3.13 The O’Mealy Box
Wilbert Garvin

Many years ago Seán Reid gave me a black box for safe-keeping. It was square-shaped and relatively narrow, with a sliding top.

It contained an assortment of drawings, patterns and notes of R.L. O’Mealy. At the 2007 reopening of the refurbished NPU headquarters I passed on this box, plus three of R.L’s hand tools to NPU since I accepted that now was the time when they would be safe and could be used for display purposes in conjunction with the lathe and reamers that had been donated by Ken McLeod and myself a number of years ago.
O’Mealy Box contents

The contents of the box gives an insight into the workings of O’Mealy. Much of his work involved restoring pipes and he identified the pipes that he was working on by the name of the owner. Some of these I know about, but many of them are unknown to me. They could be the starting point to finding out more about these players and where their pipes are now.

Boyce’s chanter - hole positions
Boyde’s chanter - unnamed big bass regulator

Bunting\(^1\) - regulator

Congdon’s - key jaws - Taylor style
Congdon’s - bass regulator - detailed drawing
Congdon’s middle regulator - hole positions and diameters - 2 drawings
Congdon’s bellows outlet - pattern for leather
Congdon’s bass drone - details of measurements

Connery’s chanter - hole positions, measurements etc. + reed cap

Coyle’s regulator - details
Coyle’s bass regulator - 2 drawings

Cramsie - middle regulator

Delap\(^2\) - bag measurements
Delap - regulator

George Farrar’s bellows\(^3\) - clapper pattern - dated 11 April 1929
George (presumably Farrar) - bag pattern

Gildas’ middle regulator\(^4\) - for pipes with 17” chanter - details
Gildas’ middle regulator - 17 & 7/8”
Gildas’ bass regulator
Gildas’ small regulator - 13&1/8” - holes positions, measurements etc.
Details of Br. Gildas’ chanter

\(^1\) This is Frank Bunting Senior – see Paddy Maxwell entry in article “3.14 O’Mealy Pupils” written by Frank Junior who now has possession of his father’s Mealy pipes.

\(^2\) See Miles Delap entry in article “3.14.3 O’Mealy Pupils”

\(^3\) George Farrer was married to R.L.’s sister Letitia

\(^4\) Brother Gildas, was a De La Salle Brother whose real name was Patrick O’Shea. He was a native Irish speaker from Kerry. He was a well known figure in the piping world, was a friend of R. L. and a regular visitor to his house in Belfast.
Haugh’s ordinary bass (Taylor)

Holywood’s top-piece for chanter
Holywood’s bag - details on Postcard

Hope’s (William Hope) tenor drone - butt-piece and tuning piece
Hope’s middle drone - butt-piece and tuning piece
Hope’s bass drone - tuning piece
Hope’s middle regulator
Note on Hope’s regulator

Miss Johnston’s (Netta Jane Johnston - Carnlough) leather pattern for outlet from bellows (on paper dated 1925)
Miss Johnston’s bag - pattern

McCleary’s bag - measurements V.T.B.C.? - 2 drawings

McKay - (fiddle-maker, Carnlough) - bag pattern
McKay’s bellows pattern

Maher’s bass regulator - details
Maher’s bass regulator showing length of keys

Bag pattern - Ned’s bag

Neill’s big drone - butt piece and tuning piece - 2 drawings
Neill’s bass regulator
Neill’s middle regulator - key details (2)
Neill’s big bass regulator - details (2 sides of paper)
Neill’s big bass - details of holes - another of Neill’s large bass
Neill’s middle regulator
Neill’s big drone - butt-piece - hole drillings (in notebook)
O’Mangon’s top-piece (chanter)
O’Mangon’s bag - pattern
O’Mangon’s chanter - details (in notebook)

O’Neill’s American regulator

Own stuck bag - 1976

Peter’s pipes - details of drones and regulators

Rowsome chanter - details of hole positions

Ryan - bellows leather pattern
Ryan’s middle regulator - 2 drawings
Ryan’s middle regulator - hole positions (2 off)
Ryan’s big drone
Ryan’s big drone - butt piece

Savage’s buttpiece of big drone

Scanlon’s chanter - details (in notebook)

