

GRACE NOTES

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NEW WEBSITE NOW ACTIVE!

During the summer months we have been working hard alongside developer and designer Richard Gentle to produce an exciting, brand new website with a clean, contemporary appearance which we hope you will find a considerable improvement over the old one.

This should also ensure that it will be much easier to visit the site using smart phones, notebooks, tablets etc. The site is already fully active, so please pay a visit to www.acpilmer.com as soon as you can.

Once there you will find many interesting new photographs showing examples of work we have recently completed, and we have also embedded several YouTube videos so you can actually see and hear some of the fine organs we have worked on.

A brand new page on the site outlines our work on Theatre and Cinema organs, a field of activity that we will be expanding in the coming years. We will focus on exciting new developments in this area in a future edition of *Grace Notes*.

Another new page features our



One of the choice instruments we currently have for sale.

considerable experience in packing and shipping mechanical musical instruments worldwide. Don't forget that we have close contacts with sea, air and road transporters for both exporting and importing items.

A number of choice instruments which have been newly-consigned to us for sale are detailed and we especially recommend those currently thinking of becoming an organ owner to carefully consider what is on offer. Remember that

when you purchase an organ from us you benefit from our 40 years of experience in the business, and our well-known after sales service will help to keep your pride and joy in first-class condition.

Producing the new website has been quite a process, but we hope you will appreciate the result, and look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions as to how it might be even further improved.

WALDKIRCH ORGAN FESTIVAL 2017

International Organ Festival Waldkirch 2017

This very popular triennial international organ festival returns for the twelfth time to Waldkirch, in Germany's picturesque Black Forest region, on Friday afternoon, June 23rd, and continues over the weekend of June 24th and 25th 2017. Many enthusiasts from all over the world regularly make the pilgrimage to see an impressive display of large and small organs, most with connec-

tions to the town of Waldkirch. In the past, organs have attended from the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK; two of our own restorations have appeared there, one of them on two successive occasions. The town's museum hosts a variety of lectures as well as having its own impressive collection of locally-built instruments in play. It's also possible to see some of the buildings connected with the various organ factories, and the town's two cemeteries have memorials to many of the famous names associ-

ated with the business. Easily accessible in the locality are other places of interest, such as the large collection of historic street barrel organs in the museum at Triberg, which is also home to a very impressive Heilmann cylinder orchestrion. Accommodation close by is limited, so we recommend that you reserve somewhere to stay as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

A C PILMER AUTOMATIC MUSIC LTD. CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

This year A C Pilmer Automatic Music Ltd. is proud to celebrate 40 years in the mechanical music business. In the last couple of years a number of significant changes have taken place, such as our relocation from Rufforth, near York, where we spent 25 happy years, to new workshop premises near Wakefield, conveniently located within a few moments of junction 40 of the M1 motorway. Although moving was quite an undertaking after so long, it has brought the additional advantage of being much closer to a wider choice of suppliers: restoration projects involve the sourcing of many different materials such as ironmongery, paint, timber, and sheet materials. It has also

brought us closer to other facilities such as printers, stationers, bank and the Post Office. Over the years we have been privileged



to work on a large number of instruments, some large, some small, a list of which would be far too long to publish here. We still

maintain many of these on a regular basis. Something that we certainly did not envisage when we started out back in the 1970s was the opportunity to travel to other countries to work, as well as all over the UK, but since then we have been lucky enough to have worked in Japan, the Netherlands, Belgium and of course, the United States, where we currently have customers dotted about all over the continent. We are always proud that we have been chosen to travel more than 3,000 miles to work on organs there.

We now take this opportunity to warmly thank all our customers and associates past and present and look forward to meeting friends old and new in the years to come.

LAUNCH OF NEWSLETTER

For some time now we have been contemplating producing a quarterly newsletter for friends of A C Pilmer Automatic Music Ltd. containing short news items and reports, as well as providing a channel for your feedback. We did not want to do this through the commonly used medium of social media and have eventually decided to do this as a subscribe-to newsletter. After some preparation, our idea has now finally become a reality, and we are pleased to offer you this

trial first edition, which we have decided to call **Grace Notes**. We hope you will find it interesting. You don't even have to be one of our customers to receive it - just click on the "Subscribe" button at www.acpilmer.com to be placed on the list. You can also unsubscribe at any time. Please tell your friends about this first edition so they can subscribe as well; we look forward to welcoming them on the regular mailing list. It's all completely free and without obligation. However, there's

always a catch, and in this case we hope that in reading it, or visiting our new website, you may wish to learn more about our products, skills and services. If you have any photos you would like to share, or any comments to make, please e-mail them to us! Our plan is to produce another newsletter in December, so we look forward to receiving your input up to the end of November.

