

Issue 25, Summer 2021

MECHANICAL MUSIC WORLD



A Delightful French Nécessaire

An Association of Musical Box Collectors Publication

From the Editors' Desk

Wow! Having just read the Chairman's Report (and checked the last issue of this Journal) I have to agree that this IS our 25th magazine. At four issues per year we must be entering our seventh year! Time really does fly when you are enjoying yourself, and that is what our hobby is about - enjoyment of the music the mechanisms, the ingenuity and the sheer craftsmanship of the musical boxes etc.

Instruments frequently come with historical connections - the manufacturer, country of origin (including snippets like the effect of Napoleon marching his armies through Switzerland) and sometimes of course the families who owned them.

Thanks to the efforts of scholars like the late Anthony Bulleid and the still early Paul Bellamy among others, more and more information is being revealed. As in most historical fields there are a few Eureka moments, but the majority of information comes from patient digging around and piecing the shards together to get the bigger picture. In this issue Paul is investigating the probable numbers of musical boxes issued by various manufacturers.

Edward Murray-Harvey has contributed another of his delightful evocative articles. On this occasion he looks at a special record cover and the advertising associated with it. David was inspired by Edward's work to look into some of the covers we have lying around.

Paul Tucker has allowed us to feature some wonderful and unique early items from his collection. We very much hope to receive further contributions

from this discriminating collector and restorer. Christopher Fynes has done his usual amazing quality photographs of Paul's items.

Part two of the manivelle story has at last made its way into print. Thanks to Paul Bellamy for some clear explanations of problems and solutions provided by manufacturers at the time and some fine illustrations of some lovely examples.

David Soulsby's automata world continues to intrigue and fascinate. The build-your-own kits are certainly interesting and the results are appreciated by family and friends. Hallowe'en is certainly big business over here - David managed to terrify some young children one dark night by silently opening the front door to reveal a life-size talking skeleton - red eyes blazing and jaws moving... This may have explained why we very seldom had 'trick-or-treaters' visit us on following years.

As this lockdown ends perhaps we should stock up with lots of kits ready for next winter?

Speaking of which, we recently came across Wooden Town, a maker of amazing kits, some of them very complex and all of very high quality. They are based in Magdeburg, Germany, but have a considerable presence in USA for shipping purposes. They sell mainly on-line and can be found at: <https://www.wooden-town.com/pages/about>

We assure you we have no connection in any way with that business!

In the meantime, please enjoy the sunshine and stay healthy.

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Chairman's Report

It's time to congratulate ourselves on reaching another milestone. This is issue 25 of our magazine. We thought initially that we would only be able to produce a brief newsletter for our small initial membership, but we have managed to do better than that. Our contributors continue to supply serious technical articles and lighter informative pieces over a very wide range of topics; there is truly "something for everyone". Thanks to Chris Fynes for the design work, our advertisers for their support in helping to fund the printing costs and especially the editors, Lesley and David Evans for their hard work in pulling it all together. We are looking forward to producing the next 25 issues to inform and entertain our growing membership.

Long term members cannot fail to have noticed that the bulk of the magazine content is supplied by a handful of regular contributors who seem to have an endless source of inspiration, but we are delighted when someone new submits an article. So I make no apology for repeating the plea for others to come forward, even if it is only a letter commenting on an article, or just a short item, or brief details of a member's box that we can write up on their behalf.

My little collection at the Old School is feeling a bit neglected as we have been closed to visitors for about eighteen months. I must admit to having the occasional glass of whisky in the schoolroom after playing a roll on the Steck or the Orchestrelle, but it is not the same without an audience. On the plus side I have had the time to go through all my musical box discs and discovered many that I had long since forgotten. So these have now come to the top of the pile for extra playing. I regularly change the tunes on my disc boxes to give a more even wear on the teeth.

As Paul Bellamy and I give our telephone numbers on the website we receive quite a few calls from non-members seeking help and information and they all appreciate the personal touch rather than having to wait for an email response (we do get emails too of course). Some even decide to join us.

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Chairman

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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 MEETINGS

Cancelled until further notice

Having had to cancel all our meetings for the past year, we have been very much hoping that we will be able to get together again this year. With the roll out of vaccinations and falling infection numbers we are cautiously optimistic about holding our usual early Christmas celebration in November. All being well we shall notify the date in the next edition.

The correct email address for PayPal payments for membership dues is:

ambcmembership@gmail.com

How Many Musical Boxes

did the Musical Box Makers Make?

Paul Bellamy

*The late HAV (Anthony) Bulleid provided a clue when he constructed his dating charts for makers and agents. The first 12 charts were published in his book *Musical Box Tune Sheets*, which had 216 examples. The book was the brain-child of its editor, Ted Brown, who persuaded him to publish his tune sheet project as a book, which was originally a series of articles published in the MBSI (Music Box Society International) Journal. It was published in 1999 and soon became a huge success.*

A further ten years passed during which three more supplements, two edited by Ted in 2001 and 2005 and the third supplement by me in 2008. Bulleid's work and his collaboration with many contributors continued until his death in 2009, at which point he had added a further 53 sheet examples. Following his wish, we collaborators continued the work.

Anthony published tune sheets as he received them and so makers and agents appeared in random order. The first book contained serial number dating charts for a number of makers. By the time of the third supplement he had revised and created more charts, so the supplement contains his last and latest charts on which the first estimate is based.

The fourth supplement lacked further updates and extensions to the dating charts.

*Anthony was the technical editor of my book *The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music* and assisted me in writing *The Music Makers of Switzerland*. It has taken me the subsequent years to review the entirety of his tune sheet work and dating charts. He had started to create further charts but they remained incomplete and unpublished. These and additional ones will be presented in AMBC's pending book, which has yet to be published, which forms the basis for two further estimates.*

So, How Many Musical Boxes did the Musical Box Makers Make?

Prelude to a First Estimate

Based on the 3rd Musical Box Tune Sheet Supplement, Bulleid's dating charts cover the following makers: B. H. Abrahams, G. Baker-Troll, B.

A. Brémond, F. Conchon, Ducommun Girod, L'Épée, Métert & Langdorff, Lecoultres & Perrelet, Mermod Frères, Mojon Manger, Nicole Frères, The Paillards, Rebicek, Ami Rivenc, Karrer. Of the few French makers, L'Épée was his only example. Also, Rebicek was the only Austrian maker.

Makers always applied serial numbers sequentially. When the date for a particular serial number is known, it 'fixes' the rate of production at that point. Two fixes spaced well apart means that the overall rate of production can be predicted. The more the number of fixes, the more accurate the date line. This is how Bulleid created his dating charts. By summing the estimated total production of these charts we get the first estimate.

There were also many agents who applied their own numbering system, often shown on tune sheets but they may have been using theirs for items other than musical boxes. It is assumed that agency sales will be accounted for by the products of the known makers. For this reason, except possibly the PVF (Paillard-Vaucher Frères) London agency, the output of agents is disregarded.

Makers may not have started their serial numbers at No. 1; the possible exception being Nicole Frères. Others may have started at 100 or possibly 1000 in order to give the impression that they had been in business for some time! Many of the Bulleid dating charts indicate no examples of serial numbers in the start-up years. This has little effect on making an estimate of their output because it is the highest serial number that matters, even if we have to deduct 1000 from that estimate.

The charts have full lines when there is certainty. Chain-dotted lines represent uncertain extrapolations either before or after known serial numbers and dates. Bulleid assumed a more or less constant rate of production with slightly different rates at the start and end of the business. The rate of production makes no difference to the actual estimated output. What matters is the date at the highest recorded serial numbers. If serial numbers are lower than 1000 then it is assumed they started at 1 or 100. It makes no effective difference to the estimates

François Nicole was the exception because he never used serial numbers, so his actual output is uncertain. However, the two Nicole cousins, David Elie and Pierre Moise, who had their workshop nearby, were probably working under François's direction and they did use serial numbers. Unlike François, their combs and movements were usually stamped with a serial number and a Nicole name such as F. Nicole, Frères Nicole or Nicole Frères.

The Bulleid charts often covered more than one maker's name. His Chart 3, Fig. 1, is for Geneva maker Brémont. It is complicated because it includes a chain-dotted line for Greiner, XY, and Ami Rivenc, YZ. Brémont's output is shown by a full line. It was only his third attempt at creating dating charts and there appear to be some errors or assumptions. The first error was for line PQ, which he questioned why Brémont should have two parallel date lines, PQ and AB?

Line XYZ is not fully explained but appears to be estimates of separate production by Greiner and Rivenc. The inference is that they were independent makers who also supplied Brémont in some form of loose partnership. Bulleid also reported that Ami Rivenc took over the Brémont business and its serial numbers at about serial number 20,000, circa 1870. However, this also does not explain why Rivenc also had his own separate serial numbers. In fact, a few years later Bulleid reviewed the production of Rivenc, his Chart 14, reproduced here as Fig. 5.

Line AB makes sense if we consider Brémont to be both entrepreneur and maker, with his own line of products as well as those bought in from Greiner and Rivenc.

Fig. 3 is my revision of Bulleid's Chart 3 for which he wrote: "...no explanation has yet been found to the two questions (1) why two sets of serial numbers within the same span of years? And (2) what about serial numbers between 28000 and 35000?" Line PQ can now be attributed to Charles Lecoultre and Perrelet. Charles was the son of François Charles Lecoultre who continued the Lecoultre business for a short time before Perrelet took over. PQ has therefore been removed from my Fig. 3 revision. In re-plotting Bulleid's estimated dates, there remain some anomalies. For example, his estimates for the dates of three Greiner serial numbers were serial 16878, circa 1865, serial 13297, circa 1867 and

serial 14550, circa 1867. Obviously there are some inconsistencies as serial numbers and dates should be continuous. However, they were only estimates but could also be typographical errors; so, when a higher serial number has a lower date it has been omitted.

