

MECHANICALS MUSIC WORLD Issue 13 Summer 2018

AGM & Chairman's Report

April 29th Meeting Report

2nd BHI South Branch Open Day by Chris Fynes

Tyvand Collection Visit by David Evans

Musical Snuff Boxes by Chris Fynes

Tony Musical Toys by Juliet Fynes

Time to Pend a Penny by David Soulsby

The Organino by Ted Brown

The Melodion by David Evans

AGM & Chairman's Report

Well here we are at yet another AGM of AMBC. Our website and word-of-mouth continue to attract new members, both overseas and British. Sadly during the last year we have lost some of our most loyal members and need we need to enrol more from the south east to build on the nucleus of



"regulars" at the Chanctonbury Ring. I will continue trying to get our Surrey, Hampshire and Kent members to come to see what we get up to at these meetings. In September the British Horological Society will be visiting and I would like to arrange a workshop on disassembling a musical box, then demonstrating some repair and restoration techniques. I should like some of our members to attend to make the workshop worthwhile. If you have friends who you think might like to join us, let me know, they just need an interest in mechanical music. In return for just E12 per year they get four magazines and can attend four meetings, including lunch plus tea/coffee and biscuits. Can't be bad! You have probably worked out that I have a passion for mechanical music. This is partly because I can't play a note, but you can't hold a passion if you can't hear instruments play and see how they work. Holding meetings gives us a chance, as a group to share our enjoyment of the sounds of different instruments and gain an understanding of their intricacies.

Treasurer's report - the membership year runs from 1st March to the end of February of the following year. In line with the AMBC constitution, members had sight of the bank statement printouts. AMBC is the only UK registered international society covering the entire range of mechanical music, not registered as a business. It was established as an unincorporated members Association. Cash at the bank at the end of the financial year, February 28th 2018, had increased slightly on the previous year. Membership had also increased, requiring a step increase in the number of copies of the periodical Mechanical Music World. At the last 2017 AGM, Committee was granted but did not exercise the right to increase the subscription for the year 2018-2019. Although Committee have absorbed increased costs they asked for the right, if found to be necessary, to advise an increase in subscription for the membership year 2019-2020, capped at 10%. The proposal was accepted unanimously.....

AGM's are notoriously tedious, though a necessary formality for members' clubs, but we managed to get through the business quite quickly. Members present were pleased that the committee had

produced four interesting magazines, another little book and a CD during the year, whilst maintaining the modest membership subscription.

With the business meeting out of the way we retired to the garden for a picnic lunch. After a slightly threatening start to the day it was a lovely sunny afternoon for the annual organ grind. The shade of the gazebos was particularly welcome to those energetically turning the handles.

Unfortunately, due to unexpected illness and sudden bereavement, the larger instruments were absent this year. Several members had brought smaller instruments which they took turns to demonstrate. Anna Svenson played a variety of tunes on her 20-note Hofbauer-style Jim Balchin pressure-operated organ. From his large collection Ted chose a Varetto 27-key reed barrel organ. Garth Haughton, a keen member but new to collecting, proudly showed his 20-note Celestina American organette. He had bought it quite recently and restored it himself, with a little help from Ted, and it was much admired. Finally, Paul Bellamy demonstrated his rather rare and unusual miniature 8-air barrel piano.

April 29th Meeting Report

The main theme of the meeting was small chamber barrel organs. Ted demonstrated what he believes to be one of the earliest models, with 12 notes, dating from around the 1750s, which still has its original tune sheet listing the 8 airs. We also saw a later 14-note, Keith Prowse example from his collection, which dates from about 1830. Anna Svenson brought along 5 organs from her collection.

The Brodrip and Wilkinson, dating from between 1798 and 1808, was particularly unusual and attractive. The front of the case is decorated with a bird in a cage instead of the usual organ pipes in lancet window openings. We hope to print an article about her organ collection in our Christmas edition.



