

# List of Dating Charts

- Chart 1 : B.H. Abrahams
- Chart 2 : G. Baker - Troll
- Chart 3 : B.A. Bremond
- Chart 4 : F. Conchon
- Chart 5 : Ducommun Girod
- Chart 6 : L'Epée
- Chart 7 : Langdorff
- Chart 8 : Lecoultres and Perrelet
- Chart 9 : Mermod Frères
- Chart 10: Mojon, Manger
- Chart 11 : Nicole Frères
- Chart 12: The Paillards
- Chart 13: Rebicek
- Chart 14: Ami Rivenk
- Chart 15: Karrer

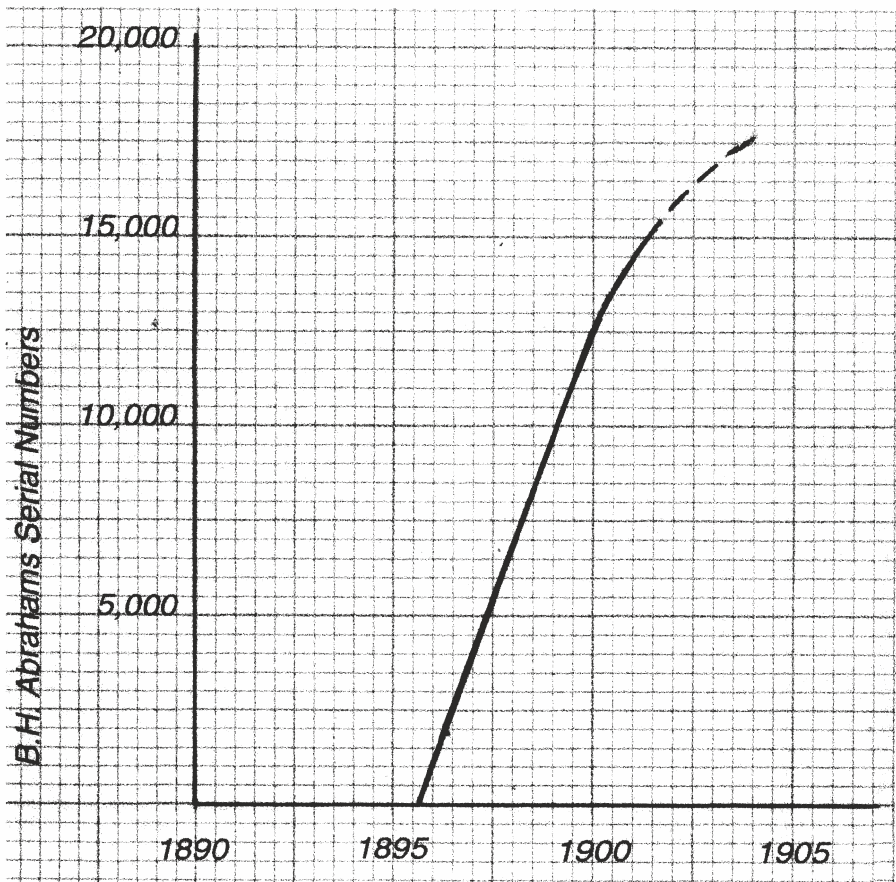
## Chart I

## B H Abrahams

Barnett H. Abrahams was a London agent at 128 Houndsditch in the 1880s. He emigrated to Ste. Croix in 1895 and founded his company there that November. He engaged Charles Cuendet (late of Cuendet-Develay) as manager and they made a remarkably fast start in production, aiming at the cheap end of the market but also making or buying some superior boxes which won awards at 1896 and 1897 Exhibitions.

Fixes for the dating chart start at serial 3,000 and finish at 18,000. The production rate tailed off after his Britannia disc box appeared, in 1890. B.H. Abrahams also made large quantities of fancy goods with music, so we cannot be certain that every serial number refers to a cartel box.

Abrahams died in 1902 and his sons took over; but the business failed and finally closed in January 1905.



## Chart 2

## G. Baker - Troll

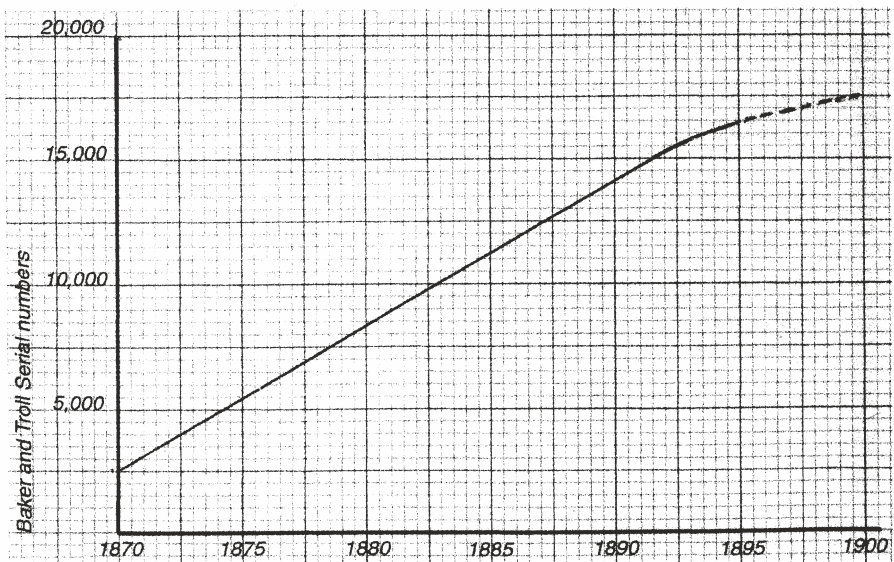
Samuel Troll from 1869 and George Baker from 1873 were independent Geneva makers who joined forces as partners from 1874 until about 1891. Troll closed soon after but Geo. Baker was still operating up to about 1900. Records of his boxes after 1890 are very sparse, so my estimate of his final output is shown by the dotted line.

