

## From the Editors' Desk

A quick glance at the Contents list below will reassure you that this issue is as varied and interesting as any other before it!

Paul Bellamy continues his investigations into the early origins of the Swiss musical box industry. His second Q David Bowers Literary Award for outstanding literary contributions to the field of automatic music has been awarded to him by our sister organisation, the Musical Box Society International. Richly deserved for his ongoing in depth studies. We heartily congratulate our Deputy Chairman and thank him for his meticulous work which benefits us all.

We were fascinated by a catalogue description of the Clement clock - at 12 feet tall, 4 feet wide and 3 feet deep it obviously was not your average clock!

Annie Tyvand has delivered on her promise of an article on one of her doll collection. We have both seen and held the doll in question and can attest that she has the most beautiful face and amazing eyes! She was so lucky that it was Annie who found her and brought her back to life.

Our Chairman has shared some treasured postcards

with automatic music themes. A lovely reminder of the days when you could send a postcard in the morning and it was delivered in the afternoon. Two deliveries a day! We have several examples of "unfortunately I cannot come to dinner tonight" apologies. No phone or Internet but a reliable postal service.

David Soulsby has delighted us with another of his beautifully illustrated studies. This time it is on Japanese battery automata. Something else to look out for after this wonderful introduction.

Chris Fynes has been busy in his workshop and details the restoration of an early musical clock base whilst Juliet has been researching a murder.

Paul has contributed a short piece about 'Napoleon Hat' clocks and the variations that title can encompass. Like musical boxes a huge variety of quality was available - you still got what you paid for!

The Christmas goodies are already in the shops, so may we be among the first to wish you all a Happy Christmas and hope for a better New Year.

Thank you to all our splendid contributors.

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## Chairman's Report

GREETINGS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

This year has not been the best. I think we all miss the face-to-face gatherings, where we can share our ideas, discuss new acquisitions and demonstrate items from our collections. The internet helps but it is not the same, trying to hold a conversation that can flow, when you are using the computer as the middle man. Even the telephone is second best.

I am sorry that we have to cancel the Christmas meeting, but I am trying to think positively for 2021, The world still goes on. Before feeling too sorry for ourselves we should reflect how much better off we are than the victims of the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic.

What we have gained from the curtailment of our normal activities is time. We can get on with restoring that musical box that has been on the to-do list for ages, paint the spare room, start a new hobby or just take the time to appreciate all that is around us. Here the badgers have been eating the damsons, the fox has had two cubs, which love pulling out the alarm wire across the drive. Harry, our "pet" blackbird, has had two broods this year and is looking a bit dishevelled when he comes to get his currants for lunch. Life is what you make it and hopefully we will get back to normal.

I must congratulate AMBC Vice-Chairman, Paul Bellamy, for receiving a prestigious literary award from the Music Box Society International. It is well deserved.

Much as the meetings are appreciated by the regular attenders we must bear in mind that the majority of our members are unable to come. The magazine is our point of contact and all involved in its production strive to make it as interesting and varied as possible. Some of you have answered the plea for contributions and we are very grateful for the fascinating articles we have received. Not everyone has the time or inclination to write an article but we would love some input. It would be good to have a lively letters page for the exchange of news and views; feedback on articles, suggestions or questions. So please get writing. The editors' address and email are printed on page 2.

I know this is a little early but I wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a very safe New Year.

Ted Brown (Chairman)

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### Publication Dates for "Mechanical Music World"

Winter issue 28<sup>th</sup> January; Spring issue 28<sup>th</sup> April; Summer issue 28<sup>th</sup> July; Autumn issue 28<sup>th</sup> October

We need articles and advertisements (unless repeats) to reach the Editors at least one month in advance of these dates. Please allow more time for involved articles with many illustrations.

## AMBC MEETINGS

### Cancelled until further notice

It is with great regret that your committee have had to abandon all thoughts of a meeting for the time being.

Having had to cancel meetings earlier in the year due to the coronavirus restrictions we had hoped, with the levels of infection falling, that we would be able to hold our traditional Christmas get together, even if some adjustments had to be made.

Sadly with infections now rising again and government guidelines changing almost daily it is impossible to go ahead with our plans.



## The mystery of IPR

by Paul Bellamy

In Issue 8, Jean-Marc Lebout reported the story of his musical box with the name ALDER stamped on its comb. The bedplate also had the letters IPR, rarely reported and of unknown origin. However, he reported details of other movements by other makers (or were they agents?) who had the same marks on their bedplates. Once more, this small but important observation has started to lift the veil about the possible meaning of the letters but so far, without revealing the identity.

The Music Makers of Switzerland (page 234) recorded IPR as follows: “**IPR**. *This inscription was stamped on the bedplate of David Lecoultre movement, pre-1840, Plate 8.1.5. ‘I’ and ‘J’ are effectively interchangeable but neither helps in attribution. Also seen on an unknown movement associated with Geneva agent Valogne, circa 1840.*”

Jean-Marc found the same mark on other movements, as follows: Henriot serial 14667 IPR 331; Métert serial 1338 IPR, Bruguier serial 4193 IPR with a number not clear enough. Also seen in another collection on a Ducommun Girod serial 20306 IPR 306.

Bulleid did not produce dating charts for Henriot, Métert, Bruguier or Valogne but he did record examples of their tune sheets with serial numbers and estimated dates. The supposition is that IPR designates an unknown maker or supplier of bedplates, possibly even the supplier to makers of complete but unprogrammed assemblies. These assemblies, minus certain components such as the comb and controls, were called *blancs roulents* in Geneva and *ébauches* in Saint Croix, the two major centres of musical box production.

A study of the Bulleid tune sheets reveals more information:

- Henriot: Tune sheet 199, serial 11435, is dated 1838 and 35, serial 11544 is dated 1839.
- Métert (as Métert & Langdorff): Tune sheet 253, serial 599, dated 1838; 155, serial 2293, dated 1845; 385, serial 3151, dated 1846; 59, serial 2627, dated 1852.
- Bruguier: Tune sheet 253, serial 599, 1838.
- Valogne: Tune sheet 290, serial 11446, dated 1840.

Serial 20306 provides some very interesting extra information about the Ducommun datelines, of which there

are two. The second line is for his son, Jean Ducommun, which starts about 1862 and ends about 1885. Both date lines have high serial numbers. Therefore serial 20306, based on the above, must be for the first date line. Bulleid recorded many Ducommun tune sheets and 99 is for serial 22386, dated 1845, is the only one close to 20306 Ducommun musical box reported by Jean-Marc Lebout, which therefore must also be circa 1845.

The Music Makers of Switzerland reported a study of the Cunliffe register for 12-air two-per-turn Nicole musical boxes, the register plus information recorded by restorer Alan Godier for 12-air one-per-turn & two-per-turn movements. The Godier table lists two-per-turn movements as a group and they include 8-, 12-, 16- and 18-air types.

The earliest Nicole 12-air two-per-turn cartel is serial 18620, circa 1839. The next two are serials 32465 & 9. The Register records 236 of these up to and including the 40,000 series. The last one is serial 47463, circa 1877. For the 50,000 series the Register lists only twelve two-per-turn varieties including one *Mandoline* (with zither) and one with bells. All other types such as *Forte Piano* are absent.

Two-per-turn Nicole movements span a considerable period of time from at least 1839 to possibly the late 1880s. One assumes that other makers will have a similar range. The reason why Nicole favoured the 12-air 2/T movement rather than an extension of their standard 8-air ones is a question of balancing demand with the use of standard components, mainly restricted by comb length. A comb with 120 teeth and a tip-to-tip distance wide enough to accommodate 12 tracks has quite an impressive tune sheet.

