

The **Music Box**

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



In this issue

*Barrel Organs and Disabled
American Civil War Veterans*

*Repair of a
Musical Snuff Box*

*The Whippet Tank,
a.k.a. 'Musical Box'*

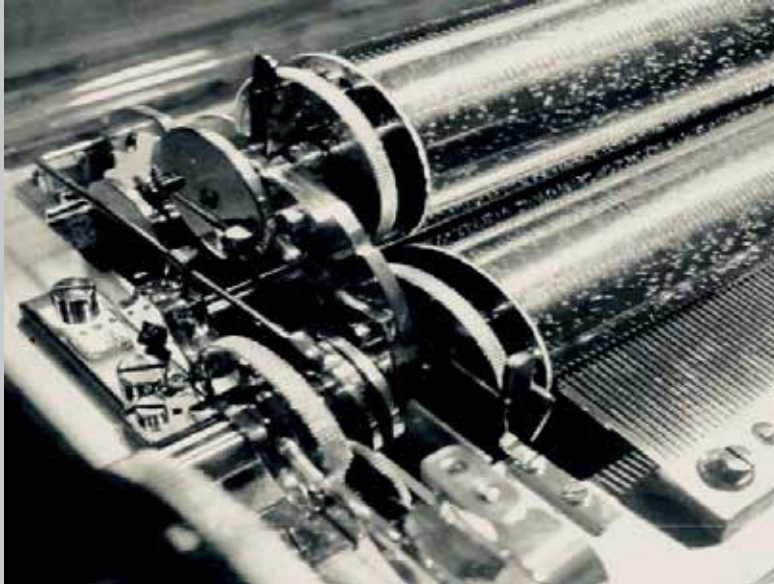
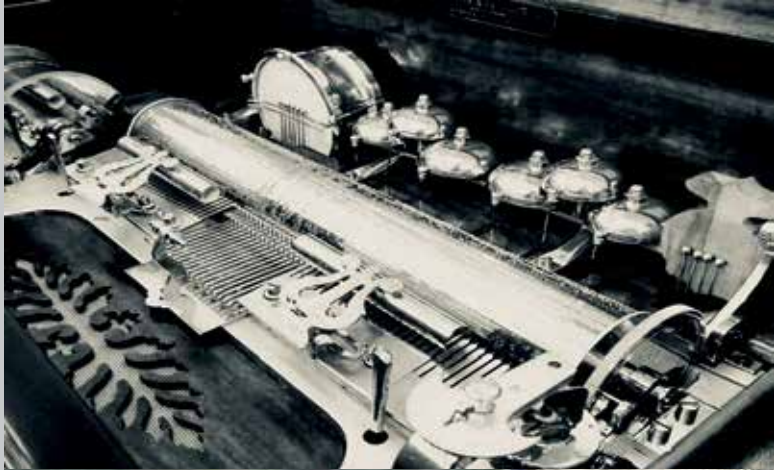
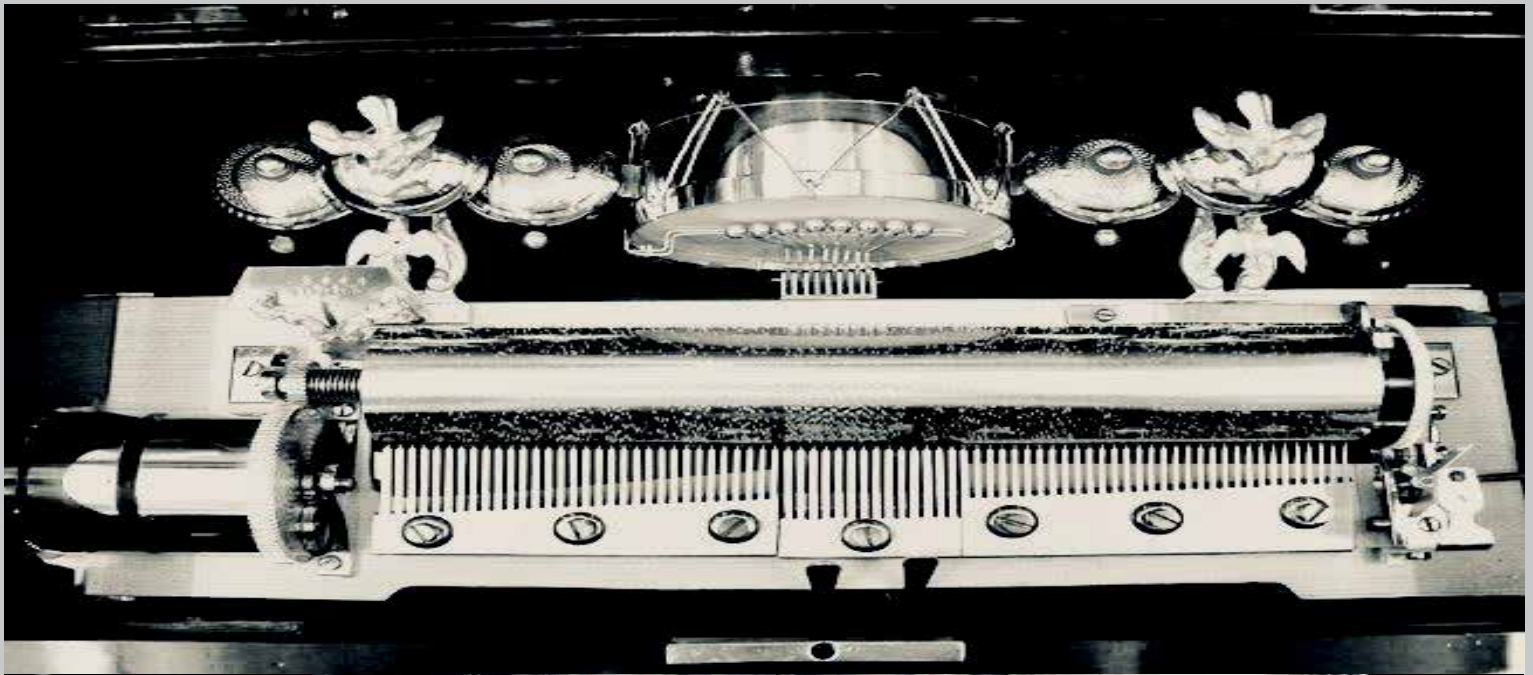
*'Robots Love Music'
Exhibition*

*The Bulle Orchestrion:
Solea, Switzerland*

*Then & Now:
The Salomons' Welte pt 1*

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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'...started playing a hand organ, only to have a pail of dirty water dumped on him from the window ...' Robert Penna on the plight of the amputee, P304



'... it is the sense of the uncanny that impresses as much as the performance itself.' Michael Start on automata, P311



'... I am delighted to have reached the 100th edition of Register News and even more delighted to still be alive to continue with the task ...' Arthur Cunliffe's Register News. P322



Front Cover: Clarinet Player 1838, by Cornelis van Oeckelen, John Gaughan Collection, currently on display in the Speelklok Museum, Utrecht. Photo Michael Start. (See P311 of this issue.)

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Editorial

This edition was intended to broadly follow a theme of 'then and now', and whilst traces of that may still be discerned within its pages, much has had to be held over until next Spring's edition, due to lack of space. Even though the regular 'News from Other Societies' has been temporarily suspended to generate more available space for features, the reader will be aware here of more of the 'then' and less of the 'now'!

One outstanding 'landmark' reached with this issue, worthy of highlighting, is that Arthur Cunliffe has reached his 100th Musical Box Register report. I will not spoil it by revealing here the number of cylinder boxes now registered but leave it to you to discover for yourself what has been achieved from very humble beginnings.

We are extremely grateful to the various contributors to this edition and hope you will find much of interest within its pages.

Along with its regular meetings, *The Music Box* is one of the major benefits of membership of the Society, keeping members up-to-date with events as well as sharing items of interest. The Executive is committed to ensuring that our quality magazine will not suffer interruption.

If you yourself or anyone you know of is interested in taking on this very important function, please get in touch with a member of Committee. As well as the skills one would expect of an Editor, the ability to use relevant software to layout the magazine is essential. A small honorarium is available for a suitable candidate.

Please continue to submit your items and photographs, preferably as Word documents and JPEGs by electronic means to: editor@mbsgb.org.uk. (Alternatively hard copy may be sent via the Society's correspondence address: MBSGB, c/o The Grange Musical Collection, Old Bury Road, Palgrave, DISS, Norfolk, IP22 1AZ.)

Articles, letters and other contributions relating to the study and appreciation of musical boxes and other mechanical musical instruments for publication in the Journal are welcome. The (Acting) Editor reserves the right to amend or refuse any submissions. Any contribution is accepted for publication on the understanding that the author is solely responsible for the correctness of the facts stated therein, and also for any opinions expressed within. Its publication in the Journal does not necessarily imply that the Society, its Officers or the Editor agree with those opinions. The Society, its Officers and the Editor do not accept, and hereby disclaim any liability for the consequences of any inaccuracies, errors or omissions in contributions which are published in the Journal. *The Music Box* is published by the MBSGB quarterly.

**Please note that the deadline for next edition is
1st February, 2019.**

Copy deadlines are normally:

1st February; 1st April; 1st July & 1st October

Publication dates:

1st March; 1st May; 1st August; 1st November.

**We reserve the right to amend these dates as
circumstances dictate.**

Correction concerning

SACRED MUSIC on CYLINDER MUSICAL BOXES

In *The Music Box*, Vol 28 No 6 the table labelled Table 14 on page 226 is in fact a repeat in part of Table 13 appearing on Page 225. The correct Table 14 is printed here below. We apologise to our readers for any inconvenience caused by this error due to a technical fault, and print the correct version here below:

Cylinder	Tune	Title	Notes
1	1	Old Hundredth - sometimes Old 100 th	Hymn Tune Title - usually set to either the words " <i>All People that on Earth do Dwell</i> " or " <i>Before Jehovah's Awful Throne</i> ".
	2	Abide With Me	Hymn Title - words by HF Lyte usually set to the Tune " <i>Eventide</i> " by WH Monk.
	3	Eternal father, Strong to Save	Hymn Title - words by W Whiting usually set to the tune " <i>Melita</i> " by JB Dykes.
	4	Art Thou Weary	Hymn Title - of words translated from the original Greek by JM Neale; may be found set to several hymn tunes most notably " <i>Stephanos</i> " by HW Baker, " <i>Christus Consolator</i> " by JB Dykes or " <i>Cuttle Mills</i> " by W Griffith.
	5	Evening Hymn	Hymn Tune Title - usually set to the words " <i>Father, in High Heaven dwelling</i> " by G Rawson.
	6	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	Probably pinned with the tune " <i>Berlin</i> " by Mendelssohn
2	1	Hark, My Soul	Hymn Title - usually found set to the Tune " <i>St Bees</i> " by JB Dykes.
	2	Low at Thy feet.- 1 st part	Hymn
	3	Low at Thy feet - 2 nd part.	Hymn
	4	Rock me to Sleep, Mother	Setting to music of a poem by Elizabeth Akers Allen; not a Sacred Air?
	5	Unidentifiable	???
	6	The Heavens are Telling	Chorus from Haydn's Oratorio " <i>The Creation</i> "
3	1	O Rest in the Lord	Aria from Mendelssohn's Oratorio " <i>Elijah</i> "
	2	Gloria in Excelsis	Vivaldi
	3	Glory to God	Chorus from Handel's Oratorio " <i>The Messiah</i> "
	4	Unidentified	Unidentified chorus from Handel's Oratorio " <i>The Messiah</i> "
	5	Unidentified	Unidentified, but possibly " <i>The Hailstone Chorus</i> " from Handel's Oratorio " <i>Israel in Egypt</i> "
	6	Dead March	Symphonic music from Act III of Handel's Oratorio " <i>Saul</i> "

Table 14: Sacred Music Pinned for Cuendet/Nicole Interchangeable Serial No. 47648.

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Barrel Organs and Disabled Civil War Veterans

by Robert F. Penna, Ph.D.



Growing up in Union City, NJ, in the 1950s, I remember a disabled World War II veteran lying on a blanket in the city's old shopping section on Bergenline Avenue. He sat there selling pencils for five cents each. Having travelled extensively since the early 1970s, my wife, Angela, and I sometimes find similar maimed survivors from wars now past, begging or selling some simple items in front of religious institutions, in markets or tourist areas. In reflecting on these experiences, I began to wonder what happened when huge numbers of young men suddenly returned from the front lines in the 1860s, many missing one or more limbs, especially during an age when prosthetic limbs were crude at best?

Above: This drawing from 1854 depicts a barrel organ grinder with monkey accompanied by a tambourine and triangle. Note the man in the background covering his ears while the children in the foreground dance and sing along.

Photo Credit: Art & Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. 'The five senses. -No II. Hearing.' The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1854-10.

Such was the case during and shortly after the American Civil War. Although the exact number is not known, many respected research sources report that approximately 30,000 amputations were performed on Union soldiers during the war. These same sources agree that a similar number of operations was likely done on Confederate soldiers, but there is no formal documentation remaining to provide concrete proof. Why, you might ask, were so many limbs removed? Mainly it had to do with the fact that there were vast numbers of men severely wounded in battle, and it was impossible for the limited number of surgeons to undertake more delicate and time-consuming procedures such as building splints or removing only part of the bone or flesh damaged by bullets. Add to that a lack of operating rooms and other battlefield challenges of the time, and it was a situation where drastic surgery was the best option for most patients. An amputation would often be performed to prevent deadly complications such as gangrene.¹

Those veterans who survived an amputation faced their next challenge as they returned to civilian life in an era where most employment required physical labour, and options for legless or armless men were extremely limited.

Many amputee veterans seeking to earn a living opted for a profession

pioneered by veterans of earlier European conflicts, in particular the Seven Years War (1756-1763) where disabled warriors were taught to play barrel organs on their return from battle. This was especially encouraged in the German-speaking regions of Europe. Empress Maria Theresa of Austria was the first to authorise permits to crank a Leierkasten (barrel organ) in public. Licences often went to invalids of the Seven Years War to help them make enough to eat and live. In 1810, Prussia copied Austria and issued permits as well.ⁱⁱ This practice continued in Germany until after World War I. Joseph Roth's *Rebellion: A Novel* describes a German World War I amputee vet who becomes a street organ grinder and then ends up losing his licence



Top right: An advertisement for cigarettes shows a drawing of an organ grinder with a monkey in mock military uniform from London. Civil War veterans looked to Europe for ways to earn a living and may have seen this as a possible solution.

Above: In this street scene from 1896, an organ grinder and his wife do not appear to be attracting much attention as her cup is empty and the street sweeper behind them is clearly not interested in what they are doing.

Photo Credit: The Miriam and Ira D Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. 'Organ Grinder.' The New York Public Library Digital Collections 1896.



which leads to him experiencing many more misfortunes.ⁱⁱⁱ

According to Terry Bender, who wrote an article titled “A Short History of Organ Grinders,” European organ grinders were often despised or even feared. The authorities in 17th and 18th century Europe were often afraid

of itinerant musicians because they carried information and news from place to place, and they sometimes stirred up trouble. It was one reason organ grinders had to obtain licences in order to play. Other times, the licences were simply granted to disabled soldiers in lieu of pensions or medical care.^{iv}

Barrel organs, also known as hand organs or “grind organs,” were first imported to the United States during the mid 19th century by European immigrants. German instrument builder Franz Rudolph Wurlitzer set up shop in Cincinnati, OH, in 1856 and helped establish a domestic barrel organ trade based in the northern states.^v

Drawn to the instrument’s portability and the ease of operating its simple hand crank mechanism, Italian, Irish, and German immigrants continued the old-world practice of playing the barrel organ as urban street performers. These buskers, or those who entertained in public places for donations^{vi}, were already known in cities throughout the north prior to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. This ready audience made the barrel organs especially attractive to disabled veterans. The organs could be carried on the chest thanks to a shoulder strap and supported by a stand which meant they acted almost like a crutch for men who had lost a leg. The carved ornamental frontages charmed passers-by, who would marvel at the instrument while the crank turner took a rest.^{vii} Antique hand organs decorated with symbols of

America are often traced to disabled northern veterans of the Civil War.

