

The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

Vol. 4, Issue 2

December, 1968

Page 9.

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and Walter T. Norris

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NEW ZEALAND.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

This is the fourth time we have been able to say "Happy Christmas" and we do so most sincerely. We hope that 1969 will be a most successful collecting year for all.

HORNS: Our orders are in for further supplies of "Gem" and "Witches Hat" horns. Although it will be some time before we receive supplies, we are now accepting orders. It is possible that the prices will be slightly higher than before, but we shall publicise details just as soon as we have them.

AND A GOOD TIME WAS HAD: We had one of our Wellington members at our Christmas meeting but he didn't know. And neither did we until we saw the face of Fred Spencer on the screen of the theatrette at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Wellbourn. The film featuring Fred was one of a carefully chosen programme which also featured the late Peter Dawson singing 'Waltzing Matilda' on one of his visits to Wellington. We are again grateful to all members who had a hand in arranging the evening and to Mr. and Mrs. Wellbourn for their hospitality.

MEET MR. BLOGGS: This month, on our illustrations page you will meet Ransome J. Bloggs who has some interesting information to impart on the subject of preserving record covers.

H.M.V. NEEDLE TINS: Having discovered that the Gramophone Co. issued at least thirteen different series of needle tins, I am keen to complete my collection. I offer 10 cents (plus postage) for any empty H.M.V. Needle Tin, more if needles in or will exchange records etc. Pam Rogers, 73 Flockton Street, Christchurch, New Zealand ('Phone 81-430).

MORE ABOUT REPRODUCERS by Walter Norris.

Back to the Beginning

In an earlier issue (Volume 1 Issue 6 Page 3) I described and illustrated most of the Edison reproducers and would now like to describe one or two other early models.

The Standard Speaker.

This appears to be the first model of reproducer fitted to early phonographs but it is seldom found as most early owners replaced it with the later model reproducers. This model had both the recording stylus and the play back stylus on the one bar (this can be clearly seen in our illustrations.) This enabled the user to make a recording and play it back without removing the reproducer from its holder in the carriage. This model also had a light weight because the early white wax

cylinders used were very soft, much like soap. A glass diaphragm was used in this reproducer and there were several thicknesses available, to suit the requirements of the user. The glass was graded 5, 6, 7, and 8 and the difference in thickness between the grades was slight. The thickest grade gave a rather dead reproduction. The glass was inserted in a rubber gasket which resembled a miniature bicycle tyre. The diaphragm was held in by a screw type ring which could be screwed by hand and was put in from the opposite side to that of a Model C. The user was warned that, when fitting a new diaphragm, not to screw it too tightly or leave it too loose - if too tight the diaphragm ceased to be sensitive, if too loose, the record would whistle or blast; there was a happy medium which had to be discovered. This model was soon replaced by a model called an Automatic Reproducer. The basic reasons for the replacement being that there was no lateral movement and the expansion of the cylinder made the reproducer repeat and ride the groove. The Standard Speaker appears to be the first to have a speaker lever. The stylus was linked to the diaphragm in fashion similar to the Model C but the link was glued to the diaphragm with a glue called Stratena. It is interesting to note that the speaker lever could be controlled by a threaded screw which was attached to the speaker cradle. This enabled the reproducer to be moved in an arc movement when changing from record to play. You will have noticed that all later reproducer cradles have a notch on which the reproducer locks although many of the Model C and Model H did retain the speaker lever. The Standard Speaker retailed at \$5 American.

PHONOGRAPHS AND PHILATELY by Walter Norris

Those who collect stamps will be interested to see the two stamps on the illustration page of this issue. These were obtained from a Stamp Dealer in Christchurch. The two cent stamp issued in 1929, commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the advent of electric light; the three cent stamp which shows the familiar face of Thomas A. Edison, commemorates one hundred years since his birth. The date of issue of this stamp was 1947. These are the only two stamps I know of, which feature Edison and his inventions; I feel there well may have been others and would be glad of any information.

