

Bumbling Bruder Tour #6 (2011)

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The 2011 Bumbling Bruder Tour consisted of 26 COAA members traveling to Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland for two exciting weeks of organ viewing and listening. Many organs were seen over this time period and I will just touch on some of the ones that were new to our group. As always hospitality on the part of the European host was excellent and I don't believe we saw any organs we wouldn't like to have in our own collection.

Tourist activities were not forgotten as the group first headed to "Rüdesheim am Rhein" (Germany) and enjoyed the hospitality of Siegfried Wendel and family. Viewing the Wendel collection, taking a chairlift ride to the Neiderwald Monument or enjoying a Rhine River cruise, and dining out in the "Drosselgasse" were just some of the activities to jump-start the trip.



Figure 1. A portion of the Waldkirch Organ Foundation collection of hand and barrel organs.

The next attraction of the trip was the always popular visit to the Jäger & Brommer workshop along with the attached Waldkirch Organ Foundation collection of hand organs (Figure 1) and the fabulous 66-key Ruth barrel organ featured on the back cover of the last issue [#49] of the *Carousel Organ*. Wolfgang Brommer was proud to display their new Weber instruments, a Weber *Violinovo* (check spelling) and a Weber *Grandezza*.

The evening of the above visit found the "Bumbling Bruders" entertained by Dr. Evelyn Flögel, curator of the Elztalmuseum in Waldkirch. We enjoyed a well-presented moritat exhibition, performed by Dorothea Walther (Figure 2), followed by dinner and demonstrations of various fair organs in the basement, one outstanding example being a 48-key Wilhelm Bruder (Model 79) seen as Figure 3, centerfold.



Figure 2. Moritat performer, Dorothea Walther (also a singer & actress) demonstrated several songs for the Bumbling Bruder group.

The morning of the tri-annual Waldkirch Orgelfest gave the COAA group a chance to visit the cuckoo clock capital of the world, Triberg, Germany. An outstanding attraction, especially for those with our specialized interest, is the Schwarzwald Museum. The museum holdings consist not only of clocks made in the area but also nearly 200 hand organs (Figure 4) and one well-preserved hand-cranked 59-key Wrede fair organ (Figure 5, centerfold).



Figure 4. A view of some of the many hand-cranked barrel organs featured in the Schwarzwald Museum in Triberg, Germany.



Figure 11. A group of moritot singers brought large crowds of onlookers.

Opening ceremonies in the late afternoon were held in front of the Elztalmuseum in Waldkirch with official speeches, hand-organ playing and of course, consumption of the local brew occurred. The featured organ outside was a 90-key Dutch street organ, *De Lekkerkerker* (see Figure 9, “Remembering Carl Frei” in this issue).

The weekend of the 2011 Orgelfest was as festive as any in the past but there seemed to be even more well-restored and perfectly-sounding organs present. It was a treat to be able to enjoy the German and Dutch organs. One of my favorites (sorry, I am going to have a lot of ‘favorites’) was Mike Hoefnagal’s 67-key Alfred Bruder fair organ (Figure 6, centerfold). Playing on the north end of town this organ was in perfect pitch and a delight to hear and enjoy. Sitting across from this organ, close to the organ restorer, Stefan Fleck’s workshop, was a 70-key Wellershaus (Figure 7, centerfold); and a Model 35 Ruth organ owned and operated by the Hinzen family (Figure 8, centerfold).

The Orgelfest was alive with many other great-sounding fair organs including both Gebr. and Wilhelm Bruders (models 107 and 41-note); various style Ruth organs (style 33, 35, 36s and 37). Two particularly nice Ruth organs were a Ruth 36c owned by Franz van Reeken (Figure 9, centerfold) and the style 37-new brought by the Hinzen family of organ owners (see back cover, issue #48 of the *Carousel Organ*). Another ‘favorite’ of mine was a 62-key Wrede organ (front cover). This organ was brought by the Blome family and was quite spectacular when lit with a multitude of incandescent bulbs built into the organ façade.

The rally was not without Dutch street organs however as four Carl Frei organs were also playing including *De Dubblele Biphone*, *De Pod* (Figure 10, centerfold); a 63-key Marengi organ; and the *De Lekkerkerker* which played in front of the museum.

Interspersed amongst the large organs in this history-laden Black Forest town were many, hand-organ grinders, more than a few with vintage organs and some with the newer manufactured ones. Several of the grinders did performed moritot acts (Figure 11), sometimes alone and often in groups such as the members of this ensemble. Figure 12 illustrates one grinder with a beautiful, vintage A. Ruth and Sohn barrel organ. Many organs of this type were playing for the two-day Orgelfest.