Michael Accinno, in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, explains how some amputees operated an instrument colloquially referred to as a “hand organ” without the use of a hand. In these cases a young boy would often accompany the veteran supplying youthful arms and hands to turn the crank of the instrument while the veteran talked with the public and collected coins. These able-bodied young assistants helped transport the barrel organs, and sometimes the disabled men too. The young boys might also wear a blue uniform that matched those worn by the veterans.^{viii}

According to Accinno, the number of disabled veteran organ buskers peaked during the 1870s. It is difficult to establish an exact number of amputee veteran performers, but in an article in the *New York Times* (March 20, 1895), one writer estimated that “thousands of invalid and wounded veterans purchased organs” after the war. Newspapers and periodicals in California, the Midwest, and the Eastern seaboard expressed alarm in documenting the presence of injured soldiers performing in public spaces.^{ix}

Writing in the *New York Herald*, one reporter captured much of the shock that crowds felt at witnessing the sight and sound of disabled Civil War veteran buskers:

As we pass at the various corners of the streets the organ grinders, who are disabled soldiers, we

Images above: Two organ grinders ply their trade on the streets of New York in the 1890s.

Photo Credit: The Miriam and Ira D Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. ‘Organ Grinder.’ The New York Public Library Digital Collections 1896.

cannot but think that some other provision should be made for these armless or legless men, who have suffered for the perpetuity of the nation. That those who fought and lost their limbs for their defense of our homes should be compelled to stand and beg for pennies at our street corners is a disgrace (Jul. 21, 1871).^x

A change in attitude against all organ grinders began to appear by the mid 1870s as Italian organ grinders, who predominated in the antebellum period but began to see their income decline after the war with the influx of disabled

soldiers, started to pretend to be former servicemen to earn more money. The public soon had a hard time trusting the stories of the buskers and all performers then saw negative reactions to their presence begin to rise.

One observer in *Appleton's Journal* (New York) noted, "The maimed soldiers of the last war ... excite more sympathy than the able-bodied Italians, and often earn twice as much money" (Jan. 24, 1874). The influx of veterans into the once immigrant-dominated profession was so pronounced that when a reporter for the *New York*

Sun asked a proprietor of barrel organs in 1874 about his clientele, he could readily reply that they were "nearly all Italians and old American soldiers" (reprinted in *Scientific American*, Jul. 15, 1874).^{xi}

Yet, it is likely that many of the immigrants were actually disabled veterans of the north's Army of the Republic. According to Bladek, as many as 200,000 German-Americans and 150,000 Irish-Americans served in the Union Army and Navy.^{xii} Between 5,000 and 10,000 Italian-Americans also served in the Union and the Confederate armies.^{xiii} However,



Above: In this street scene we see a blind man cranking an organ in the streets in the early 1900s in New York City. By this time, the job of organ grinder was quickly fading from society.

Photo Credit: The Miriam and Ira D Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photograph Collection, The New York Public Library. 'Street scene on East side, New York City,' The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1900 - 1937.



for many of the writers of the times, an immigrant organ grinder, whether an amputee or not, was scorned while American-born street performers were not.

A prime example of this attitude is represented in the 1868 book by John Mc Cabe, *The Secrets of the Great City: A Work Descriptive of the Virtues and the Vices, The Mysteries, Miseries, and Crimes of New York City*.^{xiv} He exudes nothing but scorn for immigrant organ grinders actually calling their music “the most horrible discord,” but his descriptions of “soldier minstrels” who use the same instruments is very supportive. McCabe strictly separates the veterans from immigrant street musicians reasoning that their service and

bodily sacrifices merit consideration as a special category of performers. He narrates the story of John Williams, a gallant private in the Army of the Potomac who lost both an arm and a leg during the course of the war. McCabe notes that Williams “consoled himself with the hope that the people for whom he had fought and suffered, would not let him lack for some means of employment.” As the hoped-for work failed to materialise, Williams was reduced to playing the barrel organ on city streets, a profession that, owing to its associations with immigrants, is described as “repugnant to one’s manhood.”^{xv}

If one researches further, evidence of disabled immigrant veterans as musicians can be found. An article

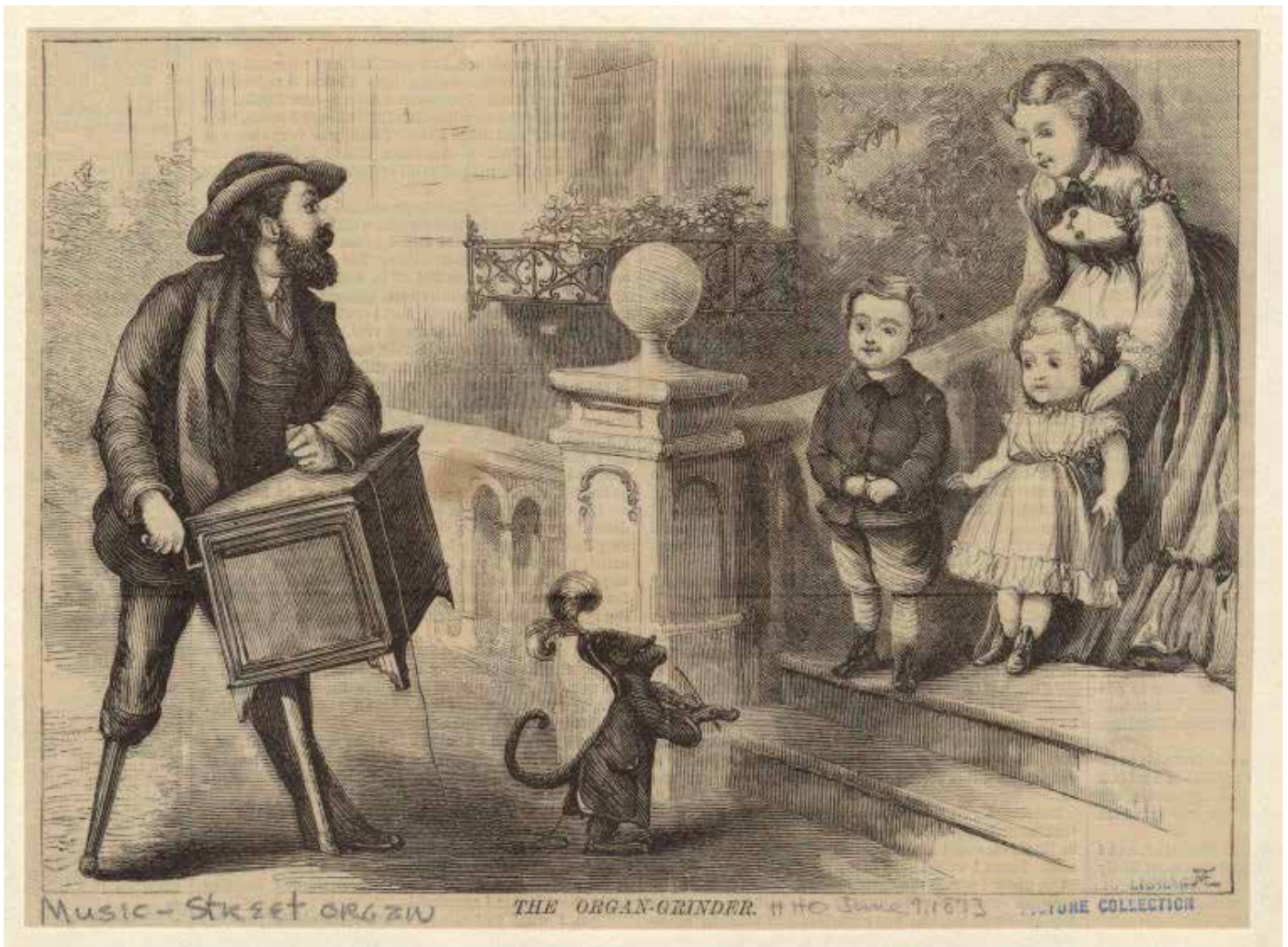
in the *Washington Post* reported the story of an Irish immigrant who lost his arm during the Richmond-Petersburg campaign. Lacking family ties in the United States, the man later received a barrel organ that he claimed was financed personally by the editor of the *La Crosse Democrat*, Marcus Pomeroy (Jan. 2, 1884).^{xvi}

A particularly disturbing story of a one-armed German veteran in Milwaukee was recounted in a series of outraged letters written by readers of the *Chicago Tribune*. According to eyewitness accounts, the veteran arrived outside of the offices of the Wisconsin State Register and started playing a hand organ, only to have a pail of dirty water dumped on him from the window of the office by the newspaper’s editor, Jack Turner (*Chicago Tribune*, Jul. 11, 1872). A corroborating account by a different witness indicates that Turner continued to berate the man and may have even kicked him down a flight of stairs (*Chicago Tribune*, Jul. 15, 1872). These accounts suggest that immigrant veterans may have had particular difficulties in navigating postwar benefit and employment networks.^{xvii}

Identifying himself only as “Otsdama,” an indignant veteran organ grinder wrote to the editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1869 to protest against the onslaught of critiques that had been leveled against the performers by the newspaper’s readers in recent weeks. His anonymous remarks, employing a mixture of humour, sarcasm, guilt

Above: This depiction of an organ grinder from 1873 shows him as bearded and a bit dishevelled. There is no air of celebration around his music, which possibly reflects the growing dissatisfaction with the people plying the trade at that time.

Photo Credit: Art & Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. ‘The organ-grinder.’ The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1873-12.



and wit to silence and shame his critics, demonstrate the power of disabled self-representation:

As a member in good standing (on one leg) of that much abused class of musical purveyors, I beg the privilege of giving to the public a few of the reasons which govern us in the choice of this profession. While many persons with musical cultivation and education enjoy the opera and so-called classical music. ... the great mass of common people are better satisfied with simple airs, finding little pleasure to elaborate and intricate compositions.... But what have these censorious

scribblers to say on the score of their own patriotism? Do they not consider that while they were enjoying their ease at home, we who are now maimed and crippled for life, were fighting the battles of our country? And when we are unfit for active labor, we must do something to support ourselves and those dependent upon us, for a living. Give us something else to do, we will gladly do it. We have sometimes thought that Uncle Sam might with great propriety give us a place in his service, to do such light work as is now performed by stay-at-home politicians.

As for example, see the inner workings of the Brooklyn Post office. Perhaps you do not like our music. Possibly you do not like our organ grinding. What else shall we do? Perchance our music annoys you.

Pay us our wages, and we will sit by our music boxes in proper silence, to please you. Is our music disagreeable? We have heard that which was more so, on the fields of Gettysburg and the Wilderness. When you hear our wheezing instruments, consider it but the faint echo which we have brought from the battle-fields which saved our Republic, and look upon

Above: A drawing of an organ grinder with a wooden leg and his trained monkey entertaining children outside their home. The drawing is dated 1873.

Photo Credit: TArt & Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. "The organ-grinder." The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1873-06-07.

our employment as the necessary resort of the fragments of your country's defenders, and we hope these considerations will make you less easily annoyed and less irritable (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 11, 1869).^{xviii}

Some Americans hated the rinky-tinkiness and repetition of the street piano – “It is a dull crowd the organ grinder appeals to,” observed the *Reading, Pa.*, Times in July 1898. In hamlets such as Allentown, PA, and Brooklyn, NY, organ grinders were actually fined or arrested because

they refused to stop playing. The city of Somerville, MA, declared “war on organ grinders,” the *Fitchburg Sentinel* stated in September 1893. The performers — machine operators, actually — were sitting ducks. They were vulnerable, attention-drawing characters encumbered by the tools of their trade. Perhaps the same often-treacly tunes, played on infinite repeat, just set people's nerves on edge.^{xix} Not all Americans, however, hated these players.

As the years passed, the nation

began to heal and Americans wanted to forget the hardships of the war years. The Civil War had been devastating. The country had suffered as a whole. No part of it had been spared the loss of life and injury. Disabled veterans, standing or lying while playing the attention-getting barrel organ, eventually became a reminder of bad times. Perhaps the disappearance of the organ grinders and their machines had more to do with helping citizens forget the war than a dislike of the music and the profession.

ⁱ “Maimed Men,” *Life and Limb: The Toll of the American Civil War*, U.S. National Library of Medicine. Found at: <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/lifeandlimb/maimedmen.html>

“Surgery in the Civil War”

<http://www.pbs.org/mercy-street/uncover-history/behind-lens/surgery-civil-war/>

“Civil War Battlefield Surgery”

<https://ehistory.osu.edu/exhibitions/cwsurgeon/cwsurgeon/amputations>

ⁱⁱ Buchner, Alexander. 1959. *Mechanical Musical Instruments*. Translated by Iris Urwin. London: Batchworth.

ⁱⁱⁱ Roth, Joseph. *Rebellion: A Novel*. (original title: *Die Rebellion*): a 1924 novel by the Austrian writer Joseph Roth. It tells the story of a German war veteran who has become a street musician after losing one leg. The novel was published in the newspaper *Vorwärts* from 27 July to 29 August 1924. A synopsis can be found at: <http://www.librarything.com/work/2098435>

^{iv} Bender, Terry. A Short History of Organ Grinders. 2010. Found at: http://bendermelodies.com/org_grinder_history.htm

^v Bowers, Q. David. 1972. *Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments*. Vestal, NY: Vestal Publishing.

^{vi} Busker – Definition of. Merriam-Webster Online. Found at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/busker> According to Merriam-Webster, the word originated in print in 1851.

^{vii} Le Ludion, company that services, trades and manufacturers of barrel organs, Toulouse, France. Found at: http://www.ledulion.com/pag_barbarie/barbarie_e.htm

^{viii} Accinno, Michael. “Disabled Union Veterans and the Performance of Martial Begging.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, edited by Blake Howe, Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, Neil Lerner, and Joseph Straus, 403–422. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

^{ix} Accinno (same as above)

^x Article in *The New York Herald*, July 21, 1871.

^{xi} Accinno, Michael. 2010. “Organ Grinder's Swing: Representations of Street Music in New York City, 1850–1937.” MA thesis, University of Iowa.

<http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/636>

^{xii} Bladec, John David. 2000. “Immigration.” In *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, vol. 2, edited by David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, 1028–1029. Santa Barbara, CA

^{xiii} “Italian Americans in the Civil War” found at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Americans_in_the_Civil_War

^{xiv} McCabe, James D. [Edward Winslow Martin]. 1868. *The Secrets of the Great City: A Work Descriptive of the Virtues and the Vices, The Mysteries, Miseries, and Crimes of New York City*. Philadelphia, PA: Jones Brothers.

^{xv} Accinno (same as above)

^{xvi} Accinno (same as above)

^{xvii} Accinno (same as above)

^{xviii} Accinno (same as above)

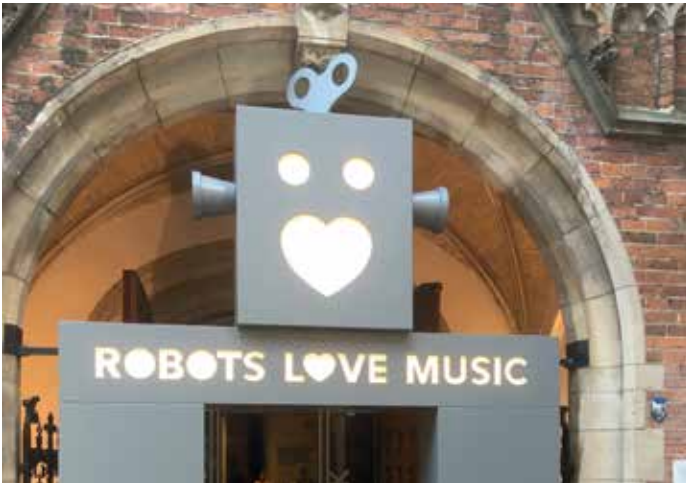
^{xix} “Strange Stories Surrounding Street Pianos,” NPR History Department. July 8, 2015. Found at: http://www.npr.org/sections/npr-history-dept/2015/07/08/420837852/strange-stories-surrounding-street-pianos?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20150708

Editor's note: This extremely interesting item was first published in Mechanical Music, the journal of the Musical Box Society International, Vol 64 No3. We wish to express our appreciation for the permission of both MBSI and the author, Robert Penna, PhD, for their permission to re-print. Please note that in the main text American spelling has been changed to conventional British English spelling. Although it will appeal to those with an interest in American history, with a significant number of ex-servicemen who currently suffer mental illness or sleep 'rough' in the UK, some may also find certain aspects still resonate today.