When Bulleid first produced his dateline it ended in 1883 but when he published his book *Musical Box Tune Sheets* he extended it to 1894 with serial numbers up to 28000. So this is another update to my Fig 3. The date lines are an attempt to separate the individual outputs of Greiner and Brémont from their partnership production. Also included on my chart are references to the tune sheet patterns but there are too many variations on three basic patterns to illustrate in this article.

Fig. 4 is my revision of Bulleid's Chart 8 for Lecoultre & Perrelet. I have also removed and produced separate charts for David Lecoultre and his brother Henri-Joseph Lecoultre but they are not illustrated here. The Bulleid date line is unchanged and retains a continuous set of serial numbers for François-Charles, his partnerships and as continued by Perrelet. My chart also includes the names and time spans of the various partnerships and a reference to the use of various tune sheet patterns, not illustrated in this article.

Bulleid later revised his date line for Rivenc in his Chart 14, 3rd Supplement, shown here as Fig. 5. He described this revision as 'A calm look at the Rivenc output away from Brémont and Greiner'. This allows the totality of Rivenc's output to be considered independently from that of Brémont.

The rest of the first estimate is taken from the remainder of the 3rd supplement charts, not illustrated here, are as follows:

Chart 4 for Conchon has a full line for known own sales but a chain-dotted line for known but untraceable production. I have assumed that this part of his output was as a supplier to others and therefore needs to be discounted in the estimate.

Chart 7 for Langdorff takes account the fact he changed serial numbers every year. He also included a date code, which made it easy to align serial numbers with date of production.

Chart 8 covers the common date line for François Lecoultre, his son and a partnership with Bréchet. Perrelet took over the business but continued the

serial numbers; his output is recorded separately below. The chart also included two other separate Lecoultre business, brothers Henri and David. Henri had several different trading names but one set of serial numbers that include his partnership with Granger.

Chart 10 is for Mojon, Manger. The first part of his date line has been ignored because there is no record of serial numbers below 15000. It is quite possible they started as suppliers to others. Making the decision to ignore a possible 15,000 items may be wrong and unjustified but sometimes it is better to be cautious and underestimate than overestimate.

Chart 11 does not take into account the output of François Nicole because he did not use serial numbers. This results in another underestimate, which only includes the output of his two cousins of the same family name, David Elie and Pierre Moise Nicole. However, the chain dotted start of the serial number is probably correct as very low serial numbers have since been found. Bulleid did not update his Nicole dating chart when taken over by Charles Brun, who started a new series at 50,000. These have been excluded in this first estimate.

Chart 12 is for all the Paillards. Bulleid assumed all the Paillards, including the separate family group known as PVF (Paillard-Vaucher Frères), worked as one group. Subsequent evidence suggests that PVF/Paillard-Vaucher Frères are two separate entities. This means that his chart should be reconsidered as the output of just the main Paillard branch. The smaller family group known as PVF or Paillard-Vaucher has been excluded from this first estimate.

Chart 13 for Rebicek was the first by Bulleid for this Prague maker. The full line is for known serial-numbered production but the start of manufacture is uncertain and many movements did not have serial numbers. He was one of a few Bohemian makers such as the Olbrich brothers of Vienna. They started making movements for musical clocks and later adapted them as stand-alone musical boxes. A distinguishing feature with few exceptions is that the comb layout was treble to the left (next to the spring motor) whereas the Swiss and French makers standardised on bass to the left.

Chart 15. This was the last of Bulleid's published charts. The Karrer family seemed to have two sepa-

rate methods of production. One part of the enterprise produced movements for supply to others and the other part was as makers in their own right. Bulleid's chart probably only accounts for their output as makers. This does not affect the estimate because their other production would have been accounted for by other makers' serial numbers. It is for this reason that I have discounted the chain-dotted part of the Bulleid dateline.

The First Estimate (thousands).

Based only on the Bulleid charts referred to above the total output of each maker is as follows:

B. H. Abrahams, 17.5; G. Baker-Troll, 15; B.A. Brémond, 28; Greiner, 42.5;

F. Conchon, 4.8; Ducommun-Girod, 52; L'Épée, 128; Méttert & Langdorff, 25.3;

Perrelet, 13; F. Lecoultre, 33; David Lecoultre, 10; Henri Lecoultre, 5;

Mermod Frères, 125; Mojon, Manger, 23; Nicole Frères, 48; The Paillards, 142;

Rebicek, 55; Ami Rivenc, 25; Karrer, 6.

The total is 798,100 and they are mainly for cartel movements between about 1815 to the end of the century but also include the snuffboxes and similar small movements that were part of his dating chart serial numbers. The one omission is for François Nicole. Nobody knows how many musical boxes he made. He started cartel production in 1810 with his signature grid-pattern on the cylinder with length-wise and circumferential scribe lines. He retired some time between 1835 and 1843, probably nearer 1835. The only comparable makers at that time were the two Lecoultre, brothers David and Henri. Their rates of production were about 200 per year. His son-in-law became proprietor of the business in 1834, so it is reasonable to assume that François ceased production, making the estimate of his output 5,000.

The first estimate is therefore 803,100.

In statistical terms it is as a high level of confidence even though there are a number of assumptions such as the actual start date of their serial numbers and uncertainty about the final numbers (i.e. highest serial numbers).

We now have to consider the makers for whom Bulleid dating charts do not exist. The numbers do

not include manivelles (hand wound) and other novelty musical items using small cylinder movements. None of the post 1900 cylinder musical box manufacture has been included because it was fast becoming a niche market, superseded by the disc musical box initially and then 'the Talking Machine' i.e. phonographs and gramophones.

Second Estimate.

One of my last discussions with Anthony Bulleid was about the unattributed tune sheets. He was convinced but had little proof that the associated movements were made by the major makers. If so, they will have been accounted for in their serial numbers and hence will be amongst the totality of the respective Bulleid charts. The only certainty is that the number of cartel musical boxes actually produced will exceed the first estimate of 803,100. But, by how much?

In continuing Bulleid's research since his death I have tried to complete several charts he had started and to produce others. This has yet to be published in AMBC's next book. The second estimate is based upon this work.

For makers without dating charts, some idea of output can be obtained if their period of production is known. Rates of production can be estimated from the dating charts of other makers with small outputs such as the two Lecoultre brothers, David and Henri-Joseph. Also, Bulleid was the first to produce a two-part list of major makers, one for Geneva and the other for the Joux Valley. I worked with him on a third list to cover mostly Saint Croix makers. These charts indicate the period of manufacture of those without dating charts.

The following is a revised output. They include an update and a breakdown for makers listed in his dating charts plus my ones. All include some knowledge of the highest serial number recorded for each maker and the period in which they were in business:

B. H. Abrahams, 17.5; G. Baker-Troll, 16; B.A. Brémond, 28; Greiner, 28; F. Conchon, 4.6; Cuendet, 65; Ducommun-Girod, 56; L'Épée, 139; Métert & Langdorff, 27; Perrelet, 13; Lecoultre & Perrelet, 50; David Lecoultre, 10; Henri Lecoultre, 5; Mermod Frères, 130; Mojon, Manger, 36; Ullmann, 6; Nicole Frères, 53; François Nicole, 5; Reymond Nicole & Falconnet, 1.3; E. A. &

Paillard, 140; PVF/Paillard-Vaucher, 14.4; Alliez et Berguier, 8.5; Rebicek, 51; Anton Olbrich, 30; Joseph Olbrich, 18; Junod, 30; Weill & Harburg, 26; George Bendon, 18; Vidoudez, 16; Ami Rivenc, 25; Karrer, 6.

The total is 1,073,300, an increase of about 34% covering most all known makers. The percentage increase is modest and comprises revisions to the makers of the first estimate, so there is still a possible high level of confidence.

Third estimate

The following is a list of the minor makers for whom no dating charts exist and where information on serial numbers and dates is so sparse that it is almost impossible to assess their output over their estimated years of production up to 1900. The years are listed in brackets:

- Alpsteg (6)
 - Badel (0, probably working for others)
 - Billon-Haller (20)
 - Bornand (Only one tune sheet example known, Estimated output 20,000)
 - Grosclaude (associated with Perrelet. Probably only worked on his own for 6 years)
 - Guissaz (20, possibly selling via agencies to the USA)
 - Jaccard-Walther (20)
 - Edouard Jaccard (15)
 - Salomon Jaccard (0. Only one recorded example. Probably supplying others)
 - Louis Jaques (20. Only one movement recorded, others probably for musical clocks) Soualle (highest serial recorded is 4168, circa 1872; assumed total output was 5,000) Thorens (4. Mostly small movements, so not included. Large movements circa 1896)
- Estimating their combined output is mostly guesswork. Bulleid thought Bornand had produced about 20,000 movements, probably selling via agencies in the USA and possibly accounting for many of the unattributed tune sheets. Soualle is estimated at 5,000. For the others an assumed average output of 200 per year has been used giving an extra 22,200, making a further 47,000.
- Finally, there has to be a revised estimate for the Austro-Hungarian makers. Recent publications put

their combined output about 100,000. Bulleid's estimate for Recbicek was about 50,000. If this was deducted we need to add another 50,000 for the Austro-Hungarians. The third estimate is for an additional 97,000 movements.

