

MECHANICAL MUSIC WORLD



Postcards from the street
In the footsteps of Heath Robinson
and much more

An Association of Musical Box Collectors Publication



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From the Editor's Desk



It was with some trepidation that I took the editorial baton passed on by David and Lesley Evans following their ten year record. My home computer is from the steam-age and not really fit for purpose. Also my use of MS Publisher is somewhat pedestrian (old dogs, new tricks!). But with a bit of help from my friends we managed to get the bumper anniversary issue published in a timely fashion and I hope it doesn't fall too far short of what readers have come to expect from MMW. I received several comments on the content, one said he liked the cover and another said if they'd wanted cartoons they would have bought the "Beano"! Also. Several requests were made for special glasses with the next issue so that they could read the captions! (The font has been increased in this issue).

I have been able to start a "Letter to the Editor" page this time (see overleaf), and hope to add the "s" next issue. This edition sees the return of advertisements, but we have managed to keep the extended page count at 36 for another issue, however we do need more advertisers to help keep costs down.

Our current advertising rates are shown on page 5, and for this you not only get exposure in this magazine but on our website as well. I'm afraid my plea for articles has fallen on deaf ears and unless this changes we may well have to reduce the page count, or even only publish 3 editions per year. So please think about writing something, it doesn't have to be the Gettysburg address, we have a special SHORTS section at the end of the magazine, where less detailed contributions can be included.

Please note the deadline dates for submitting articles or letters is set out on Page 2. Although this edition contains only articles from the 'Usual Suspects', I hope there is enough variation for you to find a topic that you are interested in. We start with an article on a 'Milestone' meeting in August. at Coultershaw with AMBC and MBSGB members pooling resources at a mammoth 'Show & Tell' session. It has been recorded impeccably by Bernard Novell supported by photographs from Ingvar Svenson.

Paul Baker has not only made postcards from his collection of street piano scenes available to us, he has accompanied each one with a fascinating backstory. Keeping the flag flying for automata, I have written about a Contraptions exhibition at the Heath Robinson Museum. It is still running and for anyone willing to brave the trip around the M25 'car park' I recommend it. Bernard regales us with a second article. This one tells us of his painstaking work in creating personalised musical boxes for a friend's grand children. For those who weren't able to see Bernard's work at the Show & Tell, he has included a plethora (*Ted's favourite word*) of photographs.

Juliet Fynes tells us of the old music hall traditions and

in particular Wilton Hall the last remaining one in the country. She doesn't miss the opportunity to slip in a wedding photo of her son and daughter-in-Law who got married there this August. She also tells us he is the youngest AMBC member (Unless anyone knows differently?).

Jean-Marc Lebout, one of our overseas contributors recounts the background to his discovery of a cartel musical box displaying the name Allder.

"The Artificial Clock-Maker" by Revd. William Derham was described in Issue 14 of MMW. Now David Evans re-visits the text to explain its' historical significance.

Paul Bellany continues his series on the history of Musical Box maker's agents, describing the contribution of Berens Blumberg .

Our 'Shorts' section includes an examination of a Smoking automaton also from Paul, an auction purchase by Bernard of a Franz Rzebitschek 2/82 Cartel and a 'left field' contribution from Juliet Fynes.

David S.

Chairman's Report

In our anniversary Issue 40, Juliet Fynes summarised our 10 years of existence since Ted Brown created AMBC, the Association of Musical Box Collectors. He chose the title Chairman, not President, for a very good reason. As Chairman he steered AMBC in a particular direction, difficult to define with precision but, in hindsight, very effective. AMBC was an instant success, built on the goodwill and friendship of its founding members. Sadly, some have 'passed on', missed but not forgotten. Others took their place as the years passed.

Our success was fundamental to the volunteer work of our joint editors, Lesley and David Evans. Both are skilled restorers in their own right and have many other interests including Magic Lanterns. Ted and I worked with them as editors of another society, for many years before they joined us to form AMBC. Like others on the committee, such as myself and Ted, they wanted to step back from Committee work but they remain as active in advising and guiding the Association.

As you know, Ted has agreed to be our first President instead of Chairman, a title well deserved. Ingvar Svenson has taken over my job as Treasurer, and I have agreed to take the vacated post of Chairman during this period of re-organisation.

I will have no voting rights but will continue to do what Ted has done for 10 years, to get a consensus view of the way forward in these difficult times, when interest in our hobby of collecting and restoring musical boxes is waning.

We are not alone in this, many societies with a historical interest struggle to survive. The reasons are complex. Factors include the lack of practical restoration skills, the lack of interest in committee work, the lack of interest in historical research, the cost of travel and organising meetings, the cost of printing and posting a magazine.

40 years or so ago, I joined a number of societies involved in self-playing musical instruments, not just in the UK but also in the USA and Europe. We had annual tours to museums, visits to private and public collections and attended many UK and European street musical festivals. However, the signs of change had already started to manifest themselves. When I joined, societies had already fragmented into small specialist groups such as fairground organs, street organs, player pianos, gramophones. Each had their own committee and magazine and eventually their own website. Now they all struggle to survive.

It is time to join forces again.

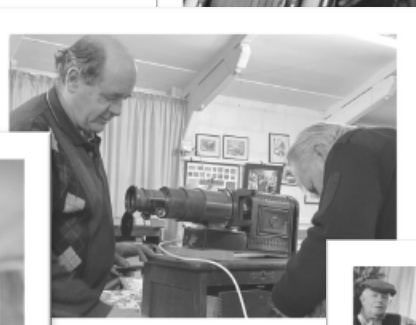
It is also time to consider other advantages of modern technology offered by the Web. Magazines can be transmitted electronically with huge savings in cost. It need not prevent those who want 'hard copy' from getting them printed and posted in the usual way.

To conclude. When we established AMBC we considered the various options of registration and came to the decision that an unincorporated society was the most cost-effective type of organisation. We also considered our constitution and the range of items for publication that are generally accepted by other societies as Mechanical Music. It is a description that I personally abhor because there is very little that is truly mechanical other than the incredible mechanisms used to create a whole range of incredible music of all genres.

Of course, we continue to publish articles on traditional musical boxes but not to the exclusion of other self-playing instruments such as musical clocks and watches, player pianos, fairground and street organs. We also include gramophones and phonographs when something of particular interest is discovered. Automata, musical and non-musical, are part of our remit as 'did the watch and clock makers of former times.



It is still our Anniversary Year so no excuses for filling any blank spaces with some images from the last decade—Ed.



TO ADVERTISE IN THIS JOURNAL

Annual Rates

Full Page £250, Half Page £140

Quarter Page £80

All advertisements will appear in four quarterly editions of Mechanical Music World and on the AMBC Website

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



I would like to record my appreciation of the latest issue of Mechanical Music World recently received in the post and find the content to be both interesting and varied.

I would like to offer a few observations, corrections and additions if I may.

Page 31 offers " A little about the composers". The composer of the Music Hall song " John Bull in a China Shop " is given as Charles Godfrey . This is incorrect. The song was written by one Albert Hall with music by Orlando Powell. (Publication date 1897, not 1887 as shown in the magazine -- I'm sure that's just a printing typo.) It's possible the writer got a little mixed up with the name Charles Godfrey as there was more than one person so named in the world of music at the time.

The Charles Godfrey so named (born Paul Lacey, 1854 -1900) did not compose the song but did indeed sing it in the Music Halls. Not to be confused with Charles Godfrey Jnr. (1839 - 1919) who was a noted composer of popular marches, waltzes and other pieces, arranger for brass bands as well as bandmaster of the Royal Horse Guards from 1868 to 1904. His name often appears as the composer credit in tune lists and on musical box and organette discs etc. with or without the suffix "Jnr". No information is given for the composer George Rosey, to which I offer the following. Rosey was a noted American vaudeville orchestrator and composer of popular marches, waltzes etc. At one time formed his own light orchestra and in 1898 recorded several titles for the United Phonograph Company of New York city, some of which were also issued by the London based record manufacturer Edisonia Limited, through the aegis of pioneer Russell Hunting who had ties with both companies.

Honeymoon March is Rosey's most well known composition, and is to be frequently found in the tune lists and record catalogues of the day.

Another observation in the same article is that the way the text is given, it implies, whether intended or not, that "Helvetia" and "Thorens" were two separate manufacturers of musical boxes. "Helvetia" was in fact a brand name used by the Thorens company usually, but not always, reserved for their cheaper end of the market products.

Over many years, "Helvetia" was used as a brand name for various models of musical boxes, cylinder phonographs and gramophones produced by the company, also confusingly sometimes applied just as an individual model name as well.

Keep up the good work, looking forward to receiving the next issue of " Mechanical Music World "!

Hampshire correspondent



**AMBC meeting with MBSGB at Coultershaw
by Bernard Novell Photos by Ingvar Svenson**

The Heritage site near Petworth was a fitting venue for members of the AMBC and the MBSGB to get-together for a ‘Show & Tell’ meeting.

It was nice to see so many MBSGB members had made it along, the numbers from each organisation were equal



Fig 1

and right from the start it was obvious that things were going to be very convivial with old friends and new acquaintances meeting up for a day of common interest. (Fig 1)

Bernard Novell (AMBC) had drawn up a rough plan for the two sessions inviting guest David Worrall (MBSGB Registrar) to start things off. David had bought along a small Martinet et Benoit Tabatière in a coromandel box with brass banding. (Figs 2 & 3) It was catalogued in a Petersfield auction as ‘a box with music’. There were two bidders. David in the room and



Fig.2



Fig.3

another on the telephone. The auctioneer was on a mission to sell 1000 lots in one day. The telephone bidder hesitated a second too long and the hammer came down in David’s favour. Fellow MBSGB member Terry Longhurst has an identical movement, including the same tunes, but in a less glamorous decorated tin case. David’s second piece was a magnificent Brémond cartel bought at auction in Chartres, France. Although David had been to Chartres to view the box, he left a bid with the auctioneer and returned home to be contacted later with the news that the box was his. He and his wife, Lesley, travelled back to Chartres by train for a weekend break, taking a spare wheeled case with them in which to bring the box home. Although the weather was unkind for the return journey, they managed to get it safely back without damage. The box plays four arrangements; the overtures to two of Rossini’s operas, “William Tell” and “Semiramis”, the 3rd Movement



Fig 4

(Andante) of Beethoven’s 5th Symphony, which is very rare on musical boxes, and Weber’s “Invitation to the Waltz”. The movement format is described on the tune



Fig 5



Fig 6

sheet as “Mandolin Overture” and the musical programme, and in particular the Beethoven piece, suggests strongly that the box was made by Brémond specifically to meet a customer order. (Fig 4) AMBC Member Roy Russell brought what he described as a Black Forest jewellery box that he bought for his wife. (Figs 5 & 6)



Fig 7

Apparently, she was not impressed!
Although not visibly marked, the consensus was that the movement was made by Franz Rzebitschek as it is identical to a marked Rzebitschek that Bernard had brought along, except the tunes it plays are different. (Fig 7) Roy had also brought several early key-wind



Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 10

boxes. Three by Francois Nicole (two 6 air and one 4 air) plus a Lecoultre 6 air and an Alibert 4 air. (Figs 8, 9 & 10) Continuing the theme of early key-wind boxes, Terry Longhurst played three boxes. Firstly, a Freres Nicole from 1812/15 with a 5" cylinder and 110 teeth,



Fig 11



Fig 12

three airs and rear controls. (Figs 11 & 12). Secondly, a 4 air (one being Auld Lang Syne) with exposed controls and Alibert stamped twice on the single piece comb. In addition, the bed plate is stamped twice. The mark in the form of an animal is often associated with the Lecoultres. Bulleid described this type of stamp, often in the form of animals, birds and various symbols, as 'craft marks'. It is likely that the box was

made by one of the Lecoultre's, possibly Henry Joseph, for Alibert. Finally, Terry played a Fat Cylinder Raymond Nicole with three magnificent overtures on 157 hooked teeth. The tune sheet, pasted onto the bottom of the case, is just legible. (Figs 13, 14 & 15) The first session was running late and so lunch was cut a bit short to allow for the afternoon delights.

First up was Alison Biden (MBSGB Editor) who regaled us with a story about a house that she'd seen advertised for sale where she noticed a double comb Porter Disc Player in one of the photos. She cheekily contacted the vendor who did reply with information on how it was obtained. Then Alison played an 1878 Barrel Organ made by Gebruder Bruder in a beautiful ornate case with brass fittings. It has four barrels each playing 10 tunes and has a stop that actuates a 'warble' effect.

Three of the barrels are original with the fourth being a later addition. (Figs 16 & 17) Alison also brought along a 4 air Mandolin PVF cartel which is one of her favourite boxes. Details on the case lead to speculation that it has been across the Atlantic a few times." (Figs 18 & 19)

Anna Svenson (AMBC) then played her 16 note Organina made around 1881 by the Massachusetts Organ Company which started trading in 1879. Looking like a tiny cash register and originally costing \$11, this came with one of the two modifications to the original design patented in 1881. (Fig 20) The first being a thin metal bar across the valve leather on each of the



Fig 13



Fig 14



Fig 15

two exhausters to stop them vibrating. The thin cardboard rolls, backed with a thin woven fabric for strength, can be tricky to load. The second modification that year was a key lifting bar which made loading of the roll easier and also enabled the roll to be extracted if it became jammed. This machine does not have this feature but, for three shillings, at the time, you could return your Organina and this could be



Fig 16



Fig 17

added. Anna's second item was an 18 note, twin reed Ariosa disc playing organette which has zinc discs that are more like a band with a huge central hole. (Fig 21)



Fig 18



Fig 19

Next up was Bernard Novell who had brought along

some of his collection, several of which have been the subject of articles in the three main Journals of AMBC, MBSGB and MBSI. (Fig 22) Firstly, Bernard showed his latest ‘upcycling’ project commission for a grandson.



