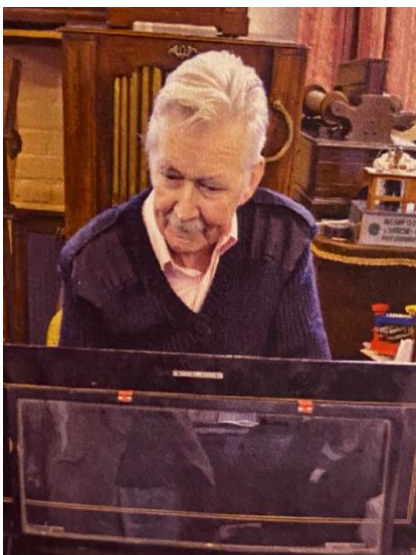


Mechanical Music World Issue 1

From the Editor's Desk

The editors, David and Lesley Evans, introduced the new Mechanical Music World magazine. The envisioned scope encompasses musical boxes of all shapes and sizes whether containing tuned teeth, pipes, strings or anything else inside them. Our collection of Fisher Price musical toys from the 1970's as well as Christmas novelties and giant fairground organs all have a place within the umbrella.



Chairman's report

Ted Brown introduced himself as the chairman of the new association. He outlined the wealth of knowledge on the history, restoration and repair of the instruments that existed within the membership. He noted that the hobby and fun elements had always been part of our interest and enjoyment. We would therefore accommodate on equal terms both the serious collector and those who get satisfaction and enjoyment from the hobby and musical side. Music has always been at the heart of entertainment. The musical box is only a part of a genre encompassed by the words "mechanical music" but is in fact a time capsule with its' own unique place in history.

Foundation Day Meeting

22nd February 2015 and the Chairman welcomed the attendees to the Foundation meeting of AMBC. He indicated that the heirs to past books and articles had generously given AMBC both copy and unrestricted access to their work. Ted also asked the attendees to approve the draft Constitution for 12 to 18 months, this was granted. The Constitution is set out in the magazine.

Useful hints from a Century ago

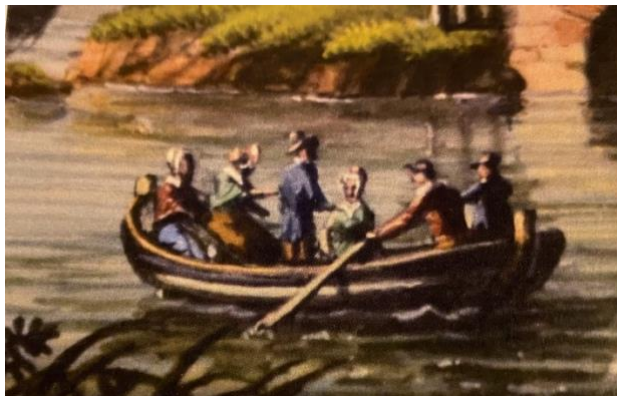
An amusing selection of hints from the past which are not well used today, including how to loosen rusted screws, prevent glass from cracking and the use of Nitrite of Amyl.

A Light-hearted collection by Juliet Fynes Juliet described how she began her specialised collection. She tells how she attended a talk by Ted at The Milton Keynes museum on 'musical novelties' or 'Nicky-Nackies' as he called them. Seeing them sat side-by-side with serious music boxes in Ted's collection, gave them an air of respectability and the urge to collect them herself. These included boxes with inlaid figures, birds or mythical beasts which she was able to pick up in Charity shops or Flea markets. Other purchases include musical movements inside ceramic items such as jugs or mugs. Juliet continues giving details of her collection fully illustrated with photographs taken by Chris, all presented in a light-hearted manner.



Snuffboxes by Chris Fynes

This very informative article from Chris presents a detailed examination of musical snuff boxes. It includes Chris's photographs of the minute scenes painted on the top and a discussion on their significance. Historical details of the artist Delaye are also included. The



second part of the article is continued in issue 2 of Mechanical Music World.