'Robots Love Music'

– an Exhibition at the Speelklok Museum, Utrecht, Holland
21st Sept 2018 to 3rd March 2019

Reviewed by Michael Start



I attended the opening of this new exhibition of historical and modern day robots at Europe's largest Mechanical Music museum in Utrecht. The museum is housed in a cathedral sized church which could have been designed for its new purpose. The space, now filled with towering organs and orchestrions vies with a polished steel automaton hand larger than that of the Collosus. On entering the Speelklok you are faced with a 12 metre high robot head with a heart shaped mouth - this is the entrance to the new exhibition. The Speelklok is passionate about what it does and each exhibit has been carefully chosen to keep you wondering if the exhibitions central statement 'Robots Love Music' can be true?

Once inside, the exhibits are discovered in small groups as you move through the specially constructed passageways, dark and ribbed, designed to look like you are inside a mysterious machine yourself.

First is the brooding and burnt automaton writer from Scorsese's film *Hugo*. Something of a coup in exhibition terms, this one (there were several made for the film) was lent by the Cinématèque Français in Paris and is probably the only Hugo automaton on public display. The automaton draws with a dip pen the complex image of Georges Méliès' iconic Moon face with a rocket in the eye. Its qualification as 'musical' perhaps comes from the horizontal pinned drum in the torso.

This component was based on the same part in the very musical Jaquet Droz Musician of 1774, although it remained mute in the film *Hugo*.

Having engaged us with this automaton from popular culture we next see a pair of Jacquemart figures hammering a set of musical bells on a clock made in the 16th century. Although you cannot operate the Jacks you do Having engaged us with this automaton from popular culture we next see a pair of Jacquemart figures hammering a set of musical bells on a clock made in the 16th century. Although you cannot operate the Jacks you do get to operate a beautiful bell-playing lady from a 19th century organ, one of many interactive exhibits, both mechanical and electronic.

The Speelklok museum has its own restoration workshop and a global reputation for the work carried out on the finest organs and musical machines, so the interactive working models are exceedingly effective and beautifully made. Modern robots abound and most are working and have their mechanisms exposed. Virtually unnoticed by most people, three large bellows in a modern robot inflate in turn and solenoids sound a trumpet almost at ear level to demand attention! While across the room a fine figure from 19th century Paris teaches the bird on his arm to copy the melodies from his finely fingered flute ('The Bird Trainer' c1890, lent by the Morris Museum in America).



Moon Drawn by the Hugo Automaton



Life sized Clarinet Player 1838

As well as a good selection of percussion robots there are robots whistling, playing trumpet, piano, flute, banjo and violin. There is even a self-playing musical prosthetic for humans. But the real exciting question tackled head on here, is whether robots can use their processing power actually to make and play original music? This claim is made by 'Shimon' a marimba playing robot head with four arms and eight sticks which plays its own compositions. Designed at and lent by the Georgia Institute of Technology the musical pieces are generated using AI and Big Data but the real audience pleaser is Shimon's uncanny animation of its animated head/eye as it listens and plays. Shimon is regularly demonstrated, with new original compositions each time. A feature of the exhibition is that there are plenty of knowledgeable young assistants who will demonstrate many of the rare, fragile and powerful exhibits as you approach them.

As always with robots and automata it is the sense of the uncanny that impresses as much as the performance itself. Nowhere is that more deeply felt than when face



Violinist, Paris 19th C.

to face with, for me the star of the show, Cornelis van Oeckelen's 1838 Clarinet player. Van Oeckelen was from a family of Dutch Organ builders and this 6 foot tall android was his masterpiece. The unclothed figure is packed tight with handmade clockwork and his slightly startled painted face with glass eyes stares straight back at the viewer, lips pursed mid performance. He is paused, non-working, missing a vital part, the original clarinet. The clarinet would have been specially made to meet his fingertips and lips precisely, delighting the audience with its virtuoso playing. A contemporary description reads "the movements of head and body, of eyes and lips were so natural and charming that people watching it completely forgot it was in fact a soulless machine". Almost inevitably he ended up in the museum of P.T. Barnum in America and somehow survived the fire there of 1865. The Clarinet Player is here on loan from the Los Angeles collection of the enigmatic John Gaughan, (known as the magician's magician) an example of the Speelklok's success in attracting loans from all over the world.



Shimon

It is obvious that this is a big budget exhibition with a serious mission. The subject may be niche but you are not alone in engaging with it, indeed the whole town of Utrecht is in on it, with most of the shops in the city centre featuring large 3D yellow robot heads staring out at you with no explanation.

When you visit, don't forget to leave time for the museum's permanent collections of rare musical treasures, nowhere else will explain the

complexities of mechanical music so clearly and with such fun. In this exhibition you have the gathering together of mankind's best attempts to hand over the musical baton to machines. The presentation and clarity of focus on music will entertain you enormously. You will also leave with the informed ability to question if the idea that 'Robots Love Music' is one we should encourage!

Michael Start runs The House of Automata in Scotland and was Automata consultant to Scorsese's film 'Hugo', designing the automaton's mechanism, as well as teaching Jude Law how to hold a screwdriver!

www.thehouseofautomata.com

Editor's note: *This year's traditional annual four-day trip to the continent run by the Mechanical Organ Owners Society, 10th-13th November, has a whole day scheduled at the Speelklok Museum. For any last-minute availability, contact MOOS immediately.*

<http://www.moos.org.uk/>



19th Century Automaton Flautist



Bird Trainer Automaton

Repair of a Musical Snuff Box

By Niko Wiegman

Despite not in working condition and not signed I could not resist buying this 3-air tinplate snuffbox. Made in 1835-40 it has the more often seen “*Environs de Genève*” transfer printed lid (fig 1 & 2).

But it also has a tune sheet stuck to the inside of the lid which is not that common on snuffboxes from this period (fig 3).

The tunes listed, although not played in this order, are;

-*Frappez les airs, Robert le diable*, Meyerbeer, 1831.

-*He is mine**

-*Robin Adair*

* (perhaps someone knows about this tune?)

It was the Robin Adair tune that made me decide in favour of it, but for repair it had to wait its turn and when that came it was a little more work than expected.

The cylinder needed a repin but during inserting the new pins it became clear something had gone wrong when it was original marked and drilled.

About half-way through the third tune they had stopped, gone back to the beginning and started drilling holes again; it resulted in many wrongly placed pins. There were many with a marking but also many without and only identifiable during play; luckily it was not too difficult to identify the unwanted pins and removing them was quick.

Not unusual in snuff musical boxes the last thing left to do was to correct the tempo of play. Since the movement now worked with minimal friction it was too fast.

Snuffboxes do not have adjustable wings as cartel boxes which leaves three options to slow down the tempo of play:

- 1) The easiest is to fit a weaker spring - but this one was just strong enough to push the cylinder up the snail and using a weaker one was asking for trouble.
- 2) Change the reduction of the wheelwork by fitting a wormwheel with more teeth. This means that with one revolution of the cylinder the endless has to make more turns. But it cannot turn faster since the resistance of the wings has not changed,



fig 1. Tinplate case with “*Environs de Genève*” transfer printed lid.

and the result is a slower tempo of play. However a wormwheel with more teeth also means a larger diameter of that wheel. To accommodate that larger diameter wheel you have to increase the distance between it and the endless by moving backwards the arbour it sits on. That arbour was already not at the right angle with the other wheelwork and doing so would only make the error larger.

- 3) That left making new wings with a larger surface area as the best option for this box to slow its tempo of play.

In fig 4 you have the endless with the new wings fitted, not much larger than the original ones but enough to reduce one cylinder revolution from a speedy 34 to a pleasant 39 seconds. That with the spring wound half way means you can now let the box play at the tempo you like by winding it or letting it run down further.

Wheelwork in snuffboxes is delicate and easily damaged if not handled with care. To minimize the risk of breakage when removing the wings from the endless it is necessary to use a staking tool to keep everything square and stable (fig 5).

The movement scratched numbered 306 was not the greatest exercise in Swiss accuracy but the comb, stamped VG and AV.IU on the brass base, was well made and with a good tone. All in all despite being by a unknown maker and more work than anticipated the result was still worth the effort.



fig 2. Standard 3-air movement with well made comb.



fig 3. Tune sheet, just a piece of paper with no information about a maker.



fig 4. Endless with larger new wings fitted and the original ones above.

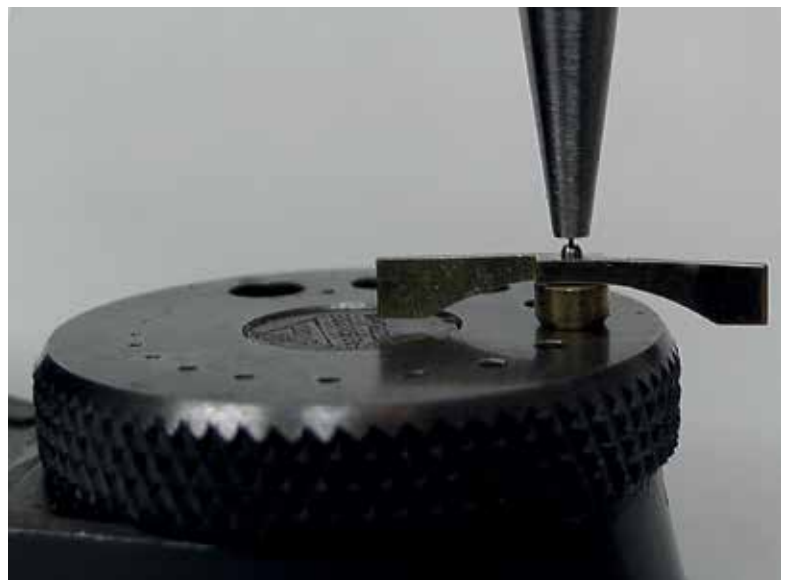


fig 5. Set-up on a staking tool to remove the wings of the endless, the tip of the punch is of course drilled, otherwise the top pivot would be flattened.

New members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to The Musical Box Society of Great Britain, who have joined since publication of the previous journal:

3293	Andrea Gabb	Surrey	3296	Nicholas J.Wilson	Cheshire
3294	Simon Hooper	Essex	3297	Sean Atherton	Cheshire
3295	A.Trowsdale	Hampshire	3298	Richard Butts	U.S.A.

All Members: don't forget to renew your subscription to the Society NOW in order to continue to enjoy the benefits of membership. See insert for details of rates and how to pay.

The Bulle Orchestrion

A visit to the Weber Solea at Café Fribourgeois, Bulle, Switzerland.

By Nicholas Simons

A few years ago, my wife Eileen and I happened to be touring Switzerland on a rail holiday. We were spending a few days at Montreux, at the east end of Lake Geneva, and had a spare day in the itinerary. Always on the lookout to combine my hobby with the holiday, I had heard of a café situated in Bulle, where there was a Weber orchestrion still playing in its original location. What better way is there to spend a free day than taking the local train and seeking out this majestic music machine from days gone by? I had gone to

Switzerland well prepared for this little excursion, knowing the address of the café, but lacking the street map of Bulle. It couldn't be difficult to find it once we arrived at the station. On arrival it took us less than

five minutes to find the café. It was located just around the corner from the railway station, in a narrow side-street. The building appeared to have not changed over the years, and is now somewhat over-powered by the tall new developments all around, *see Fig 1*. From the outside, the café appears small, but inside it is very deep, with seating for large numbers and with the kitchen at the rear. It is a single storey building of limited height, and this leads to the unusual design of the orchestrion.

Back in the heyday of the orchestrion there were two

large dealers specialising in these instruments. The largest was G. J Gerard of Brussels, but a close second was Charrier & Co of Bulle. In spite of Bulle being a relatively small town, this company was very large and had an enormous building with room after room where you could see and hear the largest orchestrions made by Poppers, Welte, Hupfeld and of course Weber. This last company was probably the smallest of this group, but created some of the most musical instruments produced in this period. The firm of Gebruder Weber

(the brothers Weber) was based at Waldkirch in the Black Forest and produced only orchestrions. Today, its instruments are the most sought-after by enthusiasts. Early Weber instruments play from cardboard books and a splendid example of this type can be seen at the Elztalmuseum



Fig 1.

at Waldkirch. As one would expect, this museum specialises in the automatic music products of the town and has individual rooms dedicated to each manufacturer. The Weber room contains three fully restored orchestrions which are played when requested. If you are interested in this field of automatic music, why not go to the next Waldkirch Organ Festival, which takes place in June 2020? The museum runs continuous tours of all the instruments. Later Weber instruments used the conventional paper roll, but not in the conventional way. The roll is read by pressure,



Fig 2.

not suction, and is held against the tracker bar by a grooved roller.

In 1914, Felicien Chassot, the owner of the Café Fribourgeois, must have decided to investigate what new form of musical entertainment was available from his local dealer. At that time, Weber's largest roll operated orchestrion was the Solea, but there was a

problem. The standard Solea case was higher than the ceiling height in the café. M Chassot must have had deep pockets as he commissioned a Solea in a special case, designed to fit his café. The new orchestrion was designed, built and installed, and there it remains to this day, still playing perfectly for the enjoyment of customers, and visitors from around the world who come especially to see this orchestrion, *see Fig 2*.

The orchestrion is 4m long, 2.5m high and has a depth of 1.1m. It is divided into three cases, the two on either side being fronted by painted glass panels depicting local scenes. To the right is the Javrov bridge, being traversed by a parade of vehicles and people, with the river flowing underneath and above are aircraft crossing the sky. To the left is a view of the local village of Gruyère, with alternating sunrise and sunset. All this is operated by moving shadow masks and lights controlled by cams. The left-hand main case contains the percussion and xylophone, whereas the right hand case contains the pipes and main wind feeders. The



Fig 3.

piano is placed across the centre of the instrument and can be seen behind the access door for the roll frame, *see Fig 3*. Above the access door can be seen the trade plate of Charrier & Co and above that, the name Solea is carved into the case. It was very difficult to take a good photograph of the entire orchestrion as it is placed at the back of the café, behind the tables, with poor lighting, a low ceiling and various roof supports in the way. My best effort is seen in *Fig 4*.

The early roll-playing Weber orchestrions are unusual in using only pressure wind for both the pipes and playing action. Later instruments used a higher pressure vacuum within the playing system, although continued to use pressure for reading the roll. This has the advantage of blowing away any paper dust, rather than ingesting it to the detriment of the action's efficiency. The Solea has a 52 note piano made by the high quality manufacturer Feurich, and is fitted with a mandolin rail. It has four ranks of 28 pipes, of flute, bourdon, violin and baritone, a 28 note xylophone, a bass drum, cymbal, side drum, tambourine, castanets and a triangle. The wind is supplied by a set of three feeders, supplying two reservoirs at different pressures for the pipes and playing action. The music is punched onto a roll of 360mm width, containing 88 holes at a 4mm pitch. The paper is transported across the tracker bar by a pair of pinch rollers so the paper travels at a constant speed, irrespective of where the tune is along the roll. This prevents the usual speeding up of the paper in the conventional arrangement where the take-up spool is the driving force, and allows longer musical arrangements to be supplied. Programmes or single tunes up to 15 minutes long are possible on Weber machines.