The final score?

By combining the second and third estimates, to final score is 1,170,300. This is a further 9% increase on the second estimate.

As each of the three estimates proceeds, the increases are of diminishing order, namely about 135 and then 9%, well within expectation.

The Cunliffe register of musical boxes reached about 14,000 but there must be at least two or three

times that amount still surviving that have not yet been accounted for. If the final score is remotely true it means that only 1.2% of the survivors have been recorded.

If that is the case, his work on producing 14 dating charts to such accuracy was a *tour de force*. The most important result of these crude estimates is that every musical box, however sophisticated or simple, is worthy of being restored for the benefit of future generations.

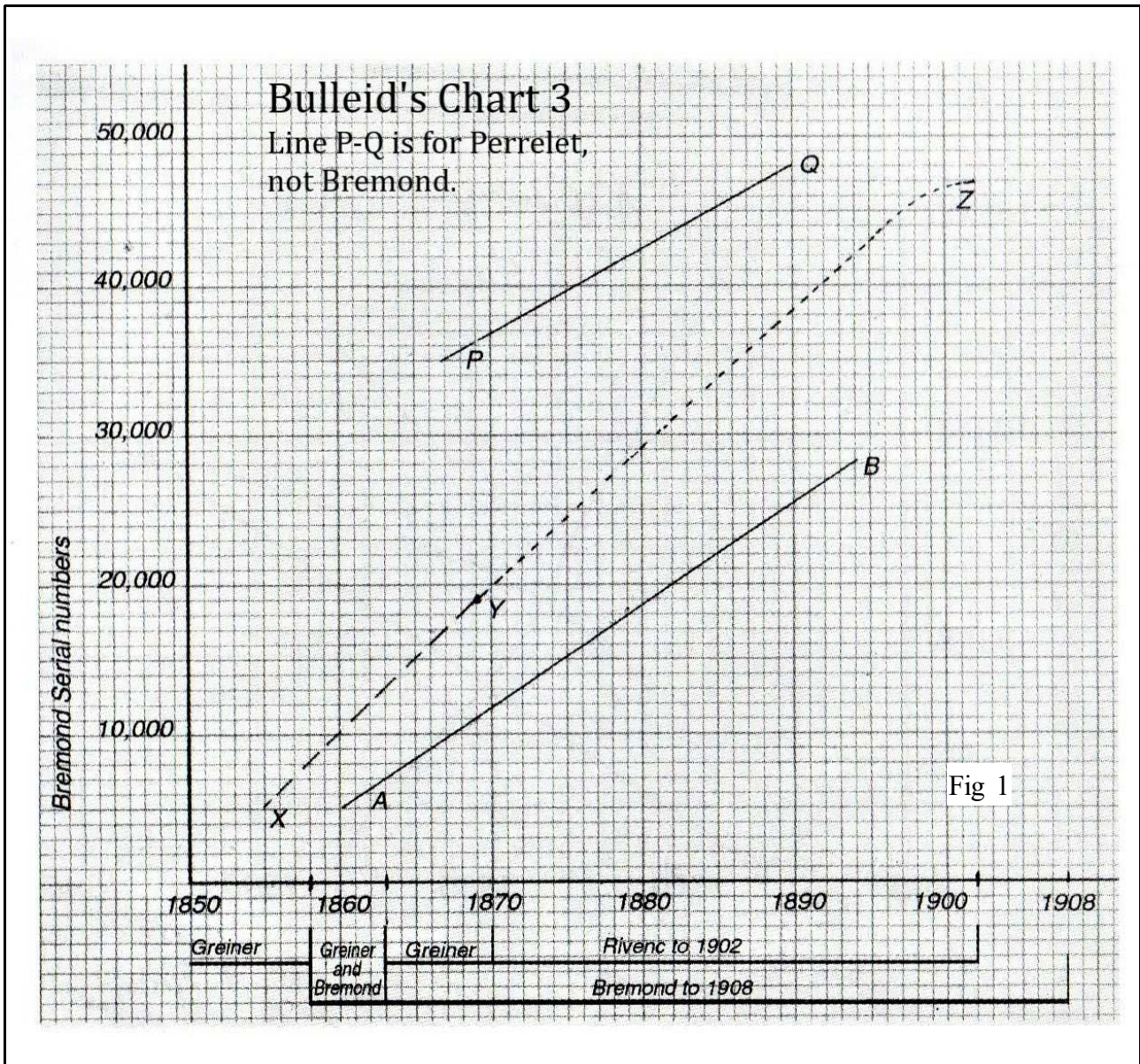
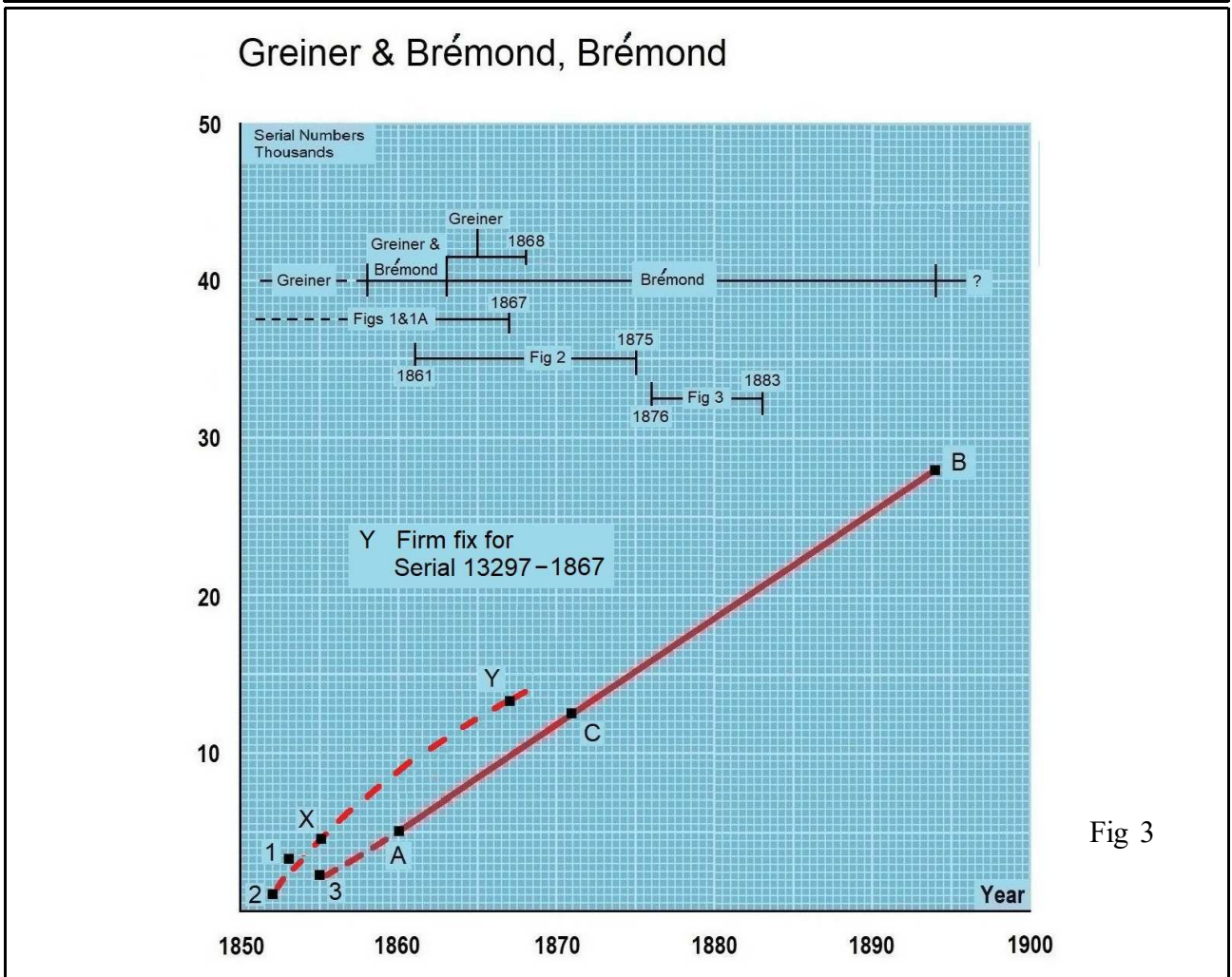
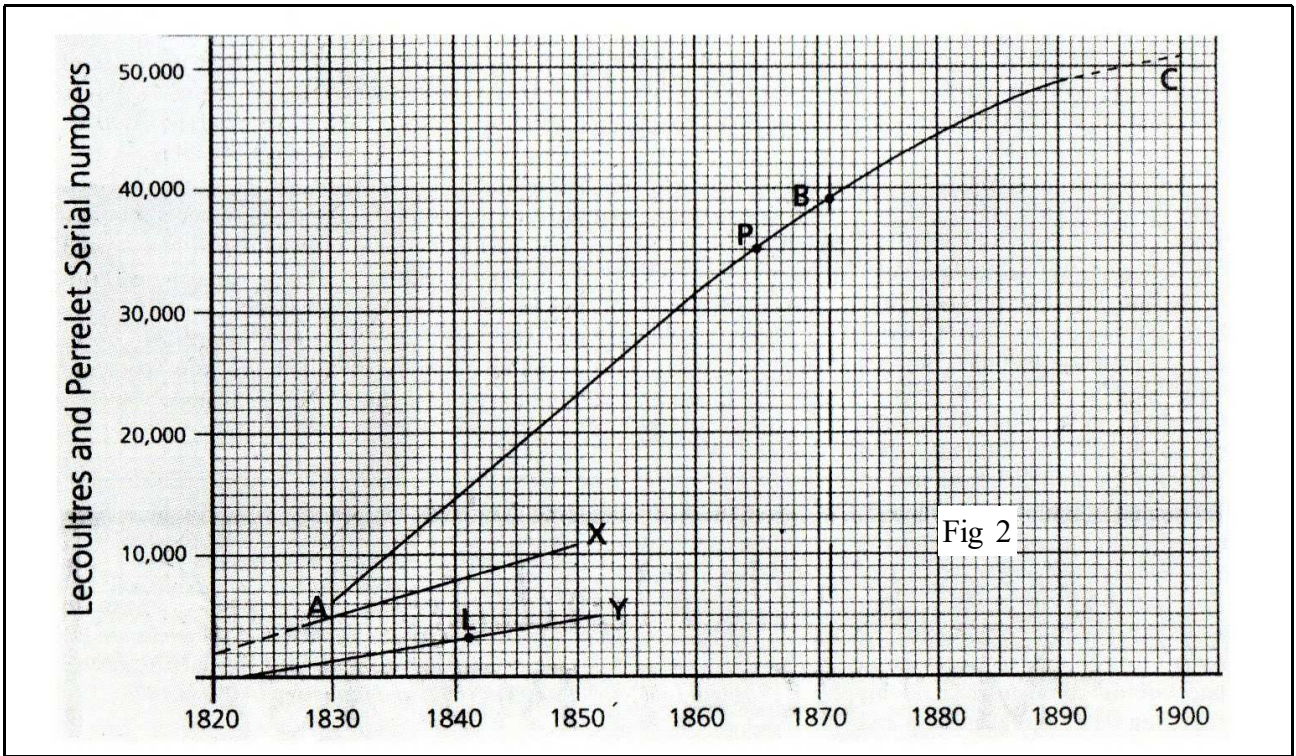
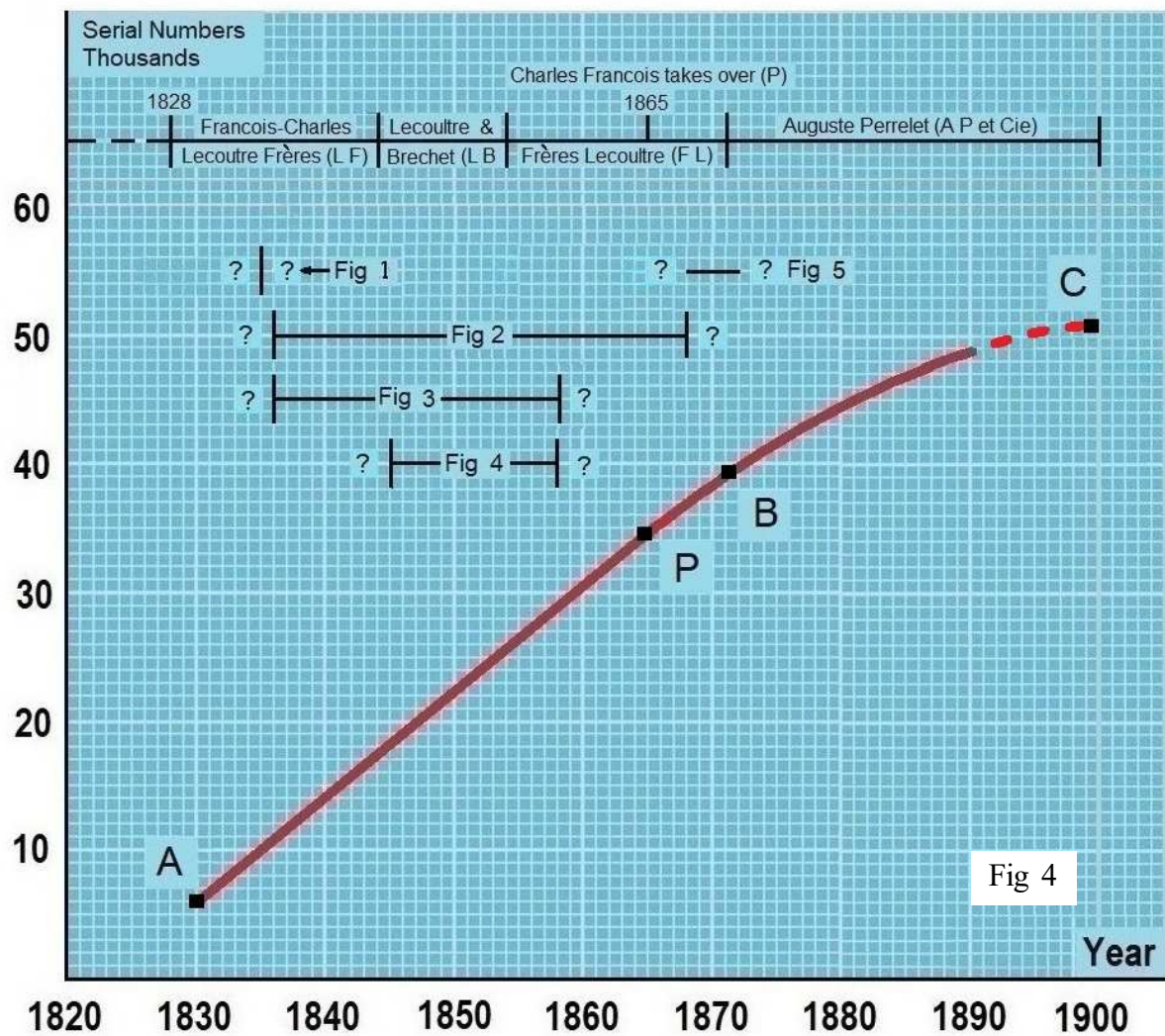
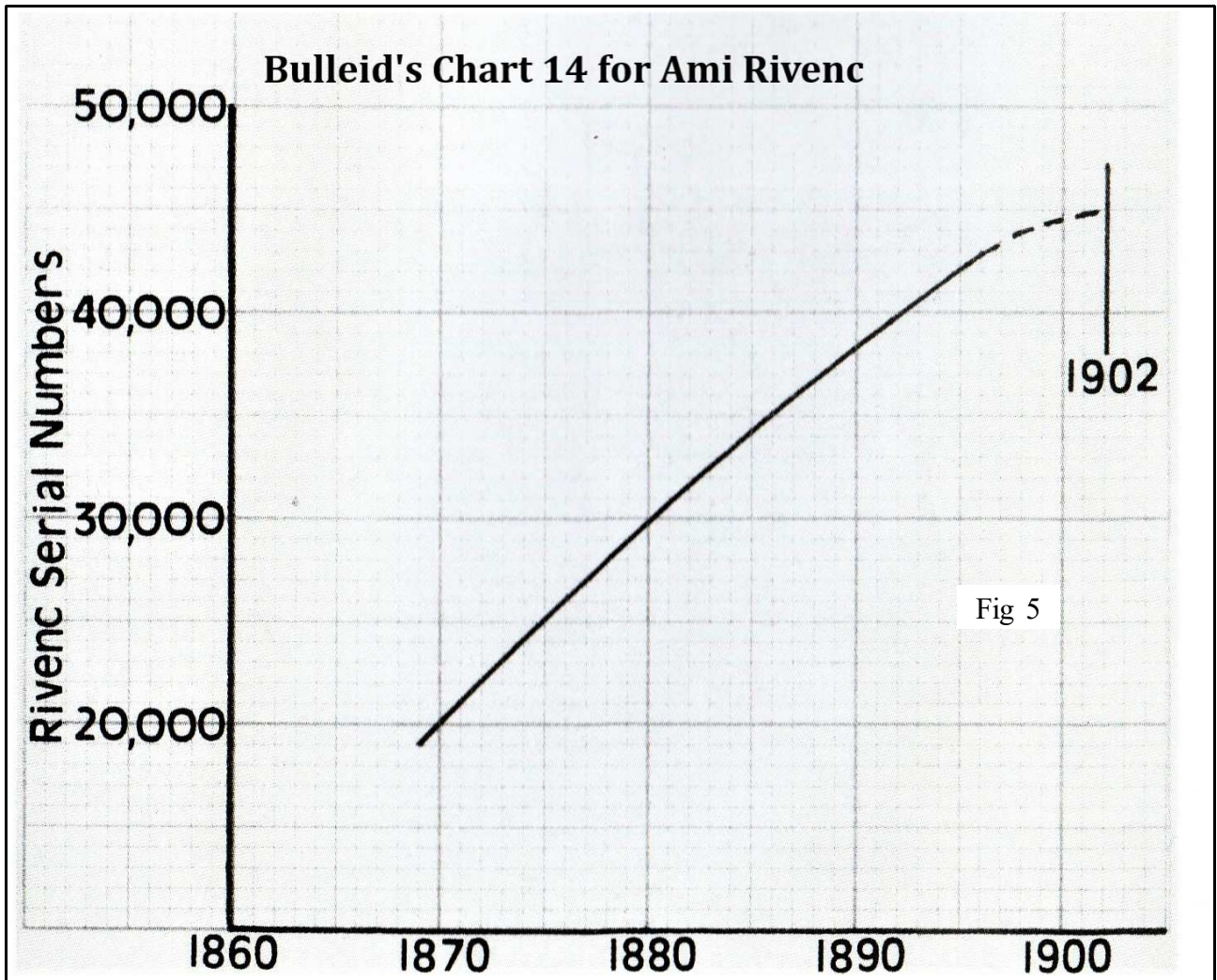


Fig 1



Lecoultre Frères, Lecoultre & Bréchet, Frères Lecoultre, Auguste Perrelet et Cie





An Interesting Record Cover

by Edward Murray-Harvey

a.k.a. O Carioca

with additional notes by David Evans

A lot of the 78 r.p.m. records in my collection are still in original cardboard-covers dating from the early part of the 20th Century, and a number of the latter are printed (as a form of advertising) with the details of the shop which originally sold the records.

