Issue 15, Winter 2019

MECHANICAL MUSIC WORLD

An Association of Musical Box Collectors Publication

From the Editors' Desk

The end of one year and the beginning of another 'clean sheet' for 2019. A time to review the past and make plans for the future. It has been a very mixed year for collectors. Every branch of collecting is reporting falling numbers of members and values of artefacts and musical instruments are no exception. Only the very top end of the self-playing market is holding its value, as recognised by the sale room report on page 19. Fortunately for collectors who cherish the instruments, a wide selection is currently available at affordable levels. Sadly, the piano-based and larger instruments are faced with being dumped and destroyed for the lack of good homes but (optimistically?) the tide will turn as fashions change.

In this issue we welcome Edward Murray-Harvey's article on the restoration of his Wilson Panharmonic horned EMG gramophone. Edward is a collector of sheet music as well as records and it is always a pleasure to hear from him. A further instalment is already promised for later in the year.

Juliet Fynes's report on the 'Penny in the Slot' museum in Germany will hopefully prompt you to consider a trip to the country in the near future. There are many relevant museums and collections there to enjoy.

David Soulsby paid a visit to the L'ile de Nantes and discovered automaton elephants - an amazing adventure! See page 24.

We thank Chris Fynes for another in-depth analysis on a very early snuff box.

The Editors have included an article on a L'Épée bells-in-view 'pity' box. We all have them - cost of restoration exceeds the finished value of the item, if indeed you can find anybody to do the work. It has been an interesting project and the results are well worth the effort. You can hear it on YouTube.com at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pxE172ps7s&feature=youtu.be

and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo_PQSGCGt0&feature=youtu.be

Just for your entertainment, we have added a few items from way back in 1893. Read them on page 11, but if you decide to act on any of the advice, you are on your own!

Please make a note of the new, earlier, date for the A.G.M. - see page 3.

Thank you to all our contributors - we need you and you respond wonderfully!

CONTENTS

Chairman's Report, Officers of AMBC, AMBC Meeting Dates 2
AGM Notice, Subscriptions 3
Christmas meeting - November 24th 4
My EMG Gramophone - *Edward Murray-Harvey investigates an unusual model* 8
In Days Gone By - *advice and hints from 1893* 11
An Unusual Musical Toy - *Juliet Fynes finds another oddity* 12
When the Penny Drops - *a visit to the Automatenmuseum in Espelkamp, Germany* 14
An Auction for Every Pocket - *Sale report from Auction Team Breker* 19
A Sur Plateau Musical Snuff Box - *Chris Fynes describes an early artefact* 22
The Elephant in the Room - *David Soulsby visits the L'ile de Nantes* 24
Debain's Court Case 26
A Large L'Épée with Bells & Drum - *David Evans describes a new acquisition* 27
AMBC Aims and objectives & editorial policy etc 30
Classified Advertisements 32

Chairman's Report

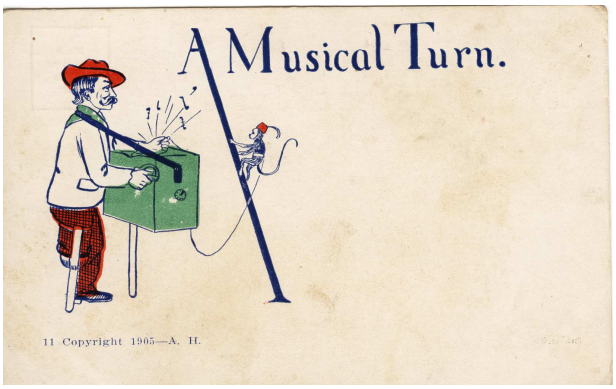
We have all made it into another year and this one, of course, will be a good one. I hope some of you have constructed the little street organ model that came with the last magazine.

Our membership numbers continue to climb. Unfortunately most live too far away to attend the Chanctonbury Ring meetings, but at the last we had a healthy thirty or so. Remember all overseas members and their friends and family are welcome at my home, by appointment, when visiting the UK. Groups of ten or more, of any age, can book a visit. I frequently host parties of schoolchildren here, and although I will not be around when they are old enough to collect musical boxes, I hope I will have at least planted a seed that will ripen.

Please remember to pay your subscriptions promptly as it saves a lot of extra work for our officers. My sincere thanks go to all of them for their commitment and time.

If you would like any topic or instrument covered in the magazine, just let a committee member know and we will do our best to oblige. Better still write an article yourself! Submissions by members always take priority.

Ted Brown



Officers of the AMBC

Chairman	Ted Brown 01403 823533
Deputy Chairman & Treasurer	Paul Bellamy 01634 252079 bellamypaul@btinternet.com
Events Secretary & Web site	Juliet Fynes
Design & Photography	Chris Fynes
Secretary/Subscriptions	Kay Brown 01403 823533
Research & Publications Committee:	Don Busby Paul Bellamy Ted Brown
Editors	David & Lesley Evans 001 250 746 5652 mechmusicmuseum@aol.com 4920 Bench Road, Cowichan Bay BC, V0R 1N1 Canada

AMBC website: www.ambc.org.uk

Feel free to contact any of us.

Publication Dates for "Mechanical Music World"

Winter issue 28th January; Spring issue 28th April; Summer issue 28th July; Autumn issue 28th 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 Meeting Dates

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 February 24th 2019
at the Old School

Sunday April 28th 2019
Annual General Meeting
at the Old School

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Dear Members

The AMBC committee thanks you for your continued support. Another year has whizzed by and the time has come to ask you to renew your membership subscriptions. We hope you will agree that the small increase still represents good value. We strive to keep the running costs as low as possible, there are no paid staff and committee members do not claim expenses, it is our hobby and we love doing it. We are delighted that the membership is steadily increasing but this does add to the administrative burden so we ask that you all pay promptly to ease the task.

UK Members £13 single (£15 for two people at the same address)

European Members £22 (24)

The Rest of the World £28 (£30)

If any member cares to add a little by way of a donation we are very grateful.

Perhaps we should explain how it works:

Members are given three options to pay, BACS, cheque or Paypal.

BACS payments are noted by the treasurer Paul, who keeps the bank account.

Cheques go to Chairman Ted.

Juliet keeps track of Paypal.

We all have to report payments to Membership Secretary Kay.

This might seem an unwieldy system but it does spread the load between us. However if members pay late we have to waste a lot of time contacting each other to ask if such-and-such has actually paid, and if not, then contacting that member.

We would like to remind members that **all** renewal subscriptions are due by March 1st each year **and not on the anniversary of joining** as is the case with some other societies. This is clearly stated on the website and Membership Application forms.

Members are reminded in the Autumn and Winter issues of the magazine that membership subscriptions are due. In future we will not be sending further reminders and the Spring issue will only be sent to those who have paid.

We are finishing the year with this bumper edition of Mechanical Music World and look forward to receiving more input from members for future issues.

With our good wishes to all

Ted, Paul, Lesley, David, Kay, Chris and Juliet

Annual General Meeting of the Association of Musical Box Collectors

Please note new date for the A.G.M. this year:

Sunday April 28th 2019

at

The Old School

Guildford Road

Bucks Green

Horsham

RH12 3JP

Please phone Ted Brown if you plan to attend:

01403 823533

AMBC Christmas Meeting, 24th November 2018

Starting in the old school canteen for tea, coffee and biscuits, the festive air was given a good start when Roy Collins brought an interesting Duo Art piano roll by Hungarian composer Dohnanyi. For those interested in the details it was his virtuoso Rhapsody, opus 11, roll number 0351 on a re-cut roll by Julian Dyer. The performer, Frank Laffitte, was a celebrated Anglo-French pianist of the 1970s whom Roy had met and who was a lecturer at the Guildhall School of Music. Frank performed for many Duo Art rolls and it is still fascinating to hear a 'live' performance from a paper roll originally cut nearly 50 years ago.

Then it was back to the atmosphere of the former school days in persuading members to leave these initial festivities and transport themselves to the School Room for an introduction by Ted to the day's entertainers.

Chairman Ted Brown opened the meeting with a reminder that, despite rising costs four high quality Issues of Mechanical Music World have been produced each year since AMBC's foundation, and at a very reasonable cost that includes P&P. At the June 2018 AGM members granted committee the right to increase membership subscriptions, which will be applied for the membership year 2019 to 2020.

At this November meeting members accepted unanimously a change in the AGM date to the first meeting after the start of the membership year on the 1st March, which this year will fall on 28th April 2019. Existing Clause 3.13 states: The AGM should be scheduled for the first week of June. The proposed amendment is: The AGM will be scheduled for the first members' meeting after the commencement of the membership year on 1st March. Votes will be by show of hands.

After this introduction the final meeting of the year started. It was so well attended that parking at the old school, with old friends and new, meant members politely shuttling their cars back and forth to allow each other space, not just to park but to transport their treasures to the school room for play and display.

In our meetings reports, we try to expand on the items brought by members.

Ducommun. First up was Tony Waddell demonstrating a fine key-wind Ducommun-Girod 8-air musical box, serial 14123, gamme No. 1208, made in 1839, comprising a comb with 160 teeth played by a 9-inch x 3-inch diameter cylinder (Fig 1). This large cylinder allowed a full rendition of each air. There had never been a conventional tune sheet but all the tunes were written by hand in French on the side of the wooden

Fig 1. Ducommun-Girod No. 14123

key compartment divider (Fig. 2). The writing for the first three airs had been virtually obliterated by thumb wear, when pulling out the divider to retrieve the key, over the past 180 years. Even so, some computer imaging showed that tune 1 was by Auber, the same opera as tune number six 'Domino Noir' and that tune 3 was a waltz from an opera. Tune 2 was indecipherable.

Some of the tune titles that could be read had a story to tell. Tune 4 was La Cachucha, from Diable Boiteux by J. Coralli, written in 1836. This was just three years before the box was made. The date and serial number exactly fit the Bulleid date line* (Chart 5 of his book Musical Box Tune Sheets), which shows how valuable his work remains in identifying dates and makers. Many tune sheet inscriptions hide an interesting story and La Cachucha is no exception. Jean Coralli (1799-1854) was a French ballet dancer. He was born Giovanni Coralli Peracini whose parents were from Bologna, Italy, but living in Paris. Coralli wrote *Le Diable Boiteux* (The lame devil) in which the young Viennese dancer Fanny Essler danced a Spanish dance called La Cachucha. It is worth visiting the Wikipedia site to find

Fig 2. Key compartment divider with tune list

out more about Coralli's fascinating life and the portraits of those dancers and musicians long since passed.

Tune 5, called a Galop, was a popular Parisian society dance in the 1820s. Its full name, gallopade, was intended to simulate the fast trot of a horse. Couples performed the lively dance as a two-step and it became the forerunner of the Polka. An even faster version of the Polka was the Can Can! All about the 1830s period. Tune 6, an Aragonaise, is another lively dance from Aragon in Spain. Tune 7, Brussler Spitzen, by Johann Strauss the elder, also in 1836, was a more sedate arrangement. Strauss chose the name, which means Brussels Lace. Perhaps this famous product was meant to convey an air of elegance and sophistication as was certainly the case for those who wore the lace. Tune 8, Zampa, by Hérold, also has something to tell. Louis Joseph Ferdinand Hérold (1791-1833) wrote the opéra comique, Zampa, in 1831. Zampa was a pirate and infatuated by a lady called The Marble Bride, a title that indicates the course of the lively opera that remains popular today. Thanks to Tony's interesting musical box, one wonders what other revelations the three missing tune titles could share.