2nd BHI South Branch Open Day by Chris Fynes

Following the success of the first Open Day of the South London Branch of the British Horological Institute in 2016, we were delighted to once again be asked to exhibit. With a better idea of what to expect, the organisers had added an additional room where we were placed in such exalted company as Birmingham University, The Worshipful Company of Clockmakers and West Dean College. However, the visitor numbers also expanded, so once again the whole place was packed with enthusiasts. The conversations all around created quite a hubbub meaning our smaller boxes didn't stand a chance. However, Ted had a secret weapon, an Ariston Organette, placed near the door. This could be heard across the hallway and into the main room, which drew the curious like a magnet. Our new banner could be seen above the crowds and we attracted a lot of interest, enquiries about membership and book sales.

Chris was particularly attracted to the live demonstrations and pleased to discover the exact purpose of some old watchmakers' tools he acquired a while ago. Out of the many photos taken he has selected craftsmen at work, and their tools and machines, to feature here.



Tyvand Collection Visit by David Evans

"When it was first suggested that the 2018 Magic Lantern Society of US & Canada hold its first ever Convention in Canada, Victoria BC, on Vancouver Island, was an obvious choice. The city has recently been voted amongst the top ten best places to visit on the planet. Plans began and it was agreed that

the Lantern Society would extend an invitation to the MBSI Northwest Chapter and to AMBC members to join in the fun. Merging the Northwest Chapter quarterly meeting with the Convention allowed meeting up with old friends and making new ones as well. After all, we are all collectors, and have much in common! It turned out really well and a great time was had by all.

When the Convention finished, a group of AMBC members was invited to visit Annie and Dale Tyvand's collection in Washington State. We were all very keen to go over, especially to see Annie's amazing new stained-glass panel for her bow-front Regina 15 5/8" self-changer box. A lady of many talents, Annie has actually made a new glass door panel for the instrument and has promised your editors an illustrated article on her work for publication in the near future. In the meantime, to whet your appetite, here is a picture of the completed door in situ. There are beautiful examples of Annie's handiwork with glass all over the house and garden. Yes, she really does make lovely three dimensional glass leaves and flowers for the garden as well as two-dimensional pictures.".....



Musical Snuff Boxes by Chris Fynes



Chris describes his beautiful bicentenary silver musical snuffbox. "Made at the time of the Royal Pavilion and its associated Regency decadence, it would be interesting to know what tales this silver musical snuffbox could tell. *It* might first have fitted the colourful waistcoat pocket of a 'dandy' or gentleman of means. And how many hands has it passed through since then, before eventually falling into mine?

Such miniature movements were found in a wide variety of cases to suit every pocket. Cases were made of tin, tortoiseshell, wood (mostly known as laurencekirk), mother of pearl, silver, gold and enamel. Some had painted or micro-mosaic lids and some were embellished with precious stones.

The lid of this particular box is framed with a band of engraved floral decoration surrounding an engine-turned panel inset with a vacant cartouche. The floral band is repeated on the base and also around the edge of the case. Located in the gilt interior, both on the lid and centre divider, its hallmarks bear the maker's initials for Joseph Willmore, a prolific and renowned Birmingham silversmith. Born in 1773, he was the grandson of another renowned Birmingham silversmith, Thomas Willmore. Joseph followed in his grandfather's footsteps and began trading as a silversmith in 1806, when he registered his mark at the Birmingham Assay Office as a snuff box maker".....

Chris continues with a second article on his Laurencekirk musical snuffbox. "Laurencekirk is a small village in the county of Aberdeenshire. It was noted for the manufacture of the Laurencekirk snuffbox that had a special type of concealed airtight hinge and wooden pin. The maker was Charles Stiven who was introduced to set up business there by Lord Gardenston. Stiven was credited with the invention in about 1783, but alternative sources credit James Sandy as the original inventor. Despite its broken glass or more likely crystal, this lovely wooden musical snuffbox, also made around the same period of 1818, bears all the features of the highest quality. When I bought this box at auction I assumed that the miniature on the lid was painted on ivory and that I would be able to restore the painting and replace the glass and all would be well. Unfortunately, I then discovered it was



actually painted on the back of the glass itself. The break was probably caused by a warp in the lid brought on by being in an inappropriate environment, such as a dry centrally-heated atmosphere. Along the edges of the cracks you can see where the paint has pulled away which ought to have given it away”