I will tell you about one cover (Fig 1) I particularly noticed today dating from the late 1920s or early 1930s. It was originally supplied by Frank Clarke (who seems to have been in business with somebody called H J Leech) and whose premises were in Castle Street, Thetford. Thetford is a market-town in the South of Norfolk, and it was (and I suppose it still could be) so truly rural and so very far away from Norwich, that it offered items that you might otherwise have to go all the way to Norwich to acquire.

Thus, apart from departments dealing in (and I quote) Radio, Electrical Goods, Cycles, Baby Carriages, Sewing Machines, Sports Goods, Ironmongery, Tools, Oils and Colours, you might be surprised to know that there were also departments offering Guns and Ammunition, presumably to cater for sportsmen, gamekeepers, and dare I say, *poachers*? A poster (Fig 2) showing HMV radios and radiograms sold by Frank Clarke's business, by then run by Horace Leech, was placed on 6th December 1934, ready for the Christmas trade.

It is a few years since I last visited Thetford, and cannot remember if Frank Clarke's shop is still going in Castle Street (*it burned down in the early 1970s – Ed*). But one other noteworthy fact I found printed on that record-cover (and on the advertising poster) is, that in those days the shop's telephone-number was Thetford 7.

(Thetford is nowadays remembered, if it is remembered at all, for being the place where the BBC television comedy-series "Dad's Army" was filmed on location.)

Edward's article prompted me to look at a few more record covers. It was relatively common for the larger businesses to have printed personalised covers in both 10" and 12" 78 rpm record formats. Other,

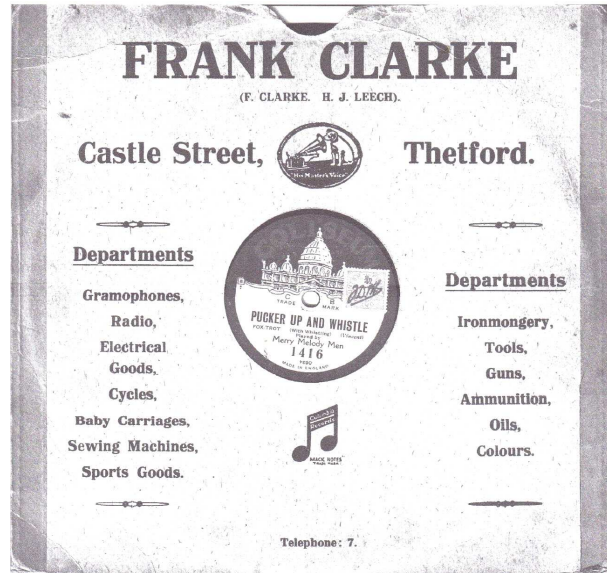


Fig 1: Frank Clarke record cover

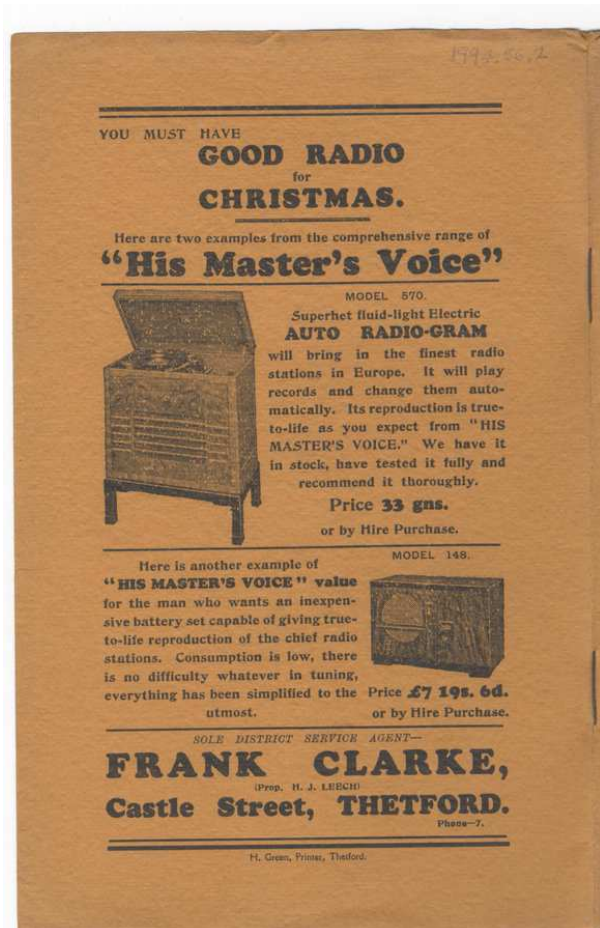


Fig 2: December 1934 advertisement from Frank Clarke



Fig 3: 10" record card cover

smaller, outlets relied upon the record manufacturer's covers and, of course, virtually all the record producers provided their records in their appropriate, often colourful, paper or card sleeves. Here is another one, of which we have multiple examples, so it must have been a successful business.



Fig 4: Sydney Scarborough with Edison 'Gem' phonograph, high-end HMV 1612 radio-gram and record cover in his shop, circa 1951.

Sydney Scarborough, Hull

The business of J. Scarborough (Sydney's father, John) was first established in 1904 and described itself as 'Hull's Gramophone Pioneer'. In the early years there were many addresses before it settled at 17 Waterworks Street 'Under The City Hall':

21 George Street (former Balmfords Cleaners)

Bell Chambers (Paragon Street, near the Cenotaph)

196 Holderness Road (near Craven Street)

26 Anlaby Road (opposite the Cecil Cinema)

The love of gramophones and music seemed to be what inspired the Scarborough family to set up shop in the first place. In 1915, Sydney really established the business by extensive advertising over a period of 10 weeks, and with this good advertising, the



Fig 5: Later advertisement from the company. There is an extensive Facebook page with many images, stories and information about the company.

essential stock and a vast number of customers, he needed new larger premises. It seems that he opened up shop under the City Hall in 1927. As well as his passion for gramophones, he also had a love for records. He travelled to his shop by bus carrying a black case filled with 12" 78 rpm records which he would listen to at home. This enabled him to comment on recordings to his customers.

He had two main sponsors: Bush and His Master's Voice. He was a pioneer himself and became the leading gramophone stockist in Hull. His son John who took over the business in later years sold out to Fox's Music in 1974 with the stern understanding that the name Sydney Scarborough was to remain... and it did so, up to its final closure in 2001.

Article continued on page 16.....

SOME EARLY PIECES FROM MY COLLECTION

by Paul Tucker

When we look back at mechanical music during the 19th century, it tends to be the period in which it was most abundant that gains most of the attention. This is understandable of course, as much of what is available today is from the latter part of the century, where mass production was the order of the day. It has to be said though that some of the most interesting and well-crafted pieces were born in the very early years of the 19th century.

Around the time of Lord Nelson's immortal victory at Trafalgar in 1805, this solid gold musical seal (picture 1), would have been keeping its new owner amused by tinkling out its little tune on a 9 toothed barillet movement concealed within its precious case.

A decade later, as Wellington faced Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, this finely crafted musical snuff box (picture 2) would have graced the pocket of its new owner. The lid is decorated with a cartouche of lyre and acanthus leaves on an engine-turned background. There are several continental silver marks, as yet unidentified. Inside is a two air *sur plateau* movement consisting of a small brass disc, with steel pins embedded in both sides (pictures 3 & 4). The date 1815 is stamped on the spring. As the power from the spring is released by the governor via the gear train, the disc slowly rotates and the embedded pins pluck the tuned steel teeth that surround the disc, to produce a piece of beautifully arranged music. Ingeniously, the maker has enabled the disc to be shifted downwards by way of switching a control, which then allows the disc's pins on the reverse side to align with another set of tuned teeth on the opposite side of the movement that play another delightful tune.

Moving on a few more years to 1823, we have a most exquisite example of a sterling silver musical snuff box with a pretty flower border (picture 5). It houses a two-air movement of the early cylinder type, crafted by Swiss maker François Lecoultré. The beautiful silver case (picture 6) was made in London by renowned silversmith Thomas Edwards and is the perfect housing for such a fine musical movement.

Finally, we have a red leather-clad French musical

nécessaire (picture 7), still retaining all its original silver tools and implements (picture 8). We believe this piece to have been made in the mid 1820s and it's still in remarkable condition. Carefully removing the bottom section of the case (picture 9), will reveal its inner workings. The cylinder snuff box movement is housed in a protective metal tin with the original label still attached to it. The first tune seems to read *Les Guerriers* which translates as *The Warriors (of Spain?)*. Perhaps it was written to commemorate the Spanish revolution of 1820? The second tune is the *Overture* from the German opera *Der Freischütz* by Carl Maria von Weber which premiered in 1821.

