

From the Editors' Desk

So, what is special in this issue? The box illustrated so well on the front cover is certainly special, and not just to its owner. At a casual glance one could completely miss that it is a musical 'box', as it is such a well sculpted tortoise!

The article on the Maxfield Gem organette details the special restoration skills needed to preserve not only the instruments but their 'software' – in this case, paper rolls – and yet again reminds us that by working collaboratively we can share experiences to further benefit us all.

When we began collecting musical boxes many years ago, it seemed that no maker other than Nicole was considered worthy of cataloguing. Fortunately times have changed and it is fascinating to see and read about the painstaking research which is unpicking the lives of the families involved in the manufacture of musical boxes and attributing patents where appropriate. Nicole certainly still features as a maker of fine quality boxes but now families such as the Lecoultres are receiving the recognition they deserve.

Our thanks go out to Chris Fynes for his article on Gevril, not just thought provoking but superbly illustrated too. Can you help solve the conundrum? Let us know if you can add something.

As I am writing this on New Year's Day it seems

entirely appropriate that we should feature Juliet Fynes' article on Big Ben and the forthcoming restoration of the clock and the tower.

We as an Association have said a final sad farewell to several fellow collectors and friends during the last year. We remember with gratitude their passion and joy in collecting and sharing their instruments and music. As the infant New Year is ushered in, with it must come redoubled efforts to connect with younger people – and share our interests in both the music, the craftsmanship and the charm, which can only be experienced first hand.

One or two small changes to the journal which you may have noticed: the Contents list has been enlarged and expanded to include a brief description of the titled article. This is to enable faster and more accurate location of the item you were searching for. To that end, at the end of this volume of Mechanical Music World (Issue 8 – later this year) we hope to compile an index to the contents.

The Officers list has been moved adjacent to the Chairman's Report for ease of access and to remind you that the Chairman, and indeed all the officers, is here voluntarily, because he is, and they are, pleased to help with any queries. If they do not know the answers, they will know someone who does! Feel free to contact any of us.

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Chairman's Report



Chairman Ted Brown with editor David Evans (left)

The start of another year and I wish you all well. We had a get-together in October for those who wanted to meet our Editors, David and Lesley Evans, who had travelled over from Vancouver Island, Canada. Their uncle, the late John Mansfield, was the founder of the Chanctonbury Ring group. He named it after an ancient hill feature that could be seen from his house. The format of the meeting consisted of at least one main theme such as a type of organette, a composer, or any one of a number of topics for education, information and entertainment.

About 25 of us gathered to make a day of entertainment with Roger Booty showing and playing a restored rare Maxfield 14-note organette. Bernie Brown (see Page 3) showed us how my Model V Orchestrelle *should* be played. An organist, he demonstrated the expressive capability of these fine manual and roll-playing instruments, from the softest piano to the loudest forte, from the slowest tempo to the quickest passages, a virtuoso performance. I have learned two more effective stop combinations that I hadn't previously tried.

On a sad note, we have to report the sudden and untimely passing of Daphne Ladell. A joint committee member with me of another society, she worked tirelessly, enthusiastically and with great generosity as meetings secretary. A superb caterer and organiser, she was a key player of the team that orchestrated 40th, 50th society anniversaries and a joint UK/MBSI meeting as well as many other society meetings and overseas coach tours. A caring person, she played her part in community service as a local councillor and a supporter of Papillon House, a charity for children that suffer Pro-

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found Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Daphne was an avid collector and restorer in her own right, aided in the technicalities by her mentor Clive Houghton. She had her own workshop and a collection that ranged from the antique to the modern. She loved to collect automata as well as modern novelties and children's 'musical' toys. Always making fun, the toilet door usually had some self-starting electronic 'gizmo' to catch the unwary. A long-standing MBSI member, she often visited the States and made many friends there. She was a great ambassador and will be sorely missed.



The Late Daphne Ladell



Two views of an original Paillard simulated rosewood case for 'spare' interchangeable cylinders.



Bernie Brown at the Orchestrelle

Meetings report

This report covers the meeting with the editors in October and the 'Christmas' meeting in November.

Roger Booty demonstrated a rare 14-note Maxfield organette (See his separate article, The Patent Gem Organette on Page 13). Maxfield was an English company established in 1859 by Arthur Maxfield who was involved in the manufacture of sewing machines. The family moved to London in 1879 when his son, John, took over the business based at 118 Upper Street, North London. John took out a patent for a paper music roll perforating machine and a spool for carrying the paper roll. By 1886 the company moved to 326 Liverpool Road, London. They were principally in business as a manufacturer and wholesaler of stationery (paper) products before venturing further into the manufacture of mechanical musical instruments.

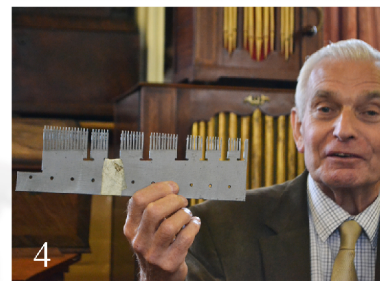
Initially they imported a 14-note organette from the USA. They called it the Empress, removed patent marks and placed their own name and operating instructions, implying they were makers, not agents. They also made their own version of a 14-

note instrument called the Gem that played narrow loops, only 3 13/16 inches wide, of which only one survivor is known. However, they also made a pedal operated 31-note instrument in the shape of a small organ but the punched paper was transported from reel to reel by hand. John's brother Alfred patented an important innovation that allowed Maxfield instruments to play endless bands. This allowed hymns to be played on Sundays as well as music for dances and songs where repetition was needed.

Maxfield made quite an extensive range of high quality instruments including a 5-octave keyboard reed organ, which additionally played 31 note paper rolls. By 1900 the firm entered the player piano market but it was some 12 years later that they operated the Maxfield Player Piano Company Ltd from the same Liverpool Street premises. By 1930 they ceased to make mechanical musical instruments and reverted to wholesale paper manufacture until well into the late 1900s*.

Don Busby gave a talk and demonstration of his experience of making a musical box. It was a

Mechanical Music World



fascinating journey both for him and his audience who marvelled at his ingenuity. Picture 1 shows the musical box in almost its final cased state. He demonstrated a rig that allowed him to crank the cylinder by hand as it played the comb. It enabled him to play the instrument and make adjustments during its final stages using a simple rig comprising plastic gears, picture 2. Picture 3 shows the completed cylinder, an incredibly impressive construction, pinned and ready for playing.

As an aside to his work on the musical box, Don displayed his patience, ingenuity, determination and skill in repairing the comb of another instrument. The damaged parts were cut and shaped to accommodate new sections of teeth, picture 4**. We had a very good day socialising with friends old and new.

A few weeks later, in November, we had our Christmas meeting which was full of interest. The organettes in the morning included several different models: The 'Little Dot', a rare 16-note USA organette; the Organina, a 16-note (American) model; the Seraphone, a 20-note Maxfield (English) model and the Celestina a 20-note by the Mechanical Organette Co, of New York. The English organettes are suction models (air being sucked through the reeds) whereas the American versions operate on air pressure.

Anna Svenson demonstrated her Maxfield Seraphone 20-note organette, picture 5. Then came a further demonstration of a Maxfield Ariel 20-note organette by Roger Booty, picture 6. This is a very rare instrument with four stops acting on two ranks of reeds. Later he demonstrated a 31-note table organette, a rare model thought to be by Maxfield. It had no maker's identification but played 31-note Maxfield music.

In the afternoon, we played a large number of modern Christmas novelties. It was Father Christmas who won the prize for the 'most naff' item. Riding a facsimile Harley Davidson motorbike, he rocked & rolled as he revved-up and sang the most un-seasonal rendition imaginable. Picture 7 is a modern version of the musical juggling clown. Picture 8 is an unlikely tortoise of a less sophisticated kind with top hat and cane, playing "Putting on the Ritz", presented to our membership secretary, Kay, by Annie Tyvand. Unlike the one on our cover this was highly automated and very entertaining. Next was a novel pop-up book, picture 9. It comprised a delightful working fairground scene with its mighty Ferris wheel, a carousel that actually played when its clockwork motor was wound by a pull-cord. Its miniature clockwork train snaked its way around the

complex track and engine shed. Picture 10 was a combination of old and new by John Natrass. He used an old base and cylinder movement from a salvaged display dome, the glass long-since gone. The models are from dolls' house merchants, cunningly automated by means of cogs and cams driven by a connection to movement. A truly remarkable example of recycling! Picture 11 is 'guess who' demonstrating a fairly old electronic Christmas card that not only played but in which the fireplace also lit up. The last novelty display was a series of toys, picture 12. Most were musical and all were automata.

