

PHONOGRAPHIC RECORDEARLY DAYS OF THE PHONOGRAPH IN NELSONBy Wally Gollledge.

In trying to find out some of the early history of the phonograph in this district, the earliest reference I have so far found is of the first exhibition of the Tin Foil Phonograph in Marlborough, in April, 1879, just over a year after its invention in U.S.A. I was fortunate enough to come across in a well kept scrap book, this advertisement for its first demonstration in Blenheim (see illustrations page). It is printed on a white card, 8" x 5" and is accompanied by a contemporary newspaper account, both of which are in excellent condition and look hardly a year old, rather than their actual 90 years.

"Marlborough Express" 10 April, 1879.

"This little instrument which you see on the table is the Phonograph and in all probability you will, like most others to whom I have shown it, be rather disappointed with its extreme simplicity. You see that instead of a piece of complicated machinery, it is a very simple piece of mechanism, composed, so to say, of three parts namely: 1st, a receiving; 2nd, a recording; and 3rd, a transmitting apparatus. The receiving apparatus which I now hold in my hand consists of a curved tube, one end of which, as you will observe, is fitted with a mouthpiece for the convenience of speaking into. The other end is about two inches in diameter and is closed by a metal disc or diaphragm, capable of being thrust slightly outwards or vibrated on gentle pressure being applied to it from within the tube. Now, if some gentleman will place his finger here he will find that when I speak into the mouthpiece the vibrations of the diaphragm force forward a small steel needle. The recorder, as you will observe, is a brass cylinder some 6 inches long and 4 inches in diameter, cut with a continuous groove V formed from end to end of the cylinder, just the same as the worm of a screw. There are ten of these grooves to the inch, or some sixty in the whole length of the cylinder, which is mounted on a horizontal axis or shaft carried in bearings at either end and having its circumferential face presented to the steel point of the receiving apparatus. The shaft is some 4 inches longer than the cylinder and one end is cut with a screw thread and works in a screwed bearing, the other end being attached to the clockwork machinery which gives it motion and as the cylinder turns round is caused to travel its whole length in front of the steel point. Round the cylinder I place a piece of tin foil. I now speak into the receiving tube and the cylinder is set in motion. It will be seen that the vibrations of the diaphragm causes the needle to impress upon that portion of the tin foil over the hollow groove and the tin foil being in elastic has retained the impressions just as the tape on the Morse instrument registers the dots and dashes of the telegraphic code. These impressions will be more or less deeply marked according to the modulations and inflexions of the speakers voice. We have now a message verbally imprinted on a sheet of metal. Sound, as it were has been converted into visible form and we have now to translate that message by re-converting it into sound. To do this we require the third portion of the apparatus, the transmitter. This consists of what may be called a conical metal drum having its larger end open, the smaller end being covered with paper, which is stretched taut as a drum head. In front of this paper diaphragm is a light flat steel spring, held in a vertical position and terminating with a blunt point and corresponding with that on the diaphragm of the receiver. The cylinder is now passed back to its original position, to what may be termed the zero point, until the steel point rests without absolute pressure in the first indentation made by the receiver. If the machinery be now set in motion at the same speed as it was when the messages or words spoken into it were being recorded, the steel point will follow the line

of impression and will vibrate in periods corresponding to the impressions previously produced on the tin foil by the point of the receiving apparatus. Vibrations of the requisite number and depth being thus communicated to the upper diaphragm, there will be produced precisely the same sounds that in the first instance were required or used to produce the impression on the tin foil".

Mr. Griffiths then set the machinery in motion, when the barking of a dog, the crowing of a cock, Old Mother Hubbard etc. were repeated by the Phonograph. Laughing, singing and a variety of sounds spoke into the instrument, being repeated with marvellous fidelity.

By the description given, it is evident that this machine is not the same pattern as the two Tinfoil machines known to exist in New Zealand, one owned by Walter Norris of Christchurch and the other by myself, as ours, which are identical, have a combined reproducer/recorder. It is thought possible that our machines, which appear to be made by the London Stereoscope Co., were brought to New Zealand by travelling showmen, as the tinfoil phonograph would have very limited appeal or sale to the ordinary person, never really having advanced from the novelty stage, apart from its then quite dear purchase price.

The next mention I can find is in the "Nelson Evening Mail" and the "Colonist" of March 27, 1891 (see illustration page); this advertisement describing the first showing in Nelson of the wax cylinder or "Edison's Improved Phonograph". This was to be shown for three nights, but was extended to another night, "due to popular demand". The initial performance was well reported in both papers and the following account is taken from both of them:

"THE PHONOGRAPH"

"Edison's great invention, as Professor D. Archibald M.A., the lecturer who described it so pleasantly and effectively, called it, the Phonograph, was introduced to a Nelson audience last night at the Theatre Royal. The exhibition did not however, take place under the most favourable of circumstances, for with those in charge of it, the apparatus had travelled a distance of 80 miles by coach from Blenheim, during the day and barely arrived in sufficient time for the performance to be given, so that no time was afforded for testing it".