These pieces are a glimpse into the very early years of what we now call mechanical music, before mass production developed later in the century. No gimmicks, nor novelty factor, just exquisite craftsmanship!

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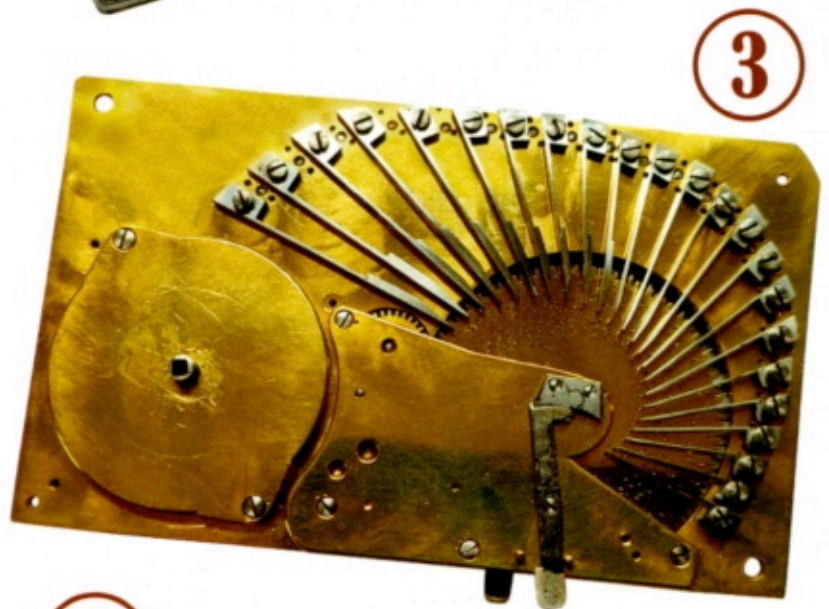
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Early 19th Century Musical Objets



- 1 Gold Seal with 9 toothed barrilet.
- 2 Silver Sur Plateau Box with engraved cartouche and engine turning on lid.
- 3 Base of movement showing flat disc surrounded by 23 teeth. Note also the female winding hole and the sliding lever which shifts the disc up and down to play the two different tunes.
- 4 Upper side showing disc surrounded by 21 teeth, the start/stop lever and the governor fan.
- 5 Silver musical snuff box with a pretty flower border.
- 6 Inside showing hallmark for Thomas Edwards with movement by François Lecoultre.
- 7 Red leather cased musical nécessaire.
- 8 Inside showing full complement of original silver tools.
- 9 Base of musical box showing names of its two tunes.

de Vertu

5



8



6



7



9



...Article continued from page 12

Hammonds, Hull

Not exactly in competition with Sydney Scarborough, Hammonds was a very large department store in Hull. It dated back to 1821 when Henry William Hammond opened a drapery store near the old North Bridge. In the 1860s it relocated to Osborne Street. Henry Hammond died in 1874, leaving the business to nieces and nephews. In 1889 it was sold to James Powell, who ran a high-class drapery shop in Brighthouse. The business continued to prosper and opened a fine new store overlooking Paragon Square in 1916. It was still trading as Hammond's. An extra floor was added in 1932, but the whole building was destroyed in a German air raid in 1941.

A new store was eventually opened in 1952, with an extra floor added in 1954, including a restaurant and a hairdressing salon by 1959.



Hammond's Department Store in 1939



The new store lit up for Christmas in 1958. There were more than 45 departments, including the record department.



New Record Labels

Not only were Blitz-damaged buildings being restored and rebuilt in the immediate post-war years, but new record labels and recording studios were being set up.

Majestic Records

Majestic Records Inc., of New York was a subsidiary of the Majestic Radio and Television Co. of St. Charles, Illinois for just four years! It was set up in 1945 and produced mainly pop, jazz, country and gospel material with some success, artists including Louis Prima, Jimmie Lunceford, Jimmie Durante and others. The former New York Mayor, Jimmy Walker, was president of Majestic Records Inc., and the recording director was John Hammond. In 1949 the company was bought by Mercury Records.



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16 The greatest hits of
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Majestic
RECORDS

Majestic Records, Inc. • St. Charles, Illinois
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Majestic Records appeared in several sections of the Record Retailing Yearbook for 1945 - published by "Recording Retailing" and "LISTEN - the Guide to Good Music" in America. The Yearbook included for the first time a new section - Convention in Print - "because of the war-born ban on travel". Instead of the popular pre-war exhibitions and retailing conventions, the book introduced the concept of the "virtual" Convention, with the various companies involved being allocated "Booths" within the book. Seventy-seven years ago, the predecessor to our present situation perhaps?

Oriole Records

Another record label with a relatively short life span was Oriole of London. Although Levy's of London (trading as Levy's Public Phono and Cycle Stores) started making Oriole records from 1931, they only lasted until 1935. However, The owner, David Morris Levy, and his brother Jacques revived the Oriole label in 1949 and included London-made pressings as well as American imports in their repertoire.

From 1954 they also produced Embassy records, sold only by Woolworth's and using cover versions (by relatively unknown artists) of hits of the day. Oriole achieved a few home-made hits in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including the Chas McDevitt Skiffle Group's version of "Freight Train" (featuring Nancy Whiskey on vocals), their first hit, "Like I Do" by Maureen Evans (based on Amilcare Ponchielli's 'Dance of the Hours') - the label's biggest hit, and Russ Hamilton's "We Will Make Love", which reached number 2 in the UK Singles Chart.

Until 1955 Oriole was the UK licensee for the American 'Mercury' label.

After the introduction of the Embassy label the firm was taken over by CBS Records in 1964.



As can be seen from the record cover, other artists such as Django Reinhardt and Lionel Hampton and his orchestra were claimed by the company, Reinhardt recorded principally for Ultraphone, Decca and HMV in Europe. He died in May 1953. Hampton recorded almost exclusively for Victor in America. It is possible that they may have distributed one or two of Hampton's recordings, but evidence is not easily forthcoming. Bobby Mickleburgh and his Bobcats recorded for Esquire, the Maple Leaf Four recorded for Embassy, the Woolworth's label owned by the Levys and Brother Bones (actually named Freeman Davis) recorded for various labels, though Oriole does not appear to be amongst them. Virtually none of the other artists are known at all today.

The Magical Little Manivelles

by Paul Bellamy

In our 1st Edition of Mechanical Music World there was a brief article about manivelles. It was entitled Part 1 but, with the best of intentions, Part 2 has so far not appeared. So, perhaps it is time to address again these much neglected hand-cranked musical novelties and toys.

Part 1 referred to the late Angelo Rulli who quoted the Encyclopaedia of Automatic Musical Instruments by Q. David Bowers. In the chapter on Adler and Fortuna Music Boxes Bowers wrote: “A wide variety of instruments was produced during the late 1890s and early 20th century. These included hand-cranked novelty or toy boxes, etc, etc”

Like all research, these are sometimes the first steps upon which others can build, as did Angelo. The idea of the manivelle was to replace the spring motor with a hand cranked mechanism and this was used in the late 1890s for disc boxes in particular, as Bowers quoted. However, the idea had also been applied to cylinder-and-comb musical toys much earlier, and they were produced in their thousands.

Unfortunately, the exact date of when they were made and by whom remains a mystery. The first maker of hand-cranked musical toys seems to be Auguste L'Épée (1798-1875). In 1839 he joined forces with Pierre-Henri Paur of Geneva and started production at Saint Suzanne in the department of Doubs, France.

If one searches the internet for L'Épée, hardly anything is mentioned about this prolific musical box maker's past. The firm presents itself today as a leading maker of clocks. Anthony Bulleid estimated that they had produced about 50,000 cartel (cylinder) musical boxes by the time of L'Épée's death after which a second set of serial numbers was started; but by whom? Although Bulleid was unable to confirm who the successor was, the records indicate it was Paur, followed by others.

We know that the firm L'Épée used Thibouville Lamy as a major agent, inferring that L'Épée products were mainly intended for sale by others. Hardly anything is known about the firm's output of manivelles or when production was started. The story is made even more confusing by unsubstantiated quotes by others. For example, John E. T. Clark wrote that manivelles were first produced in 1835. He was probably correct for other hand-cranked mechanical instruments such as organs and barrel pianos but did that apply to manivelle musical novelties?

However, there are some clues. By 1870 L'Épée had 300 workers making about 2,000 cartel musical boxes and 40,000 'petit' movements, thought to include manivelles

as well as small spring-wound small movements. Ord-Hume wrote that the application of the manivelle by L'Épée to small movements started in 1857, a very precise date. Unfortunately, there appear to be no examples of the type and style of manivelle that the date refers to.

This makes the dating of these movements extremely difficult. The only recorded firm date is some 20 years later than Ord-Hume quoted. It was for a souvenir *papier maché*-cased manivelle with a picture of the first mountain funicular steam locomotive to the peaks of Mount Pilatus and Mount Rigi in Switzerland, Fig. 1. So, one may assume that they were being made some years earlier as children's toys. Manivelle souvenirs are extremely rare.



Fig 1: Papier Maché manivelle

The extraordinary popularity of manivelles soon led to competition from others. But who were they and how can we identify them? There are very few clues and the answer is 'very rarely'. The most common early type of what are assumed to be L'Épée manivelles had nickel-plated circular cases in various diameters, Fig. 2. The larger the diameter the more tunes they played. A and D are 3 inches, B is 2½ inches and C is 2¾ inches. The diameter of the cylinder usually determines the number of tunes pinned for a single turn. There was no starting or stopping mechanism because continuous winding was required to play the tunes in the order in which they were pinned. Figs 2A, B & C are typical tune sheet patterns for these L'Épée manivelles.

