

Issue 4, Spring 2016

# MECHANICAL MUSIC WORLD



## Restoring a Singing Bird Box See Article Inside

An Association of Musical Box Collectors Publication

From the Editors' Desk

This issue should arrive in time to give you a healthy reminder of the date and venue for the 2016 AGM! We would encourage all members to come to Ted's if at all possible. This is a good opportunity to "meet and greet" old and new friends as well as shape the future of the Association. It is also a time to listen to and enjoy the instruments.

Hopefully you will find this another interesting and varied journal. We thank Juliet for the second part of the Fisher-Price story and we have included pictures of some items from our latest trade catalogue featuring the 2016 re-issues. We have an article on taking the toys apart for servicing and, at the other end of the scale, one on a singing bird restoration. Albert is a funny one – this is not the Albert who got ate by a lion, but a sort of phoenix who rose from the ashes courtesy of Ken Dickens. A hearty thank you to all our contributors, and please, keep up the good work.

At the end of the membership year it is with great pride that we can reflect on the publication of Paul Bellamy's beautiful book 'The Music Makers of Switzerland'. This is, in our opinion, a most wonderful addition to any collector's library and we are receiving warm and generous praise as fellow collectors receive and appreciate the volume. This latest book adds so much to our knowledge of the early industry and is presented in a well illustrated manner. As one reviewer put it, 'the most comprehensive work on cylinder boxes presented so far'.

Anthony Bulleid, a friend to so many of us, had set new standards for research, and in this book Mr Bellamy has continued Anthony's work and even taken it to a new level of scholarship. More of the Swiss connections will be unearthed in the future, no doubt, but this book is a pivotal work and we as an Association should be very proud to be associated with it. Well done to all concerned.

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

## Chairman's Message

It is a pity that so many musical toys end up in the bin due to internal damage, usually by being loved to death by their previous young owners. A large number will be beyond repair but some only appear to be. Those of us who have effected a decent repair on these toys should share their knowledge with others and we can help by writing about the problems in our Periodical. I have made a start by detailing a repair effected on a Fisher-Price television for a young friend of ours. If we get enough articles on this practical side of the hobby, we hope to have a regular spot. Our Committee members will always help you with an article on this or any related subject you are involved with.

Our next meeting will be our AGM and Organ Grind. Do not forget to give us your ideas on developing the Association for the future and remember that if you have not renewed your membership it will cease with no further reminders. We do not wish to lose members but will resist overspending on unnecessary postage.

My thanks to our photo-artist in producing such fine quality covers. On the inside cover of Issue 3 you found a reprint of Issue 2 featuring Richard Kerridge, our auditor. New members may wish to have back copies if they are still available. As most of our production run of Periodicals are sold out with few copies remaining, please either contact me or Paul Bellamy about availability.

Ted Brown

## Notice of membership renewal

The current membership year started 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

For existing members, contact the Membership Secretary, Kay Brown (See List of Officers for contact details. UK Fax/Phone 01403 823 533.)

New members please contact the Treasurer, Paul Bellamy:

bellamypaul@btinternet.com

The full year's subscription is due at the time of application. Those joining after 1st January get the period to the end of February free but must pay the full subscription for the following year at the time of application.

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

#### Article 1. Aims and objectives:

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

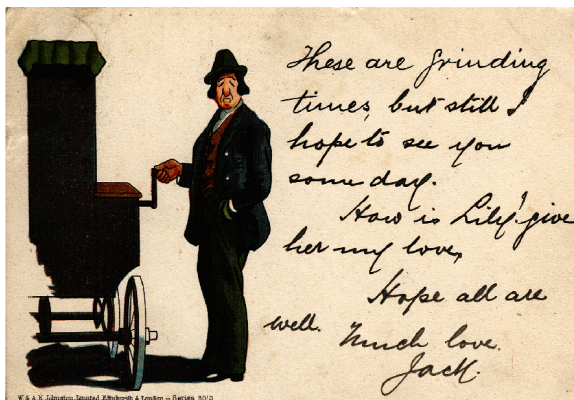
#### **For new members! Please note the AMBC Constitution: Article 2, Membership.**

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

## MECHANICAL MUSIC AND THE MUSICIAN

THE very vexed question of whether broadcasting constitutes a menace to the professional musician has been a subject of discussion ever since broadcasting was introduced, and the fight between societies of musicians and broadcasting is still an undecided battle in this country. In America, where broadcasting had a considerable start over our own country, it had seemed that some sort of understanding between the musician and the broadcaster had been reached; but the arrival of the "talkies" and the great advances which have been made towards perfecting the gramophone record appear to have been watched with the greatest anxiety by professional musicians in the United States. Recently we have seen large advertising spaces in American newspapers taken by the American Federation of Musicians, with the object of trying to arrest the encroachment of mechanical music where it is feared the new art will oust the professional musician. Some of the arguments put forward by the American Federation of Musicians do not seem to us to ring true, as, for instance, a statement that "The cultural menace of this movement to supplant Real Music with the flat, savourless monotony of Mechanical Music becomes apparent upon a moment's thought." Is it not the generally accepted view that broadcasting resulted in a vast extension of the musical public and an enlarging of the appetite of the world for music of all kinds? The extension of the use of what is described as mechanical music must, we fear, result in less employment amongst individual performing musicians, but may not this prove to be only a temporary objection and not one which is likely to have any lasting effect to the detriment of music generally, nor to the disadvantage of the community, for surely the increased taste for music must stimulate the demand for creative musicians in every grade of the art.

From "The Wireless World and Radio Review", November 13<sup>th</sup> 1929.



These are grinding  
times, but still I  
hope to see you  
some day.  
How is Lily? Give  
her my love,  
Hope all are  
well. Much love.  
Jack.

W & A.S. Johnston, Limited Edinburgh & London. Series 1010

## Projects & Wants

### AMBC Tune sheet library project:

The late Anthony Bulleid donated his entire library of tune sheet information to AMBC. Many of his published photographs were in poor condition but he adopted a 'publish and be damned' approach as a matter of research necessity.

Members from all societies are asked to donate better quality colour photographs (say, 350-400 pixels in print quality) taken face-on to avoid distortion and with the tune sheet dimensions. Additional information such as serial number, gamme number, maker, etc., is welcome, as is a cross-reference to the Bulleid tune sheet numbering system.

Please do not be put off if any of the tune sheets are damaged although the best possible condition is preferred.

The project is a long-term one because HAV Bulleid produced 400 tune sheets (and plaques) in his lifetime. If members have copies that were not published in his book 'Musical Box Tune Sheets' (known as The Tune Sheet Book) and its three supplements, these will also be welcome. They may be sent to the Editors or any of the officers - see page 1.

Postcards from the Ted Brown Collection.

'Music by Handle (Handel)' has been a musical joke for over 100 years!



## AMBC Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016



*Fig 1. Ted Brown with the marotte*

The first theme for the meeting was a DIY (do-it-yourself) demonstration on how to make a marotte. The term is a word borrowed from the French where it has a much broader meaning such as a fad or a hobby. It may even refer to a wig stand! However, the word marotte is more specifically used for a musical toy that plays when rotated by hand. It is the latter that was the purpose of the demonstration because a great deal of satisfaction can be had from creating a delightful musical toy using modern easily available materials and the musical manivelles (hand-wound musical movements). Fig 1 shows Ted Brown demonstrating a hand-made marotte made from a damaged manivelle coupled with the head of a bisque doll. Thus these two disparate parts make an entertaining whole. Ted's version of 'How to make a marotte' will feature in Issue 5 of *Mechanical Music World*.

Little is known about the history of marottes but musical versions of the type Ted demonstrated were around from the time that the small manivelles were made, probably from around the early 1870s. The term marotte also applies to earlier non-musical examples such as jesters' sticks, which still feature in the Punch & Judy shows of today. The idea of the jester and his stick goes back hundreds of years, even before

Shakespeare, who commonly referred to the 'fool' or jester in his plays. Verdi's opera *Rigoletto* has a jester as the singer in the title role. The stick often has a head that reflects comedy or tragedy.