"Professor Archibald showed by means of a powerful Magic Lantern, enlargements of photographs of the Phonograph and diagrams of the recorded sound waves engraved on the wax cylinder. He then proceeded to demonstrate the capabilities of the Phonograph to which he fitted a tin funnel, which magnified and distributed the sound all over the hall, though he explained and proved that due to its use, some of the finer tones were to some extent lost. First was given a cornet solo by Mr. A. Smith of the Covent Garden Orchestra, which was much appreciated and after other cornet solos, an amateur performance on a tin whistle was reproduced, the vain attempt to reach the top note calling forth roars of applause".

"Several other instrumental pieces, including a bagpipe solo were then played, then followed the song "The Warrior Bold" as sung by Mr. Bingley Shaw of Nottingham England, in October 1889. This was a splendid piece of vocalisation, every word and syllable being enunciated with a distinctness that did credit alike to the singer and the phonograph. Other songs were rendered, then came a reproduction of a Salvation Army Band as heard in the streets of Christchurch. The tones of the various instruments were heard with the utmost clarity, even tones of the cornet, which, as would appear to be in accordance with the rules of the Army, is invariably and ostentatiously out of tune; then the Army sang, someone ejaculating at intervals "Amen", "Hallelujah", etc".

"But we must give the palm to the quartette "The Long White Robe" as sung by the members of the Jubilee Coloured Concert Co. of New York. Each and all of the voices were heard as clearly and distinctly as though the singers had been on the stage. A recitation "The Charge of The Light Brigade" was then given with perfect clearness and dramatic effect. We cannot however refer in detail to all

the items, but must not omit to mention the last on the programme, a message to Lord Carrington, late Governor of New South Wales, spoken into the instrument by Mr. Gladstone. This was not so successful as some of his previous performances, but Professor Archibald explained that the Phonograph had received a thorough shaking on the coach trip that day and he had not had time to overhaul it since his arrival".

"The Professor also spoke into the machine, as did the Rev. F.W. Isitt at the request of several people in the hall and both speeches were at once reproduced with absolute accuracy. At the conclusion of the entertainment, any of these present were permitted on payment of a shilling, to go on stage and hear the machine to better advantage through ear-tubes and under these conditions and in absence of the tin funnel, the music and speeches were delivered in a much more pleasant and natural manner. We cannot speak in too high terms of this very remarkable entertainment which none should fail to attend."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. David Millar of the Dominion Museum will present a talk on the early days of the Phonograph in New Zealand at the Conference over Queen's Birthday Week-end.

JOHN PROUSE - 1856 - 1930.

This article and discography on New Zealand's foremost baritone of the late Victorian period was originally prepared for a former convention held in Christchurch in 1967. One of the co-editors of the Phonographic Record asked that it be drafted into an article and published. I am pleased to do this on the eve of another Convention. Those attending the Conference will be able to hear the bulk of this artist's recorded works during one of the 'in-between' sessions. Since 1967 further information has come to hand and this has been incorporated into this article.

John Prouse was born in Wellington in 1856. From an early age he displayed excellent musical ability and this coupled with a fine voice made him a very popular member of the local Church choirs in Wainuiomata and Taita where the family lived and worked. It is thought that his wife influenced her husband to take up formal singing lessons in the early 1880's. In 1885 at the age of 29 he made his debut on the concert platform in Wellington. He appeared in the 1888 New Zealand Music Festival held in Wellington, where he featured in the performances of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" and Handel's "Israel in Egypt". From this date he quickly became established as the country's leading baritone in oratorio and concert.

In the early 1890's he travelled to England to further his studies. At first he studied with William Ganz who was the Professor of Singing at the Guildhall School of Music. Later he became a pupil of Sir Charles Santley who had toured New Zealand in 1889-90. Santley must have had a very high opinion of John Prouse because he asked the New Zealander to fill in for him at the Albert Hall in a performance of "Elijah". As well as this great honour, he fulfilled engagements at the Crystal Palace and St. James's Hall, London, besides numerous concert appearances in the provinces. In 1892 he returned to New Zealand where he gave many concerts throughout the country. At this stage it must be remembered that while his singing career probably demanded his complete attention, he was very active in his family's milling interests in the lower half of the North Island.