Fig 3. Lecoultre No. 10462

Lecoultre. Next came Chris Fynes with two early musical boxes. The first was made by the firm D. Lecoultre & fils of Brassus in the Canton of Vaud, Switzerland. (His brother was Henri-Joseph Lecoultre, both of the Golay branch of the Lecoultre clans, not the Piguet branch to which François Lecoultre belonged, although most probably distant cousins. The relationship between the two family branches has never been established). It was a fine 6-air key-wind movement, serial 10462, circa 1850, with 112 teeth and a cylinder 10.5 inches long (Fig. 3). The tune sheet was in good order *(Fig. 4). The musical repertoire comprised popular airs from operas by Meyerbeer, Weber, Bellini and Donizetti.

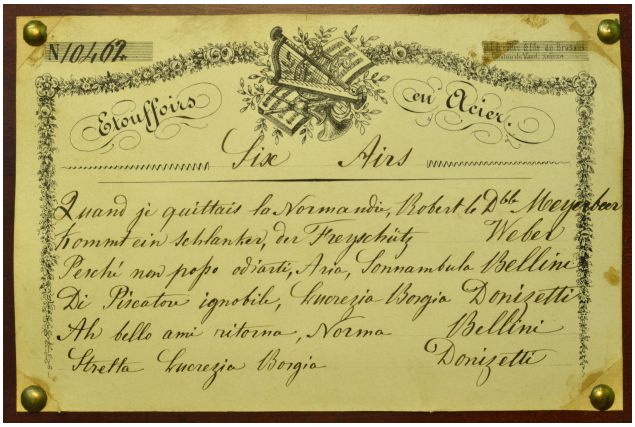


Fig 4. Tune sheet of Lecoultre 10462

A Mystery box (Ducommun?) Chris's second musical box was a 4-air sectional comb movement, serial 2247, circa 1830. The cylinder was 7½ inches long and 1¼ inches diameter. The comb segments comprised five teeth except for the last treble section that had six teeth. Unfortunately, the tune sheet was missing except for one small scrap that indicated an air from Lodoyska, written in sepia ink in a fine hand on a tune sheet with a simple plain border *(Fig. 5). Lodoïska was an heroic 3-act opera by the Italian born composer Luigi Cherubini, the name being that of a female character.

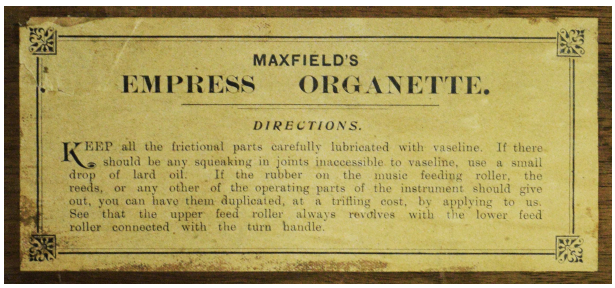
There were very few makers with low serial numbers making segmented combs in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Bulleid's tune sheet charts helps to narrow the possibilities and a strong contender could be Ducommun. Another might be Henri-Joseph Lecoultre; perhaps we shall never know.

Fig 5. Unknown No. 2247

Organettes. Roger Booty then demonstrated a 14-note Orguinette (Fig. 6), that had the label of an English maker Maxfield (Fig. 7). Comparison with Ted Brown's identical instrument was sufficient to prove that Maxfield was acting as an agent, using the name Maxfield Empress. We were treated to performances of The

Fig 6. Maxfield, or is it?

Standard on the Braes O' Mar and a Minuet by Bach. The remarkable virtuosity of a 14-note reed instrument was amply demonstrated at length, literally, as a 32-foot long perforated roll gave a rendition of Handel's Messiah. Hallelujah!


MAXFIELD'S

EMPRESS ORGANETTE.

DIRECTIONS.

KEEP all the frictional parts carefully lubricated with vaseline. If there should be any squeaking in joints inaccessible to vaseline, use a small drop of lard oil. If the rubber on the music feeding roller, the reeds, or any other of the operating parts of the instrument should give out, you can have them duplicated, at a trifling cost, by applying to us. See that the upper feed roller always revolves with the lower feed roller connected with the turn handle.

Manivelles. Paul Bellamy was the final 'turn' of the morning's play and display. He demonstrated a small 2-air rare manivelle mounted in a composition case to demonstrate the clockwise direction of rotation and how reverse rotation was impeded by an anti-rotation device. He compared this with a restored marotte showing how a standard manivelle movement was adapted to these musical puppets. The adaptation usually required the basic movement to be rotated anticlockwise when held by a right-handed person.

Paul also described how he repaired the 22-note comb of a 1950's spring-wound musical automaton. Both the marotte and the automaton presented similar comb-repair problems. The automaton had almost half of its teeth missing at the treble end, which was then cut off and replaced with a segment of comb cut from his 'cummins box' (those bits that sometimes 'come in handy'!). The added bit had no fastening hole but this was overcome by soldering on a piece of steel plate with a suitably positioned hole. Each part of the now complete comb had only one comb screw but sufficient to locate the restored comb accurately in relation to the cylinder. As the comb was hidden from view, there was no aesthetic problem about the comb's unusual appearance.

It was now time to break for the usual home-cooked lunch, which is such a popular feature of our meetings. Although still November, this counted as our Christmas meeting so Juliet Fynes organised a raffle with prizes of old M&S musical Christmas tins (filled with new biscuits!), supplemented by the little pots of cyclamen that had decorated the lunch tables. The money raised was dedicated to the AMBC research publication fund, ringfenced for the two current projects in hand, as shown by the * above. One is an updated revision about cylinder musical box restoration and the other a review and update of the Bullied musical box dating charts. More will be announced about these two projects in due course. With full stomachs and lighter pockets, the group returned to the schoolroom for the afternoon's entertainment.

Fig 8. Miniature version of barrel piano

A miniature barrel piano. Paul Baker demonstrated this rare recent acquisition (Fig. 8). Externally it looked in shape like the Spanish Faventia type barrel piano but was an exact copy of a typical full scale barrel piano. The bass strings and pairs of tenor strings were copper wound wire with the rest of the chromatic stringing in pairs. All the hammers were felt as for a modern piano (Fig. 9). The wrest plank was made of wood, unlike the

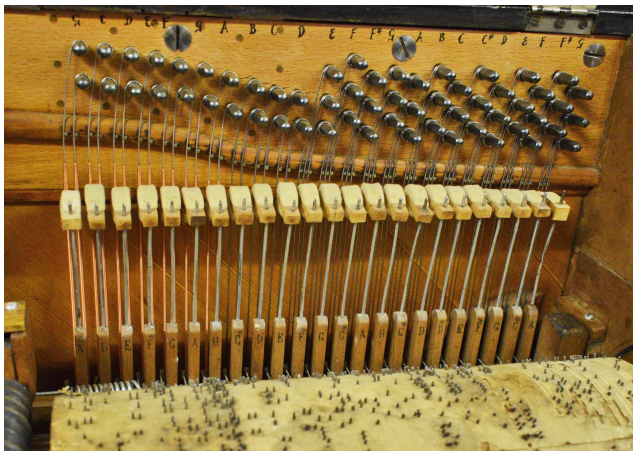


Fig 9. 'Proper' felt piano hammers

cast iron frames of the Faventia. As Paul pointed out, it is wise to know about all auction sites, not just those that specialise in self playing instruments. House and farm clearance auctions can yield a variety of interesting objects from barns and attics, in this case his almost unique miniature version of the traditional barrel piano.

Fig 10. Organ box No. 5116

An organ box. Another rather rare instrument, demonstrated by Roland Fisher, was a 6-air reed organ box, serial 5116, circa 1870. The reed comb is situated between the 'split single' comb, each half with 31 teeth mounted on a thick brass base with two rectangular slots. The slots are for the insertion of a screwdriver blade when lifting the comb for maintenance. The cylinder length and diameter are standard for the period but the governor has a compensating flywheel that helps to smooth out perturbations in surface cylinder speed. Organ boxes operate at the limit of spring-motor power because the governor also drives a crank to operate a small double-acting bellows and reservoir. The tune sheet was in exceptionally good order, examples of this pattern being Bulleid's tune sheet Nos. 9 & 232 for Samuel Troll.

As the meeting drew towards an end, we heard a selection of carols played on various disc machines; Polyphon, Stella, Regina and Troubadour. Following tradition, we finished with some of Ted Brown's apparently

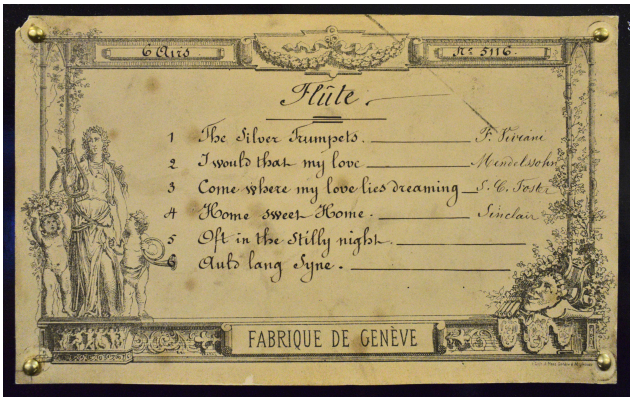


Fig 11. Tune sheet from organ box No. 5116

inexhaustible supply of Christmas novelties. Everything from battling Santas to carol singing birds. As someone once said "it is but a small step from the sublime to the ridiculous".

My EMG Gramophone

An unusual model

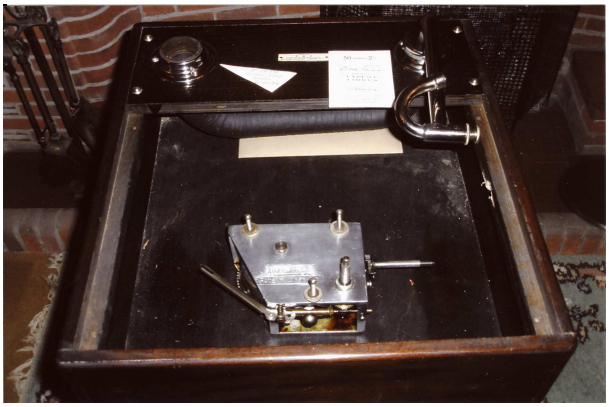
by Edward Murray-Harvey

(Article vetted by Richard B. Howard, who also took the photographs.)

EMG Mark VIII - or is it?