Figure 12. Wolfgang Huttel plays the A. Ruth and Sohn barrel organ.



Figure 13. Anita Dahlinger was the winner of the tri-annual, give-a-away 20-note Jäger und Brommer hand organ. Surrounding her are “EURO-Mouse” and a clown from EUROPA-PARK (located next to Waldkirch).

Finalizing each rally in the past has been the assembling of the crowd to witness a raffle of a new hand-organ donated by the Jäger and Brommer firm. The winner in the past (we have been to five previous rallies) has always been unknown to the “Bumbling Bruders” but this year we had a winner of our own, Anita Dahlinger (Figure 13). Anita eventually was shipped a neat and unique 20-note Jäger & Brommer to use at rallies.

Leaving Waldkirch we visited three collectors in Switzerland. The first was the Hanspeter Kyburz collection in Oberentfelden. This collection, for the most part, consists of mechanical musical instruments that are for sale. The gem of the collection, however, was the very large, 125-key Carl Frei (**Figure 14, centerfold**) that, in the years past, had been on display outside of the Jäger & Brommer factory. The organ has recently been restored by Johnny Verbeek and was enjoyable to hear.

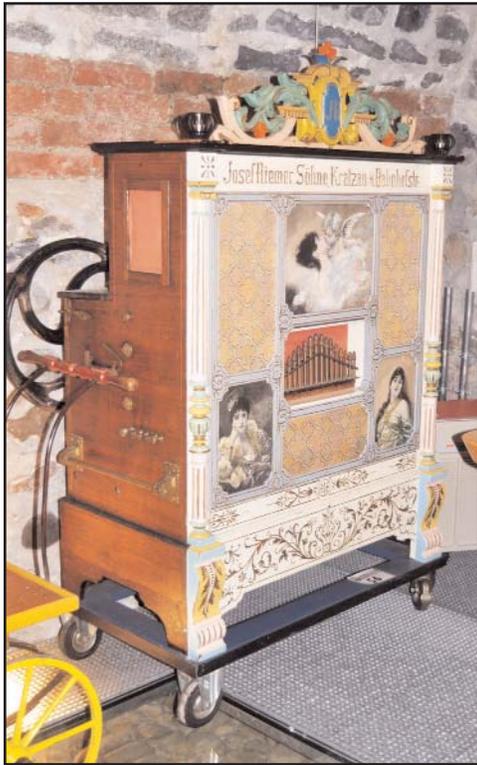


Figure 16. A 45-key Riemer barrel organ—a neat mechanical instrument from Czechoslovakia.

Next was the collection of Kurt and Ursula Matter in Oberhofen. Again the ‘Bumbling Bruders’ had chance to view a variety of mechanical instruments. The spectacular organ of the collection was a beautifully restored 62-key Wilhelm Bruder (**Figure 15, centerfold**). Only a few of these were made and with the increased number of pipes it had an outstanding sound. The Matters also had mid-sized barrel organs in the collection, a 45-key Kolb and a 45-key key Riemer (**Figure 16**).



Figure 17. An unusual Gavioli organ in the Fredy Kuenzle collection.

Oberhofen (Oberhofen am Thunersee) is located on Lake Thun and the view from the hotel was spectacular with the Swiss Alps in the background, some having snow from the previous winter. Leaving the next morning was hard to do but the group managed to travel north to Lichtensteig to visit the Fredy Künzle collection. Fredy’s hospitality was evident as he guided the group through his collection of mechanical instruments. The basement held the most interest as this was the part of the building that housed the organs. New to the collection was a Gavioli fair organ (**Figure 17**).

Later that travel day members were treated to the private collection of Tom Richter, a collector who lives just minutes away from the Frankfurt airport. Several large machines were viewed and the woodworking shop was envied by all in the group. Tom’s organ is a Model 109 (66-keyless) Gebrüder Bruder (**Figure 18, centerfold**), was the highlight of the collection.

The following morning the group traveled to Brasschaat, Belgium. An afternoon late lunch was followed by a visit to Johnny Verbeek’s workshop in St. Job in t Goor. Many large machines were in various stages of repair but we also viewed representative samples of new, smaller book-operated organs (**Figure 19**). That evening was spent enjoying the collection of Danny DeBie in Balen, Belgium. Many large orchestrions, dance organs and a Style 6 Welte were featured



Figure 19. A new 45-key street organ manufactured by Johnny Verbeek.



