

## MECHANICAL MUSIC WORLD ISSUE 28 SPRING 2022

### **The Talented Bulleids** by Juliet Fynes

Juliet carried out extensive research into the achievements of the famous Bulleid family:-  
“The name Bulleid is familiar to musical box enthusiasts for the extensive research and writings on the subject by Anthony (HAV) Bulleid. It is an unusual name so, when encountered in an unfamiliar setting I wondered if there could be a connection. Whilst browsing the Bluebell Railway website with a vague idea for a day out I happened across "The Bulleid Society". This immediately piqued my interest and, following various links, I discovered that this



society was formed in 1966 to save a light Pacific class locomotive, built in 1945 to a design by Oliver Vaughan Snell Bulleid, who happened to be the father of HAV, full name Henry Anthony Vaughan. Oliver was a most remarkable man. Raised by his widowed mother he attended Accrington Technical College and went on to an apprenticeship with the I Great Northern Railway at Doncaster. His subsequent very successful career in railway engineering has been documented in detail by his son but I will give just a brief outline. He worked his way up at Doncaster and by the age of 25 was personal assistant to the works manager. There followed some time working in France. In 1912 he returned to Doncaster as PA to the great railway engineer, Nigel Gresley who had lately taken over the post of works engineer. He was commissioned during WWI, serving in the British Army's Railway Operating Division, returning to Doncaster again after the war. He held various managerial positions until 1923 when the Great Northern became part of LNER and he served again as Gresley's assistant, having a hand in the production of many of Gresley's famous locomotives such as the record breaking Mallard. In 1937 he became Chief Mechanical Engineer of Southern Railway where he played a major role in electrification, including infrastructure and designing electric locomotives. He designed the Merchant Navy Pacific class of steam locomotive in 1941 using a number of techniques, such as welding, that enabled the easier fabrication of components at a time of wartime austerity. He continued with his innovative designs for locomotives and coaches and was appointed President of The Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1946 and awarded a CBE in 1949." Juliet's informative article continues to describe the innovations of his son HAV Bulleid in the fields of special effects in cinematography and of course musical boxes.

### **Creating Automata in the Heart of Wales** by David Soulsby

David describes his visit to the offices of Timberkits where he received a warm welcome from the company's director, Sarah Reast. Sarah told the story about the formation of this family firm which manufactures quality wooden automata kits for customers to assemble themselves (see Mechanical Music World issue 25)

The firm was founded in 2012 by Sarah's parents, Eric and Alison Williamson. Eric trained as a fine art painter in the '60s and used his skill to build carved rocking horses. Regrettably they took a considerable time to make and selling them was not the basis for a viable business.





Sarah described how the models were simplified in order to design and manufacture the DIY kits. She also laid out the extensive range of models, assembled and painted which are shown in the article.

#### **A Rock & Roll Automaton** by Paul Bellamy

Following on from this article, Paul describes how he assembled a number of Timberkits to create what he calls "the Robokit Five". The band included Guitar player, keyboard player, drummer, clarinet player and double bass. He accompanies the players with a Rock n'roll MP3 soundtrack and even constructed the band's singer based on Lisa Simpson.



#### **Restoration of an Ami Rivene Musical Box** by Bernard Novell

Although the son of a master craftsman woodworker, whose skills rubbed off to some extent, and possessing many practical skills, I still class myself as a rank amateur when it comes to antique restoration. Looking to restore a cartel music box for the very first time I was probably a little ambitious with my choice but having spotted a small and rather forlorn cartel for sale on eBay I made my conservative bid and waited. To my delight I was successful in winning it. Having taken delivery of the box, I found that the damage to the case veneer was more severe than the photographs showed. This is a big issue with buying online and one I've learned to be cautious with. Undaunted, I rose to the challenge. The mechanism although caked in dirt and smelly oil was in fact working, albeit slowly, and so I embarked on the task with enthusiasm.



Firstly, I researched the history of the box as far as I could, helped by Paul Bellamy's wonderful book "The Music Makers of Switzerland", I spotted the tell-tale cartouche stamped under the muck on top of the governor bracket. Armed with the pristine tune sheet and serial number 12765 I was then able to establish that the box was made by Ami Rivenc around 1893". With another AMBC publication, "The Cylinder Music

Box A Collector's Guide and Restorer's Handbook" by my side I set about dismantling the mechanism taking particular care to note the screws for all the components by photographing every stage as I

went along. The first thing to remove the comb, ensuring that the mechanism was safely between tunes and the governor prevented from rotating. As part of the Geneva Stop was broken, this was an essential thing to do in case of a 'run'. I proceeded with caution, inspecting all components for obvious faults and wear. Nothing was badly worn or broken, although the winder arm was bent (possibly overly wound causing the Geneva Stop to snap off). The only thing found to be missing was the jewel bearing above the governor endless". ....



Bernard's article continues with detailed descriptions and photographs of his impressive restoration.

### **Henri Métert, Geneva No. 3013** by David Evans

David describes in detail and photographs a new box in his collection:-

"Acquired recently from Bonham's, this is a typical 4-air hinged end flap key wound box, in this instance in a yew-wood case. Paul Bellamy's latest dating chart puts it at about 1845, just after David Langdorff joined the business. The number scratched on the bass endcap of the cylinder is G3/47, so 1847 rather than 1845. The H. Métert name is stamped on the top left corner of the brass bedplate together with the serial number. The 8" cylinder plays on a single comb of one hundred and fifteen teeth. A point of interest that the top eleven teeth are on a separate piece of steel plate that is mounted alongside the other one hundred and four teeth. This is definitely not a later repair - it was supplied like this when new. It may suggest that comb steel plates could have been supplied in standard length - in this case "7 3/8", which is the length of the main comb section, or more likely Métert's comb maker has this piece over from another project. The six comb fixing screws have the usual brass washers as used by Métert. The serial number is repeated in ink on the under side of the case" .....

