

GRACE NOTES

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Belgian Café Culture	2
46 key organ to Australia	2
In Brief	2
W.B.S. Model 76 / 77	3
Jim Krughoff RIP	3
The air that we breathe	3
87-key Gavioli organ's debut	4

87-KEY GAVIOLI ORGAN'S DEBUT



On the weekend of June 16th and 17th 2018 our latest full restoration project made its public debut at the Castle Fraser steam rally in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The organ, an early 87-key Gavioli, was built in 1898 and now forms part of the extensive collection of Mike Dreehan, a prominent collector of steam and other road vehicles. It is not known exactly where the organ was first used commercially, but it was possibly somewhere in Belgium; at some point it was exported to the United States where it provided the music for a carousel in a permanent amusement park. In the late 1920s the organ was rebuilt by the B.A.B. Organ Company of Brooklyn, New York. At this time, the Gavioli keyframe was removed and the scale changed to their own 80-keyless book system, making the old library of music redundant. A new selection of popular music was then supplied for it. Later, the organ operated at Almonesson Lake, a permanent amusement park in New Jersey. When the park closed down many items were sold to Jim Wells, a dealer from Fairfax, Northern Virginia. Later, the organ passed into the hands of an enthusiast, and by 2007 was owned by a collector in Florida who kept it in his basement. *(For more pictures and details please turn to the back page)*

WHY NOT BECOME AN ORGAN OWNER?

We would like to draw your attention to two instruments currently offered for sale on behalf of clients on our website, where further details and pictures can be found. The first is a 101-key organ with 12 automatic registers, built in the Netherlands in the early 1990s. Named *De Arend (The Eagle)*, it is mounted on a covered continental-built trailer, ready for use, and can play from either traditional cardboard music books or from a MIDI system. The owner is about to lose his storage

facility and is thus now willing to accept a very competitive price for a quick sale to solve this problem.

The second instrument we highlight here is a 52-key street organ built in 1970 by Arthur Bursens in Antwerp. It was purchased new by Lord O'Neill of Shane's Castle, Co. Antrim, and was initially mounted on a 1920s Leyland lorry. Later the combination found its way to Arthur Mason in Norfolk; subsequently we ourselves became its

owner and, for a time we rented it to an amusement park. The present owner (since 1990) is unfortunately no longer able to drive the Bedford display vehicle it is housed in, and so is now keen for the organ to pass to a new owner, rather than it stand unused. Only four of these organs were ever built; one of them has already been in Japan for a number of years. If you feel you might like to become the new owner of either of these two tuneful organs, please do make contact with us as soon as possible.

BELGIAN CAFÉ CULTURE



The book is very attractively designed and features many colour photographs by the author. Here is a copy of the book, ready to enjoy, together with a beckoning glass of flavoursome, cool Belgian beer!

A very interesting book recently came to our attention, which will surely be of interest to some of our readers. It is entitled *Belgian Café Culture* and is the work of Regula Ysewijn, a food writer, photographer and graphic designer. Regula lives in Belgium but is a true Anglophile and has previously written another book, *Pride and Pudding*, on the history of British puddings. A few years ago she became aware of the decline in the number of traditional cafés in Belgium, in the same way that traditional pubs have been disappearing here in the UK, and decided that this unique heritage should be documented for posterity in words and pictures before it was too late.

To someone interested in mechanical music, Belgian cafés were renowned in the past for their extensive use of barrel pianos, piano orchestrions, violin players and other instruments, resulting in that small country becoming one of the leading markets for the

makers of such devices. Indeed, their use prevailed much longer there than almost any other country. A major Belgian distributor of instruments from Germany was the famous Brussels firm of C. J. Gérard & Co. *

The visitor to Belgium 40 years ago could enjoy the music of a whole host of café organs for the modest investment of a 5-franc coin in the wall box, but today very few remain on location, having been dispersed to collectors worldwide. Since that time, the delights of Belgian beer have also become much more widely appreciated. One of the best known present-day locations (with a 92-key Gebr. Decap organ), the Café Beveren, is mentioned in the book, but is sadly not featured specifically. This café and its famous organ do however feature in many current Antwerp travel guides.