Jean-Marc dated his ALDER musical box between 1860 and 1870. The only known IPR dates so far recorded for Henriot, Valogne, Bruguier, Métert and Ducommun seem, by inference to the Bulleid information, to cluster around 1838-1840 with the exception of the Métert example to 1852. It is also clear that two-per-turn 12-air movements were popular for a very long time and that whoever IPR was, presumably a supplier or blank maker, played an important part in musical box manufacture.

## The Clement Clock

At Skinner's Auction on April 6<sup>th</sup> at their Marlborough, Massachusetts rooms one of the most spectacular lots was an English oak quarter-chiming, musical, triple calendar long case or hall clock, "The Clement Clock", made in London in the late 19th century. It was in an exceptionally spectacularly carved case with figures, busts, cupids, and floral ornamentation throughout; the four-train movement was of exceptional quality, playing seven tunes on twelve nested bells and a cylinder, quarter-hour chiming on a further eight bells, moon's phase, and triple calendar, the dial signed "Alfd Marsh at ye Dial Opposite ye Bank of England London" on a cartouche on the centre.



*Picture 2: The dial of the Clement clock*

The clock was designed to strike the hours and chime the quarter-hours, the chime selectable by the dial labelled 4 Bells/8 Bells (Westminster or Whittington). At each hour a tune is played from a brass barrel; it plays a different tune for each day of the week, the selector dial listing Johnny's so Long at the Fair, Auld Lang Syne, Home, Sweet Home, Annie Laurie, Jenny Jones, The Minstrel Boy and, for Sundays, the Old Hundredth.



*Picture 1: The Clement Clock*

There is no clockmaker recorded at that address in London, but the supplier may have been the house furnisher Alfred Marsh & Co, which was established in 1857. Alfred Marsh's original furniture making business was based at 9 Warden Road but by 1891 he had moved to 116 Kentish Town Road. Within a couple of years he had tripled the area of his retail





Picture 3: The casemaker's information and tune list on the back board of the case, inside the trunk door.

establishment by taking over 114 and 118 Kentish Town Road. A. Marsh & Co became well-established during the first decades of the 20th century and its patrons included the Crown agents for the colonies. The company offered a wide range of new and second-hand furniture. Advertisements published in the press kept the public informed about some of the second-hand pieces available. In 1930



Picture 5: The maker's, or supplier's, cartouche on the dial

those included, among others, a walnut bedroom suite, two weathered oak bedroom suites, chesterfields in silk cover, as well as drawing and dining room suites in lacquer or walnut. A. Marsh & Co seems to have disappeared during the economic crisis of the 1930s.



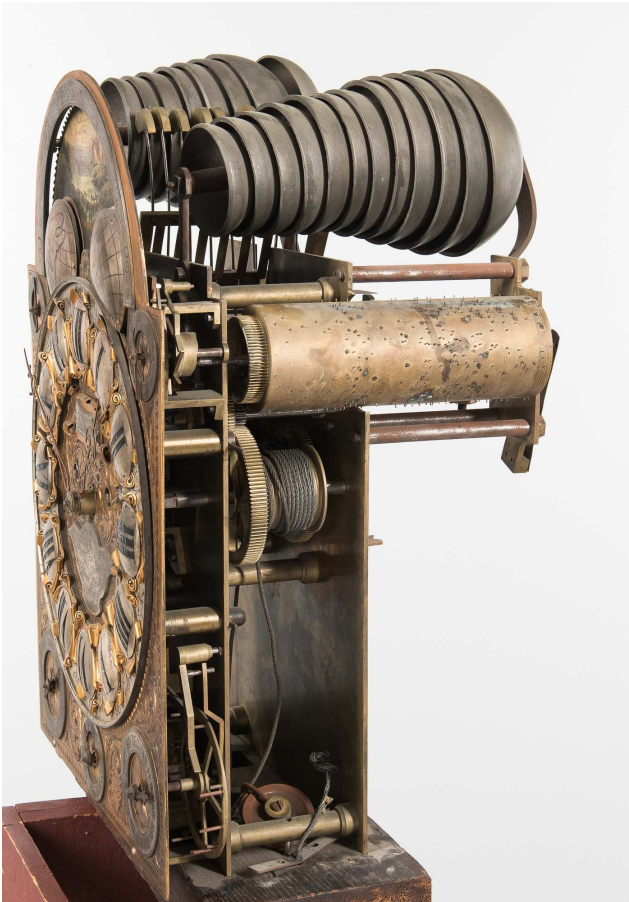
Picture 4: Queen Anne, on the trunk door

The movement would have been made by one of the firms specializing in supplying movements to the trade, such as Thwaites and Reed of London. Whilst clocks are known bearing their signature, the bulk of their business was in providing movements to other makers and retailers.

We do, however, know the name of the case maker, as he considerably left his details included on the inside of the trunk. George Humprey (sic) unfortunately does not seem to be recorded in the usual sources, but as "case maker to the Worshipful Companys" he must presumably have been of some standing.

The clock, which measures **12 feet high, 4 feet wide, and 3 feet deep**, has an ornately carved case





Picture 6: the musical train. The quarter-chiming train can be seen on the left side of the movement.

made of dark polished English oak. It has been proposed by earlier researchers that this clock is a commemorative piece for Queen Anne, who ruled from 1702 to 1714. Her carved figure features prominently on the door, along with figures of the Duke of Marlborough, Archbishop of Canterbury, court jesters bearing coats-of-arms, and King George I, who succeeded to the throne upon Queen Anne's death. Busts of Milton and Homer are displayed on the sides. A cupid figure, a customary ornament of time pieces, perches on the top of the hood. Other carved figures and scenes have not yet been positively identified. The date MDCCXX (1720) carved on the base has occasionally misled enthusiasts; it is not the date of manufacture but rather a commemorative marker relating to the reign of Queen Anne (*though she had died 6 years before that date – Ed.*).

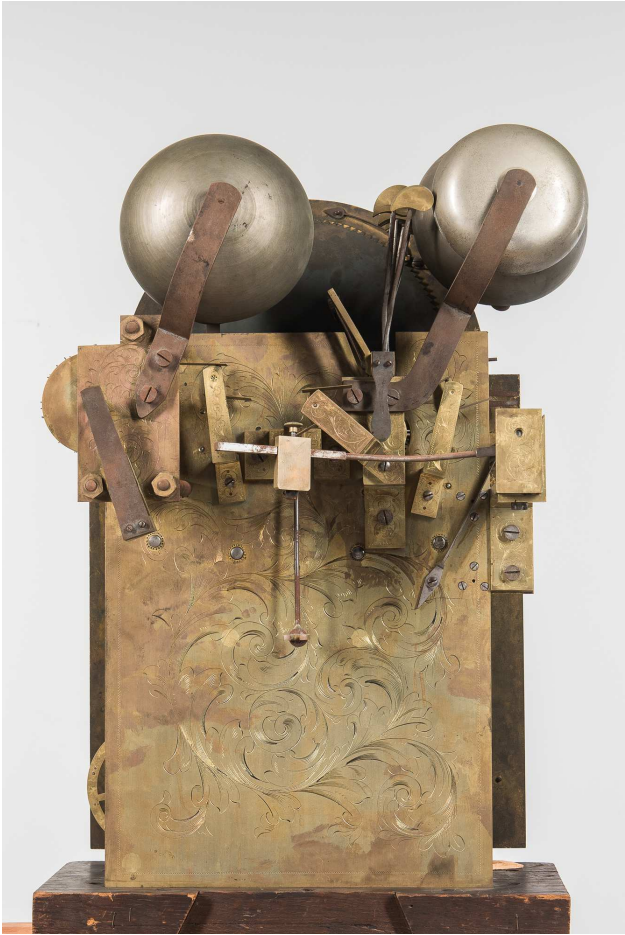
Whilst the early history of this clock is not recorded, it adorned the interior of the Grosvenor Hotel in Chester for many years. It was during a stay at the hotel in 1914 that American Percival W. Clement

(1846-1927) of Rutland, Vermont, admired the clock. Clement first worked as a clerk in the business office of Clement and Sons Marble, the family business, and a prominent company in Vermont. He became a partner in 1871. He was also president of the Clement National Bank and the Rutland Board of Trade, and an owner of numerous railroad interests. He made an offer that was too good to turn down and the hotel owner agreed to sell it to him.