Musical marottes come in many different versions, mostly with some form of wood, bisque porcelain or papier maché head plus a body that contains the manivelle. Fig 2 shows a genuine late 1800s example that plays 'The Wedding March'. Two others were shown which used manivelles that had badly damaged cases. One is a 'Mr. Punch' who was a non-musical stick puppet. His head is papier maché. Unfortunately the body had disappeared, so it was replaced with the manivelle, thus hiding its damaged case but putting it to new use. This will be the cover picture for Issue 5.

The second theme was based on the musical box makers Alliez & Berguer (Fig 3) and l'Épée (Fig 4). Fig 4 is serial 8329, a 6-air key-wind movement circa 1854/5. This appears as tune sheet 74 in Bulleid's book *Musical Box Tune Sheets*. He wrote that this simple 'borders style' appears with and without the AB. A notable feature is the way the lid pin interacts with the end-flap. Fig 4 is another simple borders style tune sheet for



*Fig 2. An 18th Century marotte*

serial 10163, circa 1853. This is similar to Bulleid's tune sheet 3124, serial 19373, circa 1861. At first sight both tune sheets seem superficially similar but the borders are quite different.

Bulleid thought at first that Alliez et Berguer were agents. He revised this view as further evidence came to light. He noted: *'However, there are five A&B musical boxes on the Register, serial numbers 788 to 9209. And, there are 33 Henriots, serial numbers 10463 to 14818, quite regular except for a gap between 12802 and 14555. Most have the small embossed tune sheet, and serial number stamped upwards at the spring end of the bedplate, - which does really seem more like a maker than an agent!'*

Dating them is not easy and may have to be estimated but evidence indicates that the partnership started sometime before 1855 with Alliez leaving before 1863 and Berguer continuing the business with his sons. They were often associated with fine Mandoline musical movements with groups of about 8 teeth tuned to the same pitch and pinned to repeat in rapid succession.

Alliez et Berguer cartel musical boxes for the period 1850 to 1865 have turned up fairly regularly. By coincidence, Geneva agent Henriot sold similar

movements, one of which is known to have the maker's name Badel of Geneva. That example had tune 1 pinned on the tune track, which was common Saint Croix practice but less so for Geneva where most makers pinned the last tune pinned on the tracks.



*Fig 3. Musical box by Alliez & Berguer*

L'Épée set up business in 1839 in a small French village called Sainte-Suzanne. The village was close to the Swiss border. His work was initially based on Geneva practice but had distinctive features:

- U-shaped steel 'click' springs.
- Wooden handles on iron levers.
- Tin-plated polished cast iron bedplates.
- Inner case lid frames with slide-in glass.
- The control lever platform screwed into place.
- Integral cast legs secured by screws from under the baseboard.



*Fig 4. Musical box by L'Épée*

The business was self-sufficient and did not seem to rely upon the network of suppliers used by the Swiss makers. L'Épée tune sheets come in many different elaborate designs, mostly with floral forms, cherubs and female figures. Tune sheets were often headed *Musique de Genève*, which was an accepted generic term at the time and not necessarily implying Swiss manufacture. Their



*Fig 5. L'Épée movement with Nicole stamp*

original tune sheet pins are quite crude, small and distinctive, being fabricated from two pieces of brass wire wrapped and soldered around one end to form the head.

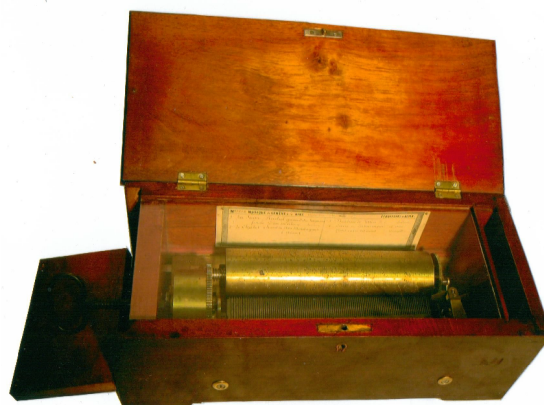
There are also examples of Thibouville-Lamy tune sheets to whom he supplied movements, as well as several movements with agency-type tune sheets, particularly agents A & S Woog. The Woog monogram was often stamped in an oval on the bedplate alongside the serial number. Geo. Baker also placed his Baker-Troll tune sheets on l'Épée movements and his monogrammed BTB lifting tab on the frame of the inner glass lid.

The features were not always consistent and remain unexplained. Bulleid quoted Dr. J E Roesch, who noted male Geneva pegs were steel pins fitted axially in the spring arbor, winding handles without wooden handles, some with tune indicators of distinctive shape, steel damper pins, brass damper wires. Serial numbers and dates were not given. However, Bulleid suggested that the steel damper pins were actually iron replacements and that most original movements had brass damper pins (see *Cylinder Musical Box Technology*.) One of the l'Épée movements demonstrated at the meeting had standard front and rear case bolts securing the movement.

A number of l'Épée movements had NICOLE A GENEVE stamped on the base of the bedplate. One, a key-wind movement serial 7858, circa 1850, had a long narrow tune sheet typical of l'Épée with no maker's name but with NICOLE A GENEVE in a lozenge-shaped border impressed on the bedplate, Fig 5. The case had a typical l'Épée feature, an end flap with a pin that engages the lid when closed, Fig 6. This use of the Nicole name on a l'Épée movement appears to have taken place over a ten-year period. Theories have been put forward that there may have been forgery in the use

of the stamp but there is no evidence to substantiate this.

The late Lyn Wright and Bulleid were of the opinion that the supply was from l'Épée to Nicole. Wright noticed that l'Épée sometimes used steel governor 'end-stones'. There were similarities in the blanks used by both l'Épée and Nicole about this time. However, Bulleid pointed out that it is generally accepted that these musical boxes came onto the second-hand market and that the unusual Nicole stamp was added. Again, there is no evidence for this. Webb, however, also found that their movements have many similarities to those found on Ducommun movements. Whatever the answer it is clear is that the Nicole name must have been of customer value to both l'Épée and Nicole. The few that have been identified are all of Nicole quality but Nicole had cast iron bedplates and these were brass; also, Nicole track widths were 0.017inches or less and these were 0.018inches. The mystery has yet to be resolved, the period from 1850 to 1886, if correct, being so long.



*Fig 6. L'Épée box with pin on the end flap to engage with the lid when closed.*

Another fine example demonstrated was a Ducommun Girod lever-wind musical box, Fig 7. This 6-air movement had the more unusual feature with the name stamped on the surface of the lever handle. The tune sheet is of identical pattern to two of the Bulleid tune sheet examples, 7 & 32, both circa 1863 at the commencement of the lever-wind era. This was followed by a musical box made by François Alibert, Fig 8. He was one of the few French makers with a workshop at rue J. J. Rousseau 10, Paris. It is not known to what extent he made or sold musical boxes but may have had connections with Geneva. His musical boxes are very similar to those of David, known as David Cadet. According to Bulleid his blanks almost certainly came from the same Geneva source. Note Bulleid's practical way of retaining the winding key by means of a simple peg fixed to



Fig 7. Ducommun Girod box

the back of the case. Thus the key does not get lost nor does it float around inside the case causing damage. Another slight mystery was a two-per-turn 12-air Nicole with an elegant but simple borders tune sheet – but more about this some other time. And finally, this part of the meeting ended with a return to l’Epée. It will feature in more detail at a later date but sufficient to say it has both low gamme and serial numbers as well as some clever details in manufacture. See Bulleid’s tune sheet 384, in the third supplement edited and produced by Paul Bellamy and Ted Brown.