*If you have any photos
you would like to share
with us, or any
comments to make,
please e-mail them to us*



BANDMASTER FIGURE FROM LOST MARENGHI ORGAN RETURNS TO UK

This superbly carved bandmaster figure (illustrated left) has recently been brought back to the UK from the United States. The figure was identified as coming from the Marengi organ supplied new in 1906 for Anderton & Rowland's bioscope show by Marengi's London agent Justin Wentworth. Sadly, the show and its fine organ were scrapped many years ago, but the bandmaster figure miraculously survived, perhaps being spared destruction due to its great beauty. Amazingly, at one point it was even part exchanged for a Gardner

diesel engine! In more recent times it was sold to a prominent collector in the United States where it was admired on numerous occasions by Andrew Pilmer and Russell Wattam on their visits there. Eventually it was purchased, carefully packed and sent by air freight back to the UK, where it has now found an appreciative new home with a collector who was instantly impressed by the great detail of the figure, which is almost certainly a work of art from the renowned studio of Demetz. Large animated figures such as this (50" / 1.30m tall)

were only fitted to the very largest and most expensive instruments, and it is believed that only a handful of them now exist worldwide. It has movements concealed within it to turn the head, and the figure would have also marked time to the music with a baton held in his right arm. Then, as now, moving figures held a special fascination for the general public, children in particular. Old photographs show huge crowds of West Country fairgoers gathered in front of the organ prior to the start of the bioscope show. What tales could this proud figure tell us?

FEATURED ORGAN SCALE

THE 32 KEY PRINSEN ORGAN

In each edition of **Grace Notes** we plan to feature a particular scale for a mechanical organ, be it large or small. If you happen to own an instrument using that particular scale, you may be encouraged to obtain some new music for it, or be interested to learn more about it. This time we feature the **32-key Prinsen** scale. This was devised by the well-known Belgian music arranger and organ builder Arthur Prinsen in the early 1980s to fill the then heavy demand for small, yet musical, hand-turned street organs. Unlike German products, Mr. Prinsen chose to use a keyframe playing book music rather than paper music rolls, and for this he devised a very useful scale with 5 bass notes (two stopped pipes for



each note, sounding an octave apart), and seven accompaniment notes (one stopped pipe per note) in a chromatic sequence starting at C. The melody division continues chromatically on from this,

except for the lowest g# and top d#, which are missing, enabling quite complex music to be successfully arranged. Over the past few years we have produced a sizeable repertoire for this scale, including old music hall songs such as *Come take a trip in my Airship*, several of

Haydn's *1792 Pieces for a Musical Clock*, *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* and light music favourites such as Ronald Binge's *Elizabethan Serenade*. A useful book with which to end the day's

performance is *Adieu* from the musical *White Horse Inn*. Contact us now for an up-to-date list of titles for this scale. Incidentally, we do not just repair and tune large organs, but we are also happy to undertake such work on most makes of quality hand-turned organs as well. If your organ has not

been tuned and serviced for some time, you will be surprised by the difference just a few hours' professional work can make to it (and so will your audience!) and, moreover, at a reasonable cost.

Why not book it in now?

IN BRIEF

After years of searching, Yorkshire-based enthusiast **Brian Cooper** has finally fulfilled his



ambition to own a fair organ. He has recently purchased the 48 keyless Chiappa (left) that was advertised for sale on our website earlier this year. The organ was tuned and checked over by us before he took delivery, and Brian has already attended a few events with it. He has also added a number of used books to the repertoire from our stock. We wish him much pleasure and success with his new acquisition.

HANDY TIP

For convenience, try scanning our new **QR code** (right) with your smart phone to go directly to the homepage on our website. In future, all our advertising material will also carry this QR code, and it has recently been printed on the latest version of our music book labels. When you arrive at the site, why not send us a brief message from the Contact Page letting us know that you have visited?



CHANGES TO UK BANKING REGULATIONS

Recent changes in United Kingdom banking practice means that cheques presented for clearance must now bear the **full account name** of the recipient, and not just part of it, as was sometimes previously acceptable.

Unfortunately, for this reason, in recent months we have had to return a number of cheques to their senders for replacement, causing unnecessary delays and inconvenience to both sides.

