

### **September Meeting at The Old School**

Ted devoted the morning meeting to presentations on Musical toys. Most of us can remember our children owning Fisher-Price toys in the 1960's, 70's and 80's. There are F-P collector's clubs, especially in the USA, but in the mechanical music world we have been slow to recognise the collecting potential. Prices are already on the rise, and if you have an interest in these toys, now is a good time to start a collection. In the afternoon Ted gave a talk (the first in a series) on the large family of organettes produced during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

*Extract: "I take my own advice, for although I have a number of the older F-P musical toys I have not tried to collect more recent ones, or taken much interest in Tomy. The Thomas Tank Engines and pianos playing interchangeable discs made by Tomy, and their cassette players, are now firmly on my 'Must look for list'."*



### **MBSI Presentation**

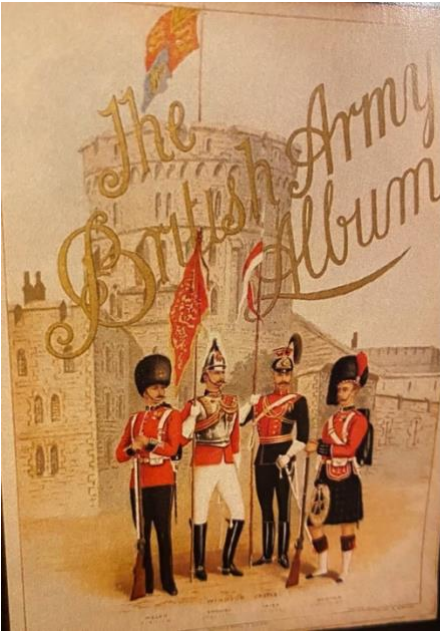
MBSI President Judy Calietti presented AMBC Vice-Chairman Paul Bellamy with the Q David Bowers Literary award for 2016 at the Society's AGM in Minneapolis. The award celebrated Paul's major work "The Music-makers of Switzerland" in 2015.

### **Visit to Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre**

The AMBC visit to Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre was a great success. The weather was, for a change, warm and sunny and it was a delight to be in the open air. The Amberley management was very accommodating and we in turn provided a full day of musical entertainment. Barrel pianos, organs and smaller instruments such as organettes were there to entertain. Keith and Richard drew the crowds to their vantage point opposite the village green, where there were small children's traditional fairground rides. The showman in charge of this gave them a break from time to time by playing his Decap Jazz organ. Ted Brown was ensconced in the net "Hayloft" lecture room, where he gave several demonstrations and talks on musical boxes. was also a good recruiting base for members who were clearly interested enough to want to join AMBC, and a number of our new little booklets were sold.

### **Looking at Photograph Albums**

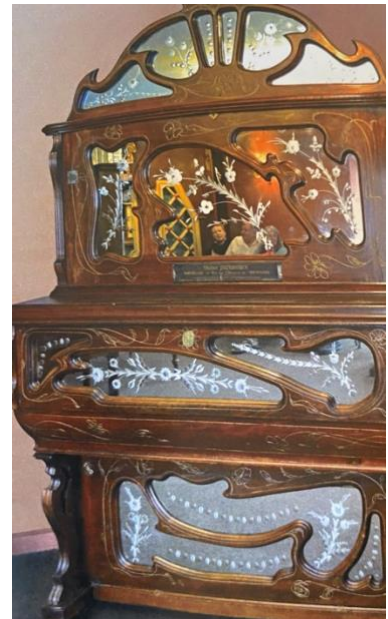
*Extract:* “The style of most European albums followed the conventional book form, with a decorated cover and pages with apertures of several sizes to receive the owner’s photographs. Often the inside pages were illustrated lithographed images on a particular theme or subject, such as the Gladstone album (Figs 3,4) the fly-leaf of which is marked 'Designed & printed in England, bound in Germany, Entd Stat Hall 17/6/92 No. 13887' and with the initials J.G.M. & Co Ltd. Stationers' Hall was, of course, where the register of copyrights was maintained. Another example (Fig 5), also with a gold-tooled brown leather front, is simply marked 'Manufactured in Germany. A further example, presumably made in Germany, but not marked as such, has a deeply carved Black Forest style wood front cover (Fig 6) depicting deer in a forest. Inside, several of the photograph apertures have pencilled annotations with the names of the subjects in the original images (Fig 7) One such is 'Baron von Knesebeck, Prime Minister of the King of Hanover' (Fig 8), which he wasn't.”



### **AMBC Visit to Suffolk**

AMBC members visited locations in Suffolk first to see the “Sounds from the Past” housed in an old chapel in Monks Eleigh village. They were hosted by Paul Goodchild, founder of the collection. It comprises old radios, televisions, record players and gramophones no longer wanted by their owners. After enjoying their time there they moved on to the Moyses Hall Museum at Bury St.Edmunds to see the Gresham Parkington Clock collection. The next location was to the Grange collection of organs. Finally the trip concluded at the Cotton Mechanical Music collection. A splendid weekend by all account.