I acquired my EMG gramophone in the 1970s. It is an early model and has a Wilson Panharmonic horn made by the London Scientific Supply Company. The soundbox is one of the early EMG soundboxes based on the Gramophone & Typewriter/HMV "Exhibition" soundbox. (It may be interesting to remember that the "Exhibition" box was used on all G&T/HMV gramophones from 1904 to 1924, and modified versions were used on EMG gramophones, including mine, for a few years after that.) The clockwork motor is a single-spring COLLARO Model M2.

You may be wondering what model of EMG gramophone I have? The answer is that I don't know. What I can tell you is that the gramophone bears an Ivorine tag which tells us that at the time it was built, the firm EMG Hand-Made Gramophones was located at 247 High Holborn, London W C 1.



Collaro M2 motor

Richard Howard *(an acknowledged specialist in EMG machines - Ed)* likes to think that my gramophone is a Model VIII, which it somewhat resembles, but I myself would beg to differ. What makes me want to differ? The main reason is the address. Contemporary advertisements showing the model VIII, and even the (presumably earlier) Model VII, give the company's address as Grape Street. And as I have mentioned above, my EMG seems to have been made when the address was High Holborn, i.e. before the move to Grape Street.

Francis James's excellent book "The EMG Story"* mentions that a gramophone which was called "The Wilson Panharmonic Horn Model" seems to have been sold for a short time and at that time the address was 247 High Holborn.

At what date did the EMG firm move to their later and more familiar Grape Street address? I'm afraid I don't know, even after my having carefully looked in Francis James's book (Op Cit Supra). But what we do know is that (according to a mention on page 512 of the May 1928 issue of the Gramophone Magazine) the firm was still at that time located in High Holborn. So, if I have got it right, the time-line is as follows (but if there is anybody out there who can help with better information, please contact the Editors of this Magazine):

At High Holborn, before the move, "The Wilson Panharmonic Horn Model" being made.

Move to Grape Street (when? Not before May 1928) Model VII being advertised.

Now in Grape Street, Model VIII being advertised.

At some time in the 1970s I was actually lucky enough to meet the famous Percy Wilson who designed the Panharmonic horn. Although he didn't actually see my EMG, I described it to him, and he gave me his opinion that it was built in 1928. And so I would like to think that my EMG is a "Wilson Panharmonic Horn Model".

As to the actual provenance of my EMG, I have little or nothing to tell you. There used to be in St Giles Street in Norwich, a dealer called Ives, who specialised in

interesting and collectable records. Although I was not a customer of his (I couldn't have afforded to be!) I was in those days quite well-known locally as being interested in gramophones. Mr Ives contacted me and offered me the gramophone, and I bought it from him for eighteen pounds.

Soon after I bought the gramophone, the mainspring broke, and I put the instrument up in my loft, intending to repair it some day. I had an HMV cabinet gramophone to get by with, and I forgot all about the EMG. It only came to my mind again, when I was in my eighties -- a time when my fingers were now too clumsy for me to carry-out the repair myself.

Luckily my very good friend Richard Howard offered to attend to the matter for me, and he has made a splendid job of it. In the good old days one could buy new mainsprings to fit most standard motors, but nowadays one has to repair the old one. I won't bore you here with the details of how to repair broken mainsprings, but it is not too difficult a job if you are used to clockwork.

The EMG deck with newly-replated fittings

In the 1970s, the Norfolk (England) Education Department offered evening-classes in Clock-Repairing, and I became one of about a dozen students. And actually Richard is used to working on elderly motor-cars, so I recommend that if you want to get a gramophone fixed, go either to a clock-repairer or to a motor-car restorer.

But apart from the mainspring and the clockwork motor, Richard worked on the rest of the gramophone as well. He has gone over the woodwork of the case, and the horn (papier-mâché, traditionally thought to have been made from out-of-date London telephone-directories) has been polished. Metal parts exposed to view were sent away to be re-plated with nickel, and the soundbox has been carefully re-tuned. Richard's aim was not to make the gramophone look brand-new, but to make it look as it if had been looked-after in the hands of somebody who appreciates it for what it is.

I must confess (am I Edward The Confessor?) that I have added to my EMG, a modification of my own. There is no place to rest the soundbox when not in use, except to fold the tone-arm back on itself, which results in two polished metal parts having to rest against each other. To keep those items apart, I have made (out of string) a buffer in the form of a Turk's Head knot, at a place where its weight does not bear down on the needle. I hope it won't ever happen, but should the gramophone at some time in the future fall into the hands of a philistine who dislikes the Turk's Head, it could easily be cut away, leaving things as they originally were.

The Turk's Head knot - the soundbox rests on it when foldd back.

As to the needles I use, I prefer (triangular) bamboo needles. Luckily I have a store of them, and I know where I can get others. Of course one does need a special cutter for trimming them to produce a fresh sharp point. The alternative to bamboo needles are thorns (also called fibres), and I understand the latter are still available, I think, under their original brand-name, "B.C.N." (I didn't know until recently, that those initials stand for Burmese Colour Needles. - *The firm has been resurrected recently and you can once again purchase genuine B.C.N. needles - an Internet search will yield details, or contact the Editors for further information - Ed)* Thorn needles also need to be re-pointed, and there are, or there were, various devices available for doing that.

Possibly it may be laziness, but I prefer to snip the end of a bamboo needle, rather than to cramp a fibre needle into a chuck and then grind a new point on it. Of course the bamboo is more bulky than the thorn, and so (even allowing for the fact that the fibre is made of denser material than bamboo) more effort is required for the record's groove to set the bamboo in motion. So, bamboo or fibre? I reckon that you pays your money and you takes your choice.

Of course you will have to take my word for it that the gramophone plays superbly well, especially with the

soundbox as expertly tuned by Richard. Some people say that the straighter the horn, the better the reproduction. The horn does stick out into my living-room, which is a bit of a nuisance, and I can understand why swan-necked horns were made. I find the best place for the gramophone is for it to be kept in one corner of the room, where I find it is less of a nuisance, but one must remember that the winding-handle must be always accessible.

Interesting label on the Panharmonic horn.

I try not to swing the horn sideways too often, but nevertheless I keep well-greased the circular joint or ring where the horn joins the gramophone. Both to lessen any wear-and-tear, but also to prevent leakage of sound. One finds that the part of the horn which passes under the deck gathers dust, and that part should from-time-to-time should be blown or sucked clean with a vacuum-cleaner. That operation should take place while both the soundbox and the horn are removed, and the dust and other matter should be sucked or blown so that it travels from the narrower part of the horn to the wider part. I can remember that I suggested doing that with Ernie Bayly's** EMG, and Ernie was amazed at all the detritus which had lodged there over the years.

And now here are the rules to which Richard and I adhere when using any clockwork gramophone or phonograph. These rules are to allow us to get the best out of the machine, while reducing the wear on the mechanism and on the record.

Make sure that the brake is released so that the turntable or mandrel is free to revolve. Then wind the spring (or springs) until not too tight. Many years of experience have shown us how tight, and we cannot really tell you on paper. (We know that some musical-boxes have a mechanism to prevent the spring from being overwound, but we cannot remember ever having seen such a thing on a gramophone or phonograph.)

At the end of your winding, apply the brake, put on the record, release the brake, and off you go. Only apply the brake while you are changing the record. And at the end of your session, remove the final record and let the motor run down until it stops naturally. Leave things like that until your next session.

By following these instructions, the least amount of strain will be imposed on the mainspring(s), and the gramophone or phonograph should give you many years of service. The mainspring(s) should be wound as seldom as possible, so when you get to know how many records it will play at one winding, then wind only as and when needed.

Finally: when I was a child, many gramophones were toys and they were treated as toys. If they went wrong or got broken, they could easily be repaired. But those days have gone. Nowadays a gramophone is no longer a toy, and it must be treated with respect.

*James, Francis: 'The E.M.G. Story', published 1998 by Old Bakehouse Publications, Gwent.

** Ernie Bayly was editor and publisher of 'The Talking Machine Review' magazine until the late 1970's. He was the compiler of the catalogue of the EMI Collection of historic gramophones and phonographs in 1974.

The Panharmonic horn being cleaned and repolished with Chilco coffin wax - the best in the world!.

A useful accessory provided by EMG with their machines. It ensures optimum tracking.

In Days Gone By

Hints and Advice from the 'Experts' at 'Amateur Work' Magazine, March 1893.

Putting a New Wrest-plank in a Pianoforte

T B of Atherstone writes:

"Kindly advise me in putting a new wrest plank into an old piano. The instrument has been subjected to extreme damp, and the plank has become pulled away from its bracings."

- Use the plank that has become displaced, if it is not split. When the glue gives way through damp, the bolts will not hold it; they are useful, however, to prevent the glue starting. Slacken all the strings, and with a chisel take off the capping - that is the piece of thin wood which covers the top ends of bracings and wrest-pank. The extent of the injury will then be seen. Now procure some bolts to go right through the plank and bracings, with nuts and washers; use these for top edge of plank. Also get some 4-in. No. 14 screws for the centre and bottom edge of plank. Having got all the bolts and screws fitted, and some of the best Scotch glue, well made and hot (this should be of the consistency of treacle), the job can be commenced. In a factory cramps and screws are used for this purpose. Let the room be warm, then get an old table-knife or a piece of hoop iron, make it hot, but not to burn the wood, or the glue will not hold; rub it in the fissure to warm the wood. Then pour in the glue and use the knife for rubbing it in; tighten up the nuts with wrench or pincers, and turn in screws as quickly as possible. While this is drying in a warm room for three or four days, glue some blocks of wood behind, attaching them to plank and bracings wherever possible. If the pins in the plank are loose, and it is the wish to make a good job of it, re-string it, and put a set of larger wrest-pins in.

(Or take it to the dump - Ed)

A recent communication to the French Academy of Science describes a formenophone, the invention of M. Hardy. It is an instrument for measuring the densities of gases by the difference of pitch produced by two similar organ pipes, one of them being sounded by a blast of air, and the other by a similar blast of the gas under investigation. The ability of the experimenter to distinguish relative densities will depend on his being musical.

(See if you can find 12 different gases, so that you can make a formenophonic octave using pipes all of the same length - Ed)

A short time ago, Messrs. Broadwood, the celebrated pianoforte makers, purchased three logs of mahogany cut from one tree for the enormous sum of £3,000. These logs were about 15 ft. long and 38 in. wide. They were cut into veneers 1/8 in. thick. The wood was peculiarly beautiful, capable of receiving the highest polish, and, when polished, reflected the light in a most vivid manner like the surface of crystal, and, from the many forms of the fibres, offered a different figure in whatever direction it was viewed.

British paperhangers, as a rule, find a pair of long-bladed scissors good enough for the purpose of trimming their wall-pieces, but the Yankees use a light hand-tool consisting of a box shaped to give an easy hold for the hand, and having a saw-cut in it 2 in. long and deep enough to admit the widest margin likely to want trimming off. A pair of steel wheels run very easily and trim inside the box; their edges are ground sharp, and, coming together, make a very rapid cutting machine.

You could use it for cutting down your 65-note piano rolls to fit the 58-note Orchestrelle - Ed.

At Woolwich Dockyard there has recently been completed an electric circuit of more than six miles of wiring, to connect the numerous clocks on the works and bring their time-telling performances into stricter accord. Motion will now be imparted to the hands by pulsations communicated electrically, so no more winding up of weights or springs will be wanted.