Thus this AMBC meeting raised as many questions as answers, bringing to light features which would otherwise be overlooked. At least the owner of one of the movements as well as the members present had plenty to digest. As regards Alliez and Berguer, the question of maker or agent remains unresolved but as many makers also bought in components and sold them as their own it is reasonable to assume that they were, in the main, makers.

The *Wondering Minstrel*

(Ed: If any reader can add to this discussion, comments, photos and other details are welcome).



Fig 8. Box by François Alibert., another French maker.



*H.A.V. Bulleid's ingenious key securing peg, glued on to the back board of the case and, provided the appropriate glue is used, easily removed.*

## A 'Martinet et Benoit' Overture Cylinder Box

by Chris Fynes

The rare stamp of 'Martinet et Benoit', when seen on a musical box comb, is usually synonymous with a movement of fine quality. The fact that little is known about this partnership is probably down to the small number of examples of their work to have surfaced.

Last year I was fortunate to discover a Martinet & Benoit overture box (fig 1), serial no. 3725, which appeared to be only the third 'cartel' to come to light, joining numbers 3830 and 3948. Nevertheless, there are also about dozen or so miniature movements known to exist, with serial numbers ranging from 2181 to 4007. They are difficult to date accurately as any changes were made over a long period. Some are encased in tortoiseshell boxes, including one with a finely painted lid (fig 2), one intricately carved (fig 3), and another with gold inlay. Others are simply mounted in tin boxes, and yet one other encased in a high quality 'Palais Royale' necessaire (fig 4). A number of these small movements have upwards of the usual 70 teeth and there is even one with 123. The choice of music tends to be on the early side, mainly operatic with extracts from overtures. Much of this data comes from an interesting article written on the subject by Luuk Goldhoorn (*see 'The Music Box', Vol 25 No. 4 - Winter 2011 - Ed*).

### **The Overture Box:**

This newly found cartel musical box movement (fig 5) is well worth closer examination, if only just to admire the fine workmanship. Its features might also give us a more accurate dating clue.

### **The Comb:**

This consists of one long section with an extra block of three teeth screwed and pinned to the treble end (fig 6). It is stamped 'Martinet et Benoit' in two places (fig 7) and is fitted with 94 hairspring dampers. It is 7.6 inches long with 154 square-tipped teeth, about 21 to the inch if measured in the middle of the finely cut comb. Made from 9/32 inch thick steel it has integral tuning weights with 24 brass extensions individually soldered to progressively wider bass notes (fig 8). The comb screws have coded location dots punched around their vertical edges, matching corresponding dots stamped on the leading edge of the separate brass plate mounted underneath the comb (fig 9), the number one screw having no dots as the coding starts from zero. Predictably when first discovered all the screws were in the wrong holes.

### **The Cylinder:**

The cylinder is 7.9 inches long with a diameter of only 2.1 inches, which sounds ridiculously small for an overture box. Nevertheless, as it takes 2 minutes for a whole revolution, it is also extremely slow turning with a surface speed of approximately .055 inches per second, a distance even less than the thickness of a 20p piece (fig 10). The fine pins on the cylinder are only about six thou thick, about half the usual thickness for a musical box, but are very short in length to presumably give them more stability (fig 11). Much like a miniature movement, there are no radial lines engraved around the cylinder.