Tony Musical Toys by Juliet Fynes

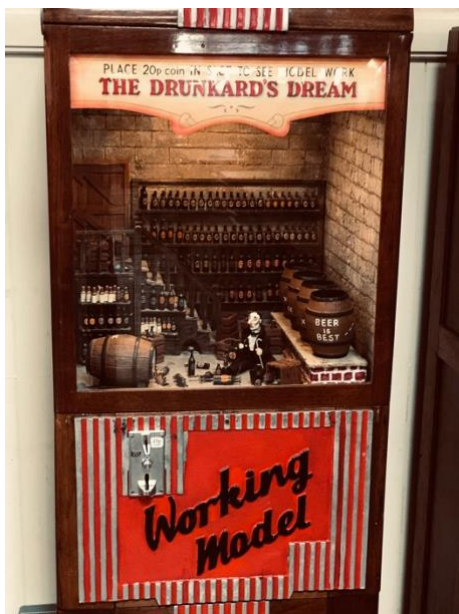
Juliet begins her article with a little bit of history:- “Eiichiro Tomiyama began producing toys in Japan in 1924. His original designs were tin-based, some of which continued into the 1950’s. As with other toy companies production ceased during the war years. He had established a research and development centre in 1935 to create new types of toys using new manufacturing techniques and materials. A shift to plastic offered an entirely new range of toy possibilities and 1953 saw the launch of the Tomy brand. From simple tin models Tomy’s toys achieved an increasing complexity of shapes and forms. The company became the leading Japanese toy manufacturer as Fisher-Price had become in the United States.

Throughout the 1960’s, Tomy continued to explore new technical possibilities and became one of the first to investigate uses of new capabilities offered by the development of transistors. In the 1970’s, Tomy increasingly became interested in electronics and the use of newly developing microchips and the use of liquid crystal displays”.

Juliet continues to describe the toys including the Barbie musical piano, record cassette and CD and video players. A selection of her Tomy collection is shown here.



Time to Spend a Penny by David Soulsby



Dave travels to the Rye Heritage Centre to view their large collection of coin-in-the-slot working models. Of particular interest are those manufactured by the Bollands. These machines in general have amusing scenarios, but executions were also popular. Titles like ‘The Drunkard’s Dream’, ‘The Burglar’, ‘The Miser’ and ‘The Haunted Churchyard’ were among the collection of the 300 models they built. David, armed with a pocketful of old pennies continues to operate the some of the more impressive models in the collection and describes them together with photographs.

The Organino by Ted Brown

Ted describes the history of the Organino as well as details and photographs of the one in his collection.

“Reading through the German Society magazine and the last American MBSI magazine I noticed an article by the late Luuk Goldhoorn. It also contained a very useful addendum by Niko Weigman, which updated the article after Luuk's death, on an instrument called an Organino. This is a metal musical box with eighteen tuned teeth and a wooden cylinder pinned with a single tune. The teeth of the movement are steel mouth organ reeds. My Organino had a broken top tooth that was relatively easy to replace and tune using a mouth organ reed.

The Organino dates from the 1930s. Luuk states that the German manufacturers were Haro, shown as H.R. on the trademark of an outstretched arm holding a mouth organ with 881 "Mein Stolz" (translated as My Pride), with Made in Germany stamped on the side of the instrument. According to Niko Weigman the firm was run by Hans Rölz who had factories in Klingenthal, Germany and Graslitz (now Kraslice in the Czech Republic)”.



The Melodion by David Evans

Melodeon' - a small reed organ, in the form of a harmonium or accordion. Another German instrument with a wooden barrel. The barrel version of the Melodeon was made and patented by Wilhelm Späthc of Gera from 1878 (German patent 2151). These barrel Reed organs typically had 25 notes, but were available in sizes varying from 14 notes to 33. The Späthe catalogues available show that they were available in 1901 and still . Were in J9J3. The patent referred to the simple tune change lever system. They were essentially inexpensive. selling for DM 10.60 for the J4-note size in 1901 to 66 Marks for the 28-note version in 1913. The version here has 27 notes. The Barrels are interchangeable, with care, and the factory list stated 'Extra barrels delivered in a few days'. The paper label in the lid is the tune list for the barrel originally supplied”. David's article continues with intriguing details and photographs of this barrel Reed organ.

