

# GRACE NOTES

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As the Festive Season is now upon us and the New Year rapidly approaches, we would like to thank our friends and customers everywhere for your business over the past twelve months and look forward to your continued custom in the New Year. If 2018 is the year that you decide to try out our services for the first time, you can be assured that your enquiry will be given our careful attention. If you are a recent subscriber, and this is the first edition of Grace Notes that you have received, we hope that you will find something of interest amongst its pages and that you may even be inspired to drop us a line via the Contact Page on our website with your own thoughts on any of the subjects raised.

*May we extend our Season's Greetings to everyone and hope that 2018 brings you peace, health and happiness.*

## MODEL 36 RUTH ORGAN IN USA

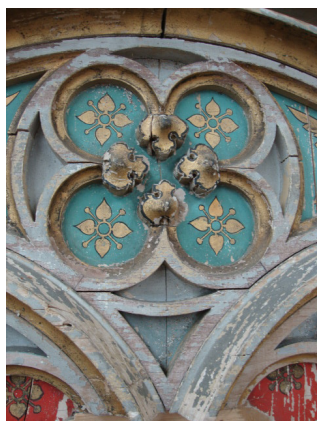


Well-known American collectors, Dick and Cheryl Hack, recently hosted their annual MBSI Chapter Meeting where their Ruth organ was played for visitors. The organ has been a long-term project for Dick, with pipework being sent to us for repair and voicing following on from a visit last year. This year's visit from Russell Wattam (pictured) saw the organ tuned from the ground up and further repairs carried out in time for the meeting. To see and hear the progress to date, click here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SX0ETAvaJZc&ns=em>



1. Head of a column showing painted decoration



2. Part of lower drum stand panel



3. &amp; 4. Details of the painted decoration



## SUCCESSFUL FESTIVAL IN WALDKIRCH

As mentioned in a previous edition of *Grace Notes*, the Waldkirch Organ Festival took place again this year in June, with exceptionally warm and sunny weather throughout. It was good to meet many friends and customers from several countries, including Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium. There was also a large contingent of visitors from the United Kingdom. On display were a very good representation of historic German street organs, both barrel and roll-operated, as well as an impressive street organ display from the Netherlands. This included the 90 key Carl Frei organ "The Amsterdam Harmonica" which had been overhauled and tuned for the occasion by its owner, Elbert Plier, and the "Lekkerkerker", Carl Frei's favourite 90-key organ. The "Marengi van Nuberg" and the "Brandweer", a 56-key Limonaire were the other two Dutch street organs present.



A prominent feature of the town is the church of St. Margaret where, for many years, Gustav Bruder served as organist.

The recently-restored 89-key "Lange Gavioli" was presented by the National Museum from Utrecht. Various organ businesses in the town opened their doors to visitors each day, where work-in-progress could be ad-

mired and music enjoyed, with refreshments available nearby. A wide range of displays, lectures and special performances were held throughout the festival period. Don't forget the next festival date: Friday 19th to Sunday 21st June 2020. *Auf wiederseh'n!*



The bandmaster of the Weber Capelle orchestra proudly greets visitors to the Elztalmuseum

## MORE ORIGINAL GAVIOLI ARTWORK

We were pleased to learn that several of our readers found the feature on original Gavioli artwork, which was published in *Grace Notes* No. 2, of some interest.

Following on from this, here are some detail photographs of a number of elements in our possession from the façade of a late Gavioli organ (see panel to the left). They originate from a 94-key organ which, for many years, was one of the many attractions at Rivere Beach, an amusement park located in Massachusetts,

USA. The decoration shown is the factory original.

We have never seen a photograph of a Gavioli organ façade executed in this 'rounded' Gothic style and would be interested to know if any of our readers have either. Sadly, the rest of the front was destroyed a long time ago, but the organ itself fortunately survives, albeit in an incomplete state.