Baker-Troll boxes made after 1891 include serial 15,473 which has a transfer label stating: "Geo. Baker & Co. (late G. Baker-Troll & Co). Serial 15,644 also carries a plaque inscribed "S. Troll (late George Baker & Co)". No distinctive tune sheet for Geo. Baker on his own has yet been reported. He was duly taken over by CHEVOB & Co.

The tune sheets and glass lid lifters with the distinctive BTB monogram persisted for at least three years after 1891.

S. Troll boxes before the partnership had both their own and shared tune sheets and he may have continued his own serial numbers - see tune sheet 95.

The extensive Baker-troll sales catalogue of about 1892, described in TMB Vol. 18 p134, shows that they acted also as agents – one musical box illustrated has a Paillard tune sheet as with tune sheet no. 24 . The massive interchangeable boxes they offered, with elaborate surrounding furniture, are fairly often seen at auctions. Sometimes they show no trace of a serial number. I cannot explain this oddity, but wonder who made them. Most likely Paillard.



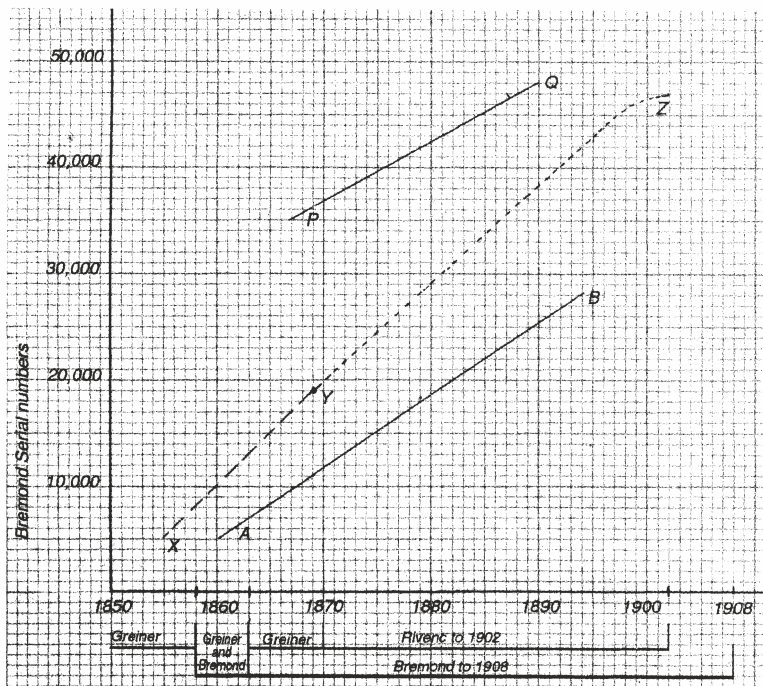
# Chart 3

## B.A. Bremond

B.A. Bremond joined the established Geneva maker Théodore Greiner as "commercial partner" in 1858, but went on his own as a maker in 1863. The line AB in chart 3 accurately dates Bremond boxes with serial numbers from 5,000 to 28,000, from about 1860 to 1894. The line PQ is a fairly safe guide to dating Bremond boxes with serial numbers from 35,000 to 48,000. No explanation has yet been found to the two questions (1) why two sets of serial numbers within the same span of years? And (2) what about serial numbers between 28,000 and 35,000?

Bremond's output from 1894 until his closure in 1908 is surrounded in mystery, because there are no late Bremond boxes on record. The most likely explanation for this is that these late boxes may have been sold with general purpose tune sheets such as the "Isle Rousseau" of tune sheet no. 147.

Very few boxes by T. Greiner are on record, so dotted line XY on chart 3 may slope too steeply; but it is accurate at serial number approx. 19,000 in 1869 because that is when business and his set of serial numbers were taken over by Ami Rivenc. Dotted line YZ shows the subsequent output, as explained in Chart 14. As explained in Oddments 13, Chart 3 before 1864 is unreliable but data for corrections is not available.



## Chart 4

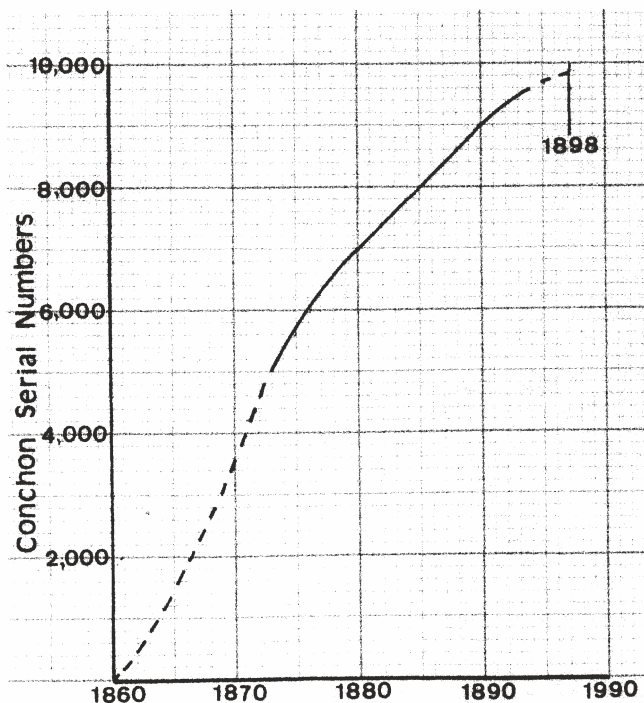
## F. Conchon

François Conchon was first listed as a Geneva maker in 1874, but that first listing says nothing about when he made and sold his first musical box. Several makers were undoubtedly in operation some years before their first listing, and in Conchon's case I now hazard a guess that he started in 1861, aged 24.