Figure 20. A 52-key Dutch street organ, *The Salem*, viewed in the Henry Krijnen collection.

Leaving this area the next day gave the ‘Bumbling Bruders’ an opportunity to be one of the first groups to enjoy the Henry Krijnen collection in Oosterhout, Belgium. Henry is into gambling both as a business (supplying machines) and a hobby as he had quite an



Figure 21. A well-restored 68-key Wellershaus in the DeVoer Brother collection (Ulvenhout, Holland).

eclectic collection of arcade and mechanical music. His organ inventory was large and included 52-key Gasparini, an 84-key Mortier, a Poirot Cylinder Organ, a 70-key Wellershaus and a 52-key Dutch street organ (Figure 20).

We left this part of Belgium to arrive at our hotel in Utrecht, Holland where we would branch out and tour several interesting collections of organs over the next few days. First on the list was the DeVoer Brothers in Ulvenhout. The collection was familiar to us as we have visited it several times in previous tours. Maartin van der Vlucht was our guide and helped us through the various collections in this area. The DeVoer collection consists of German-made organs including a 67-key Wilhelm Bruder, a 79-key Richter, a Ruth Model 37 and a 68-key Wellershaus (Figure 21).

A second Dutch collection that we have visited before is that of Wies Schwagten. This is dance organ heaven with some of the largest Decaps and Mortiers ever manufactured. Newer organs that we haven’t featured in previous write-ups include three 105-key Decap dance organs (Figures 22-24) found in a separate room off of his dance organ hall. For those that admire dance organs, this is the ultimate showroom.

A third and popular attraction in this area of Holland (Hilvarenbeeck) is the showroom of Cris van Laarhoven. Built specifically for the display of organs as well as a dance hall this collection has been featured in a previous issue of the *Carousel Organ* (“Nederlands Boekorgel Centrum” #32).

Most of his organs have been covered by previous tours (105-key Robot Decap, 50-key Limonaire street organ, 61-key Marengi and 101-key Decap with the exception of a new Mortier dance organ (Figure 25), the *Poseidon*.



Figure 25. The *Poseidon*, a 101-key Mortier, is a recent addition to the van Laarhoven collection. Originally equipped with a different facade and called *de Visjes* (the Fishes) it has been recently restored. It was originally constructed in 1929.



Figures 22-24. Three 105-key Decap dance organs in the Wies Schwagten collection.

The following day many of the tour members traveled to Amsterdam for more tourist-like activities but a few of us “can’t-get-enough-of-organs” members persuaded our driver to take us to the Hinzen collection of organs. Boasting over 25 fair organs (all used with their carnival rides) we were able to see just a few, the most memorable being the large Style 38 Ruth (**Figure 26, centerfold**). In the years past there has been a Style 38 Ruth present at the Waldkirch Orgelfest but this year’s celebration was void of such an organ, so this was a treat to see and listen to this magnificent organ. Amongst their stable of various models of Ruth organs was a fairly uncommon organ, a Model 33 Voigt which had been converted to play Ruth music (**Figure 27**). It is a compact organ but still useful for a small carnival ride.



Figure 27. A Model 33 Voigt fair organ in the Hinzen collection.



Figure 28. A perfectly restored street organ, *De Engelekest*, in the collection of Henk Veenigen.

Our second to last day on the tour we revisited Henk Veenigen and family in De Wijk. Like the van Laarhoven collection, Henk has authored an article about his collection which appeared in issue #19 of the *Carousel Organ* (“Henk Veenigen’s Draaiorgels”). Hand-cranked and in wonderful tune was one of my ‘favorites,’ *De Engelekest* (**Figure 28**), a 56-key Carl Frei organ with 148 pipes. Henk has been involved with the street organ for many years and a detailed photo album of the Veenigen’s revealed a younger Henk punching out cardboard music for a Gavioli street organ, *De Adelaar* (**Figure 29**).



Figure 29. A vintage photo of Henk Veenigen punching out books for the Gavioli street organ, *De Adelaar*, in the background.

A new venue for the group was visited later the same day in a small town, Stadskanaal. This was the Museum Musica and it was run by the Norderer family. Housed in an abandoned church it was an eclectic collections of all things musical as well as other common household items.

Our final day of touring found the ‘Bumbling Bruders’ visiting the Speelklok Museum in Utrecht. The interior of the museum had been altered since our last visit. The large organ hall was the same (**Figure 30**) but the rooms adjacent were smaller allowing for fewer of the organs that we liked to enjoy to be appreciated. Many Perlee organs had been assimilated by the museum—one such and well-respected organ was *De Arabier*, a 75-key Verbeeck-built organ that was quite famous for playing at street organ rallies in Holland (**Figure 31, centerfold**).