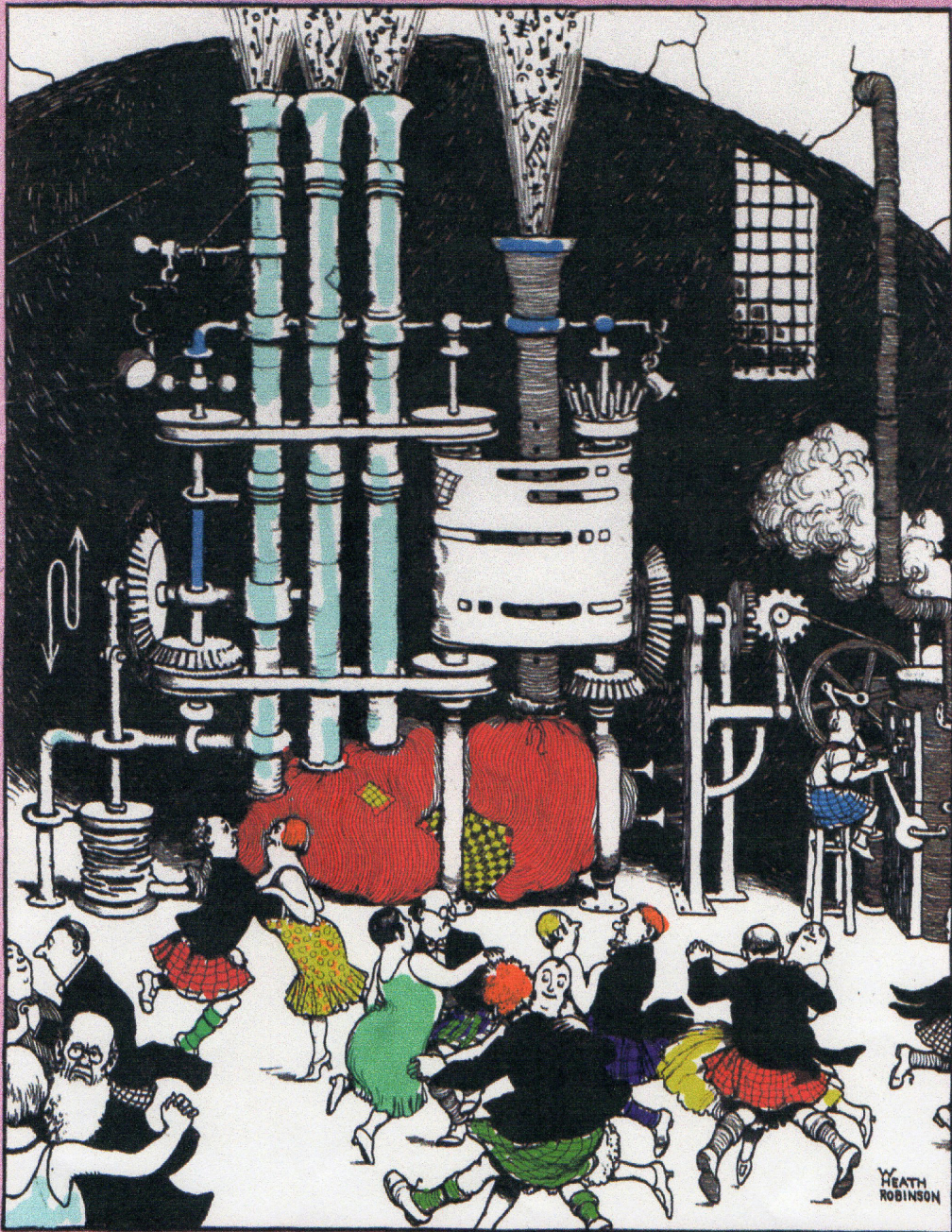
Our two recent meetings in October and November illustrated the range of topics, the talents and the entertainment members get when they have the opportunity to meet and share their work and collections with others.

Our meetings are not just about the old but also the new. Picture 13 shows Ted Brown with a modern key-wind and battery operated toy photographer. This crazy creature careers around the table then stops. It raises its arms to take a flash-photograph before racing off again to repeat the act for as long as its spring motor allows. This fun item shows how automata are as much fun today as they were hundreds of years ago. They are also becoming quite rare due to limited production runs. Collecting them can be not only a delight but also an interesting hobby.

*Note: More information can be found in K. McElhone's 'The Organette Book', published and produced for MBSGB in 2002 by Ted Brown. Ted was the Publications Committee chairman (not Paul Bellamy, as stated on page iii of the book; Paul was the proofreader.) Ted wrote the chapter on organette restoration, covering both the suction type (American) and the pressure type (UK).

**Note: A CD of Don's work is available for just £5 + postage. It is full of detail and technical information concerning every step of his work. He demonstrates his way of cutting the comb, hardening and tempering, shaping comb teeth, fitting dampers, making and pinning the cylinder and so much more.

W. HEATH ROBINSON I N V E N T I O N S



All about names, Part 5: Made by Lecoultre?

A tribute to Henri-Joseph Lecoultre

It is inevitable that when one sees or hears a musical box one of the first questions asked is “Who made it?” The answer may be far more complex than it seems but more of that a little later. The auction houses and sellers may be far more explicit: “Made by Lecoultre”. So there we have it, Lecoultre made it!

The source of that family name as far as Switzerland is concerned stems from the 16th Century headed by Pierre Lecoultre. At that time he was probably called le Coultre. He was a refugee, fleeing from religious persecution along with many other French Huguenots who were Christian Protestants. The Jewish community were equally affected. They brought with them craft skills and family ties that were fundamental to survival at the bottom end of an established social hierarchy in their new found homelands. They migrated to other lands but one of choice was nearby Switzerland. Pierre arrived in Geneva in 1558 from the French town of Lisy-sur-Oureq.

Geneva was a city-state on the borders of France, crowded, bustling with energy but not an easy place for a displaced person to settle. Although he obtained the status of ‘inhabitant’ in Geneva, then known as the Protestant Rome, there was a valley not far away where life was still hard but settlers more welcome. He was attracted to le Chenit, a settlement among scrub oaks, with a nearby well-beaten footpath, a sentier, not far from Le Lieu, ‘the place’, all located within the Vallée de Joux.

Pierre purchased a plot of land and soon the small community developed. He married and by 1612 his son built a church. A church was more than a focus within any community. It served many purposes other than religion. Thus the church became the centre of their community, which they named le Sentier. A century or so was to pass before that early settlement became the headquarters of the internationally famous Lecoultre Company, carrying that name through to the present day.

Another family of similar origins was Nicole. There were business connections as well as marriage ties between the Lecoultres and the Nicoles. For example, Louise-Françoise-Elizabeth Nicole (1793-1852), the daughter of one François Nicole married a François-Louis Lecoultre. The dates are significant because they are within the period described by the late HAV (Anthony) Bulleid as the ‘Golden Age’ of the musical

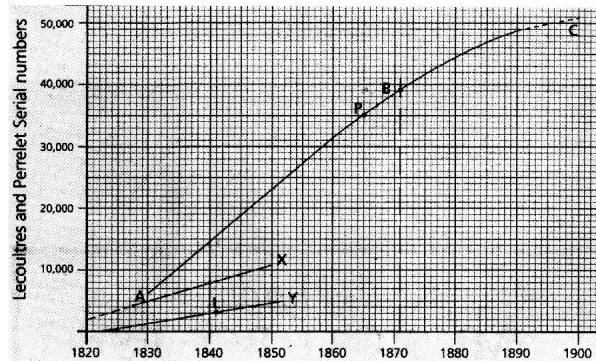


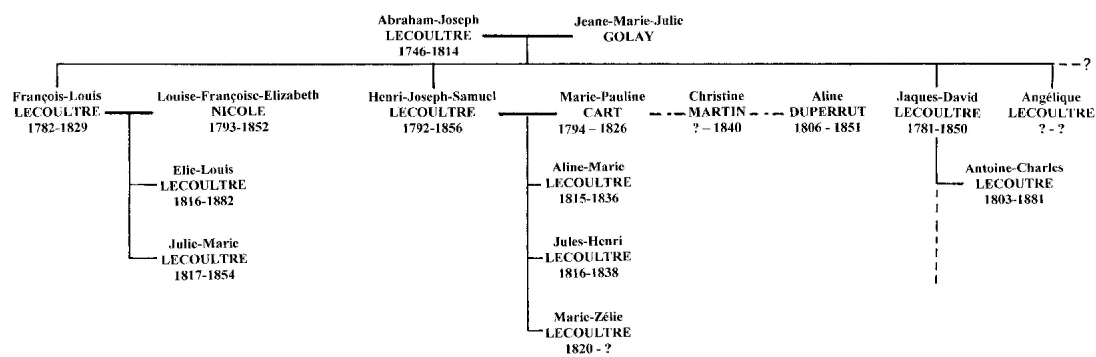
Fig 1. Bulleid's Lecoultre dating chart

box. Pierre Germain researched the Lecoultre family and others such as Olin Tilotson and Christian Eric examined the Nicoles.

There were two main branches of the Lecoultres associated with watch and musical box manufacture and development, the Golays and the Piguets. It is wrong not to distinguish between them if one wants to understand the provenance of a ‘Lecoultre’ musical box. Anthony Bulleid thought that their working and family relationships were so close that he did not consider it necessary to make much distinction between them other than to publish their separate serial number systems on his dating charts. This is Chart 8 for Lecoultres & Perrelet in his Musical Box Tune Sheet book and also its third supplement (See fig 1.) For practical purposes this may be so but the types of movement and the developments over time can only be appreciated if based on “who did what, where and when!”