He also made combs and blanks and, later, orchestrions; and he concentrated on large and complex cylinder boxes. That accounts for his relatively low annual output average of 400. His Star works at the lakeside end of rue des Alpes overlooked the Brunswick memorial and was "just across the square" from Brémont.

He foresaw the elimination of cylinder musical boxes by disc boxes after about 1895 and the last of his many exhibitions awards was for a Polytype at Geneva, 1896. He closed down in 1898. His highest serial number on record is 9,594 with an 1891 tune, so his serial numbers may never have reached 10,000.

One of his complex boxes is serial 8,258 made in 1883. Two of its six cylinders play 6-minute overtures on 6 turns, with helicoidal pinning at the "tune gap" to allow continuous play. It was described in TMB Vol. 16 p199.





## Chart 5

## Ducommun Girod

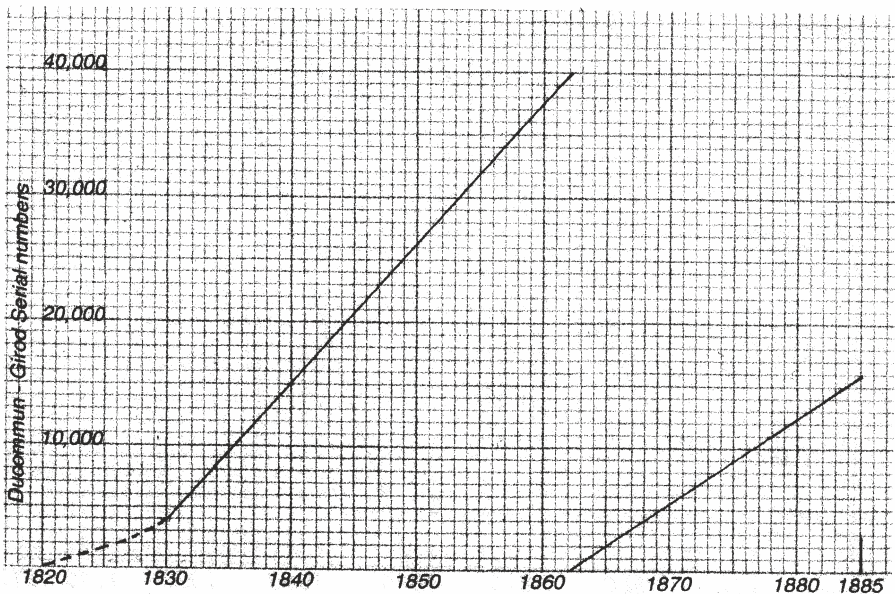
The complication with Ducommun Girod dating is that their serial numbers revert to 1 during the key-to-lever-wind period. So I assumed it must be the year 1862, when the 40-year-old F.W. Ducomun-Girod company became L. Ducommun et Cie. Now, seven years and many tests later, I think this date is undoubtedly correct. It means that the first series stopped just short of serial 40,000. The highest on the Register is 39,580 - discounting dubious entries which lack corroborative markings.

There are a few lever-wind boxes over 36,000 in the first series; and conversely a few key-winds numbered below 1,000 in the second. So their changeover ran from 1858 to 1863. Fairly typical.

The first dating line is well supported from 1830. I dotted the less certain earlier output. The second line is only strictly fixed to about 1880; but serial 15,839 is recorded with 1865 tunes, so I have assumed that came at about the end, when Jean Ducommun kept the business going until 1885.

They stuck to their traditional tune sheet throughout, except for their Harmoniphone flute boxes, introduced about 1862, see tune sheet no. 79.

A side effect of the two sets of serial numbers is that Ducommun Girod actually made two boxes with every number from one to 15,000. I eagerly await the first such pair to grace the Register.

