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Organ Day Meeting June 4th June 2017

It was Ted's first chairman's report and he reiterated his feelings on mechanical music, stating that age, rarity or value should not be the primary criteria for buying an instrument. They are musical and should be bought for their music. Over the last few months he had restored several children's musical boxes and a modern Swiss Chalet, all of which had memories of the owners' or their parents' childhood and had much more than monetary value to their owners. He mentioned that over the years he has obtained spare parts from makers like Thorens, Reuge and Gueissaz, most of which are unused and if any members needed any 'bits' they should give him a call. He would be happy to help out and keep the music playing.



After the AGM the members' meeting continued with the planned organ day of various instruments. Paul Baker gave Paul Bellamy a present for his pending 81st birthday a few days hence. He demonstrated the well-preserved Meloto-cased original piano roll by the composer Ketelbey, called The Clock and The Dresden Figures, on Ted's player piano. It was well over ten years ago when Paul first heard the music but had been unable to obtain a copy of this rare example. The meeting was particularly indebted to Paul Baker, Norman Dicker and Anna Svenson, for bringing and playing a wide variety of instruments on a warm and sunny June day.

The article continues to describe these instruments and the events of a very enjoyable day.

NoTulips – Many Cheeses by Anna and Invar Svenson



The article describes Anna and Invar's interesting visit to the Speelklok museum of mechanical music in Utrecht, Holland. After a guided tour downstairs they viewed the Upstairs Gallery. This area covers well over a third of the collection. Although they were a bit disappointed that it was not possible to hear the instruments, nor even a recording of any of them. The only exhibit which could be heard on this floor was a turret clock dated c1550-1600 with a carillon which had been added at a

later date. On the first Wednesday of each month the museum offered a tour of their workshops so it was lucky that Anna and Ingvar were there on such an occasion. They entered the main part of the old church which was filled with a lot of wood, organ parts and 'stuff' as well as other musical instruments in various states of repair. There were two main repairing areas, one on one side for the wood repairs and the one on the other side for horology and repairs to metal work. They then took the downstairs tour of the museum and saw and heard many of the instruments in action ranging from a beautiful organ clock to a rabbit in a cabbage made in France between 1911 and 1915. The couple really enjoyed their visit spending over four and a half hours there!



Film Shoot at the Old School by Ted Brown



Ted began:- "I don't usually have anything to do with television camera crews, but I received a call from an independent company called Nutopia, who informed me that they were doing a short film for the USA History Channel on McTammany, the very underrated inventor of organettes, improvements to the player piano etc. It is apparently coming out on 28th May or thereabouts to coincide with Independence Day. It should be titled 'Land of the Free,' or 'Land of the Brave'. McTammany is featured as he was a Scot who emigrated to the USA and after working on agricultural machinery and getting no recognition for ideas for improvement, he left and, being a proficient musician he taught piano and subsequently was instrumental in the invention of the organette. It will probably take two or three more weeks to get the museum and school canteen back to some semblance of order now that the crew have gone. It is surprising what a state you can get in when ten

crew members, cameras, lamps, microphones and a smoke machine are all in action. The day went well and now at least we have more information out there about mechanical music. If you have an interest in J McTammany, Merrit Gally or the Monroe Reed Organ Co. etc, or organettes in general, get a copy of Kevin McElhone's 'The Organette Book'. It has a section on organette restoration and lists almost all known instruments and their makers. If you can't find one online or from the author, I have a couple of copies here."

Musical Boxes with Bells by Paul Bellamy

It is an established fact that there are more Nicole Frères musical boxes recorded than any other maker. Paul attempted to analyse the private register, owned by Arthur Cunliffe, by concentrating on those made by Nicole. Although about 10,000 surviving musical boxes have been recorded so far, it is a very small proportion of the ones made. Nevertheless, there is sufficient number on record to assess when various types of musical boxes came into or went out of fashion. Paul made the assumption that Nicole was either leading or following fashion. This article is just another area of study about cylinder musical boxes with accoutrements such as drums, bells and castanets, all favourite additions at some time in the history of the cylinder musical box...

An Unusual Glockenspiel

A good friend of the author's set him a little challenge which he describes in this article. The only information on this interesting instrument, shown below is the German patent mark DRGM 275345 and he was given the task of finding out more from this meagre information.