His chart shows one for David Lecoultre (thought to be Jaques-David of the Gokay branch), another for his brother Henri-Joseph and yet another for the firms F. Lecoultre Frères and Lecoultre & Brechet. The family names are made more complicated by the fact that there is an Henri-Samuel Lecoultre in the Piguets branch and an Henri-Joseph-Samuel in the Gokay branch. Both branches have a François, François-Louis (1782-1829) of the Gokay branch, connected with François Nicole and François-Charles (1801-1871) of the Piguets branch who is almost certain to be the F. Lecoultre of the F. Lecoultre Frères date line.

John E. T. Clark inadvertently provided a clue in his first book when he listed the attendees at the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park,



THE LECOULTRE - GOLAY BRANCH
 Notes: Wife of Jaques David unknown.
 Number of Lecoultrre - Golay children unknown
 Plate 3.1

Fig 2. Lecoultrre-Golay family tree

London: D. Lecoultrre & Son of Brassus; Lecoultrre Brothers of Brassus. Clearly these were two different Lecoultrre firms, D for David of the Golays and François Lecoultrre of the Lecoultrre Frères of the Piguets. There is no record at the Exhibition of David's brother, Henri-Joseph, who died in 1856 and who lived and worked in Geneva. It seems reasonable to assume that there was no significant working connection between these family groups.

Bulleid, however, believed there was a close working connection between them, those of the Piguets Branch who settled mainly in Geneva and those of the Golay Branch who remained in the Joux valley. He had his Eureka moment when he discovered a movement serial number 31367. According to his dating chart he knew it was made about 1860 and was the product of F. Lecoultrre Frères. It had their typical tune sheet with its letters LF in the top right cartouche and B.B. & C in the bottom central cartouche. The latter were agents, Berens, Blumberg & Co of London. The comb carried another clue, a stamp with the letters LF/Gve in a lozenge. This was the mark of the Geneva Lecoultrres, whoever they were? Anthony Bulleid's ability to seek out the meaning behind these almost insignificant clues was remarkable and thus he demonstrated that there *was* some interaction between them. However, as one swallow does not necessarily herald summer that one example is insufficient to say how close that relationship was. The date is also too late for both David and Henri. Perhaps someone has an answer to this riddle.

By 1860, significant technical change in the manufacture of musical box movements had taken place and was to continue. Bulleid perceived that date as the end of the 'Golden Age' defined by the changeover by practically all makers from the old-fashioned

clock-and-watch key-wind standard to the adoption of lever-wind. It took barely three years in transition with some exceptions. Some key-wind movements were adapted to lever-wind. Ratchet-wind keys were also available as an alternative.

The dating charts for the brothers David and Henri-Joseph Lecoultrre of the Golay branch show that these two were separate family groups. By the end of the golden era only David's son, Antoine-Charles, was alive. Their tune sheets are distinctly different, as were their movements, another clue to indicate that cooperation between the family members may not always have been so. Here there is definite evidence of competition. These two brothers should be recognised as amongst the greatest of the early makers. Their competitive instincts seem to be reflected in the way both achieved a similar objective in totally different ways.

Germain based his research of the two branches, Lecoultrre-Golay and Lecoultrre-Piguets, on the work of Charles A. Roche of Geneva. He published a history for private use in 1919 entitled: *La Famille Le Coultre, originaire de Lizy-sur-Ourcq du 16e au 20e siècle*. There were extensive family connections in the Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva and also Ste.-Croix. The same family names occur so frequently that attribution of a name to a particular family member is quite confusing, none more so than D. Lecoultrre, which is presumed to be David Lecoultrre whose name was also probably Jaques-David Lecoultrre. The use of a second name by its owner seems to occur often, causing much confusion. The adoption of the wife's family name upon marriage was also common practice, usually hyphenated but not always consistently so. Worse, partnerships had a similar form. Thus, until proven otherwise, Jaques-David is as-

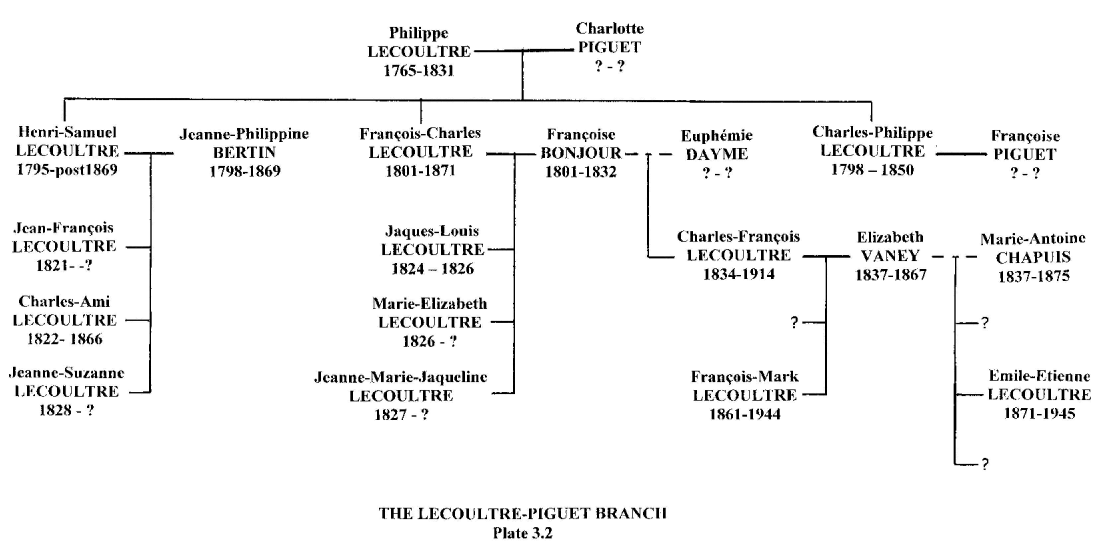


Fig 3. Lecoultre-Piguet family tree

sumed to be David Lecoultre and his brother was Henri-Joseph-Samuel.

This is not the only possible example of a second name being used in preferences to a first given name. The Lecoultre-Golay branch had at its head Abraham-Joseph Lecoultre and Jeanne-Marie-Julie Golay. The mother lived for a time with son Henri-Joseph-Samuel. Thus, when a movement is found stamped HL MG, a first guess is that the initials stand for Henri Lecoultre and Jean-Marie Golay as a family partnership, i.e. the possible use of her second name. We shall see that Henri-Joseph also referred to himself by the separate use of both first and second given names, Henri or Joseph.

L.G. Jaccard wrote that Abraham-Louis Cuendet secretly contacted Frères Lecoultre about 1811 in the Joux valley at Au Bas de Chenit. Together with the Justice of the Peace of Le Lieu, an Henri Jaccard of Cuillairy (a suburb of Ste.-Croix) and another Henry Jaccard, said not to be directly related and nicknamed 'à chez Baptiste', began making instruments similar to those made in the Joux. His reference to Frères Lecoultre leaves some doubt as to which branch of the family he makes reference. A good guess would be the Piguet's.

The two family trees are shown as figs 2 and 3. Jacques-David Lecoultre (1781-1850) was said to be a blacksmith who lived and worked in the Joux Valley, a maker of ploughs and knives. Germain recounts that he forged and filed combs and was known to supply both his brother Henri and son Antoine Charles. The confusion about names is an ever-present hazard. For example, Chapuis incorrectly wrote that Henri and

François were the sons of Jaques Lecoultre, an error in both the English and French versions of his book. Jaques (David?), Henri and François moved to Geneva in that magical year, 1815, to supervise musical box manufacture. He recalls that Henri invented an articulated spherical device used with drilling machines in the preparation of cylinders.

Bulleid wrote that David was probably the first to make a single-comb Forte Piano movement. This term is correct for the period up to the early 19th century and reflects its use for this term applied to the loud-and-soft expression of the musical box. Pianos at that time were in transition from lighter construction, thinner strings and light, leather-covered hammers to the more robust modern form of the pianoforte. Both Henri and David developed the forte-piano effect by the use of long and short pins and each chose to do so in completely different ways. They went even further by introducing a further degree of expression, *crescendo* and *diminuendo*. Both were incredible innovators, so why did they choose to compete in this way? This was a time before the existence of patents!

Henri and David Lecoultre movements had their own serial numbers, different to the F. Lecoultre Frères one of the Piguet branch. There was a large variety of tune sheet types with different comb details and bedplate markings. A common feature for David was a standard thickness comb stock with cast iron comb base whereas Henri tended to use thick comb stock with a thin brass wedge underneath. There is positive evidence that standard thickness comb stock was in general use and supplied in imperial measurements, indicative of English standard stock. Their long-and-

short-pin Forte Piano single-comb movements had different features, their combs having different hooked tooth profiles. Tooth tip profiles also tended to be different, David with square ended tips and David with profiled ones.

Both produced the effect by raking pins to change their effective height so producing forte for the longest and piano for the shortest. By progressive raking they created diminuendo and crescendo. This must have been a hand operation, so how was it done? The answer is a guess but probably quite simple. When a tune is pricked before drilling (they were separate operations at the time) and then pinned, they were then filed to height concentric with the cylinder axis. They would then be raked to the lowest of the piano range. The musical score was used for pricking and so, by using that score again, the crescendo and diminuendo pins for each tune track could be achieved by manually bending the raked pins from the loudest to the softest of the piano range.