We are bringing this change to our customers' attention so they can ensure that in future all

cheques are made payable only to "**A C Pilmer Automatic Music Ltd.**" as any other wording will not be accepted by our bank. We thank you in advance for your understanding and co-operation in this matter.

Whilst on the subject of banking, over the past year we have been trying to make as many as possible of our own payments by direct transfer, and believe that several of our customers may also find this a more convenient method in future. Not only is it a quicker, easier and sometimes

more reliable way of paying than by cheque, but an envelope, stamp and stroll to the post box are also no longer required!

If you would like to pay us by direct transfer in the future, please contact us at enquiries@acpilmer.com and we will be pleased to furnish you with our bank details.

For the convenience of our customers on the continent it is also possible to make payments into our euro account in Belgium. Again, we will be pleased to send you the account details on request.

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You **can** hear the difference!



GET MORE OUT OF YOUR MECHANICAL MUSIC HOBBY

For some organ enthusiasts, attending events during the summer months to hear organs play completely fulfils their hobby interest. During the winter months they may be happy to get their 'fix' of organ music from listening to CDs or watching videos on the internet. However, the world of mechanical music can reach much further; here are a few suggestions that may help you get more from your hobby.

Many enthusiasts have a particular favourite type of instrument, be it dance, street or fair organ, whilst others can enjoy an appreciation of all types. The enthusiast can easily delve into the origins and commercial backgrounds of how organs were commercially used in their different circumstances. A wealth of books and websites show fairground organs in use, especially in the UK; searches further afield reveal sources showing dance and street organs in their original locations.

For the organ enthusiast, there is, broadly speaking, a choice of French, Belgian, German and American makers, and it is interesting to study the differences and similarities between them. Just like the people living in those countries, the organs each speak a different language and it can be fascinating to find out where the various accents originated from.

You could of course make a study of the music played: comparing different versions of the same piece by different arrangers is always worthwhile, and it can be quite revealing to hear the music in question being played in its original form to see how the marker has captured the composer's intentions. A good example of this is to hear the Thursford Carl Frei organ's rendition of *Winterstürme* (Winter Storms) and then the orchestral version.

These days it is easier than ever to find contemporary recordings of old music hall songs, marches and general light music through the medium of YouTube, CD's and downloads. Recordings of more serious music enable those interested to hear what a favourite overture sounds like in the original orchestral version, which may lead on to discoveries of less often heard pieces by the same composers, sometimes leading to the commissioning of a new arrangement for an organ. The eleven volumes of *Waldeufel* compositions is a prime example: you can hear your favourite organ waltzes played as the composer intended, but soon realise that many more gems remain unheard on the rally fields. Studying the sometimes colourful lives of composers and performers can bring that extra dimension to the music you are listening to.

Another strongly connected field of interest is design and decoration. In the heyday of production, organ builders commissioned designers to prepare drawings of new fronts which were sent out to clients, and if accepted, put into manufacture. Organs embrace many design styles and eras, common ones being *art nouveau*, *Jugendstil*, *art deco*, and *neo-renaissance*. It is possible to read more about the origins of these styles, and to see how the organ front designers incorporated popular trends into their own work. Equally, front painters were also heavily influenced by fashions of the outside world.

The technical side of organ building also fascinates some enthusiasts, and whilst printed information specific to our subject is limited, those interested to learn more could widen their reading to encompass church organ building, about which there have been a great many books published. Mechanical organ building and design was closely related to church, and later, theatre organ building, and of course, several famous names in our field were initially trained in the classical organ world. Good examples of this are the Bax family, key members of Mortier's staff, and the Gaudin brothers, who later took over Marengi's business.

Don't forget that there is also a world of player- and reproducing pianos, orchestrions, disc and cylinder musical boxes, organettes and even musical toys, so if the prospect of buying and housing a large fair organ sounds daunting, there are affordable instruments small enough to fit any ordinary house.

VISIT TO U.S.A. MEETING

This photo was taken during a joint meeting held by the Lake Michigan Chapter of the Musical Box Society International and the Carousel Organ Association of America at the Victorian Music Palace, hosted by Jasper and Marion Sanfilippo. This is one of many opportunities available each year to visit the extensive collection and is located to the west of Chicago. In the picture are, from left to right: Jerry Biasella, restorer and docent from Chicago Heights, Jasper Sanfilippo, Andrew Pilmer, Russell Wattam and the well-known mechanical music author and restorer Art Reblitz from Colorado Springs. In the background is the organ formerly owned in the UK by the Jonas family.