(The Woolwich site was used between the wars as a calibration centre for rating deck watches and chronometers, in addition to Herstmonceaux and Greenwich Observatory - Ed)

AN UNUSUAL MUSICAL TOY

By Juliet Fynes

This little object is certainly unusual. I have been unable to find anything like it despite intensive internet searches. As to being musical, I am afraid some of the glorious boxes we feature in MMW would, if they could speak, be affronted to share these pages with such a bit of nonsense. However it is interesting in as much as it presents a puzzle.

It consists of a cardboard cylinder roughly 4.5 inches tall and 2.25 inches in diameter, fixed to a circular wooden base by a metal band. The inside surface of the base is covered with metal, into which are driven a series of nine metal spikes of increasing length arranged in a circle. It is capped with a cardboard disc from the centre of which a thread holds a metal ring on a wire which dangles into the middle of the metal spikes. When the cylinder is agitated the ring strikes the spikes producing a jangly sound similar to wind chimes.

I was drawn to it by the illustrations around the cylinder and on top. At first sight the parade of animals, wearing clothes and walking upright, seemed to indicate a children's toy. On closer inspection I noted that they were all carrying flags of different nations and wondered if it might be commemorating a political event. The only writing is the Patent Number 91216, which dates it to about 1909. My first thought was the Boxer Rebellion that took place around the turn of the century, as this had been depicted in a famous Puck cartoon of animal characters representing the European powers. They were led by the Russian bear and British lion, squabbling over the carcass of the Qing Chinese dragon following its defeat. A Japanese leopard(?) slinks in for a piece, while the American eagle stands back and watches the imperial scramble.

Apart from the date being a bit early, these are realistic and very fierce animals, whereas the animals on my little toy are a cheerful looking bunch. They are decked out in rustic attire, parading peaceably along a pathway with chicks and ducklings at their feet, butterflies above and a church and houses in the background. They are carrying flags, which more or less conform to the allies that put down the Boxer Rebellion, but if the animals are meant as national symbols they are

All four sides

carrying the wrong flags.

It appears to be a wedding procession, led by a rabbit carrying a black/white/blue/white/red striped flag which I have been unable to identify. There is a laurel wreath tied to the pole with ribbon. The "bride" is a tiger wearing a floral headdress, carrying a posy and a Japanese flag, her "groom" is a lion with an American flag. The "bridesmaid" holding the train is a deer carrying a Union Jack and what could well be an olive branch. Next to her is an eagle whose flag is obscured, carrying another branch with red berries. They are followed by a rooster with a Russian naval ensign, and a loppy-eared dog with a French flag.

The scene on the lid shows three animals (looking rather like a dog, rabbit and monkey) dancing hand-in-hand, apparently singing. Above them flies a line of flags; American, French, Japanese, British and two I can't identify. The scenes are happy ones, unlike the brutality pictured in the Puck cartoon, which suggests some sort of union or treaty. So what could it be?

The "Gentlemen's Agreement" of 1907 between Japan and the USA might be represented by the happy couple. After being on the same side in the Boxer Rebellion, as the new century progressed, tension began to mount between the two countries over various issues. This informal agreement was precipitated by the San Francisco school board segregating Japanese children and it limited new immigration from Japan in return for protecting the rights of Japanese families already resident in the USA. But this agreement only concerned these two countries. What of all the others apparently represented by the animals on my little toy?

Inside the Tube

Going by the flags the Triple Entente between Britain, France and Russia might fit the bill for the bridesmaid and other attendants. This developed from the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894, the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale of 1904 and an Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907. The Triple Entente between these three countries, supplemented by agreements with Japan and Portugal, was a counterweight to a Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy.

Were these various alliances of sufficient public interest to inspire the production of a commemorative toy, moreover one worthy of being patented? I am not convinced. Has anyone a better suggestion?

BUILDING—FURNISHING 59

The Tel-Electric
Piano Player

SIMPLE, yet wonderful expression devices make it the most artistic and flexible of all piano players. It is always under your personal control — whether you wish to interpret the wondrous music of Beethoven or Wagner, or the more simple melodies of those composers who write in lighter vein, the Tel-Electric responds at once to your every mood. Through it you realize the pleasure of personally producing music. Or, if you so desire, the player itself will interpret any musical composition with the technique and finish of a master musician.

Exclusive Tel-Electric Features

Your hands control the expression;
Your feet have nothing to do.
You do not have to pump it.
It runs by electricity but electric current in the house is not essential.
It may be attached to any grand or upright piano.
It does not injure your piano in any way.
It does not in any way obstruct the keyboard of your piano, which is always free for hand playing.

Price, attached to your piano, $350

Send for Illustrated Catalog
Set of four photogravures symbolic of music, suitable for framing, size 11 x 15, will be sent prepaid for 10 cents in stamps.

The Tel-Electric Company
TEL-ELECTRIC BUILDING
299 Fifth Avenue, New York City

Branches
Chicago and Boston

Agencies in
All Large Cities

In answering advertisements please mention SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

Don't try to contact these advertisers! They probably won't respond...

PHILIPPS

„Duca" Reproduktions-Piano.

Nach festgelegten Urteilen erster Kapazitäten:

‚Der Standard der Reproduktion'.

Unaufhaltsam ist der Siegeslauf seiner Leistungen und die jüngsten Lorbeeren verkörpern sich in den „Höchsten zu erreichenden Auszeichnungen" des

„Grossen Preises"

sowie des

„Ehrenpreises der Stadt Frankfurt a. M."

bei der letzten Ausstellung in Frankfurt a. Main. September bis Oktober 1911.

Die Konzert-Darbietungen im eigenen Ausstellungssalon „Kaiser-Pavillon" waren von rund 15.000 Personen besucht, und wurden die glänzendsten Urteile und Begeisterungen kundgegeben.

„GRAND PRIX" Weltausstellung Brüssel 1910.

Frankfurter Musikwerke-Fabrik
J. D. Philipps & Söhne, Aktien-Gesellschaft, Frankfurt a. M.

Berlin W, Potsdamer Straße 108. Leipzig, Parkstraße 1. Heidelberg, Bahnhofstraße 31.
Metz, Karolinger Straße 3—5. Brüssel-Nord, rue de Lsekon 181.

Bitte unverbindlich Kataloge einfordern. [9141b

WHEN THE PENNY DROPS

Visit to the Gauselmann Collection

In the last edition of Mechanical Music World we reported on the attendance by AMBC committee members at the AGM of our German sister association GSM (Gesellschaft fur Selbstpielende Musikinstrumente).

The venue was the Automatenmuseum, home to the Gauselmann Collection of Slot Machines and Automatic Musical Instruments, in Espelkamp, Westphalia.

HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM

Paul Gauselmann developed his early interest in juke boxes into a business operating, and then manufacturing, gaming machines. It quickly became the industry leader in Germany and one of the most important gaming machine manufacturers and arcade operators in the world.

These machines were not only Paul Gauselmann's business but his hobby too. He was interested in their history, social and cultural context, so set about collecting vintage examples. The first instrument in his collection, acquired in 1985, was the 1948 American Jukebox "AMI B". By 1987 the collection had expanded to 400 items.

A 1988 exhibition on the history of slot machines in the Deutsches Museum München, entitled "When the penny drops …", was met with great public interest and marked the beginning of the Gauselmann project. Collecting, restoring, researching and documenting could not remain the exclusive purpose of these efforts. The Gauselmann family took the decision to make the collection accessible to the general public. With just under 600 historical machines, the Museum Gauselmann opened its doors in 1995 at the company headquarters in Espelkamp.

After acquiring the entire collection of the Deutsches Automatenmuseum of Bingen in 2001, the "Museum Gauselmann" was finally and officially renamed "Deutsches Automatenmuseum". In 2007, the collection was further supplemented with another 650 unique machines owned by Jean-Claude Baudot of Paris.

Since October 2013, the German Automata Museum has been located at Schloss Benkhausen. Here about 200 exhibits, out of a total of approximately 1,800 coin-operated machines in the collection, are on show to the public in the most comprehensive museum of its kind in the world. They are beautifully displayed in airy galleries with both German and English interpretations.

THE EXHIBITS

These show a wide variety of coin-in-the-slot machines from different eras and countries, notably Germany, America and Britain. Some dispensed chocolate and other items, some are games of chance or skill and yet others are purely for entertainment such as the "end of the pier" machines which formed such an important part of the British seaside holiday experience.

On our visit I purchased a superbly produced book from the museum. This contains photos and descriptions (alas in German) of a representative sample of over eighty exhibits from the collection, just a few of which were on show at the time of our visit. The ones featured here are a small sample of those that we did see. In a short article it is only possible to give a flavour of this unique museum.

Figure 1 shows the Eierlegende Henne (Egg-laying Hen) MUM Automaten, GmbH, Dresden, Germany, 1920.

Around 1900 there was a trend for dispensers to take the form of animals. The egg-laying hen was true to its name, laying a metal egg containing a sweet when 10 Pfennig was inserted.

Figure 2: Gambrinus, Symphonion Fabrik Lochmannscher Musikwerke AG, Leipzig, Germany, c1898, Collection Ernst Bundle.

Gambrinus is considered to be the inventor of beer brewing and is a familiar figure in history and legend and this machine would sit well in a pub or bar. An 84-note Symphonion movement is fitted into the barrel.

Figure 3: Jugend Pramienautomat (Children's Prizes), Philipp & Co. Automatengesellschaft,

Berlin, Germany, 1905.

This charming machine shows two little girls in the dress of the period, with the taller reaching up on tiptoe to show where to insert the coin, whilst the smaller girl and their dog watch with interest. The message is clearly displayed “Sweets and a present will be yours, when you put a 10 Pfennig coin in here”.

Figure 4: One-Armed-Bandit (replica), Frank Polk, Reno, USA, 1977.

In the years 1951/52, the "cowboy artist" Frank Polk created, about 95 life size wooden carved cowboy and Indian figures, whose upper body consists of a three-reel gambling machine, for a company in Reno/Nevada USA.

Figure 5: Paris Courses, Pierre Bussoz, Paris, France, 1911.

Another gambling machine where the punter could bet a small amount of money on a horse. The metal horse was operated by a wheel inside the machine. For only 10 French Centimes the player had the chance to win a coupon, worth 20 or 30 Centimes for food or drinks, if his or her horse was the closest to the winning line.

Figure 6: Kalliope Panorama Nr. 176, disc musical box, 1885. Kalliope Musikwerke, Leipzig, Germany. Collection Stadtmuseum Lindau.

It has 12 bells and double combs with a total of 120 teeth. This is another horse racing machine. You could bet on one of 12 horses. The horses ran at different speeds during the playing of the disc. When the music stopped, the horse closest to the finish line had won the race.

Figure 7: Prämienautomat Polizist (Policeman), Mitteldeutsche Automaten AG, Dresden, Germany, 1906.

This beautiful Art Nouveau vending machine, with its comical policeman, gives a choice of chocolate or candy for 10 Pfennigs.