Before going overseas again in 1903 he completed a tour of New Zealand with Antonia Dolores a Soprano whose mother was the famous Madame Trebelli. His second stay in England was much longer than the first being spread over three years. It was during this time that he reached the height of his career. He came into contact with many important musical personalities. Acting as supporting artist he appeared with the great violinist Jan Kubelik and the equally famous pianist Wilhelm Backhaus in a tour which extended throughout the British Isles. In the later half of 1905 he made his test pressings for the Gramophone and Typewriter Company. A memento of this period is held by Mrs. Oliver

Prouse of Wellington. It is a postcard dated 25th May, 1904. The back of this card bears the following inscription. "Dad had a great success last night and has fine critics this morning. Was recalled twice for 'Pilgrim's Song' and had to sing an encore after".

Returning to New Zealand his services in concert and oratorio were once again in great demand. His wife was by no means a silent partner in their marriage. She was directly responsible for the 1906 Christchurch Exhibition Festival Orchestra appearing in Wellington. She and her husband shared a tremendous reputation as being wonderful hosts to many important touring artists. Melba, Clara Butt, Antonia Dolores and Andrew Black were only a few of the many singers to spend their Wellington seasons in close association with the Prouse's and their house in Clifton Terrace. One obituary notice mentions the fact that Toscanini and Edward de Reszke were great friends and correspondents with Mr. & Mrs. Prouse. In 1911 John Prouse and Antonia Dolores once again toured New Zealand. I have in my possession a programme dated the 21st March which was presented at the Opera House, Wellington. Prouse as supporting artist contributed Schubert's "Der Wanderer" and a bracket of three songs by Mallinson, "Eldorado", "Eventide" and "We Sway Along".

In his later years his voice must have retained a lot of its former glory because it is reported that in 1927 when Dame Nellie Melba was directing arrangements for the Duke and Duchess of York's Melbourne visit, she cabled John Prouse to come across because she could use the services of a good baritone. It would appear that he did accept the invitation but whether or not he performed at any of the functions I have not been able to ascertain. Shortly before his death in August, 1930 he made some radio broadcast recitals. A memorial service was held in his honour in St. Paul's Cathedral. His oratorio roles included Elijah, Messiah, Israel in Egypt, Acis and Galatea, Lobgesang (Hymn of Praise - Mendelssohn) and Haydn's Creation.

References & Acknowledgements: Contemporary Programmes, Obituaries "Evening Post" and "Dominion" August 4th, 1930, "An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand" (1966), "The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand" (1898), "Music and the Stage in New Zealand" by Hurst (1944). News cuttings, photographs and personal reminiscences by Mrs. Oliver Prouse of Wellington.

Discography: I have seen five John Prouse records during my years as a collector. All were white label sample pressings (lettering in gold) with the flush surface G & T label. The titles appear in ink along with the statement 'John Prouse'. All are piano accompanied. The first four items of the discography all came from the same collection. If this collection originally belonged to John Prouse then he had excellent tastes as far as collectors are concerned. There were G & T items by Plancon, de Lucia, Renaud and Caruso. The fifth item I saw in the collection of a Christchurch collector who now resides in London. This collector told me he had found this item in a second hand shop in Ferry Road. Unfortunately I did not take down the details (this was about 10 years ago) and so I've left the space blank for future use should the particulars ever come to hand. The voice is well produced and great attention is lavished on the words and their pronunciation. His stylish phrasing stamp him as an artist who obviously received good training. His faults are perhaps a certain excessive vibrato on some notes coupled with a rather hollow sound which occurs during the higher passages. His rich low notes are a joy. My favourite would be the Tchaikovsky following by the Maiden of Morden. All were recorded in the latter half of 1905. It would also appear from the matrix numbers that two sessions were required. Also from the obvious gaps further examples must exist. Perhaps these will be discovered in the years to come.

Discography No.	Title	Matrix No.
1.	Pilgrim's Song (Tchaikovsky)	2180e
2.	Maiden of Morden	2184e
3.	There are none like three	2185e
4.	There's a land (Allitsen?)	2147e
5.	-	-

EDITOR'S NOTE: W.R. Moran of the U.S.A. reports that in a Pathe catalogue in his possession a vocalist is listed as singing a song called "There's a Land". The composer is stated as Allitsen. Whether or not this is the same ballad as recorded by John Prouse will remain a mystery until either pressings are compared or the music turns up in some Victorian Album. Any help a reader may be able to offer concerning the composers of the other songs would be greatly appreciated.

William Main.

OLD ADVERTISEMENTS.