Fig 4.

Felicien Chassot was obviously very proud of his new attraction so he produced a music menu for his customers. This is shown in *Fig 5*. At the time, the repertoire extended to 57 music rolls, many with two or three tunes, covering both classical and popular genres. The customer would ask the waiter to install his chosen roll and then drop a 20 centime coin into one of the conveniently situated wall boxes to play one tune. These days you pay the waiter one Swiss franc for each tune.

It is very rare to find a commercial instrument still in its original home, and still playing regularly to such a high standard. The café owners fully understand the value and importance of the orchestrion and have turned down many offers from collectors around the world. It is maintained professionally by Pascal Schneider, a local organ builder and music roll producer. A CD of the instrument may be purchased by visitors and it can be seen on YouTube. This Solea deserves to be looked after and enjoyed for another 104 years, and beyond, and its playing quality is a testament to the owners of the Café Fribourgeois, Pascal Schneider and of course, the builders Gbr Weber.

Acknowledgement: *Treasures of Mechanical Music*, Reblitz and Bowers, Vestal Press, 1981.

Café Fribourgeois
Grand Café-Restaurant

*****O*****
FÉLICIEN CHASSOT, Propr.



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MUSIQUE CLASSIQUE ET POPULAIRE

Rouleaux

N° 1. La Marseillaise	R. DE L'ISLE
Le Régiment de Sambre et Meuse	PLANQUETTE
» 2. La flotte aérienne, marche	TEIKE
Clair de lune sur l'Alster	FÉTRAS
» 3. Aïsha, intermezzo indien	LINDSAY
Les joyeux montagnards, tyrolienne	
» 4. Amina, sérénade égyptienne	LINCKE
Danse du Paraguay	
» 5. Le chant du Moulin, Film enchanté	BREDSCHNEIDER
Par monts et veaux, solo de xyloph.	KLING
» 6. Danse des gnomes	MAYER
Songe d'amour après le bal	CZIBULKA
» 7. Le Trouvère, pot-pourri	VERDI
» 8. Faust et Marguerite, pot-pourri	GOUNOD
» 9. Le Rêve du Nègre, fantaisie	MIDDLETON
» 10. Entrée triomphale, marche	PIEFKE
Danse tyrolienne	LENGRIESSER
» 11. Entrée des Gladiateurs, marche	FUGIK
Les Jongleurs, galop	DIETRICH
» 12. Sourire d'Avril, valse	DEPRET
» 13. Le merle d'or, polka-marche	SCHWER
Voilà notre tempérament, mazurka	ZIEHRER
Heinerle n'a pas d'argent, schottisch	FALL
» 14. Roses rouges, valse	LÉHAR
Mon manchon est disparu, schottisch	LINCKE
Eve moderne, valse	GILBERT
» 15. Rulya, polka-marche	LINDENMANN
Coppella, mazurka	DELIBES
Au rivage du Neckar, schottisch	
» 16. Maxime, marche	LÉHAR
Lambic, valse	FREMAUX
Poupée, tu es ma lumière, marche	GILBERT
» 17. Polonaise	OGINSKI
Le Chocho, tango	VILLOLDO
Amour joyeux, pas de deux	CHRISTINÉ
» 18. Jeunes filles et nègres, pas de deux	SCOTT
» 19. Etoile polaire, valse	WALDTEUFEL

■ Pour chaque morceau, mettez 20 centimes dans l'un des appareils.

Rouleaux

N° 20. Poète et Paysan, ouverture	FR. SUPPÉ
» 21. Zigeunerbaron, fantaisie	JOH. STRAUSS
» 22. Martha, ouverture	FLOTOW
» 23. Mignon, ouverture	AMB. THOMAS
» 24. Le Barbier de Séville, ouverture	ROSSINI
» 25. La Cavalerie légère	
» 26. Nibelung, marche	SONNTAG
Oiseau du Paradis, valse	
Barre fixe, galop	
» 27. Sur les vagues, valse	ROSAS
Les gaics, polka	
C'est chez nous au sang, mazurka	
» 28. Fantaisie pour violon	MULHING
Les Huguenots, fantaisie	MAYERBEER
» 29. L'Orange sans reproche, marche	
Pigeon blanc, valse	
» 30. Ballet, fantaisie pour violon	
Non, je ne marche pas	
» 33. Ouverture de « Joyeuses commères »	WINDSOR
» 34. Zlata-Praha, Pot-pourri de chansons nationales bohémiennes	URBANK
» 35. La Pic voleuse, ouverture	ROSSINI
» 36. Ouverture de « Le Roi d'Yvetot »	ADAM
» 37. Pot-pourri de « Chansons d'Etudiants »	KOHLMANN
Rêve d'automne, valse	
» 38. Chansons patriotiques, pot-pourri	
Sous les Tilleuls, marche	KOLLO
» 39. Kochanodschka, danse russe	KOLLO
La lune luit, chanson russe	
» 40. Aubade printanière	LACOMBE
La Reine, Two-Step	SIEDE
» 41. Fantaisie de « Onegin »	TCHARKOWSKY
Sadosky, marche	
» 42. Dorette, valse	HARIL
A travers l'espace, marche d'aviateurs	SIEDE
» 43. La Brabançonne, chant national belge	
Les Cloches de Corneville, ouverture	PLANQUETTE
Nuit tranquille, nuit sainte, chant de Noël	GRUBER
» 44. Charme de la Danse, valse	
Salut à la Patrie	
Prière Néerlandaise	

■ Pour chaque morceau, mettez 20 centimes dans l'un des appareils.

Rouleaux

N° 45. Mænen hak mir mal die Taille auf Par le téléphone	
» 46. Schumaritza, Hymne national bulgare	
Marche des Chasseurs (Waidmannshiel)	
La Nuit charmante	
» 48. Les flots du Danube, valse	IVANOVICI
Quand l'amour meurt, valse	
» 49. Niki-Marche	
Estudiantina, valse	WALDTEUFEL
Carmen, marche	
» 50. Hindoustan, fox-trott	
Rêve de Valse, valse	O. STRAUSS
» 51. Juxbaron, fox-trott	
Verner Madel, valse	
» 52. Salomé, fox-trott	
Les Millions d'Arlequin, valse	DRIGO
Halloh du Süsse Klingelfee, téléphonestep	
» 53. Jes we have no bananas, one-step	SILVERCOHN
Quand Zézette zozotte, fox-trott	GAVEL
La Violetera, schottisch espagnol	PADILLA
Im hôtel zur grünen Wiese, fox-trott	BRINK
» 54. Fernande, one-step	
The Sheik, shimmy-fox	
Affl,	
» »	
Bright eyes, fox-trott	
» 55. Un peu, un tout petit peu	
La Rose bleue, tango	
Pasadena, fox-trott	
Chill bom bom, marche	
» 56. Und zum schluss, shimmy	
Wenn ich dich, fox-trott	
Eldgatein, fox-trott	
» 57. Wilhelm Tell, ouverture	ROSSINI

■ Pour chaque morceau, mettez 20 centimes dans l'un des appareils.

Fig 5.

MUSICAL BOX REGISTER

MORE than a year ago, Arthur Cunliffe announced that he would like the co-operation of all members in compiling a register of musical boxes. It seems that many members were unable to appreciate the enormous research and data feedback facilities which such an enterprise would create and the response was very meagre. However, from this small beginning, Arthur Cunliffe has been able to come up with some very worthwhile data. *The Music Box* presents this preliminary report in the hope that it will spur all members to participate in the scheme without further delay. This is one of the most important and potentially rewarding projects which has ever been undertaken in the field of musical box documentation.

INTRODUCTION

SINCE first questionnaires were sent out to members following the announcement on page 165 of volume 6, only a rather small sample of returns have come in and the register has had to be launched based on this small amount of data.

First let me explain why I first set about compiling (or trying to compile) such a register. The basic idea was to compile a list of all known boxes and from this try to estimate the likely number of boxes remaining out of the enormous number made.

The next target was to try to date boxes accurately from the undoubted emergence of a pattern of all-maker serial numbers; tune titles and other marks.

And finally, of course, there was the strong possibility that the Register could help with the recovery of stolen boxes.

To operate the register properly, all questionnaire cards are coded and do not show the name or address of the owner of the box. This ensures that even if the entire register was stolen, published or otherwise broadcast, there would be absolute anonymity preserved. It was felt that with so delicate and potentially valuable a study as this, this would be the only way in which to conduct it.

CONCLUSIONS

Before looking specifically at some of the makers about whom information has emerged, I must repeat that my findings so far have been based on a very small num-

ber of returns and my purpose in publishing this now is in the sincere hope that members who have not so far contributed data will recognise how worthwhile this study is and so be inspired to take part.

Because of the limited sample available, it is impossible to be certain about much at all and I must preface what follows with the expressions "It would seem that",

MUSIQUE A LA MODE



Artist H Jacquier chose this aristocratic street organ-grinder for his painting *Domenico le joueur d'orgue*, shown at the Paris Salon in 1905. From a postcard in the Claude Marchal collection.

or "It could be that . . .".

From replies received, it seems that most members regard their Nicole boxes as being the pride of their collection. In numbers, unidentified boxes (i.e., unknown-make) head the list followed, in descending order, by Nicole Freres, Paillard, Bremond, Dawkins, JGM—and then there is nothing to choose between the others.

THREE-BELL BOX A RARITY?

Little seems to be known of the Bremond family and its products. B A Bremond boxes do follow in serial number and seem to be regarded by their owners as "being the equal of any Nicole". There is a tendency for all boxes with a flat-topped winding lever to be classified as Bremond-built. May I appeal most strongly for more research into this maker.

It seems likely that some 12,000 to 14,000 musical boxes are being held by the members of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain.

The least common make or style of box seems to be the three-bell box and boxes of the type produced by B H Abrahams are scarce. Could it be that in the years to come the three-bell box might turn out to be a rarer animal than a Nicole?

There is also mounting evidence to support the stories that musical box manufacturers made parts for each other.

EVIDENCE — JGM

Thanks to the recent work done by Christopher Proudfoot, the mystery of JGM has been resolved — John G Murdoch & Co, 91-93 Farringdon Road London. Movements were probably made for them by the Thibouville-Lamy organisation.

The earliest movement recorded is numbered 200 and this number is stamped on the bedplate and is visible between the treble-end comb teeth. Numbers then rise to five-figure numbers and later still movements have their serial numbers prefaced by a letter. The letters A, I, K and R have been recorded. Early movements all appear to have 51 teeth in the comb: later ones have 55 teeth.

Older movements seem to have had winding keys with a heart-shaped handle to them while later winding keys have circular ring handles and "barley-sugar" sticks. Tunes seem to be traditional and I suspect that these movements were only fitted in photograph

albums. Has any member a JGM movement fitted other than to an album and in original condition?

DAWKINS

This maker seems to have produced a very wide range of musical boxes which vary widely in quality.

An early box with the serial number 35135 has the date "1884" written on it in pencil. Box number 44191 is dated in pencil "Bought 17 January, 1898".

If these figures are true, then Dawkins produced 9,056 boxes in the 14 years or approximately 646 per annum, or 12 per week.

Dawkins made a range of boxes with combs of 43 and 52 teeth, whilst the mandoline expression boxes, harmonical harp piccolo boxes and interchangeable boxes all have combs up to 124 teeth.

Some Dawkins boxes have the sphinx trade mark rubber stamped underneath the case.

LANGDORFF

Key and lever-wind boxes have been reported and it would seem that Langdorff made use of at least four different designs of tune card.

The cases of Langdorff boxes do have the characteristic "double cross" joints first detected by the editor some years ago, and many seem to have had pencil writing on the underneath of the box which has been partly rubbed out. Perhaps this was some manufacturing instruction, or despatch directions?

Some forte-piano boxes have been listed but most are lever wind models of the 76 or 77-tooth variety.

Serial numbers range from four figures to five figure numbers.

DUCOMMUN-GIROD

Not a common box at all. Only lever wind boxes reported to date.

Often serial numbers and gamme numbers seem to be difficult to find for this maker. Serial numbers range from four-figure to five-figure numbers.

Box number 39580 has no inner glass lid although box number 39577—an earlier movement number—does have such a feature.

THE GREAT UNKNOWNNS

By far the largest survival rate seems to be among boxes made by makers who have not left their identifying marks behind them, or whose marks have yet to be interpreted accurately. Among these are the following boxes which, because of their manufacturing characteristics, I suspect must

have been made by the same maker.

First is the unknown maker who stamped the letters JA on the combs of his manufacture. The ones reported with this characteristic are all unusual, being either forte-piano or fitted into exotic cases.

Then comes the unidentified maker who made fine keywind movements with two sets of numbers stamped on the brass bedplate. One number is always stamped in the left-hand corner of the bedplate, and the second

number is stamped under the comb and is visible between the treble teeth. Not one of these boxes so far advised has survived with a tune card.

This concludes the conclusions from the initial survey.

All members who understand the value of this type of work are urged to contact Arthur Cunliffe at 2 The Lane, Sunderland Point, Morecambe, Lancashire LA3 3HS, requesting the number of questionnaire cards which they need, i.e., one for each box.

To commemorate the 100th edition of 'Register News' we reprint here Registrar Arthur Cunliffe's very first report

from **The Music Box** Volume 7 No 5, Spring 1976.
The 100th edition appears over-page.



Arthur Cunliffe at work on the Musical Box Register.

Register News Number 100

By Arthur Cunliffe



I am delighted to have reached the 100th edition of Register News and even more delighted to still be alive to continue with the task. At the time of writing the number of boxes listed on the Register has reached 11,941 and new entries are coming in slowly. There must be thousands of boxes still out there but the days of large collections have long since gone. Finding an individual with over a hundred boxes are no more, but I can remember some early members of the Society who did have such collections.

If we add up the number of boxes made by the ten most popular makers the results are interesting.

- (a) Nicole = 3,520
- (b) L'Épée = 533
- (c) Lecoultré = 526
- (d) Bremond = 518
- (e) Paillard = 420
- (f) Mermod = 395
- (g) Ami-Rivenc = 343
- (h) Ducommun = 310
- (i) Junod = 160
- (j) Abrahams = 107

In addition there are 2,702 boxes listed as "Unknown"

All these boxes make a grand total of 9,534.

Take that number away from the 11,941 listed boxes and we have 2,407 boxes that came from the smaller manufacturers. Often these are from well-known makers who have not put their names on the products.

These figures also illustrate how important it is to name manufactures if at all possible, but please do not guess! Unknown makers will always be with us and

we will never know who made them for certain.

Unsurprisingly many later period boxes were 12 air examples where manufacturers were trying to give customers as many tunes as possible for their money. It looks as though some of these late period boxes were 3 per turn but strangely not many of this type seem to have survived. Maybe trying to play 3 tunes in the space of a minute or so was cutting down playing time too far for most people. After all less than 20 seconds a tune hardly gives time to complete a chorus let alone a main melody.

The advent of digital photography has opened up a new dimension and has meant many more boxes are having their tune sheets illustrated. Sometimes it is possible to get an idea from the tune title of where the manufactures hoped to sell their boxes.

One box made for the Welsh market plays among others, Rhyfelgreb graye e Harlech followed by Codiad jr haul and

finishing with War song of the Men of Glamorgan. I wonder who in Switzerland had the job of writing that tune sheet!

A lot of boxes for America play:

*Maryland my Maryland,
My old Kentucky home Good Night,
Under the Double Eagle,
Dixie's Land,
Washington Post March,
Old Folks at Home.*

Later in the U.K. it is common to find tunes like:

*Ask a Policeman,
Grandfathers Clock,
Private Tommy Atkins
The Lancashire Lass*

The perfectionist often dismisses these tunes as being trivial, but they were a part of the world of musical boxes and deserve to have a place in any collection.

Occasionally two boxes turn up with the same serial number and it takes some time to decide if they are indeed separate boxes or the same box being registered twice. Often the job is easy when they are

totally different in construction but decidedly more difficult when they are largely the same. Either way causes a headache for the Registrar!