Fig 20

A late 1800's Tunbridgeware sewing or manicure box with marquetry bands fitted with an ‘orphaned’ post 1980 4 tune Reuge 50 note movement and control. Bernard had also made a new tray for pens & trinkets. The interior lined with Japanese bookbinder's paper and dark blue velour.

Full details of this are shown in his article later in this issue.

Second was a Lecoultre Freres Alternate Tip cartel playing 12 tunes. It has 195 teeth (88 playing). The cylinder is 477mm long and 55mm in diameter. It was bought from a private seller in Falkirk and plays Scottish tunes five of which are Quadrilles, meaning that this box was probably used to teach or practice Scottish dancing. Both movement and case lid have been extensively restored. An article about alternate tip boxes, written by Jean-Marc Lebout from Brussels, appeared in The Music Box Vol 32 No. 2 Summer 2025, features this box as being one of the earliest. Next was an eight tune Langdorff et Fils cartel with a tune sheet written in Romanian playing mainly traditional folk-dance tunes from Romania and surrounds, though one tune is an Austrian Waltz. The cylinder has been re-pinned, the comb has had the dampers repaired and has been re-tuned. Restorer James Preddy told Bernard that this comb has more than twice as many sharps and flats as any comb he's ever worked on. Again, it is thought that this box would have been used to teach or practice dances. Articles about this box appeared in Mechanical Music World Issue 39, Spring 2025 and in The Music Box Vol 32 No. 2 Summer 2025. Bernard's fourth box was an unattributed six tune cartel with 103 teeth playing operas. This cylinder has been re-pinned and the comb restored. It appeared briefly in MMW Issue 40, Summer 2025 as possibly being by Ducommun Girod. Moving to a smaller box that has appeared in MMW Issue 38, Winter 2024 and Mechanical Music (MBSI) Volume 70, No. 5 September/October 2024. This Petite Musique Mandoline Zither is a rare example by Paillard



Fig 21

Vaucher et Fils and was once owned by music box collector and author David Tallis. It plays four tunes on 77 teeth from well-known operas: Le Jet d'Eau Op.17 (1862) by Sydney Smith; The Carnival of

Venice (1829) by Niccolò Paganini; Victoria Grande Valse (1846) by Jules Schulhoff; and Home Sweet Home adapted from John Howard Payne's 1823 opera

Clari. The melody was composed by Sir Henry Bishop with lyrics by Payne.

Two small, but rare boxes – an unusual Thorens Manivelle version of the common AD30 disc player with a delightful scene on the lid and a very rare 12 tune, two per turn Charles Ullmann Tabatière playing tunes from the musicals of the late 19th Century (and one from 1725) on 37 teeth. Finally a 2/82 Rzebitschek cartel playing the Redetzky March by Johann Strauss the Elder (1848) and another unknown tune. Sadly, the cylinder return had stuck so we were unable to listen to the



Fig 22

unidentified tune. Paul Bellamy (AMBC) had bought along three very large Crown Devon musical jugs and described how these ceramics became collectible.

Juliet Fynes (AMBC) finished the day with some small items (Fig 23), some carried in a musical sewing basket. The most bizarre was an Australian boomerang clothes brush. A drinks pourer and trinket box had been chosen as examples of an unusual use of material, decorated with reverse-carved floral Lucite panels. This is mostly found in the form of brooches, very fashionable in the 1950s.

A rare Manivelle in a round composition case showed a print of the Laxey Wheel on the Isle of Man. Another unusual item was a brass model of a mangle containing a 56-note movement (featured in Issue 12 of MMW). Lastly and by no means least was a singing bird that had been fully restored by Chris Fynes (Issue 4 of MMW), including the painstaking re-feathering of the bird. The pretty micro mosaic trinket box was shown as another example of the skilful workmanship used to recreate the tiny bird's eyes.



Fig 23

The variety of boxes brought along was about as wide as anyone could have hoped for with some unusual ones and also some interesting background stories. All agreed that the joint session had been a great success and looked forward to a similar event in the future.

STREET PIANO MEDLEY—Vintage postcards from Paul Baker

Paul presents us with a fascinating insight into the stories of people and their street pianos as depicted in postcards from his collection.

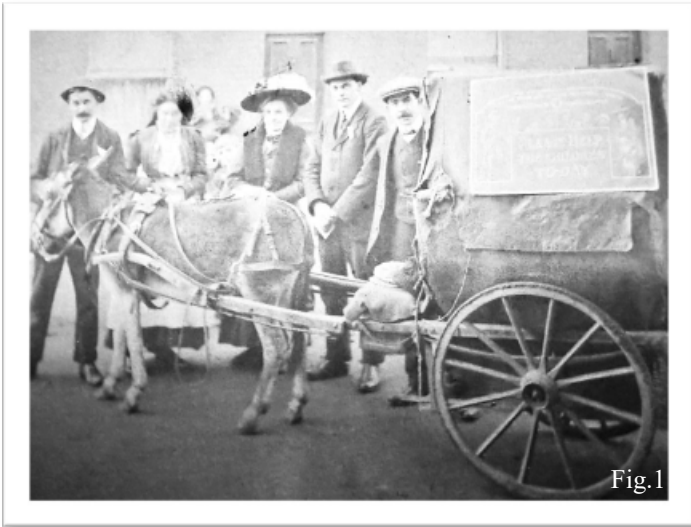


Fig.1

Fig.1 Collecting for charity , date and location unknown but quite likely Edwardian England. The back of the postcard reveals an intriguing story.

" What do you think of this ? We have got our donkey at last. Went round the streets last Saturday.

Took nearly £5 , We shall soon be well off now. Thank you for your kind letter , shall be pleased to see you when you can come, with love to all , Annie. This was a street collection last Saturday for the National Children's Home. Albert hired the donkey. Thought it might be an attraction to the people "



Fig.2

Fig 2 A man and woman pose for the photographer alongside a little 40 - hammer Pasquale street piano, at an unknown location and date but believed to be somewhere in the South according to the informant who donated the postcard. Presumably recording their efforts for the camera before embarking on the day's work. Judging by the man's appearance , he could do

with a new pair of trousers and that moustache he is sporting certainly needs a trim at the barbers!



Fig.3

Fig.3 A charming study of a sight once common in suburban England, a typical Italian organ-grinder, his "donna" and child ,together with his street piano and donkey, captured for posterity one sunny day, date and location unknown. A great attraction for children as well as a source of added income for our street musician was the birdcage, seen mounted on the side panel of the piano. For the payment of one penny , trained canaries would pick out a pre-printed fortune card , pink for the girls and blue for the boys.



Fig.4

Fig.4 Photographed on Thursday October 5th , 1911 , the "King of Hearts", "Mr. Blackface" and a young lady at the piano, get ready to collect in aid of the Hospital and Nursing Institute as part of the Taunton carnival of that year. Their piano looks to be a 40 or 44 hammer instrument , bearing the trade label of prolific piano-organ maker Pasquale & Co of Clerkenwell , London.

Original photographic postcard by Ernest Cox of Taunton , who is known to have recorded many local events as well as topographical subjects , especially the annual carnival from 1906 to 1927, subsequently publishing the views as postcards, sold from his photographic shop in Station Road.



Fig.5

Fig.5 A familiar figure on the streets of Baltimore for more than 43 years, Charlie Cirelli is seen here in 1946, pulling his A. Capra & Co. Street piano. At age 65, Charlie, once known as the "King of the Hurdy-Gurdy Band" lamented "*Business isn't what it used to be*" and "*Today's people don't understand the Hurdy-Gurdy*" [*1.] In 1959, the Baltimore "*Sun*" newspaper commented".

At age 79 he has had to retire, the weight of over 600 pounds has become too much for him to pull." In fact, Charlie had virtually retired in 1946 when this photo was taken. Charlie's mother, brother and wife were all organ-grinders but Charlie was the best known and outlived them all. At one time he had sixteen "hurdy-gurdies", he had acquired when his colleagues gave up their trade or returned to Italy. He loved the music of



Fig.6

the street pianos and it is said he would not have a monkey anywhere near his machine!

Charlie died two years later in 1961, a potted biography and his funeral arrangements making the columns of the "*Sun*". Happily his piano survives in a museum collection.

[*1 In USA, the term 'Hurdy-Gurdy' is often used as applied to street pianos.]

Fig.6 A well known sight on the streets of Edinburgh for more than 20 years, Mary Dunlop together with her piano and beloved pony "Smoky", are captured in 1965, a year before she passed away at age 73.

Born of Italian parents, diminutive Mary adopted a way of earning money once common among some members of the Italian community both in Scotland and England.

Often to be seen outside St. Giles cathedral in the post-war years, she had many friends and acquaintances and was particularly loved by the children, known by them as "Monkey Mary" as for some years she toured the streets with a capuchin monkey.

"Smoky" was presented to her in 1954 by The Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to replace an old pony that was pensioned off to a horses' rest farm.

Mary became such an iconic figure in Edinburgh that local clubs raised funds when the piano needed repairs, a memorial plaque to her memory has been placed in Rutland Square and her famous street piano can still be seen today in Edinburgh's Museum of Childhood.



Fig.7

Fig.7 Two pretty young ladies in traditional dress pause for the camera, with their piano, on a quiet Brussels street at the close of the 19th century.

With a Quaregnon, Belgium post-mark for August 1899, the postcard is a very early example of what is known by collectors as an 'undivided back' card, the terms of the Universal Postal Union membership before 1902 only permitting a message to the recipient on the front of the card, in the small space provided for the purpose to the right of the image. Interestingly, an enlargement of the trade label on the front of the piano reads "Pasquale & Co., Clerkenwell, London". Gregori Pasquale had founded the London business just a few years earlier in 1894, but the Pasquale family business had been active in Brussels since the 1860's.

Fig.8 Two Gentlemen stand proudly alongside a 44-hammer barrel piano, probably hired for the day somewhere in the Manchester area. The piano bears the trade label of Simon Robino, an Italian by birth but by 1897 had settled in Manchester's "Little Italy" with his

wife and five children, previously in the mid- 1880's



Fig.8

having lived in Marseilles where he had studied music at the College of Music there. Initially employed by Domenico Antonelli at his Piano-Organ works in Great Ancoats street, Robino by 1911 owned his own business, listed in trade directories as a 'mechanical organ maker' at 14 - 16 Portugal Street and nearby 85 Oldham Road, next to famed barrel organ maker Peter Varetto at no. 87. As well as being a talented musician and having the ability to "mark" the tune barrels, Robino also invented a re-iterating hammer action for street pianos, such instruments known as Mandoline or Tremolo pianos, said to have been developed to produce a strident tone in an attempt to combat the levels of ambient street noise found in busy towns and cities. Robino died in 1936 at age 70, having passed the business to his son Victor, who carried on for a few years until Italy entered the war against England in 1941 when the piano factory was smashed up together with many other Italian businesses in Ancoats.



Fig.9

Fig.9 A charming view of an Italian family beside their smaller size 35 or 40 hammer instrument with a chained monkey about to descend from the top of the piano. A highly trained little fellow, often a capuchin and usually attractively costumed in a smart buttoned waistcoat together with a fez style of cap, the monkey would perform tricks and

typically dance to the music produced, thereby providing an entertainment which was certainly an attraction to children and as he pleadingly held out his cap for contributions, even dour Victorians could rarely resist!

In the popular folk memory, monkeys as an accompaniment to street music are more often associated with the 'hurdy-gurdy men' (*2) , whose instruments were the true barrel organs , that were carried around secured to the performer by stout leather straps around the body and shoulders, the organs being rested upon a stick or stump when being played.

(*2) *In Britain , the term 'hurdy gurdy' in popular parlance was often used as applied to the smaller sized reed or pipe barrel organ that was once in common usage by street musicians before being more or less ousted by its larger cousin, the street piano.*



Fig.10

During the Edwardian era , picture-postcards pre-printed with Birthday or Christmas wishes or other forms of conveying goodwill to the recipient , were popular as a cheaper alternative to sending a greetings card within an envelope as not only was the purchase price of a postcard usually less expensive than that of a card, but also as before 1912 when postal rates were equalized, the cost of a stamp for a postcard was a half-penny whereas that for sending a letter was a penny. Produced by an independent photographer or chemist rather than one of the large commercial postcard manufacturers, nothing is known of the location of this charming image of three well dressed Edwardian ladies, posing for the camera with their horse which is harnessed to a purposely constructed four - wheeled cart that has been designed with a drop-axle and low-level loading bed for ease of mounting the piano.

The only clue we have as to the origin of the event is a handwritten message on the reverse of the card which gives but scant insight --- "From Edie to Edie Pepper". It would seem that the occasion was of relatively unusual character as it had certainly aroused the curiosity of onlookers and passersby who have unwittingly become social history's prize.