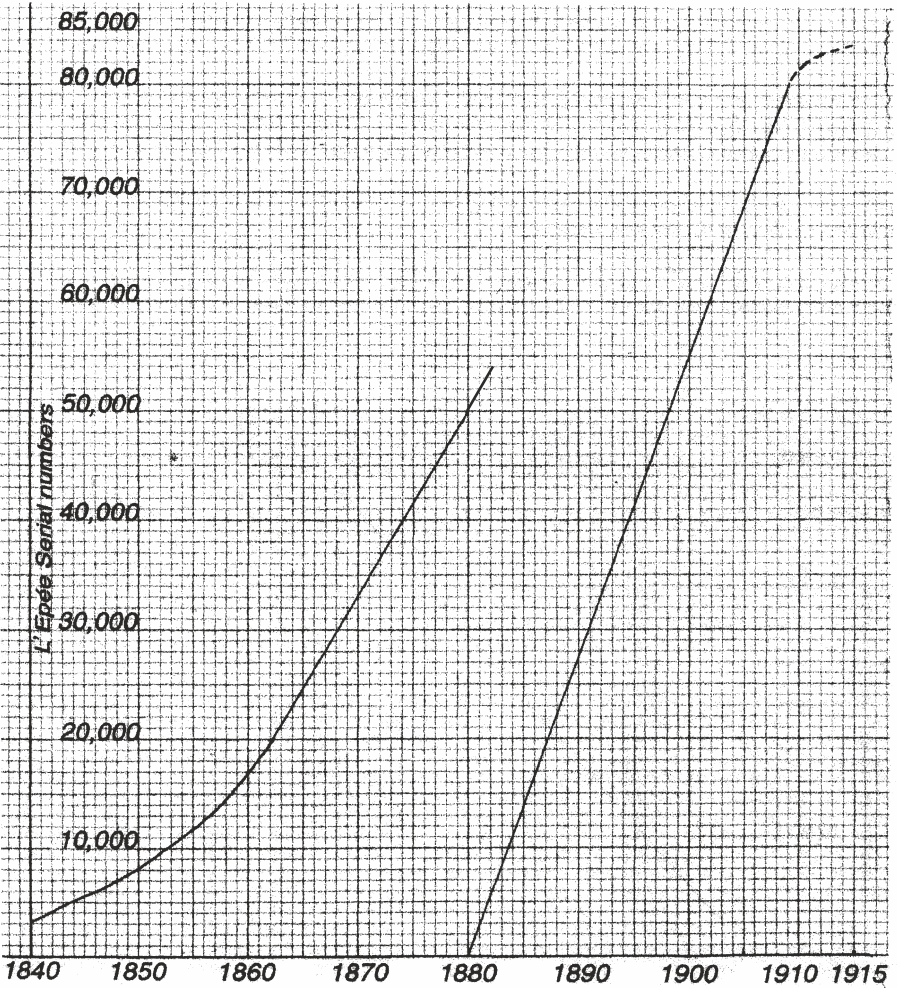


# Chart 6

# L'Epée

The French factory was started by P.H. Paur in 1833 and was revitalized by Auguste L'Epée in 1839. Output of cartels reached 2,000 per year by 1870, plus innumerable manivelles. I estimate that serial 50,000 was reached in 1880, and numbers then restarted at 1 – a big saving in digits. A yearly average of well over 2,500 continued until decline started in 1909 and war stopped production in 1915. Three 1880 boxes with numbers above 50,000 are known. One has tune sheet 251.

See also TS Nos. 459 & 460 for the reasons for extending the first set of numbers to 54000



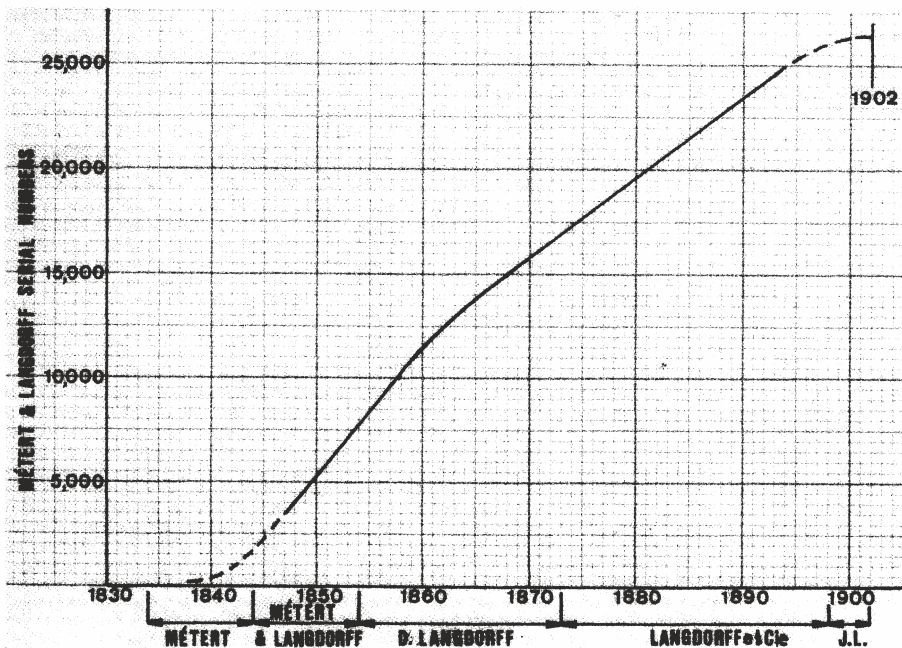
## Chart 7

## Métert & Langdorff

Henri Métert started production in Geneva during 1837 and engaged a partner David Langdorff, from 1844 until 1852. When he took over, output averaged 640 per year until about 1860 when it fell to about 400 yearly, probably with an increased proportion of larger boxes. David Langdorff died in 1873 and his son maintained the same output until a decline in 1895 and the amalgamation of the business with Rivenc and Billon in 1902.

From about 1840 to 1870 all Langdorff boxes had their gamme number and year of manufacture scribed on the bass end cylinder cap. Later boxes have them scribed on the bass lead. This powerfully adds to the accuracy of dating in Chart 7. It also confirms Langdorff as the maker of typical boxes so marked when an agent's name is stamped on the bedplate.

Langdorff gamme numbers are of lesser interest because they were only current for about a year. Typically, serial 20,254 gamme 127 and serial 20,430 gamme 306 made in 1881 and serial 20,649 gamme 177 made in 1882 all play exactly the same six tunes, same order, same arrangements. Very good quality, of course.





## Chart 8

## Lecoultrés & Perrelet

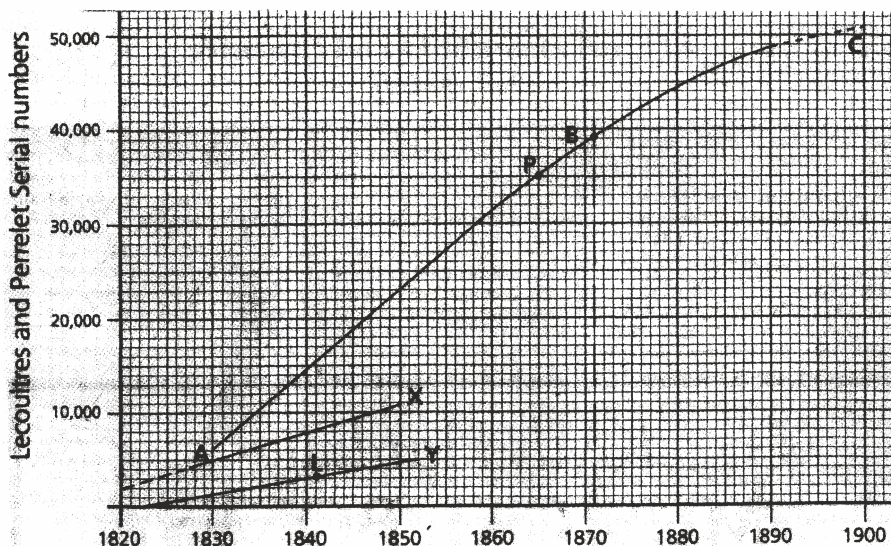
Line AB is for all F. Lecoultré Frères and Lecoultré & Brechet boxes. Most have L.F. Gve or L.B. stamped in small letters on their combs and FL or LF or LB, often with agent's B.B.C, on their tune sheets. It is accurate from 1830 to 1871, and is fully explained in my book *Cylinder Musical Box Technology*, p 73. Also, it is now known that Lecoultrés and Brechet worked together from about 1844 to 1854. C. Lecoultré took over in 1865, point P, see tune sheet 285.