As did most organ firms in the past, Gavioli & Co. was prepared to build fronts to special designs on demand, and pen and ink drawings, sometimes enhanced

with watercolour paints, were sent out to customers for their approval. This created much more work than producing a 'standard' organ front and this increase in customisation has been cited by some writers as being a contributing factor in the demise of the firm.

The firm's designers (who regrettably are unknown by name to us today) must have been familiar with a range of architectural styles, as the Gavioli catalogue offers fronts executed in *art nouveau*, Louis XIV, Renaissance, etc.

## IN BRIEF

**Congratulations** to the enthusiastic couple from Melbourne, Western Australia, who visited us during the summer and purchased the handily-sized 46-key Andrew Whitehead fair organ which was on offer on our website. Before it leaves, for the Antipodes some minor cosmetic work will be undertaken, such as additional gilded detail on the bandmaster's jacket. The instrument, together with its varied library of music books, will soon be carefully packed and crated for its long journey "down under". We are sure that all our readers will join with us in wishing the proud new owners much fun and happiness with their new acquisition!

**Another of our services** was recently put to the test when we were approached by a customer who was interested in bidding at auction for an item, but would be out of the country on the day the sale was due to take place. We were pleased to visit the auction house on the morning of the sale on his behalf and inspected the lot in question, a desirable 1940s Wurliitzer 'Peacock' juke box. After giving a condition report by telephone, a maximum bid figure was agreed, and when the lot came under the hammer a few hours later, we were the highest bidders. However, the auctioneer announced that he was unable

to sell the juke box at the hammer price, but advised that the sale could be further discussed in private. This situation was relayed to our customer who authorised an increase in the bid amount, and after some negotiation, we were finally able to secure the purchase and with money to spare. Anxious to see his acquisition, the new owner asked us to arrange collection from the auction rooms and deliver it to his home a few days later. In a similar vein, some years ago we purchased a fine Hupfeld Phonoliszt-Violina from an auction in France on behalf of a client residing in the USA.



## FEATURED ORGAN SCALE

### THE 35-KEY LIMONAIRE ORGAN

The famous Parisian firm of Limonaire Frères produced large numbers of smaller-scaled instruments which served an important niche in the market. Their 35-key organs were widely used in children's roundabouts, and in the UK some were even used on adult cakewalk rides<sup>1</sup>. Whenever organs had to be moved into position from a truck or trailer, the light weight of the 35-key Limonaire series made them ideal for this purpose.

The percussion instruments, consisting of a bass drum and cymbal at one side, and a snare drum at the other, were mounted on detachable consoles for transport purposes. The consoles were usually decorated with carved work in the *art nouveau* style, and there was also a removable pediment which completed the attractive appearance. The cases were veneered in walnut and varnished.

The scale itself is a very clever

one for its size, and this, no doubt, contributed to its commercial success. It has six bass notes, C, D, E, F, G and A, which continue on into the accompaniment division with b, c, d, e, f and  $\sharp$ . If necessary, the b accompaniment can even stand in as a bass note. The basses usually comprise of two stopped pipes per note, sounding an octave apart; the higher octave continues on to form the accompaniment which has just one pipe per note. The melody section has 19 notes from g to f, a very useful compass, missing out both g and d sharps. The melody pipework could be varied to suit the customer's wishes. A point of interest in these organs is the snare drum action which is of the reiterating type, meaning that a continuous slot in the music book produces a sustained drum roll. Unusually for French organ-building practice, the 35-key scale is scrambled.

Limonaire Frères marketed these instruments in a variety of different styles; some had just one rank of open flutes in the melody, some had

one or two ranks of violins and others had violins and pan flutes. For economy, a smaller version was available without percussion or pediment and with painted instead of carved decoration. Some fronts were open; some closed. A larger 38-key model with automatic registers controlling flutes and violins was also produced, which are very effective. The scale later formed the basis for larger *Jazzbandophone* instruments that the firm built.

We have a repertoire of new arrangements of familiar tunes for this scale available, and we will be pleased to send out a list of titles on request. For someone wishing to display an organ indoors, or those with limited storage space for a trailer, a 35-key Limonaire organ would make an admirable choice.