The hardback, 272-page book, published by Luster, which is in

both English and Dutch, can be obtained through all good bookshops or online. You can find out much more at www.missfoodwise.com/2016/10/belgian-cafe-culture-book.html/



* We have a limited stock of quality facsimiles of a rare 34-page Gerard catalogue for sale, printed just like the original and measuring 21cms x 17cms. Several Weber orchestration styles including the Brabo, Styria, Maestro and Solea are described and illustrated in it. In the UK this costs just £6.00, or \$10.00 from the U.S.A. You can find more details on the book page of our website.

IN BRIEF

The weekly glossy magazine supplement to the **Yorkshire Post** regional newspaper of Saturday, January 6th 2018 carried a well-written, almost full-page article on the subject of collecting juke boxes, written by John Vincent. It was accompanied by a large colour picture of the Wurlitzer Style 850 Peacock jukebox which we purchased at auction last year on behalf of a client, and which was mentioned in the previous edition of *Grace Notes*.

We are sorry to report the passing on April 22nd of **Brian Dunford** the well-known engine and organ owner from Flockton, West Yorkshire. Over the years Brian purchased and restored several road steam engines including examples by Sentinel, Foden, Garrett and Burrell. The fine Burrell showmen's scenic road locomotive "King George V" of 1911 was a familiar sight at many events together with the 89 key Gavioli organ we obtained and restored for him over 20 years ago. This was believed to

be the first book-playing instrument to be used on the UK mainland, and more recently, was the first fairground organ to be recorded and released on compact disc in this country. †

Thanks to all who re-subscribed to this e-newsletter as a result of the new General Data Protection Regulation of May 25th. If you know someone who would like to receive *Grace Notes*, please ask them to subscribe by visiting our website.

46-KEY ORGAN GOES TO AUSTRALIA

Congratulations to the enthusiastic couple from Melbourne, Australia, who visited us during 2017 and purchased the handily-sized 46-key Andrew Whitehead fair organ which was for sale on our website. Before it left, several improvements were carried out and the instrument was cleaned, adjusted and tuned. Along with its library of music books, including some new ones selected by the owners, the organ was then carefully packed for its long sea voyage "down under". This included hermetically sealing the organ and its accessories in a foil bag with desiccant to prevent the possible build-up of moisture whilst in transit. As with all our international



shipments, the bespoke packing case was fully compliant with present international regulations and constructed to be handled by fork-lift. We can arrange the transportation of all kinds of instruments, whether purchased from us or not, including all documentation and insurance. We have extensive experience in the use of dedicated 20 and 40ft containers and trailers and also smaller consolidated consignments by land, sea and air. We have arranged the safe worldwide transport of several large dance, street and fair organs, piano orchestrions and other items. Call us in confidence to discuss your requirements.

FEATURED ORGAN SCALE

WILHELM BRUDER SÖHNE MODELS 76 / 77

This scale was introduced by the Walldkirch firm of Wilhelm Bruder Söhne during the 1920s in response to the changing market for fairground organs. The aim was to produce a musical, yet physically small instrument that would be strong in sound and attractive in appearance, yet produced at a low cost. The firm referred this range of new instruments as *Starkton-Notenorgeln* or "powerful sounding book organs" and designated them as models 76 and 77. Model 76 instruments did not have percussion or reed pipes, and were perhaps designed for use in children's roundabouts, as the sound is not so aggressive. The model 77 had percussion and fuller instrumentation. The scale provides five bass notes, F, G, A, C and D, which in the model 77 organs are furnished by reed pipes designated as *tubas* by the makers. There are no stopped or open helpers sounding with these pipes, but the full, warm sound of the reeds on their own produces a fine founda-