ALICK LAUDER

In the Lauder family there were eight children including George who died at an early age. Of the rest Harry is the best known, being perhaps the most famous of all Scottish singers to enter the entertainment world. Of the rest of the family little is known with the exception of Alick who also went on the stage as a Scottish entertainer. He made one Diamond Disc for the Edison Company - its Number according to a 1923 Catalogue being 50237. On this Alick Lauder sings 'Ding Dangle' and 'I Wish I Was..'. After several years as an entertainer he left the stage to become a successful businessman.

It is interesting to note that whilst Alick Lauder made this one Diamond Disc, his brother Harry does not appear to have made any; his place in the category of Scottish Songs being taken by Glen Ellison who sang all Lauder's titles.

DAN LENO

This month, Mr. C.E. Wolledge spotlights one of the greatest Music Hall entertainers of all time, Dan Leno. A recent article in the paper revived old memories and he writes:-

"This humorous entertainer was considered the funniest man on the stage - his was a name renowned through the entertainment world. Although it is sixty-four years since he died, his art is revered probably more than any other Music Hall artist. Dan Leno is one of the few

COVER STORY



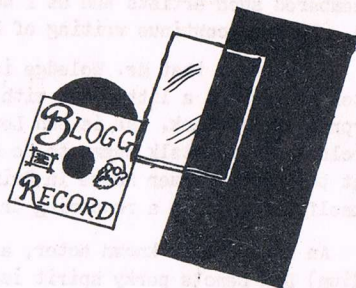
WRITTEN & DRAWN

ENTIRELY by -

Ramona Bloggs

(with James Heath).

Many record covers carry useful and interesting information (as well as the customary exhortations to play Bloggs records with Bloggs needles on the new improved Bloggograph) and if you have the record to match it seems silly not to put the cover to work. However many old covers are made of thin paper that tears at the least provocation and soon begin to look moth-eaten. Here then is a way of getting the best of both worlds, keeping the record in its original sleeve while preserving the sleeve from harm.

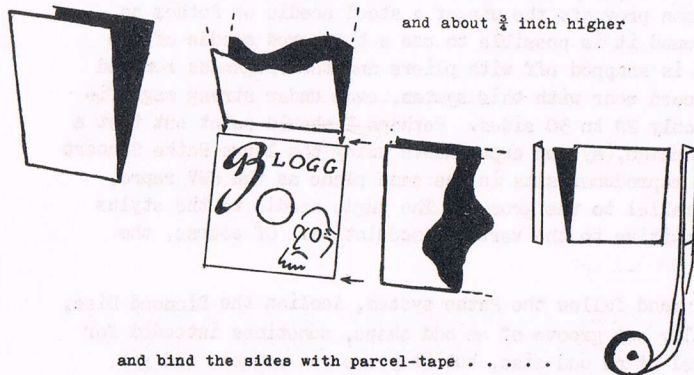


You will need a plastic bag slightly narrower than the sleeve and a few inches longer, and some cardboard, about the grade used for exercise book covers or a bit thicker -

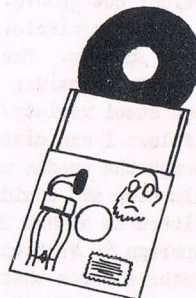
Fold the card,

cut it slightly narrower than the sleeve

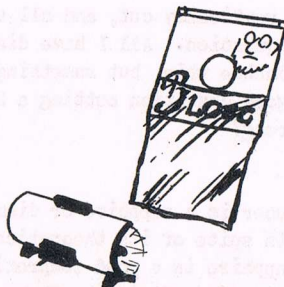
and about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch higher



and bind the sides with parcel-tape



This is very critical because the record must fit into the lining and the lining must fit within the sleeve -



With the lining in the cover to stiffen it, soften the plastic bag in front of the fire and draw it over, stretching it so that it fits without wrinkles....

Place the cover over the lining and trace around the centre hole and cut it out with nail-scissors.

and fold the excess plastic inside the lining.

remembered such artists and as I am one of his great admirers, I was interested to see mention of him. I shall continue writing of him in our next issue."

It appears that Mr. Woledge is not the only person who remembers. "More than sixty years after his death, a little man with big bright eyes and a letterbox mouth has been making a surprising comeback. He is Dan Leno, the Music Hall comedian. Suddenly in modern show business circles, all the talk seems to be about Leno. Mr. Roy Hudd, the television comic, relates how he went to Leno's former house in Brixton, London and discovered that it was the house which he himself had seen in a recurring dream since a boy.