The movement within the case was usually a die-cast alloy or steel frame with integral cylinder bearing brackets, Fig. 3A. The cylinder is held between two cone-



Fig 2: Nickel plated L'Épée manivelles



Figs 2A, 2B and (top right) 2C - typical L'Épée tune sheets

headed screws, the one to the right having a right hand thread and that to the left a left-hand thread. The comb is set by hand to engage the cylinder pins for correct lift. Longitudinal cylinder adjustment is enabled by means of the bearing screws. This example suffered minimal damage and just one tooth needed to be replaced.

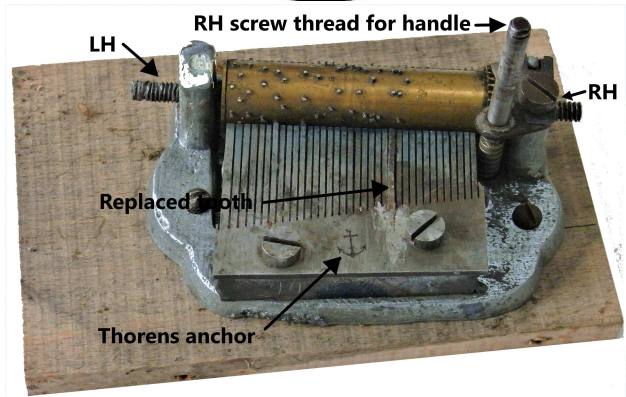


Fig 3A: Typical movement with cast frame.

The cylinder is rotated by an endless screw, much in the same way as a conventional governor endless controls the rotational speed of governor vanes but here the endless is in direct engagement with the cylinders drive gear, called the Great Wheel on conventional musical boxes. The endless has a crank handle that has to be wound in the correct direction to rotate the cylinder pins upwards against the comb teeth as for a conventional musical box.

So what happens if the handle is wound in the wrong direction and what is the correct direction of rotation? Normally, winding is clockwise. If wound anti-clockwise the cylinder pins will press down on the comb and, if there was nothing to limit the pressure on the comb, teeth and cylinder pins usually break or bend.

Several simple devices were used so that when the cylinder rotated backwards and put pressure on comb teeth, the winding handle disengaged the endless. The simplest device was a right hand screw thread on the top of the endless to which the handle was screwed. When wound anticlockwise, the handle started to unscrew. Not a good idea when the child pursued the anticlockwise motion and caused the handle to become detached and possibly lost!

The most common device was the fork-and-pin type crank. The endless has a pin fitted at right angles to its axis. The handle has a forked end shaped to engage the pin when turned clockwise but with curved faces that

cause the handle to ride up the pin and disengage when wound anti clockwise. Those who remember the days of the motor car starting handle will know all about how the handle disengages when the engine fired up. They may also remember the risk of a dislocated thumb if the engine misfired and the cylinder pressure powered the starting handle backwards. Of course, the slight pressure of cylinder pins pressing down on the comb posed no risk to the child's thumb being dislocated but was sufficient to cause disengagement of the winding handle.

Despite these simple protective devices, they only work when screw threads and moving parts are free. The manivelles that survived the rigours of childhood were not designed to last for several generations. As the generations passed, either due to wear or seized parts, and whether operated by a child or ignorant adult, they are prone to be wound the wrong way with the inevitable destruction of the enclosed movement. Fig. 3B is a detail of Fig. 3A showing how a small spring was made and mounted under the top of the winding shaft to prevent the cylinder being rotated anti-clockwise.

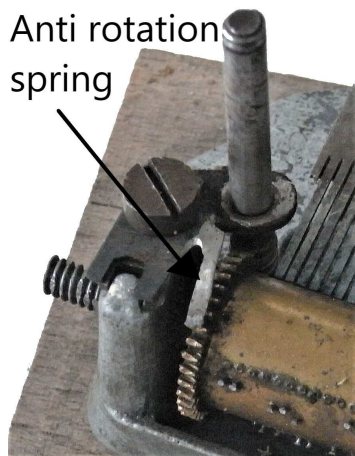


Fig 3B: Detail showing the rotation protection device

Unlike the conventional musical box, most manivelles were not designed to be taken apart. The round metal cases were firmly attached to the alloy base which had small apertures around the circumference of the casting. The case had matching indents formed in the same way as the teeth pressed into the disc of a disc musical box, Fig 4.

The indents are shown as red stars. The case on the left, A, is plain. Inside is a cardboard tube almost the full depth of the case; the tube supports the picture. The case on the right with the embossed lyres, B, has indents to support the picture. Both are made by L'Épée. Once the indents were pressed into the base some means had to be found to lever them out without distorting the case. It can be done provided the case is supported either side of the indent and a thin, flat, hard chisel is gently tapped between base and case. A thick, old, feeler gauge can be

ground to make a small chisel as can an old flat Swiss (i.e. needle type) file or strip of silver steel. Once the tabs have been straightened out, the case can be freed and the extent of damage assessed. Perhaps it is better just to listen to the tunes and, if all seems well, to consider a purchase; otherwise best left alone.

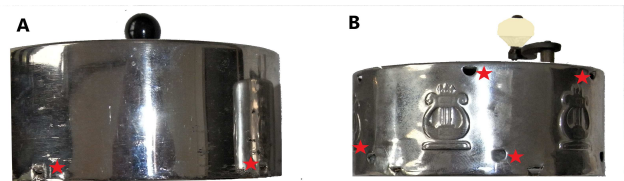


Fig 4: Showing the indents in the case to keep it closed.

Some manivelles have painted round metal cases, again difficult to date. One example is Fig. 5. The movements have a wooden base and the case is attached by small nails. The date is uncertain but probably well into the mid 1900s.



Fig 5: A painted cased manivelle

Ease of access is much better when the manivelle has a wooden, composition or *papier maché* case and a wooden base. These are usually attached by pins or small screws. Fig. 6A is an example of a Thorens manivelle 4 x 2¾ inches square, with delightful image of ice skaters. Fig. 6B is a tune sheet pattern for this type of Thorens manivelle.



Fig 6A: Thorens manivelle



Fig 6B: Thorens tune sheet

Another wooden cased 6-air example, Fig. 7, is 7 x 5½ inches square and 5 inches high. The front and back have delightful lithographed prints and the sides have simulated wood-printed paper. The maker is unknown as is its date, presumed to be about 1870-1880.



Fig 7A: A six-air manivelle, maker unknown

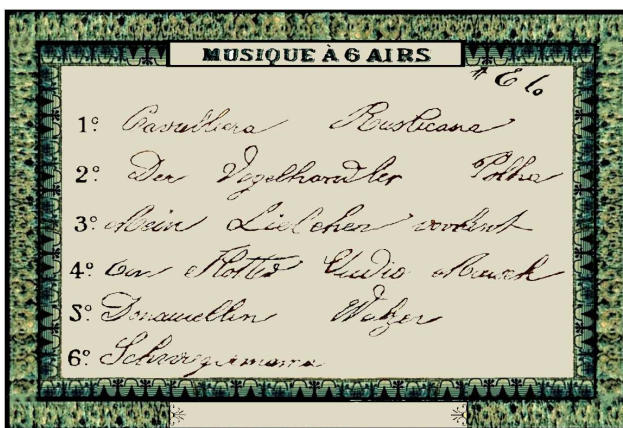


Fig 7B: Tune sheet for Fig 7A

Fig. 8A shows the movement of a 4-air single turn manivelle. The cylinder can only rotate in the direction shown but the Great Wheel can be rotated in both directions. If by accident it is rotated in reverse, a ratchet device allows it to do so but, immediately the cylinder teeth exert the slightest pressure on the comb, the ratchet disengages. Fig. 8B shows that the Great Wheel is an

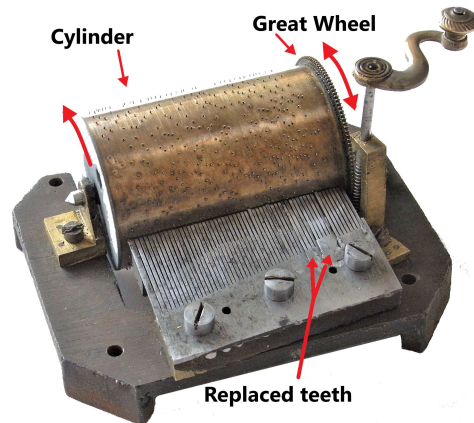


Fig 8A: Four-tune manivelle

annulus that rotates independently but on the same shaft as the cylinder. The hidden end cap of the cylinder has ratchet teeth cut on its face that engages with the ratchet springs. when wound forward but which then ride over the ratchet teeth when wound in reverse.

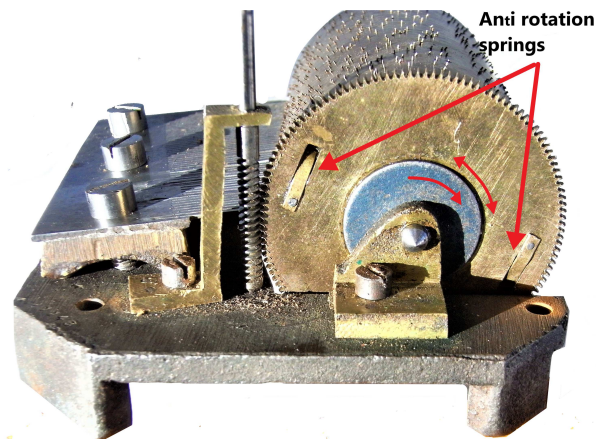


Fig 8B: Showing the ratchet 'clicks' on the great wheel. How effective it was may be judged by the comb in Fig 8A!

