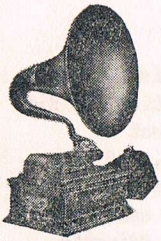


The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

Volume 2. Issue 2. Editorial and Secretarial Address December, 1966.
73 Flockton St., Christchurch, 1. New Zealand.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

WORTH WAITING FOR? Members will have realised from the longer wait for this issue of "The Phonographic Record" that we have altered the frequency of publication. It was decided at the Annual General Meeting to publish six issues per year, bi-monthly with the possibility of an extra issue for a special occasion.

THE SEASON'S GREETINGS: As this is our last issue for 1966, we would like to wish each Member a very happy Christmas and a New Year of successful collecting.

THE FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: This was held on Monday, September 26th in St. John's Anglican Church Hall, Latimer Square, Christchurch. Mr. Norris presented the Annual report and also expressed his thanks to all Members who had made the first year of the Society such a success. The election of Officers resulted as follows:- Patron Mr. C.E. Woledge, President Mr. W.T. Norris, Vice-President Mr. W.S. Dini, Secretary-Treasurer Miss P.G. Rogers. Committee - Messrs. W. Anderson, A.M. Otley, and W.E. Webb.

THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS: The Audit of the accounts has now been completed. There have been several small adjustments and any Member who wants a copy of these adjusted accounts may have it on application to the Secretary-Treasurer. The final balance of income over expenditure for the year was £43. 7. 4. Next year it should be possible to have the audit completed before the Annual General Meeting.

EDISON GEM HORNS: After some weeks of experiment on the part of two of the Members, the Society is able to offer the small straight (without flare) Gem horn exactly to the pattern of the original. We have only a few of these left and they are available to Members (unpainted, but with painting instructions) at £1 each, postage extra.

BINDERS FOR "THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD" We are at present investigating the possibility of having these made especially for us in England. It would be of assistance to us if Members who would be interested, would contact the Secretary.

CONVENTION 1967: It has been decided to hold the 1967 Convention at Queen's Birthday Weekend instead of Labour Weekend. Out of Christchurch Members who intend attending are asked to contact the Secretary.

NEVER BEEN TWENTY-ONE BEFORE: Alan Robb who has recently celebrated his twenty-first birthday was delighted to receive a cake which was decorated with a most ingenious model of a Berliner Hand-wind Gramophone complete with ice cream cone horn. Alan photographed this decoration, and we have included it in our illustrations in this issue.

EDISON DIAMOND DISCS

This article and the ones to follow will tell most of the story of the Diamond Disc, that is of the machines and recordings and the tone tests. Edison always strived for perfection and did not hesitate in spending endless time in research and vast sums of money on any project he thought worthwhile. The phonograph was reputed to be one of his favourite inventions, and no doubt this is one of the reasons he spent so much time and money in improving it. It seems that the Edison Blue Amberol Cylinder and the Diamond Disc were introduced about the same time and this was during 1912, the Diamond Disc being issued towards the end of the year. Edison's record catalogue claims that five years of tireless effort by the inventor and his associates, and three million dollars were needed for experimentation before the New Edison re-creation was produced.

It is proposed to divide the Diamond Disc story into five parts, A. The machine, B. The reproducer, C. The Disc, D. The tone tests, and E. The Artists. In this article we deal with A. THE MACHINE.

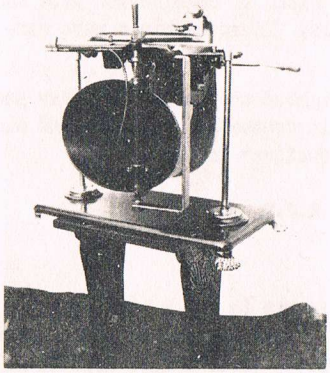
Anyone who has examined a Diamond Disc machine will find the workmanship of a very high standard. The finest are the Laboratory Models, most carefully made and having a large horn of special metal claimed to be non resonant. All these models had a small circular stamped gold disc affixed to the cabinet; this proclaimed them as Official Laboratory models. Almost all Diamond Disc models had a volume control; this consisted of a soft round ball which, by operation of a lever near the turntable could be inserted into the horn thus regulating the sound.