Fig.11

Fig.11 Two ladies, possibly a mother and daughter, suitably attired as Romany gypsies, pose proudly by a 44-hammer instrument which bears the trade label of M. Tomasso & Bros., 1 St. Mary's Lane, Quarry Hill, Leeds. Almost mainly photographed before embarking on a day's collecting for charity or possibly as part of a carnival procession, our ladies with street piano and a tambourine in hand, form a striking image of a now all but disappeared, but once common means of raising funds or extracting contributions from the general public.

Fig.12 A young lady in Summer dress stands confidently at the winding handle of a little 40-hammer piano, together with a group of helpers and onlookers, captured at a moment in time around a hundred years ago. The prevalence of cloche hats worn by several of the ladies suggests a date of early to mid- 1920s when that style was at its peak of popularity although remaining as a fashionable choice into the early 1930s. The location is possibly Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk as the piano bears the trade label of A.O. Wintle, whose business of hiring out and re-pinning barrel pianos was carried on in the extensive range of outbuildings at Lawshall rectory, some 8 miles to the south of Bury. Algernon Ogle Wintle (1881--1959) had become fascinated with street pianos as a boy growing up in the Royal Borough of Kensington but developed his passion further when serving his first curacy as a church minister at St. Mary, Crumpsall, a suburb of



Fig.12

Manchester, around 1910. There he met Simon Robino and in time expanded his knowledge of how to 'mark' and re-pin the tune barrels of the pianos. Wintle was rector of Lawshall from 1923 until his death and was often to be seen himself with a barrel piano on the streets in and around Bury St. Edmunds, raising funds for the local hospital and other good causes.

A short silent cinema film featuring the canon and his 'piano-organ works' was made by Gaumont in 1929 and shown in film theatres as part of Gaumont's regular weekly "Gaumont Mirror" cinemagazine.



Fig.13

Fig.13 A man and woman in fancy dress stand by a gaily decorated 40-hammer street piano, in readiness for the Wokingham carnival

A portrait of Queen Alexandra adorns the front of the piano, suggesting possibly a date of around 1910, after the death of King Edward VII on May 6th that year, but before the coronation of King George V in June the following year.

The photographer was F.W. Foulsham of 63 Wokingham Road, Reading, a prolific publisher of postcards featuring local people and events in the Reading area, from at least 1906 to the late 1930s.



In the Footsteps of Heath Robinson by David Soulsby

Heath Robinson (1872–1944) was an English illustrator, cartoonist, and artist best known for his intricate and whimsical drawings of absurdly complex machines designed to accomplish simple tasks. His machines were often powered by pulleys, levers, steam, weights, candle flames and occasionally mice. His name has become synonymous with overly elaborate contraptions, much like his American counterpart Rube Goldberg.



Photo 1 The Disgusting Spectacle sculptures.

Tim Hunkin's 'The Disgusting Spectacle' (Photo.1)



Photo 2 The Ferryman crosses the River Styx

beckoned me in with its upturned finger, before beginning its nasal examination (it's hard to believe Tim built this way back in 1979). The exhibition had some entertaining pieces on display, including four very different offerings from the always thought-provoking Fi Henshall. One of these, 'The River Styx' (Photo 2), depicts the mythological ferryman Charon navigating the eponymous river, transporting

the souls of the dead across to the Underworld in his boat.

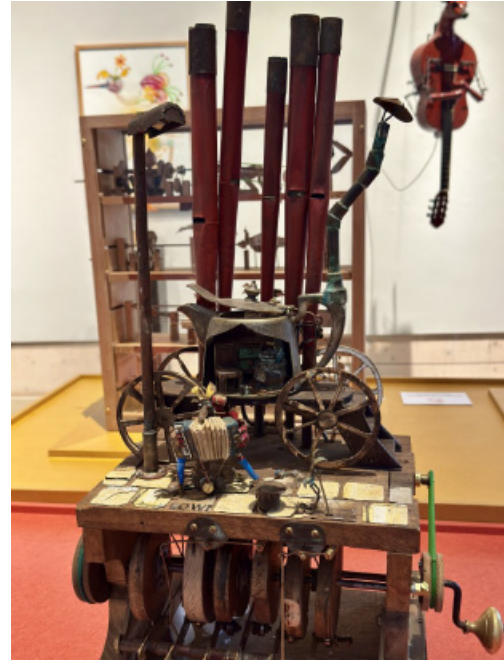


Photo 3 Busking before Tea

Fi's carving of a grim weathered old man in an oilskin coat, waving an outstretched lantern in one hand while steering with a long pole, is very evocative. The body of the unfortunate lies in the boat, with a coin in his mouth to pay the ferryman for the grim journey. Fi told me she had considered putting coins over the eyes of the corpse, but it made him look as if he was wearing sunglasses!

Busking before Tea, (Photo.3), the final part of her Hawkers, Tinkers and Pedlars collection depicts a giant



Photo 4 Top Quality Piano

kettle, with lid raised and steam blowing through a connecting series of organ pipes. The kettle is a diminutive kitchen with chair, chest of drawers, mug, and a miniature kettle perched on a blackened stove. The whole thing is mounted on a four-wheeled cart. In

front is the busker (a found objects creation of a mouse?) with accordion in hands. A hat for collecting coins is there on the paving slabs (actually tin) and another typical Fi figure of a bird is dropping in a donation. On turning the handle, a light illuminates the mini-kitchen, the accordion player jiggles into life, and a steam-powered melody sounds out with



Photo 5 Mind the Gap

percussion from the rising and falling lid.

The third exhibit 'Top Quality Piano' is shown in Photo 4. Fi explained: "The original piano was owned by a woman whom it had huge sentimental value for, because her late father worked extremely hard to buy it for her as a child. It had got worn out to the point that it was not worth repairing, so she decided to have it turned into a sculpture. The harp at the back is the centre part of the main strung frame of the piano and the keys all come from it too. The sides are part of an old Singer sewing machine frame - it all seemed to fit together quite well"

The movement is introduced by an assortment of Fi's creations in action, banging with a mallet, pulling at chains, swinging a trapeze, pounding the piano keys against the strings. Light streams from below so that the shadows of the hammers stand out in stark relief.

I asked Fi for some background to her fourth automaton. 'Mind the Gap' (Photo 5).

"It was originally made for an exhibition about climate change - it (very!) loosely represents the displacement of communities as a result of changing climate and the difference in living/traveling conditions between rich and poor. I'd rather none of this sounded quite so serious though, mostly I just

wanted to make a piece that sounded like a train (which it does!) and is full of travellers, who look from side to side as the world goes by. The fat banker in the gold carriage snoozes and smokes a cigar as the pages of his newspaper flap in the breeze. There's a man above the train trying to leap on from an



Photo 6 "ING"

electricity pylon. A rat and a vulture gnaw on bones in the bottom of the piece, I suppose this is another nod towards the destructiveness of climate change and the futility of flight, but also my workshop was regularly



Photo 7 Original Sketch for ING

invaded by rats at this time, so I put them in a lot of my work!"

Paul Spooner was well represented by two complex pieces that I hadn't seen before. The first one was called 'ING' and comprised a grid of various wooden

figures undertaking tasks (Photo.6). I asked Paul about the background to the piece. "It arose from thinking that so many simple mechanical toys and automata illustrate English verbs in the continuous present tense. I first started thinking about that after talking to a man who was learning Hungarian and comparing the two languages. I made a drawing of 'ing' actions that would be easy or interesting to make mechanical" He



Photo 8 The Science Museum

sent me a copy of his original sketch. (Photo 7). In the end only 16 made the final group of automata - Scratching, Scrubbing, Voting, Yawning, Shivering, Twiddling, Flapping, Agreeing, Rocking, Swimming, Marching, Circling, Looking, Yelling, Expecting, Dipping. An amusing array that kept the visitors absorbed before they moved on to engage with Paul's second exhibit, "The Science Museum" (Photo 8).

Unfortunately I missed seeing this in action, so am grateful to Paul for his own description of the movements. "From the top: an endless belt announces 'The Science Museum', a pair of clock hands ratchet round and on the hour a cuckoo rolls out on a trolley and two pipes make the cuckoo call. Below that is a dangling man whose feet are brushed by a rotating feather, a fan blows the curtains at the window, a chough in a bell jar turns to look at you, two hands plonk down on a piano keyboard. There are also two snail shells with their Latin names written below them. On the lowest layer is the crank handle, the bellows that drives the clock ratchet and the cuckoo trolley, a walking figure, a pencil that draws zigzags on a square of paper and five Japanese girls with their mouths forming the five Japanese vowels: ah, ee, oo, eh, o with the appropriate hiragana characters written on their chests.

It's partly made up of a few pieces of mechanism that I made as separate but then decided to cobble them all together as a sort of compendium of movemexercises ents. I added more parts including the belt of letters and put it in a framework that looks a bit like the tower of our village church (listed by Pevsner as 'an all-granite church of no special interest') I suppose I was thinking of visits to museums when I was young, especially the Science Museum in London where there were hand-cranked mechanical devices showing how things worked."

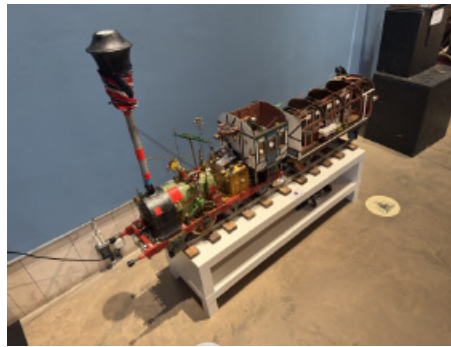


Photo 9 Railway Ribaldry

I enjoyed the many exhibits in the style of Heath Robinson, including one inspired by the drawing by him for the book *Railway Ribaldry* in 1935, created by Tim Ellis.

This construction (Photo 9) was of a locomotive, built using recycled and remade items collected over a period of a year, ranging from cast iron wheels and brass trinkets to parts of passenger aircraft components. A group of youngsters were attracted to it by streams of bubbles that blew out of the stack when in operation. They hung around the exhibit for some time though, maybe they'll be the next generation of Automata lovers?

My journey inevitably led me to the adjoining gallery where drawings and models paid homage to the man himself. Many people believe Heath Robinson actually built his contraptions, but this happened only rarely. He was associated with makeshift or imaginary gadgets as early as 1912, but only on a few occasions were 3D models actually constructed. One of these was for the Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition at Olympia, London in 1934. A firm of engineers created a life-size version of Heath Robinson's "ideal home," based on his cartoon entitled 'The Gadgets'. The house stood 50 feet wide and nearly 20 feet high, and with over 30 lifelike figures performing daily routines, aided by complex contraptions, as shown in a postcard from the time. It is clear that the full sized model had been embellished (under the direction of Mr Robinson).and many additional fantastical devices incorporated.

A coin-operated model of the house was on display, it was built by Stephen Ward and adapted into a motorised automaton by Roger Pattenden. It is a three-storey model building cut away to reveal multiple rooms, each filled with whimsical, animated figures and contraptions, as drawn in the simpler original cartoon. The exterior has a hand-crafted, irregular roofline with textured "slate" tiles. Photographs of these models are shown on the inside back cover.

After dropping in a couple of coins to view the animated figures simulating Robinson's cartoons, and reflecting on how inflation had affected slot machines, I headed home.

The exhibition showed just how alive Robinson's spirit remains: quirky inventiveness, sly humour, and the joy of over-complication for its own sake. Today's artists have followed in his footsteps given his drawings fresh dimensions.

A century on, the absurd still works beautifully.

Upcycling Antique Boxes and Orphaned Movements by Bernard Novell

Personalised music box for a Granddaughter

In early 2022 visiting friends, Kate asked if I could make a bespoke music box, with a ballerina, for her (then) unborn granddaughter. I was honoured to be asked.



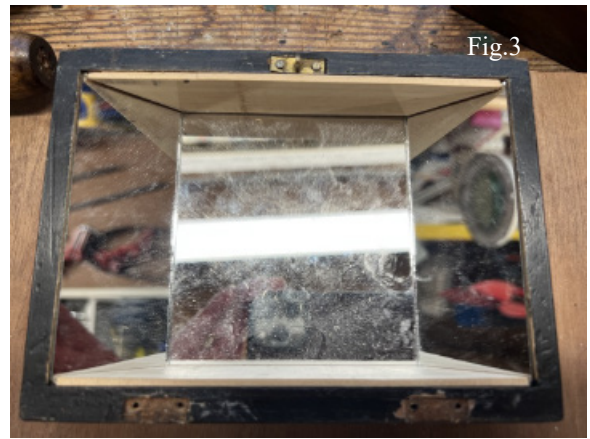
A lovely Tunbridgeware jewellery box with intricate inlay bands was selected from my workshop shelf along with a suitable movement from my stock and I set to work.

The box had been obtained from a local auction house. (Fig 1) It had a small amount of damage to the exterior marquetry which would need to be addressed. The interior was sound, but the lining was very dirty.