Picture 7: Queen Anne Memorial on the inside of the trunk door.

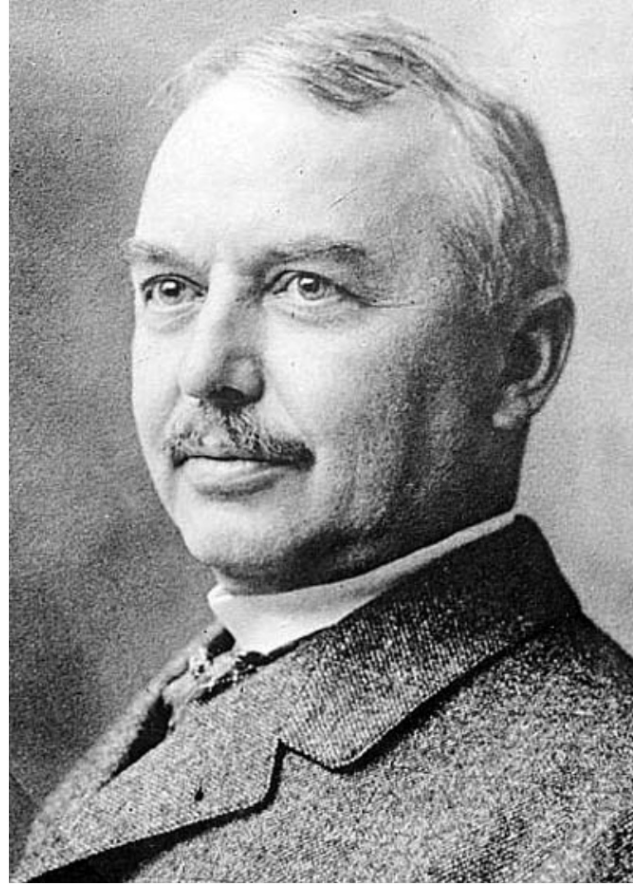




*Picture 8: The back of the movement.*

Clement originally intended to place it in the Hotel Woodstock in New York City, of which he was then owner. Transport to the U.S. however, was delayed because of World War I, and by the time it could be shipped in 1920, Clement no longer was owner of the Hotel Woodstock, but as he was then serving as Governor of Vermont, the clock was installed in the Governor's chambers. It was subsequently moved to the Reception Room in the State House, where it remained on loan until 1944, when Mr. Clement's heirs formally donated it to the Vermont Historical Society.

The clock was then displayed over a period in three different locations within the Capital Complex. It was first installed in the Society's quarters on the first floor of the Supreme Court Building at 111 State Street. In 1961 it was moved down the street to the State Administration Building at 133 State Street. Ten years later it was moved into the Pavilion Building at 109 State Street where it was displayed in the "Victorian Lobby", a replica of the



*Picture 9: Percival W. Clement in 1909*

Pavilion Hotel's lobby, appropriate to its original siting in a hotel lobby in England.

Note: The Clement Clock records comprise documentation removed from the museum collection files of the Vermont Historical Society relating to the large, ornate, English "great-grandfather" clock that was purchased circa 1914 by Percival Clement of Rutland, placed in the State House in 1920, and made an outright gift to the Vermont Historical Society in 1944.

The Society's collection of ephemera includes correspondence, memoranda, news clippings, photographs and other materials documenting the provenance, features and history of the Clement Clock on display in the State House and then donated to the Vermont Historical Society in 1944 by the estate of Percival W. Clement (1920-1944). It includes papers documenting the purchase of the clock by Clement and its shipment to Vermont in 1920. It also includes information on various repairs undertaken on the clock in the 1950s and 1970s.

*Images Courtesy of Skinner, Inc. [www.skinnerinc.com](http://www.skinnerinc.com), and thanks to Penina Seigel of that company.*

## The Hidden Secret

by Annie Tyvand

As an antique doll collector, I am always on the hunt for old German bisque headed dolls. Such was the case a number of years ago while I was strolling through the Paris Saint-Ouen Flea Market. There lying half hidden on a table was this little head poking out. I knew instantly the head was German made. Before I continue, I must confess my French is abysmal, therefore no haggling was exchanged over the price of the doll. Nor could I understand any of the information the woman might be trying to tell me. I gladly paid the requested amount and I happily wandered away with my new found treasure (see front cover and picture 1).



Picture 1: The body of the doll and its wood panels.

I had always been taught to be respectful of old things and knowing the doll was older than me, I was quite gentle in my examination of the doll back in my hotel room. I noticed that her clothing had been sewn and glued onto the body. Due to its age, the silk dress was beginning to fray but her body still felt "solid". I didn't bother to inspect her further for fear of damaging the old fabric. However, I was ecstatic with my purchase as the bisque head was in fabulous shape! The mohair wig was in its original uncombed condition. The bisque face was perfect with brown, glass paperweight eyes and a small open mouth with tiny teeth showing. I carefully wrapped, bundled and packed my treasure for its safe trip back to the States. Upon arrival at my home the doll was carefully placed in my doll room where she stood so I could enjoy her, untouched for many years.

As fate would have it years later, a nasty wind storm uprooted a large fir tree, threatening to cause major havoc within my doll room should the tree completely fall against the house. All the dolls were quickly evacuated to the dining room for safe keeping until the tree could be dealt with.

By now you are probably wondering what this tale has to do with mechanical music. As I mentioned in an earlier paragraph, my original examination of the doll was limited to mostly a visual inspection as the clothing had been glued down. When I picked up the doll to return her to her proper place in the doll room, she made a sound. It was not the sound of a Mama crier doll, nor a growler typically found in bears, but the evocative sound of a musical box. Needless to say, I was totally stunned with my discovery. I had no idea there was anything out of the ordinary hidden within the cavity of my doll. Upon closer inspection, I discovered that the body was not composed of what I thought was a solid wooden block, but wooden panels. I carefully peeled away the glued-down clothing paying extra attention not to damage the fragile silk dress. The wooden block was composed of a three wooden panels that were hinged on the bottom with a fabric strip. Between the hinged panels housed a tiny comb and an 18 note cylinder ratchet driven music box. When the wooden panels were gently squeezed together



against the fixed spring, the return action of the spring advanced the ratchet action forward causing the small cylinder barrel to revolve and stop (pictures 2, 3 & 4).

Repeated squeezing and releasing of the wooden panels allowed the barrel to complete a full revolution. One revolution of the barrel played a complete tune. The ratchet action only allowed for a forward motion which protected the tiny comb and cylinder from being damaged. Unfortunately, I am not familiar with the name of the tune.

Simultaneously, another wire attached to the top of one of the wooden panels moved the two arms back and forth as if they were playing tambourines when



*Picture 2: The operation of the musical movement*



*Picture 3: The movement*



*Picture 4: A single tune pinned on the barrel*

the unit was squeezed. All these years I never knew that this tiny secret mechanism was hidden inside my doll. I have pored over numerous doll books hoping to find another example of my doll so I could attribute her to her source of origin. From the mold numbers on the head, the head was manufactured by the Armand Marseille factory in Koppelsdorf, Germany between the years of 1920 and 1930. The doll is fairly large, standing 14.5" in overall height. I did find a similar movement in Marianne Cieslik's book, 'German Doll Studies', but none of the dolls were as elaborate as mine, nor did they have a music box hidden inside.