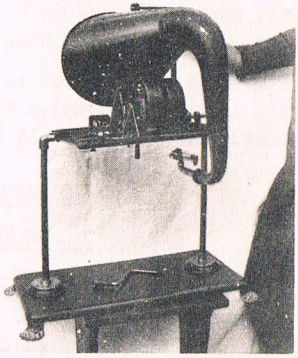
There was a large range of models, different woods being used and some machines having beautiful inlay work. It is not always realised that as both cylinder and disc machines were produced at the same time, the same cabinet was sometimes used for both. An example of this is the Amberola III and the Diamond Disc model, The Modern, also the cylinder machine, the Amberola 60 and the London No. 1, these were both table models. There were special models, none of which were imported into New Zealand and quite a few others of which only samples were imported. In the U.S.A. fantastic models costing thousands of dollars were produced for the wealthy, the most elaborate and expensive, costing 8320 dollars.

All models used a system similar to the cylinder machines; the reproducer was driven across the disc and did not depend on the grooves of the disc to propel it across as did the gramophone. This appears to be a unique feature of Edison machines. The motor was simplicity itself; lubrication of the whole motor was carried out through a number of small pipes, one to each bearing with a small piece of felt at the end of the pipe where it is brought out underneath the turntable. The motor of all the later models had all the gears cut at an angle to give silent running; the spring barrel had a bung which enabled lubrication to be done without dismantling the spring. Early models had a two ball governor, later ones had a more satisfactory three ball one. The very last motors had a special governor with a fitting to keep the governor balls in track. This was designed to prevent what was termed a "drunken governor".

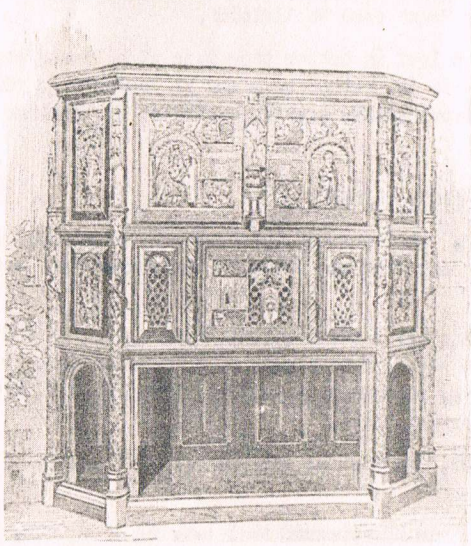
In the book "From Tin Foil to Stereo" there is an illustration of the earliest model. It was an overhorn machine. The first model to be imported into New Zealand was the B80. It was a table model with a large single spring, and was belt driven between the motor and the turntable. Another model to appear about the same time was the C250, an upright Laboratory model of Chippendale design. It sold for 250 dollars and was used for tone tests: it is easily identified as it is the model pictured on some of the record envelopes. In the latter stages of production, a number of models called The New Edison Long Playing Phonograph were produced; they were black in colour and were fitted with a long playing attachment. The price was high and few of such machines came to New Zealand. It was possible to convert a standard machine to long playing by fitting an attachment and this was the method used by most who wished to

EDISON DIAMOND DISC





TWO VIEWS OF THE MOTOR



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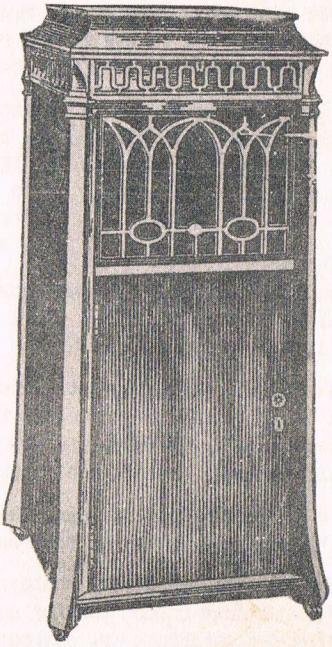


OFFICIAL LABORATORY
MODEL – C 250

play the long playing gold-label discs. This attachment consisted of a small set of gears, extra spring and barrel and a special reproducer which had LONG engraved on the top. The spring in the New Edisons, and some of the London Models was a big one, 1½" wide and 25 feet long.

The long playing models have two springs of this size giving sufficient power to play a full side of the 24 or 40 minute records with one winding. One of the outstanding Diamond Disc models was the Edisonic and the main feature of this machine was a long horn which, in combination with the special dance reproducer gave , more volume than any of the other models. These machines were rare and only two are known to have come to New Zealand.

Edison referred to this project as "re-creation" and copyrighted the word. In later years he would not allow anyone in his organisation to use the word "record" in connection with diamond discs. Collectors studying a Diamond disc envelope will find that the word "re-creation" is used.