The last collection of the trip was visited in the afternoon. We traveled about an hour west to the town of Haarlem where the Kunkelstichting Museum resides. Our visit was moderated by Louis Guykens, a member of the KDV organ group. The museum is well

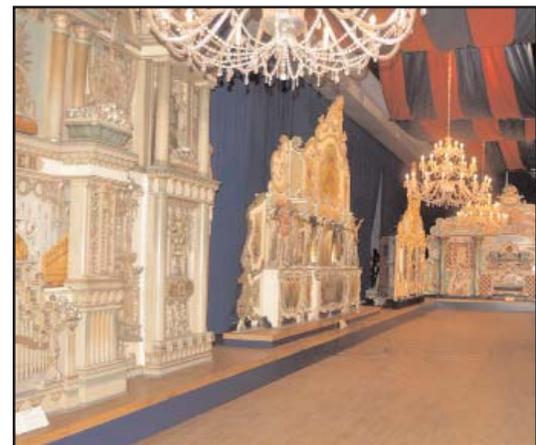


Figure 30. The large organs in the Speelklok Museum, Utrecht, Holland. A 101-key Mortier and a 65-key Gavioli can be seen in the foreground.

known for the *Kunkels* organ (**Figure 32**). Restored just a few years ago this 112-key Marengi/Frei organ is instantly popular as soon as it starts playing. Most of the other organs on loan to the organ hall have been reported on in write-ups of previous Bumbling Bruder trips.

This has been a brief report on the organs visited, photographed, videoed and appreciated in the 2011 Bumbling Bruder Tour. All of our visits and tours were as a result of our European friends and it would be amiss for me not to acknowledge them at this time. **Figure 33** is a collage of those contacts that helped make the tour a success.

Figure 32. The *Kunkels* organ, a 112-Marengi/Frei organ is the centerpiece of the Kunkelstichting Museum in Haarlem, Holland.



Figure 33
 (1st row). Wolfgang Brommer; Theo DeVoer; Danny & Lutgard DeBie; Evelyn Flögel; Louis Guykens
 (2nd row): Minus Hinzen; Heinz Jäger; Joop Unkel (driver); Henry Krijnen; Fredy Künzle; Hanspeter Kyburz
 (3rd row): Kurt & Ursula Matter; Jan Norderer; Tom Richter; Wies Schwagten; Alberic Godderis (restorer, Speelklok Museum)
 (4th row): Maarten van der Vlugt; Cris van Laarhoven; Henk and Marc Veenigen; Johnny, Marijke and Jeffery Verbeeck
 (5th row): Jens Wendel; Siegfried Wendel



Figure 3. A 48-key Wilhelm Bruder (Model 79) in the basement of the Elztalmuseum in Waldkirch.



Figure 5. A 59-key Wrede fair organ in the Schwarzwald Museum in Triberg, Germany. This large organ can be hand-cranked.



Figure 8. A Model 35 Ruth organ in the collection of the Hinzen family. They brought three organs to the Orgelfest in Waldkirch.



Figure 9. A Model 36c A. Ruth & Sohn organ owned and brought by Franz Reeken. The lady figures rotate while the organ plays.



Figure 15. A 62-key Wilhelm Bruder in the Matter collection in Oberhofen, Switzerland. Note the heavily carved facade.



Figure 18. An unusual case style seen in this Model 109 Gebr. Bruder of Tom Richter, Neu-Isenberg, Germany.



Figure 6. A rarely seen 67-key Alfred Bruder fair organ in the collection of Jan Hoefnagel. It was trailed from Holland to Waldkirch.



Figure 10. A Perlee organ built by Carl Frei and brought by the van Leeuwen family from Amsterdam. Named *De Pod* it is a favorite of the Waldkirch Orgelfest, appearing in several previous rallies.



Figure 7. A 70-key Wellershaus fair organ brought by the Ballman family.



Figure 14. The immense 125-key Carl Frei organ that sits in front of the show-room of Swiss collector/dealer, Hanspeter Kyburz.



Figure 26. A spectacular Model 38 A. Ruth and Sohn concert organ in the collection of the Hinzen family.



Figure 31. The *Arab*, a 75-key Perlee organ, originally built by the Verbeeck company. It is in the Speelklok Museum in Utrecht, Holland.