*Extract:* “All the instruments demonstrated had an interesting background and provenance. First up was a 1796 domestic barrel organ by William Ayton, purchased from the sad break-up of the Finchcocks collection. Perhaps the most impressive looking was a Belgian penny-in-the-slot barrel piano by Pasquale, in art nouveau style with engraved mirrors. Amongst others we heard a rare Lochmann barrel piano with a unique mechanical reiteration feature (mandolin effect), a Swedish table barrel piano (piano harpa) c1890 by Andersson, and a Lochmann disc musical box with eight nested tuned bells, not the normal tubular type often fitted in the Lochmann instruments. Our chairman also recognised a John Hicks barrel piano which had belonged to him some twenty years previously. I was particularly taken with the Paul Losche orchestrion because of the large animated picture with a waterfall and turning mill wheel.”



### **Yesteryear Railways, Escalators and Elevators** by Bill Mayle

*Extract:* In 1900, Eugene Paillard built a new factory in rue de l'Industrie, Saint-Croix, Switzerland making the Gloria improved interchangeable disc musical box as well as a phonographs. Both the Gloria and the phonographs were exhibited at the same 1900 Paris Exposition as the Seeberger-Otis escalator! He made the Gloria in partnership with an American engineer called Georges Varelmann under a patent by Eugene Tuner. Also in 1900 at the same exposition the Otis Elevator Company won first prize. The first elevator (i.e., lift in the UK) was at Harrods, London. The American Leamon Souder

patented a version in 1889 with another patent by Jesse W Reno in 1892 but it was Charles Seeberger's redesign in 1897 that made it a success as manufactured by Otis. There were not only elevators but also escalators, the moving staircases. The first one in the UK was installed at Maida Vale Underground station, London in about 1916. Reflecting on transport, whether by train, escalator or elevator, most of these innovations all occurred during the musical box era and were part of the Industrial Revolution. When the Liverpool to Manchester railway first opened to travellers in 1830 railway passengers had to apply 24 hours in advance to the Station Agent with their full name, address, place of birth, occupation and the reason for their intended journey! The Agent then had to satisfy himself (Yes it was a man!) that the applicant "desires to travel for a just and lawful cause". For unaccompanied women, this could be a daunting task. As trains were initially used for moving coal and industrial goods, people were transported by weight as if they were goods. Passenger numbers trebled between 1842 and 1850, doubled again in the 1850s and again in the 1860s. Rail travel, despite huge investment, was 50% cheaper and quicker than horse drawn coach. It changed the shorelines. Fishing villages became fashionable towns offering day trips and entertainment. The poor could travel third class. The rest travelled first class in social isolation."

### Who built my Musical Box?

Ted met the revered Anthony Bulleid in the early 1980s when he gave a talk at a Magic Circle headquarters meeting in London. He asked him about musical box makers and after some thought he



said the line between makers and their artisans was impossible to work out. With comb makers, cylinder makers, tune arrangers, gear, spring and bedplate makers, those pinning cylinders, etc., it would be no more than an educated guess as to who was the actual maker. The more Ted looked into this the more his words proved to be correct. Other than examining some early musical boxes such as tabatières (snuffboxes) as time progressed it sometimes becomes difficult to be absolutely certain as to the maker even when a name, initials or a logo is shown on a

tune sheet or the component parts. Tune sheets may tell us the distributor (agent). Stamped bedplates and combs may indicate the maker or sometimes the supplier of the component part. In this article. Ted considers the information available to attempt determine the actual makers of our musical boxes.

*Extract:* "Alliez & Bruguer were based in Geneva and classed as maker. The case of my box is square ended, typical of the French maker l'Epée. Anthony noticed that the 'dots' used to align comb teeth tips with a cylinder tune track (the punch marks located in the tune gap) were aligned with tune 1, the first tune pinned on the cylinder. This was typical Saint Croix practice. Few Geneva makers followed this practice and most pinned the last tune on these dots. My tune sheet is of very similar design to the one illustrated by Tony. The drop down ends of Tony's and my case are the same and the serial numbers are close. Anthony Bulleid was right when he identified those he considered to be the major makers of Geneva & the Joux Valley and Saint Croix. Over many years he assiduously gathered information in order to produce his dating charts. He examined hundreds of tune sheets. This work resulted in his book *Cylinder Musical Box Tune Sheets*, known as the *Tune Sheet Book*, which I had the privilege of co-operating with him and editing the book and its three supplements "

### Fascination of Box Lids Juliet Fynes

Juliet explains that because of constraints on space their collection only consists of cylinder boxes, and about half of them are miniature snuff-box type movements, or tabatières. The prize exhibit has a beautifully painted miniature on the lid and was featured in issue 1 of *Mechanical Music World*. Juliet

confesses to being more interested in the cases than in the movements, in particular the great variety of lid decoration. An illustrated selection is featured here.

**New Views and Tips**

How to remove the glass from a tabatière box, repairing lock damage and dealing with box shrinkage are some of the topics covered here.