L'Épée serial number 17570 arrived recently with a second number of 2723. The same number turns up on a Bendon box. Fortunately in this case it was relatively easy to separate the two boxes as the L'Épée box plays classical tunes, including some from Mozart, whilst the Bendon plays popular airs. One air from the Bendon box is *Over the garden wall* and I don't think anyone will wish to attribute that to Mozart!

I am now going to ask whenever you see anything to do with the Register if you would mind checking my work as far as you are able. Due to the sheer number of boxes turning up and my ability to get computing wrong on occasions, I regret that errors do creep in from time to time and they are increasingly difficult to spot.

The music of Mozart does not feature on musical boxes as much as I personally would wish. More music by Haydn would also be very acceptable to me along with works by Beethoven. Maybe their music was thought to be not up to date

enough for the times. Whatever are the reasons I think we are all jolly glad that some musical boxes did play their music and that they have survived in sufficient numbers to give us so much joy.

Over the years I never envisaged I would reach 100 editions of the Register News but somehow or other I have! Finding something to write about is always difficult, so if you spot a titbit of news please contact me. I hope to continue writing for the Society for as long as I can before it becomes too difficult for me to continue. I send my grateful thanks to all of you who have helped me over the years. Remember collecting musical boxes and listening to them is the best hobby anyone can have.

The attached picture for this edition of Register News is of a L'Épée box which has a rather fine case. I suspect that it was made as a special order in the first instance and that it would have been rather expensive.

Arthur Cunliffe.

Editor's note: *An overture box recently sold at auction in the UK featuring an arrangement of the overture to Beethoven's only opera, Fidelio, generated keen interest.*



Details of the 'old' 'hard copy' Register



Box by L'Épée in a fine case

The Musical Box that went to War

A piece of 100 year-old history shared by Kevin McElhone

On the 8th August 1918, near to the town of Villers-Brettoneux, France, Whippet A344 known as 'Musical Box' was about to become a legend. In command of the tank was Lieutenant C.B. Arnold. It began an attack with seven other vehicles, which for one reason or another became stuck or suffered mechanical failure. This left 'Musical Box' on her own to support some Australian Infantry and Mk. V tanks attacking the German lines. 'Musical Box' attacked a battery of German field guns, which was somewhat suicidal at best but scattered the Germans with its machine guns allowing the Australian infantry to advance into the German position.

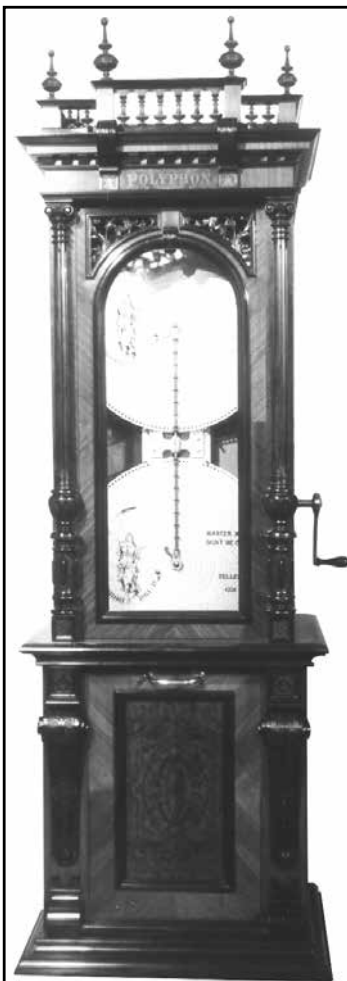
Lt. Arnold pressed on regardless for several hours resulting in the dispersal of a large segment of a German infantry division, a transport column and even an observation balloon. The combat had caused the cans of petrol carried on 'Musical Box' to be perforated, leaking petrol dangerously into the tank, so much so that the crew were having to wear their respirators. Eventually, 'Musical Box' was crippled and set on fire by a direct hit from a German gun and the crew bailed out. Despite the driver being shot he and the machine-gunner were captured. Lt. Arnold survived the war as a POW having inflicted a loss on the Germans far out of proportion to what could be expected.



The tank with the moniker 'Musical Box' and her crew in more relaxed times



Model of the Whippet A344 on which detail can be more easily seen



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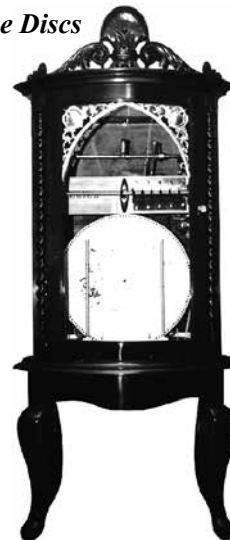
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This That and T'Other No 25

by Arthur Cunliffe

Many people grumble about the complications of modern society but loathe computers as we may, they are now almost an essential part of living. There are just a few valiant people who soldier on taking little or no notice of anything a computer may throw at them.

Details of musical boxes and the tunes they play can hardly be kept nowadays without a computer. I still regard it as magic when it is possible to find a serial number or a specific tune in less than three seconds out of several thousand records. Not only that, the same computer is capable of storing many photographs. At this moment the number of photos I have stored is 9,767 with a search time for finding any one of them being less than 1/3rd of second.

Figure 1 shows a picture of a Langdorff box. It illustrates some details that may not be fully understood by people new to

collecting musical boxes. When I say there is a platform, either wood or brass, to the right hand side, it refers to the part where the operating levers are to be found.

The most important lever is the 'start/stop' of course. On boxes where there are three levers such as the Langdorff illustrated, it is the middle lever. The lever closest to the front of the box is the 'instant stop' whilst the one furthest from the front is the 'change/repeat' lever. Boxes which only have two operating levers do not have the 'instant stop' feature. If anyone is unsure about what the levers do, wait till the end of the tune before taking any action. **The golden rule is never tip or pick up a box when a tune is playing.** Many of you will have seen boxes with bent pins no doubt caused by moving a box whilst playing or worse still leaving it

wound down when in the middle of a tune. Often I have seen someone walk away from a box in an auction leaving it to run down when they have lost interest in it. This can cause pins to be bent sideways. I am sure that boxes that have many pins bent sideways have suffered in the past from being moved whilst playing or left to run down half way through a tune.

Figure 1 also shows the two combs of a forte-piano box. Usually it is the left hand comb that is the forte comb with the smaller comb playing piano teeth. Usually the two combs play independently but I have seen boxes where both combs play together giving a slightly louder sound.

Setting up the two combs is never an easy task, so unless you have the skills to properly set them up leave the job to an expert.

Turning to another matter altogether, it is often difficult

to arrive at an

approximate date of manufacture for a musical box. Later period boxes are easier to spot as often the tune sheet gives us a clue.

A later period box turned up the other day.(Figs 2 & 3.) It was only a small movement with a 3 inch cylinder playing no less than 6 airs. Probably made around the period 1895 to 1906, with a serial number of 13379, it had one tune called *Ben Bolt*.

This song was a cockney song, also known as *The Trilby song*. Another song on the same box was entitled *What the dicky birds say*. The cylinder being 7.5 cm there was only enough space to pin the basics of a melody. However the song must have been known relatively well at this time as Regina did make a 15 ½ disc of the tune.



Fig 1

Another indicator to the age of the box is it had “Made in Switzerland” stencilled on the baseboard.

We all know the Gilbert and Sullivan song from the Mikado *A Wandering Minstrel* Recently it turned up



Fig 2

on another box but was called *A Rambling Minstrel*. It illustrates just how difficult the English language can be at times!

Arthur Cunliffe.



Fig 3

Important Message from the Committee

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain is still in need of volunteers to help run the Society. In particular we need a permanent Editor. Please note that we are able to pay a small honorarium for this to the right person – layout skills using compatible software is essential, membership is not. The Acting Business Secretary would also like to be relieved to concentrate on other areas, while our Meetings Secretary (still working for his crust) has announced that he expects to be busier than previously anticipated and won't be able to dedicate himself to organising the meetings as much as desirable. Can you put in some of the groundwork (with guidance if necessary) to help arrange a weekend meeting in your area? You have been warned: we cannot function as a Society at the current level without more help! Committee membership is not obligatory for most jobs. Please contact a Committee member to volunteer.

The Salomons Welte Residence Organ

a Unique Instrument

For next Spring's Society meeting we shall be staying on the Salomons Estate with access to its Welte Residence organ. In anticipation of that event, we reprint here on the following pages the article about it written by Graham Whitehead, and published in *The Music Box*, Vol 12, No 5 (Spring 1986.)

Please note that one page of photographs has been omitted as the quality did not justify reprinting them.

In next Spring's edition we shall bring you up to date on the organ's fortunes since 1986.

Further details about the next Society national meeting can be found on Page 337 of this magazine and on the inserted flyer.

Hopes for England's finest Welte organ

by Graham Whitehead

The largest and most expensive Welte Philharmonic Pipe Organ ever to be installed in Great Britain, may one day make music again. This is the aim of the Sir David Salomons' Society who have the care of this famous Organ under their wing.

Sir David Lionell Salomons was born in 1851 and became one of the most noted inventors of the late Victorian era. First interested in watch-making and metal-work, he went on to invent electro-magnets, domestic appliances powered by electricity, an electric organ and a mechanical piano.

The family home at Broomhill Nr. Tunbridge Wells was developed by Sir David into a mechanician's paradise with the construction of a work-shop laboratory and what became called the Science Theatre. A peep into the Science Theatre auditorium is a thrill enough, but casting one's eyes around one soon realises the joys of discovering a natural museum. Natural, because little has changed since the turn of the Century and much of the original electrical installation of 1896 is there to be seen.

The building was completed by Sir David without the aid of architects or engineers of any sort. It was also one of the first buildings to be constructed with a cavity wall, in fact the cavity in this building is around three feet wide and it is said one is able to make a circular tour of it.

The fully equipped working Victorian stage, a unique relic well worthy of preserving itself, is surmounted by this awe inspiring Welte player organ standing approx. 28 feet wide by 17 feet high.



Sir David died in 1925 and in 1937 his widow gave the whole estate, 35 acres of it, for the people of Kent. Initially it served as a convalescent home, but in 1946 it passed to the government under the National Health Act of that year and is now occupied by the South East Thames Regional Health Authority as a training school.

Two years ago, Graham Whitehead owner of the Napton Museum of Mechanical Music, together with his colleagues, had the pleasure of inspecting and reporting on the current condition of the instrument as part of the Sir David Salomons' Society's viability study, and this society with 60 members hopes to launch a national campaign to raise funds to restore and present music on this unique instrument. It was during the preparation of this report that I decided to write to the Society, for onward transmission to the authorities, regarding the general security of the organ. I had noticed indications that souvenir hunters had been at work around the Science Theatre and that parts from the console and the electrical installation had disappeared. It would have been disastrous if the music rolls were to go the same way. Happily my letter describing this installation as a "valuable work of art" resulted in much tighter security and for a time access became virtually impossible to anybody. A situation which may have caused the rumour that the instrument had been bricked-up. In fact as the accompanying photographs, taken in December 1985 show, this is not the case.

History

The unique and exciting instrument has a fascinating history. This type of Welte organ were originally made for churches or halls and were produced in Freiburg-im-Breisgau. The organs, Great and Echo, were ordered through Messrs. Steinway of London, the well-known pianoforte manufacturers. The date of the order was 19th June 1913, with delivery anticipated for April 1914. Erection of the instrument was envisaged to require two months work.

Quite why is not known, but there were delays in despatching the order, further delayed by the trial of the instrument in the Freiburg workshops of the Welte Company. In fact, this testing did not take place and the organs were only partially erected by 17th April 1914. The entire instrument was then dismantled and packed into 45 large cases and shipped to London, reaching there by late July. The very last case arrived just one week before Germany declared war. Consequently, Welte's staff were unable to erect the organs at Salomons, although one German, in England at the time, did assist for three months. Final completion was achieved on 20th December 1914, having taken some four and a half months.

The organs might best be described collectively as an orchestrion, for the action mechanisms are more closely allied to Welte Player Piano systems, rather than conventional church organ actions of the period.

In addition, the presence of percussion stops [Drum, bells, Glockenspiel, etc.] is also commensurate with other orchestrions. Indeed, much of the pipework bears remarkable similarities with these types of mechanical musical instruments.

The instrument has never been rebuilt, or altered in any way. Therefore it remains in completely original form, making it a rare and precious example of a Welte player organ. As far as can be ascertained as there are no indications to the contrary, the organ has not been cleaned and overhauled since its construction. There are, however, signs that the organ was maintained in a most scrupulous fashion, whilst Salomons was able to oversee the care of it.

It appears that the 'orchestrion' has neither been maintained or played since about 1941. Reginald Dixon the famous Blackpool Tower organist is believed to have played the instrument around this time, whilst he was a member of the RAF. Your new Editor had made contact with Reg to verify this fact but was unable to obtain confirmation during his illness from which sadly he never recovered. One presumes that those responsible for maintaining and servicing it were called away to join in the war effort. As a result, the instrument has stood unused and slowly decaying for some 44 years.

The present location of the instrument is undoubtedly the original position [i.e., it has not been moved since installation]. The Great, Swell and Pedal divisions are all housed within the main case at the back of the stage in the Science Theatre. The Echo organ is sited at the opposite end of the Theatre, above gallery level, in a 'box room'. The doors to the box room would have been opened to allow the sound of the Echo organ to enter the Theatre area. The entire instrument [including the Echo division] is enclosed in expression boxes. The position of both sections are the most desirable, acoustically. Although the reverberation period is virtually nil, the 'ambience' is perfect, both for music and the spoken word.

Access for maintenance to the main organ is well planned. There are three removable panels in the case front and doors to the rear of the instrument at two levels and from both sides. Most action work can be seen from the lower rear level, whilst tuning is from the upper level only [by climbing in amongst the pipework]. The Echo organ also has removable panels around almost the entire perimeter of the case. Good tuning access is available at the back and sides of the organ and the action readily serviceable from underneath the soundboard.

There are some 2000 pipes in the instrument, ranging from over sixteen feet in length to about one half inch, or less. By far the greatest proportion of the pipework is formed from an alloy of approximately 95% tin and 5% antimony, a hardening agent. Therefore, the pipework alone is extremely valuable and not just in a financial sense.

By virtue of the fact that the entire instrument is enclosed in expression chambers, the moveable louvres of which have been mainly kept firmly closed, there is only a modest amount of dust and dirt in evidence. The internal actions, which are, to all intents, sealed, have likewise remained relatively clean, though not necessarily free of corrosion. In fact here is a wealth of evidence to suggest that close-tolerance working movements have been impaired by the length of disuse.

Winding

The blowing equipment of this instrument is of especial interest and concern. It is possibly not original; alternatives of the period would have been gas engines or hydraulic pumps. The main organ blower is situated in a quasi-crypt space beneath the stage. The room is extremely damp and, consequently, the impeller casings are red with rust. Fortunately, this does not appear to have attacked the metal too deeply. The plant is a two-part unit, manufactured by Watkins & Watson Limited and known as a 'Discus' blower. This company is, incidentally, still in the organ blowing business. The blower motor is an American Century machine and the manufacturers plate bears the following details: 5 HP, 110/220 V, 52 - 26 A, 1750 RPM, 60 Hz. In effect, this means that the motor, of the repulsion start type, is rated at five horsepower, with an option of two voltages, either series or parallel, running at a speed of 1750 revolutions per minute. The 52 - 26 amp rating is the

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maximum current demand, dependant upon the use of the series/parallel option. The essential difference to most other blower motors of the modern era is the use of 60 Hz alternating current. Mains alternating current today is of 50 Hz.