TALKING OF CYLINDERS

A.J.R.

"..... to forgive, divine".

One of the hardest things about writing an article of any length is the inability to be absolutely certain that it contains no mistakes. This difficulty is even more acute for someone like myself who was born well after the Golden Age of phonographs was over. Very often after I have written an article I come across more information which either adds to, or contradicts the original article, and so there is nothing for it but to rewrite the article - if the magazine has not gone to press - or follow it up with a supplementary article or a correction. And, correcting the September article, I now find that the earliest Edison records were not played at 160 r.p.m. but at various speeds. When gold-moulded cylinders were introduced, the speed was raised to 160 r.p.m. My apologies to anyone who was misled. I also credited Lambert with making wax cylinders (October Record) for "wax" read "celluloid".

I am a firm believer in the old saying that "Half a loaf is better than none at all" and prefer to write an article knowing that there may be some errors in it, rather than say "I couldn't be 100% certain it's right", and not even attempt it. At least the errors always provide a subject for another article, which brings me to my main topic:

"SOME ERRORS ABOUT EDISON"

1. "The Phonograph was invented on August 12th, 1877". The cause of this error is a drawing by Edison of what is alleged to be the first model of the phonograph with the words "Kruesi, make this - Edison, August 12th 1877".

The book "Edison" by Mathew Josephson corrects this error stating that "this sketch is now known to have been drawn by the inventor some time after the event, from memory - and without date or any written instructions". (p.162). As Mr. Josephson says, it does not provide the mechanical information from which the workman, Kruesi, could have made the working model.

From a diary of another workman, Charles Batchelor, the date of the phonograph invention is established "beyond all doubt" as December 6th, 1877.

2. The second error concerns the photograph of Edison "as he appeared at 5 a.m. on June 16th, 1888, after five days without sleep" working on the improved model of the phonograph. Again by reference to various diaries and notebooks Mr. Josephson is able to correct this error, and says that the vigil actually lasted only seventy-two hours, which is still a considerable time.

Incidentally, I recently came across a print of the same photograph in the Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia, Vol. IX, p. 162, with the caption "Thomas Edison in America listening to the first 'voice letter' made by Colonel Gouraurd in England in 1888".

This seems an appropriate time at which to thank "A.J.R." or Alan Robb as Christchurch members know him for his unfailing and cheerful help over the past year. He has been of particular assistance in preparing a suitable accounting system for the Society. It is with the best wishes of the Christchurch members that Alan moves shortly to Timaru to take up a position there. He will continue to write for the magazine, and for this we are most grateful, as we are to all members who, by writing set themselves up as targets for criticism. Societies as well as Kipling's gardens "are not made by saying Oh! how beautiful and sitting in the shade". It is so much easier not to do anything than come out in the sunlight and work for fellow collectors; it is so much easier to say "there is nothing in it for me" than "what can I do for other collectors?" This is a society formed for the mutual help of collectors and we sincerely thank those who are helping to fulfil its aims.

THE BERLINER RECORDS

There are many in New Zealand who collect records and who have found single sided records. These are mostly 10" and 12" in diameter. However the first discs produced by Emile Berliner were five inches in diameter, single sided with hand engraved label and made of a material usually used for making buttons. These were thin and of poor quality and were made for hand-turned machines. Later discs were of larger diameter, 7", and were much thicker but had the same type of label. These gave a greater playing time and began with an announcement giving the title and artist on the record. The playing condition of these is not often good and discs are sometimes found worn and pitted from age and use. They had a plain reverse and were made for the trademark model gramophone and its predecessor. The disc which appears to have been produced next had an embossed trademark of an angel with a quill engraving a record. These had a handwritten title but the later disc was all embossed. These were different in two ways - they had no announcement and they had the trademark embossed on the reverse side. The disc to follow these was the first to have a paper label, it also had a much larger version of the trademark on the front and the same design on the reverse. This seems to be the first disc to appear with the wording The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd., the derivation of the famous G. & T. label.

Most of these were produced before 1900 and appear to have been produced in Germany for the English Company. Mr. Woledge, our Patron, has pointed out that many artists recorded on these discs long before they appeared on cylinder. One of the most celebrated artists in this category was Harry Lauder.