The tray was missing. (Fig 2)

The first process was to remove the hinges. These were in poor shape and, because I wanted to fit the inside of the lid with mirrors, I decided to fit a new 92 degree stop piano hinge to cope with the weight and ensure that the mirrors were at the correct angle to reflect the



ballerina. The lock was nailed in place so I decided not to attempt to remove it, instead I polished it up using a glass fibre pen. I found a key to fit the lock. Then the interior and base were stripped of paper and material using water and a scraper, then left to dry.

I cut two wedge shaped infills so that the mirrors, obtained from the local glazier, were faceted to reflect the ballerina from three directions. The mirrors were not glued in place, instead I made two shaped retainers and covered them with scarlet velour and attached them with brass screws. (Fig 3)

Four wooden bead feet were added to the base to raise the box to allow for the winder.

Because of the depth of the box and the lid recess I needed to raise the height of the movement so that it was visible and would stop when the lid was closed. I cut a block of wood, with two beech sides, to form two trinket compartments with the movement in the centre. (Fig 4)

The orphaned Reuge 18 note movement, playing "I Could Have Danced All Night" was dismantled, cleaned, polished and oiled ready for installation. Because of the thickness of the block below the movement I sourced an extension key shaft from N.J. Dean along with a new Ballerina.

The marquetry was repaired (Fig 5) and the exterior





Fig.5

cleaned, abraded and then given several coats of pure shellac. The bead feet were finished with black French polish which was also used to finish the interior lips and movement area.

A polycarbonate cover was cut to fit above the movement, with a slot to allow the ballerina to fold



Fig.6

when the lid was closed.

The compartments either side of the mechanism platform were lined with scarlet velour. Finally the



Fig.7



Fig.8

piano hinge was fitted, the brand new ballerina added to the movement and a personalised plaque fitted.

Lyra was born on 22nd May 2022, in Sydney, Australia. I delivered the box, in person, on 16th September. Lyra dances to her box every day!

Personalised music box for a Grandson

Early in 2025 Kate and Alan requested another box for their grandson Lowen, also born in Sydney. This time she wanted a box with a good movement and a tray for pens etc. I sent photos of my stock of five Tunbridgeware boxes and Kate selected the largest (Fig 8). We then went through the options for movements,

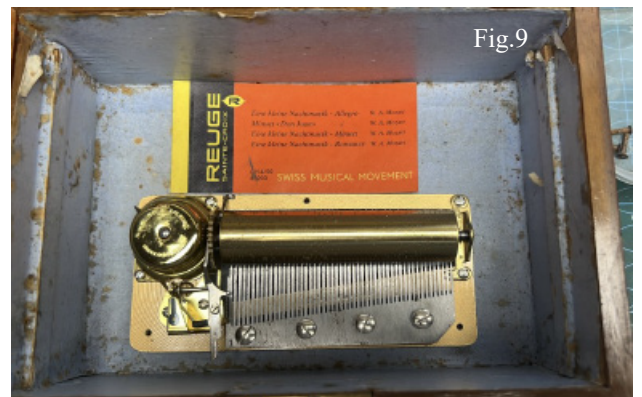


Fig.9

finally selecting a 4/50 Reuge playing four pieces by Mozart, Three Eine Kleine Nachtmusik (Allegro, Minuet & Romance) and Minuet from Don Juan. This post 1980 movement I had bought in its original protective packaging a few months before and was in mint condition. Even the tune sheet was included. (Fig 9)

As with the first box, the first job was to dismantle it, clean out the interior and work out what else needed to be done.



Fig.10

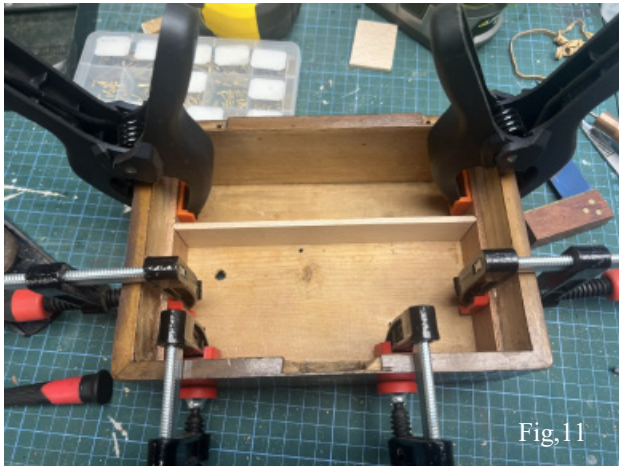


Fig.11

This movement required an on/off slider. I like to ensure that these are a good fit by using wooden trips below and above to form a groove. (Fig 10) Then I positioned the movement and drilled the holes for the



Fig.12

winder and three fixings. At this stage it's good to fit and test both before moving on.

There was plenty of room behind the movement for a



Fig.13

compartment and the tray would need some support. I use solid timber to make the side supports and a divider. (Fig 11) These were glued in place. A polycarbonate cover was cut and pre-drilled to fit over the movement. I made sure that the side supports were recessed so that the tray was supported all the way along as there is no support at the back.

The marquetry needed some 'microsurgery' to replace a few tiny pieces. (Fig 12) I use hide glue (as would have been used originally). When dry I added the four bead feet and filled a few small holes with melted wax before



Fig.14

staining the new pieces then cleaning and abrading the whole exterior ready for polishing with several coats of pure shellac, including the lips of the box. The movement compartment was 'painted' with black French polish, as were the bead feet.

While this was all drying I cut the components for a six-compartment tray on the band saw – again using solid wood. The base is of 4mm thick beech and the side &

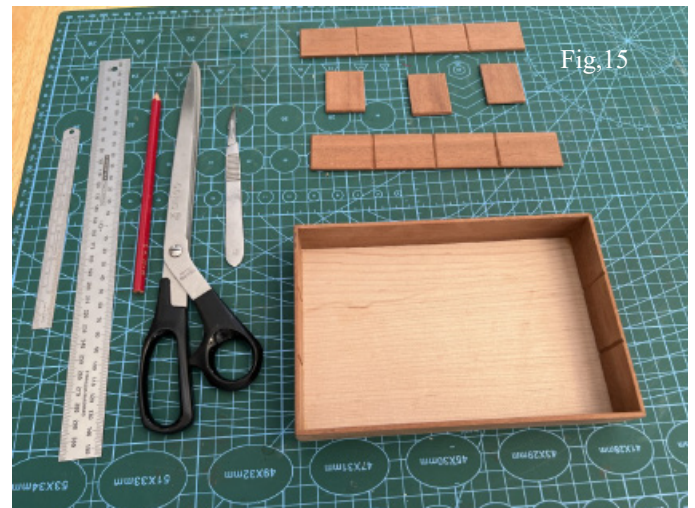


Fig.15

dividers of 4mm mahogany.

The positions for the dividers were marked accurately and sawn half-way through then the groove chamfered using a sharp bevel edged chisel. The corners are mitred using a guillotine (Fig 13) then glued using mitre clamps. It's very important to ensure that the corners are



Fig.16



Fig.17

square and level so this is done on a bench made from a kitchen worktop. When all corners are glued and set, the sides are glued to the base and left to dry. The dividers are cut and mitred on both sides to form a V, again using a guillotine. The dividers are not glued in place so they need to fit accurately. (Fig 14)

The tray is now ready to be lined. I use Japanese bookbinder's paper and bookbinder's glue taking care to ensure the pattern is the right way up. (Figs 15 &16)

down the centre. In this case, the base of the tray was velour, so this was fitted last and then the dividers added. I had to allow for the thickness of the velour in the height of the divider. (Fig 17) Velour was also used for the underside of the tray as it will rest on the polycarbonate cover over the movement. The compartment behind the movement and the inside of the lid were lined to match the tray.

I like to fit the hinges before I complete the external polishing, then fit the mechanism, controls and the polycarbonate cover. The final touches are a key with a tassel and adding the tune sheet to the base. Grandma will add a plaque.

The finished box (Figs 18 & 19)

A final, personal, word from Kate which makes it all worthwhile.

"I am delighted with both boxes which will be treasured by our grandchildren and will hopefully be passed down through the family. Can I also add that I think you are a genius. xx"



Fig.18

The sheets are marked and cut to shape, ensuring that there are side and bottom overlaps built into the first, opposite, pieces so that there are no gaps when the opposing pieces are glued in place. The dividers are wrapped on three sides and trimmed with a scalpel when dry. The grooves for the dividers are scored and slit



Ted Brown showing a group some his collection at The Old School.



Fig. 19

THE MUSIC HALL TRADITION by Juliet Fynes



The great English Music Hall evolved from the eighteenth century coffee houses and taverns where men could meet to do business over a meal and drink, often with live music in the

background. By the 1830s some landlords began to make more of the entertainment with rooms specifically devoted to musical performances. The audience would chat during the acts and could be very raucous, applauding their favourite turns and heckling those that didn't come up to scratch. In the 1850s purpose-built music halls began to emerge where food and drink were served throughout the lively shows. These were beautifully appointed buildings with luxurious décor and fittings on a par with the more sedate theatres and concert halls, with their separate refreshment rooms and respectful audiences.

Music halls were mainly the preserve of men until later Victorian times, when changing social norms and increased female participation in the workforce led to greater acceptance of women, both as performers and patrons. Gradually the emphasis became as much about the entertainment as the food and drink. They became wildly popular, despite the disapproval of "legitimate" theatre managers and the temperance lobby. By 1873 there were said to be 375 music halls in London alone. The performances became more varied bringing in conjurers, comedians, acrobats and all kinds of variety acts alongside the traditional music. A "chairman" acted as master of ceremonies, introducing the acts, bantering with the audience, building anticipation and calming any overly rowdy behaviour. Singers were still the mainstay and some became big stars with a following to rival the fan base of today's pop idols. Performers such as Marie Lloyd, Harry Lauder, George Formby, Vesta Tilley, to name but a few, were household names, still recognised today. They sang sentimental ballads, comedy numbers, often poking fun at themselves or the



Fig. 1 Front door Wilton's Music Hall

upper classes, love songs and rather saucy ditties full of double entendres.

One of the most important surviving examples of a Victorian music hall is Wilton's which holds a special place in the history of British entertainment and architecture.

It's history dates back to the 1690s and a row of five houses in Graces Alley, Shadwell. The largest of these was an ale house which from 1826 was known as The Mahogany Bar, reputedly because the landlord was the first to install a mahogany bar and fittings in his pub. In 1839 a concert room was built behind the pub and the



Fig. 2 Wilton's Auditorium

building's life as an entertainment venue began. John Wilton bought the business in 1850 and in 1859 replaced the concert room with his "Magnificent New Music Hall", which could accommodate 1500 patrons. The hall was built behind the houses, with the bar remaining as the public entrance. This was common practice at the time as street frontage was very expensive. The hall was equipped with opulent décor and the finest technology of the day. Wilton sold his music hall in 1868 and it continued under various proprietors until a disastrous fire in 1877. It was rebuilt to the 1859 design but finally closed its doors as a music hall in 1881.

The building was subsequently bought by the East London Methodist Mission, which supported the poor local community, especially through hard times, such as the Great Dock Strike and the Blitz, for the next seventy years, closing in 1956. It then suffered the ignominy of being a rag sorting warehouse for a few years until threatened with demolition by LCC in the 1960s as part of a slum clearance scheme. In that decade so many lovely historic buildings were lost in the fervour for new builds, many of which themselves have now been demolished with few regrets. Luckily Wilton's came to the attention of some famous names, such as Sir John Betjeman and Spike Milligan, who prevailed upon the LCC to relent and it was given Grade II* listed status in 1971. In 1972 a trust was set up to fund repairs.

Although Wilton's cannot be said to have been rediscovered, as it was always known about, it was rather a question of "out of sight, out of mind", with only the front entrance and the windows of the bar and office to be seen from the alley. A limited amount of restoration took place and some productions were put on in the late 1990s but it soon fell back into debt and dereliction. The turning point came in 2003 when it won the South East category in the BBC Restoration series. In 2004 the Wilton's Music Hall Trust took over and embarked on a programme of extensive repair and sensitive conservation, funded by grants and donations. It reopened in 2015 and is now a popular multi-arts performance venue, with limited availability for private functions which have to be booked at least a year in advance.

Wilton's is said to be the oldest surviving music hall in the world although in its long history it belonged to John Wilton for less than twenty years and functioned as a music hall for only thirty, compared to the Methodist Mission tenure of seventy years.



Fig 1

The popularity of music halls survived the First World War, during which patriotic songs helped keep up public morale, but began to decline soon after due to the

rise of cinema and other forms of entertainment. It was not helped by the banning of the sale of alcohol in music halls by the LCC in 1923, leaving the theatres exempt. This dealt a body blow to a tradition that had developed from drinking establishments. Music hall

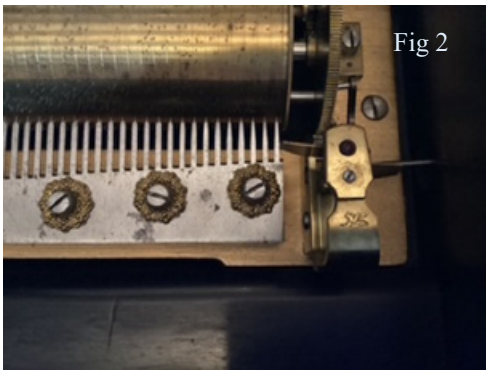


Fig 2

had become all but extinct by the mid 20th century.