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4

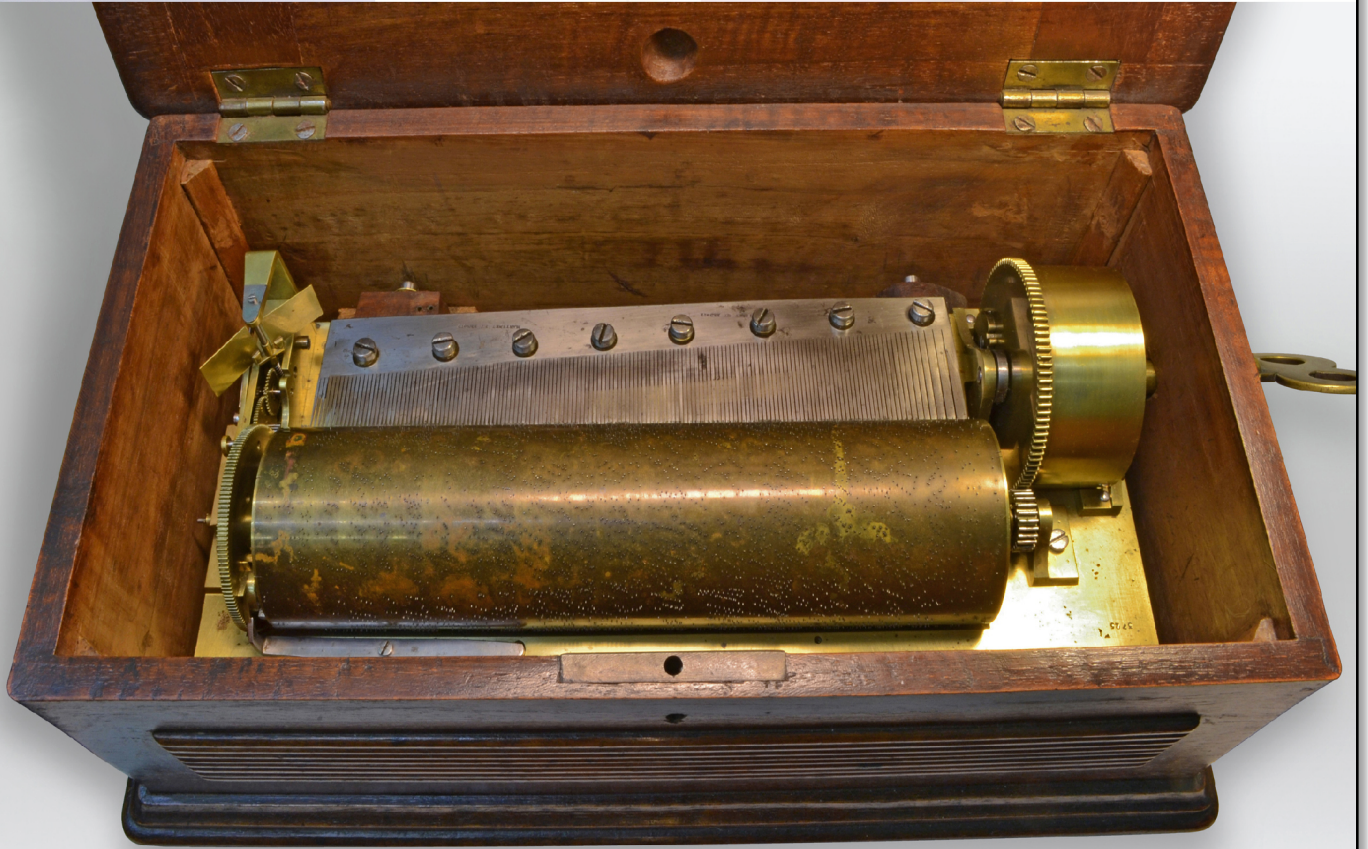


Fig 5

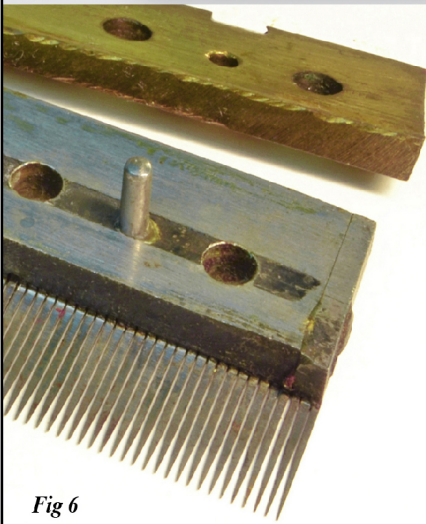


Fig 6



Fig 7

Fig 9

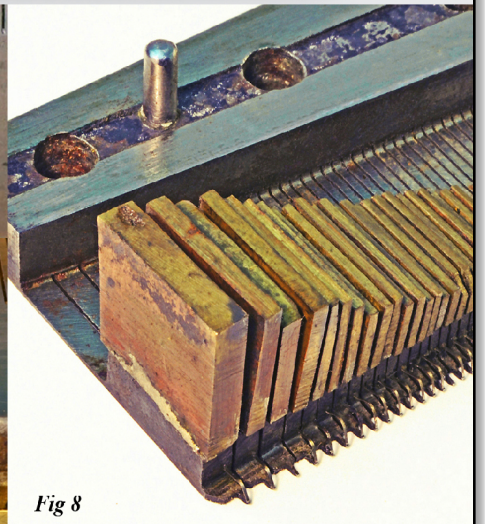


Fig 8



Fig 10

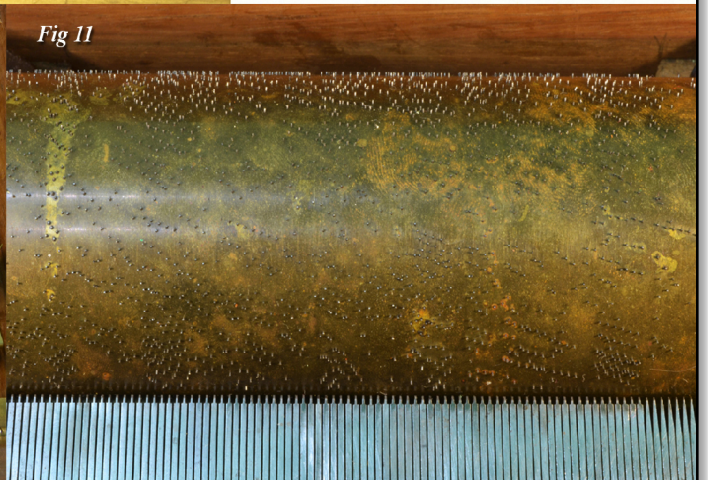


Fig 11

**The Governor:**

The governor cock has a tiny steel end-plate; it also has a non-adjustable bracket to hold the lower end of the worm, similar to early Falconnet boxes (fig 12). A small trip lever attached to the side-plate shows the movement was originally mounted in a clock base before being put into its present case. Also associated with this lever is a pivoted brass latch placed next to the governor. Its job is to engage the trip when activated, just long enough to prevent the stop pin prematurely dropping back into its slot (fig 13).

**The Other Features:**

The Geneva stop with its radial fingers is of the earlier type, as is the shorter bracket for the inner spring mounting. The snail cam has six arms so uses two identical sets of steps for the three turns of the cylinder. Like early movements by François Nicole, it also has no feet under the bedplate, so great care is necessary when dismantling (fig 14).



Serenade du Barbier  
Il brama dell'Opedia in quattelle  
L'alto d'ave che dell'Alberca scannone  
qual Tenerec dillette L'ingarons Roba  
3040

**The Tunes:**

It plays three overtures with a soft mellow tone, less florid than a later box, but with gently flowing crescendos closer to the original score.

1. The Barber of Seville by Rossini 1816
2. Semiramide by Rossini 1823
3. Lodoiska by Kreutzer 1791

**The Date of Manufacture:**

All of the aforementioned features are those you would expect to see on a late 1820s or early 1830s movement. I can find no evidence to indicate the movement might have been made in a later period. The musical necessaire, that I noted earlier, has a higher serial number of 3804 and the contents bear Paris gold marks for the years 1819-1838 (fig 15). The dates quoted in the musical box books, of circa 1850, for the manufacture of these boxes must surely be based on inaccurate information and need to be reappraised.

**The Later Case:**

Its moulded mahogany case is a bit of a mystery – it was probably made for another purpose. The separate glass lid might indicate it was put together with the movement in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (fig 16). But the unusual way it is mounted inside the box with wooden brackets held on with otherwise conventional case screws is most odd. The fact that the three original oval shaped control levers have now been bent downwards to poke out of the bottom of the case is also peculiar (fig 17). I suspect all this was done for cosmetic reasons. Unusually, the hole for the exposed brass winding key is on the right-hand-side of the box as the movement has been mounted back to front, perhaps mimicking the arrangement of an earlier clock base.

**The Mystery:**

There is yet another intriguing anomaly about this musical box. Detailed inspection of the cylinder reveals there are four extra pins beyond the range of the top end of the comb that would have played two extra teeth, the first adding three extra notes to the 'The Barber of Seville' and the other just a single note to 'Lodoiska'. Why are they missing? Was the comb cut short after an accident or what? There are no signs of any replacement teeth or of a re-pinned cylinder and the end of the comb shows no signs of ever being cut off (fig 18). One can speculate, but it is my strong conviction that it was actually the maker who decided to dispense with the teeth, perhaps because they would add little or nothing to the music, or maybe of the added difficulty of attaching five teeth to the end of the comb as opposed to three. Either way, if the comb had been longer at the top end, there would also have been too wide a gap to the nearest comb-screw, causing an exaggerated lack of symmetry with the base end. It therefore follows the decision to shorten the comb must have been made prior to the screw-holes being

drilled. Right or wrong, it was all part of the early days of experimentation.

**The New Discovery:**

In the Auction Team Breker catalogue for the May 2016 auction there is now another Martinet & Benoit cartel box listed. It is a key wind fusee movement with exposed controls (fig 19), in what appears to be its original wooden case (fig 20). The serial number is 3940 (fig 21), later than the above overture box numbered 3725. It has a single-piece comb with 89 square tipped teeth. The name 'Martinet et Benoit' is stamped on the comb and coded location dots are clearly seen on the heads of the comb screws (fig 22). The endplate on the governor cock appears to be made of brass. There is a hand written tune sheet stuck to the inside of the lid which lists its four tunes (fig 23), three definitely from Rossini operas. Tune one is a serenade from the Barber of Seville, tune three is from Semiramide (the story of Semiramis of Assyria) and tune 4 is from his opera L'inganno felice.

The most notable thing about this movement is its unconventional layout. The spring, controls and governor are on opposite sides, while the comb lies the normal way with its treble teeth on the right. The earlier overture box described above, which does use the standard layout throughout, is mounted in its case upside down. Another clock-base sectional comb movement of mine which happens to have its teeth reversed, is also mounted upside down. Therefore, all three are wound from the right. It seems a variety of layouts were still being experimented with around the 1830's, as the transition took place from fusee to non-fusee, sectional combs to one piece and musical clocks to musical boxes. I am not sure why the fusee was phased out at this early stage. Maybe the quality of the steel spring improved or perhaps it was just an economy measure.

Further details about the makers, Martinet & Benoit, and the transitional period can be found by referring to Chapter 4 of Paul Bellamy's new book 'Music Makers of Switzerland'.

Picture contributions by kind permission of Auction Team Breker, Hammam's Auctioneers, Galerie de Chartres and Sothebys (NY)

*(In the antique clock world it is believed that from around 1800 onward in Europe in general, and in France and Switzerland in particular, fusees were considered largely unnecessary as you could achieve satisfactory timekeeping results from the by then ubiquitous anchor escapement by simply fitting a longer mainspring than needed and only using a part of it. Consequently, whilst most French clocks of the period will run for two weeks on a winding, it was intended that they be wound every week. The British persevered with the fusee on all their best clocks right up to the 1890s, despite the relatively expensive procedure involved in making it. A pertinent questioner might well ask why a musical box movement which only plays for a short time should have been fitted with a fusee in the first place? - Ed)*

# Saving our Albert

or

## The story of a lone organ figure



**Albert** as he came to be named turned up about 55 years ago in a pile of fire salvaged timber a friend purchased to build a hen house. The figure was completely smoke blackened with blistered paintwork and missing both hands but with no sign amongst the pile of any parts of an organ on which I then presumed he may once have stood.