Figure 8: Savoyard disc musical box, Fabrik Leipziger Musikwerke, Leipzig, Germany, 1893, Collection Siegfrieds Mechanisches Musikkabinett.

After the coin is inserted, the boy turns the handle in simulation of a barrel organ. This activates the disc and the monkey automata in the cabinet. One plays the violin and the others dance.

Figure 9: Win a Kit Kat, Allwin machine, Oliver Whales of Redcar, Great Britain, c1950.

A penny coin released a ball that was fired by the player into the vertically-mounted spiral. If the player succeeded in dropping the ball into the hole, he or she won a bar of Kit Kat.

Figure 10: Onkel Theodor, Germany, c1905.

Onkel Theodor is part of the group of coin catapults that appeared with increasing frequency from 1895 onwards in Germany. Scoring a hit would earn the lucky winner one of four different awards of cigars or a glass of beer from the landlord.

Figure 11: Elefant, Sächsische Automaten & Türschließer AG, Dresden, Germany, c1900.

This vendor of sweets and collector cards is a typical representative of the imaginative vending machines of the era, and the art nouveau style. The monogram “CH” on the elephant’s saddle cloth is a sign of the designer Curt Heinsius.

Figure 12: Loterie de Comptoir, France, c1890.

This French lottery game from the late 19th century was a small device in which to store matches, to be placed upon bars or counters. Inside the golden wheel, on top of a decorative hand drawn picture of a shell game, there is a marble. The wheel could be rotated and the position of the marble when the wheel stopped decided the lucky winning number.

Figure 13: Storch Automat, MUM Automaten GmbH, Dresden, Germany, 1925.

Another wonderful vending machine, this stork carried a basket of chocolate babies on its back. After inserting the coin and turning the crank handle, the packaged baby was delivered. A bellow and a wooden flute would cause it to scream “Mama”.

Figure 14: NSPCC., Great Britain, c1930.

The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) is a charity founded in 1884. This is an example of one of their vintage collecting boxes, in the shape of a sad neglected child, which would not be an acceptable symbol for the organisation nowadays. It was designed to tug at the heartstrings of passers by to encourage donations.

Figure 15: Uncle Sam, The Caille Brothers


Awaiting Image


Awaiting Image

Company, Detroit, USA, 1908.

This patriotic, American symbolic figure "Uncle Sam" invited people to shake his hand at fairs and in penny arcades. For one cent he measured the strength of a handshake and the result appeared on the display in front of his chest.

Figure 16: Mühlen-Süßwarenautomat (Candy Mill), Deutsche Verkaufsapparate Aktiengesellschaft, Dresden, Germany, c. 1910.

This striking-looking vending machine from Saxony, shows a miller and farmer in traditional costume, shaking hands in front of the windmill. It is similar to the one with the two little girls as it gives a choice of two kinds of sweet which are delivered to a drawer at the side, accessed when the handle is pulled.

Figure 17: Cochon électriseur, Maurice et Molle, Paris, France, c1905.

This is indeed an "electrifying pig". Turning the right handle while holding the left will deliver a mild electric shock to the player. The longer he can hold on, the greater his shock will be, until the pig's eyes light up mischievously and a bell rings to signal his resistance.

Figure 18: Rotkäppchen (Red Riding Hood), Sächsische Automaten & Türschließer AG, Dresden, Germany, c1900.

Vending machines with fairy tale motifs were extremely popular among children in the late 19th century. About eighty years after the Brothers Grimm had presented their fairy tale collection, the "Red Riding Hood" was constructed. This is another machine offering a choice of chocolate or candy in return for 10 Pfennigs.

To operate these exhibits requires low value, and now mostly obsolete, coins in various currencies. Of course, Pfennigs are no problem. I don't know how well supplied the museum is with francs and dollars, but just a mention that they were a bit short of pennies had our chairman raiding his collection to send a few to Jessica Midding, Assistant Director, who had conducted our tour. She was delighted to find that many were even older than the machines.

Do go to see this fabulous collection if you can. It is well worth a detour, or even a special visit.

McClure's—The Marketplace of the World

ONLY the artistic interpretation, the musical versatility, and the wonderful scope of the living fingers of a master pianist can compare with the exquisite playing of the TEL-ELECTRIC, the most perfect mechanically as well as the most artistic musically of all piano players. Mechanical music is impossible with

The TEL-ELECTRIC PIANO PLAYER

IT is the *one* player which you, *yourself*, whether an expert musician or not, can quickly and easily learn to play with all individuality of a master pianist.

It permits you to interpret perfectly world-famous compositions with all the original feeling, all the technique, and with all the various shades and depths of expression as intended by the composer.

In using electricity as the motive force of the Tel-Electric we not only eliminate the tiresome foot-pumping and noisy bellows of the pneumatic player, but we place the instrument under your absolute control—ready to answer, instantly, your slightest musical whim.

The Tel-Electric, though radically different, has proved itself infinitely superior to any player on the market. Consider these exclusive features:—

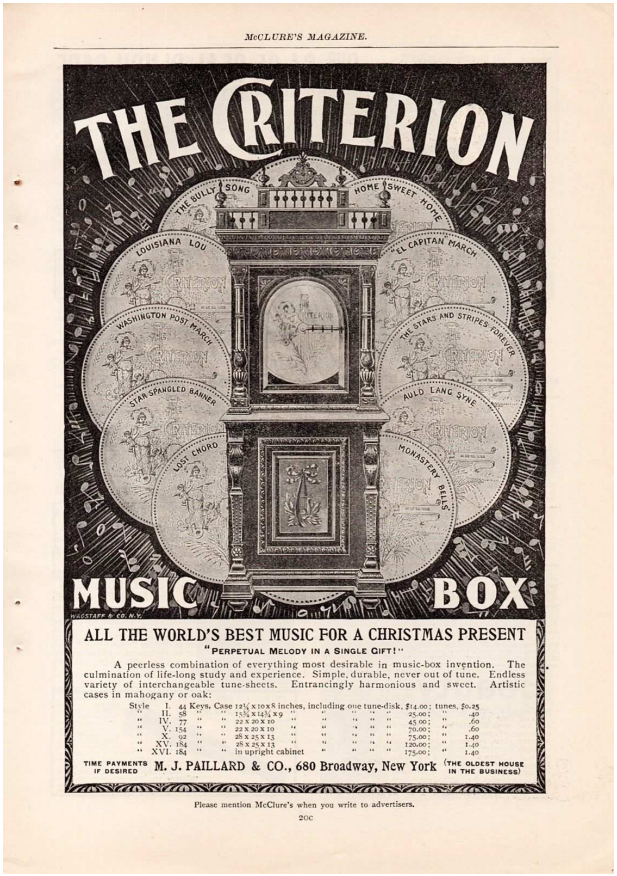
Requires no pumping—can be attached to any piano—absolutely perfect and instantaneous expression devices—does not obstruct the keyboard—uses indestructible music rolls—totally unaffected by weather-change—has never been replaced by any other piano-player—any piano with a Tel-Electric attached costs less than a player piano of the same grade.

If you cannot call at one of our stores or agencies and learn for yourself the truth of our claims for this marvelous instrument, send for our interesting, illustrated catalog—mailed free on request.

THE TEL-ELECTRIC COMPANY, 299 Fifth Avenue, New York City
Branch Office, CHICAGO **Agencies in All Large Cities**

When answering advertisements it is of advantage to mention McClure's.

29



McCLURE'S MAGAZINE.

THE CRITERION MUSIC BOX

ALL THE WORLD'S BEST MUSIC FOR A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

"PERPETUAL MELODY IN A SINGLE GIFT!"

A peerless combination of everything most desirable in music-box invention. The culmination of life-long study and experience. Simple, durable, never out of tune. Endless variety of interchangeable tune-sheets. Entrancingly harmonious and sweet. Artistic cases in mahogany or oak:

Style							
"	I.	41 Keys, Case 12¼ x 10 x 8 inches, including one tune-disk, $14.00; tunes, $0.25					
"	II.	58	"	"	15¾ x 14¾ x 9	"	"	"	"	25.00; "	.40
"	IV.	77	"	"	22 x 20 x 10	"	"	"	"	45.00; "	.60
"	V.	154	"	"	22 x 20 x 10	"	"	"	"	70.00; "	.60
"	X.	92	"	"	28 x 25 x 13	"	"	"	"	75.00; "	1.40
"	XV.	184	"	"	28 x 25 x 13	"	"	"	"	120.00; "	1.40
"	XVI.	184	"	"	in upright cabinet	"	"	"	"	175.00; "	1.40

TIME PAYMENTS IF DESIRED — M. J. PAILLARD & CO., 680 Broadway, New York — (THE OLDEST HOUSE IN THE BUSINESS)

Please mention McClure's when you write to advertisers.

20C

An Auction for Every Pocket

Auction Team Breker, 9 + 10 November 2018

A collection tells many stories – stories of the objects themselves, of the time and the place they were produced, of the people who made them and of the collector who gathered all these strands together.

On 9th November 2018, Auction Team Breker offered the **mechanical music collection of the late Luuk Goldhoorn**, the famously private author and historian of Utrecht, The Netherlands. Goldhoorn was a respected and generous researcher, as a glance through the acknowledgements of almost any recent book on the mechanical music industry will confirm. In addition to his many detailed articles in the specialist press and contributions to the Dutch Museum "Speelklok" in Utrecht. Goldhoorn was best remembered for his reference work on 19th century Austrian musical boxes, which he described as a forgotten craft.

The Goldhoorn collection was unusual in its depth and its focus: 174 lots of pocket-sized musical snuff boxes, watches, sewing necessaires and original documentation from the earliest days of the musical box. In offering this personal, highly academic collection, questions about availability and demand came into play. Would a collection of this size and specialist nature find buyers, would it overwhelm the market ?

Here Breker's unparalleled international advertising campaigns and combination of traditional and live bidding (via three internet platforms in America, Europe and China) came into play. The policy paid off, with a resounding 100% sold rate for the collection and enthusiastic bidding from Cologne to Canberra.

Objets de vertu with rare musical formats attracted some of the heaviest bidding.

Also in demand was a fine selection of ***Palais Royale*** **sewing necessaires** and a series of "sur plateau" musical boxes in George III silver cases.