In an era when most homes had a piano, there was a plentiful supply of, often highly decorative, sheet music costing just a few pennies, for people to enjoy the songs at home. Their popularity endured well beyond the decline of the music halls. As well as appearing as sheet music the most popular tunes were pinned on barrel pianos, to be played in the streets and other public places, also on discs for penny-in-the slot machines in pubs and cafes. Discs were available for domestic machines and selections could be found on cylinder boxes. Our very first musical box was such a one.

After setting up home in an historic house, Chris and I soon developed a taste for antiques without the means

to indulge it. We loved hunting around the sort of shops in the back streets of Worthing or Portsmouth that specialised in house clearance. One day we came across a musical box in a dilapidated state which, under the grease, tarnish and woodworm, was basically sound. Chris was intrigued and armed with books by Graham Webb and Arthur Orde-Hume set about restoring it. The fancy washers and phoenix trade mark established it as coming, via the agent

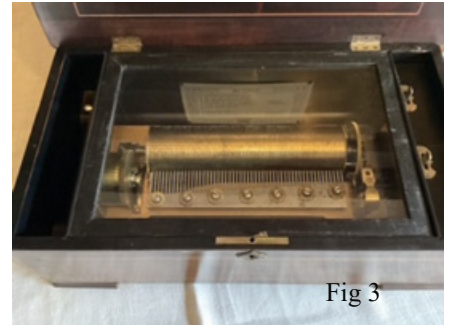


Fig 3

Dawkins, from the maker Ami Rivenc.(Fig 1) It has a 10 ¼ by 2 3/8 inch cylinder, 52 teeth comb and serial number 41972. (Fig 2).

Treating the woodworm, making new feet and repolishing the case presented no difficulties. Following the instructions in the books, Chris

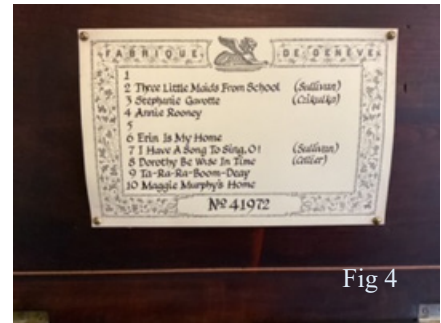
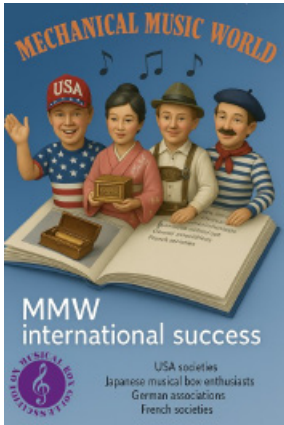


Fig 4

was able to dismantle the mechanism and clean it all up, straighten some pins and repaint the bedplate. One of the trickiest parts was replacing the dampers, but with much patience he mastered this. Finally reassembled it looked a treat, as though fresh out of the showroom. I(Fig 3). We were able to get a reproduction tune sheet and fill in the tunes that we knew (Fig 4). Having joined MBSGB a few more were identified at "name that tune" sessions, but two stubbornly still remain a mystery/ (This modest, late box marked the start of a life-long hobby collecting, researching, restoring and recording cylinder musical boxes for more than half a century.



Congratulations to Justin Fynes and Louise Jones on their wedding at Wilton's Music Hall on 16th August.



A Musical Box made by Alder by Jean-Marc Lebout

Another in our regular series of articles from our friends from abroad.

We are indebted to Jean-Marc Lebout for the pictures and text of this article. The text is a translation/transcription of his original article.

The history of music box makers has been enriched by a name previously unrecorded in the literature on the subject. It was in a Brussels antiques gallery that I had the chance to discover this cartel.

This cartel is unusual not because of its construction, which is very classic, but rather because of the name stamped in the center of the comb. The comb was quite dirty when I found it and the name, made up of fairly tightly packed letters, was difficult to read. It only became visible after lightly cleaning the comb and using a good magnifying glass. The ALDER name, in capital letters, then unmistakably appeared.

I had never come across this name before. I decided to

buy the musical box and then consulted the usual bibliographical references—Ord-Hume, Jean-Claude Piguet, Ruud Maes, etc. but they all confirmed my first impression that there was no additional information and therefore it was truly a rarity.

A corner of the veil was lifted thanks to my Swiss friend, Jean-Marc Cerutti. He knew that the city of Geneva archives contained documentary evidence devoted exclusively to the musical box. This had been compiled by Pierre Germain, a Belgian, who spent his entire career at CERN in Geneva. He

had intended it for a book that ultimately never saw the light of day.

Jean-Marc Cerutti obtained a copy of Germain's work that included a folder titled 'Alder'. It consists of just three small sheets: a copy of a legal document dated 1876 and two advertising inserts, plus a few handwritten notes by Pierre Germain. What can we learn from them?

The 1876 document, Fig.1, is the deed of registration

held in the Registry of the Geneva Commercial Court of the dissolution of the de facto partnership formed between Ferdinand Alder, mechanic, and David Rivenc Paquet, hairspring manufacturer. Rivenc was appointed liquidator of the said business who released its assets and paid the due amounts to each of the parties after the business accounts were finally settled.

Ferdinand Alder was born in Küssnacht (Canton of Zurich) around 1827, the son of Gaspard Alder and Anne Fierz. He married Cléophélie Isler in Geneva on April 25, 1854. They had at least two sons.

David Rivenc, born around 1828 was the son of Louis Rivenc and Françoise Allier. He married Louise Paquet on July 4, 1855, in Plainpalais (Geneva). David Rivenc is not the father of another Rivenc called Ami Rivenc but is there a family connection?

Both were active in Geneva around 1860-1880. Ami took over Greiner's activity around 1869. Both HAV Bulleid and Arthur Cunliffe thought that this date could be pushed back a few years by placing production by Ami from serial numbers 14,000 and not 19,000 as Bulleid had estimated.

Fig.1 is a copy of this almost illegible document. At the top right is a small line of text at an angle: David = father of Ami. The document is signed near the bottom: Ferd Alder Rivenc David in elaborate script. Beneath the signatures is further hand-written text stating that the document was registered in Geneva on the 8th November 1876 plus some details of the registration number and the settlement, countersigned by a name thought to be Morari

Fig.2 is one of two known advertisements, this one dated 1878. It mentions receiving an 'Honorable Mention' at the 1878 Paris World's Fair and participation in the earlier 1867 Paris and 1873 Vienna exhibitions, as well as two Silver Medal awards. Ferdinand Alder presents himself as a mechanic, manufacturer of machines and tools for watchmaking, jewelry, and musical instruments. This is followed by a fairly detailed description of the various types of machine tools he is capable of supplying. The advert does not give his address.



Fig.3

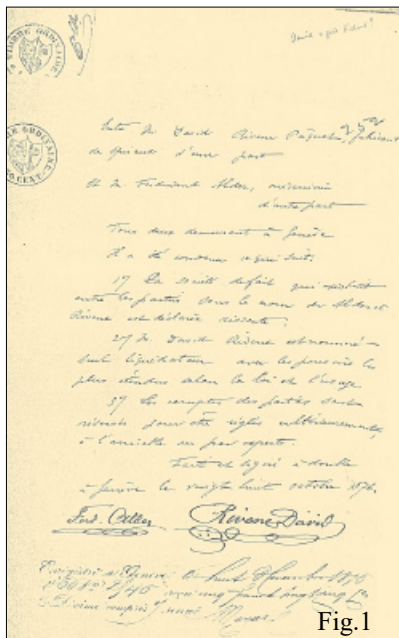


Fig.1

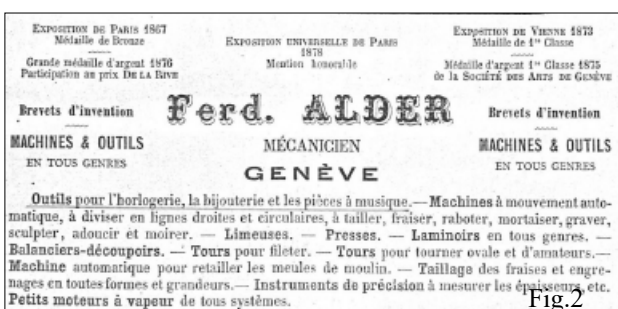


Fig.2



Fig.3.
Is for
the
other

advertisement, published in the Swiss Horological Journal of July 1892. It shows that at that time the business was carried out with the help of his sons. It mentions the founding date of the business as 1854, the date of his marriage and, no doubt, his move to Geneva. Again, there is no address.

In another Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce (FOSC) of April 16, 1891, Ferdinand Alder is listed as the head of Maison Ferdinand Alder; type of business: mechanic; workshops located at 3, rue de la Pépinière.

Fig.4 shows the case of the Alder musical Box.

Fig.5 shows the layout of the lever-wind movement. The bedplate is stamped with the serial number 1135.

Fig.6 is a close-up of the comb stamped in small capital letters ALDER. The cartel movement is wedged into the case that is virtually the same size as the bedplate making little room for the winding lever. This detail still reflects the influence of an earlier period when cartel movements had side-wound key wind spring motors. Subsequently, the extra room for both the lever and the controls led to slightly larger cases.

The case measures 49 x 20 x 13 cms and is scumble finished. The lid has bird marquetry. There is an interior glass protection over the entire movement, including the levers. The interior is ox-blood red. Red. The only hint of luxury in this case is found in the beautiful marquetry on the lid. There is no tune sheet for the 12 tunes pinned at two tunes per turn.

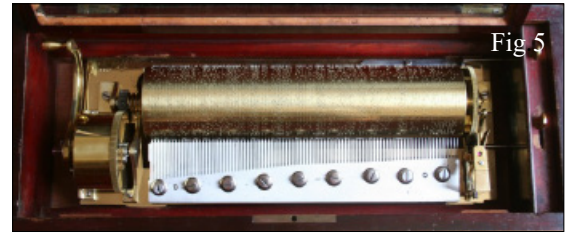
According to a classification proposed by Etienne Blyelle this is a third-period type of cartel movement clock described as follows:-

- Smooth cast iron bedplate with three integral feet, spring barrel on the left, governor on the right. The spring barrel is secured from below. Stop-start and repeat levers are on the right. There is no instant-stop lever.
- Brass cylinder measuring 28 cm and with a diameter of 7 cm.
- One-piece 104-note comb positioned by two visible studs and secured with nine screws with washers. 'Alder' mark located between the 5th and 6th screws.

Comments: I date this cartel between 1860 and 1870; identifying the tunes would help to refine this data. While the mechanical construction of the cartel follows good manufacturing practices, the maker's choice to build a two-tune cartel but using only a cylinder of medium diameter was aimed to produce a more economical musical box model.

At the same time, Nicole Frères also produced large numbers of two-tune music boxes but with cylinders with a diameter of 8 cm. Each Alder tune lasts 50 seconds compared to 60 seconds for Nicole Frères. The musical arrangement of the tunes is adequate but without any particular refinement. The comb sounds rather harsh; listening is more pleasant with the lid closed than with it open.

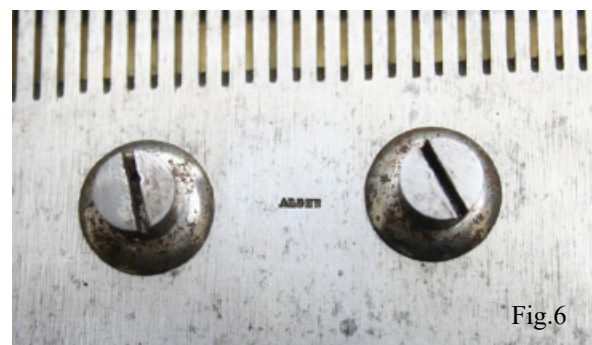
Etienne Blyelle used a phrase of his own that has stuck in my mind: What I only see once in fifty years is 'ultra rare'. I do not yet have that much experience as a collector, so I asked the Seewen Museum, renowned for its vast collection of cartels, including some fairly rare signatures. I also contacted Arthur Cunliffe who maintains the music box register; it has now surpassed the milestone of 10,000 recorded cartels.



Alder is not present in the museum's current collection, nor is he listed in the Arthur's register.

The serial number '1135' should not lead us to believe that such a large number of cartels were produced. Numbering most likely began at 1000. I can reasonably say that Alder's output must not have been a great commercial success, and that he did not pursue this diversification of his core business for very long.

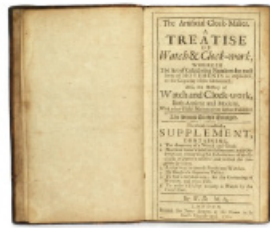
Stamping a name on a comb offers a fairly reliable guarantee of authenticity since it must be affixed before the comb is tempered. It cannot be affixed after tempering, otherwise it risks damaging both stamp and comb. In fact, the comb first hardened and then tempered would still be relatively brittle.



Did Alder pursue his activity alone or in partnership? Did the dissolution document mentioned at the beginning of the article relate to this specific activity? These questions remain unanswered for the time being.