MUSICAL BOXES - HINTS FOR THE NEW COLLECTOR

W.T. Norris

In the issue published in March 1966, I began a series of articles concerning the three main classes of Musical Boxes. I now continue by discussing b, DISC ON STEEL WHEEL AGAINST COMB. This type of box is rarer than the pin type but examples are found in New Zealand reasonably frequently, but often in poor condition. The teeth are sometimes broken off, the discs may be bent and the governor is quite often broken or missing altogether. The spring is often unhooked or completely broken. If it is damaged and the machine is a large one, it would be advisable to take the whole thing to someone who understands springs as it is very easy to lose a finger or suffer a hand injury in removing this part from the machine. If the trouble is a break near the centre, the machine will work with a shortened spring. The broken end will need to be heated till red hot to remove the temper and a fresh hole drilled in the spring. The spring should then be placed back in the barrel and the barrel lubricated with a mixture of graphite and grease.

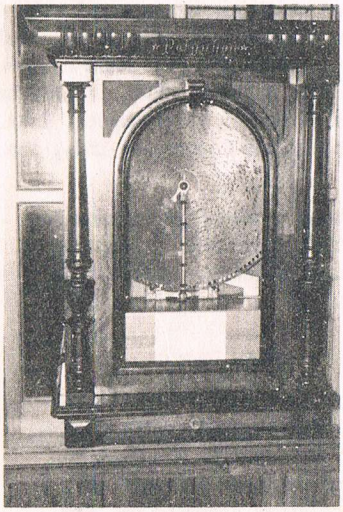
Meccano cogs can be used in repairing a 15" disc Polyphon on which part of the gear train

EARLY DISCS

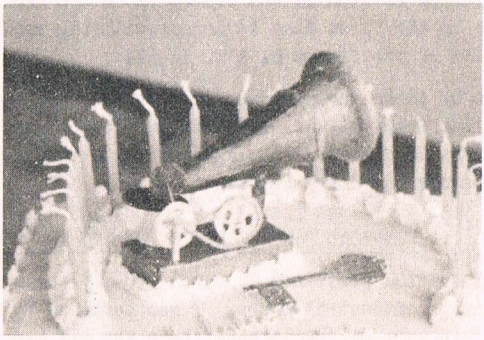
AN EARLY BERLINER

AN EARLY "G & T"

A LATER BERLINER



POLYPHON
WANGANUI MUSEUM



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

is missing. I have had practical experience of this. The lead strips attached to the comb should also be examined as these often curl with age and, if touching, should be separated as, if faulty, they will impair the sound. If corroded or stuck together great care will be needed in removing this corrosion. The dampers are attached to a metal strip and operated by the cogs as they are turned by the disc. They are important as they have the same effect as the dampers in a piano i.e. they stop the note from vibrating after it has been struck.

If the discs have been badly treated, they will stick and jump when played. This can often be overcome by tapping out the bends with a small hammer. If the motor is missing altogether, I see no reason why a gramophone motor could not be adapted to fit, but it would have to be a large one. These machines were made by a number of firms and vary greatly in size, those seen in New Zealand having discs of 5" diameter up to 19⅜". Our illustration shows a coin in the slot machine which hangs near the entrance to the Wanganui Museum.

BOOK REVIEW THE ARCHIVES OF SOUND by J. Bescoby-Chambers. Publishers, The Oakwood Press. New Zealand price approximately 41/-.

It is comparatively easy to obtain reference books concerning vocal records but up until now, the non-vocal record collector has been virtually neglected. Therefore the Archives of Sound will fill a gap in the history of early recording. Mr. Bescoby-Chambers gives us a short history of the gramophone and a short chapter on the player piano, some useful advice on collecting historical records including how to differentiate between the acoustic and the electrical recordings of various companies. Then comes the main feature of the book - a brief biography of the major pianists and violinists who made recordings or piano rolls and a list of their most important records. The final two chapters deal with spoken and documentary records and the Composers' own interpretation on record. This is not a complete listing of every early non-vocal record manufactured (principally in England) nor does it even deal with every type. It is instead a book which can spark off the collector's interest and yet in itself remains a valuable reference book.