tion to the music. There are 15 notes in the accompaniment division, which has an abridged compass of notes from g to b, predominantly featuring wooden trumpets with a helper. The rhythm of the music is thus perfectly accentuated by the trumpets playing short chords, and counter-melodies contrast with the melody division. This has 17 notes, continuing on the sequence from c to g; the scale contains no d# in any of the divisions. The melody is carried by a mixture which can vary in composition from organ to organ. However, in all cases, the mixture carries the melody line admirably, often at octaves, in which case it soars above the accompaniment so that the music always has clarity. Although the scale provides for a forte / piano function, we only know of one instrument with this feature. The percussion effects comprise of a snare drum with two independent beaters, and a bass drum and Chinese cymbal sounding together. Interestingly, the company chose to make the tracker bar spacing the

same as Gavioli's instead of that usually favoured by WBS. Perhaps this was due to the influence of the 46-keyless organs they were making at this time for Chiappa Ltd. in London. A new design of façade was produced for the *Starkton* range of organs, which reflected the jazz age in its style. Many organs with serial numbers towards the end of WBS production are instruments of this type, suggesting that the design brief had correctly anticipated the demands of showmen. A large repertoire of music was produced, especially the hit tunes of the day, which guaranteed the popularity of these organs with the fair-going public. The factory arrangements were by Eugen Bruder, one of the principals of the firm. In the years after the war, Gustav Bruder produced much additional music for this scale, including several impressive potpourris and concert pieces which leave the listener in wonder at what can be achieved with just 37 playing notes!



This smart model 76 Starkton organ was used on the fairs in what later became East Germany and remained there until the early 1990s. It was collected by us from Hamburg, brought back to our workshop and fully restored and re-decorated. A complete repertoire of carefully produced new music was also furnished, to which the subsequent owner has also added. It is mounted in a smart, compact four-wheeled box trailer which can be pulled with a large car. The organ made the long journey from North Yorkshire to the organ festival in Walldkirch in 2011 where it was well-received. It is now for sale, and would be an ideal starter instrument for an enthusiast with a liking for German fair organs. Contact us for further details - more pictures and a video can be found on the For Sale page on our website.

THE AIR THAT WE BREATHE

The compressed air used in all organs is the very life blood of the instrument. Traditionally, this was furnished by bellows (or a pump) and there can be no doubt that this remains an excellent method of producing "wind" (as organ builders refer to it.) However, many organs of more recent construction have always had wind supplied by a blower, and for reasons of convenience or cost the original bellows were often removed years ago from organs. From time to time we encounter organs of this nature, fitted with older blowers which are often belt driven. Sometimes these are not

even centrifugal fans but are of the paddle-type, which, after running for some time, can heat up the wind being produced, causing tuning and other problems with the organ, especially in hot weather. Over the years we have gained a lot of experience with blowers and their associated wind control, and to our amazement often see organs where there is absolutely no control over the volume of air supplied to the reservoir - a wholly unsatisfactory situation. For the last few years we have mainly been supplying blowers fitted with the latest inverter motor drives, whereby the fan speed can be regulated exactly as required. This

arrangement reduces unwanted noise, and significantly lowers the energy requirement, especially the initial starting load - an advantage when using a portable generator. Not only can we supply complete new units for use in Europe, but also for organs in the U.S.A. In these instances we specify American-market motors and inverters so that any future repairs can be easily carried out locally. If you currently have a problem with your existing blower, or wish to buy a brand new one, why not contact us now? We'll be pleased to give you further advice.

JIM KRUGHOFF R.I.P.