A close study of an Henri movement revealed a complex three or four stage operation, starting with the pinning and raking and adjustment of the piano parts and then the same for the forte parts. Of course, the loud was no louder than the sound of a normal movement of its time. David may have achieved the effect in a similar way but there were other differences to indicate this was not so. For example both used hooked teeth but they had different hook profiles. The problem is that tooth tip-release and damper operation becomes a problem as pin rake angles increase. Henry overcame this by bending down a tooth near the bottom and then bending it up again nearer its tip. The extreme bass tooth had a

greater degree of bending-down-then-up, which decreased to almost zero somewhere towards the middle along the comb. The bending effect produces a clearly visible pattern not seen on David's forte-piano combs. The combination of tip angle, rake angle, tooth profile and damper shape was both a design and handcraft skill. No doubt costly and time consuming but also musically very effective to the concentrating ear.

When pins are raked excessively (or even at all) musical timing is affected. For small rake angles the ear may not detect any difference. As raking increases the timing becomes noticeable. Both makers overcame this effect by pricking the forte (long) pins slightly in arrears to the piano pins. Exactly how they chose this timing differential when setting up the dividing gears for three and four beats to the bar remains a mystery.

D. Lecoultre became D. Lecoultre et Fils, Brassus. This indicates David was no longer in Geneva but established there with his sons, whose names remain unknown, as does the foundation date. The only clue is the Bulleid dateline that suggests anywhere between 1820 and 1827. Antoine-Charles, who made combs between 1823 and 1828, became a watchmaker. A David Lecoultre et Fils tune sheet, serial 9385, circa 1848, (TSB64) is reproduced as fig 4. It uses the terms *Rouage à Balancier, Forte et Piano, Crescendo* and *Diminuendo*. The tune sheet also has the words D. Lecoultre et Fils, le Brassus, Canton de Vaud written in the top right panel. Although David died in 1850, a two-comb *Forte Piano* musical box bearing his name was shown at the Great exhibition of London in 1851.

In the text of Chart 8 Bulleid wrote: "Line X is for David Lecoultre, 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 a serial number about 70,000". He wrote elsewhere: "D. Lecoultre, on changing to Lecoultre Frères would have had a strong motive in joining the Lecoultre serial number system; particularly as they both used the same agent Berens, Blumberg."

There is, in fact, no evidence that he joined the brothers at Geneva as an integral part of their working relationship or that he used their serial numbers. David died in 1850. Because his business was D. Lecoultre et fils of Brassus it is obvious he had more

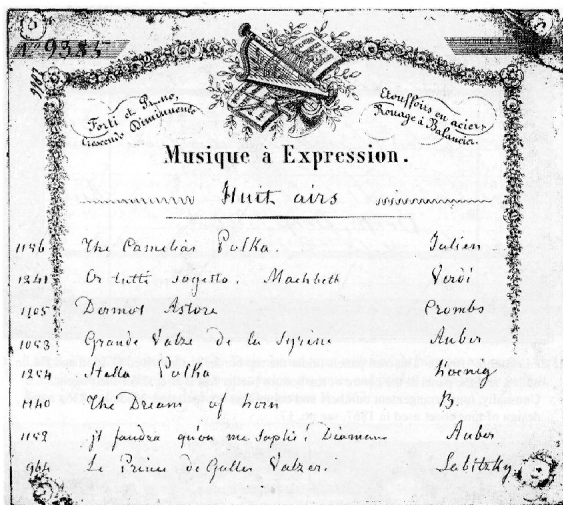


Fig 4. David Lecoultre et fils tune sheet

than one son and they may have joined with the F' Lecoultre branch; it is purely speculative, though.

Germain also drew attention to a 3-bell musical box with D. LECOULTRE, BRECHET, A GENEVE stamped on the bedplate, serial 24824, circa 1851. This seems to create another anomaly because Brechet has been reported as having had a partnership with Francois-Charles Lecoultre from 1844 to 1854. However, it is quite possible and more than likely it was the same Bréchet. There is still much uncertainty about these family and working relationships, aggravated by the similarity of names and possibly in errors of interpretation by past authors. One hopes that this account does not aggravate the situation further.

Of all the Lecoultres, Henri-Joseph-Samuel (1792-1856) deserves more recognition. He was also known as H. Lecoultre-Duperrut (Aline Duperrut was his third wife) and Lecoultre & Granger (Granger being a partner). He was the youngest of the three brothers and ten years younger than François. He was known by both names, Henri Lecoultre and Joseph Lecoultre but is not to be confused with the Henri-Samuel of the Lecoultre-Piguet branch. He visited Geneva in 1816 and then returned to Le Chenit for a time but finally settled back in Geneva in June 1822 with his wife, Marie-Pauline, (né Cart, 1794-1826) called Marianne and their three children at rue Rousseau 60. François Nicole and brother François-Louis Lecoultre lived on the first floor of the same premises. He lived there with his mother, Jeane-Marie-Julie, née Golay, and two workers. One was his niece *Julie Meylan*, aged 22, and the other a 26-year-old watchmaker David Raymond from Le Chenit. It is possible this was David-Marc-Samuel Raymond, mentioned by Geneva archivist W. Zurbuchen. Zurbuchen did not give the date but it was at another address, rue de Cendrier 118, which by co-incidence was occupied some years later by Pierre-Moïse and David-Elie Nicole. This David-Marc-Samuel, born 1809, was listed as a musical box maker but probably a worker, not a maker. He is thought to have married another Nicole called Judith and went to London about 1835-1840. The Geneva directories also record dates of 1831 and 1835 as Henri's continuing business after the death of his brother, as follows: Lecoultre, Rousseau 60, maker of large musical boxes.

Germain quoted from letters to his brother Jacques-David that Geneva was expensive and the accommodation not well furnished. In 1822 he wrote to say that business was poor with many movements still for sale and yet he could only continue making them in the



Fig 5. Henri Lecoultre tune sheet with agent's name Malignon

hope that sales would revive. He also requested a dozen blanks that Henri cut himself, confirming Bulleid's belief that there was co-operation. It seems to be that they would help each other out rather than compete for the limited market they served.

Henri and Marie-Pauline had three children. Aline-Marie was born in 1815 but died in 1836. A son, Jules-Henri was born 1816 and another daughter Marie-Zélie in 1820. She died aged 32. Henri continued in business at rue Rousseau 60. It is the same address, as listed in the 1834 census, for Henri François Raymond Nicole, the son-in-law of François Nicole. In 1836, the year of Aline's death, he moved to rue Montbrillant 127, a suburb of Geneva called Petit-Saconnex. Two years later, in 1838, he lost his son Jules-Henri. In 1839 he married again to Christine Martine but she died three weeks later in Montreaux. Henri suffered from *ennui*, which probably meant he was depressed. After the loss of his brother François in 1829 and the deaths of his children, it is not surprising.

In 1840 Henri entered into partnership with Jean-François Granger. He married then again in 1841 to Aline Duperrut (born 1806) and his partner witnessed the marriage. Bulleid wrote that he traded under the name of J. Lecoultre-Duperrut from 1841, here using the initial of his first name, Joseph. He followed the custom of taking the wife's family name, hence Henri-Joseph Lecoultre-Duperrut. The partnership with Granger lasted until 1844 as recorded in the Geneva Directory. An Henri tune sheet circa 1845 is shown in fig 5. Note the differences to that of his brother David. It was known as Lecoultre & Granger, makers of musical boxes, quai des Bergues 27. It was Granger's address where he died in December that year. Henri's bad luck continued when Aline died in 1851. Henri, now living at 214, Gervais Square, survived a few more years, dying on October 23rd 1856. He was 64



Fig 6. Snuff box with movement and case stamped HL and G years old.

Lecoultré & Granger movements are quite rare, identified by that name stamped on the comb. Henri's musical boxes were typical key-wind movements. They had polished brass bedplates distinguished by blued comb screws without washers. His Forte Piano models had a governor with weights on the vanes. A major innovation of his was a multi-cylinder interchangeable version, called *Rechange*. This was the precursor of the true interchangeable cylinders. Henri's cylinders had to be made to fit the movement whereas true interchangeable movements had coarser clearances and tolerances and could be made to order later.

Germain wrote that the invention of the revolver-type of *Interchangeable* movement according to one writer, Wartman, was also by Henri-Joseph but that other accounts (no references given) said it was his sister Angelique who should be credited with the invention. There is no evidence to confirm either statement.

There is little evidence as to what extent Henri-Joseph produced small tabatière-type movements. One example was a 2-air movement, serial 11973 stamped on the bedplate. It was housed in a painted tin case, typical of the souvenir-type sold by many agents and makers. It had a cylinder 2.4ins (6.2cms) long and a 70-tooth comb stamped H. Lecoultré in letters about 2mm high. The names of the airs were scratched on the bottom of the case: *Entendez vous* and *Romance*. The lid and case had a yellow background with a black image of almost photographic quality of the Hotel de l'Union, Chamonix. Fig 6 shows another snuffbox movement with the letters HL and G stamped on the inside of the lid and base of the compartment. It is presumed that this is for Henri with the unknown G. Was it for Granger or Golay?