Nearly all manivelles had a tune sheet label. Those with a metal case embossed with lyres are for L'Épée and the style of their tune sheets is the give-away. Unfortunately, because the tune sheets are stuck to the cast base, they often get defaced and become illegible.



Fig 9A: A small wood-cased manivelle



Fig 9B: Another wood-cased example

Figs. 9A, *B, *C, *D are a selection of small wooden-cased manivelles. Fig. 10 is the tune sheet for a composition-cased manivelle but this time the maker can be identified by the logo, which has the words QUALITÉ EXCELSIOR, for late Saint Croix maker Charles Ullmann.



Fig 9C and Fig 9D (top right) - further examples of attractive wood-cased manivelles

In respect of other makers, there is very little guidance as to the maker despite the numbers that were made. Mermod, Paillard and Thorens must be amongst them but



Fig 10: Tune sheet for a Charles Ullmann manivelle

no doubt there were others such as Cuendet. The popularity of the manivelle has never really faded and they were made well into the 20th century, although L'Épée probably ceased to make them when it diversified into making clocks at the turn of the beginning of the 20th century. When Swiss production ceased and when after WWII, Japan started manufacturing them, others followed. Even today novelty manivelles can be found and be played to the delight of children as well as parents because there is nothing quite like the sound of a musical box comb; the electronic sound of most modern musical toys, and one must also include the sound of those ghastly mobile phones is well..... an abomination to anyone's ear.

Getting your Automata “fix” during Lock-down

by David Soulsby

Lock-down has made prisoners of us all in the last 12 months or more, so opportunities to travel and look at automata have been very limited. The following rather random items provided a well needed “fix” for me until hopefully things return to some form of normality.

Zoom presentations by Automata exhibitors

The third Lock-down in England prematurely closed the “Cabaret Mechanical Marvels” exhibition of automata, in the St. Albans museum, about a week after I’d bought a ticket to go and see it! However the curator, Sarah Keeling, arranged an on-line presentation from the Exhibition hall a few weeks later. I downloaded the free Zoom application and subscribed to the talk. As well as describing the exhibits there, she provided interesting background information on some of the more prominent automata creators. The “Cabaret” in the exhibition title derives from the name of the shop in Falmouth, set up by Sue Jackson and responsible for the renaissance of automata making in the UK in the late 20th century.

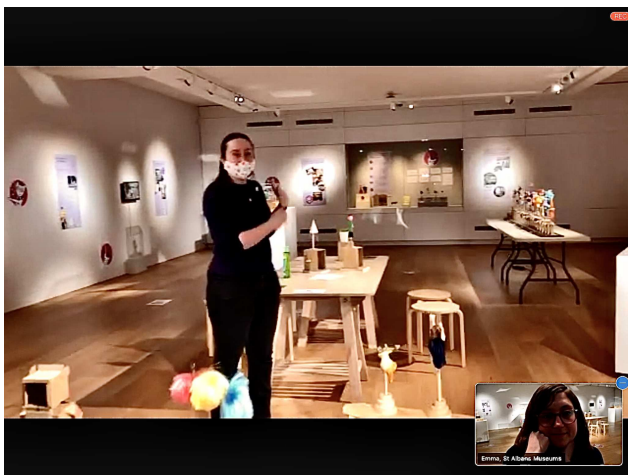


Photo 1: Zoom presentation of CMT Automata exhibition at St. Albans museum

Undoubtedly the ‘father’ of Falmouth automata makers from this era was the late Peter Markey and some of his work was on display. The individual carvings are colourful and simple, but show an impressive amount of animation, as in ‘Falmouth Jungle’ (Photo 2). Explorers turn their heads, tigers pop up and down, a crocodile opens its jaws, a woman dances, a dog grinds its teeth, helicopters and planes fly over the rainbow. The Zoom presentation was an admirably second best and the organisers



Photo 2: Peter Markey's Falmouth Jungle 1980 showing his simplicity of design and use of bright colours.

are hopeful that the real thing will be re-opened after restrictions are lifted.

Collecting Automata on sale

As most automata of any quality on sale in the UK tend to be bespoke or limited editions, they are quite expensive. However toys and models featuring automata have matured into quite innovative novelties, so I thought I would check them out.

The most interesting items that I came across were animated models from Lemax made with polyresin. The company was established in 1990 by Jack Lee, manufacturing a range of model houses, particularly those that light up. Their popular range of illuminated miniatures is purchased by collectors to build displays of whole villages. Although the original houses and facades had their designs based round a Christmas theme, the company has expanded and offers more than 2000 models produced in various motifs including:- *Harvest Crossing* – Farmyard layouts with animals, farmers cottages and rustic barns *Jukebox Junction* – A retro village with classic cars, rock’n roll and 60’s optimism. *Carnival* - All the sights and sounds of the fairground. Ten years after their creation Lemax launched a new village collection called *Spooky Town* to celebrate Halloween. Although initially mainly static, these themed constructions were ideal for the introduction of sound and animation into the designs.

Their catalogue has a wide choice of Halloween models with colourful names such as:-



Photo 3: Lemax's Graveyard Party with its animated figures



Detail pictures of the Lemax Graveyard Party



“Evil Spirits Whisky Distillery” and “Dead zone construction site”. I chose “Graveyard Party” because it included the largest number of moving figures, all gliding through a superbly sculpted three dimensional landscape. Four separate ghoulish ball room dancers, mounted on magnets on a moving turntable, twirl around a coffin which opens and a skeleton figure in a tuxedo rises up. Several groups of undead revellers perform the conga, moving in

and out of a beautifully rendered mausoleum. Further creepy figures pop up behind tombstones at the front of the model at various intervals. The spectacle is illuminated by LEDs and is accompanied by demonic music (Photo 3).

Halloween is celebrated extensively in the USA, but not so much over here, consequently I had to order my choice directly from the States via EBay. It arrived after about 2 weeks and although Import duty and shipping were a bit steep, I was well pleased.

Building my own Automaton

Not possessing the skills to start from scratch I decided a self assembly kit would be the best way to build my own automaton. Timberkits, an innovative company based in Mid Wales since 1993 sell mechanical model kits made from natural wood.

They provide a range of models in four different categories: - Beginner, Intermediate, Confident and Advanced. Although far from it, I chose a kit from the “Confident” collection, the Xylophone player.

My parcel arrived with over 60 different pieces and 34 pages of very comprehensive instructions (Photos 4).

Building the model generally went well with only a few hairy moments. On completion my xylophone



model looked pretty much like the photo on the box. On turning the handle the figure sprang to “life”. The percussion sticks (mallets) moved up and down, the player tapped his feet and bobbed his head. The big mistake I made was to attempt an artistic embellishment by painting the model with acrylic paints. As can be seen from Photo 4, the original unpainted version is far superior.



Photos 4: Views of the Xylophone player under construction

So my period in lockdown was not totally wasted as far as appreciation of automata is concerned. However with vaccinations in the UK progressing well and some restrictions already being lifted, I am hopeful that next year will be a bumper one for renewing visits to automata outside my own home. I have already made a list.

Recording in the early days

Fred Gaisberg arrived in England as Emile Berliner's personal agent entrusted with the task of finding European artists to record. Hearing Caruso sing at La Scala in 1902 led Fred to offer the tenor £100 to record ten songs. Gramophone & Typewriter in London cabled Fred saying '*Fee exorbitant, forbid you to record*'. Fred disobeyed and Caruso made £1M over 20 years and the Company £2M.

These pictures are from Fred's book 'Music on Record', published in USA in 1943 and in UK in 1946. 'The Author' referred to is of course Fred himself.



Alfred Clark (right) with the author in front of the first clock-driven gramophone



Paderewski making his first gramophone records at his home, Rioud Bosson, in Switzerland in the year 1911. The author is shown listening

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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.

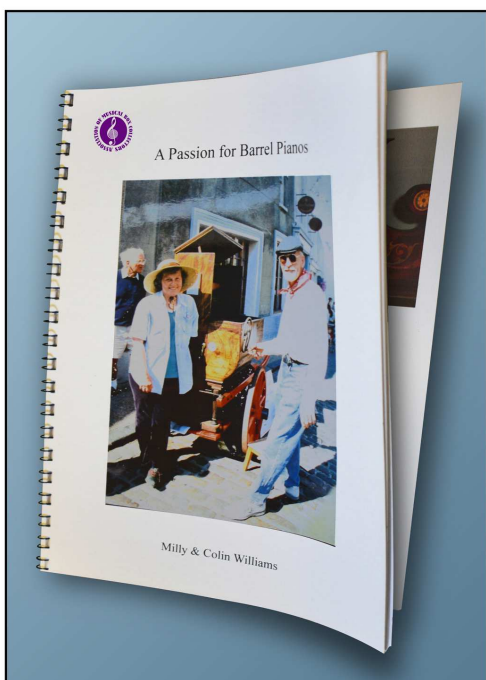
***Disc Musical Box Book** by K. McElhone. £50 + P&P.

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

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