Names and numbers on musical boxes and their movements were usually those of manufacturers such as Nicole Frères, Ducommun-Girod, Henri Méttert, etc. One must also consider that some movements may have been over-stamped by others such as Malignon, Alliez and Berguer, etc., who were probably agents rather than makers. I have also seen, unfortunately, 'modern' overprints crudely affixed with the sole aim of misleading an unskilled buyer.

Making of Quarters and Chimes (The Artificial Clock-Maker by Revd. William Derham M.A., 2nd Edition, 1700.)



Introduction by David Evans

Clock movements simply struck the hour until the latter part of the eighteenth century, when chiming movements first began to be built into the clock cabinets. Early models were actually copies of famous clock towers and church and cathedral bell towers. Some even had 12 or more bells and played 7 different melodies, one for each day of the week. During the nineteenth century, the large and cumbersome bells were gradually replaced by long hollow tubes mounted in the rear of the cabinet. Even today, the popular melodies chiming out from modern “grandfather clocks” are produced by hammers striking tubular bells or gong rods. On each quarter hour, they play either a variation or a small part of the melody, while on the hour they play the full melody and then strike the hour.

Tubular bells are long, hollow copper or chrome cylinders. They hang at the rear inside the clock in descending order of length from left to right. For example, the world’s most famous chimes, the Westminster chimes have tubular bells. They strike four notes and therefore need four different lengths of tubular bell for the chime, plus a fifth to strike the hour.

Gong rods are shorter, solid rods of cast iron. They are firmly fixed into place and take up much less space. They produce a more subdued chime than that of tubular bells, especially when compared to those made from chrome.

The siting of a clock will also influence the sound of its chimes. The same chimes will sound quite different on a hard floor of ceramic tiles than in a room with carpets and upholstery. Soft flooring material and furnishings absorb and soften the sound, while a hard floor has the advantage of making it easier to stand the clock level. There were a number of popular chime arrangements listed as follows:

Westminster Chimes

The world’s most famous chimes are still a popular favourite. Originally derived from Handel’s Messiah, they were first fitted to the University Church clock of St. Mary’s the Great in Cambridge, England. Via their association with Big Ben in the Victoria Clock Tower

of London’s Houses of Parliament, their fame has spread worldwide.

Whittington Chimes

These owe their renown to the legend of Dick Whittington, “Thrice Lord Mayor of London town”. An early 17th century play tells the story of a young penniless boy who leaves his master’s home with only his cat for company. Fortunately, the cat proves an excellent mouse catcher, earning the money which lays the foundation for Dick’s fame and fortune in later years. These chimes once rang out from the church of St. Mary le Bow in London’s Cheapside, and a Londoner was only a true cockney if he or she was born within the sound of Bow Bells.

St. Michaels Chimes

St. Michael’s chimes have a long and exciting history. Cast in London, they could first be heard ringing out in 1764 from the steeple of St. Michael’s church in Charleston, South Carolina. When the British occupied Charleston in the time of the American Revolution, the bells were returned home to the old continent. After the war, they were bought and taken back to Charleston by an American merchant. After the discovery of serious cracks in 1823, they were sent back across the ocean for recasting. During the American Civil War they were moved to Columbia for safekeeping, only to be destroyed in a fire. Fragments of the bells were found and sent back to London, where they were recast in the original moulds. On 21st March 1867, back in America at last, the eight bells rang out the joyous refrain “Home again, Home again from a foreign land.

Winchester Chimes

These lovely chimes were named from the Winchester Cathedral in which they were first played. The Norman conquerors of England did not like the fantastic cathedral chimes of the Saxons, so Bishop Walkilin, a kinsman of William the Conqueror, demolished and rebuilt the Winchester chimes in 1093. The cathedral’s central tower fell in 1107 but soon was rebuilt. This edifice forms a substantial part of the present cathedral, located in Hampshire, England.

Transcript from Making of Quarters and Chimes by Revd. William Derham M.A.

The Reader will expect that I should say somewhat concerning Quarters and Chimes: but because there is little, but what is purely mechanical in it, I shall say the less, and leave the Reader to his own invention,

The Quarters are generally a distinct part from the Clock part, which striketh the Hour.

The Striking-Wheel may be the First, Second, or etc Wheel according to your Clock's continuance. Unto which Wheel you may fix the Pinion of Report.

The Locking-wheel must be divided (as other Locking-Wheels,) into 4, 8 or more unequal parts, so as to strike the Quarter, and lock at the first Notch; the half-hour, and lock at the second Notch, &c. And in doing this, you may make it to chime the Quarters, or strike them upon two Bells, or more.

'Tis usual for the Pin-wheel, or the Locking-wheel, to unlock the Hour-part in these Clocks; which is easily done by some jogg or latch, at the end of the last Quarter, to lift up the Detents of the Hour-part.

If you would have your Clock strike the Hour, at the Half hour, as well as whole Hour, you must make the Locking wheel of the Hour part double, i.e. it must have two Notches of a sort, to strike 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. twice apiece.

As for Chimes, I need say nothing of the Lifting-pieces and Detents, to lock and unlock; nor of the Wheels to bridle the motion of the Barrel. Only you are to observe, that the Barrel must be as long in turning round, as you are in Singing the Tune it is to play. As for the Chime-Barrel, it may be made up of certain Barrs, that run athwart it, with a convenient number of holes Punched in them, to put in the Pins, that are to draw each Hammer. By this means you may change the Tune, without changing the Barrel. This is the way of the Royal Exchange Clock in London, and of others. In this case, the pins or nuts which draw the Hammers must hang down from the Bar, some more, some less, and: some stand upright in the Bar; the reason whereof is, to play the time of the Tune rightly. For the distance of each of these Bars, may be a Semi-brief, or &c. of which hereafter.

But the most usual way is, to have the Pins that draw the Hammers, fixed on the Barrel. For the placing of which Pins you may make use of the Musical Notes, or proceed by way of Changes on Bells, viz 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. The first being far the better way, I shall speak of that chiefly, especially because the latter will fall in to be explained with it.

And first, you are to observe what is the Compass of your Tune, or how many Notes of Bells there are from the highest to the lowest: and accordingly, you must divide your Barrel from end to end. Thus in the examples following, each of those Tunes are 8 notes in compass; and accordingly the Barrel is divided 8 into parts, These Divisions are struck round the Barrel, opposite to which are the Hammer-tails.

I speak here, as if there was only one Hammer to each Bell, that the Reader may more clearly apprehend what I am explaining. But when two Notes of the same found come together in a Tune, there must be two Hammers to that Bell, to strike it. So that if in all the Tunes you intend to Chime, of 8 notes compass, there should happen be such double notes on every Bell instead of 8, you must have 16 Hammers: and accordingly you must divide your Barrel, and strike 16 strokes round it opposite to each Hammer-tail. Thus much for dividing your Barrel from end to end.

In the next place, you are to divide it (round about) into as many divisions, as there are musical Barrs, Semi-briefs, Minums, &c. in your Tune. Thus the 100th Psalm-tune hath 20 Semi-briefs; the Song-tune following, hath 24 Barrs of triple time: and accordingly their Barrels are divided. Each division therefore of the 100th Psalm Barrel is a Semibrief, and of the song-tune 'tis three crotchets. And therefore the intermediate Spaces serve for the shorter notes: as, one third of a division, is a Crochet, in the Song tune. One half a division, is a Minum and one quarter, a Crochet, in the Psalm tune. Thus the first note in the 100th Psalm, is a Semibrief, and accordingly on the Barrel, 'tis a whole division from 5 to 5. The second is a Minum and therefore 6 is but a half a division from 5; and so of the rest. And so also for the Song tune, which is shorter time: the two first notes being Quavers, are distant from one another, and from the third pin, but half a third part of one of the divisions. But the next pins (of the bell 3, 3) being Crotchets, are distant so many third parts of a division. And the next Pin (of the bell 1) being a Minum, is distant from the following pin (4) two thirds of a division.

From what hath been said, you may conceive the surface of a chime-barrel be represented in the Tables following, as stretcheth out at length: or (to speak plainer,) that if you wrap either these Tables round a Barrel, the Dots in the Table, will shew the places of the Pins to be set on the Barrel.

You may observe in the Tables, that from the end of each Table to the beginning, is the distance of two, or near two divisions: which is for a Pause, between the end of the Tune, and its beginning to Chime again,

I need not say, that the Dots running about the Tables, are the places of the Pins that play the Tune.

If you would have your Chimes complete indeed, you ought to have a set of Bells, to the Gamut notes; so as that each Bell having the true sound of Sol, La, Mi, Fa, you may play any Tune, with its Flats and Sharps. Nay, you may by these means, play both the Bass and Treble, with one barrel.

If anything going before appears gibberish, I can't help it, unless I should here teach the skill of Music too.

As to setting a Tune upon the Chime barrel from the number of Bells, viz, 1, 2, 3, 4, I shall here give you a specimen thereof.

Such Command o're my Fate, in numbers.

775, 3, 3, 1, 4, 5, 6, 4, 4, 2.

4, 3, 2, 3, 4, 6, 3, 5, 7, 7, 7.

5, 6, 8, 8, 4, 4, 4; 3, 5, 4.

6, 5, 7, 5, 3; 41, 3, 5, 5, 5.

3, 3, 1, 3, 5. 554, 2, 4, 6.

4, 3; 23, 3; 53, 5, 7, 7, 7.

Note: In these numbers, a Comma [,] signifies the note before it, to be a Crotchet. A prick'd Comma or Semi-colon [;] denoteth a prick'd Crotchet. And a period [.] is a Minum. Where no punctuation is, those Notes are Quavers.

I shall only add further, that by setting the Names of your Bells at the head of any Tune (as is done in the Tables before) you may easily transfer that Tune, to your Chime-barrel, without any great skill in Musick. But observe, that each line in the Musick is three notes distant; i.e. there is a Note between each line, as well as upon it: as is manifest by inspecting the Tables.

Comments by Paul Bellamy:-

This article by David Evans, based on the work of the Revd. Derham is of historical significance. Fig. 1 is a musical score that accompanied the article. It shows how the conventional musical score was reconstructed into a grid for pinning onto a barrel of a chiming clock. It is entitled 'Such Command O're (over) my Fate', an early religious song or hymn.

The notes are crotchet, quavers, minims, etc, written on a standard 5-line stave at the ends of which are numbers 1-8, depicting the 'white' notes of a piano keyboard.

The actual pitch would be a matter of choice. Also, pinned barrels cannot always be programmed to play the intended duration of each note. For organ clocks this is achieved by the use of pinned bridges that enable air flow to reeds and pipes to be sustained. For chiming clocks with such musical arrangements seven pins in succession are required to repeat the strike in order to simulate a longer note.

It is easy to see how the transition was made from the use of a pinned cylinder to play the chimes and music of a musical clock to a pinned cylinder plating the tunes steel teeth of a musical comb.

Antoine Favre-Salomon (1734-1820) was a Swiss watchmaker. In 1796, he produced a pocket watch with an embedded musical mechanism. This has been recognised as the first "comb" music box. One of his surviving music boxes has been displayed at the Shanghai Gallery of Antique Music Boxes and Automata in Pudong's Oriental Art Centre, now in the Reuge museum in Kyoto, Japan.

Favre is credited with the 'invention' of the cylinder musical box. It was not really an invention so much as an adaptation of existing technology that enable him to make miniaturise musical movements small enough to be out into other items such as signet rings. His innovation led to the production of larger cylinders and longer combs for use in musical clocks. François Lecoultre was probably the first to do so. His movements were musically very sophisticated with a huge range of scale sometime in excess of four octaves. His movements quickly lead to a demand for 'stand-alone' musical boxes as an alternative to their use in 'chiming' clocks.

Movements of the type made by François were called 'cartel' movements, probably because they were made for the Swiss clock and watch makers (Cartel means an association of manufactures). His movements did not have his name or a serial number but are uniquely distinguished by the grid pattern scored on the cylinder surface, similar to Fig. 1. Much nonsense has been written about this pattern which is often incorrectly described as 'rigid notation' or 'a squares pattern'. Fig. 1 should be a clue to the original purpose: peripheral lines are the track lines for each cylinder pin. Horizontal lines are merely guidelines to the peripheral spacing of pins. They were nothing to do with the 'the number of beats to the bar.')

The late HAV Bulleid held this view and suggested that use of the lines became redundant because the pinning and pricking devices used for musical boxes were so accurate that manual spacing became redundant. Bulleid thought that François became quickly aware of this but

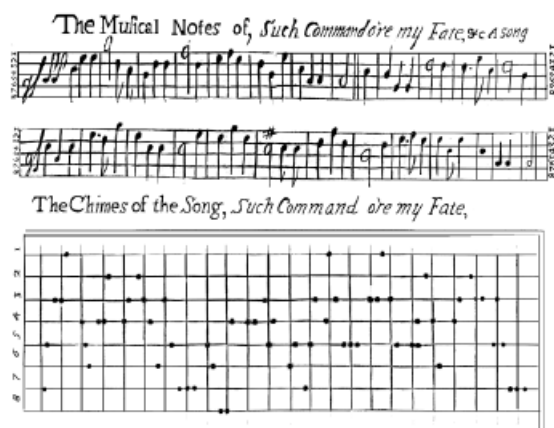


Fig. 1 The conventional musical score was reconstructed into a grid for pinning onto a barrel

Musical Box Agents. Berens Blumberg of London and their association with the Lecoultres by Paul Bellamy

This article is the second in the series about musical box agents.