The serial number poses a dating problem when compared with Bulleid's dating chart for Henri-Joseph Lecoultré. The highest number is estimated to be 5000 in 1856, the date of his death. *Entendez-vous* is a traditional French song, possibly *Entendez-vous dans le feu tous ces bruits mystérieux*. It was popular and still known today but gives no clue to the date of the movement. At the time of writing, only two other small movements of the snuffbox type, with H. Lecoultré stamped on the comb, are listed in the International Musical Box Register. They are serial 14198, with 2-airs and serial 16233, with 6-airs. The extent of this range is thus 11973-16233, all seemingly aligning with the Bulleid date line for his Lecoultré & Perrelet dating chart (reference Tune Sheet Book supplement 3). This spans 1837 to 1842.

The lowest Lecoultré movement of this type is serial 107 and is stamped LECOULTRE. The few movements known with this name might be by Henri-Samuel Lecoultré of the Piguët family branch, not Henri-Joseph Lecoultré of the Golay branch and thus possibly not part of the F. Lecoultré production or the others on Bulleid's dating Chart 8. It remains guesswork. However, whether or not this is true, if one extrapolates back to the beginning of the F. Lecoultré curve it appears to start in 1825. The simple explanation is that Henri probably bought serials 11973 & 14198 from Francois-Charles Lecoultré, the F. Lecoultré Frères of the Lecoultré-Piguët branch.

There we have it. Clearly made by Lecoultré. True, of course but which one? As regards Henri, he was a man of exceptional skill and fortitude whose personal circumstances can only be described as tragic. To own something made by him is something to be treasured and a legacy to his memory.

P.S You are advised not buy one that has been repinned. If you do, the timing will be out, the crescendo, diminuendo and the piano will be lost. All that remains is the forte. Can the original music ever be recovered? Never say never but please let us know. Only one person has made that attempt and perhaps he would like to let us know more about that effort. There is so much more to be learned. The Editors will always welcome any comment or contribution to this article.

The Patent Gem Organette

by Roger Booty

(Roger Booty is an avid collector of organettes. He has an extensive knowledge, particularly of some of the very rare examples, possibly unique in the literal sense of being the only one known. Here, Roger gives an account of how he created a new repertoire of music for a rare instrument).

Disc musical boxes can cause consternation if you have one with an unusual size of disc. Expanding the collection, even starting one, can prove difficult. This applies also to organettes, especially continental models whether they play discs, strips, endless bands or rings*. Machines playing rolls and endless bands are less of a problem because, if you are unable to find any original music, you can resort to arranging and cutting your own music.

The Patent Gem Organette, picture 1, only plays endless bands and luckily it proved not too difficult to solve the problem of finding suitable music. As you can see, mice had eaten the treble end of four endless bands, picture 2. The Gem was made by Maxfield and sons Ltd, 326



Picture 1: Maxfield Patent Gem Organette

Liverpool Road, North London. It likely dates from around 1900 and this example is the only one known. The other machines made by Maxfield are the Seraphone, Ariel, the double voiced Ariel, and the Pneumatic 31-note organ. They all play endless bands made via an arrangement covered by their 1887 patent no. 16,748. The patent actually illustrates an American organette, the 20-note Orchestrone, which they adapted to play the endless bands. The idea obviously caught on as most, if not all Orchestrone imported into the UK, were adapted by Maxfield and renamed either the Fairy Musician or Peerless Pneumatic Organ. The smaller 14-note roll-playing Jubal Orchestrone was also adapted to play endless bands but retained its original name.

So how did I solve the dilemma of creating new music the Gem? I knew the Peerless and Seraphone had the same 20-note scale, also that the music on both machines travelled at the same speed over the tracker bar, which admits air to the reeds as the punch music passes over. The only difference was that the Peerless music strip was only $3 \frac{5}{8}$ inches wide against the Seraphone at $5 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. I also knew that the 14-note scales of the Jubal and Gem were identical. So, did by any remote chance their music travel at the same speed? I called Ted Brown, the only person I know who has a Jubal, and asked him how long it took for 38 inches of music to pass over the tracker bar. His answer delighted me no end when he confirmed it travelled at exactly the same rate. This meant that I could borrow his $2 \frac{5}{8}$ inch Jubal music and transfer it across to the $3 \frac{13}{16}$ inches wide bands of the Gem. Luckily everything worked out correctly and I now have a nice little collection of bands, albeit not copies of original Maxfield music but at least copies of contemporary music.

*See 'Phoenix' organettes, (The Organette Book).



Picture 2: Roger with mouse-eaten band

Maybe we have been looking in the wrong place for the name. When I Googled the words ‘Gevril watches - Gevril Group’ it came up with the following text:

“*Jacques Gevril was an up-and-coming watch and clockmaker in 1758 when he accompanied his colleague Pierre Jaquet-Droz on a trip to Madrid. There, the men presented a selection of complex musical automata to King Ferdinand VI. The king was so impressed he bought every piece. Jaquet-Droz returned home the following year but Gevril remained in Spain to fortify his reputation as a master watchmaker and was appointed Royal Watchmaker by the king. Gevril lived in Spain for many years thereafter, refining his craft and producing watches for the Crown. Gevril’s traditions were survived by future generations of watchmakers including Moyse Gevril and Daniel Gevril, who built their reputations on horological innovations and artistic enamelling techniques. Today Gevril pocket watches are highly collectible: one is located in the Museum of Geneva and another is part of the collection of the Wilsdorf family, founders of Rolex.*”

This was accompanied by a video showing examples of these fine antique pocket watches. Today, amongst other watches, they make the most attractive ‘art-deco’ style American watches.

So far, I have been able to trace the names of a FRANÇOIS GEVRIL and a FRÉDÉRIC GEVRIL, who were family relatives during the early 19th century, but no clues beyond that.

Can anybody else shed some light on this conundrum?

Musical Box Music & Composers

Writing in 1994, H A V Bulleid* covered the subject of the composers of some of the more popular tunes found on cylinder musical boxes. Since then, more research has been conducted and the Internet has simplified the task of discovering details of much music, including dates and locations of performances etc. From time to time we shall be covering most of Bulleid’s observations on the subject, in some instances supplemented by further research. In this issue we revisit Bulleid’s work, starting with composers beginning with the letters A and B. He wrote:

Knowing the origin of the tunes adds to the interest and value of a musical box, and can also help in dating.

Tune arrangers were at work right from the 17th century, mainly adapting song music for various musical instruments and orchestral music for the piano and its antecedents. Eminent arrangers included Bach and Liszt; those of less eminence could be just as effective. By the early 19th century there was extensive know-how about arranging, which explains why such excellent arrangements are heard even on the very earliest musical boxes.

When tune sheets duly credit the composers they are about 99% accurate. The most common error is to give the credit to an arranger or performer - for example, to singer Sinclair for Bishop’s Home Sweet Home.

The forty composers here noted (*from time to time – Ed*) vary from classic to popular, from still famous to almost forgotten, and from opera to music hall. What they have in common is at least one of their tunes preserved on cylinder musical boxes.

Abt

The German composer Franz Wilhelm Abt (1819-1885) was a popular choirmaster and composer specializing in songs and male choral music, running to over 600 opus numbers, including two operas in 1873 and several song cycles. He is best remembered for *When the Swallows Homeward Fly* (1850) and *Good Night, My Sweet Child* (opus 137).

He was a very successful director of choral societies in Zurich from 1842 to 1852, he conducted in most European capital cities, and had a triumphant tour of the USA in 1872.

Adam

The French composer Charles Adolphe Adam (1803-1856) was, like his father, a piano teacher and composer. His 80 works for the theatre included three ballets and many operettas; their tunes are often heard on cylinder musical boxes. They include:

1831 Casimir.

1834 Le Chalet. This was Adam’s first big

success, it was called Swiss Cottage in England.

1836 *Le Postilion de Longjumeau*. The postilion's song was said to be a show-stopper. It is on Polyphons 1579 and 5109.

1841 *Giselle*. (Ballet)

1850 *Giralda*.

1852 *Si j'étais Roi*.

1852 *La Poupee de Nuremberg*

1856 *Le Corsaire*. (Ballet)

Ascher

Josef Ascher (1829-1869) was a German composer of piano music. His background and his compositions and their dates are not easy to trace. The following items are to be found on cylinder musical boxes after about 1855. I think they all originated with German titles, but the Swiss musical box makers often translated them into French or English, which I have copied in these few examples:

Alice Where Art Thou?	1861
Le Chalet	1861
Danse Espagnole	1854
Dozia (Mazurka)	1854
La Perle du Nord	1855
Les Trompettes du Regiment (Polka)	1863
Les Grelots (Mazurka)	1858

Ascher is best remembered for the internationally famous ballad "*Alice...*" which is on Polyphon 10143.