An even better-known actor, a big world star, is convinced that (as revealed to him by a medium) Dan Leno's perky spirit is hovering above him."

It is interesting to note that the publishing firm of Evelyn have re-issued the comic autobiography Dan Leno - Hys Booze which was originally published in 1899.

THE SOUND OF SUCCESS (Continued) by James Heath

3. Pathe discs also use a sphere or ball stylus of 8 mils which fits precisely in a semi-circular vertical cut groove. However this groove is much shallower than Edison's so the groove is really an arc of a circle. This shallowness varies from record to record, and some are very prone to groove jumping. The same reason prevents the use of a steel needle on Pathes as Diamond Discs. As an aside: I have found it is possible to use a butchered needle of the semi-permanent steel variety. The tip is snapped off with pliers and the roughness removed with a fine file. I can discern no record wear with this system, even under strong magnification, although the needle will last only 20 to 30 sides. Perhaps I should point out that a heavier or clumsier arm could inflict damage, (my own experiments using the large Pathe Concert reproducer fitted to an HMV 250). The reproducer sits in the same plane as the HMV repro, i.e. the diaphragm is vertical, and parallel to the groove. The angle needle to the stylus bar on the Pathe ensures that it is sensitive to the vertical modulation. Of course, the HMV responds only to lateral cut.

4. Records such as Clarion and Diamond follow the Pathe system, Aeolian the Diamond Disc, but there are a few that use a vertically cut groove of an odd shape, sometimes intended for use with a steel needle, or else a jewel of an odd size, but they are not common, and you should by now be able to work things out without help.

5. As far as I know, all cylinders are vertically cut, and all use a closely fitting jewel. The size of the jewel seems open to question. All I have discovered is that a 4 minute is 4 to 5 mils and a 2 minute about double this, but something must be wrong somewhere, as I had trouble with an 8 mil sapphire in good condition cutting a 2 minute cylinder, even with a very light weight. Any ideas what went wrong?

On to the equipment -

Probably the neatest electrical reproducer is a sapphire or diamond stylus of the proper dimensions mounted in a modern cartridge. In spite of its theoretical inadequacies - and my nasty comments - the usual 2.5 or 2.7 mil sapphire is a good compromise, but the keen type will use the polished diamonds available in a range of sizes. These can be obtained loose or cemented professionally into the stylus arm. The mono cartridge is satisfactory as it stands for lateral cut records, as also is a stereo cartridge with the outputs from each channel paralleled. There is no universal standard for cartridge terminals so refer to the data sheet to sort out the pins. Usually some markings recognisably like "LEFT +, LEFT -,

RIGHT +, RIGHT -, " are used, or the plus sign may be omitted and the Minus replaced by "E" (Earth), "G" (Ground) or "N" (Neutral). To connect these for lateral cut (mono), one wire in the flex from the pick-up is connected to pins " LEFT + " and " RIGHT - ", the other wire to pins " LEFT - " and " RIGHT + ", or the single "E" pin on three pin cartridges. The more common four pin cartridges can be made suitable for vertical cut by connecting the channels out of phase. This means one wire from " LEFT + " and " RIGHT - " and the other from " LEFT - " and " RIGHT + ". Very occasionally you may come across a 'Sum and Difference' cartridge. On these, one pair of pins gives the Difference (A-B) output and the other the Sum (A+B). For lateral cut use the Sum pair of pins only, and for vertical cut use the Difference pins only.

Solution No. 2 is for 78's only.

During the thirties HMV and other companies brought out various types of conversion kits, some designed to replace the acoustic reproducer or arm with its electrical counterpart, or else a self-contained record player to plug into a radio set. (This last recommended). The motor can be electric or spring drive and the speed controlled by a governor; just the thing to obtain exact pitch! The arm, while not light by present day standards is still kinder than the rock-crushers, and a small counterbalance can usually be squashed in somewhere. The needles are the common steel sort, and in these arms they perform quite well and the record wear is low in comparison to an old acoustic soundbox. Another point which is not always appreciated is that a steel needle is expendable, being used to play only one record before it is discarded and thus it can be used on a damaged or cracked record. This is to say the least inadvisable with a jewel as a crack in the record will send your stylus across the room or else chip it and make it unusable.