<sup>1</sup> In the UK, many original 35-key organs were later converted to play the Gavioli 46-key scale for the purpose of standardisation, by adding the notes missing from the scale on off-note chests, and extending the original keyframes. The original scale lent itself to this conversion.



An original 35-key Limonaire organ located by us in Belgium some years ago and sold to an English enthusiast. In this example, the consoles have painted decoration, and the original cloth covering of the front panel has been removed to display the violin pipes. This is one of three organs we have supplied to clients in the UK playing on this scale.

## GAVIOLI ORGAN IN ROAD ACCIDENT

Readers will be saddened to learn that the 89-key Gavioli organ which graces the centre of Messrs. Screeton Bros. famous Golden Galloping Horses was involved in a serious road traffic accident during August, when a 44-ton heavy goods vehicle collided at speed with the rear of the road train whilst travelling on a motorway. The impact, which also involved another vehicle, caused the organ to be sprung from its trailer, coming to rest on its front side on the carriageway. This photo of the wrecked organ trailer gives an



indication of the force of the collision. We have recently been entrusted with the task of completely restoring the organ and are confident that it will be back in place in the centre of the machine for the 2019 season. Messrs. Screeton Bros. Ltd. have owned and travelled the three-abreast ride and organ since 1964, when it was acquired from north-east showman, Percy Sheeran. This is one of the few remaining Gavioli organs earning its living on the fairgrounds. More news on this work in future issues.

## ERRATA

**Shane Seagrave** of Weymouth sent a quick reaction to the story in the last edition of *Grace Notes* about the Thomas Weeks barrel organ at Raby Castle.

He writes that in the article "you inadvertently pressed one of my favourite 'hobby-horse' buttons by equating one shilling to five pence in today's money. One shilling was indeed worth five new pence (5p) in 1971 when the decimal currency system was introduced, but at the time of Weeks's exhibition, around 1800, that one shilling admission charge

would be worth the same as £6.50 in 2017. We feel sure that the privilege of seeing the delights of Thomas Weeks's Royal Mechanical Exhibition in the present day would be worth much more than even that modest amount, and thank Shane for bringing this to our attention.

**Another** small error also crept into the last edition, as the last line of the article about Carl Frei and his son was accidentally left out. This mistake was brought to our attention by reader, Fred Dahlinger, in the United States. The omission

should have been the footnote credit for the book referred to in the text: *Fest im Takt - Kompositionen von Carl Frei sen.* which is published by and exclusively available from the Waldkircher Orgelstiftung (Waldkirch Organ Foundation). This is a quality hardbound, A4 format book, partially illustrated in colour, with the text in German, Dutch and English. We can thoroughly recommend this book to all admirers of Carl Frei, his organs and especially his music.

You can to use this QR code to quickly access our website to see new content.



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## NEW HOME FOR WHITE'S MAMMOTH GAVIOLI



We close the year, and this issue of *Grace Notes*, with the exciting news that White's Mammoth Gavioli has just changed hands. The organ was moved from County Durham to its new home in the South of England within the last few days. The new owner, Mr Tom Mayhew, is delighted to become the latest custodian and is looking forward to presenting the Gavioli at events in the future. Conscious of its national as well as international importance, Tom is committed to preserving the organ and hopes to continue the sterling work undertaken by George Parmley and members of the Show Organ Society, who have exhibited it since 1956.

We were pleased to be appointed by its then owner, Mr Neil Corner, to seek a new home for the organ which he had acquired from the family of its original owners.



*We acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Mr Richard Dean, of Dean Organ Builders, Bristol, in the execution of this transaction.*

Based on more than 40 years of continuous professional involvement in the mechanical music business, with wide experience at home and abroad, we are able to offer a bespoke service for the sale or purchase of all kinds of automatic musical instruments as well as providing valuations for estate planning, probate, insurance or other purposes. We guarantee complete confidentiality and all charges, terms and conditions are agreed in advance.