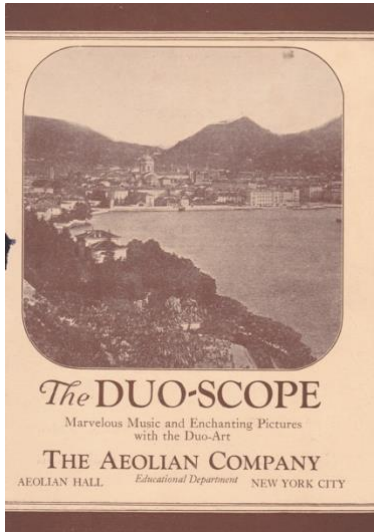


Chairman's report

Ted announced the next Chanctonbury meeting at the Old School for September 10th. He indicated that this would be primarily devoted to organs and organettes and asked members to bring along any of these that they would like to show.

He also mentioned the Mechanical Music Auction and Social Meet-up that Lawrence Fisher was holding in Eastbourne on October 28th. Full details of the event were included.

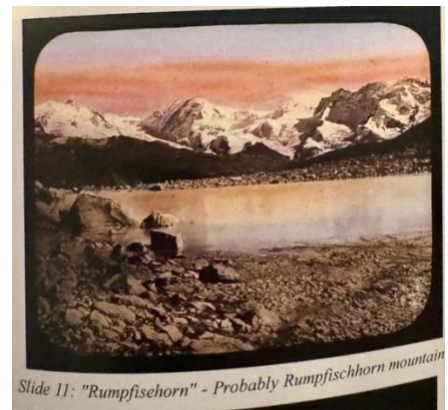
The Aeolian Duoscope by David Evans



The editors of MMW, wearing their other hats as editors of The Magic Lantern Gazette for the Magic Lantern society of USA and Canada, recently acquired the remaining stock and archive of the H P Riley/Riley optical Company of New York. Herbert Jowett Riley was the son of Joseph Riley of Bradford who founded the Riley Brothers magic lantern business in Bradford, Yorkshire, around 1887. Herbert J moved to New York with his family in 1894, including wife Minnie and their son Herbert Percival Riley (1891-1969), aged 3. Herbert J and H Percival after him managed the New York branch of the business, which lasted well into the 1950s.

Amongst the large archive, David found information about the Duo-Scope, a collaboration between the Aeolian Company and the Riley-Sloan Company to produce "Marvellous Music and Enchanting Pictures with the Duo-Art". This was basically an early form of semi-

automatic audio-visual entertainment. The article contains photos from the original brochure which includes ten Duo-Art rolls to be played on the instrument whilst suitably hand-tinted magic lantern slides were projected on a screen, big enough to impress the audience. A really interesting blast from the past!



The Hicks & Taylor Barrel Piano and Organ makers of Bristol

There has been some uncertainty about the family relationships and other details of the Bristol Barrel Piano and organ makers. This article, based on the research of Nicholas Nourse (Galpin Society journal 2014) and others, removes some of this uncertainty. It includes the histories of the various collaborators.

Excerpt: "Joseph Hicks senior was born in 1787 and baptised on the 13th April 1788 at St. James, Bristol, the son of Peter Hicks (cabinet maker) & Jerusha Hicks née Townsend. Her charming name, rarely used today, derives from the biblical story of Jurusha, the daughter of Zadoc the priest.



The church was built in the 1790s but fell into disrepair until renovated as a Grade 1 listed building, it is now used as a performance space for circus skills; no doubt Joseph would be pleased that it continues to entertain the public just as he did. Joseph married Maria Williams there on 28th February 1811. They had eight children including Maria, George, Joseph junior, and John Joseph (senior) also had a brother called John, but little is known about him.

Joseph was listed as an Organ Builder from 1815, and a manufacturer of portable pianofortes from 1842. He died in Bristol in 1844 and was buried on 31st January at St. Michael on the Mount. This Grade II listed building was bombed in the 'blitz' and then suffered severe fire damage. It is now in

private ownership and is intended to be another performing arts venue. Joseph seems to have had an artistic effect on both Saint James and Saint Michael fig. 2. An early Joseph Hicks barrel piano with automata, serial number 604 (see back cover). All 10 automata figures move and are surrounded on three sides by mirrors.

From Circuit boards to clockwork by David Soulsby

David recounts his recent holiday on the continent and his visit to two very different automata displays. The first at the French city of Blois in the Loire valley was in the “Maison de Magie” a museum celebrating the famous magician Eugène Robert-Hardin who is often credited as being “the father of modern magic”. The renowned American magician Ehrich Weiss was so fascinated by the French man that he created the now famous stage name Harry Houdini as tribute.



The museum is in a classic building built in 1856 and a massive automata in the shape of a six headed golden dragon emerges through the outer windows every half hour. The article shows several photos of the dragon and describes the features of its construction by Michell and Jean-Pierre Hartmann. The article next describes the somewhat older automata in the Baud museum located at L'Auberson in Switzerland and again features a host of photos of this celebrated collection.

A late little musical box or the story of an opera buff by Paul Bellamy

Paul tells us that although the cylinder musical box industry was in gradual decline towards the end of the 1800s there was still a market for small, decorative, musical boxes. The disc musical box had not yet dominated the market and the era of the phonograph and its musical home entertainment competitors, the gramophones, were yet to supersede the cylinder music box in popularity. The makers of Saint Croix mostly dominated the manufacture at this time and made some delightful instruments that can enhance a collection even today. Paul continues to describe one example of these. The entire case is covered in beautifully figured burr walnut veneer, a most untypical finish to a musical box case but completely original. That in itself makes it an attractive possession. The lid has an intricate decal, a form of transfer based on silver foil that is also an interesting feature. The tune sheet indicates the following:- “When the robin nest (sic) again, Merry War, Iolanthe Trio and Dona Juanita Waltz”. The article continues with fascinating details and photos of the box.



The Tournaphone Organette

Probably the largest of the 'paper-as-a-valve' organettes, this American 25-note monster plays 13" wide rolls which can be up to 80 feet or so long. Made by the Tournaphone Music Company of Worcester, Massachusetts around the earlier 1880s, they have an unkind (to the roll paper) method of feeding from the top of the supply roll and attaching it to the underside of the take-up spool, thus flexing the paper in the opposite direction. This results in most original rolls being badly damaged. A number of these instruments were exported to UK, where they were badged as Cabinettos. This example is of the slightly later type with a separate knob to select play or rewind. There is a spill valve which is activated by the rewind knob to prevent the instrument from playing in reverse, and it is also operated by the reservoir in the unlikely event of it spilling whilst playing. The instrument illustrated is marked as serial no. 449 on its blue maker's label. More information is available in 'The Organette Book' by Kevin McElhone.