The friend having no interest in such strange things as organ figures a deal was struck (one pint of best bitter as I recall) and looking much unloved he came to stand in my workshop for ages while I decided what to do as it was obvious that he could never be totally restored to original condition as missing hands and the fire damage was too severe.

Having noted details of the small amount of colour and decoration still visible in places I eventually set to work with paint remover and scraper and he was stripped back to the bare wood only then did I regret having not photographed him as in found condition. It was interesting to see as the paint was removed how he had been constructed but with no sign of woodworm as I understand is often the case in the softer wood these figures are carved. All joints were now visible but required loads of wood filler and various grades of sandpaper to restore the profile.

From the large cavity carved into his back, and some existing rusty linkage extending down the left arm it was clear that this hand was intended to be animated but with no sign of the remains of any form of motor to give it movement so I now wondered if he could be a left handed conductor or band master as he was in military style uniform. Some organs I have seen do have male left handed bell ringers but usually not in this military style of dress. But then the thought hit me that with no hinge at the elbow any movement of the hand would only be side to side and not up and down so he could be a bell ringer and I did so want him to be a band master.

This was at the time of the emerging rally scene when a few traction engine owners and the odd often out of tune organ would gather in a local field and hope that a few members of the public would come and pay a few pence to see them. How things have progressed since then.

So before proceeding further I asked several larger fairground organ owners I knew if they had any knowledge of such a figure but with no result.

Several big organs have very similar or almost identical figures of the same height of about 38 inches and attire but they were all right handed. I can't recall ever having seen a left handed conductor at live concerts or on TV but I have no idea why this should be the case.

Examination of these other similar figures gave me some indication what the missing hands should look like so two piece of wood were selected and on the second or was it the third attempt, several hours work and with only two or three plasters and the odd bandage on my cuts reasonable results were achieved and fitted in place.

Now came the painting, starting with a good under-coat followed by two top coats. Colouring of the face took time to get the desired effect with the worst problem getting the eyes and eyebrows equal. He had some strange facial effects before I was satisfied.

An attempt was made to replicate the original decoration on the trouser legs but I felt I never got this quite right, so plus a few other adornments, braid pinched from the wife's old dress, some brass studs, gold paint (could not run to gold leaf) and a small moulding from a DIY shop he was mounted on a round base and given his baton, so now he was the band master I always wanted, but with no large organ to conduct he stood silently in our hall for many years suffering the ravages of children, Grand-children and much later great Great-grandchildren.

Some years on, having acquired a 31 note organ, Ted Brown suggested 'why not fit a pneumatic motor and use Albert as a frontispiece?' Ted kindly supplied the air motor together with a foot pump once used for inflating air beds. This method proved very satisfactory when, with the press of the foot, Albert sprang to life doing the job he was intended to do by his creator and surprised many a child standing a bit close when his arm suddenly moved. So Albert earned his keep by aiding collections for various charities over the years until we parted with the organ - he still stands in our hall albeit now looking somewhat jaded and in need of a repaint having attracted the interest of sticky fingered children and passing dogs when on outside duty.

Something like over 50 years on, questions still remain; was he never finished by his original carver, for whom I have much admiration of his skill? What

era was he carved in, he appears to be of the late 1890s to early 1900s period when compared to similar figures which can be dated but could he be a copy, why had he been painted if never finished? Did he ever get to stand proud on a large organ and how did he come to be in a load of fire damaged timber the origin of which could not be established? Questions perhaps I shall never know, but my hope is that when he moves on he will find his rightful place on something like a large 98 key military style fair organ, even if he is left handed, and find himself in the company of some delightful well-endowed Bell Maidens to cheer him up as he has been on his own for so long.

With apologies to all left handed folk.

*Ken Dickens*



*Albert's back, showing the cut-out for operating parts to be fitted.*

## YESTERDAY'S TOYS - TOMORROW'S ANTIQUES

### *FISHER-PRICE VINTAGE MUSICAL BOX TOYS*

from the 1960s, 70s, 80s

by Juliet Fynes, with assistance from Ted Furcht

#### Part 2



*Fig 7. Record Player*

#### THE RECORD PLAYERS

In 1971 Fisher-Price introduced the record player, designed by Ralph Crawford and Duke Spengler, which to all intents is a disc box (Fig 7). It was produced with minor variations until 1983, with either Swiss or Japanese musical movements. It had a red base and yellow turntable and needle arm, and a compartment to hold the 5 variously coloured “records”. The records were double-sided, thus giving ten tunes in all. The records have small protuberances in the grooves, which catch on star wheels in the pick-up head. These in turn pluck the teeth of the 22-note comb. The sound is conducted by a metal rod to a plastic cone in the body of the box, which amplifies the music. In the 1980s similar models were made in green/yellow, yellow/red and blue/orange colourways.

The Change-a-Tune Carousel (not to be confused

with the Merry-go-Round) is a similar toy, but with only three “records” and the addition of a three-seater, what would be called chair-o-plane, in the UK (Fig 8). Patented in 1980 it was made only from 1981 to 1983.

#### COT TOYS

The Pull-a-Tune Pony and Bluebird cot toys, where the movement is contained in a small plastic figure and activated by pulling on a cord, were introduced in 1968 and the Pull-a-Tune Teddy in 1981.

Between 1973 and 1981 they manufactured a cot mobile playing *Brahms’ Lullaby*, with farmyard animals suspended on rotating arms. The Teddy Teddy Bear range of toys was produced from 1985 to 1989. It included the Crib Music Box Moon (1985-1987) with a wind-up movement, playing *When You Wish Upon a Star*, which could be



Fig 8. Chair-o-Plane

strapped to the cot rails (Fig 9).

#### OTHER MUSICAL BOX TOYS

Fisher Price made other interesting musical toys based on cylinder movements. These included the Musical Box Barns of 1960 to 1962, the Musical Lacing Shoe of 1964 to 1968, the Musical Box Movie Camera of 1968 to 1970, the Musical Ferris wheel of 1966 to 1980 (Fig 10) and the Play Family Merry-go-Round of 1972 to 1977. The Change-a-Tune Piano of 1969 to 1972 has a choice of three tunes which can be selected by striking any of the

Fig 10 Musical Ferris Wheel



Fig 9. Crib Music Box Moon

piano keys.

#### MANUFACTURE

Most Fisher Price toys were made at the East Aurora plant, but some were manufactured in Medina, New York. In the mid 1970s Fisher Price opened a toy factory in Peterlee, County Durham. Some toys were made here for the European market as well as the UK. Princess Diana opened a new factory in Peterlee in 1983, but it was closed in 1997 by Mattel and production shifted to Italy, where manufacturing costs were cheaper. In 1971 the Mettoy Playcraft



Company (whose success was principally based on their Corgi models) negotiated a deal to manufacture and distribute Fisher Price toys in Britain. They were made in a factory near Swansea, South Wales, which also fell victim to a takeover by Mattel and was closed by them in 1991. I know of a 1979 Tote a Tune "Made in Great Britain" and one from 1981 "Made in the UK". I also have a Giant Screen TV from 1981. The exact place of manufacture is not recorded. The American collector Ted Furcht owns five British made totes dating from 1978 to 1983

#### THE GUARANTEE

So confident were the company of the quality and durability of their toys that in 1966, Fisher Price began to guarantee all their musical boxes, with a one year warranty. If, within one year of the original purchase date, the toy failed to operate correctly, it was replaced, free of charge. Each musical box came with a guarantee slip in the packaging, which was filled out by the customer. This policy was instituted by Jack Asthalter, then Vice President of Marketing. Their confidence was well founded as so many have survived in working order, in spite of the hard usage that can be seen in the wear and tear to the decorative lithographs.