Line BC is for boxes made by Auguste Perrelet (A.P. & Cie.) who took over from F.C. Lecoultré in 1871 at about serial 39,000 and continued their existing serial numbers until closure in about 1900, when they may have reached 50,000. See tune sheet 286.

Line X is for David Lecoultré, safe from a bit before 1830 until he joined the brothers at Geneva. Some of his early boxes lack a serial number, but display a two-digit number separate from the blank numbers. A box marked 27 in this manner has 1838 tunes and would be expected to have serial number about 70,000.

Line Y is for Henri Lecoultré, 1822 to 1852, with partner Granger from 1840 to 1844. Name changed to J. Lecoultré-Duperrut in 1841, point L.

The Lecoultrés who made musical boxes at Ste. Croix (see Piguet p336 and TMB Vol. 18 p136) are not included. Records of their output can only be described as dire.

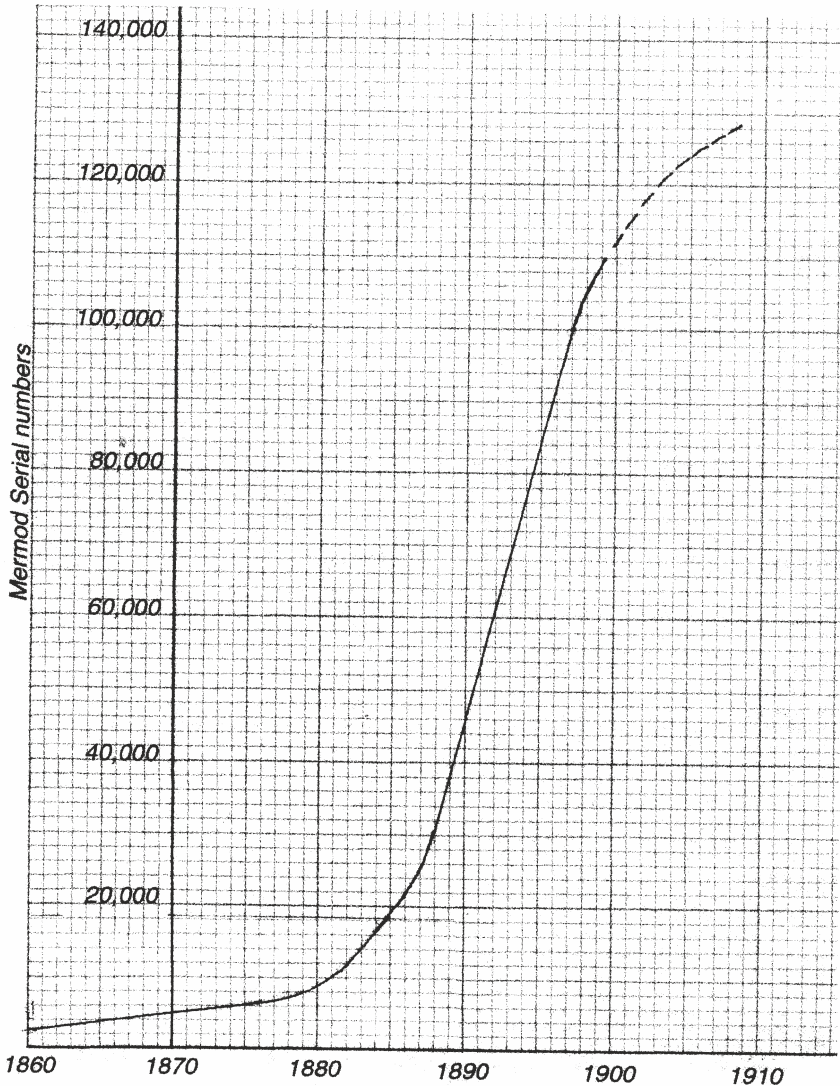


## Chart 9

## Mermod Frères

Already the leading maker of watches in Ste. Croix, Mermod Frères started making musical boxes about 1850, reaching serial number 10,000 about 1880 and then making nearly 8,000 a year until 1897. Highest serial no. on record is 130,138.

Their Stella disc machine appeared in 1896. Cylinder musical box production declined sharply after 1900, finishing about 1908.