Benedict

Sir Julius Benedict (1804-1885), an English composer, was Weber's first pupil in 1821. He conducted at the Norwich Festival every year from 1845 until 1878. He wrote nine operas including an adaptation of Flotow's *Stradella* in 1846; only three of the works are likely to appear on tune sheets and the last named was his only real success:

The Gypsy's Warning	1838
The Crusaders	1846
The Lily of Killarney	1862

Boiëldieu

François Adrien Boiëldieu (1775-1834) was the leading opera composer in France during the first quarter of the 19th century. He was trained by the Rouen cathedral organist and became a concert

pianist, performing his own compositions. He wrote his first opera-comique in 1793 and finished with a score of 36 operas, some in collaboration with Cherubini, Herold, and others. Those heard on musical boxes include:

Le Calife de Bagdad	1800
Ma Tante Aurore	1803
Bayard à Mézières	1814
Le Petit Chaperon Rouge	1818
La Dame Blanche	1825

This white lady frequently appears on early overture boxes. Citizens of Geneva are said to have greatly admired the music of Boiëldieu, and Professor Chapuis interestingly suggested that some of the tune arrangers may have been specially inspired by his *Harp Concerto*, composed in 1795.

Bucalossi

Three members of the comparatively gifted Bucalossi family settled in England around 1865; they were Brigade, a musical director and producer; Ernest, a prolific composer best known for his operetta *La Ghana* (1886) and his *Grasshopper dance* (1905); and, by far the best known of the trio, Procida who was prolific at composing and arranging, and adapting. His first comic opera, *Pom* (London, 1876), was fairly successful. He annoyed The Times who commented "Its only merit is in the music for which Signer Bucalossi is not so much responsible as are Offenbach and Lecocq." However, he scored a considerable success with *Les Manteaux Noirs* in 1882 and got by with *Delia* (1889) and *Br. George* (1892). Both Procida and Ernest also composed masses of song and dance tunes so accurate attribution is practically impossible. The waltz *My Queen* (1860) is by Procida while Ernest has his *Careless Cuckoos* on Polyphon 50705.

As an arranger Procida Bucalossi adapted current popular opera tunes for quadrilles and other dances and he must have made quite an impression because in the Welte Organ catalog of music rolls in about 1895 he is credited as the composer of several waltzes including *The Mikado* and *The Gondoliers*.

* *Cylinder Musical Box Technology*, Almar Press, New York, 1994

BIG BEN

Juliet Fynes looks at its history and construction

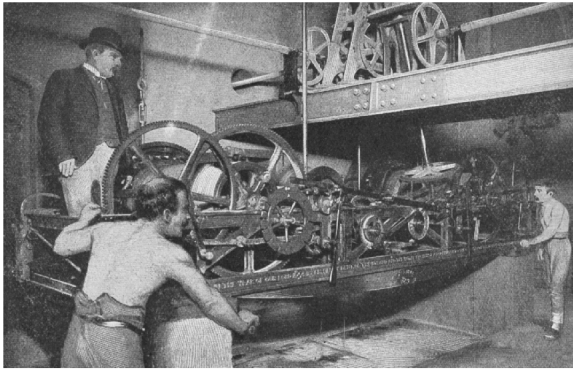


Fig 1. Winding time in 1900 - every three days.

Big Ben is, of course, the nickname for the great bell that booms out the hours over Parliament, and throughout the country and the rest of the world via radio and television. It is also convenient shorthand to describe the clock and the iconic tower in which it is housed – now known as the Elizabeth Tower in honour of Her Majesty’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

During 2017 it is to fall silent for several months whilst urgent repairs are carried out to the clock mechanism. The fabric of the tower is also in a poor state and the refurbishment is scheduled to take three years. The good news is that at the same time a lift will be installed making visits easier for those who cannot manage the 334 stone steps.

The mechanism of the Great Clock was designed by Edmund Beckett Denison and George Airy, the Astronomer Royal. Construction was entrusted to the London firm of E J Dent, who completed it in 1854. Pugin’s tower took another five years, during which time Denison was able to experiment and instead of using the deadbeat escapement and remontoire, as originally planned, he substituted the more accurate three-legged gravity escapement.

The quarter bells were cast by John Warner & Sons in London. They also cast the original Big Ben in their Stockton-on-Tees foundry, but it cracked beyond repair during testing and it was melted down and a replacement cast at the Whitechapel Foundry. At over thirteen tons it was the largest bell ever cast in Britain at that time and became an instant celebrity. Transporting the bell the few miles from the foundry to the Houses of Parliament was a major event. Traffic stopped as the bell, mounted on a trolley drawn by sixteen brightly berribboned horses, made its way through the streets, which had been decorated for the occasion, cheered

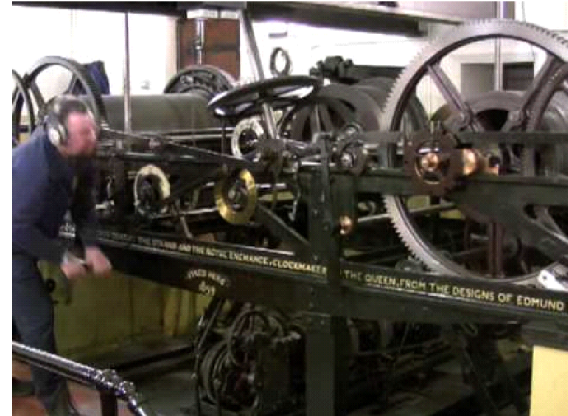


Fig2. Winding time in 2016

along by enthusiastic crowds.

It first chimed in 1859 but in a matter of months it had also cracked due to the hammer being too heavy. It was out of service for three years, but eventually having been given an eighth of a turn and a lighter hammer, rang out with the distinctive tone we still hear today.

The famous “Westminster Chimes”, rung on the quarter bells, were actually written in 1793 for a new clock in the church of St Mary the Great, the university church in Cambridge. It is said to be based on the tune “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth” from Handel’s “Messiah”.

In an article in Volume V of the *Harmsworth Magazine*, c1900, there is a description of a visit to take the first publicly available photographs of Big Ben from the interior. One shows two men, stripped to the waist, winding the clock (Fig 1); the going train, chiming train and striking train. This was hard labour, done three times a week and taking several hours. Today a team of four still undertakes the thrice weekly winding but it has been eased since electric motors were installed in 1912 to wind the chiming and striking trains, but the team still have to take turns winding the going train by hand (Fig2). The accuracy of timekeeping is maintained by the gravity escapement, which is particularly suited to turret clocks, and also the construction of the pendulum. This is made of concentric tubes of zinc and steel to overcome the alteration in length due to changes in temperature. Fine adjustments were, and still are, made by the addition or subtraction of old pennies on to the pendulum bob. Each period of the pendulum is two seconds and adding or subtracting a penny will change the clock’s speed by 0.4 seconds per day. There was a telegraph line between the Great Clock and the Observatory at Greenwich, through which the clock sent a time signal twice a day in order to check its

performance. This line was destroyed in 1940 by enemy action and was never reinstated, as by then the clock had amply demonstrated its remarkable accuracy.

The magazine article also shows a photo of a bowler-hatted functionary lighting the numerous gas lamps that illuminated the opalescent glass dials from behind (Fig 3). The spaces behind clock faces are only four foot wide and became very hot. Since 1906 the dials have been lit by electric bulbs (Fig 4). For two years during World War I, the bells were silenced and the clock faces were not illuminated at night to avoid guiding attacking German Zeppelins. During World War 2, although the bells continued to ring, the clock faces were not illuminated to avoid guiding bomber pilots during the Blitz.

There are also engravings of the prison within the tower (Figs 5 and 6). This was last occupied by Charles Bradlaugh. He was elected MP for Northampton in 1880 but as an atheist he refused to take the religious oath of allegiance and requested permission to affirm instead. This was repeatedly refused so he was unable to take his seat, leading to four by-elections in which he was re-elected each time. He was arrested and imprisoned in the clock tower for attempting to take his seat and refusing an order to withdraw from the chamber. He eventually took his seat in 1886. In November 2016 a bust of him was

unveiled in parliament to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the National Secular Society which he founded.