During my research, much to my surprise, I found that J. K. Farnell & Co, Ltd. of London produced the Alpha Farnell stuffed bear during the same time period of 1920 - 1930. They too used the same identical ratchet driven musical box mechanism instead of a growler in some of their bears. Unfortunately, I suspect very few examples of these dolls with the ratchet driven music box mechanism have survived since they were created to be enjoyed by young hands. And as we all know, young hands are not always as gentle as we would like them to be.

If you know of any other dolls similar to mine, I would love to hear about them. Maybe one might be tucked away in another doll collection somewhere waiting to share her secrets.



## STREET ORGAN POSTCARDS

Some examples spanning forty years of postal history.

Picture postcards were first accepted in Britain as legitimate postal items in 1894. They quickly became very popular as a way of sending greetings or a short message.

Until 1919 the postage rate was 1/2d. It was then increased to 1d. A further increase to 1 1/2d three years later was swiftly reversed following public protest. It remained at 1d until 1940.

Manufacturers rose to the challenge of producing a huge variety of cards to suit all tastes and purposes; views, buildings, people, animals - in photographs and drawings, sentimental, artistic and humorous. They provide great source material for social history buffs. Dating can be easy if there is a clear post mark but from the beginning people liked to collect them so many were never sent. The name of the printer, where included, can also establish the approximate date.



Fig 1



Fig 2

Street organs were a feature of everyday life at this time and I have chosen some from my collection to illustrate the way in which they were portrayed.

Figures 1 and 2 are from the "London Life" series, produced by R. Tuck & Sons. This company was one of the best known in the early postcard boom years. The term "Oilette" on these cards indicates that they were reproductions of scenes from specially commissioned paintings. Figure 1 gives us the feel of the old organ grinder. A quiet Victorian street with a lone barrel organ player, cap in hand, hoping for a small donation from one of the windows. It was posted in 1905. In Figure 2 the music is coming from a covered barrel piano on a donkey cart, being played by a Gipsy woman. The cart did double duty as a baby carriage and the baby learned to appreciate good music from an early age. Figure 3, posted in 1904, is by the artist Edward King, from the similar Oilette series of "Town Life". The couple look tired and defeated. It must have been a hard life, depending on the generosity of others to scrape a living.

Figure 4 at first glance looks quite ordinary, portraying a street scene of people grouped around an organ. When viewed more closely it appears to be a collage with figures cut from other photographs and stuck onto an otherwise empty street. This is a pre WW1 card printed in Germany. The Easter Greetings card (Figure 5) employs the same technique, using photographs of real babies and drawings of hares on a giant egg against a rural background.

Publishers Lawrence and Jellicoe printed postcards, amongst other things. Figure 6 is an example from





Fig 3

their pre 1920 series "London Opinion". It is taken from an original painting and seems to be emulating the R. Tuck "London Life" series. The organ grinder is bowed down by the bad weather. The caption "The Optimist" is probably tongue in cheek.

Fred Spurgin was an artist and designer, born in Russia, before moving to England with his parents. His postcards started appearing about 1910. He



Fig 4



Fig 5

worked with many different publishers producing patriotic and comic cards, such as the example shown in Figure 7. It was published by Inter-Art as part of a series with a title now considered offensive. Figure 8 is another Inter-Art card from the "Commique" series. Another noted cartoonist of the period, Dudley Buxton, drew the card, Figure 9, published by C.W. Faulkner & Co.



Fig 6





Fig 7



Fig 8

Figure 10 is another "Oilette" card by R.Tuck & Sons, posted in 1916. This is one of the "Dark Girls and Black Boys" series. The artist is H. Dix Sandford (Hilda), a British illustrator specialising in black children at play. The children depicted on the Belgian card, Figure 11, are aiming to give a performance on a strange combination of instruments. Has anyone heard a duet for double bass and street organ?

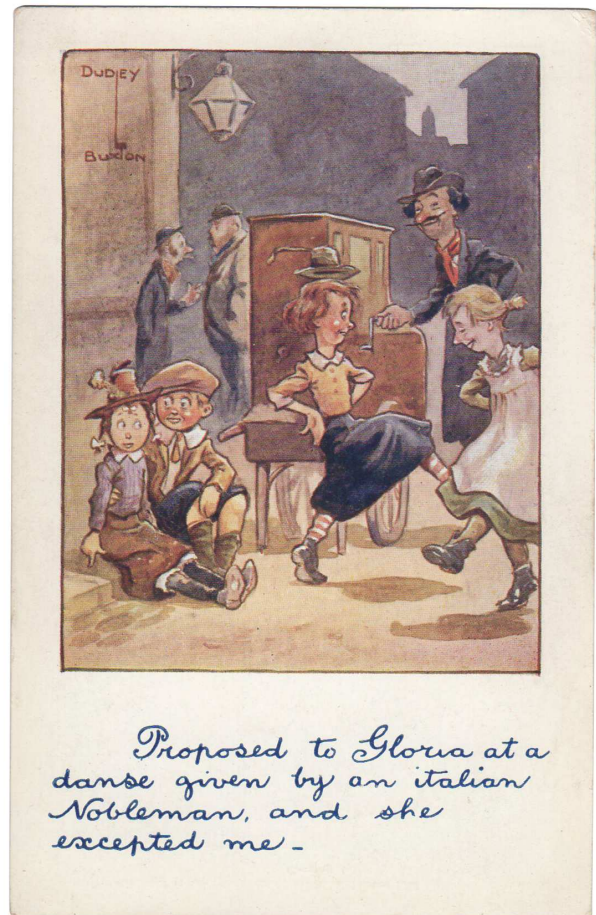


Fig 9



Fig 10

The seasonal cards, Figures 12 and 13, were printed in Germany, as could be deduced from the costumes. They are reproduced from hand-coloured posed photographs. Finally Figure 14 shows a nice quality, embossed, card by R Tuck. This year I must let the pig convey my seasonal message to you.

Ted Brown





Fig 11



Fig 13



Fig 12



Fig 14



## Making a CD of Snuff Box Music.

You may have noticed an advertisement for a CD of musical snuffboxes on the inside front cover. We have tended to concentrate our collection on snuffboxes over the years due to the restriction of space. They vary in quality, the earlier ones often more carefully set up and sounding higher in scale, most probably the result of those movements being made before dampers were developed. Because of their small size, the length of their music was also restricted, but this was made up for with an abundance of added trills

to charm the ear. This is what made them so attractive. As they gained popularity and mass production took off, the quality began to tail off towards the end of the century.

Have you ever tried to demonstrate a number of your musical snuff boxes at a social gathering? The difficulty of getting people to hear them properly, even on a sounding board, the embarrassment of mixing up the keys, trying to remember how much to wind a particular box and whether the second tune was on the left or right and which way to push the button, all this can waste a lot of time.

It occurred to me there must be a better way, and I thought why not put them on a CD? There are many CDs of mechanical music around, but not one, to my knowledge, of snuff boxes.

I decided to make some recordings, to the best of my ability, and edit them all together. It is now possible to hear them clearly at a proper volume, without any breaks in between, and eliminating the problems of playing them "live". It is much easier to compare them and appreciate their trills, subtleties and embellishments. I also designed some artwork



for the CD, its cover and the accompanying booklet inside.