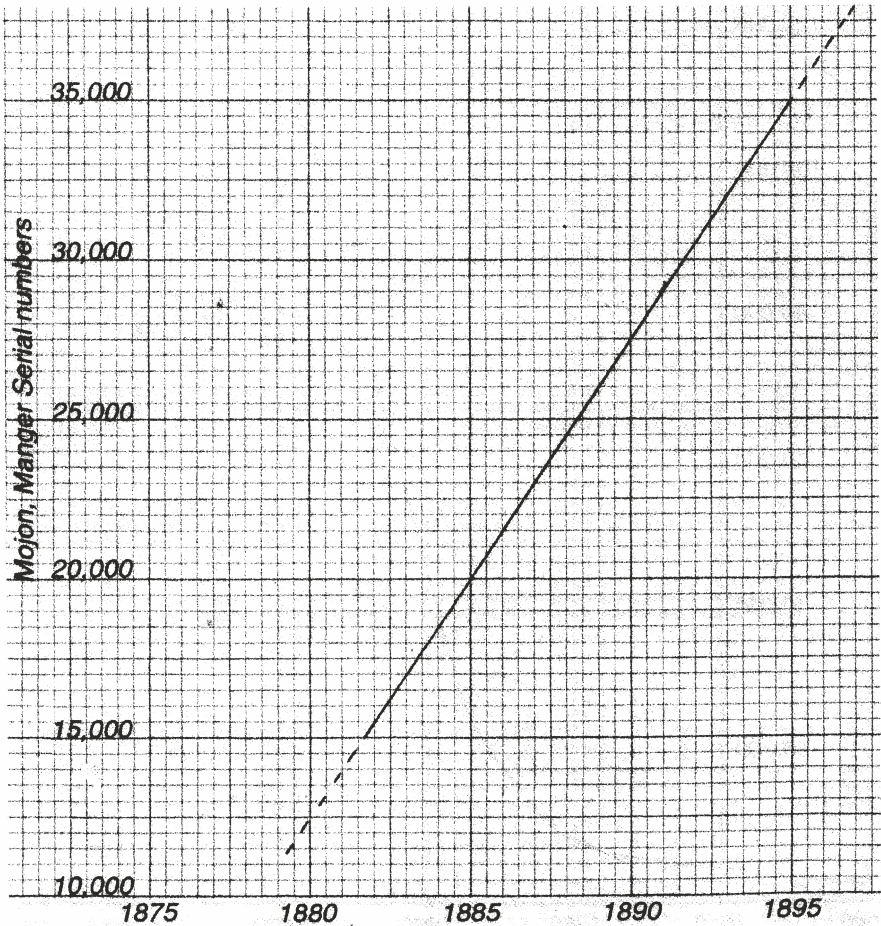


# Chart 10

# Mojon, Manger

Mojon, Montandon who later became Mojon, Manger are reported as Geneva makers of cartel musical boxes from the 1860s. They shared London office premises with the well-known agent John manger, and their boxes usually come with M.M.C. rather untidily stamped on their governor cocks and sometimes on the case lock. It definitely stands for Mojon. Manger & Co. They were certainly versatile, because their 1893 advertisement offered "musical boxes made to special order in six weeks."

Their boxes are reported with several serial numbers from 15,000 up to 34,069, with their latest tunes from 1880 to 1890 respectively. So we have no record of any of their boxes before 1881 and I have left both ends of their dating charts dotted. Highest serial no. on record is 34,662.





## Chart 11

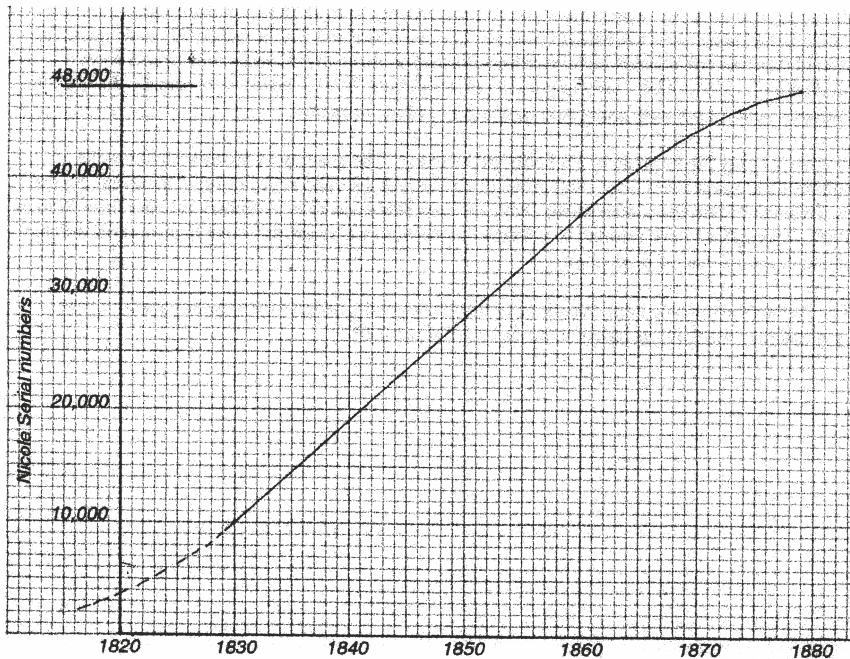
## Nicole Frères

Chart 11 is probably accurate to within one year for all Nicole boxes made from 1835 until production ceased in Geneva, probably during 1879. In 1880/81 the Nicole headquarters moved to London and they put their name on boxes supplied by other makers, probably mainly Paillard, with new serial numbers starting at 50,000 or a bit above. A new series of gamme numbers was also introduced, starting at 5.000.

Genuine Nicole serial numbers probably reached the 48,000 shown; but the highest so far recorded is 47,495.

A few late boxes or surplus stock were completed in London by Henri Métert. He was a grandson of the I.H. Métert who partnered Langdorff and he had joined Nicole as an apprentice. Boxes he completed, often after a sizeable delay, included serial 44,429. It has drum, six bells and castanet and a 16½" (42cm) cylinder playing 10 tunes, one composed in 1890! This proves the fact that a few Nicole boxes were pinned with new tune arrangements in London; but very few – that is the only one on record.

Early boxes were mainly tabatières; cartels were very scarce until nearly 1830 but “took off” after François Nicole invented dampers. Early tune sheets were inscribed Frères Nicole – changed to Nicole Frères about 1839.





## Chart 12

## The Paillards

The Paillards started to switch their production from watches to musical boxes a year or two before 1830. By 1851 they had established sales offices in Paris and New York and had appeared at the Great Exhibition (Crystal palace, London, 1851).

I have assumed that their serial numbers reached 5,000 by 1851; but a serious fire in 1857 and financial troubles must have hampered output, though it certainly passed 10,000 in 1866. Their company name changed from E. & A. Paillard to C. Paillard et Cie. in 1865, C standing for Caroline Paillard who figured in the temporary financial rescue. In 1869 they made over 1,000 cartel boxes as well as nearly 6,000 manivelles and 18,000 tabatières.