The highest prices of the day were achieved by the largest and smallest pieces respectively: an exquisite enameled gold musical pendant and a magnificent **"Eroica"** triple-disc hall clock by **Symphonion Musikwerke of Leipzig.**

Lot 193: Symphonion Eroica Style 38A triple-disc musical clock, c. 1895. ***Sold:*** *62.900 €/ $71.700 – a new European auction record for this model.*

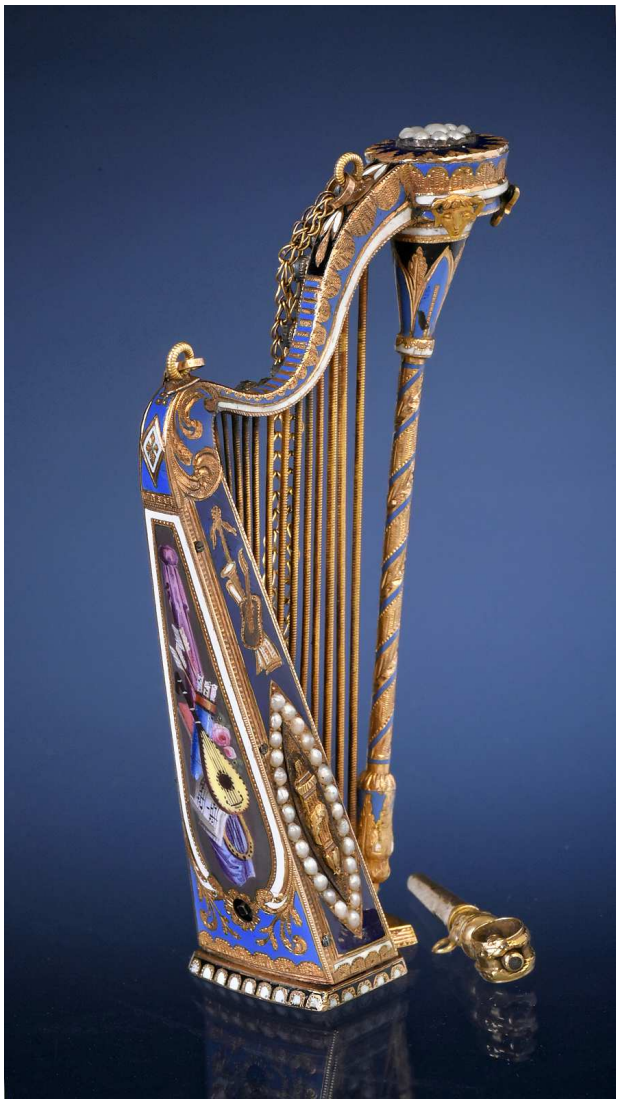
Other rare formats included the **double-disc Symphonion 'Duplex'** and coin-activated **'station' musical box**, accompanied by three dancing bisque dolls, in carved chalet case.

Victorian parlour entertainment continued in a cast of mechanical singing birds and French musical automata.

Lot 263: "Station" musical box chalet by Mermod Frères, c. 1900. Sold 27.700 € / $31.600

Lot 10: An exceptional gold snuffbox, playing one British and one Swiss air, with inscription celebrating "friendship and recognition" – a sentiment as relevant in 1810 as it is today. Sold: 17.600 € / $20.050

Lot 47:. Musical silver snuff box by Joseph Rogers & Son, Sheffield, c. 1817, with sur-plateau musical movement. Sold: 4.280 € / $4.880



Lot 45: Gold and enamel musical harp pendant, probably Bessière & Schneider, c. 1805. Sold: 36.500 € / $41.600

Lot 114: A rare curved Musical Gold Snuffbox, c. 1812. Sold: 25.180 € / $28.700

Lot 102: Musical sewing necessaire by F. Nicole in miniature escritoire, circa 1840. Sold: 7.770 € / $8.860

Lot 227: Silver-gilt and enamel singing bird box by Charles Bruguier, c. 1845. Sold: 32.740 € / $37.300

Lot 209: Model 252 twin-disc Symphonion, c. 1905. Sold: 18.900 € / $21.500

Other items of note included:

Lot 38: Gold Musical Sur-Plateau Pocket Watch, c. 1815. **Sold:** 4.280 € / $4.880

Lot 39: Palais Royale piano-form sewing necessaire with full complement of original tools, circa 1830. **Sold:** 6.330 € / $7.220

Lot 277: Large singing bird bocage by Bontems, c. 1890. **Sold:** 12.600 € / $14.360

Lot 272: Monkey Fisherman Automaton by Jean Marie Phalbois, c. 1884. **Sold:** 11.300 € / $12.850

Sur Plateau Musical Snuff Box

by Chris Fynes

This silver gilt musical snuffbox recently came into my possession giving me the opportunity to photograph and examine it more closely. It was probably originally bought as a rich man's toy during the Regency period.

The case is stamped with a London hallmark and the letter 'T' dating it to 1814. The makers mark is identified by the letters 'WT' sitting within a rectangle with canted corners, this is likely to be William Troby who was registered between the years 1811-1823. On the inside of the lid are scratched a series of numbers, most probably related to various repairs throughout its long history. It plays 'The Sailor's Hornpipe'. This tune first appeared in a dance known as the "College Hornpipe" in about 1797. It is now mainly associated with Sir Henry Wood's Fantasia on British Sea Songs featured in the Last Night of the Proms. The musical movement itself is not signed by any maker but bear all the characteristics of those produced by Piguet et Meylan.

These sur plateau or miniature disc movements were the precursors of cylinder movements and were primarily devised to occupy the limited space of a pocket watch, small snuff box, vinaigrette or other novelty as they needed to be flat. This particular one is less than a quarter of an inch thick with a base of only 2½ by 1½ inches. And yet within this small space sits a tiny double-sided disc which plays a total of thirty-nine teeth with pins not much thicker than human hairs. This must have really tested the watchmaker's skills.

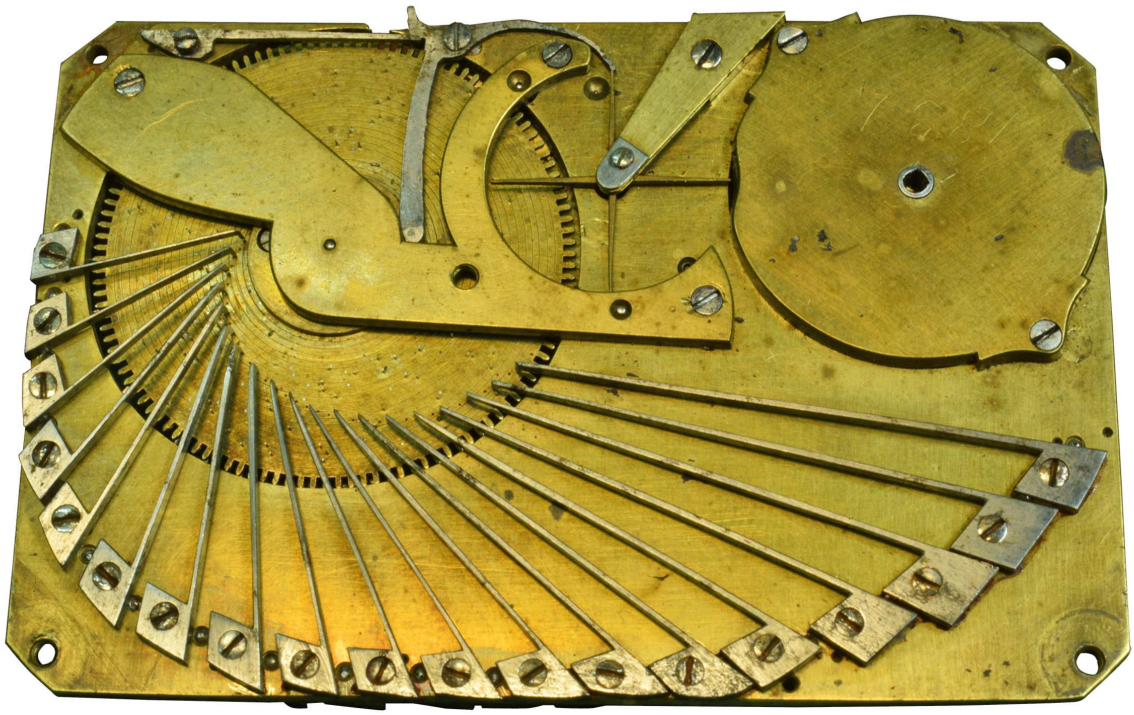
To give room for the teeth (often called springs) to vibrate properly, they are plucked sideways in the same plane as the disc. Consequently, they are arranged radially around the surface, slightly off centre with their tips placed in the form of an arc. To allow more room, all the alternate teeth are mounted on the reverse side of the disc and so are set-up in the opposite direction. To enable teeth to be plucked, they have extended tips pointing inwards towards the disc, all accurately shaped and positioned to allow the pins coming in at an angle of some 75 degrees, to push against their sides with sufficient tension to leave them to vibrate at the right intensity. Therefore, the base of each tooth has to be dowelled precisely. A slight deviation could cause the tooth-tip to trap a pin and cause a breakage. In fact, two teeth have already lost their tips, which over the period of 200 years is not unexpected. Well worth a bit of restoration though!

The movement is powered by a spring mounted in an extra thin barrel which ultimately drives a four-bladed fan against air pressure inside a well. It is wound anti-clockwise with a square male key as opposed to all later cylinder movements wound the opposite way with female keys. All the gearing is mounted between two plates within a gap of about 1/10 inch.

Some sur plateau movements play two tunes, the first on one side of the disc and the second on the reverse. The tune change is facilitated by a separate control lever that pushes the disc up or down.

It is remarkable that such a complicated mechanism should be produced before the advent of the much simpler cylinder movement, albeit some were made at a later date. This was most certainly the result of an obsession with miniaturisation at the time.

Sur Plateau silver gilt musical snuff box movement dated 1814. It plays 'The Sailor's Hornpipe' which is mainly associated with Sir Henry Wood's Fantasia on British Sea Songs featured in the Last Night of the Proms.



THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

A visit to the mechanical wonders on the L'ile de Nantes

By David Soulsby

My wife and I recently travelled to the French port of Nantes, about 400 Km from Paris, in search of a four storey mechanical elephant. It was housed in one of the huge warehouses on the site of the former Loire shipyard. It is part of the 'Machines de L'ile' project led by François Delarozière and Pierre Orefice for the urban renewal of the area, since the docks closed in 1987.

But first we visited the Galerie des Machines where machinists described their work (my O-Level French let me down somewhat) and demonstrated some of the other mechanical inhabitants. A giant spider rose out of a hole in the floor and waved its legs in turn towards us (Picture 1). A few (no doubt with better linguistic skills than mine) were allowed to ride on the spider as it 'walked' backwards to the rear of the warehouse.

The pièce de résistance that the machinists are currently working on is a giant Heron tree. It will be 30 metres high, 45 metres in diameter and with an estimated weight of 1000 tons. The tree combines steel branches and plant life, with the trunk being accessed via a staircase enabling visitors to visit every floor. A number of mechanical birds will adorn its' branches including two gigantic herons. Although not due to be completed until 2022, many of its components were demonstrated in the workshop. These included a giant humming bird, a flock of wild geese and protype models of the herons themselves, which allowed a select band of tourists to 'fly' to the warehouse roof above (Picture 2). A mechanical caterpillar due for the roots of the trees was available for a brief ride if desired. A mock-up of the branches of the heron tree were also there to climb up.