After selling the first two, I was pleased to receive the following feedback:

*It is brilliant! I was so impressed with it. The layout of the little booklet is superb and the photos are very attractive. The music itself is very well recorded and put together and the tunes are wonderful. I have a few CDs of musical box recordings that I have bought over the years, but this one tops the bill by far. It far surpassed any expectations I had. It was worth every penny and more.*

P. T.

*It arrived just in time to put it on the stereo to have*

*our dinner....*

*I'm off to listen again as I was really interested in the range of melodies. A lovely CD! Thanks for a fine quality recording.*

*A CD of your beautiful Snuff Boxes has now been gifted to a collector who told me after listening to it "The favourite part of my massive collection was always my snuff boxes and this recording reminds me of how much I loved them; however, my boxes were never in as fine condition as these. I am so impressed by this beautiful recording."*

J. B.

Quote from MMD review:

*I've just received a fine recording of 19th century musical Snuff Boxes. I am not aware of any other such recordings. The sound is wonderful and the selections are identified where known. As an additional treat, an insert has photographs illustrating different styles. The ornate music is crisp and perfectly recorded and the boxes are well tuned.*

J. B.

## **Batteries are included!**

### **The Golden age of Japanese battery operated automata tin toys**

By David Soulsby

I recently bought my first Japanese 1950's battery operated automaton in the UK. It was a Cragstan crapshooter in good condition and cost me £100 (Photo 1). The tin toy was a croupier playing craps. He moved his rubber lips in a smile while waving dollar bills in his left hand, shaking a cup in his right and throwing three dice onto a felt covered table. I had heard that the Cragstan name was associated with innovation and good quality. However I subsequently found out that the company did not manufacture its own toys, but was in fact a marketing and distribution firm from New York that imported post-war Japanese battery-operated and mechanical wind-up toys. My purchase in fact had been constructed by the Yonezawa Company. The Cragstan company name comes from an amalgamation of the owner's names, who were Craig, Stanton, and Elmaleh. The firm's founder was Frank Stanton (1921-1999) and it was based in New York City where it operated from the late 1950's through to the late 1960's.



*Photo 1 - Cragstan crapshooter manufactured by Yonezawa*

Another Cragstan variation of shooting craps is a monkey (Photo 2). It has no On/Off switch, instead if you push the arm holding the cup back it will start up. The monkey first covers the cup with its paw before shaking the dice, and rolling them out, with his head bobbing up and down.



*Photo 2 - Cragstan monkey crapshooter by Alp Co.*

Cragstan toys were in fact produced by many different Japanese manufacturers including;-

- Nomura
- Masudaya
- Yoshiya
- Daiya
- Alp
- Horikawa
- Yonezawa
- TPS (Tokyo Plaything Shokai)



## Mechanical Music World

The myth is that Cragstan toys appear to have higher quality and are more detailed than other battery operated toys of the era, with more complex actions, as in the chef shown in Photo 3. On start-up the stove lights up and the chef shakes his pan containing bacon and egg while sprinkling in pepper from a bottle. He then flips the egg over in the pan, the whole time his face is moving, smiling in anticipation of a tasty breakfast.



Photo 3 - Chef cooking his 'over-easy' breakfast, by Yonezawa

Cragstan toys were indeed highly innovative but were not unique in this regard. Several other US importers put their company names on toys built by these same manufacturers. Rosko, Linemar, Illfelder and Franconia were some of the biggest distributors. So there was in fact a large range of ingenious toys around.



Photo 4 - Gino blowing bubbles, from Rosko Toys by Tamiyama

One of the automata bearing Rosko's name with an original design, is Gino, the Neapolitan balloon blower (Photo 4). He opens his eyes, dips his metal wand in the soapy water and lifts it up over the cylinder alongside. A burst of air generated by rubber bellows is released and bubbles are formed which drift away and pop. Gino rings his bell throughout this performance.

It is perhaps worth briefly considering the background of the development of such wonderful automata. These toys were crafted from very thinly cut sheets of steel that were plated in tin. Tin-plate was a favourite with toy makers since at least the middle of the 19th century. It was relatively inexpensive, lightweight, and easy to work with, yet strong enough to withstand the rough treatment by children. The toys were originally assembled and painted by hand and spring activated tin toys such as those from Ernst Lehmann originated in Germany in the 1880's. The development of chromolithography, allowed illustrations to be machine printed onto flat sheets of tin plate in striking colours and patterns and then pressed into shape such as in Photo 5.



Photo 5 - Lehmann automaton of zebra kicking out at his driver. Circa 1924.

While they were responsible for pioneering the tin toy industry, their downfall began following the anti-German feeling that sprang up at the end of the First World War. A lot of toy companies in the United States took the opportunity to replace Germany as the leading manufacturer, and in the 20s, the American tin toy industry began to boom.

The production of tin toys was discontinued during World War II because of the need to conserve raw materials in the war effort. But later, as part of reparation, Japan was encouraged to greatly expand



its tin toy production. Because of the high strength of the US\$ the bulk of these toys was aimed principally at the American market. Japan was allowed a low profit while US companies could import them and sell them alongside their own products. Adverse post war sentiment was avoided by describing the toys as “Foreign” instead of “Made in Japan”. The name of the importers such as Cragstan and Rosko was printed on the toy’s boxes as well as often being photo engraved on the toys themselves.

The Japanese output included a mass of well-designed and innovative clockwork and friction novelty playthings, but it was their battery- toys that made the biggest impression. They could run for longer than their spring driven counterparts, allowing the design of the most ingenious and complicated automata toys ever produced. With two D-cells inserted, the number of actions the toys could perform was remarkable. Walking, spinning, smoking, pouring, drinking, lighting up, as well as arm and limb movements and of course sound effects, were just some of them. Vinyl heads were also an additional feature which allowed faces to move, smile with moving lips, and eyes open and close. Japan became the leading toy maker for the next 20 years and then production tailed off in the late ‘60s as increased labour costs, more stringent safety restrictions and competition from plastic toy makers all took their toll.



Photo 6 - *Teddy the Manager* from Cragstan waiting for a call. By S & E Co.

The majority of these toys were of course aimed at children as in ‘Teddy the Manager’ (Photo 6). The child has to dial a number on the remote telephone causing its counterpart on Teddy’s desk to light up and flash as it rings. Teddy picks up his receiver and, according to the words on the box, *talks* into it, in reality a series of high pitches beeps.



Photo 7 - *Smoking McGregor* from Rosko, by T N Nomura

A number of the products were aimed at a more adult audience, for instance, McGregor, the smoking Scotsman in Photo 7. He is seated on a travel chest supported by a stick and when he gets to his feet, rises to an impressive twelve inches tall. The description on the box says all you need to know about this character.

*“Pot-bellied Scotsman McGregor takes a puff of his cigar; the butt lights up. He enjoys a fine blend of Tobacco and exhales the smoke through his mouth. Then he raises himself, closes his eyes and this time exhales the smoke through his nostrils. He is alive”.* (Hardly a role model for children though).

A similar level of exaggeration appears on the box of the Happy ‘n Sad Magic Clown imported by Franconia (Photo 8). *“First he laughs then he cries. Almost lifelike.”* In reality the clown shuffles from



Photo 8 - Happy and Sad clown, imported by Franconia. Made by Yonezawa.

side to side squeezing his accordion, which makes a noise like a cop siren, while his lips twist up and down.

The antics of these wonderful automata are a real joy to watch in action. Take a look at a couple more in Photos 9 and 10. Sammy Wong the Chinese tea totaller sold by Rosko and Mr Fox the Magician, another Cragstan offering. The kettle flashes and steams as Wong *pours* into his teacup before lifting it to his mouth. Mr Fox covers the rabbit with his hat, turns and points revealing that the rabbit has vanished.