Fig 4. Electric lighting for the dial

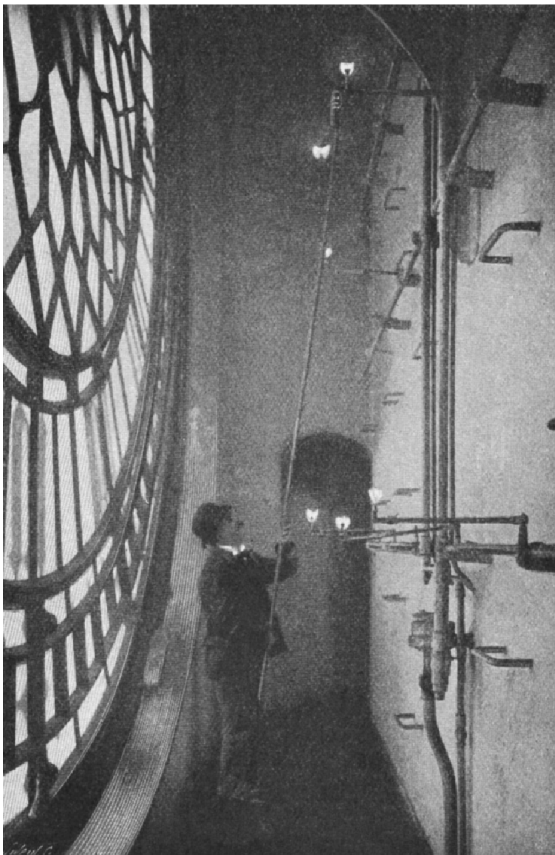
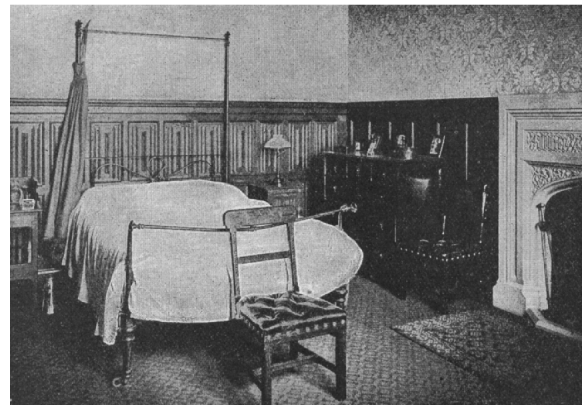
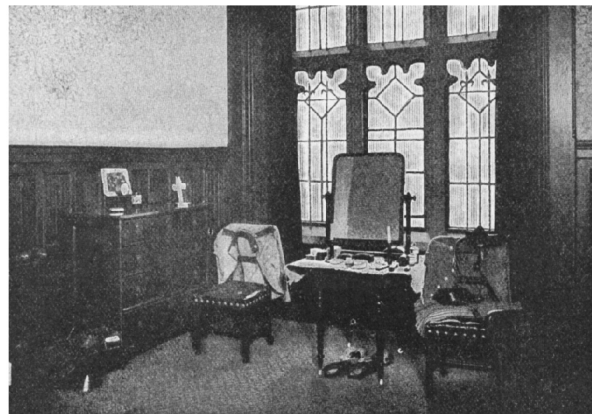


Fig 3. Lighting the gas jets



Figs 5 & 6. Two views of The Prison Room

Saleroom Report

Belgian Beer King Breaks Record in Cologne

“What **Bachus** is to wine, **Gambrinus** is to **beer**”

With the traditional German carnival season gearing up in Cologne, what better way to celebrate than with a 24,600 Euro (£29,595) musical figure of the beer king Gambrinus? Opinions as to the origins of the mythical monarch differ. In 1891 the New York brewer, George Ehret, named Duke Jan Primus of Brabant and John I of Burgundy as possible sources of the Gambrinus legend in his book *Twenty-Five Years of Brewing*. Others have suggested a Flemish king, others still the monk Brother Kellermeister, also known as Cambarius, as the inspiration behind the unofficial patron of beer and brewers.

Wherever the truth may lie, the origins of the Symphonion ‘Gambrinus’ musical box in **Auction Team Breker’s** sale on 5 November as Lot 438 were markedly clearer. The terracotta figure of the drinking king on the musical barrel was a popular fixture at the ‘Gambrinus Tavern’ in Leingarten (near Heilbronn) in the South of Germany for over a century. Dropping a “Pfennig” into the slot activates the 29.8 cm (11 ¾-in) disc-playing musical movement.

Though the work of the same firm, the Symphonion Musikwerke in Leipzig, the “Eroica musical hall clock” (Lot 437) is a world away from its earthy cousin. Named after Beethoven’s *Sinfonia Eroica* (or Symphony No. 3), the Symphonion “Eroica” plays three discs simultaneously. Housed in a refined Baroque Revival case, adorned with carved columns, cupola and putto, the clock fetched 43,000 Euro (£35,995).

Another musical box built to impress was the Kalliope ‘Panorama’, whose 64.5 cm (25 1/2-in) musical tin discs are accompanied by a crescendo of twelve musical bells and six animated horses galloping across a painted landscape in the base of the cabinet (Lot 457). The Panorama rode away to a new home for 25,700 Euro (£21,512).



Lot 438 - Gambrinus



Lot 437 - Symphonion 'Eroica' hall clock (right)



Lot 518 (above) - sleeping musician.

Music, movement and a dash of magic were on display in a wonderful selection of antique doll automata, mechanical figures programmed to perform a cycle of gestures such as winking, shrugging, serving tea, taking snuff, drinking and falling asleep while playing the banjo.

Less reverent, more playful than their decorous Japanese ancestors, French doll automata of the 19th century more often than not neglect their appointed tasks. A monkey huntsman, too busy with pipe and wine to notice the rabbit hopping back and forth at his feet (Lot 538), fetched 5,900 Euro (£4,937).

A musician who rests while he should be working is the clown in the 'Sonnette de l'Entracte'. Sleeping whenever he gets the chance, the ring of the inter-



Lot 420 - singing bird in miniature piano.

mission bell reminds the clown of his audience and finally obliges him to start playing again (Lot 518). Presented in unrestored, original condition, the piece fetched almost 24,600 Euro (£20,590).

From the same historic Mexican estate came the 'Eccentric Clown' by Gustave & Henry Vichy (Lot 520) - a curious character strumming a frying pan as though it were a banjo - whose height at over a metre tall, originality and rarity propelled him to 46,700 Euro (£39,000).

Combining pocket-sized proportions with mechanical complexity, a singing bird box by Frères Rochat of Geneva (Lot 425) flew to nearly 24,600 Euro (£20,590) while a singing bird in a miniature piano with Vernis Martin (Lot 420) decoration rose to Euro 9,800 (£8,200).

Christian Ritschard and his Musical Tortoise



Our cover picture illustrates a very finely carved musical tortoise. It is 9 inches long and contains a standard photograph album-type two-air musical movement, maker unknown. The novelty does not accord with the Black Forest style of carving but the maker and the place of tortoise manufacture is known as shown on the red label: Chr. Ritschard, Sculpture, Montreux Les Avants. Les Avants is a village in the municipality of Montreux in the Canton of Vaud, Switzerland. Nothing seems to be known about him but the workmanship of this carver is of very high and realistic quality. The abbreviation for the first name seems to be for Christian. The 'shell' is tinted and shaded and its rather 'cheeky' face looks up with exquisite glass eyes. (Ritschard's work can also be seen on a musical jewel box, (Pictures 4 & 5) and a cuckoo clock (Picture 2), where his label can just be seen at the top just above the movement access. These latter pieces appear to be somewhat later, probably post-1900 – Ed)



Picture 1: The underside of the tortoise.



Picture 2: Cuckoo clock bearing the Ritschard label, visible just above the movement aperture in the picture above.



Picture 3: Tune sheet of the Tortoise.

At a guess the wood is probably lime, a fine-grained material favoured by carvers and often used for children's rocking horses and wooden toys as well as other quality carved artefacts. The date is also a guess but seems to be about the turn of the Victorian century, perhaps late 1890s. The tune sheet is a very simple borders design in green with the two airs clearly inscribed. The tortoise plays when lifted and continues to the end of one of the two airs when put down. Tune change is by means of a snail cam with four arms. At the end of cylinder rotation one of the four arms engages a steel 'finger,' which rotates the cam a quarter turn. A step in the cam shifts the cylinder to the second tune. When that tune has played, the step drops back allowing the cylinder to return to its original position. Thus the cylinder has rotated twice and moved once but the snail cam has only rotated half a turn. Thus one revolution of the snail cam plays each air twice in turn.

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Next year's membership subscriptions are due by the end of February 2017.

The cost of publishing the four annual editions of "Mechanical Music World" is partially covered by advertising revenue. We aim to keep the subscriptions as low as possible to cover the rest of the cost and the postage to members.

At the last AGM members voted for an increase in subscriptions next year, up to a maximum of £5.

The new rates are;

U.K. Members: £12 (£14 for two people at the same address) - an increase of £2.

European Members: £20 (£22) - no increase.

The rest of the world: £25 (£27) - an increase of £5 due to the high cost of postage.



Picture 4: Carved jewellery box and its Ritschard label below.



Picture 5: The interior of the jewel box.

**Letters and Comments to AMBC Committee
on our Publications**

The Music Makers of Switzerland

Congratulations for this masterwork and enduring contribution to the preservation of the history of mechanical music ... it is simply stunning, well written and extraordinarily researched. Our very best wishes on the MBSI (Q. David Bowers) Literary award.

Joe and Lynda Berman.

I have just finished reading your book and have to congratulate you for writing this wonderful book. It is very impressive how many facts and details you know. I could swear that no Swiss person knows so much about Swiss musical boxes as you do! It must be that you went to school with most of the musical box makers of Switzerland.

Johan Goyvaerts,

This is one of the most extraordinary and comprehensive studies about the history and people who made musical boxes.

Comment to Ted Brown, AMBC Chairman.

Your book has to be the benchmark for all further research. The fact that you have included detailed references to past books, articles and sources shows the extent to which you applaud and have built upon the work of others.

(Comment to author)

AMBC and its Periodical.

I am thoroughly enjoying your friendship from afar of those in the Association ... and support the 'Publication Pipeline'* I am so impressed by AMBC's focus.