#### A WORD OF WARNING

These toys have retained their popularity over the decades, so much so that some are being reproduced as "Fisher Price Classics", very similar in appearance, right down to the packaging. These include the Record Player, Clock, TV Radio, Ferris Wheel, Two Tune Television (Fig 6 right) and Change-a-tune Piano. They resemble the originals very closely so care should be taken when buying online as some sellers do not explain very clearly that these are reproductions. They are made in China with Chinese musical movements and the piano is actually battery operated. Genuine old models can usually be bought for a similar price or more cheaply, though of course very seldom in such pristine condition. A bit of wear and tear is only to be expected on these well-loved old toys and is part of their history.

With thanks to Ted Furcht, who has provided me with a great deal of information and patiently found answers to my numerous queries.

### **AMBC Meeting Dates**

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

#### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June: AGM followed by Organ Grind.**

Meet at the Old School from 10.30 am. Please bring your own sandwiches. Desserts and drinks will be supplied.

#### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July: Special Event at Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre.**

AMBC members will be entertaining the public with organs, barrel pianos etc. If you would like to bring an instrument to demonstrate please contact Ted.

*Other members may gain free entry on production of current membership card.*

The museum is open to visitors from 10am to 5pm.

#### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September: Chanctonbury Ring meeting at the Old School, from 10.30am.**

Lunch provided. Please let Ted know if you intend to come. Tel: 01403 823533

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September:** Proposed weekend visit to Suffolk, based in Ipswich for three (or two nights if preferred) dinner, bed and breakfast. To include the Mechanical Museum at Cotton and visits to some private collections.

If you are interested please contact Juliet: email: [info@ambc.org.uk](mailto:info@ambc.org.uk) Tel: 017968 342353

## Restoration of a Singing Bird Box

Chris Fynes

My interest lies mainly in cylinder musical boxes, so I know very little about singing bird boxes. As they are so expensive, I decided to buy a cheap example in poor condition and try my hand at restoration. This way, even if it all went wrong, I might at least have gained some experience. Having acquired a box at a maiden bid, closer examination showed me I was about to go on quite a steep learning curve.

Its simple black horned panelled case was broken in places and badly stuck together but was redeemed with a nicely painted enamel lid of a cock fight, not very PC nowadays but historically interesting. The bird which had lost most of its feathers, predictably did not work and had its wing caught up in the grid. The tail spike was badly bent to one side where someone had forced the lid closed. When I tried to extricate the bird there was a squeak or two at a repeated pitch before it immediately got caught up again. This was basically to do with the start button not remaining open when activated. Cosmetically, all the metal parts were also badly corroded.

Before starting restoration, I consulted Ted Brown who kindly gave me some useful hints and supplied me with a copy of the authoritative Geoffrey Mayson book 'Mechanical Singing-bird Tabatières'.

Having got the mechanism out of its box I was able to examine it more closely. Although it had the simpler type of 'going barrel' movement, it also had some unusual features about it. The governor fan was positioned at the back of the movement rather than at the side and the control to turn the bird from side to side consisted of a pivoted curved rack segment, instead of the more usual reciprocating bar rack. The maker's trademark depicted a windmill surrounded by the letters 'OMM' and it was numbered 294.

According to Mayson, among the relics of the closed Griesbaum factory in Triberg, a carton came to light containing a dozen or so movements without a bird or bellows between them, but otherwise in running order. Each movement carried the stamp OMM and a three-figure number. It is possible that these movements may have been taken over by Griesbaum or perhaps have been bought in a dis-

posal sale. The movements differed to the normal Griesbaum models and, in particular, the bird had a different song. The US restorer Troy Duncan believes that these movements were first used and encased by Griesbaum before he developed his own. He has in his collection a box with an OMM movement in a beautiful Griesbaum model 7a enamel case and an early Griesbaum movement in a case with an identical enamel lid of a cock fight.

Hidden inside the lid mounting of my box is scratched the name 'Munchen' and some other script I can't make out. There is also the date 1923, which could be when the case was originally manufactured or repaired.

The restoration commenced by remaking a worn part that was designed to keep the box open during its full cycle. This part had become so thin that it no longer engaged the control lever as it should.

The piston that controlled the so called 'swanee' whistle was stuck tight in its cylinder. This meant it could only whistle one note. Some old lubrication had dried-up and gone hard. After applying some solvent to help loosen it, I was able to gently tap the cylinder around its edge with the end of a musical box key to release it. A slight polishing was all that was needed for it to work properly.

I was pleasantly surprised that the bellows appeared to be in good working order despite the fact that it had an old patch on it. Replacing the zephyr skin covering was not something I was looking forward to. (*An article on how to do this can be found in 'The Music Box', Vol 25 No. 7 - Autumn 2012 - Ed*)

Straightening the tail necessitated taking the bird apart which was held together with tiny pins. It was important to clamp the inside portion of the tail piece securely before attempting to straighten it so as to avoid any distortion that would impede its movement.

Having acquired a couple of tatty old stuffed humming birds out of an old Victorian display case, I was now equipped to re-feather the bird. The furry end of each feather had to be cut-off with a scalpel, leaving a section of the central spine for sticking it

*Mechanical Music World*

down. This was a very tedious eye-testing procedure. For glue I used a teeny dab of nitro cellulose lacquer which dries amazingly quickly. The feathers had to be laid on like tiles starting from the tail end. It is important to arrange the colours symmetrically before applying, so as to avoid ending up with different coloured wings and also to remember to make sure any moving parts are not clogged up with feathers or glue. The eyes were made up from drops of white coloured Araldite topped with smaller





black drops over the top. I was also able to use this black glue to re-stick and fill in the damaged black horn.

Finally, it only remained to clean up the silver framework, which was very badly corroded. It is possible the silver may have originally been gilded, if so, this would have disappeared in the cleaning process. Anyway the polished silver looks very well.

It was rewarding to bring the bird back to life and to hear its little song again, and to be able to appreciate the fine craftsmanship that went into its manufacture.

(Ed: Chris Fynes' singing bird seems to have added another dimension to this subject. The name 'Munchen' is most likely to be for the German city of Munich but perhaps it has another meaning? OMM was associated with the Geneva maker Raymy who worked from around 1903. Lack of records and advertising material make dating his products speculative. This one has the date 1923, which is presumed to be the date of the mechanism. His mechanisms and cases were well constructed, some with an oval case and guilloché enamel. He

always used the logo shown in the illustration with its letters OMM surrounding a windmill within a circle. An earlier version of this logo has the letters L.M.G. The interpretation of both remains a mystery. A first guess could be that OM and LM refer to family names such as brothers or father and son. The LMG could be the initials for LM with G for Geneva. The OM would then be for another family member, surname initial M with the M for Munchen. Another mystery is the following word that is almost indecipherable except for the first few letters, which are German for Falcon. Is this a reference to the singing bird? Hardly likely! If any reader can help, please contact the Editors)

*As a follow up to my article about an OMM singing bird box, I subsequently discovered another article written about one by Pamela Holmes in a 2009 MBSI 'Mechanical Music' publication. It describes a similar OMM movement numbered 402, this time within a most beautiful silver mounted guilloché red enamel case. Standing on rams-headed paw feet, the top set with inlaid and engraved corner pieces, it has a most unusual lid consisting of a cartou-*

*che with a pierced window inset with plique a jour enamel work.*

*Engraved on the bottom of her case is the word 'Austria'.*

*She wondered if there were any readers who knew of other ÖMM movements with this unusual name, but has so far had no response, until I informed her about mine. So if anybody else is aware of any others, we would both like to know.*



## Fisher-Price Restoration

from Ted Brown

I was asked if I could fix a Fisher-Price toy television. It was playing very slowly. As the screen picture is driven from a musical movement, I knew where the problem was likely to be. The main difficulty with most of these children's toys is access to the



sary the toy should look as untouched as possible when it is re-assembled. The nails are usually plated so rust on the shaft is not the main problem in removing the nails but you need to get leverage under the nail-head. I use two old 5mm bladed screw drivers, sharpened to a blunt knife-

inside. (After all, they are supposed to be child proof!) Modern Health and Safety Rules do not apply but nevertheless the maker made a pretty good job of making them impenetrable.