TALKING MACHINE MEMORIES by C.E. Woledge - THE EDISON COMPANY IN NEW ZEALAND (Continued)

With all these new items coming to hand, we were in clover and our faith in Edison reached a very high level; we had no fear for the future despite the headway the disc was making. Our turnover in instruments (I say instruments because we never referred to the Edison Phonograph as a machine) increased enormously, and at one time we could not secure sufficient Amberola 60's* to meet the demand; this also applied to the Opera. Our record trade however received a slight set-back owing to the winding-up of nearly all the cylinder companies. The issue of Blue Amberol cylinders so far had not reached sufficient size to cater for the demand and we had been compelled to handle several odd makes, especially the English products such as Edison Bell, Sterling, White and Clarion. Although these were only 2-minute records there was still a demand owing to their English flavour. Columbia four-minute unbreakable had come on the market and the U.S.A. unbreakable was expected; we looked to these to uphold the cylinder. But, alas, all of these companies suddenly closed down and with the exception of Columbia they all went bankrupt. What looked like a victory for Edison was actually a disaster because he had to compete against the entire talking machine world which had adopted the disc.

Even with this handicap, we still had faith in the cylinder and believed, with regular and sufficient supplies of Amberola 60's and Operas, we would eventually win out - but misfortune lay ahead.

In August 1914 war broke out. At the start, the English people did not take the war very seriously, in fact they almost looked upon it as a time of rejoicing with plenty of flag flying

and boasts of what they were going to do to the Germans. Edison, in an interview, advised a more serious attitude to the conditions and instead of the "Peace by Christmas" slogan which was prevalent, suggested that the Nation make its calculation of the duration of the war in years instead of months. He was slated for this and some very unkind remarks were made against him. His presence in England was probably to boost the English factory. However he immediately handed over the whole outfit to the military authorities and took back to U.S.A. only the plant which was of no use to the war effort; it is doubtful whether he ever received a thank-you for this generous gift.

Matters were complicated further in December 1914, when on the 9th of that month the great Edison fire destroyed practically the whole factory which covered four blocks and employed 4,000 hands. The only departments to escape destruction were the vault containing the Blue Amberol masters and the office block which contained all the printed matter. Edison kept the whole staff on and set them to work next day cleaning up the mess and great efforts were made to repair damaged machinery; architects and contractors were at once on the job and in a few days a new and greater plant was underway. Even after a week or two, Blue Amberols were being produced and our supplies came to hand but this was all.

The war had such an effect that it now looked as though the talking machine business was finished for the time being, because German submarines were too active to allow ships to carry anything other than necessary cargoes.

An incident worth mentioning is that a week or two before declaration of war, the monthly list of Blue Amberols came to hand and included was the "Tipperary" song. Little or no consideration was given to it and it was cast aside to be given away with a parcel of records which sometimes went with an instrument sale. No further supplies arrived until after the war - but it was then too late!

*(N.B. This model sold for £60 in New Zealand thus the name Amberola 60. The machine is catalogued Model A but referred to by some collectors as an Amberola 1.)

FOR SALE: Set of four Blue Amberol records , Airs from PINAFORE. Offer wanted from Society Member. Please contact the Secretary.
WANTED TO BUY: Interesting labels on 78's. Also Diamond Discs, catalogues and other written material. Good price paid for Celebrity Records. Phone Christchurch 519-197, or write to John Beauchamp, 16 Garreg Road, Christchurch 5, New Zealand.
WANTED: The following Red Decca 78's by Freddie "Schnickelfritz" Fisher and his orchestra, x 1638, x 1640, x 1694, x 1777, x2148, also any Judy Garland 78's. Apply Noel McMillan, 54 Methuen Road, Avondale, Auckland.
FOR SALE: 18 BRAND NEW Model O reproducers complete and mounted in carriages for installation/ conversion of Edison Triumph or Home machines. Price of Reproducer and carriage $A. 10.00 each. Packing and postage extra. Also assorted bits and pieces (no separate styli.)
FOR SALE: SEVERAL DOZEN mixed 7" Berliner, Columbia, Talk-o-phone, Zonophone and G. & T. Co. discs. Condition from fair to as new. Price Aus. 50c to $A. 1 according to condition. A few early Nicole 7" at 50c each. All discs - packing and postage extra.
FOR SALE: 3 complete and brand new WORLD long playing record controllers, rubber wheels perished and unboxed. Price $A. 7.00 each with packing and postage extra. Apply to the Secretary.

REPAIRING WAX CYLINDERS "E.H."

Damaged wax cylinders, provided the breakage is confined to a crack or small pock-mark can be made playable by forcing beeswax into the hole with the corner of a small screwdriver. The surface is then smoothed flush with the record surface, and usually, when first played, the reproducer will make a slight channel across the repair and regain its correct groove. If it does not, a small track can be made for it across the beeswax with a pin. Although I have not repaired a record that has broken into separate parts, I would imagine that it could be glued, taking care to mate the grooves accurately, and any remaining cracks could be filled with wax.