The power output shaft is directly coupled to two independent impeller units. The first [nearest the motor] provides the vacuum for the organ action, whilst the second stage draws air from the organ chamber, through a protective grille, into the blower and pressurises it for pipe-wind and minor pressure-operated actions. This information can be determined from the direction of the impellers [indicated on the casing] and the side of inlet/outlet trunking. The rollerblind controls [two] are in good order. One was dismantled during the inspection visit and was found to be in excellent condition, not to say, a masterpiece of organ building engineering. There are two double-rise wind reservoirs, each measuring 7 ft x 4 ft. Whilst the original leatherwork looks clean and undamaged, it is almost certain that this leather will split as soon as the organ is put 'on wind'. The same applies to the vacuum reservoir [5 ft x 2 ft]. The main reservoir for the Echo organ [double-rise, 3 ft 8 ins. x 6 ft] is already split and would not take the strain of being winded.

There are, surprisingly, no concussions fitted to the wind supply in any part. However, with the pallet per note action there is very little need for these. There are two tremulants, to Swell and Echo. Each is of the oscillating pallet type and are located behind glass faceboards to allow visual inspection during operation. [Tremulants are often temperamental and it is of great assistance if one can view the unit whilst in motion].

Building frame

The building frame is of extremely solid construction. The soundboards are supported on steel RSJ's, as they especially require firm support, free of movement due to atmospheric conditions to which timber frames are liable. There are no passage boards [tuner's walkways] provided within the instrument. Tuning would therefore be a somewhat hazardous affair, particularly in the main organ, where one must stand amongst the 'forest' of pipework as best one can. Suspended from the ceiling of the main organ enclosure are two rails, over which a crude ladder can be moved, with the intention of providing support **above** [!] the pipework. There are few tuners who would trust such an invention!

Pneumatic actions & leatherwork

The action employed throughout the instrument is of the pneumatic type, and is operated on two differing principles, vacuum and pressure [charge]. Despite theories to the contrary, an inch water gauge of vacuum exerts the same force as an inch water gauge pressure! All the pneumatic actions have at least two stages, usually known as primary and main, although there can be anything up to four stages in parts.

Electric actions

The Echo organ, being some 200 ft or more distant from the Great organ is operated by electric action, albeit an early form. At the console, the Echo organ action is pneumatic, being converted further along to electric, via a relay – complete with silver wire contacts.

Thence, electric cables [cotton covered] carried the 16 volt DC charge to the Echo organ, through a main cable which runs through the roof of the Science Theatre.

This cable runs into a set of 61 'horseshoe' magnets,

whose moving armatures open or shut off a small wind supply to the primary action.

The Echo organ drawstop contacts are of the mercury bath type – the mercury has long since evaporated.

Soundboards

The soundboards, or windchests, on which the pipes stand [and from which they receive their wind-supply], are of a rare type.

There is a small hinged pallet for each pipe of the instrument, and groups of pallets are interconnected by wires, so as to open collectively. These action wires are operated by the main pneumatic motors – the wires being sprung towards the off position.

This form of action was little used in this country but was more common in the USA during the late 19th Century.

The general disposition of the organ presents the Swell and Great soundboards side by side, pipework laid out chromatically, with largest pipes at each side of the instrument, running down to small trebles at the centre.

Swell box

The entire instrument is enclosed in a single expression chamber, including the Echo division which also has a Swell box.

There are eighty vertical shutters in the main organ Swell front and a further ten in the Echo box.

The main front louvres are all connected to open progressively and are operated by mechanical means from the console. The action is exceedingly heavy and it takes fairly strong ankle muscles to make any impression. There is a pneumatic Swell engine to operate the shutters from the roll-playing mechanism.

The Echo shutters are controlled electro-pneumatically from the console, where the expression pedal has a graduated contact plate, controlling individual shutters.

Access for tuning is through removable panels at the rear of the instrument.

Console

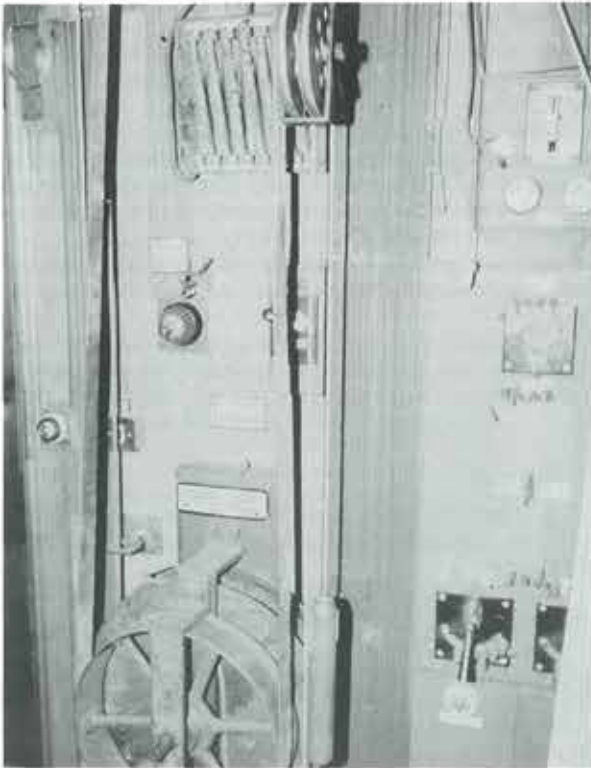
The organ console is built in and does not conform to Royal College of Organists standard console dimensions. Even so, it is very comfortable to sit at, and one feels in total command, or would do, if the organ were in a playable condition! The overall condition of the console is rather poor; it seems to have attracted a large number of visitors who have been keen to take mementos of the occasion. Most of the original switchgear [blower starter, generator starters, console lights etc.] has survived, as have the assorted guages [amperes, volts, etc., for action current and blower]. The keys are weighted at the rear to facilitate prompt return of the keys to the off position. The pedalboard is little worn.

The key action is cleverly designed to produce a top-resistance, normally a feature of instruments with mechanical action. In this case, the keys are connected to small valves or pallets in a touch box [a box, filled with pressure wind, which conveys wind from the key pallet to the first stage of the pneumatic action].

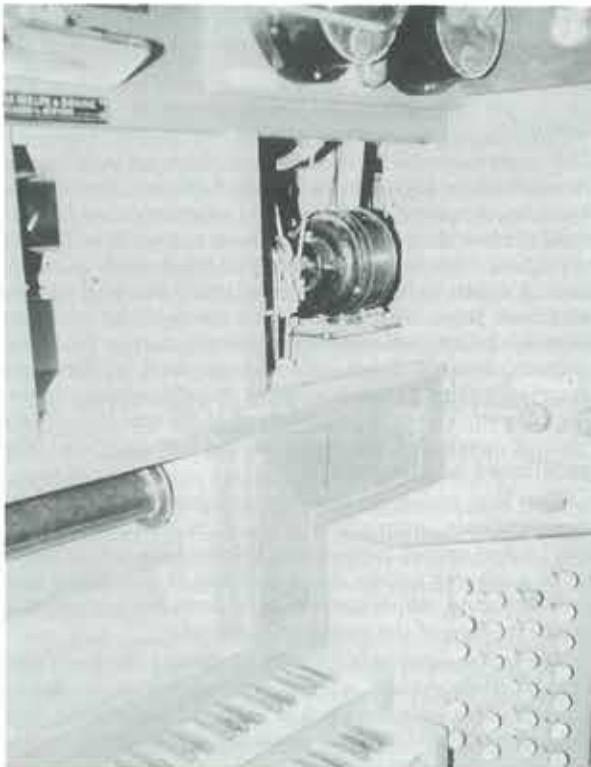
The top-resistance is created by making the key/pallet linkage slightly slack, so that when a key is depressed about 1/8 of an inch, the slack is felt and taken up and then the key pallet pulled open against a small spring.

The combination piston action is somewhat crude, but probably effective enough. Pressing a piston creates a vacuum exhaust, transmitted to the piston relays.

The main organ action is similar to the Welte player piano's system, which is a pressure/vacuum system. A shortcoming of this system would be that the pipework farthest away from the keyboard would suffer a time-lag, whilst closer pipework would speak earlier.



A view of some of the stage control equipment.



Right hand side of console showing drive motor to upper spool frame.

The player

Immediately above the console are the two spool boxes for the orchestrion rolls. Their associated drive motors are concealed behind the console panelling, which is easily removable for servicing purposes.

Every stop can be controlled by the paper roll. The roll will also set position ff, mf, p, pp.

Both spool frames play Welte Philharmonic organ rolls and three types of roll are playable. There are 15¼" spools on both frames, one with 150 holes at 4 ports per cm. The other with 120 holes at approximately 8 port per inch.

With this type of roll all "Register" commands are reversible. Each hole turns it's rank "on" the first time it is used and "off" the following time.

The bass drum, cymbal, snare drum, triangle and castanettes are only playable from the 120 hole rolls. However their use could also be accomplished by interchanging one of the spool frame tracker bars for one which uses Welte Orchestrion rolls No. 10. These are 12¼" wide and have 100 holes at 8 ports per inch, and a "universal" type scale. Quite how the difference in roll width is overcome is not apparent.

Many of the concert orchestrions made by Welte use these rolls, i.e. numbers 5 - 10, as did the Brigovnia, Wotan, philharmonic organ I and II. Welte manufactured special rolls using only those holes which would be appropriate to the registers and voicing of each model and were usually identified by the numbers. The rolls for this spool frame are labelled "Orchestrion style 10." Smaller orchestrions such as the Brigovnia will also play these rolls but the musical results would not be as satisfactory.



The console shown spool frames and electrical apparatus.



Close-ups of spool frames.



Switchgear to right of console.

Repertoire

The success and popularity of the Welte Mignon reproducing piano roll system inspired the company to introduce the same principle, i.e. an exact reproduction of the performers work, into the organ and thus the idea of the Welte Philharmonic organ developed. In the same way that the Welte Mignon reproduces the playing of pianists, so the Welte Philharmonic system reproduces the playing of organists and with amazing accuracy.

A great number of Artists rolls by different masters were produced by Welte, recorded by premier organists of many countries. By moving a lever on the spool frame the owner had the choice of a "reproducing" performance or could "influence" the performance by selecting stop combinations according to his own musical taste.

Casework

The main case is a fairly elaborate design, with castellated corning capping the compelling appearance of the tin front pipes [the front pipes are all dummies - non speaking].



The backcloths of the stage reflect the case design!

Specification

Manual compass CC to c, 61 notes.
Pedal compass CCC to f, 30 notes.

Echo Organ

Aeoline

8 ft

Vienna Flute	8 ft
Unda Maris	8 ft
Vox Angelica	8 ft
Vox Humana	8 ft
Tremulant	-

Great Organ

Bourdon	16 ft
Open Diapason	8 ft
Flute Traverse	8 ft
Violin Diapason	8 ft
Gamba	8 ft
Viol d'orchestre	8 ft
Voix Celeste	8 ft
Principal	4 ft
Flute Harmonic	4 ft
Harp Eoline	4 ft
Flute	4 ft
Mixture	III fach [ranks]
Bassoon	8 ft
Tremulant	-

Swell Organ

Open Diapason	8 ft
Bourdon	8 ft
Violin	8 ft
Flute Dolce	8 ft
Eoline	8 ft
Principal	4 ft
Flute	4 ft
Clarionet	16 ft
Horn Solo	8 ft
Oboe	8 ft
Trompette	8 ft
Clarion	4 ft
Tremulant	-

Pedal Organ

Bourdon	16 ft
Violin Bass	16 ft
Posaune	16 ft
Cello	8 ft

Couplers

Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal
Swell to Great
Swell to Great sub octave
Swell to Great super octave
Swell sub octave
Great super octave
Super octave Echo
Sub octave Echo

Accessories

Five pistons to Great [labelled thus]	p mf f t O
Five pistons to Echo [labelled thus]	p mf f t O
Bass Drum	
Cymbal	
Side drum	
Snare drum	
Triangle	
Castanettes	
Church bells	
Glockenspiel	
Tracker block for master rolls	
Tracker block for orchestration No. 10 rolls	
Interchangeable piston setters	
Automatic reroll to both spool boxes	

Notes on specification

There are differences in the specification which Steinway's sent to Salomons; spellings are confused and some stops do not appear to be installed [kettledrum].

The Mixture II is called Rain effect in the original specification - being "adjusted to suit the new organ." This would infer that Salomons was already in possession of a small orchestration, prior to receiving the new instrument.

The original cost of the instrument is quoted as being £4,050. In order that the equivalent cost today may be calculated, I approached MBSGB member Peter Hassel, a branch manager of Barclays Bank, who kindly enquired with the Economics Unit of Barclays. I was informed that the correct add-on figure to account for inflation since 1914 would be x 18.3, which calculates to £73,500. A small price for such a magnificent instrument.

Pipework

The wind pressure is noted at the console to be 6½" water gauge [vacuum pressure for the action being 15" w.g.].

Voicing techniques are fairly usual to German practice of the period. There is a large proportion of harmonic pipework [that is, overblown to speak an octave higher].

The materials of the pipework vary considerably: lead, tin, plain metal, spotted metal, zinc, pine and even cardboard for the Bassoon resonators. Reed wedges are mostly secure and most tuning springs are of non-corrosive phosphor-bronze - a sign of quality workmanship.

Tuning of the pipework is also by the conventional German method of slotted pipes, with rolling flaps of metal. There are no tuning slides.

Physically, the pipework is in remarkably good order.

Present tonality

Without being in working condition tonality cannot be judged, however, there is a rare recording of the German composer, Max Reger, playing his own composition on a Welte organ, erected in the Freiburg workshops. The recordings were made using the roll-playing mechanism and artificial reverberation was superimposed, because of the dead acoustics of their workshop. The sound of the organ is extra-ordinary - very smooth and lush. At all times the tone is refined and pleasing, and the action apparently very responsive.

In all probability, there are many items of interest which have been omitted from this report - it is an enormous task to survey an instrument of such unique complexity. It is our hope that this report will serve to draw attention to this instrument, of which it is most certainly deserving and the utter uniqueness of this instrument alone is a strong argument for its retention and restoration.

May we therefore wish John Wheeler, Chairman of the Sir David Salomons' Society, and his members, every success with their plans, and that consent will be shortly be granted by the Regional Health Authority that will allow them to go ahead with a national appeal to fund restoration on this magnificent instrument. Anyone wishing to offer assistance or who is further interested should contact: John Wheeler, MBE Chairman, Sir David Salomons' Society, c/o Sir David Salomons' House, Broomfield, Tunbridge Wells.

The Editor would like to thank those who gave help in the preparation of this article. ■

*Photography: Graham Whitehead.
Photoprints: Frank Holland.*

Book Reviews

New MBSGB Publications

Supplement to *The Organette Book*

by Kevin A. McElhone; Reviewed by Charles Moore

In the original *The Organette Book*, published in 2002 by the Musical Box Society of Great Britain Kevin McElhone endeavoured, with the help of many contributors, to compile the essential information available about the organette, which he defines as “an automatically operated reed organ, most frequently for indoor use, which is small and portable, rarely has a keyboard for playing manually and with the music program transported through the machine by a direct mechanical method”. The main section of the original book is an alphabetical listing of all known organettes by name and to a new enthusiast such as me this was a revelation. The variety of methods and mechanisms that were developed in various countries for producing music with a small hand cranked instrument was surprising to say the least.

It is noted in the introduction to *The Organette Book* that “other newly discovered organettes came to light, too late to be included”, and it was anticipated that the story of the organette was not fully told. At the time the Author requested that any new information be forwarded to him “so that details may be included in later works.”

Fast forward 16 years and the first of these “later works” is the newly published *Supplement to The Organette Book* compiled and edited by Kevin A. McElhone. The book is produced in an 8.5 by 12 inch format (A4 size). It is 100 pages with full colour photos and scans on literally every page, many of those pages being almost entirely covered in photos. Opened randomly at any page, it is a feast for the eyes.