Unfortunately over the years the number of automaton toys in circulation has gradually decreased. Obviously many were discarded not long after production as children “grew out” of them. Deterioration included corrosion of connectors from leaking batteries and perishing of rubber components as well as general ‘wear and tear’. The automata are very collectable and rare items in pristine condition can exchange hands for thousands of dollars. But there are also many available on eBay at reasonable prices and if you have any restoration skills there are bargains available that only need a small amount of repair work to recapture their original splendour.

Some perhaps need more than others; the following ad from Defsilver for a Rosko bartender toy would perhaps stretch my capabilities somewhat.

“Rosko has seen better days to be honest, he has



Photo 9 - Sammy Wong the Tea Totaller, from Rosko, by T-N Co.



Photo 10 - Mr Fox the Magician, from Cragstan, by Yonezawa  
*been in storage for some time, his clothes are tatty, his hair is peeling off, he's lost his wine glass and has a split on his nose and he needs a good clean. As you can see he needs some tlc to get him back to his former glory. The battery compartment looks clean but remains untested, so bear that in mind”.*



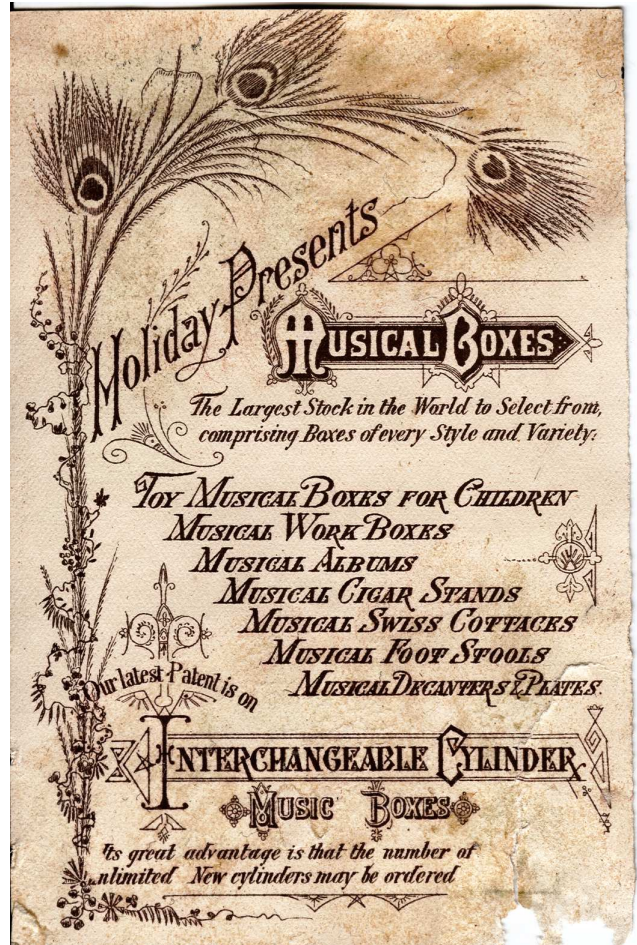


Photo 11 - Reference book on Battery Toys, by Brian Moran

Unfortunately the only museums that have extensive displays of these toys are in Japan itself, for example in Yokohama. This means that the only real way to enjoy them is to build your own collection over time, I've made a start. There were over 750 models of battery operated automata, as set out in Battery Toys by Brian Moran (Photo 11). (I counted them in order to exclude the vehicles also described in this book).

The unique scope of high quality vintage battery operated automata that were manufactured by the Japanese designers and constructors during this period is to be celebrated.

This really was their Golden Age.



Ted and Paul with the hip flask

### A PRESENTATION PERFORMED

In the last issue we reported on a presentation to Chairman Ted Brown, marking the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of AMBC, that we had hoped to make at the April AGM. It had to be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

It now seems that restrictions on social gatherings are likely to continue for much longer than anyone had expected or hoped. We recently grabbed the chance for a committee meeting at the Old School (suitably socially distanced, of course) before the likelihood that we shall be forbidden to visit other people's homes, even in small numbers. So Vice-Chairman Paul Bellamy did the honours and Ted has now officially been presented with his award.



## MURDER MOST FOUL

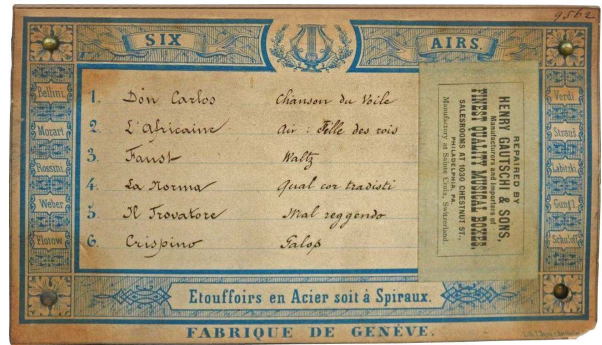
You might expect a little cut-throat competition in the musical box world, but not actual homicide. Yet this was the fate that befell a musical box dealer in Philadelphia in 1901. In fairness it was not occasioned by a business dispute, but a good old fashioned “domestic”.

I happened upon this story when I saw this interesting trade card on the Internet and decided to investigate further.



My interest was piqued by the claim on the shop front that Henry Gautschi was a musical box manufacturer. I am no expert, but have been around enough of them to be fairly sure I had never heard this name. Sellers’ labels on musical boxes can give the impression, whether intentional or not, that they actually made the instrument. Gautschi certainly sold imported boxes, including Paillard, Junod, Bremond, Mojon Manger, Guisnez and Allard, identifiable by their tune sheets. These bore added stuck-on strips, some of which give the impression that they were made by him in St Croix (never Geneva where his brother was alleged to be a maker). Some however more clearly indicated that he was only the agent or importer. For example, a Nicole that was imported by Farr & Brother of Philadelphia. In addition to a wide range of cylinder boxes in 1895 he became an agent for Regina disc boxes.

Gautschi did however have some credible claim to be a manufacturer. He certainly had a workforce able to undertake repairs to musical boxes, so he could also have made boxes from parts imported from Switzerland. As Arthur Ord-Hume notes in his Collector’s Guide, import duties were much lower



Bremond Tune Sheet



Common Tune Sheet used by several makers

on parts than on complete boxes, making this an attractive proposition. The claim is strengthened by his patenting of certain “improvements” in 1892;

*Be it known that I, HENRY A. GAUTSCHI, a citizen of the United States, residing at the city of Philadelphia ..... have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Musical Boxes.....*

*The principal objects of my invention are, first, to provide a musical box with driving or actuating mechanism that cannot be readily damaged or injured by careless or excessive winding, and, second, to dispense with the main or driving spring and to provide a musical box with an efficient, compact, and durable air or pneumatic motor for actuating or driving the pin-barrel thereof. Etc.*

He was an advocate of high quality. In an 1887 advertisement inviting prospective customers to send for his catalogue he claimed his boxes to be *Far superior to any other make, not speaking of the worthless trash that abounds in the market soon being of more annoyance than pleasure to their owners.*

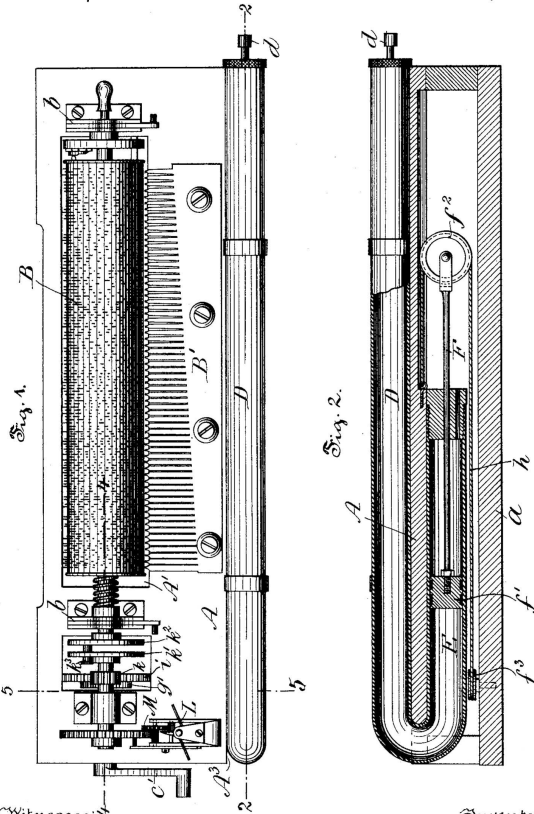
(No Model.)

