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Musical Bracket Clock by Robert Rossellini, Liverpool by David Evans

David describes this fine clock:- “By this fine mahogany musical bracket clock (see front cover) stands 40" tall on its turntable base, so arranged that the clock can be easily rotated to see the back without having to lift it. The twelve-tune movement plays on twelve bells arranged across the top of the movement and played from a pinned barrel. The clock was made Thwaites and Reed of London in 1801, the name Robert Roskell, Liverpool, seen on the dial being the retailer. Thwaites and Reed tended to act as a trade supplier, making clocks for many of the "famous" makers of the mid 18th Century to the end of the 19th Century. The firm was established in 1740 and still is a business to this day. Amongst the many famous they supplied are Vulliamy, Ellicott, Dutton, Moore, Elliotts and many more.” …..

AMBC Petworth meeting reviewed

An intrepid group of members braved storm Dennis to visit Petworth for this 'show and tell' meeting. Notably Paul Tucker drove all the way from Swindon, bringing with him an exquisitely restored early exposed-control cylinder musical box. (1). Stamped on the bedplate were the names 'Golay et F Lecoultre' and the serial no. 5476 (2). Paul dated the movement to about 1829. It had a sectional comb in groups of five, adding up to 96 teeth altogether. This remarkable box played a fine selection of four pieces from Rossini's 'William Tell' including the overture 'March of the Swiss soldiers'. The newly made case was formed out of figured fruitwood in correct period style (3). Over coffee and cake two of Juliet's collection of composition snuff boxes were passed around. Both dated from around 1835 and were somewhat smaller, with metal hinges and of blacker material than the later snuff boxes with Laurencekirk hinges. One had a view of Milan and played two beautiful, but unidentified, tunes on a 68-note sectional comb. The other was decorated in a dainty Regency style design with a floral cartouche. Rather unusually it still bore its tune sheet identifying two patriotic French airs, together with the London retailer’s label.
Tony Waddell then demonstrated another stunning cylinder box. It was a Langdorff, serial no 9899, dating to about 1857 (4). The movement was in perfect original condition with no repairs to comb or teeth. The lid was rosewood veneered with boxwood inlay and banding (5). The ratchet-wound movement had 125 teeth with a 33 x 5.5cm cylinder, playing 12 airs at 2 per turn on a slow turning cylinder. In order to achieve this speed, the reduction ratio of the governor is set higher than usual.

The tunesheet lists a fine repertoire of tunes (6), including a mix of Italian opera, waltzes and dance tunes by Verdi, Donizetti, Hoklenberg, Gung and Labitzky.

Next up was Anna Svenson with her Peerless Pneumatic Organ (7) which she had meticulously restored. The lid bore a label for John G Murdoch & Co., London, retailers, wholesalers and import agents. It was marketed as 'The Fairy Musician'. Amongst the tunes played was a lively Music Hall song, entitled "Mary Ann, I'll Tell Your Ma". No doubt very popular in its day, it told the story of the courtship of Mary Ann, who seems to have had quite a reputation……..

A 78 Revolution David Evans reviews the race to play records electrically

David begins his article:-"As most of us probably know, the disc gramophone was invented by Elüile Berliner, a German immigrant living in America, in 1887-1889. Berliner visited his home country in 1889 and by 1890 the German toy manufacturers Kämmer and Reinhardt had secured the rights to manufacture a toy version of the machine. The machine was hand wound by a crank handle. By 1894 Berliner in America was producing a similar machine for domestic consumption.

In 1897 Eldridge R Johnson of Camden, New Jersey, had developed a small but reliable clockwork motor for the gramophone, which transformed its performance. Also in 1897, William Barry Owen of the Berliner Gramophone Company arrived in England to promote sales of the new Johnson machine, and helped set up the Gramophone Company in 1898, with offices at 31 Maiden Lane, London. Meanwhile, after a bumpy legal ride. Johnson in America had incorporated the Victor Talking Machine Company on October 3rd 1901.

At this time of course all recordings were made acoustically. Basically, performers stood in front of a recording horn, the sounds mechanically vibrated a stylus that cut a modulated groove in a soft substrate to form the master recording from 1919, J P Maxfield and H C Harrison of the Bell Laboratories (part of American Telegraph & Telephone - AT&T)". David continues with more details of this interesting challenge and many photographs of the equipment.

Making of Quarters and Chimes William Dereham (writing in 1700) describes the process

"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 fecund 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."

A Simple Case by Christopher Fynes

Chris describes with detailed photographs his repair, restoration of a movement and installation in a contemporary period box.

"Here is a picture of an unrestored four-air Musical Clock-base recently purchased in the Rüdesheim Mart. It was shoddily mounted in a broken softwood case, unlikely to be original as depicted by the many holes used for attachment around the bedplate's edges. The start/stop did not work, the governor turned slowly and the movement was generally gummed-up with a lot of old oil, but on a musical note it showed promise".

