

MECHANICAL MUSIC WORLD ISSUE - 14 AUTUMN 2018

Visit to Espelkamp

Committee members of AMBC were privileged to be invited to attend the AGM of the German society (Gesellschaft für Selbstspielende Musikinstrumenten), which took place at Schloss Benkhausen in Espelkamp, Westphalia.

The castle is the headquarters of the Gauselmann business group. The current building dates from the 18th century but the site is 500 years old, surrounded by a moat with a pair of black swans in residence. The imposing cobbled courtyard in front of the castle is flanked on either side by hotel accommodation, a restaurant and of course the Automaten Museum of coin-operated machines and self-playing musical instruments, which was the centrepiece of the meeting.



In order to be in good time for the meeting, which began early on the Friday evening, we travelled



out the day before. A wise decision as it turned out. Without going into the exigencies of the journey, suffice it to say that, apart from one very short break, we were sitting in the car for twelve hours. We eventually arrived tired, hungry and after the restaurant had closed for the night. We hoped to beg a sandwich but after a very short wait the restaurant manager set down a magnificent buffet in front of us; platters of assorted meats, cheeses and fish with a big basket of various

types of bread and all the trimmings. This set the standard for the rest of the visit, of memorable meals and charming hospitality. We spent most of Friday sightseeing until at 5pm we met up with our German hosts. A vintage yellow Swiss Post Bus, laid on for our journey to the dinner beer tasting and brewery tour, rattled its way to the restaurant. Here we were served another superb meal and old friends were greeted and many new one made. Luckily most of the German delegates spoke excellent English.

Saturday morning was spent taking a conducted tour of the permanent collection of *coin-in-slot* exhibition in the Automatenmuseum, the private collection amassed by Paul Gauselmann, head of the company. He came himself to welcome the party and show us the lovely little toy juke box which was his gift to all those present. This fascinating and beautifully presented museum needs an article to itself, which we will be printing in the next issue.

August Chanctonbury Ring Meeting

“ The meeting was well attended. Chris Fynes gave a comprehensive talk on nine early snuffboxes, including sectional comb movements and tortoiseshell and silver cased movements, some of which have previously featured in the magazine. They played early Swiss tunes and classical excerpts, with extremely fine arrangements. The next topic was disc boxes and one of our members brought along a table model 19 5/8 inch Polyphon. After playing a number of tunes, ancient and modern, we finished with an arrangement by Patch Pearce of "The World Falls Down" from "The Labyrinth". It had been requested by David Bowie and on hearing about this a neighbour, who was a great fan, got Patch to make an extra copy for him. He didn't own a Polyphon but wanted a copy just to keep. Ted Brown then gave a talk on small disc boxes, showing their different comb arrangements. Even some of the big auction houses don't understand different comb layouts. Ted explained the difference between them. Some movements had a single comb. Others had two combs, one on each side of the star wheels and its pressure bar. These are called 'duplex' combs and the teeth are tuned alternately side to side so that both act as a single comb. Others had two combs each tuned to the same scale slightly different frequencies when played together they produce an effect called sublime harmonie. Ted also played two 5 1/4 inch Symphonions. One had a single comb with fine teeth, the other had a comb each side of the pressure box one with fine teeth and the other with thicker teeth giving slightly more volume. The general consensus was that the single comb sounded better. After lunch Chris demonstrated a Nicole 3-air overture box. Members were intrigued to learn that the immaculate-looking lid had been riddled with woodworm holes. Chris had painstakingly stamped out tiny circles of rosewood veneer to glue into the holes, giving an almost imperceptible finish after polishing. We then had a request session which brought out the Triola, the Aeolian Orchestrelle and the Steck Pianola. Finally, we went into the living room and heard the 73-note Racca. For those who have never heard a Triola or the Racca, both instruments play strings repetitively, called reiterating. It is a sort of mandolin effect. The Triola uses punched paper rolls and the Racca, made by Giovanni Racca of Italy, is also called a Piano Melodico and uses punched folded-book music. We finished with tea and biscuits, a good day having been had by all. Anyone wishing to attend a future meeting, just give Ted a call. We would love to see you. Also we welcome anyone to bring along their favourite instrument(s). Our meetings at Ted and Kay's Old School are a showcase for members' instruments. We will be delighted to demonstrate them for you or assist you in any way.”



Fete in the Park

Declining numbers and the difficulty in recruiting new members to mechanical music organisations have been much discussed lately. In fact this problem is common to many other societies devoted to traditional pastimes and collecting historic artifacts.

Whatever the reasons, and many have been suggested, the remedy is by no means obvious. Some societies, even museums, have faded away or become shadows of their former selves. As relatively "new kids on the block" AMBC were "holding our own", with membership increasing steadily, if more slowly than they would wish. To further boost their exposure the Society joined the Petworth fête in the Park. Positioned right opposite the Ice cream van our pitch was not short of visitors.