H. A. GAUTSCHI.  
MUSICAL BOX.

2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

No. 476,458.

Patented June 7, 1892.



Witnesses:  
Romain Bormann  
Thomas M. Smith.

Inventor:  
Henry A. Gautschi  
by J. Walter Engleau.  
att'y.

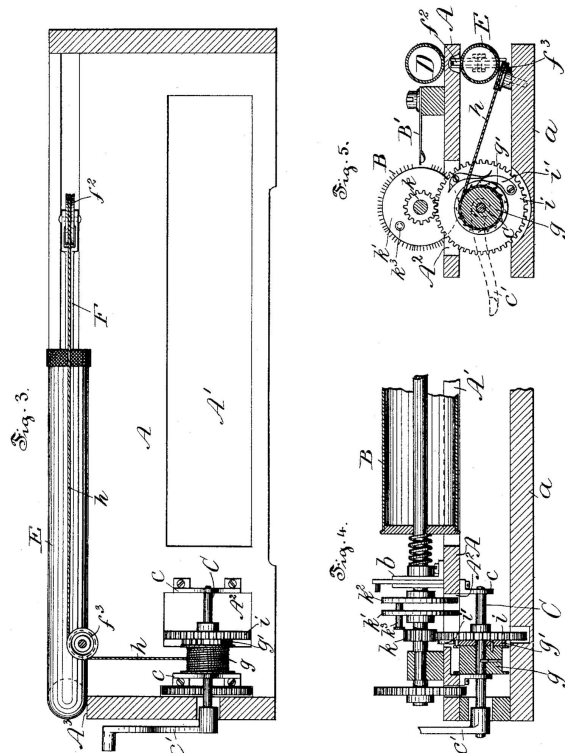
(No Model.)

H. A. GAUTSCHI.  
MUSICAL BOX.

2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

No. 476,458.

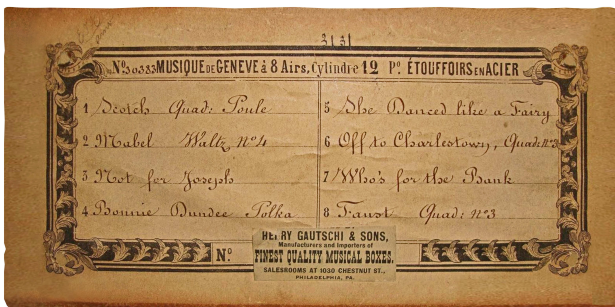
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Gautschi's Invention



L'Épée Tune Sheet

The reverse of the trade card, illustrated above, states "within the last years musical boxes have been introduced into the market without care of quality – the Langdorff Musical Boxes have long been known ....as the most perfect and carefully made....." This card was evidently made for distribution at an Exposition at which Langdorff boxes were first made available in America and at which



Mojon, Manger Tune Sheet

Gautschi was taking orders to supply them at Swiss prices. This may have been the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 at which Langdorff won a commendation.



Heinrich (Henry) Gautschi was born in 1846 in St Croix. As a nineteen-year-old newlywed he emigrated with his wife to Pittsburgh where he opened a tobacconist shop. Eight years and seven children later he became bankrupt and the family returned to St Croix. In 1876 it was decided that he would open a branch of C Gautschi & Co in Philadelphia to sell his brother's musical boxes. This enterprise proved far more successful than his previous business and in 1884 he broke away from his brother to run his own business, though on his shop front he rather cheekily claimed that Henry Gautschi & Sons was established in 1876. He became very wealthy and was able to move his family to a fashionable neighbourhood.

Following the death of Henry's wife in 1892 he hired an Austrian widow as housekeeper. She saved enough in a year or so to pay the passage of her twenty-year-old son, Jacob Pesendorfer, to America. His frequent visits to his mother enabled him to get close to Henry's daughter Annie. Henry disapproved, forbade her to see him and sacked Mrs Pesendorfer. The couple eloped thus sowing the seeds of the subsequent tragedy.

Henry vented his wrath by arranging for Jacob to be sacked from every job he took. He then bribed the heavily pregnant Annie with a huge financial inducement to leave Jacob, who was then barred from seeing his newborn son. Jacob's resentment festered for three years until in 1900 he attempted to snatch his son and tried to strangle his father-in-law. Charges were dropped on condition he kept away from them. But in 1901 he lay in wait and shot Henry, who lingered for a few days but eventually died of his wounds.

Jacob was condemned to death for murder, but literally at the eleventh hour the hanging was postponed to give the Board of Pardons time to consider his sanity. Eventually his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Annie divorced him and gave up their son for adoption. Jacob became a model prisoner, learned a craft and was pardoned in 1926. He set up a factory to employ ex-convicts and give them a fresh start in life. He lived to a ripe old age, having in large part atoned for his crime, but he never saw his son and there is no record of what became of him.



*Paillard Tune Sheet*

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M. J. PAILLARD & CO.  
680 BROADWAY, NEW YORK,  
GRAND HEAD-QUARTERS FOR

**MUSIC BOXES**

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**MUSIC BOX**  
Patented August 9, 1870.

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PATENT REVOLVING

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**M. J. PAILLARD & CO.**  
Manufacturers and Importers,  
680 Broadway, New York.

**Yester Year: A Napoleon hat chiming clock.**



Fig 1: A Typical 'Napoleon Hat' clock

An often overlooked musical clock is the 'Napoleon Hat', so called because this type of mantel clock is shaped like the hat he wore, typical of the time. Fig. 1 shows the clock and Fig. 2 shows a cartoon of the period.

This shape of clock first became popular about the early 1900s. Many were made and the quality varied enormously. The one illustrated is extremely well made but the maker remains unknown. Their popularity declined in the 1950s.



Fig 2: Napoleon on Donkey

The cartoon is quite interesting, drawn with typical British humour of the time. Poor Napoleon is seated backwards on a donkey by a sign post pointing to Fontainebleau, where the treaty for his exile to Elba was declared by the Allies. Despite this disparaging image, it is entitled: The Journey of a modern Hero to the island of Elba. Of course, he escaped back to France and was received as a hero. Here he raised an enormous army but was finally defeated and exiled to Saint Helena. No doubt

the hat-shaped clock reminded the British of Napoleon, who was admired by many for his courage and bravery despite being an enemy of many others.

The date of his defeat was, of course, at the Battle of Waterloo, in June 1815, led not just by the Duke of Wellington but also the now forgotten Prussian, Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher. It is a fact that Napoleon's defeat allowed Geneva the freedom from French repression that resulted in the growth of the latent cylinder musical box industry.