Taylor’s bass - ordinary
Taylor’s bass regulator

Tootal’s chanter - details - including top-piece
Tootal’s bass regulator
Tootal’s big bass regulator - hole positions
Tootal’s big bass regulator - details
Tootal’s ordinary bass regulator
Tootal’s middle regulator - hole positions
Tootal’s boxwood bass regulator
Tootal’s ordinary boxwood bass - hole positions, sizes
Tootal’s tenor drone - butt-piece
Tootal’s middle drone - butt-piece
Tootal’s bag - pattern

Ward’s E regulator

Big bass - key patterns (Taylor style)

Pattern for own bellows (outlet) dated Sept.1940)

Another 3 patterns for bellows outlet - no names

Bag pattern - Kenna pipes (before and after sewing)
Pattern for arm pad on bellows - unlabelled

Pattern for bellows leather - unmarked

Note on own pipes

3 Bag patterns - unlabelled

2 bellows leather patterns - unlabelled

bellows leather pattern labelled Father’s?

Envelope (Taxes) containing regulator key patterns (Taylor style) for Hewitt’s middle regulator; Neill’s ordinary bass; Neill’s bass; Coyle’s A bass; Tootal’s bass G (2); plus 4 unlabelled.

Template for drillings in butt-piece of bass drone (wrapped up by me to avoid damage).

**O’Mealy Notebook**

Notebook containing assorted measurements plus names of tunes and the notes of the first bar - however not in O’Mealy’s handwriting!

**Unpublished Airs:**

McParson’s Farewell
The Little Devil’s Waltz
The Lad that I love
The Lord of Mayo
My Love among the Roses
Carolan’s Farewell
Farewell Inverness
Killycrankey
I long to see Old Ireland free
Miss Gregg
Over the Bridge
The Bush in Bloom
Take Her out and Air Her
Miss Multitude
Blackberry Blossom
Castle Kelly
Flatcaps Jane
The Wind that shakes the Barley
Miss Monaghan
Drousy Maggie
Lagan Slashers
His of Slainstown (?)
New Found Out
Jenny Pickin’ Cockles
Follow us down to Carlow

**Hornpipes:**
The Liverpool hornpipe
Flowers of Edinburgh
The Cork Hornpipe
The Sailor’s hornpipe
The Dublin Breakdown

**Reels:**
The Stoney Steps
The Flogging Reel
The Scholar
The Bush in Bloom
Bonnie Kate
My Love among the Roses
The Bright Star of Munster
The Morning Star
The Heathery Breeze
What the Devil ails You
Miss McLeod's reel
The Shannon Breeze
The Dublin Lasses
The Green Fields
The Fairy Dance
Over the Bridge to Bessie

Unlabelled regulator drawings - Taylor style - possibly O’Mealy’s own copy of Taylor.

Old(!) faded measurements etc. - small pages from a notebook perhaps

Letter - from Brother John (Johnny Mealy) plus reply from R. L.

Letter to Mr McCullagh 13 June 1912 (on back letter to Capt.O’Neill June 1912 - proof?)

Letter from D.McCullough 28 Feb.1912

Letter from D.McCullough 8 March 1912 - reply on back dated 11 March 1912
Letter from John Southwell, Newry 1926.
Letter from Brother Gildas, Downpatrick, 1933.

Letter from Br. Gildas dated 11 Jan 1933 (photocopy)

Wilbert Garvin

Dear Mr. O'Mahy,

I enclose the notes of Ballybray Bay, just as I attempt to play it.

When firing the lower end of the big regulator, perhaps it would be better to shorten the wood a little (cut a little?) so that the wort would go further up on it and the brass circle would not look so broad.

I hope you will succeed in your experiment on the clock.

With every best wish to yourself and 
Mrs. O'Mahy.

Yours sincerely,
Brother Gildas.
I am sending this letter to be posted in Belfast owing to the fear of delay.

7 Queen St.
Newry
4th May 1928

Dear Mr. McAlpine,

Received your letter regarding the necessary pipe material to make.

I would prefer the ebony or dark rose wood with the full set of regulators.

You state in your letter that it is a long time since you played at a concert in Newry.

I'm sorry to say that all the concerts that were held recently give no consideration to our native songs or music.

Let me know about the price of instrument I am writing about.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Best Wishes,

Yours Sincerely,

John Smith