They opened the first special-purpose musical box factory in 1875, and I have assumed that they started a second set of serial numbers that year. Production of cartels rapidly increased to about 9,000 per annum, and only started a slight decline after 1893 with serious decline after 1900.

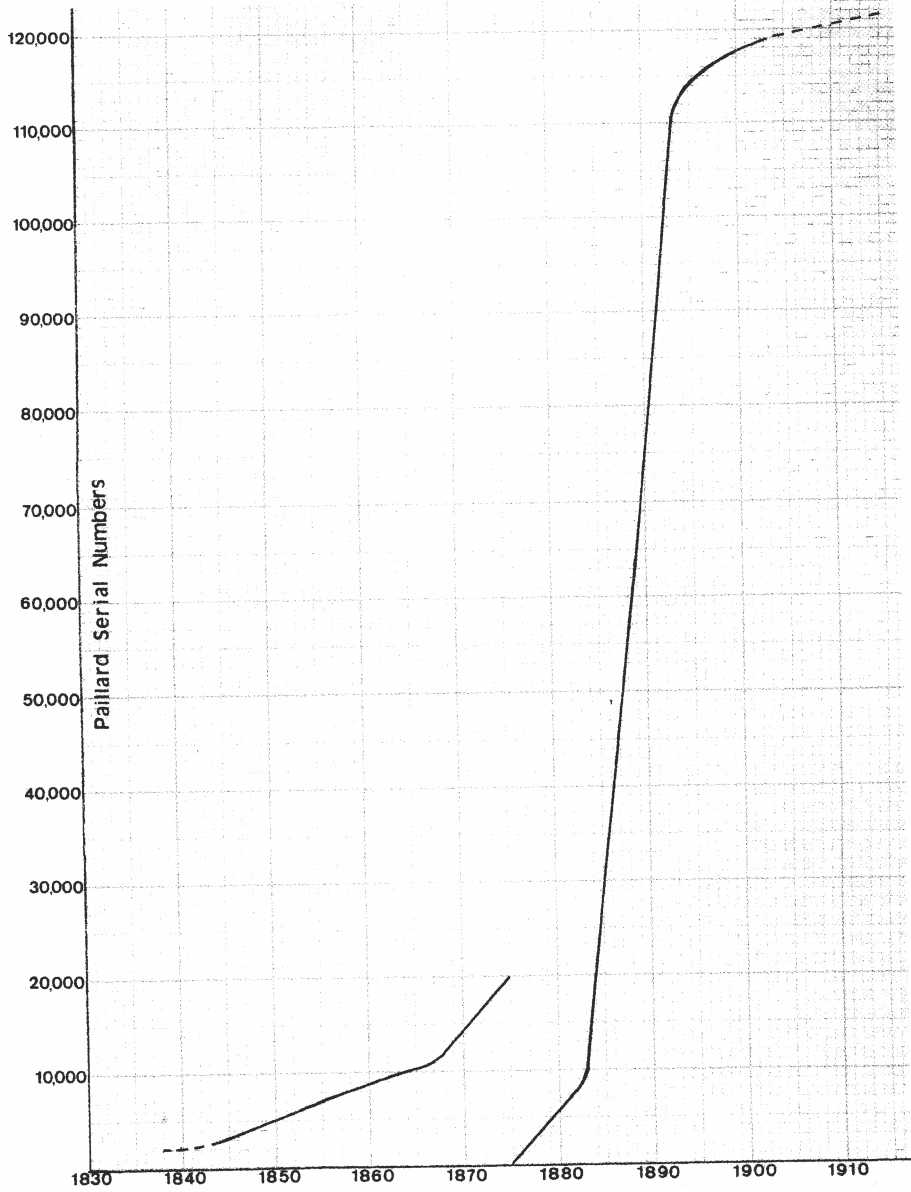
The Company's name changed from C. Paillard (often seen stamped as C/P/&/C, cruciform) to E. Paillard et Cie, about 1895. More detail appears in TMB Vol 18 p17, and much more in Piguet, pp365 – 374.

Such was the main Paillard family, making musical boxes in Ste. Croix from before 1830 until the 1914 war.

In my previous effort at dating Paillard boxes, (Cylinder Musical Box Technology p82) I included boxes made by Paillard-Vaucher et fils. Later, I discovered that certainly from 1885 and probably from 1882 the Paillards had taken over the Paillard-Vaucher London office and with it their P.V.F. trade mark. It proved that Paillard-Vaucher serial numbers finished at about 15,000 when they closed down production in 1881. Also – very important point – all later “P.V.F.” boxes were actually made by the Paillards, - except possibly a few sold by the P.V.F. office as agents.

In Chart 12 only boxes made by Paillards are included. The quantity of boxes with low serial numbers and latest tunes after 1860 prove that there was a second series of serial numbers. So the earlier parts of this chart, after about 1850, are reasonably accurate. Accuracy is better from 1880 to 1903. Thereafter I have resorted to a dotted line because we do not know the highest serial number attained, nor its date of production. Highest on record is serial 122,111.

The Paillards also made huge quantities of manivelles and tabatières (petites musiques). I have assumed they were not included in the cartel serial numbers.