The hat-shaped case is made of plywood veneered with oak or sometimes mahogany. Most movements were made in Germany but some were made in England. The example shown was certainly of a very good standard. There were several different designs defined by the number of keyholes in the dial. A basic timepiece does not sound the hours, and has only one keyhole. Striking clocks have two keyholes, and sound every hour and half hour on a coiled gong. Chiming clocks have three keyholes and sound every hour and quarter hour on metal rods. Fig. 3 shows the example to be a chiming clock. It has five very well tuned metal rods.

Most of the Napoleon clocks played the Westminster chime, as does this example. More complex examples play the Whittington and St. Michael chimes and these require up to nine rods. The musical arrangement is made by a set of 'star' wheels, ganged together so that each operates a felt-tipped striker. Unlike the star wheels of a disc musical box, which have teeth at equally spaced intervals, these star wheels simulate the pins of a cylinder musical box. Each star wheel has teeth spaced to play its tuned bar at the right time.

Despite so many Napoleon clocks being made, they are quite affordable and the better quality ones hold good prices. The famous Westminster Chimes and the other tunes can add character to any collection and the story of Napoleon and his hat make an interesting story to boot! (Nothing to do with a boot or even to a Wellington boot – it just means something 'better'!)

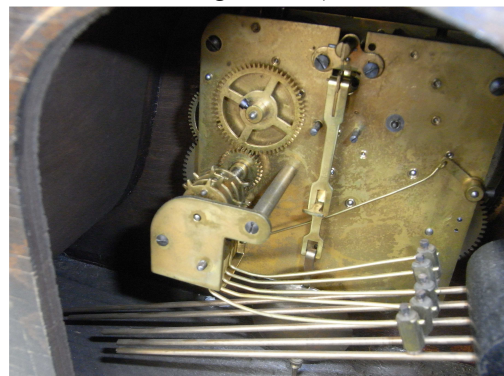


Fig 3: The Movement of the Chiming Clock



**Lid Hinges and Stays - H A V Bulleid describes how to overcome problems that often beset us.**

Cylinder musical box lids were normally designed to remain open at a sufficient angle to support the glass lid without danger of it slamming shut. This was easily achieved by so placing the hinges that the back overhang of the lid rested appropriately against the back of the case. A problem posed by this design feature was how to guard against the ham-fisted operator who would pick up the box by the open lid, and roughly at that. The answer was to use small screws so that they would loosen or pull out rather than split the wood. Accordingly, well fitted countersunk steel wood screws three-eighths of an inch long and size number 3 or 4 are normally ideal. Yet I have seen inch long screws into the case, and screw points actually penetrating the lid veneer. We have all seen resulting splintered lids and case backs. One also sees hinge screws at a drunken angle, forced in anyhow over the broken-off stub of an earlier screw.

If oversize screws have been used, or if the holes are otherwise damaged, they should be plugged with wood carefully whittled to a nice fit and then pressed firmly in after coating thinly with a wood adhesive.

To remove the remnant of a broken screw.

1. Drill a ring of holes all round it, about half an inch deep, with a 3/64 inch (no. 56) drill.
2. Pick out the remnant.
3. Drill 1/4 inch diameter by 5/8 inch deep to clean out.
4. Procure or whittle a piece of 1/4 inch dowel, make sure it is a good fit in the hole, and press gently in after cutting to length and coating with wood adhesive.
5. Leave to dry for a couple of hours before drilling to take new screw.

With the passage of time, even the best seasoned wood shrinks slightly across but not along the grain. This is why the front beading is often pushed awry at the corners of early type lids. It is also the reason why lids often fail to shut properly, the striker plate having become perhaps a sixteenth of an inch short of the hole in the lock plate. I

have known mis-guided people seek to remedy this by altering the hinge position on the lid, thereby causing the lid to open too far and greatly increasing the stress on the hinges. Others ruthlessly remove the striker plate peg, often in a manner frightfully reminiscent of those Wild West dentists. The correct cure is to move the striker plate forward and fill in the resulting narrow gap in the lid behind it with a matching strip of veneer.

**Lid Stays**

The great majority of music box lid stays were made from brass strip about one twentieth of an inch thick, both limbs being about 4 inches long between pivots and the lower limb having its lower hole slotted so as to make it easy to avoid binding in the closed position. The two limbs varied in width from about 5/16 to 5/8 inch and varied in design from quite plain to such embellishments as lyres.

They are easy to make, drilling and filing the two brass strips as a pair and using brass wire about 1/8 inch diameter for the two pin joints. Rivet them lightly for free movement without rattle. A traditionally-shaped L-piece secures the top limb to the lid and a round-head brass screw should be used for the case anchorage, with a fibre washer each side of the stay to prevent rattle.

*From 'Cylinder Musical Box Design and Repair'.*

**Association of Musical Box Collectors**

**Aims and Objectives:**

To promote the enjoyment of mechanical music in all its forms.

To provide opportunities of social interaction to members through meetings and outings of musical and other historical interest.

To establish formal links and working relationships with other national and international organisations in the field of mechanical music.

To encourage research and publication of articles and books on the subject.

To reach out to the public and foster a wider interest in mechanical music.

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The following items are for sale to AMBC members and those of its associated organisations. Surplus from sales will fund AMBC administration costs. The primary allocation will be towards research and further publication for the benefit of AMBC members and that of associated organisations.

Contact P. Bellamy or Ted Brown for P&P details: bellamypaul@btinternet.com or 01403823533.

**A Passion for Barrel Pianos** by Milly & Colin Williams. (See illustration)

This delightful and informative limited edition has over 60 illustrations and charts, most in colour. There are 12 sections dealing with aspects of casework, barrels, gearing, musical arrangement, marking and pinning.

The booklet is A4, ring-backed binding for easy use, with 40 pages of information between the covers.

UK price: £10 + P&P with comparable European and overseas costs to be negotiated.

**Cylinder Musical Box Design & Repair** by HAV Bulleid. £10 + P&P.

**Cylinder Musical Box Technology** by HAV Bulleid. £10 + P&P.

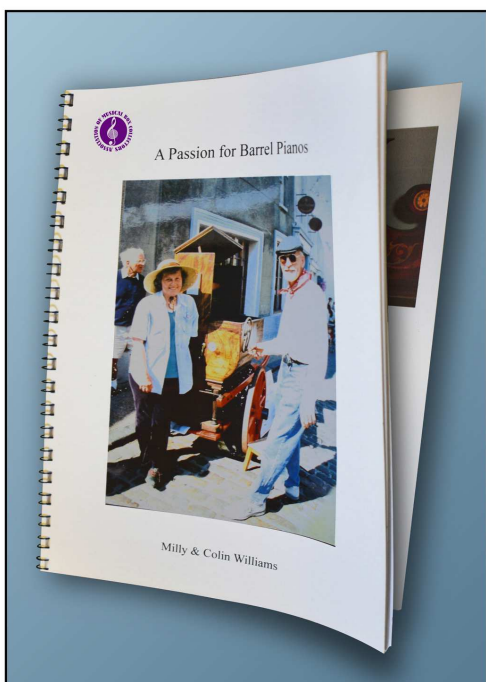
\***Disc Musical Box Book** by K. McElhone. £50 + P&P.

\***The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music** by Paul Bellamy and contributing authors Cunliffe and Ison. £35 + P&P.

\***Musical Box Tune Sheets** (The Tune Sheet Book) and three supplements, by HAV Bulleid.

\***The Organette Book** by K. McElhone. £35 + P&P.

\***Street musicians on Postcards** by Paul Bellamy. £8 + P&P.



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12-tune, 12 bell Musical Bracket clock by Thwaites & Reed of London, retailed by Robert Roskell, Liverpool, circa 1801. See article in Issue 20 of 'Mechanical Music World'.



David Evans. Call 001 250-746-5652 or email mechmusicmuseum@aol.com

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