The first was published in Issue 39 of Mechanical Music World. Its introduction is also applicable to all agents in the series.

Otto Adolphus Victor Alexander Berens (1797-1860) was born in Riga the capital city of Latvia when it was part of Prussia. It was one of the largest cities in the Balkan states. Its population was mainly Prussian German and the official language was German.

Tsar Peter the Great attacked the city in 1710 at a time when it was suffering from an epidemic of plague, which also ravaged much of Europe at the time. It remained under the control of Russia but retained a large degree of autonomy and the economy flourished.

Otto's family prospered but he later emigrated to London in 1827 for reasons that are unclear. However, London was the capital city of world trade in those times and the capital of the British Empire. He established himself as a draper and seller of fancy goods at St. Paul's Churchyard, London. Drapers were sellers of cloth. In those days it was deemed to be a highly skilled profession.

He entered into partnership with Ludwig Alexander Blumberg (1803-1857) as Berens Blumberg & Co. but the exact date has not been recorded. Evidence below

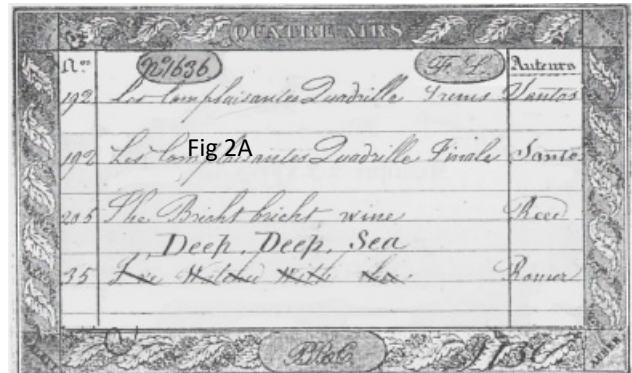


(see Figs. 2A & 2B) indicate it was circa 1836. The partnership may have been formed soon after he went to London in 1827. This strongly suggests that Ludwig Blumberg was a fellow countryman.

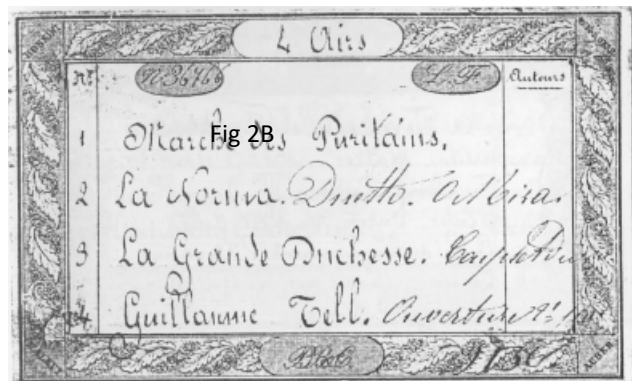
The partnership then moved to 2-6 Cannon Street London in the 1850s. The premises were in a very prestigious building designed by William Hoskins. He was Professor of Architecture at Kings College London, a structural engineer and Town Planner.

Otto married Charlotte Busby, a much younger woman. Unfortunately, she suffered from depression, became an alcoholic and died in 1857. The following year he married another, much younger, woman called Louisa Cooke but they only had about 18 months together before he died.

His mausoleum is a Grade II listed monument, designed by Sir Edward Middleton Barry, the son of Charles Barry who also designed the Palace of Westminster known as The Houses of Parliament.



Otto became a very successful and wealthy businessman



who sold high quality goods to wealthy people including musical boxes. An account can be found on the internet under the heading 'The London Dead, Otto Berens'.



Fig. 1 shows his initials BB&C^{ie} stamped on the brass

bedplate of a movement serial number 21119, circa 1847. Note that he used 'Cie', the French version of 'Co'. The tune sheet was missing; the comb had 104 teeth and was not stamped with a name.

Fig. 2A is Bulleid's tune sheet 62 for François Lecoultre



Fig 3B

serial 10920, circa 1836. It carries the initials FL. Fig. 2B is for an almost identical pattern for Bulleid 17 serial

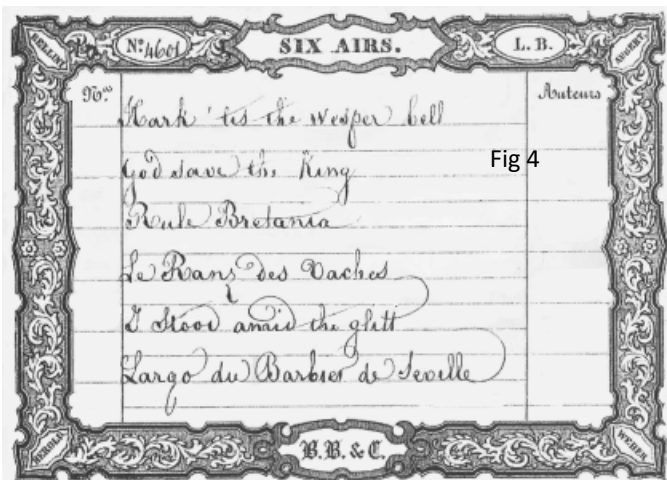


Fig 4

36766, circa 1868 but the cartouche has the letters LF for Lecoultre Frères.

Otto Berens died in 1860 so this seems to indicate that



Fig 5A

the company continued after his death. The 1836 example pre-dates the BB&C agency.

The use of this tune sheet lasted at least 26 years, probably to the end of the

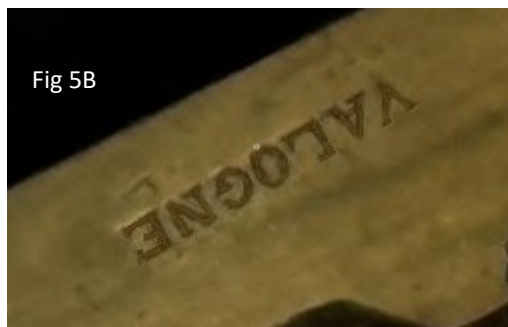


Fig 5B

Lecoultre-Bréchet (this was François Charles Lecoultre) era, which ended about 1871. François Charles was succeeded by his son Charles François in 1865. Bulleid also noted that this pattern of tune sheet used by this branch of the Lecoultre family (i.e. excluding the cousins, brothers David and Henri-Joseph) sometimes did not use the right side column, headed 'Auteurs', for composers.

Fig. 3A is for Bulleid's 63. It is an entirely different pattern for an F. Lecoultre serial 11484, circa 1836. The tune sheet was pre-printed for 3 airs but with a hand

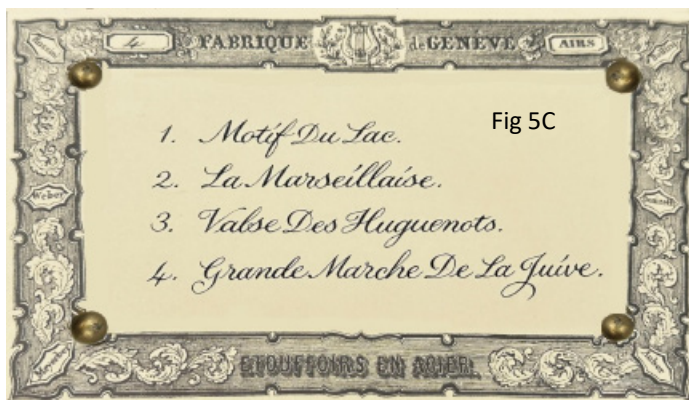


Fig 5C

written deletion by overwriting 'trois' (i.e. 3) with Quat (i.e. for quatre, 4). Overture moments were considered to be very prestigious and many early movements were programmed for just three airs. The pre-printed



Fig 6

fancy pattern suggests that the tune sheet design was a collaboration between Berens Blumberg and

François Charles just a few years after the agency was

established.

The same pattern for F. Lecoultre (Bulleid 228) serial



29254, circa 1857 was used for a 12-air movement, 21 years later. Technology had advanced and this one was for a 2-per-turn lever-wind movement with large diameter cylinder (diameter not given).

The same pattern (Bulleid's 181) was for



Lecoultre & Bréchet serial 258763, circa 1841.

Bulleid's 180 for a Lecoultre & Bréchet serial 24093, circa 1851. This is another fancy pattern some 15 years later than Fig. 4 used about the time Berens & Blumberg moved to their very prestigious offices on Cannon Street, Fig. A.

A 4-Air movement with a standard 13 inch cylinder but serial number not recorded. Fig. 5B shows the name Vallone stamped upside down and without an adjacent serial. This is the same movement as shown in Part 1 of these articles about musical box agents. It is possibly the only known example that connects Lecoultre & Bréchet with both agencies, BB&C + Valogne. The date is uncertain but possibly about the same as the following example Fig. 6, circa 1849.

Fig. 5C shows the tune sheet with the terms ETOUFOIRS EN ACIER (Comb dampers made of steel) and the fact that the movement was made in

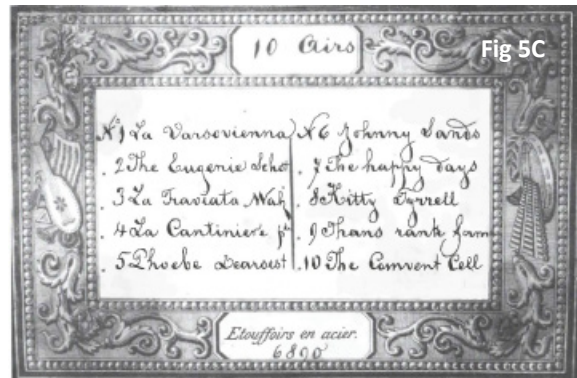
Switzerland. Although not stated, this is certain to be either the Lecoultre Bréchet partnership or for F. Lecoultre.

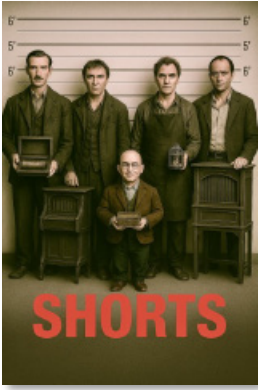
This is for an 8-Air key-wind movement with a standard 13-inch cylinder serial 21985, circa 1849. Although not shown the movement was stamped LB for the Lecoultre Bréchet partnership. The tune sheet was missing.

A 4-Air key-wind movement with a standard cylinder. The comb has about 90+ teeth, serial unknown. The tune sheet pattern is the same as Fig. 2B. The exact date is uncertain but was for the Lecoultre Bréchet partnership.

A 6-air key-wind movement with 104 comb teeth, serial unknown. The tune sheet was in very poor and faded condition but is the same pattern as Fig. 4, so assumed to be about the same date, circa 1850.

The second part of the Berens Blumberg article will be continued in Issue 42 of Mechanical Music World.





Just a handful of short articles to close out this issue.

A smoking automaton

by Paul Bellamy

In Issue 8 of Mechanical Music World, Spring 2017, we published an article about the late Lyn Wright and his fascination with automata. He made several models

to demonstrate their mechanisms, made some of his own and restored them for others. The article illustrated several of his demonstration models that showed how the simple mechanisms worked. He called each one Fred the Head and Ted Brown now has custody of them. They are still used to demonstrate the mechanisms and they remain a source of entertainment.

Hobbyists can have great fun in making their own automata. We frequently publish articles on the subject, whether of the musical or non-musical type. In our recent Issue 28, I showed how Timberkits' models could be adapted and coupled together to make a musical automaton.

Those made by the great automata masters such as *Jacquet Droz, Leopold, Lambert, Rouillet et Decamps, Henri Maillardet, Vichi, Lambert and Phalibois* will be out of most collectors reach but go onto the Internet and see what is available for home construction from kits of parts. The modern small manivelles (hand cranked musical movements with punched card music) are ideal and can be adapted to drive the mechanism and play music.



Fig. 1

One of the best museums for musical and non-musical automata as well as the finest examples of watches is the Patek Philippe Museum in Geneva, Switzerland. It is no wonder that Geneva became the capital of the musical box makers, overtaken by Saint Croix towards the end of the 1800s.

Even the smaller novelty automata can be very expensive.

One very fine early example of a non-musical smoking automaton was used to entertain patrons of a Viennese coffee house. It was an oriental figure, now in the

Austria Tabak GmbH/JTI Tobacco Collection of Vienna. The image is their copyright but freely available to view on the web, Fig. 1.

Most of the Fred the Head models, like the scarecrow, *Worzel Gummidge* of children's TV fame, had several different heads. Quite wisely, none of Lynn's models smoked or drank except for one that is explained as follows.

Fred The Smoker consist of a single bellows that sucks in air through one vent when opened out and expels it through another when forced closed. Fig. 2

shows Fred the Smoker's head and its hand-cranked bellows as constructed by Lynn.

The bellows consists of two same-shaped oblong pieces of wood joined at one narrow end with a cloth hinge. With jaws opened about one inch, the pair are covered by thin airtight material such as leather or rubberised cloth. Ordinary cloth can be used if sealed.