Extract: "It may be apocryphal that snuffboxes, particularly the composition variety, were used for snuff, because there is little physical sign of snuff being present in surviving examples. For the earlier ones, in their fine cases of gilded silver, gold, tortoiseshell and finely decorated surfaces, it is most likely

that many will have contained snuff but the disadvantage may have been the rather large-sized snuff compartment ideal perhaps for offering to one's friends but not so appropriate for personal use. When makers supplied the much cheaper musical tabatières with composition cases, they would have been rather clumsy to transport and the key, if kept in the snuff compartment (there was nowhere else to put it) would inevitably introduce the dusty snuff into the works when winding. More of a pepper mill than a snuffbox! Thus the general consensus seems to be that they were rarely used for the habit and were basically miniature musical boxes of the cylinder kind. There was another type of movements used for snuffboxes called the *sur plateau*. This comprises a disc pinned on either one or both sides."

The Magical Little Manivelle Part 1

Manivelles, French for handle, are not only children's toys but also for the discerning ear and souvenirs.

Extract: "The Manivelle has many advantages particularly its simplicity and hence low production cost. No batteries, no need for a governor yet the speed can be varied to suit

Fast, slow, accelerando and rallentando. The brass cylinders were usually well made and were very skilfully pinned. Most had just one or two tunes per cylinder, even six on rare occasions! Combs typically consisted of between 18 and 36/40 teeth”

All about names Part 1 (Continued in MMW Issue 2)

One of the innovations in the development of the cylinder music box was the spring damper and the lead weight. The damper allowed notes to be repeated and the weight permitted a greater scalar range. The article goes on to describe mandolin effects with incredible detail.

Extract: “Although most of the unidentified *Super Mandolin* musical boxes have no identification marks on their movement, one musical box had a tune sheet marked E&APf, for Eugene & Ami Paillard, the f may have been for *fecit* i.e. ‘he/she made it’ but more probably for frères.”

Farewell to the Revelstoke Nickelodeon

David Evans talks about his time at Revelstoke, British Columbia, Canada. The article contains a plethora of amusing anecdotes about the thousands of visitors to his Nickelodeon and mechanical music collection, illustrated with photographs.

Extract: “I had been quite apprehensive about our first coach party – we were after all very new to the entertainment business – and a party of thirty-plus American seniors were booked in. Oh my goodness! they were seniors too. Walkers, wheelchairs and sticks everywhere. Of course they fell under the spell of the music and in the last half hour of their visit they found the jukeboxes and they danced. Oh how they danced!”



An introduction to automata by the late Lyn Wright



Lyn’s article describes the late Lyn Wright’s fascination with automata and an example called Fred the Head.

Extract: “In later issues of this periodical, the Publications Committee will address the subject of automata. An automaton is closely related to the musical box, to clocks & watches, organs, etc. The mechanisms mostly derive from those of ancient times including ‘dancing fountains’, public and religious clocks, as well as for scientific use as in the orrery and other similar machines. Just as the watch and clockmaker’s art reached a peak in mechanical ingenuity and presentation, it did so almost in parallel with the development of automata and thus easily translated into the era of the musical box. It continues today. Cheap ‘dancing doll’ novelties, whether spring or electric motor operated, are direct descendants. They can still be highly entertaining as well as extremely annoying when the target of amusement is the child who insists on playing repeatedly some of the ghastly modern ‘musical’ examples. These are the ‘Mr. Magoo’ examples, designed, one suspects, to annoy. We hope our survey will cast another light upon this huge topic, providing interest and practical examples to today’s hobbyist, like Lyn. There are many examples hidden amongst the collecting fraternity. The most sophisticated of historic examples have been described many times and are well beyond the means of most but little attention has been paid except by just a few of the musical box fraternity.”

So you want to buy an organette? By Ted Brown

Ted's article considers a number of questions that you should ask yourself before purchasing an organette:-

Do you want it for your collection or occasional playing?

Will you be happy with the condition of the case?

Are you prepared to deal with possible wood worm in the case?

Does it have a supply of music rolls or disks?

If so does it play well?

Does it have enough puff?

These and many other key questions are posed and guidance given, invaluable before you get your wallet out