(Concluded)

MORE ABOUT "MINI" GRAMOPHONES

Roger Cole adds some more information:-

"The model in the illustration in the August issue of The Phonographic Record is an Excelda, a Swiss model with a metal reproducer. Some of these are finished in black and others, like the one in the illustration and my own are of "mottled" or "crazed" dark green. My own machine was obtained for \$5.00 from a gentleman in Lyttelton about three months' ago. He told me that he bought it during the war in Italy and used it to entertain his mates; he brought it home after the war. How he carried it about beats me! This machine will play a 12" record - one side, one winding and as far as volume goes it beats all my other twenty-two machines. Tone is the thing which suffers in these small machines and a rather tinny tone is the rule."

To most New Zealanders, Music Hall is something that we read about and the songs we collect on record. Alan Robb has been interested in this form of entertainment for some time and we were intrigued with his letter to us written when he was in England recently. Below we print an extract under the title of:-

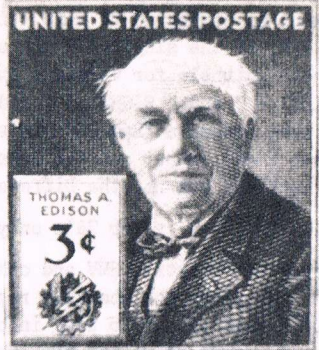
OUR MAN IN HYDE PARK

"The spirit of Music Hall lives on! Last night - Sunday - I spent about 2½ hours singing old music hall songs (and some more modern ones too) at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park.

I had just had tea and wandered over there to listen to the speakers. In the corner I found a large crowd gathered round a real old cockney lady aged about 65 - 70 and weighing the best part of seventeen stone. She was beating time on an empty 4 gallon drum and singing at the top of her voice. With her was a fairly young boy - about my age (apparently part of the "act") who was doing his best



THE TWO EDISON STAMPS



TRADE MARK

Thomas A. Edison
The Edison Phonograph

ENSURES A MERRY XMAS.

It is the one thing that brings joy to all the household. Start old and young. There are the best of Edison Records in the program. Listen and you will find the most wonderful variety of the season for your entertainment. Popular. Unusual. Novel. More to see at last.

HOME RECORDING.
The Edison Phonograph

What greater fun could the family have than making your own records at home?

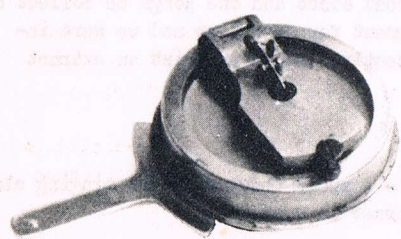
See our program of Christmas Selections in specially strong, suitable as records specially made for the festive season. Also new records to be released.

AMBEROL	STANDARD
1. The Merry Christmas	1. The Merry Christmas
2. The Christmas Carol	2. The Christmas Carol
3. The Christmas Song	3. The Christmas Song
4. The Christmas Eve	4. The Christmas Eve
5. The Christmas Day	5. The Christmas Day
6. The Christmas Night	6. The Christmas Night
7. The Christmas Morning	7. The Christmas Morning
8. The Christmas Afternoon	8. The Christmas Afternoon
9. The Christmas Evening	9. The Christmas Evening
10. The Christmas Year	10. The Christmas Year

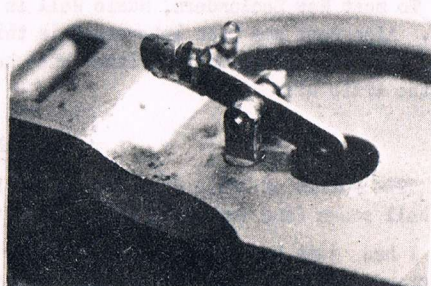
NATIONAL PHONOGRAPH CO. LTD.
EDISON WORKS LONDON, N.W.