He discovered that the initials stand for Deutsches Reichsgebrauchsmuster, a registration system introduced in 1891 and used until 1952. It was also known as a Utility Model, a 'poor people's patent' which was more limited than a full patent, cheaper and quicker to obtain, and only gave protection for three years. He came across a list of some of these DRGM numbers, but 275345 was not among them. After following a few more dead ends, some useful information was eventually obtained, the application date was the 3rd of March 1906 and the applicant was the "Leipziger Musikwerke Euphonika". This instrument was exhibited at the autumn Leipzig Trade Fair that same year. The description was given as; a "Mechanical Chime on which the bells are arranged on an axle at right angles to the upright stand". This rare instrument uses a

serrated edge metal disc drive with twelve concentric rings of holes. Each ring aligns with a lever and one of twelve bells. As the disc rotates a spring-loaded lever drops into a hole and the other end strikes the bell. The edge of the disc engages with a small drive cog mounted on the shaft of the spring motor. Speed of rotation is crudely controlled by a large air-vane. A simple hinged pressure bar holds the disc in place. The Euphonika Music Works of Leipzig were founded in 1895 and went bankrupt in 1910. They were known for the manufacture of organettes, in particular the "Amorette". The range of Amorette organettes included 16, 19, 24 and 36 reed instruments in table models and upright forms. They also produced a selection of toys, mostly based on the 16 note organette, in model hotels, watermills and children's wheelbarrows. Some of these models included dancing and spinning couples at the front. There was a version combining the Amorette with the Glockenspiel, the twelve bells being mounted horizontally, six to either side of the cabinet below the disc

Yesteryear Coronation 1953

This article considers how major world events impacted on the manufacture of automatic or, self-playing musical instruments. The popular domestic player piano/pianola peaked production about 1924 and it was a downward slope from then on due to several factors. The US stock market crashed in 1929, virtually wiping out the market for these instruments. In 1931 the Aeolian Company bought out the American Piano Company and sold off their assets to raise money for investment. One of these, the huge piano manufacturing company in the UK in Hayes was closed and sold to the Gramophone Company. On the plus side the souvenir industry had a boost by Queen Elizabeth's Coronation with items that were made to mark the occasion. Among one of its delightful pieces shown was a musical teapot in the form of the coronation coach, it is fitted with a small Reuge movement



Two Heads are better than One by David Evans

The Duophone was the brainchild of Charles Leslie Newland of Eltham, South-East London, and was manufactured for only a few years around 1923. Not only did it have twin conveyances or tubes on the tone arm, it also had two

soundboxes, one connected to each tube. The two diaphragms were each connected via a fulcrum bar to a common needle holder. The two mica diaphragms were of different thickness and operated by stylus bars of different lengths, the general idea being that one soundbox responded better to bass notes and the other to treble ones. The resulting pressure waves were united at the base of the tone arm, where it mounted to the motor board and the horn. The whole thing is described in detail in British Patent No. 11715 of 1921 (also known as British Patent no. 187,258, which number is stamped into the tone arm of our machine). Duophone machines have another odd feature a knob on the outside, on the front, in the middle, on the top rail of the cabinet just below the lid front. Pressing it when the music stops applies a brake to the turntable and lifts the sound boxes



off the record, so that no damage can occur. Charles Newland seemed particularly proud of this, claiming in fifteen pages of British Patent No. 6792 of 1921 (BP 185,142) that not only did it 'reduce to a minimum the liability of injury, owing to inattention, to a record and to the reproducer when the end of the record has been reached, and whereby the instrument can be easily and quickly stopped, all without the necessity of opening the cabinet or case of the instrument, of lifting the reproducer by hand, or of other operations common with the

instruments now in use', but also 'the instrument cannot be started by unauthorised persons until said cabinet or case is opened for the purpose of using the instrument'

A Mandoline Snuff Box by M Bordier by Chris Fynes

The picture shows a three-air musical snuffbox stamped M. Bordier on the comb. Ord-Hume describes him as a Geneva maker of small musical movements working around 1815-30 period. The lid has a gilded impressed brass plate of a religious scene headed with the inscription 'L' Entrée de Jesus dans Jerusalem' and is signed 'Morel F.' Another snuffbox in my collection has a similar stamped plate with a scene of the Last Supper also signed 'Morel F.' The same name can also be found on the impressed scenes of later composition snuffboxes. Chris continue his article with further details of this Bordier musical box.