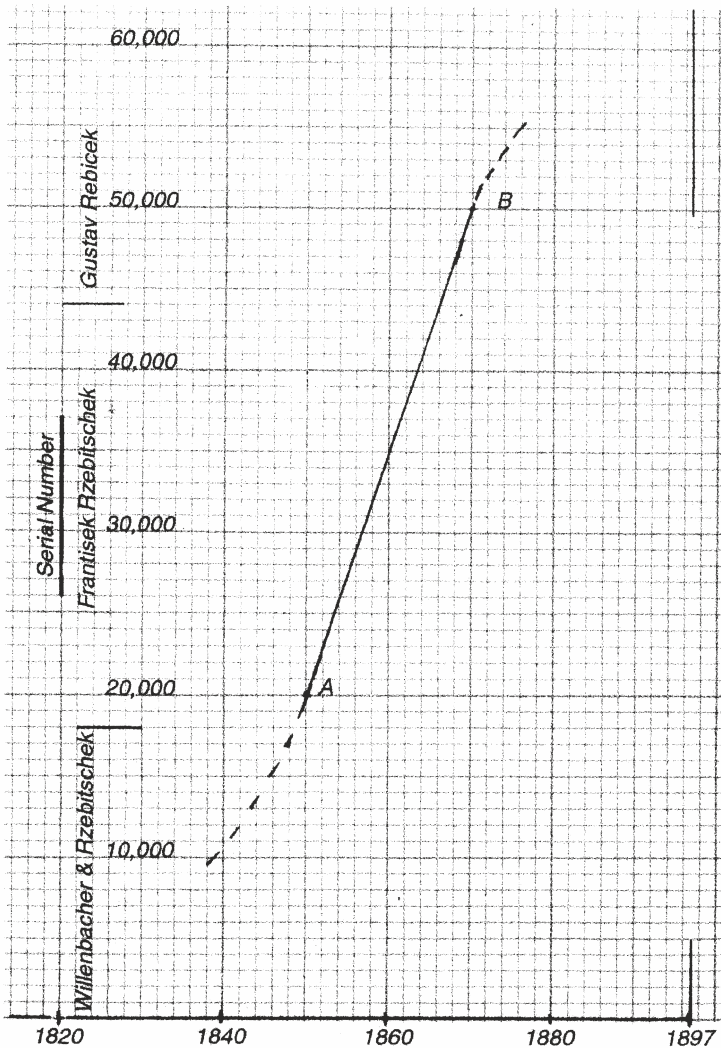


# Chart 13

# Rebicek

The Prague firm of Rebicek, and its antecedents, were making small cartel boxes from the 1820s. Chart 13 shows how they maintained a steady annual output of about 1,500 from 1850 to 1870.

The early period and the tailing off after about 1875 are shown dotted, being very uncertain; but the part AB is a good guide for dating all their boxes with serial numbers between 20,000 and 50,000. The firm closed down in 1897. More about them in TMB Vol. 19 p44.



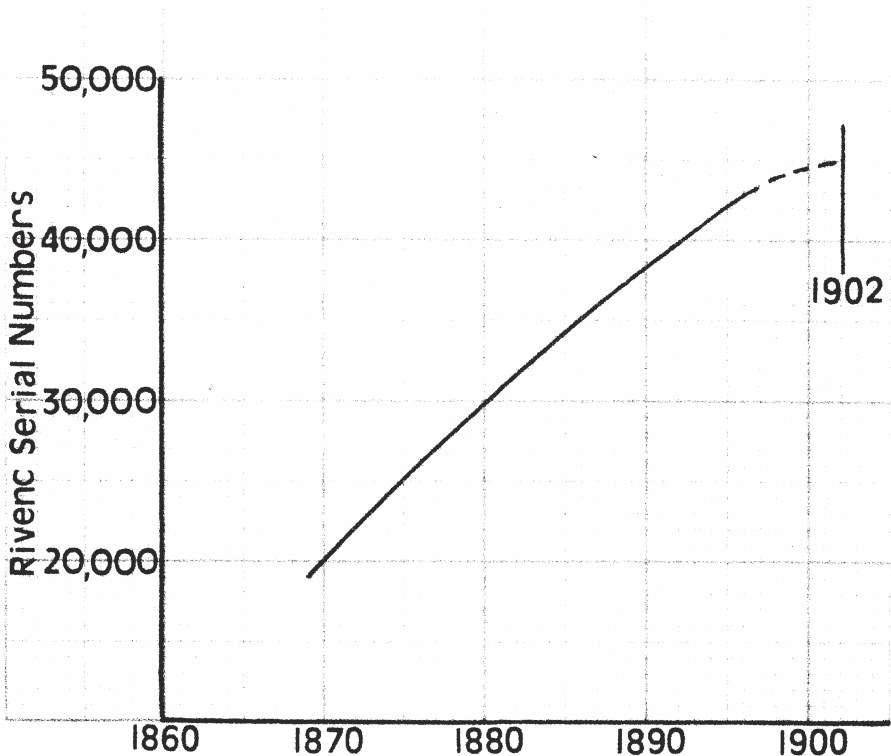
## Chart 14

## Ami Rivenc

Chart 14 provides a calm look at the Rivenc output, away from Brémond and Greiner. It was the first chart produced by linking the dates of the latest tunes played by a large number of boxes. It was a lengthy process, depending on securing an adequate range of boxes playing up-to-date tunes. That is why only 14 such charts have been produced.

Chart 14 had already been repeatedly checked since it first appeared in 1991, - TMB Vol. 15 p93. It is accurate except after 1899, where it has twice been slightly improved but we still do not know the highest serial number reached by Rivenc – probably 47,000. The highest on record is 44,610, with two 1896 tunes, see tune sheet 193.

When the Brunswick Memorial Monument was completed in 1879 “on his very doorstep,” Rivenc took up its winged lion as his trade mark. On boxes after serial 29,000 it is often seen stamped on the governor, and sometimes under the case, and on many tune sheets. Some boxes made in the 1879-1882 period have various plaques proclaiming his nearby factory “AU MONUMENT BRUNSWICK.”





# Chart 15

# Karrer

The Karrer family operated in Teufental, about 18 miles S. E. of Bern, from 1854 until 1895. This chart is useful from serial numbers 2,000 to 10,000 in section BC. Only two Karrer boxes are on record for the early years AB, and none for the later period CD, so these are shown dotted as guesses; likely, I hope. The highest serial number on record in October 2020 is 16389