LEFT:- CHRISTMAS 1911

RIGHT:- ALICK LAUDER



THREE VIEWS
OF THE
STANDARD
SPEAKER



to get everyone present to join in. He had some success from uninhibited souls like myself who couldn't care less if anyone we knew saw us enjoying ourselves. Later Doris was joined by three of her friends, also singers. One, Lillie cannot have been a day under 75 but what a voice she had. She was equal to any of the real Music Hall artists. She did have a little trouble with her voice at times but as she explained to the crowd she "had been on 'oliday". Just what the connection was I could not see. To restore her voice she occasionally lubricated her throat with a little of a colourless liquid from a clear glass bottle. This went on until after 9 p.m. when I decided that I had had sufficient and strolled off. They were still singing as I left".

We have received some most interesting letters from our American member Richard C. Brown. They have been so informative that we have asked Richard's permission to use extracts from them. Here is his method of :-

CLEANING 78's.

Some of the records that have been obtained from second-hand shops are extremely dirty and I have been using a mild detergent (like that used for washing dishes) and very luke warm water in a plastic basin to clean up the records - brushing them very lightly with a nylon bristle brush and rinsing them and drying them with a towel. It may seem rather strange to clean the records this way but I had some rather bad experiences with the commercial record cleaners (like those in the pressurized can) taking off the finish of the record and filling up the grooves with residue. The washing activity is as brief as I can make it but I don't have any trouble with the label lifting off since they seem to be heat pressed on. Sometimes the cleaning does get a little difficult with paint on the records or something like that.

A RECORD OF RECORDS by C.B.E.

Noel recorded on a 15 inch Polyphon disc No. 1669. As this is the Christmas issue, I feel it is only fitting that I write about a music-box record, as there is nothing like the sweet sound of that predecessor of the phonograph to capture the image of the season (especially true in the Northern Hemisphere). As with most other Polyphon recordings, the tune is strengthened by a strong underlying "vamp", a feature not found in all "brass barrel" recordings. "Noel" is not to be confused with "The First Noel", the former being evidently a popular air of the nineteenth century, now alas forgotten except perhaps by people like us. The tune itself is fairly simple, in common (4/4) time and being fairly slow, leaves little room on the disc for a repeat version with variations in the form of elaborate arpeggios and chromatics. Indeed, the end comes unexpectedly, in the middle of the repeated line.

'AVE A LARF.... J.E.H.

Recently in a Saturday paper I noticed a gentleman offering for sale the very thing I had searched for - without success - for months. I left him to stew until late on Sunday afternoon.

We played the usual cat and mouse game, he extolling its merits and virtues and claiming it was worth double the price; I pulling a long face at his price and countering the various abstruse faults and disadvantages.

Eventually the price came down and the bargain struck. -I thought he looked relieved, but to his dismay and my huge delight, his four-year-old son was more outspoken... 'There, Daddy, thank goodness we've got rid of that old thing.....'

The Society's Accounts for the year ended 8th September, 1968 have now been audited and at the Auditor's request we print them below. The main alterations are a breaking down of the income and expenditure into more categories and the carrying forward of the library books as an asset.

VINTAGE PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY OF N.Z. (INC.)

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1968.

To purchase of parts and badges	113.36	
" purchase of records	30.00	
" purchase of binders	33.02	
" rent	10.00	
" costs of display	29.01	
" printing, stationery and stamps	49.33	
" costs of Christmas party	15.37	
" miscellaneous payments	4.88	
By receipts of display		43.30
" subscriptions		145.08
" donations		14.62
" sale back issues of magazines		20.40
" sale of binders		40.50
" sale of parts		105.88
" sale of records		32.95
" sale of badges		34.00
" miscellaneous receipts		5.87
To balance of income over expenditure	157.63	
	<u>\$442.60</u>	<u>\$442.60</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1968.

CURRENT LIABILITY

Subscriptions paid in advance 24.00

ACCUMULATED FUNDS

Brought forward 210.01

Excess income over expenditure for year ended 8th September, 1968 157.63

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at Canterbury Savings Bank 280.06

Stock in hand 95.38

Petty Cash 10.00

Library books 6.20

\$391.64 \$391.64

TO THE MEMBERS, VINTAGE PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY OF N.Z. (INC.)

I have examined the books of the Society which are in agreement with the above accounts and which show a true and fair view of the Society's operations for the year ended 8th September, 1968 and its position at that date.

Signed: A.J. ROBB B. COM.

HON. AUDITOR.