We were very saddened to receive the news that **James A. (Jim) Krughoff**, of Downers Grove, Illinois, USA passed away on February 20th. Jim, together with Sherrie, his wife of over 50 years, built up a world-class collection of mechanical musical instruments and associated music libraries. The collection housed a wide variety of instruments, from reproducing pianos and musical boxes to a Wurlitzer theatre organ. Jim's great passion, however, was for large and rare German and American orchestrions and organs. We are

proud to have been associated with the full restoration of two major items in the collection: the fine model 38 Ruth organ which came from Berlin and the famous *Blue Angel* Decap robot organ. Jim and Sherrie were founder members of the Lake Michigan Chapter of the Musical Box Society International, and we were privileged to have been guests at a number of Open House events and to have enjoyed their spontaneous, generous hospitality, including their legendary barbecues with plenty of Jim's favourite 'Old Style' beer! Their well-organised presentations as part

of MBSI National Conventions held in Chicago will be long-remembered for the fine music and pleasant atmosphere. Jim collected instruments because he was genuinely interested in and enjoyed their music, playing them either for his own or visitors' pleasure almost every day. We produced over 1700 metres of new books for the Ruth organ which included seldom-heard overtures and concert pieces which Jim had carefully selected to bring out the best in the instrument. We offer our sincere condolences to Sherrie and family at this sad time. †

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



**A C Pilmer Automatic
Music Ltd.**

Correspondence Address:
Ridingwood Farm
Upper Common Lane
Clayton West
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD8 9LN

Phone: + 44 (0) 1924 272743
Mobile phone: + 44 (0) 738 879843
E-mail: enquiries@acpilmer.com
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www.acpilmer.com

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87-KEY GAVIOLI ORGAN'S DEBUT

(Continued from Page 1)

After removal from the basement of the house in Florida the instrument was carefully packed and shipped in a container to the UK. Since then, a full restoration and re-decoration has taken place, undoing some of the alterations made in the late 1920s and returning the organ to the original Gavioli specification and scale. Fortunately, in this instance, the bellows ('pump' for our U.S.A. readers) had been retained, and these were completely re-leathered. The original hand-carved façade ornaments and figures were repaired, re-decorated and gilded, and a completely new repertoire of music was furnished. Although a number of 87-key Gavioli organs remain today, very few are configured to the original scale, which provides individual control for the band mistress's conducting arm, and for her head and left arm. Similarly, the two bell ringer figures are controlled from their own key in the music. In most other cases, as 89-key (VB) music is being used, these functions have been linked to the operation of the bass drum and non-existent register controls. We have never before seen the figures operate as the original makers intended, and this was a revelation, as the independent control offers an enhanced visual and musical dimension. Similarly, the true character of an 87-key organ can be heard by using the correct musical arrangements. Although the organ provided the music for a carousel, it did not stand in its centre, as is the custom here in the U.K., but stood against the wall of the pavilion housing the carousel, facing the ride. The original high proscenium had thus remained, which, although impressive in appearance, created practical problems for the organ's transportation and display outdoors in public. The photographs below show how Mike Dreehan overcame this problem. It is intended to present the organ at events outside of Scotland when the details of the presentation have been completed, and we will advise of this in due course. As well operation from the normal mains supply or on-board generator, the electrical system for the organ has been designed for use with a 110V DC supply, which at some events will be provided by Mike's Burrell Special Scenic Road Locomotive "Dolphin".



View of the rear of the organ showing the original case panels with cloth inserts whilst a new music book is in play.



In order to accommodate the organ's tall proscenium, a unique trailer was designed by Mike Dreehan and built in Yorkshire by WHF Ltd. The entire roof is elevated on hydraulic rams to allow the carved work to be displayed. Additionally the trailer, riding on air suspension, has hydraulic levelling jacks, a built-in diesel generator and a sophisticated lighting system. The opening doors are hydraulically operated by remote control. The sides of the trailer have been lettered and gilded following an original Gavioli design by sign writer Phil Anderson. We firmly believe that this is the finest organ display trailer anywhere in the world. (Top) The trailer with its Volvo tractor unit. (Left) The roof has been raised from its travelling height and the organ's carved work has been erected. The front flap covering the wheels has yet to be lowered. The curtains then slide into place on electric tracks.