Joseph Berman, PhD. Dean emeritus, Ohio University, USA.

*AMBC has produced three major pieces of research with other publications 'in the pipeline'.

Dear Ted & Kay,

Thank you both for all the trouble you go to for the Chanctonbury Ring meetings. Gatherings are always enjoyable and friendly. We think the magazine (*Mechanical Music World*) is really good, excellent in fact and very informative.

Anna & Ingvar Svenson

AMBC Meeting Dates

Please contact the host to ensure a place is reserved and for needs to be catered for. Include any guests you may be thinking of bringing. Also please advise if a booking has to be cancelled so that places can be offered to others.

Sunday 26th February 2017:

Ring at The Old School, Bucks Green, Guildford Road, Horsham RH12 3JP. 10.30 for tea and coffee in the canteen. 11 a.m. meeting. Please book with Ted tel: 01403 823533

Sunday 23rd April:

Chanctonbury Ring as above.

Sunday 4th June: 10.30 refreshments, AGM 11 a.m., to be followed by lunch (bring your own sandwiches, puddings and drinks provided). Organ afternoon, bring an instrument if you can.

Sunday 10th September: Chanctonbury Ring, as above.

Saturday 25th November: Chanctonbury Ring Christmas Meeting.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editors

As I started to read the interesting article on musical photo albums my eye was caught by a familiar scene. Although the oval vignette on the album page in Fig 1 is very small, it is instantly recognisable as the hamlet of Byworth, in the Parish of Petworth where we live. It consists of a few houses, cottages and farms strung out down a mile long country lane.

This view, which has been photographed many times over the years, is of what passes for the centre. This version dates from about 1905 judging by the clothes of the children, though rather too small to make out in this copy. The right-hand cottage in the distance was, within living memory, a bakery and small general shop. The greenery is now gone and the front carries an old Hovis sign as an indication of its history. The infant school, much further along the lane, was turned into a house many years ago. Luckily the pub has survived to fulfil its traditional purpose. The photographer would have been standing with his back to the Black Horse. The door leads straight into the bar, with a roaring fire and an equally warm welcome.

JF

Thank you Juliet! It is implied in the album that the 'incidental' images printed in it were actually taken by Francis Frith (1822 - 1898), who became fascinated with photography, sold his wholesale grocery business in Liverpool in 1856 and embarked on three excursions up the Nile, bringing back some beautiful pictures. He became one of the most celebrated photographers of his age. After his marriage in 1860, he decided to revisit the places of his youth, and discovered that his public were just as pleased with his new images as they were with the Egyptian ones.

Though he visited Hampshire in the 1880s, the picture of Byworth you mention was taken by one of Frith's assistants in 1906. His photographic business continued long after his death in 1898. By the time it finally closed in 1971, it had a collection of more than 300,000 photos of Britain alone. - Ed

Furniture Cleaners and Revivers

We are now approaching Spring weather, and the smoke and dust of the Winter's fires will be in evidence upon our furniture. House-cleaning throughout will very soon be the order of the day, and then comes occasion for useful recipes, a knowledge of which is necessary to the housewife. Furniture renovation does not entail a considerable amount of labour if it is attempted in a systematic way, and a few hints on the subject will be acceptable.

The work of a furniture renovator is simply to procure a renewal of the polished surface upon furniture that has been dulled by atmospheric or other conditions, and the preparation of woodwork that is to receive the renovating treatment should be one that will cleanse from its surface every particle of dirt and objectionable matter away, and thus leave the old polish bare and ready to receive the reviver. An application of common washing soda, very weak in solution, is as good as anything to effect this, and should be used with judgement. I need scarcely say that both of the following mixtures should be securely corked when not in use. The first recipe is one part sweet oil, two parts turpentine, one part linseed oil, and with lime water added. This mixture is applied with a pad and wiped off with a clean, soft, duster. The second recipe consists of a quarter pint of linseed oil, one ounce of butter of antimony and a quarter pint of vinegar; this is applied with a soft rubber and wiped off with a soft rag.

From 'Amateur Work', 1885.

Readers are reminded that they undertake to try out and use these recipes at their own risk! If you do, please let us know the Outcome - Ed



News, Views and Tips

Cylinder Pin Straightening

Cylinder musical box restoration almost invariably involves straightening some bent cylinder pins, but before starting to straighten any pins bent sideways, an examination of the whole cylinder is desirable, if only to decide whether or not you need a re-pin! First locate the registration dots, which will generally be located at the tune-change gap. Frequently they will locate the first tune on the cylinder (though some makers made it the last tune) and the purpose is to adjust the position of the cylinder relative to the comb teeth. Often the peg at the right end of the cylinder which rests on the snail cam is adjustable so that, with the snail set to tune 1 (or the last sometimes) the cylinder can be moved slightly left or right until the tips of the comb accurately align with the lines scribed around the cylinder for the purpose.

Observation will usually show that the majority of pins which are not perfectly straight all lean slightly in the same direction, usually towards the treble end. Some cylinders had quite serious pinning errors straight from the factory, these requiring more work at the 'justifiage' – the final factory setting up of the completed movement. Never start adjusting any pins without first examining the pins of all tunes every inch or so along the comb while playing. You will spot any lines of pins which have been bent sideways on purpose, and the last thing you want to do is straighten them!

Obviously the only pins needing attention are those leaning in the opposite direction to the majority and those leaning excessively. This approach saves a lot of time and indecision. Bear in mind that there is a tolerance on the point at which the pin touches the tooth tip. Ideally every pin should touch the exact centre of its tooth, but a range of about 2 or 3 degrees either side would be quite acceptable. Do the straightening in bands not more than half an inch wide, rotating the cylinder a few times for each band, against a white background so that one can see the lines of pins of each tune and quickly spot any pins sufficiently out of line to

need attention.

(The above distilled from H A V Bulleid's two books, 'Cylinder Musical Box Design and Repair', and 'Cylinder Musical Box Technology'.)

The Constitution of the Association of Musical Box Collectors known as AMBC

Article 1. Aims and objectives:

- 1.1. To promote interest within the body of membership of AMBC for the mutual enjoyment, entertainment and research relevant to musical boxes and all other associated forms of programmed musical instruments generally known by the term 'mechanical music'.
- 1.2. To establish formal links and working relationship with other Societies who wish to be associated with AMBC.
- 1.3. To provide social opportunity for meetings of musical and non-musical entertainment, of historical or social interest. Meetings may adopt the established format of the private Chanctonbury Ring meetings hosted by Mr. E. Brown.
- 1.4. To publish research, articles, books and pamphlets for members on all forms of musical instrument including musical and non-musical automata, covered by the term 'mechanical music', and in order to promote public interest.

For new members! Please note the AMBC Constitution: Article 2, Membership.

- 2.1. Application for membership will be by means of an AMBC membership form.
- 2.2. Acceptance of membership will be at the discretion of the AMBC Committee.
- 2.3. Applicants must accept the terms of the AMBC Constitution and abide by Committee rulings in the application of those terms.

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*Note: As an Association AMBC does not give valuations or take responsibility for advice or guidance nor imply any form of guarantee for the accuracy or consequences arising from information so given.

AMBC sale items

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. This A5 234 page book, long out of print, is available brand new for the bargain price of £10 + P&P.

Cylinder Musical Box Technology by HAV Bulleid. This A5 290 page book, long out of print, is available brand new for the bargain price of £10 + P&P.

***Disc Musical Box Book** by K. McElhone. This exceptional A5 book comprises over 490 pages in full colour throughout. It is a compendium about all forms of disc and related instruments. Although second hand, it is in mint condition for the bargain price of £50 + P&P.

***The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music** by Paul Bellamy and contributing authors Cunliffe and Ison. This A5 book comprises over 250 pages with colour centrefold of 16 pages illustrating 118 pictures plus ample charts and pictures in B&W. There are a few unused mint-condition copies purchased by the principle author for personal gifts but now donated to AMBC. A bargain price of £35 + P&P.

***Musical Box Tune Sheets** (The Tune Sheet Book) and three supplements, by HAV Bulleid. This A5 book and its supplements illustrate 400 tune sheets with dating charts for 15 makers. Contact E. Brown for details. They are in mint condition, purchased by Mr. Brown at the time he edited and compiled the book for Bulleid.

***The Organette Book** by K. McElhone. This 10 x 7-inch landscape edition has nearly 220 pages and hundreds of illustrations including a colour centrefold of 16 pages and 33 illustrations. Although second hand, it is in mint condition for the bargain price of £35 + P&P.

***Street musicians on Postcards** by Paul Bellamy. This 9 x 6½-inch book is in full colour throughout, comprising 108 pages. It is in the form of a 3-act play, each act in 4 scenes thus describing 12 categories of post card types. The intervals tell the history of postcards and the story of Christie's Old Organ. These are mint condition copies bought by the author originally for personal gifts but now donated to AMBC. A bargain price of £8 + P&P.

The Editors have a large quantity of **Hupfeld 73-note player piano rolls**. Is anyone in need of any? If so please contact us - see Officers list on Page 1.



A Passion for Barrel Pianos



Milly & Colin Williams

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