Interesting though the vision of the future Heron Tree was, we were eager to get close-up and personal with the object for which we had travelled so far to see – le grand éléphant (Pictures 3 to 7). By the time we had left the Gallerie des Machines, the mechanical marvel had left the warehouse and had trudged a considerable distance across the square. It was very impressive to look at, with its massive feet striding forward, carrying 40 people on board. Occasionally it trumpeted or sprayed water at groups of kids running alongside (Picture 7). The stats speak for themselves: It is 12 metres high, 8 wide and 21 metres long, constructed of over 48 tons of steel and wood, set in motion using 62 cylinders, 46 of which are hydraulic, 6 pneumatic and 10 gas-powered. It travels at speeds of up to 3 km/hr. It allegedly costs Machines de L'ile €200,000 a year to run it. For a mere €8.50 each to ride the giant beast for half an hour, we climbed the adjoining ramp to the terrace, through the portal and up the circular staircase to the top, for a view of the abandoned dockyards. From inside it was interesting to view the mechanical parts in motion as we set off across the square.

The city is the birthplace of Jules Verne and so there is a strong tradition of celebrating the weird and fantastical. His book "The Steam House" described a wheeled house pulled by a steam powered mechanical elephant. Another of his books "20,000 leagues under the sea" is celebrated on the same site by the Marine Worlds Carousel populated by mechanical models of sea creatures operated on three separate levels all rotating independently. The highest level under a big top adorned with painted panels is the surface of the sea which includes several boats and flying fish (Picture 8) as well as jelly fish, turtles and even sea serpents. Surrounding them are 24 moving mechanical waves. The second level is the abyss, populated with a deep sea lanternfish (Picture 9), a manta ray and many other exotic mechanical fish. The lowest represents the sea bed with a giant crab (Picture 10), reversing squid (Picture 11) and a bathyscaphe, a total of 14 deep sea denizens, each of which you can hop on board for the ride. The creatures are moveable by pushing pedals and moving levers.

For the purists I guess you could say the elephant and his mechanical friends are not automata, because of the motorized vehicles involved. But if you were to stand alongside and watch his progress stomping around the naval docks of yesteryear, waving tail and ears, and suspend your disbelief, I'm sure you'd believe it was real. And that was good enough for me.


1


2


3


4


5


6


7


8


9


10


11

The Marine Worlds Carusel on the L'ile de Nantes

Debain v. L'Épée Court Case

See article on Page 27

A part of Debain's patent application, and the part under dispute with L'Épée, was:

"Having thus described the nature of my said Invention, and the manner of performing the same, I would have it understood that I do not confine myself to the precise details shewn and described, so long as the peculiar nature of either part of my Invention be retained ; but what I claim is, - First, the arranging mechanical apparatus, as herein described, capable of being acted upon by moveable surfaces having suitable projections or indents as before described; and I also claim the arranging surfaces F capable of acting on suitable apparatus to give motion to the keys of pianofortes or such like keyed musical instruments, as herein described.

And, secondly, I claim the arranging apparatus having spring tongues or reeds, as herein described, whereby the same may be readily applied to and detached from pianofortes or other similar keyed musical instruments.

In witness whereof, I, the said Alexander Debain, have hereunto set my hand and seal, this Twenty-two day of February, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and forty-seven.

ALEXANDER (l.b.) DEBAIN."

(Extract from Debain's patent application - Ed)

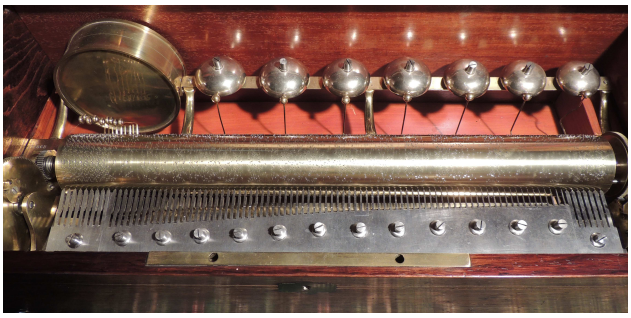
A Large L'Épée with Bells & Drum

by David Evans

In 1833 Pierre Henri Paur from Mont Béliard, Switzerland, started a musical box factory in Sainte-Suzanne, in the Franche-Comté district of France with the intention of creating a French musical box industry using Swiss workers. (In those days before the EU, it was easy to move from one European country to another). He had experience as a comb manufacturer in Geneva and no doubt understood the other necessary steps in manufacturing complete instruments. Little is known of his methods or output, but his attempts ultimately failed. In 1839 he was joined by Auguste L'Épée from Neuchâtel, Switzerland, a former director of the Japy clock company in Beaucourt[1]. Paur died a few months later and L'Épée bought and took over the running of the enterprise. He launched the fashion in France of adding musical movements to snuff-boxes, watches, fruit dishes et al which had up until then been a Swiss monopoly. In 1845 he had thirty workers and by 1850 the factory was expanding and involved Auguste's sons, Henry and Edouard.. In or around 1857 L'Épée invented the manivelle for children, which necessitated a further expansion of the factory facilities required to make them. In 1861 new workshops were built though later in the year the French piano manufacturer Debain sued them for infringing their copyright for the mechanical interpretation of music (Debain of course had by then introduced their Antiphonel planchette piano player and copyrighted the whole basic principal)[2]. The French government finally intervened in 1865, as the L'Épée factory output was considered of great benefit to the French economy, since the majority of its production was exported.

The long delay in resolving the issue cost the L'Épée organisation a great deal of money, but another new factory was nevertheless built in 1869. Two years later Sainte-Suzanne became the centre of a major battle in the Franco-Prussian war and the village was occupied by Prussian troops. The factory was taken over and used as a field hospital until it was destroyed by the invaders, including large numbers of finished musical boxes. The resulting devastation culminated in Auguste's death in February 1875 at the age of 77.

Picture 1: L'Épée No. 24,568

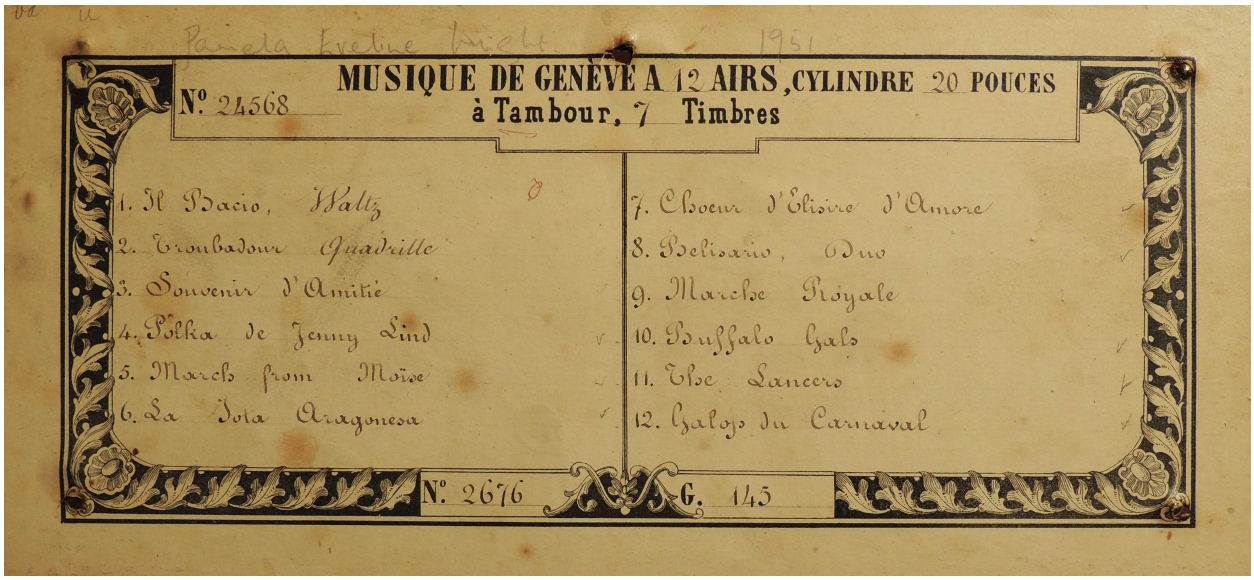


Picture 2: Interior of L'Épée No. 24,568

For several years the factory had been run by Henry, Edouard and their brother-in-law, though they kept the original name for the business, and by 1878 350 workers were employed. The company diversified into gramophones and other mechanisms, though musical boxes were produced until 1914[3].

The box under consideration (pictures 1 & 2) is L'Épée serial number 24,568 in the first group of serial numbers on the Tune Sheet Book dating chart in Supplement 3, which dates it to 1864. Its tune sheet (picture 3) does not appear in the Tune Sheet Book and is a variation on TSB No. 283. The tune sheet has the heading "Musique de Genève à 12 Airs, Cylindre 20 Pouces, à Tambour, 7 Timbres". It is a 12-air box with a 21 ¼" (54 cm) cylinder, a musical comb of 79 teeth, with a drum comb with nine teeth to the left of the bass end and a bell comb of seven teeth to the right of the treble end. The percussion combs are secured with short screws threaded into the cast iron comb base so that they are fixed relative to the musical teeth, and the whole comb assembly can be removed as a single unit. The total length is 21". The bedplate has the stamp of agent S Woog. Samuel Woog acted as an early agent for the importation of L'Épée's musical boxes into England. He died in 1865 and his business was taken over by his son Jules, and later by Adolphe Woog. Their initials in an oval quite often appear on L'Épée bedplates.

H.A.V. Bulleid and Paul Bellamy (see Mechanical Music World Issue 9, the article on musical boxes with bells) conclude that exposed bells first appeared about 1860, so this box is relatively early in the 'Bells in Vue' period. Its seven bells are mounted in decreasing order of size (and pitch) from left to right and the linkages are designed with the minimum of play, the brass links connecting the teeth to the bell rods have small shouldered threaded screws at



Picture 3: Tune sheet of No. 24,568

their ends instead of the more usual holes and pins. The result is a pleasing musical interpretation including the bells as part of the melody. The brass drum, with brass head and nine beaters, does not really add much to the performance as usual! It can be disconnected.

This may be one of the earliest L'Épée boxes so far recorded with visible bells. In the article mentioned above, Paul Bellamy lists in chronological order tune sheets of various makers that have mention of bells. Unfortunately an error has crept in on the L'Épée tune sheet TSB No. 34 (also illustrated as Fig. 2 in the Mechanical Music World article), which is listed as 1865. It was indeed listed as such in the original Tune Sheet Book, but in the list of corrections included in Supplement 2, the date for No. 34 was amended to 1880. In other words, this serial number (1216) is from the second group of L'Épée boxes on the dating chart, not the first group. The fact is that one of the tunes listed on it, Pinnafore, was first performed in 1878 which rather confirms this view.

Programme of No. 24,568, Gamme No. 145:

Il Bacio – Waltz (Arditi, 1860)

Troubadour – Quadrille (Albert Leutner, c. 1838)

Souvenir d'Amitie (Fernando Sor, 1825 - d.1839)

Polka Jenny Lind (1846)

March from Moire (?)

La Joie Aragoneur (?)