The T.V. has what looks like dome-headed rivets holding the casing together. Luckily I had come across this form of fixing on an Amorette Organette with dancing dolls where iron nails were used.

How to remove them is the problem. There were seven of these, three along the back and two at each end, driven through the plastic upper part into a hardwood base. Having been in place for 40 or so years, they do not make for easy removal.

I have found the following procedure fairly successful. Remember, although repair is neces-

edge. These can still go through your finger, so a good dodge is to cut the fingers off an old leather glove and slide it on the finger in the danger zone. Wedge the screwdriver blade under the nail head and use a cocktail stick or something stronger as a fulcrum. If possible, wedge another screwdriver similarly on the opposite side to lever the nail up from both sides. Hopefully, after two or three attempts the nail should start to lift out.

To pull them out I use a pair of clockmaker's hairspring cutters. They act like pincers but do not have a chamfer on the outside face and thus grip the shaft when almost flush with the plastic. With an impossibly stubborn one you may have to cut the head off. With nails out (or heads cut off) the

plastic cover can be lifted from its base and there will be enough nail exposed to grip or to drill out. The ones you have removed will tell you the drill size.

To stop the drill from slipping you can put a sleeve around it. A ballpoint pen refill, a piece of brass tube or even the pivot-end of a brass hinge can be slid over the drill to keep the drill bit steady.

Hopefully, you are now inside the works. The TV screen slides out but place this face downwards on the table to prevent the picture scene and drive spindles from falling out. The pivot holes and locators were fine but I gave them a good rub with a cloth and applied a thin film of Vaseline. I know grease attracts dust but it is not really open to the outside world. This is also the time to clean the inside of the screen and case.

My main problem was the musical movement, an 18-note Sankyo unit, which drives the picture roll from the end of the cylinder. I brushed dust out of the movement with an old hog's hair poster paint brush. It is stiff enough to remove fluff and to drag out old lubricant; you can also see if a bristle is left behind. On plastic wheels I put the tiniest amount of silicone lubricant (not even a drop!) and on the pivots of the endless a touch of fine clock oil. Remember, you are not oiling your bike! You can always remove surplus oil with the pointed end of a twist of tissue or a fine paintbrush.

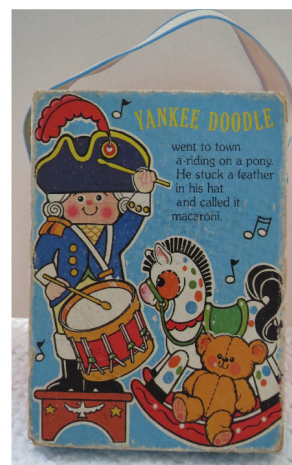
Run the movement to the end of a tune. (The movements play two tunes on one revolution). The screen needs to show an appropriate complete section of the picture when the tune ends. Lift the sprocket wheel out of its seating and move the picture in the screen area underneath. Remember the pictures go from left to right. Give it a good playing and when you are happy, you can re-assemble the case.

If you have burred any of the nails you can tidy them up with emery paper. If you have to replace any damaged pins it may be worth a look around a hardware store – cabinet hinge pins or 'pop' rivet pins may do the job.

If you need to try your skills out first it might be worth a trip to the local nursery or boot fair (or to someone like me who does not know how to throw things away) to find an old broken one to practice on. Either way, I wish you luck. If you meet a tricky

bit give me (or Paul, my deputy) a call. You should not have to take it apart again.

*It has always been our thought that it might need to come apart again - and you might be the one who needs to get it apart, so give some thought to the subject and don't glue it all up solid! - Ed*



The distribution of Fisher-Price Company products was not restricted to Europe - they had a distribution centre at East Aurora, New York. The above American version of the Pocket Radio was brought to our attention by member Annie Tyvand and dates from 1975.

## My first Key-wind Musical Box

from Ted Brown



*Fig 1. Nicole Frères No. 36261*

About 30 years ago I managed to buy my first key-wind musical box, a Nicole Frères serial number 36261 factored by Cox Savory, Cornhill, London in about 1858. In the 1970s and 1980s they commanded a price much higher than lever-wind boxes. This was probably because no one had invented the web site and Ebay and all this other stuff that I refuse to get my head around. I was giving talks on mechanical music to Women's groups and Friendly Clubs and at one of these a gentleman offered to sell me a musical box. This had never happened before and I became very interested. It apparently looked very much like one of the boxes I had demonstrated but did not work very well. I went to his house and sitting on a coffee table was a 13-inch cylinder key-wind musical box.

He set it going and it slowly built up speed and started to play. It was obviously missing a large number of cylinder pins but worryingly it was vibrating noisily and moving along the length of the coffee table. I do not advocate my next action and it was probably more in reflex than anything else but I shoved my finger into the endless fan and stopped any further movement. The two

fan blades had 6BA bolts with a selection of nuts and washers screwed on them to arrest the initial centrifugal force of the fan blades. This was necessary because the endless screw was a hand-made replacement made of silver steel wire wound around the endless shaft. Because of the coarseness of the wind the modified worm wheel (sometimes called the bay leaf gear) engaging with the endless had only 12 teeth whereas the original would have had 30.

The owner pointed out that in about 1920 his brother had poked his finger in (as I had done) but something had broken and the damage occurred. He was only about 6 years old at the time but it was etched on his memory. I had a deal on the box on the understanding that I would bring it back for him to see and hear when restored.

I had two comb teeth and several tooth tips replaced and the governor restored. I re-pinned the cylinder (having done a 3-bell, 6 inch cylinder movement for practice) and reassembled it. The most expensive piece to restore was the ratchet-wind mechanism that Nicole Frères supplied as an optional extra for key-wind boxes.



Fig 2. Ingenious 'endless' repair

This was because a 'friend' of the owner had filled it full of resin when the ratchet spring broke.



Fig 3. The ratchet-wind 'key'.

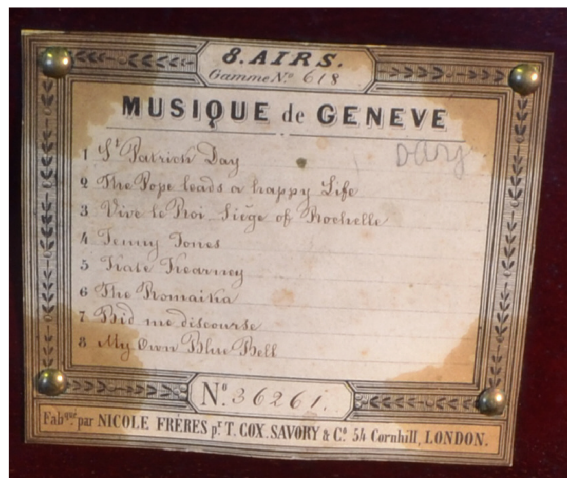
I was able to take the box back in a refreshed case to its last owner and watch his face when he heard it play properly for the first time in about 70 years.

## Nicole Tune Sheet for No. 36261

The tune listed as No. 2 on the tune sheet is 'The Pope leads a Happy Life'. Thanks to Juliet Fynes, we have a little history of the song:

### THE POPE HE LEADS A HAPPY LIFE

This is one of those once popular Victorian songs which is now virtually unknown. It apparently originated in Germany as a student drinking song and became popular in Ireland and



### The Pope Leads A Happy Life

*The Pope he leads a happy life,  
He's free from every care and strife;  
He drinks the best of Rhenish wine,  
I would the Pope's gay life were mine.*

*But he don't lead a happy life,  
He has no maid or blooming wife,  
He has no son to raise his hope,  
Oh! I would not be the Pope.*

*The Sultan better pleases me,  
His life is full of Jollity,  
He's wives as many as he will,  
I fain the Sultan's throne would fill.*

*But still he is a wretched man,  
He must obey the AL-Koran,*

America, though was perhaps less well known over here. It is mentioned in a list of Traditional Irish Music as being translated from the German and the Library of Congress holds a copy of the sheet music of an arrangement, published in New York, but with no mention of the original German composer.