Boxing Clever by David Soulsby

David began his treatise on automata donation boxes as follows:- "The collection box has been a longtime method of raising cash for deserving causes, whether shaken by helpers in church or by charity campaigners in the High street. Also most museums in the UK do not charge an entry fee and have to rely on the contributions from their patrons to supplement their limited budget. Fundraisers traditionally installed fixed Perspex boxes with slots, into which visitors could donate coins or notes. Some modified the methods by which money could be collected in order to attract people to part with their spare change. The Roll-a-Coin boxes or Money-spinners became very popular in reception areas and shopping malls. The coins dropped into a transparent dome, appear to defy gravity as they spiral around in a vortex eventually dropping into the collection dish at the bottom. The concept that the donor should enjoy their generosity in some small way has been promoted in the UK by the inclusion of automata with coin-op mechanisms. A number of these have been produced as one-off commissions by well-known automata artists and usually have amusing themes that celebrate a connection to their sponsoring establishments or good causes. Some are more successful than others in persuading customers to part with their money. They have higher initial investment and maintenance costs than plain Perspex boxes, but these can be outweighed by attracting more cash because of their popularity and increased usage.

I contacted five UK automata artists to find out more information on the collection boxes that they had designed and built and travelled to see some of them. Keith Newstead needs no introduction to enthusiasts: he has been building between 8 and 10 automata a year for over thirty years and is arguably the most prolific creator of collection boxes in the UK. He hails from Falmouth, Cornwall, birthplace of the Cabaret Mechanical Theatre and modern-day automata.

One of Keith's many boxes that I went to see is located at the Foundling Museum in Brunswick Square, London. Known as the Hallelujah box, it features two children sitting in a room, holding violins. They have a dog at their feet and the room exhibits a number of portraits hung on the wall behind them. Dropping in your donation causes the lights above the portraits to come on and the children to sway as they play their instruments. The sound they produce is a tortured rendition of Handel's Hallelujah

Chorus. (The museum includes an internationally acclaimed collection of material to Handel and his contemporaries). The people in two of the pictures above cover their ears at the noise, while the dog barks and howls. Finally, as the duet finishes the upper portrait figure pronounces with relief 'Oh-Hallelujah!'."

David continues to track down further boxes from Keith at Elstree Studios and Inverness, as well as others from Lucy Green, Tim Hunkin and Jan Zalud

Another Changeable Cylinder Prototype by Bill Wineburgh

Bill tells how he was inspired by David Evan's article in Issue 19 of MMW about the L 'Epée experimental changeable cylinder movement.

"The similarities to and differences from a musical box I recently restored are quite amazing and I would like to share them with you.

Jaccard / Cuendet / Abrahams Prototype. The piece I have has a grain painted case with transfer borders to look like inlayed wood trim and colour transfer decorations on the lid and front to look like inlays. The case design is quite like those by B H Abrahams, the London agent for Jules Cuendet. It has a late tune sheet with typewritten tune names for two of three changeable cylinders. The tune cards are the "terrace at right" as in Card #6 in HAV Bulleid's 'Tune Sheets' that is used by Jules Cuendet in his catalogue. The tune sheet is marked in the lower left "Lith. Picard-Lion Geneve" and "DEPOSEÉ" in the lower right. It has three changeable cylinders 13 inches in length and 2-1/8 inches in diameter. Two of the cylinders, which are numbered 60702 and 60712, have accompanying tune sheets. The third cylinder is numbered 60704 and has no accompanying tune sheet. The bedplate is forged with "Jaccard" on the underside and it has a lot of holes that have been filled in where it may have once been prepared to use for another set-up. The comb has 93 teeth (92 playing) and a gamme number on the bass lead is ' 1766', referring to the comb's tuning, and the comb base is marked to exclude the highest treble tooth"…….

A Black Forest barrel organ clock

The clock illustrated is a kind that was manufactured in some numbers in the Black Forest of south-west Germany adjacent to the French border. The largest town is Freiburg. The area was well-known for its cuckoo and trumpeter clocks since the early 18th Century and orchestrions in the 19th. Orde-Hume remarks "While *Flotenuhr* were made in large quantities around the period 1820-70, the organ mechanism itself was concentrated on to the exclusion of the clock, and was refined into a superb musical interpreter". This organ clock dates from about 1840. Its 36-key movement plays on 26 stopped pipes and 10 open ones, the rank being mitred to fit just below the hood. The mahogany case was probably made for it after the movement was shipped to America. The clock movement is a typical Black Forest design with wood plates, striking the hours upon a bell and sitting between the main frame plates of the organ. As can be seen, the two bass pipes are placed horizontally above the plates. The weight-driven drive train for the organ barrel is fitted with double-acting cranks that operate the feeders.

This clock has had a chequered career. Having been imported into America when new, it experienced the Northridge, California, earthquake of January 17th 1994. The quake killed sixty people and injured 9,000 in the Sylmar and Sherman Oaks areas of LA as well as causing severe widespread damage. The clock apparently fell over and was quite badly damaged, costing $7,000 to repair, according to a Los Angeles Times newspaper article of September 21st 1994. The dial, of alabaster, was shattered and a new one was made of thin marble, The French type enamel chapters are original. according to an appraisal carried out in 1988…..