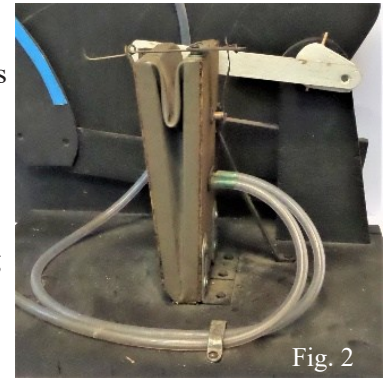


Fig. 2

This type of bellows, sometimes called an air-motor, was in common use for musical instruments such as mechanical pianos and organs. The motor could expand to actuate the hammer of a piano. It could also be closed to operate an air valve. Some had springs across the two wooden parts to create greater air pressure or vacuum because both pressure and vacuum were used as power sources. Assisted by springs, pressure and suction could be elevated and regulated. They were also used to give a rapid open-and-closed response.

Fred needed neither. A simple wooden lever connected to a crank merely pulled the bellows apart to suck and pushed them together again to blow. One of the two pieces of wood had a suction hole covered by a flap of thin card or very thin leather on the inside

of the bellows. The flap was glued at one end and held closed by a single thin wire anchored at one end with the other slightly curved away at the tip but resting on the flap valve.

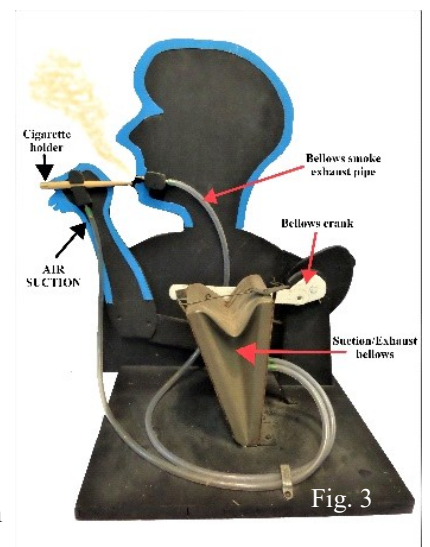


Fig. 3



Fig.4

When the bellows opened, internal suction opened the flap allowing air to enter; when closed, the spring and air pressure held the flap closed but allowed it to escape via another hole and identical flap valve on the outside of the bellows.

Smoker Fred has a cigarette holder near his mouth, connected by a tube to the suction part of the bellows. With cigarette fitted in the holder (not shown) and ignited, the bellows draws air to make it glow and to suck in

smoke. Half a turn later the bellows pushes the smoky air through a tube connected to the bellows' exit valve and to the mouth. Fred happily puffs away as the handle is turned. Fig. 3 shows the bellows and crank in the closed position.

The crank can also be used to operate the arm holding the cigarette. Another lever connected to a pivoted arm could be used to move the cigarette to and from the mouth. Fig. 4 shows a rather fine smoking figure that has a moving arm as part of the smoking action.

A hobbyist can easily convert a toy, inflammable of course, to create a custom built automaton. It does not take much imagination to see how the crank can be adapted to operate a modern manivelle.



NOT A MUSICAL MOVEMENT..... but something very similar.

By Juliet Fynes



Stamp Mill at Gevorg Tin Mine Museum, Penzance

When I came across this picture I was struck by the resemblance to a small, cheap, cylinder movement with a handful of square-ended teeth, plucked by bumps on the barrel. Two machines with such different purposes; the one a tiny spring-operated mechanism to produce music, the other a big industrial machine to crush rock.

Mining of copper and tin in Cornwall can be traced back many centuries. By the time of the Roman Conquest in 43AD Cornish tin was already being traded internationally. Demand steadily increased and reached its peak by the mid 1800s when Cornwall was the world's largest producer of tin, with over 2000 mines at one point. The discovery of copper and tin elsewhere in the world soon led to foreign competition, with a rapid collapse in the price which meant that copper mining ceased by the end of century, with tin mining steadily declining into the twentieth century.

Reminders of this lost industry are seen in the evocative abandoned engine houses dotted about the Cornish landscape. Apart from the few museums they are all that remain above ground to mark the vast underground workings, some extending far out to sea. They also act as a memorial to the generations of miners who toiled in cramped and dangerous conditions to provide the raw materials for industry and eke out a livelihood for themselves.

The job of the miners was to hack out lumps of ore-bearing rock, which were then transported to the surface. The first stage in the processing was to break down these lumps into smaller pieces. This was sometimes done manually but the process was mechanized and able to cope with large quantities of rock more quickly by the use of a stamp mill. These were known from earliest times and worked by dropping a heavy weight on to the rock. Cornish stamp mills were developed around 1850. The stamp was constructed from heavy timber with an iron "head" at the bottom. It was lifted by cams on a rotating axle, and fell on the ore and water mixture, fed into a box beneath. The heads normally weighed between 4 and 8 cwt each, and were usually arranged in sets of four in timber frames. Small stamps were commonly powered by water wheels and larger ones by steam engines. The waste was washed away leaving the heavier ore, which then went on to the smelting and refining processes. The rock so laboriously mined would have contained at best around one percent tin.



Franz Rzebitschek 2/82 Cartel by Bernard Novell

With Brexit tariffs and the cost of shipping I don't usually buy from auction houses in Europe or even elsewhere these days. However, when I spotted Rzebitschek and Olbrich music boxes for auction in Prague I decided that I would bid for one of them as there was a gap in my collection that one would fill nicely. They were both of a similar size but the Rzebitschek appealed to me most as it played the Radetzky Waltz by Johanne Strauss the Elder and another unidentified, but equally lovely, tune.

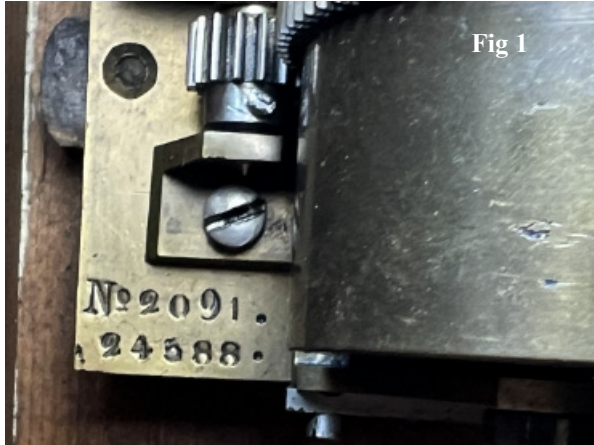


Fig 1

The auction estimate was in Czech Korona, which looked a bit scary at first, but then I realised that 10



Fig 2

CZK was just 35p. I put in my modest bid and

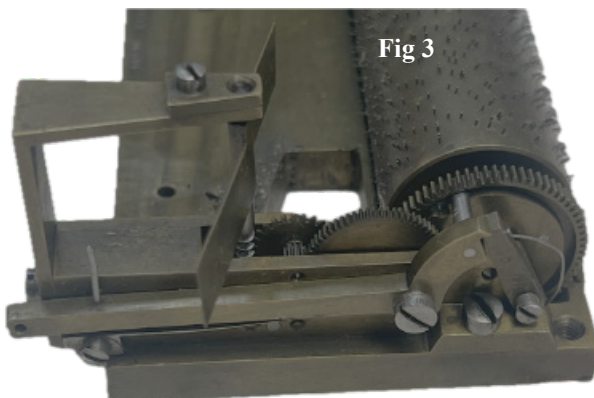


Fig 3

waited. Surprisingly, I won, and then the extras were added, including shipping. Of course there was

customs duty to pay on top of that. Not a cheap box by any means but definitely worth buying.

The bedplate is stamped back left with the Gamme No. 2091 and the serial No. 24588. (Fig 1) This dates the mechanism to around 1854.

Fig 4



It is also stamped RZEBITSCHEK PRAG in front of the comb. The comb is stamped in the centre with



Fig 5

RZEBITSCHEK IN PRAG and there is a number 5 stamped bottom left. (Fig 2)

Although grubby and oily, the movement appeared to be in good overall condition with no apparent damage or missing parts. I noted that that the design of some parts differed from Swiss made boxes, in particular the comb has the treble notes on the left and bass on the right. The governor fan blades are large in proportion. The change/repeat mechanism is fixed and cannot be changed without removing the mechanism from the box. The start/stop mechanism is released by a pull cord, a spin off from the design for a musical clock, which means that the movement stops at the end of each tune unless the cord is kept taught. (Fig 3)

I decided to make an immediate start on cleaning and so it was dismantled straight away. All the brass



Fig 6

components, other than the cylinder, were immersed in Horolene and left for 24 hours. The steel parts, other than the comb, were given an ultrasonic bath with a degreaser additive, rinsed, dried and polished. The cylinder was sealed, cleaned with Wrights Brass Polish and polished with Autosol. The brass parts were rinsed, dried and polished with Wrights. The comb was very lightly abraded to remove dirt and rust. Reassembly was straightforward with each bearing being lightly lubricated with clock oil then some final testing to ensure the mechanism ran smoothly before adding the comb. (Fig 4)

The plain, dare I say cheap, pine case was quite dirty and just a little battered. There was a faint cartouche transfer on the top of the lid and another inside the lid. The outer one disappeared when I applied a mild cleaner – not much of a loss I decided. The inner one I left intact. (Fig 7)

Two opposite corners of the bottom section had gaps where the quadrant had split. (Fig 5) I removed both quadrants and replaced them with new, using recycled wood, glueing and cramping them overnight to ensure a sound repair. The handmade single screw hinges, screws and hook catch were cleaned and polished. The box was then given a couple of coats of clear wax polish to preserve the patina. (Fig 6) I wish they were all that simple!

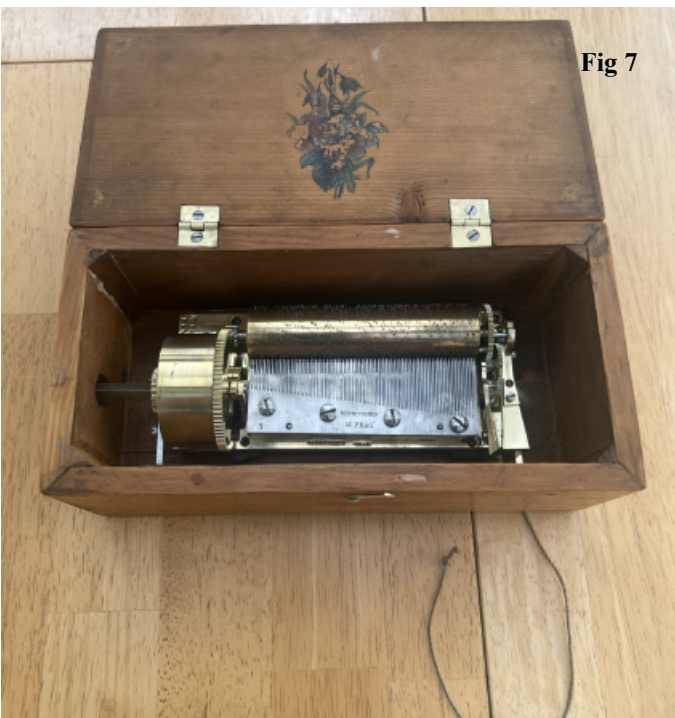


Fig 7

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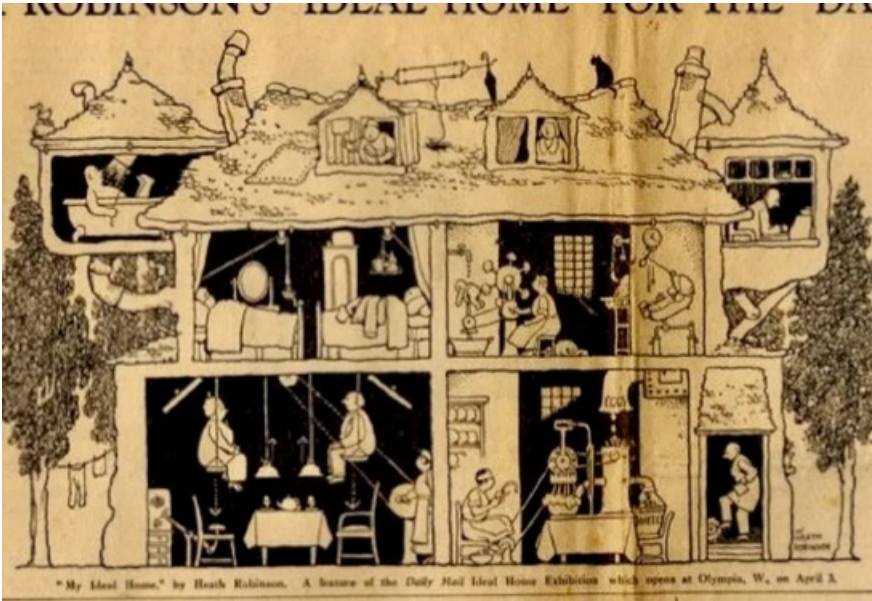
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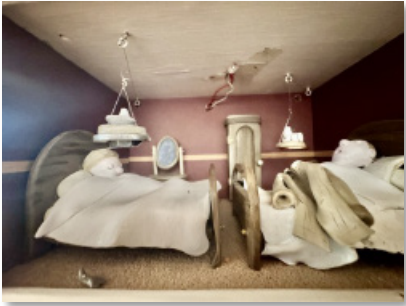
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