Small Table Barrel Organs from the British Isles by Anna Svenson

Barrel organs are an extremely old form of mechanical music. Organs are mentioned in the Old Testament. The Bible claims that the pneumatic organ was the work of Jubal and David. The Roman Church attributes St Cecilia as the true inventor. Muslim writers attribute Aristotle (344BC). There are many references to other inventors including Plato and descriptions of elaborate instruments of different designs, one example being the water driven, mechanically operated organ built by the Bana Musa in the ninth century which only had one pipe and had pallets along its length to open and close the holes to produce the different notes. Clocks had organs working in them almost as soon as clockwork was invented. One of the most famous early examples was a present from Queen

Elizabeth 1 to the Sultan of Turkey. This was built by Thomas Dallam of London in 1599. This was not a small clock! It stood about twelve feet six inches high, five feet six inches wide and four feet six inches deep and was very elaborate (this is an understatement, i.e; a carved figure of Queen Elizabeth with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, moving figures, etc!). Barrel organs in churches meant that the organist did not have to be present as a selection of hymns could be pinned to the barrels, one turn for each verse.

Anna describes - the first small English table barrel organ that she bought has a painting of a bird in a cage on the front and has twelve pipes (pictured on the front cover of this issue). More often than not there is no maker listed anywhere on the organ which makes dating it difficult. Sometimes the tunes are listed on a handwritten paper label under the lid and as they were often pinned to play the tunes of the day, dating can be estimated by investigating when the tunes were written. This small



organ was made by Broderip and Wilkinson and the address on the label 13 Haymarket, London, dating it from between 1798 and 1808 which is when they were working from these premises. However, it did not work! Anna wanted to repair it without ruining it so spent more than a year looking at it and finding out more about it, before she eventually took the plunge. The article is accompanied by photographs of this journey.

Another Toy Piano

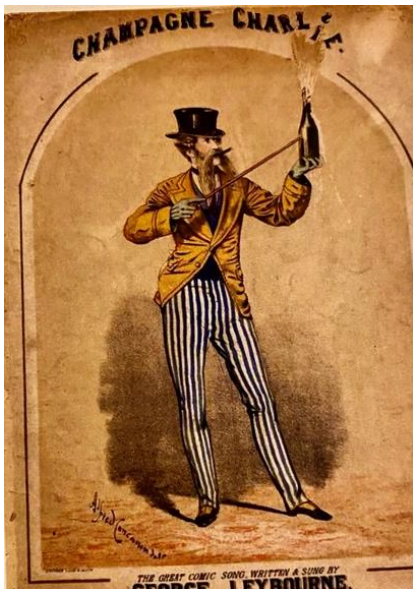
The mention of the Tomy Tuneyville piano in Mechanical Music World Issue 13 stirred a dim memory in one of our members of an article that appeared in the MBSI journal many years ago, about this and another toy piano. After much asking around and trawling through the archives it eventually came to light. The author was Michael Kitner and it appeared in the Autumn 1979 journal number 2 of volume XXV, entitled "Two More Self-Playing Musical Toys". The subject matter was a comparison of two similar looking but very different toy pianos. At that time these were new toys, both having been launched in 1978. As explained in the recent article on Tomy, the Tuneyville piano is actually a mechanical organ. The article goes on to describe the Jelly Roll Player Piano produced by the Janet Corporation of New Jersey.



How Street Musicians and Music Hall Artists influenced Sheet Music by Norman and Jane Dicker

Sheet music publishing began in the middle of the 15th century with the development of mechanical techniques for printing. Before this, copies of music would be hand drawn, it was often done by monks and was time consuming, labour intensive as well as prone to errors. The earliest known printed music is a set of liturgical chants dated circa 1465.

During the 16th century Pettruci in Venice introduced the triple impression method of printing with separate impressions for staff lines, words and musical notes, which were made in that order. The prints were clear but still time consuming and expensive but multiple copies could be produced easily. At about the same time in England a single impression for printing all three parts at once



was introduced. The results were messy but it superseded the Pettruci system and was used until replaced by copper plate engraving in the 17th century. An interesting fact is that during the reign of King Henry VIII it was a requirement that the Monarch received a copy of all printed music.

Sheet music has been collected for many different reasons, not just for playing. Covers seem to be one of the most popular reasons for collecting but sadly, in many instances, the actual sheet music is discarded and only the cover is kept. Although many of the early covers were not coloured and not that appealing, in the mid 19th century hand colouring was introduced followed by machine colouring. The artists who produced the covers were very talented. One of the most famous and therefore most collectable was Alfred Concanen (1835-1886). Today his covers are much sought after and can command as much as £80 in good condition.

The Bells of Saint James, Vancouver by Paul Bellamy

Paul begins his story:- "Sitting at home one day, planning a visit to Canada, the city of Vancouver and its nearby Vancouver Island, I received an email saying: 'Whilst you are in the city, why not contact Professor Paul Stanwood of St James' Church, Granville, he would be delighted to show you around its unique carillon.'" And so it came to pass.

The church is of the Anglican community and one of the first structures made entirely of reinforced concrete, painted brilliantly white and standing on cross roads at the edge of Downtown Vancouver, bordering its famous Chinatown district. In fact it was on the original site of the very first settlement that was to become Vancouver, named after Captain George Vancouver who sailed on that particular voyage of discovery from England.

The first wooden church was built in 1881 in the hamlet of Granville, east of the present city of Vancouver but probably once the original settlement for what was to become a great city. It was destroyed by fire in 1866 along with the whole of Vancouver. Within one day of a full year it was replaced but on a new site slightly east of the shoreline. It too was then replaced by the present concrete structure in 1937. Thanks The original rector wanted a peal of bells so he made an anonymous donation for that purpose. He thought that there would not be enough enthusiastic campanologists to ring the changes so he decided that they should be played mechanically".