At the beginning of the book there is a section with vintage photos containing organettes and scans of original trade cards and other ephemera. The later sections of the book include novelty items, updates and additions to the tuning scales found in the original, lists of museums, patents and an index of named instruments. The main section of the Supplement is once again the alphabetical listing of the organettes by name, in this case not duplicating every named instrument found in the original but only those for which new information or photos are

included. It was here that I started preparing for this review by synchronizing the Supplement and the original book at the listings beginning with ‘A’, intending to go through and make notes.

I didn’t even make it through the A’s before realising that if I continued in this order the review would be very late. So noting just a few discoveries as I turned through the book: a red Intona that plays a metal donut type disk in a hexagonal case, a Tanzbar automatic accordion in a hexagonal case, a previously unknown monster Orchestrionette model playing a 56 note presspahn loop and photos of many actual instruments previously only shown in period advertisements.

Not surprisingly in compilation books of this sort you might expect that some information presented would be subject to correction or clarification at a later date. Here the Supplement provides not only additional information but corrects some of the information found in the original book. For the Supplement book I can offer a couple of bits of additional information. On page 25 it is speculated that the Auto-Organ is a 14 note instrument but in fact it plays 22 note Autophone strips. And on page 71, the Pneumatic Organ by J. R. Holcomb & Co. looks very much like a 14 note instrument in size and case style but it is actually a very compact pneumatic instrument, playing 20 Celestina rolls. This information has been passed along with the Author’s appreciation and he asks that any corrections or information on any instruments not documented in the two books be passed along to him.

As the author of this review I should disclose that I am credited in the book as a contributor. However I certainly had no part in the compilation or production of the book. As a collector and organette enthusiast I can highly recommend the book as a must have reference along with the original *The Organette Book*. And if you are someone interested in mechanical music more generally I think you will find it fascinating that there were so many different models and variations of these ingenious little instruments which were mass-produced for a wide audience.



NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM MBSGB

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain announces the publication of two new books
Published in September 2018

Supplement to The Disc Musical Box

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone
ISBN 978-0-9557869-6-9



100pp Hard Back ISO A4 format [8.27" × 11.70"]; Profusely illustrated in colour throughout with
Additional Illustrations of Models, 89 Additional Lid Pictures;
Additions to Lists of Models, Patents, Tune Lists & Serial Numbers;
Combined Index of Images in the original book and its Supplement.

Originally published in 2012 and still available, see below for details,
The Disc Musical Box is a compendium of information about Disc Musical Boxes, their
Makers and their Music; profusely illustrated throughout with Illustrations of each Disk
Musical Box Model, and with Catalogue Scans, Lists of Models, Patents & Tune Lists.

Supplement to The Organette Book

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone
ISBN 978-0-9557869-5-2

100pp Hard Back ISO A4 format [8.27" × 11.70"]; Profusely illustrated in colour throughout;
Additional Illustrations of Models; Additions to Lists of Patents, Tune Lists & Tuning Scales;
A New Section on Trade Cards; Combined Index of Images in the original book and its
Supplement.

The Organette Book is a compendium of information about Organettes, their Makers
and their Music. Originally published in 2002 but now out of print although 2nd Hand
copies are occasionally available in on-line auctions.



Other MBSGB PUBLICATIONS

Limited stocks remain available of the following MBSGB publications:

The Disc Musical Box

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone

A compendium of information about the Disc Musical Boxes, their Makers and their Music.
Profusely illustrated in colour throughout; complete with a supporting DVD of Catalogue
Scans, Lists of Models Patents & Tune Lists & Additional Illustrations

Published in February 2012

Book - ISBN 978-0-9557869-4-5

DVD - ISBN 978-0-9557869-7-6

Musical Box TUNE SHEETS

and **Supplements 1 to 4**

by the late Anthony Bulleid and by his successor Tim Reed

including the accompanying

SEARCH ENGINE Version 3

Devised and compiled by the late Luuk Goldhoorn

Over 500 Cylinder Musical Box Tune Sheets Illustrated, Identified and Described
Invaluable aids to identifying the maker of a cylinder musical box.

Published in October 2000 ISBN 978-0-9505657-7-4

The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music

by P Bellamy, A D Cunliffe and R Ison

A concise history of the Nicole family's involvement in and influence on the
development of the Cylinder Musical Box industry during the 19th century.

Published in August 2006 ISBN 978-0-9505657-3-6

For all MBSGB Publications, please refer to the Musical Box Society of Great Britain website for further details
including latest availability, discounted prices and information on how to order. - www.mbsgb.org.uk



Supplement to The Disc Musical Box Book

by Kevin A. McElhone

Reviewed by Alan K Clark

This volume is all solidly packed with the interesting detailed technical description that we know and expect from this author. Not even a page is wasted with an introduction, as we go straight to the contents, and then the description of the instruments. The photography is generally very good and there are illustrations of all sorts of musical boxes, including some non-disc and novelty models. Kevin has found additional information on a staggering 1411 machines (either new models, or variations to existing known models) since his first book, which contained 1543.

The new contents list clearly shows which chapters in the original book have had additions made to them, and their respective page numbers. Chapter 2 contains a bewildering collection of mainly colour photos of a very wide range of musical boxes. Chapter 3 contains a table showing the numbers of new models added to our knowledge, listed under maker, with the maker who made the largest number of models being Symphonion at a new record high of 349 models, of which 81 are apparently detailed in this new volume. The large multi-page tables list all the newly found models and variants, listed under maker, model, and disc size etc. Chapter 4 lists the serial

numbers of the newly found machines referenced to maker, disc size and model. Chapter 6 shows discs of previously unknown make, many of which still remain unknown.

We then have chapters on case and lid pictures, patents etc. The Index of Illustrations now helpfully lists all the illustrations for both the original and the supplement. However, as with the original book, the illustrations are only listed under the maker, and not the model number or name, thus searching for a particular Polyphon model can take time, plus there is no guarantee that it is actually illustrated. Also, there is no list of simple corrections to details in the first book, even though we now know that, (for example), some Imperator disc sizes were almost certainly inaccurately measured.

Notwithstanding those small criticisms, it a very valuable addition to our knowledge of this enormous field of instruments, and Kevin is to be congratulated on his continuing passion to collect this data for our use. I highly recommend this supplement to all musical box collectors.

Alan K Clark

DONALD ALAN ROBINSON 1934 – 2018

We were sorry to learn earlier this year of the death of Don Robinson, a long-standing and well-respected member of the MBSGB, who very actively promoted mechanical music and worked hard for its conservation, with a particular interest in organs. Until a few years ago he and Dorothy regularly joined MBSGB visits abroad, as well as attending Society meetings, particularly those close to home, on occasions contributing much to their organisation. He will be a much missed figure, and we send our condolences to close friends and family alike.

We are pleased to be able to publish here an edited version of a tribute to him by Raymond A Elliott, originally written for The Fair Organ Preservation Society, of which Don was for a long time a leading light:

Don Robinson was born and brought up in Heighington, near Lincoln, where his father was the village postmaster. As a teenager he had a love of the fairgrounds, particularly the steam traction engines owned by travelling showmen, and the organs which provided the music.

In 1960 his father bought the 89 Key VB Gavioli organ, built in

Paris circa 1893, from Rowland Hill, which had started life fronting Charles Farrell's "Silver Coliseum" bioscope show. The organ received a thorough overhaul by Chiappa Limited in Clerkenwell in 1974, and attended rallies and events with the Burrell for the rest of Don's life.

After his marriage to Dorothy, Market Rasen became their home, and his "Shed" became the repository for his growing collection. He and Dorothy enjoyed travel, visiting heritage railways and organ events in the UK and in Europe.

Don was an early member of The Fair Organ Preservation Society, serving on the Committee for many years, and was President from 2000 to 2003. From 2003 he served as a Vice President, his good sense bringing many discussions to an acceptable conclusion.

Don & Dorothy were great supporters of the Market Rasen community, raising money for local worthy causes, and due to their efforts a fine peal of bells now ring in St. Thomas' church, and the tower windows have been restored. Every Christmas the Burrell and Gavioli organ attended the Christmas event in the market place to raise funds for a local children's charity.

Raymond A. Elliott.



MBSGB SPRING MEETING

SPRING IN THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND! Thursday 2 May to Saturday 4 May 2019 at Salomons Estate

Broomhill Rd., Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0TG



Salomons Estate is a mixture of contrasts between a Stately Home and College which is now in the hands of an insurance company and largely used as a wedding venue / hotel.

It does however house the **MAGNIFICENT ORGAN and ORCHESTRION** which you will surely know about! We will be given the keys to the organ, roll cabinets and the blower room to play at our leisure on Thursday afternoon (2/5/19) and later in the evening when we have dinner in the **Victorian Theatre**.

PROGRAMME for the meeting as follows:-

Thursday 2 May 2019

Arrival at the hotel.

The door labelled Science Theatre is actually the door to Salomons Organ! We will meet the custodian for the keys at 3.00pm and hope to start playing from 3.30 to 5.30 (approx.).

Dinner at 7.00 for 7.30 in the Victorian Theatre with organ accompaniment!



Friday 3 May

Leisurely breakfast then we go by car to the home of **Jack Henley** who will be our host for the day.

Arrive around 10.30 for coffee to view the wonderful car collection and play the superb instruments at the motor house and in the house by the kind and excellent agreement of Jack who will be celebrating his 80th birthday!



Dinner at Salomons in the Morning Room, 7.00 for 7.30pm.

Saturday 4 May

We go by car after a leisurely breakfast to the works of **Nick Seymour** who has a superb Mortier dance organ amongst other instruments.

Arrive 10.00 for coffee whilst being entertained, then followed by a light lunch at 12.00 and departure.





MBSGB Tour to Paris

Friday, 26th July 2019

We leave home early morning (pickups to be arranged) and take a mid-morning shuttle from Folkestone. On arriving in France, we will travel to Lille where we will take a late lunch while listening to the organs at the **Café des Orgues** in Herzeele. Afterwards we travel on to the hotel Holiday Inn Porte de Clichy where we will spend the next three nights. The evening will be at leisure.



Saturday, 27th July 2019

Visit to the **Phono Museum**

<http://www.phonomuseum.fr/>



Saturday afternoon is sightseeing in Paris where we will search out as many music box players and carousels as we can find. We will visit sites around the Tuileries, Opera, the Louvre, the Notre Dame and many more with photo stops and of course a lunch break. Later, after some free time at Montmartre we will take the funicular to the Sacre Coeur before enjoying dinner on the Place du Tertre, in the artist quarter of Paris.

Our Saturday morning visit is to the **Phono Museum** Paris, a museum of sound, highlighting 140 years of recorded sound. The entire evolution of the technology of sound recording is demonstrated, from the first cylinder and then disk phonographs, moving on to reel-to-reel and cassette tape recorders, and leading to CDs and today's MP3 files. Nearly 300 machines are on exhibit, all in working order.



Dinner will be taken at a local café.

Sunday 28th July 2019

This morning a visit to the **Musée des Art Forains**, <http://arts-forains.com/> where you will see the most fantastic display of fairground rides throughout the ages set in the most beautiful surroundings with a guided tour that will take your breath away.



Later more sightseeing but this time around the Eiffel Tower, and the western side of the city.

In the evening we take an early dinner on a Bateau Parisien with a guided tour with full views along the river Seine.

"The merry-go-rounds and booths preserved by the Pavillons de Bercy are the evidence of a vast heritage. Their display brings back an atmosphere similar to 19th century funfairs."

Monday 29th July 2019

We travel to Lille and visit the **private collection** of M Andre Bisonet, who has about 60 pieces to show you before we begin the return trip to Calais and the late afternoon shuttle.

Price per person: £475 in a twin and £550 in a single. Price includes all travel by executive coach, return shuttle, three nights B&B at the Holiday Inn Clichy, lunch at the Café des Orgues, dinner at Montmartre, dinner on the Bateau Parisien. Entrance to the Phono Museum, the Musée des Arts Forains and services of a tour escort throughout.

All subject to availability and confirmation at time of booking, but the provisional arrangements for these dates and visits are currently on hold.

A deposit will be required of £50 per person on receipt of the booking form with full payment due on May 1st 2019. *Melody Tours* 1 Chandlers Court, Instow, North Devon. EX39 4RN. Tel: 01271 860013

LETTERS

Dear Sir

Unfortunately mistakes were made in my article on Seraphone serial numbers, p 270 of Vol 28.

The sub note, '1*', should refer to the final machine listed, the one with no number, as it is the one I saw in the Piano Museum. Machine number 90518, marked with '1*', was actually stolen from St Albans Museum in 1979. Lastly, number 26259 was omitted from the list, it was a N.H.O.H.

A museum which has been open since at least 2016 is 'The Mad Museum', a place of kinetic art and automata. Address: 4 – 5 Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6PT. For MAD, read Mechanical Art & Design. I have not visited but it looks like it could be of interest.

Yours faithfully

Roger Booty.

12th September, 2018

Dear Editor,

While reading through a back issue of 'The Music Box' Spring 1984 (Volume 11, no 5) Pages 191 -193 contains a most interesting interview with the late Graham Webb, conducted by the late H.A.V Bullied.

Of interest Mr Webb states, that prior to writing his books, he supplied a pamphlet with each musical box he sold. Purely for my own academic interest, does any member have a copy of this pamphlet? If so, I would be very interested to hear from you.

Mark Singleton

07905 554830

Corrected list:			
		82512	Her
		90212	Her. P.B.
1958	N.H.O.H.	90354	Her
2218		90419	Her. P.B.
3005		90497	Her
3378	N.H.O.H.	90518	
3433 (3438?)		101612	His
3448		114812	
3728	N.H.O.H.	190359	
4062	N.H.O.H.	803710	Her. P.B.
4299	Her	1902411	P.B.
4345		1907612	Her. P.B.
4395	N.H.O.H.	Blank 1*	N.H.O.H.
5113	Her		
5508	Her	Abbreviations and notes:	
6151	Her	Her - 'By Her Majesty's Royal Letters Patent'	
7140		His - 'By His Majesty's Royal Letters Patent'	
7706	Her	N.H.O.H. - No 'His' or 'Her' dedication	
7721		P.B. - Peter Black dealer label	
8466	Her. P.B.	1* - seen at Piano Museum/Musical Museum when it was still in its earlier Brentford location.	
13656	His. P.B.		
15648	His. P.B.		
15948	His. P.B.		
16378			
1744(?)	His		
25116	His		
25989			
26259	N.H.O.H.		
60206	His		
61056	Her. P.B.		
70219			
80098	Her. P.B.	If there is nothing noted after the serial number this means the Directions label was missing or that the details were not noted by the person who supplied the information.	
80458	Her. P.B.		
80463	Her. P.B.		
80503			
81056	Her. P.B.		
81481	Her. P.B.		
81572	P.B.		

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2018 / 2019

1st December 2018	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders Christmas Meeting. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. 11am start. Please contact John Philips 01584781118
6 April 2019	MBSGB London and Home Counties Group. Meeting at St Albans Organ Theatre. 320 Camp Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 5PE www.stalbansorgantheatre.org.uk/ . The museum is being opened exclusively for us. Please come along and support one of the few remaining collections which has a varied selection of instruments. We will start with a drink on arrival from 10.30 and will have members talks and demonstrations of instruments until 12.45. Lunch 12.45 - 13.45 will be included in the price of £12 a head. The Museum instruments will be demonstrated to us in the afternoon until about 15.45. We need to let the museum have numbers for catering by 6th March so if you intend coming please contact kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com or telephone 01536 726759.
2 - 4 May 2019	MBSGB Spring Meeting. We will be staying at Salomons, Tunbridge Wells. Home of the world famous Welte residence organ and Style 10 Orchestrion. Visits will include the collections of Jack Henley and Nick Seymour. Please note that this is a Thursday to Saturday meeting.
1 June 2019	MBSGB AGM & Society Auction, Roade, Northants.
6 - 9 June 2019	Trip to Moscow. By special permission MBSGB members are invited to the private collection of David Iakobachvili. See Vol 28 No 7 /contact David O'Connor, davideoconnor@aol.com, 07860 558141 for more information and latest availability.
26 - 29 July 2019	MBSGB Trip to Paris. In conjunction with Melody Tours, we will visit the Café des Orgues, Phono Museum, Musée des Art Forains and an extensive private collection. The trip will also include time for sightseeing and taking a dinner 'en Bateau Parisien.'