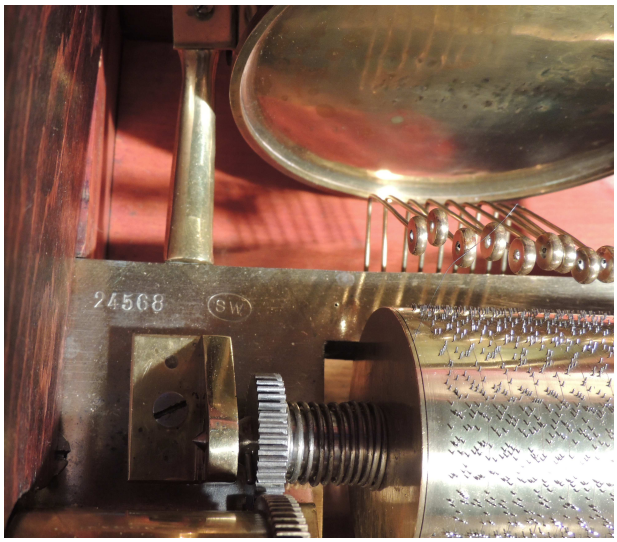
Choeur d'Elisire d'Amore (Donizetti, 1832)

Belisario Duo (Donizetti, 1836)

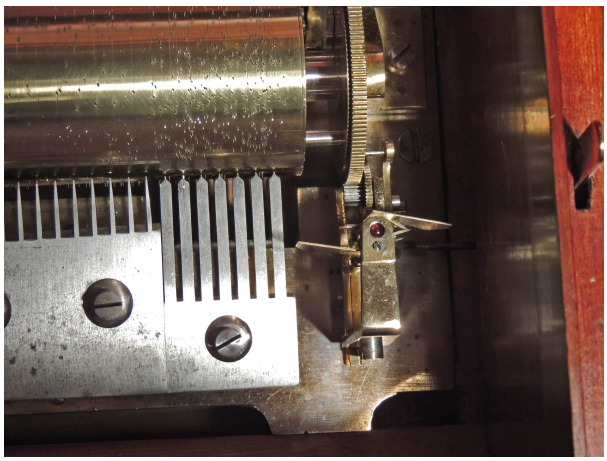
March Royale (i.e. National Anthem - several of these exist)

Buffalo Gals (1844)

The Lancers



Picture 4: Serial number and S Woog stamp



Picture 5: Bell comb

Galop du Carnaval

Picture 6: Winding lever

The box exhibits most of the standard L'Épée features:

U-shaped click springs – no doubt accounted for by Auguste L'Épée's time at Japy Clock Co – virtually all French clocks have U-shaped click springs.

Wood knob on steel winding lever.

Unusual bedplate – Bulleid says they are cast iron with tin plating over copper. Ord-Hume says they are polished steel dipped in a tinning solution. The bedplate on this example is magnetic. Though there are a few cast iron alloys that have magnetic properties, the ones that appear in most domestic goods do not, but steel does. My observation seems to indicate that L'Épée bedplates are polished steel, then tin-plated over copper to keep them from tarnishing.

The inner glass slides out of the left end of its frame.

The control lever platform is secured to its divider with small wood screws.

In this box, the case fixing screws are conventional long screws with polished brass washers at the front and wood screws at either end at the back of the bedplate – see Picture 4, just visible at bottom left, under the wood divider.

Restoration

When we acquired this box it required a re-pin, several teeth replacing and re-dampering. This work was carried out by Ailsa Weir, who reported that the comb is the longest single piece comb that she and her father, Jim, have ever seen, and Jim had to make an extension to their grinding machine in order to accommodate its length. Pictures 9 and 10 show the machine before modification and the new extension added to it for this job.

Picture 7: Showing where teeth are missing and some short tips

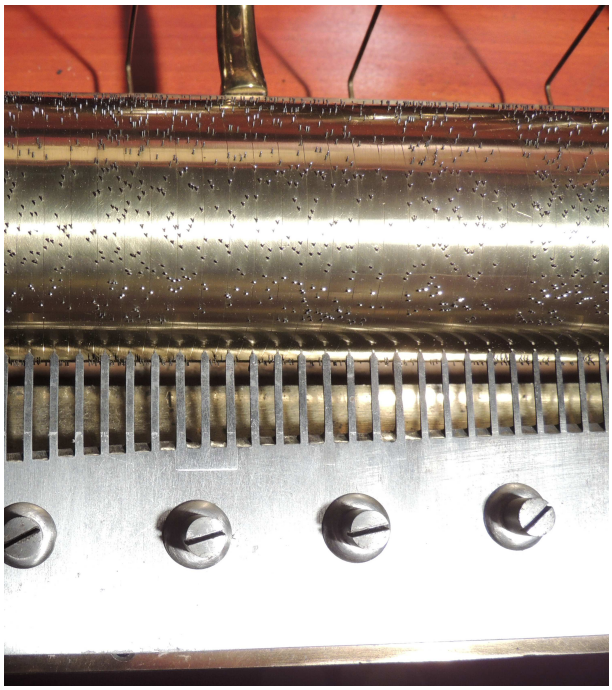
Bibliography

[1] *Frédéric Japy (1749 – 1812) founded his watch movement factory in Beaucourt in 1771. By 1777 it employed 50 workers. It is recorded that in 1801 300 workers were producing 100,000 movements per year. Napoleon gave them an award in 1804 and offered Frédéric the title of Comte d'Empire, which he refused. In 1805 he patented a wheel cutting machine and invented several other machines for finishing watch parts. By 1807 his sons Fritz, Louis and Pierre entered the business and by 1810 they had opened a factory to manufacture clock movements and exhibited examples from 1819, winning a gold medal for them in 1849. They exhibited at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, at which time they were making 60,000 clock movements and 500,000 watch movements annually. The firm prospered under various members of the family into the 20th Century.*

[2] *See Page 26*

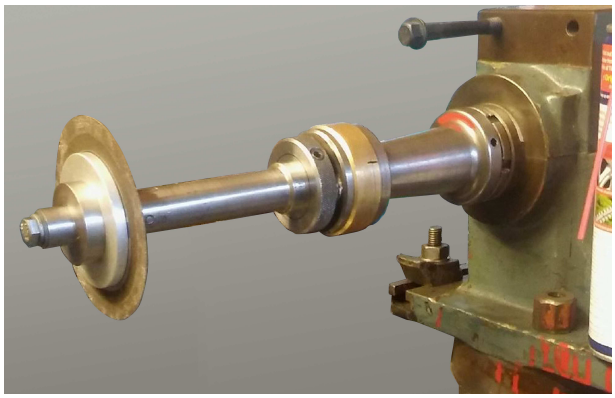
[3] *See Ord-Hume, A.W.J.G., "Musical Box", London 1980.*

Much of the research on L'Épée was carried out by Roger Vreeland and Mrs Mark Davis and published in "Musical Box".



Picture 8: Repaired teeth and the whole comb cut back slightly to take up wear.

Picture 9: Weir grinder before modification



Picture 10: Weir grinder with specially-made extension

Other works consulted:

Bellamy, P: The Music Makers of Switzerland

Bulleid, HAV: Cylinder Musical Box Design & Repair

Piguet, Jean-Claude: The Music Box Makers

Tardy: Dictionnaire des Horlogers Français Vol.1.

Webb, G: The Musical Box Handbook, Vol.1

Pictures 7, 9 and 10 by courtesy of Jim and Ailsa Weir and reproduced with permission.

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.

AMBC & Editorial Policy

The AMBC Editors welcome articles, letters and other contributions for publication. They expressly reserve the right to amend or refuse the foregoing if not in compliance with editorial guidelines. Opinions expressed by an author do not imply those of the editors or AMBC who disclaim any liability for errors, omissions, inaccuracies or the consequences thereof.
The AMBC and its editors disclaim responsibility for advertisements, product information, warranties and endorsements that are the sole responsibility of the advertiser or contributor to whom representation must be made.
Committees/Boards of other Societies may reproduce or edit AMBC publications subject to the permission of the Editors or in lieu the Executive and as confirmed in writing or by email. AMBC welcomes reciprocal arrangements. Constructive comments, including the identification of errors, additional material, correspondence, etc. are welcome for publication under AMBC editorial guidelines. Contributors should ensure that such material does not breach copyright of a third party or that, where appropiate, the copyright holder gives Rights to Publication in whole or part.
An author's contribution as published by AMBC in any form, including the AMBC website (ambc.org.uk), will be the copyright of AMBC. Contributors have absolute right to retain their intellectual property rights to the material contributed.
AMBC will make available any of its published material, subject to the above conditions, for the use of other societies and organisations provided that does not involve a profit motive. AMBC therefore wishes to collaborate with other like-minded organisations in research and publication to encourage interest by members of other Societies and of the public at large.
*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.

Awaiting Image

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. £10 + P&P.

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

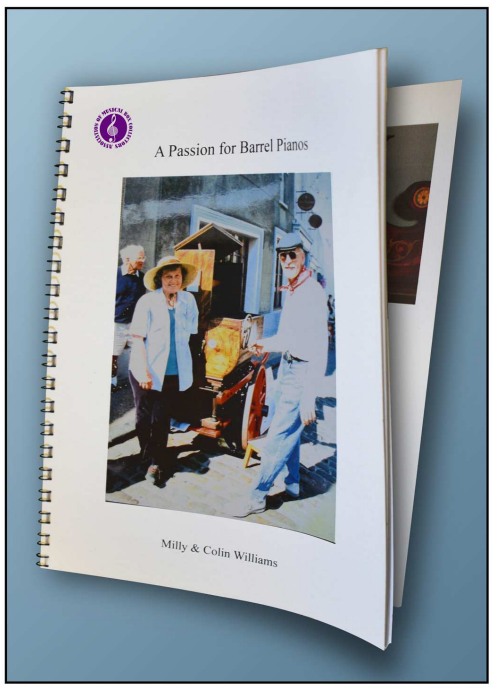
***Disc Musical Box Book** by K. McElhone. £50 + P&P.

***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.



Members' Sales & Wants

Polyphon 104 (19 5/8") Pediment:

I have some good reproduction pediments that can be supplied 'as is' in the white wood or stained and polished

Polyphon 105 (24½") Motor Cover. Polished and glazed.

Symphonion 25¼" Pediment, in excellent condition.

Restoration Project: Case, Motor, Bedplate and Combs to make a Symphonion 25¼"

8-Air Nicole Freres Music Box with a Double Spring Motor.

Wanted: A pair of combs for a Polyphon 104 (19 5/8") or a complete bedplate.

Contact: Steve Greatrex 07774 418 706

I have spares for Reuge, Thorens, and Guissez movements up to 31 notes. These include endlesses, combs, cylinders, stop/start levers, springs, spring barrels and even the knobs for the stop/start levers on mugs.

Call Ted Brown: on 01403 823533

A member who has relocated to Italy has some mechanical music box related items for sale.

For details call 00-39-523-891999 or mobile 00-39-3319234660

I am selling some of the items that appear in the little book "Collecting (affordable) Musical Novelties".

For complete list of items available contact Juliet Fynes on info@ambc.org.uk

If you have not yet bought a copy of the book it is £5 plus postage - see advertisement inside front cover.

In future editions of ***Mechanical Music World*** *we shall be pleased to accept advertisements from members, both display (contact Ted Brown for details) and classified (contact the Editors). Let us know if we can help.*