The song was taken up by students from Harvard and Yale;

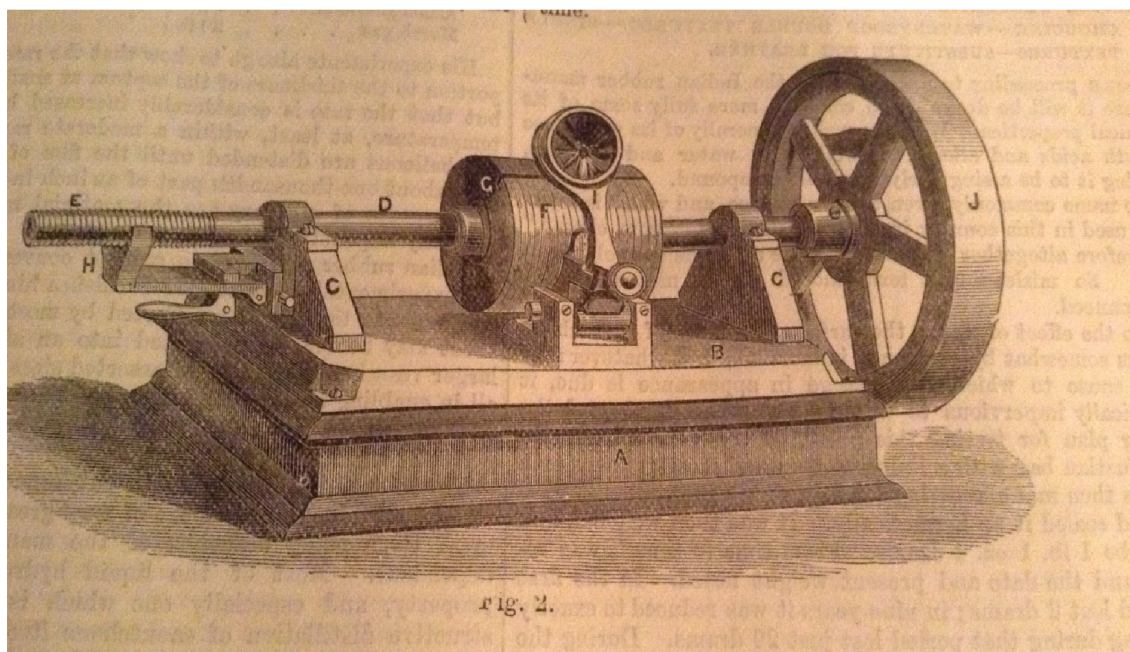
*He dare not drink one drop of wine,  
I would not change his lot for mine.*

*So, then I'll hold my lowly stand,  
And live in German fatherland;  
I'll kiss my maiden fair and fine,  
And drink the best of Rhenish wine.*

*Whene'er my maiden kisses me,  
I'll think that I the Sultan be,  
And when my cheery glass I tope,  
Oh then I'll think that I'm the Pope.*

## THE PHONOGRAPH – IT WILL NEVER CATCH ON

“Although Mr Edison has produced some marvels of science, it was by his phonograph that his name came first prominently before the English public. The first account of the machine was of a very startling character, and appeared in the columns of the *Scientific American*, and was afterwards copied into the newspapers throughout the world. The words ran thus:- “Mr Thomas A Edison recently came into this office, placed a little machine onto our desk, turned a crank, and the machine inquired as to our health, asked how we liked the phonograph, informed us that *it* was well, and bade us a cordial goodnight. These remarks were not only perfectly audible to ourselves, but to a dozen or more persons gathered around, and they were produced by the aid of no other mechanism than the simple little contrivance below”.



“It is not surprising that this curious instrument should have made a great sensation. Its principle was so new, and withal so simple, that it came as a surprise even upon scientific men, who had hardly thought that the reproduction of speech could be possible by such means. As usual with such novelties, the most exaggerated accounts of its capabilities soon got abroad.....

.....The instrument is a marvel of scientific genius, but its performance at the best is but a parody of the human voice.....

.....It is doubtful whether the phonograph will ever be more than a scientific toy, and that this opinion is shared by the company which has been formed to deal with it, may be judged from the opening words of their circular:- “The adaptation of this wonderful discovery to the practical uses of commerce and social life not having as yet been completed in all its mechanical details, this company is prepared to offer to the public only that design or form of apparatus which has been found best adapted to its exhibition as a novelty.”

*Extract from “The Technical Educator” (1877)*

### NEWS AND VIEWS

We have received many tributes since the publication of **The Music Makers of Switzerland, including those below:**

Thank you Paul...you must have spent many years on this "labor of love" and I will enjoy this book for many years to come.

**Jerry E. McQuinn.**

I am really excited about having your new book. Annie Tyvand has told me so much about it that I cannot wait to have my own copy of it.

**David Corkrum.**

Late yesterday afternoon the Postal Service brought me your new book... it was in perfect condition and Lynda and I set out on examining its organization. Thank you so much for the years of research, preparation, fund-raising for its publication and its final form. Mechanical music aficionados are indebted to you for this valuable work. Cordial regards.

**Joseph Berman**

### *How to Mould Sawdust*

Make a jelly paste of equal parts rye-flour and glue; take equal parts of sawdust and common wheat flour; to every half-gallon measure of this latter mixture add half a cup of molasses. Now knead into a very stiff dough using as much of the jelly as you require, but it must be very stiff. Oil moulds with neat's foot oil and press your dough into all parts, tamping it down smooth with a roller or flat piece of wood. Let stand for twenty-four hours in a dry place. It will then shake out easily on to a papered tin or common oven pan.

Take a soft brush and oil the face of the pattern you have got out of your mould, mending any small imperfections that may exist in your casting, and with a sharp knife or chisel, remove all outside edges, or rather I would say, "trim your cast neatly now." Bake in a moderate

bread heat oven, and remember one thing - directly all the moisture is out of your work, it will begin to burn very quickly; so you must watch your oven very carefully.

By following these directions carefully, you will have a casting equal to any piece of carved wood. Shellac or paint when cold.

This process may be handy to those who do anything in the way of casting pieces of ornamental detail, as, for instance, the moulded corners of a picture frame; and if the castings it produces will bear polishing, this plan of moulding wood-dust has a future before it, and should in time be widely used.

*Extract from 'Amateur Work' magazine, 1885.*

## A SUGGESTION

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### WEDDING FOR BIRTHDAY CHRISTMAS

You cannot imagine a more delightful and appropriate present than one of the new

### Paillard Music Boxes.

It is a lasting and pleasing remembrance that all but speaks the giver's name.

200 styles, from 40 cents up.

*The Piano Orchestrion, a new instrument, is a perfect home entertainer. Run by alcohol motor. No winding or turning of cranks. Also new style of Music Boxes, with interchangeable disks instead of cylinders. Popular and inexpensive.*

*Musical Novelties, such as Musical Water Pitchers, Decanters, Chairs, Albums, and others. Especially pleasing because of their Beauty, Usefulness, and Oddity. Call or send for descriptive Catalogue.*

**M. J. PAILLARD & CO.,**  
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*M J Paillard of New York's advertisement of 1893.*

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

Contact P. Bellamy or Ted Brown for P&P details: bellampaul@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.

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

**Cylinder Musical Box Design & Repair** by HAV Bulleid. This A5 234 page book, long out of print, is available brand new for the bargain price of £10 + P&P.

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

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

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

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A Passion for Barrel Pianos



Milly & Colin Williams

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