Turkey Cops It During MBSGB Visit To Ambridge!

(warning – spoiler alert!)

Society Autumn Meeting, 28th – 30th September, Birmingham

Unfortunately, before being able to enjoy this meeting most members attending it had to endure an epic journey to get to the venue, due to a series of unrelated serious traffic incidents and roadworks. However, the effort was finally well-rewarded by the combination of delightful hotel, some unusual activities and a relaxed, fun atmosphere.

Despite its name, the Plough & Harrow – a new addition to the ‘Best Western’ stable – bears no resemblance to a pub; the original building, a stately Edwardian-era mansion, in traditional red-brick local style, had a welcoming yet elegant décor, with many tasteful ‘period’ features – not to mention a ‘blue plaque’ showing that *Lord of the Rings* author J R R Tolkien had visited in 1916.

Saturday morning those of us who had struggled through trying road



Havoc in Ambridge! (Photo: Keith Reedman)

conditions the day before welcomed the chance to travel by coach the short but bewildering distance to ‘The Mailbox’, a relatively new ‘centre’ in the city, located on the site of the old Post Office (hence its name.) Here within a rather glitzy shopping precinct is the new home of the BBC Birmingham studios following its departure from Pebble Mill. After a security search we were split into two groups for a guided tour of the premises. Those in the second group

awaiting their departure time had the opportunity to investigate the various attractions (or distractions) in the lobby. Amongst these were some of the costumes from the popular ‘Strictly’ dance series, an inter-active feedback station where you could register on video some of your views on BBC productions, and a number of computer-stations where you could enjoy (or suffer) a ‘virtual experience.’ However, by far the most entertaining feature in this area, was the ‘try your hand as a weather presenter,’ where Mike Biden hammed it up, wildly waving a hand at clouds ‘up there’ or out of shot ‘down there.’ From time to time his entire arm would be abruptly amputated by a superimposed graphic of the eastern region of the country.

Embarking on our tour, we passed a Dalek at the top of a flight of stairs (presumably it had taken the lift as we all know Daleks can’t climb steps) and other familiar BBC ‘props’ before passing through the news room to one of the studios. Here we were told about the cameras (costing



Released from duties as MBSGB President, Alison Biden considers a career in broadcasting

hundreds of thousands of pounds each), and the lighting and 'auto-script' systems, as well as having explained the production process of a 'magazine'-style programme. From there we were taken to a large control room, before passing to a series of small radio studios, where various operations were described, interspersed with fascinating and amusing anecdotes. Our tour almost over we 'visited' Ambridge, the studios where the long-running popular radio soap opera of 'country folk', *The Archers*, is produced. (This studio recently featured in Ian Hislop's 'The Olden Days' series on BBC tv.) Here to our surprise we found a fully equipped kitchen, with Aga, gas cooker, oven, sink, kettle and toaster. We learned that *Archers* fans are sharp-eared and highly critical; over the years the BBC had been taken to task because such things as cold water poured into a cup does not sound the same as hot water, and those in the know can tell the difference between a



Saturday night entertainment: Barry Smith



Joan Rippengal secures her winning place in the quiz, beating off fierce competition from Roger Brooks and John Farmer

cow in distress and a contented one! Three favourite props were the oven door (doubling as a noisy washing machine), the squeaky ironing board (gate) and a bank of door bells. Next door we were led into the 'dead room', completely lined with foam to kill any echo. This is where outdoor scenes are recorded (with outdoor sounds subsequently dubbed in afterwards), and our guide demonstrated how 'Nigel' had fallen off the roof killing himself without the actor sustaining so much as a scratch. The first group had the opportunity to put their new-found knowledge to use enacting a pre-scripted sample of an *Archers* scene, in which some unfortunate turkey met its end and may have enhanced the flavour of some cider (don't ask!) Some *very* crunchy 'frosty ground' was much in evidence. Our tour concluded with a quiz, with Joan Rippengal just pipping the other two competitors, John Farmer and Roger Brooks, in hot competition.

After a sandwich lunch at the hotel we once again set off, this time to the famous Jewellery Quarter where we had a guided tour of the Museum. Split into three groups this time, one's experience and knowledge gleaned varied according to your guide – one group came to the conclusion that their guide had a bit of an attitude problem, heavy on feminist comments and lighter



What channel are you on? Where's our synchronisation?'



New member Richard Gregory experiences the ritual Konzertina initiation

on some of the more general details. The museum is housed in the former Smith & Pepper jewellery factory. Some of the statistics were staggering: it was possible to make a gold bar worth £90,000 from all the tiny particles of gold reclaimed over a period of two years. (A different guide used the illustration that after two months the owners could afford a new car.) Health and safety was unheard of, and despite the storing of sugar-like cyanide crystals in the kitchen next to where the tea was made (!) and exposure to all sorts of noxious fumes and substances and dangerous processes, one female worker didn't retire till in her eighties and went on to live to an even riper old age. After the tour there was time for those with deep pockets to browse some of the shops in the area.

Saturday evening we were entertained by Barry Smith, Chairman of the Midlands Accordion Society, who played a selection of old-time favourites and well-known international tunes.

(One member declared it was the best entertainment the Society had had for some time.) Attempts by about half a dozen members to demonstrate how we can play our Thuringer Konzertinas in

unison merely degenerated into a cacophony of three tunes being played simultaneously, at which point we handed back to the 'professional.'



'Amen!' – with Nicholas Simons

Sunday morning we had a 'show and tell' session. Jack Lowther generated a certain amount of envy as he showed two boxes he had recently found at auction at very modest prices, which although unspectacular, played very nicely. (We hope in due course Jack will write about at least one of them for the journal.) David Worrall demonstrated a restored movement bought from Baud in a 'modern' case. We then had a talk by John Moorhouse about the House of Fabergé, somewhat appropriate following Saturday's Jewellery Museum visit. This

was followed by a screening of the promotional video for the MBSI's 2019 convention – an eye-opener to many of the audience which raised a lot of interest. The morning's proceedings concluded with an extensive demonstration of unusual musical novelties by Nicholas Simons and John Farmer. Nicholas's would merit an entire article in themselves (now there's a thought ...!) These included three examples of 'Amen' boxes, a 1950s plastic 'Hurdy Gurdy' toy, which was actually a disc-playing machine containing reeds and bellows, some Rollmonicas and similar

'instruments', and a Clariola. John Farmer demonstrated three items formerly in the late Daphne Ladell Collection – the 'Musicano,' an animated picture with Reuge musical movement and a small organ in the form of a thick book which was effectively a modern take on a Serinette.

With much appreciation for all their hard work to John Farmer (hotel liaison and all programme activities) and Nicholas Simons (additional hotel liaison and members' communications.) Also, to Kath Turner for supplying the photographs.

Next Edition:

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of The Music Box. The next edition is due out at the beginning of March, 2019, when we shall be bringing you Part 2 of 'Then & Now: Salomons Welte Residence Organ', reports on a number of recent local meetings, a cardboard-disc playing machine and other unusual instruments, a new feature spotlighting personalities in the mechanical music community, MBSGB news and much, much more. You won't want to miss it, so don't forget to renew your membership!

Further contributions welcome – please see page 302 for details on how to submit, and note the copy date of 1st February, 2019.

Renewals due NOW!

Great meetings and fascinating magazine articles are just two of the benefits of membership. Don't forget to renew your subscription in order not to miss out. Details of rates and how to pay are on the inserted flyer, and on the website www.mbsgb.org.uk

**A MERRY CHRISTMAS &
A HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all.**

**We look forward to seeing
you in 2019!**

Classified Advertisements

FOR SALE

For Sale:

A very rare 24 1/2" Komet Model 200 (similar case style to the Mikado Polyphon) and a good quantity of discs. This box has been nicely restored and plays with a strong and crisp tone. I only know of one other example of this model.

Regina 15 1/2" Duplex TableTop Disc Music Box and Discs. This box has an exceptional tone, helped by the case which is solid mahogany rather than the more common veneered type.

Polyphon 19 5/8" Model 104. Complete with Motor Cover, Pediment and Keys. Fully restored and playing perfectly.

Exhibition quality Musical Longcase Clock. This supreme example built to regulator standards sets the bar, with 7 different chimes ringing out on a set of 9 Harrington Tubular Bells. With inbuilt auto change facility switching to a different tune each day, if required.

Nicole Freres Music Box. A powerful Double Spring, drives a 13 1/2" Cylinder containing 8 Airs. The case is 27 1/2" X 11 1/2" X 8 1/2"

Polyphon Mikado, great tone, 12 disc's, unrestored condition £9500 o.n.o

Early Francois Lecoultrre overture box, c1830,3 well arranged overtures £8500 .o.n.o

Tel: Steve Greatrex 07774 418706 email spg1@hotmail.co.uk

For Sale:

Symphonion Hall clock, untouched, collector quality condition. 11.7/8 sublime harmony. With plenty of music £7500 delivered. (UK Mainland) Tel: Mrs. Morris 07824 439169 email: tamorris1@live.co.uk

For Sale:

24.5 Polyphon, model 105, clean, bright, unrestored, 12 disc's. Bargain to clear £4000 o.v.n.o

Mark 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

Classified Advertisements

For Sale:

Black Forest Trumpeter clock by Emilian Wehrle. Exceptionally rare 8 day shelf example, with two tunes. Walnut architectural style case. As seen at Durham MBSGB meeting Superb piece £ 5750. or part exchange early cylinder box, cash either way. Tel: Mark 07905 554830

email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

For Sale:

Black Forest table clock, with perpetual calendar automation. (Day/ Date/ Month) (*Illus Black Forest Clocks, Rick Ortenburger*) Red walnut case, with great patina, excellent untouched condition. exceptional quality £2250 o.n.o.

Tel: Mark 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

For Sale:

400 day, Kaiser 'Universe Clock' made in Triberg, Schwarzwald, Germany c1955 with phases of the moon in arched dial, enamelled in dark blue, and depicting the Galaxy, with rotating globe pendulum. Beautiful/ Fascinating/ Quality/ Rare/ good fun & great conversation pieces . . . 2 examples. 1 with signs of the zodiac on the chapter ring, the other Arabic numerals. Sat under original glass dome. £375 o.v.n.o each.

Tel: Mark 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

For Sale:

'Musical Boxes' book by John.E.T.Clark, 1st Edition, 1948 with DJ. Great book, goldmine of information, especially the Nicole section £30 free UK p&p

Also, second edition, enlarged and updated, DJ £30 free UK p&p

The Disc Musical Box Handbook & The Cylinder Musical Box Handbook, 1st Editions, with DJ, excellent, signed by author £100 pair, free UK p&p

Tel: Mark 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

For Sale:

12 tune Ami Rivenc tidy cylinder box,

11inch serpentine Polyphon with 20 discs,

9.5 inch Polyphon with 4 discs,

Symphonion 11 7/8 inch twin comb disc box excellent condition with 10 discs,

Empty 11 7/8 Symphonion cabinet all with all the furniture but lacking picture and part of the top moulding.(I can manufacture these if required).

Britannia 9 1/4 inch table box with discs.

Palliard cylinder box with 3 interchangeable 13inch cylinders and matching table (in need of restoration).

Holiday Symphonium, modern with 10 18cm christmas discs.

Thomas Pacconi modern disc box with animated revolving Christmas scene and 10 discs.

Book playing modern music box playing a continuous 70mm music strip.

Basically willing to sell for the price bought at, to free up space.

Peter Trodd, Tel: 02380 812067 email: troddpeter@gmail.com

For Sale:

World War 1 Piano rolls – recuts of old original tunes, buy now in time for the 100th Anniversary – ask for list.

For myself & other members a small selection from an even longer list would include Triola roll-playing zither; 3 Cylinder Musical Boxes, Symphonion 13 inch edge drive, Atlas organette 16-note; Fairy Musician / Peerless Organette; Aeolian Orchestrelle x 5; Player Pianos x 6; Musical Snuff box and Symphonion 19 inch (France).

Large amount of spare parts for Organette, internal and cases, wad-punches and other re-building tools – all have to go I will not be needing any of them any more.

Full lists & photos available by e-mail. Free delivery to most MBSGB meetings or can send by post at your cost. I am also thinning my personal collection: what are you looking for? you are welcome to visit by prior appointment.

kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com

(note the underscore _ between my 2 names) 01536 – 726759

For sale:

Manette 35 cms diam to add an orchestra to a Phillips Pianella. Needs a bit of TLC and a skin, made of brass or similar. Photos can be provided. Offers accepted.

The Music Box Journals 1983-1992 Vols 11-15 professionally bound in 5 books. Offers? (too good to go to landfill!)

Alan.whytock@btinternet.com

Free:

To good home, assorted mid/large antique church organ pipes, way too good to scrap.

Tel: Mark 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

WANTED by members & customers

Wanted:

Discs for Symphonion 11 7/8 inch in good condition; I have a list of about 400 titles of discs that are wanted on many types of disc box – do please send me lists of any tunes you have for sale.

Instruments including "A" Nickleodeon; Thorens / Reuge 4½ inch disc mechanism or one in a poor case; Small chamber Barrel organ suitable to take out to talks; Draper's Organette; Gem or Concert Roller Organ; Celestina/Seraphone.

kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com (note the underscore _ between my 2 names) 01536 – 726759

Wanted:

French music-box key to fit 8mm X 8mm arbor. (No. 19 or 20 ?).

Tony Waddell. (ta.waddell@btinternet.com)

Wanted:

Overture box for private collection, also exposed control cartel boxes, snuff boxes & disc players. Especially large/unusual examples.

Tel: Mark 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

Wanted:

For Project 19.5/8 Polyphon, basket case, badly wormed, or just a mechanism. Also similar 24.5 Lochmann's Anything considered. Tel: Mark 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

Wanted:

Kalliope Panorama or similar for my collection. Mark 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

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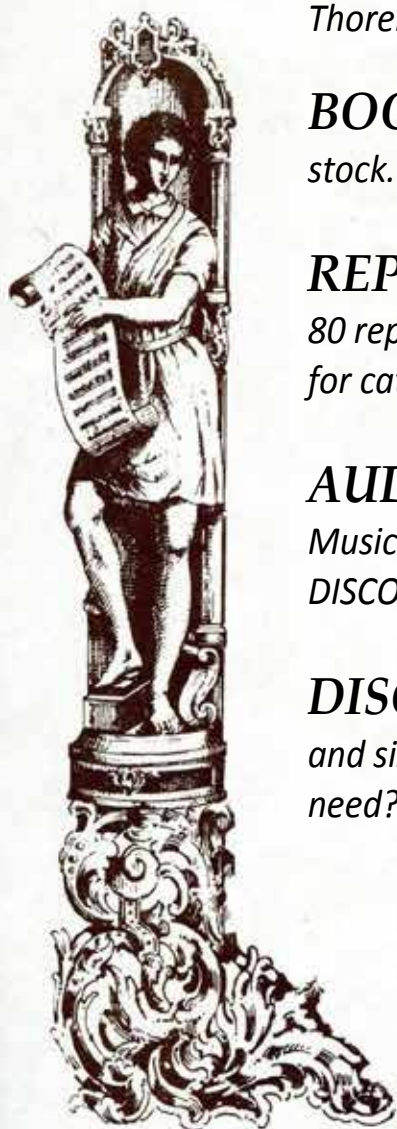
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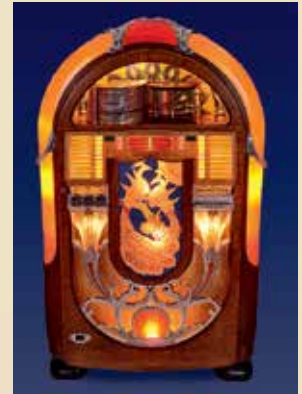
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