

Mechanical Music World Issue 2



Organ Grinder Meeting

On June 6th 2015 AMC Ted Brown hosted an organ grinder at the Old House and there were a great selection on display. A non-organ interloper is shown on the cover of the magazine, in the shape of a barrel piano, the article includes a fascinating insight into its history. Other organs brought along and played by their owners were:-

- A fine Chiappa three rank barrel organ
- An Alan Pell 31 note street organ
- A 26 key Street Harmonium
- A Jim Balchin 20 note, 31-pipe street organettes
- A Van Doreen 22-note pipe organ
- A Jägermeister and Brommer Busker organ
- A Melodia 14-note paper-as-valve organette



Spring Outing

Juliet Fynes describes how a group of AMBC members visited the London Museum of Water and Steam in Brentford. The Georgian architecture of the building, built in 1836 was worth the visit alone, but there was much more to see here, not least the demonstration of the massive Edward Bull engine. After the tour the group moved on to visit the Mechanical Music museum only a short distance away. Full of photographs from the visit, the article describes the contents of a number of galleries which included an Imhotep and Muckle Orchestrion and a Chickering Grand piano amongst many others.

Snuff boxes a Review Part 2

In the continuing history of musical snuff boxes (Part 1 was in MMW issue 1) Part 2 considers the Aubert movement. Illustrated with a number of photographs the article covers the history and details of these snuff boxes.

The Apache Dance



Edward Murray-Harvey tells us how his reminiscences of the past were triggered by listening to the tunes of Offenbach played on a Concert organ. He tells us of his highly personal memories of war-torn Britain.

Extract: "My mind goes back more than seventy years, to the forties of the last century. It was a different world from today. Especially was it strange to a youngster of eight years who had been used to the peaceful life of Brazil, and who suddenly found himself in wartime Britain. But there were times even in

Britain one could forget the War, if only for a short time."



Musical Mugs

Ted Brown tells us of his collection of mugs that have battery operated musical movements, activated by a light sensitive panel in the base. Although the batteries last a surprisingly long time they do ultimately fail. In this article Ted describes the intricate step by step process of how to remove and replace batteries when they eventually give up the ghost.

All about Names Part 2

Over the years many different names have been used to describe musical boxes this article explains some of them.

Extract: "Movements with four motors are almost certainly *Longue Marche*. Two spring motors in tandem are coupled in parallel to an identical pair. The winding handle has a spur gear that engages with both barrels in each tandem pair, therefore they rotate in opposite directions to each other". "The Plerodienique type of movement was one of a number of designs devised to achieve a long-playing time. The term should not be confused with *Longue Marche* even though the movement may also be of this type. Its invention is attributed to Albert Jeanrenaud and it was assigned to M. J Paillard in New York under US patent 266,826 on 31st October 1882, Fig. 1. Comparable patents were also assigned to Paillard in Ste Croix. It is a very complex machine comprising two cylinders on a common shaft. Each has a stepped snail cam that moves the cylinder in the same manner as for a tune change but they do not change position in unison. First one stops and changes position whilst the other continues to rotate, and vice versa, repeated for as many steps as machined on their snail cams, usually between 6 and 8. Hence a very long continuous composition.

The music arranger ensured that there was no break in the performance by spreading the tune between the two cylinders so that there is no interruption in play when either of them moves in its tune gap. The cylinders are spaced apart, the gap covered by a cylindrical sleeve that gives the appearance of a single cylinder."

A Late Georgian English Barrel Piano

The Christie's South Kensington auction catalogue for their sale on December 18th 1986 included Lot 107, described as a "weight-driven barrel piano in an upright ebony-strung mahogany case with fretted cloth panel and six eight-air barrels in wood cases – 67 inches high, circa 1840".

This article describes this purchase and interesting details about it.

Extract: "A little research revealed that the same instrument features in Siegfried Wendel's little book 'The Mechanical Music Cabinet' (published in Dortmund, Germany in 1984) on Page 43. The illustration is the same photograph used by Christie's to illustrate their sale catalogue. Wendel describes it thus 'Instrument makers also built mechanical pianos for use in the salons of rich people, and their appearances mirrored the furniture styles of the period. The maker of this piano is still unknown to us. There are six spirally pinned barrels with it, the driving force is provided by a suspended weight.'" A print by George Cruikshank is an illustration for Charles Dickens' work and shows the piano in the background.



Book Review by Jeremiah Ryder

Figures in the Fourth Dimension, Mechanical Movements for Puppets and Automata by Ellen S Rixford. ISBN 978-0-578-15865-5

It is not an inexpensive book (\$80) but if you are curious about the study of simple-to-complex animation mechanisms, or even inclined to try your hand at creating or repairing magical, moving, animated figures, this should be an invaluable, even inspirational – tour de force.