Never pass by a pile of old newspapers or magazines without going through the advertisements. Often as not only letterpress type will greet you but even this can be most rewarding. When a line block illustration (often an engraving) was used to supplement the type or copy then it becomes of considerable collecting importance. A collection of these which have been photographed and enlarged for display purposes will be on display at the Convention in Wellington over Queen's Birthday weekend. On the illustrations page you will see four examples which help to demonstrate the value of these old ads. Sometimes they lead to frustrated discussion and debate. How many of our readers will speculate that the rather crudely drawn phonograph on the "Give Away" add is a Puck. (N.Z. Illustrated Magazine October 1903). The Columbia one on the other hand (same publication as above) is much clearer but is it easily identified? It is the AJ or AH. Perhaps its an AK. Sometimes the engravers were given a fair amount of artistic license in their interpretations. The "Gramophone" add on the other hand is very easily recognised (Strand Magazine, January 1899). Note the bit about music boxes still being sold. Some notes on the do's and don'ts in collecting this material must be made plain. Never cut out an advertisement from a paper or publication. It's a sin to remove things in this manner. Often as not it can be copied intact without the use of the knife or scissors. Sometimes the binding may not permit easy copying. If the staples are carefully removed this will facilitate reproduction without damaging the appearance of the publication on re-assembly. Should a page or section become removed permanently from its place in a publication then see that its date of issue is pencilled in on the margin. A pencil is to be preferred to a ball-point at all times because it can be easily removed if it detracts from the aesthetic appearance of the advertisement. Store all such material in flat folders under an index system. With bound books or hefty magazines place a distinctive slip of paper to act as a book mark so that it will act as a ready reference when you are showing it to some fellow collector. If getting it copied photographically ask the photographer to give you a 'line film' negative. This always gives the best reproduction in matters of this nature. So start lifting up your linoleum and examining the papers often used for a dampening effect. You could be walking on a mine of information.

William Main.

"WOOLF ACROSS THE TASMAN"

By Michael Woolf

Being an account of an expedition to Terra Australis by a peripatetic phonograph fancier.

On the first of July 1968, I arrived in Sydney together with my wife and one year old son, to fulfil a series of contracts with Australian Shopping Centres. The idea was that my collection went on show and was advertised to attract the public to the centres and also, I hoped privately, the publicity would help to swell the collection.

The first showing was to begin on July 10th, so I had ten days in which to arrange accommodation and transport and re-assemble the collection from its packed-down state. The Australian customs being satisfied that none of the goods contained cylindrical cigarettes, long-playing liquor or musical marijuana and the Agricultural people having waved their magical rubber stamp to

The NEW DISC GRAPHOPHONE

£7 7s.



AMERICA'S LATEST AND BEST.

Runs three records per winding. Takes both size records, and is **greatly superior** to any other machine using flat records.

We have the **LARGEST SUPPLY** of Phonograph and Disc Records in the Colony. 3,000 always in stock. Catalogues and Lists post free.

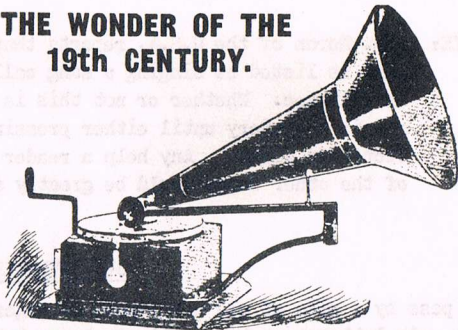
THE TALKERIES, MANNERS STREET

(NEXT TO OPERA HOUSE),

WELLINGTON.

AND 210, HIGH STREET. CHRISTCHURCH.

THE WONDER OF THE 19th CENTURY.



"THE GRAMOPHONE."

(Berliner's Patent).

Loudest and most distinct sound-producing machine yet invented. Goes by clock-work. Record-discs practically indestructible. Loud enough to fill a hall holding 500 people.

A Customer writes: "Your Gramophone exceeds all our expectations. We find it magnificent in the open air."

Hundreds of Records to Choose from. Records sent on Approval.

PRICE £5 10s. Records 2/6 each.

Large variety of Musical Boxes with Changeable Metal Discs.

IMHOF & MUKLE

(By Appointment to H.M. the Queen),

110, New Oxford Street, LONDON, W.C.

THEATRE ROYAL, NELSON.

Under the direct ion of

MESSRS. MACMAHON.

THREE NIGHTS ONLY! (3)

COMES GIVE

EASTER MONDAY

NEXT.

THE PHONOGRAPH

EDISON'S STARTLING
TALKING MACHINE!

Messrs MacMahon have much pleasure in announcing the First Exhibition in Nelson of Mr Edison's Latest Phonograph, which will take place on

MONDAY NEXT.

Professor Douglas Archibald, M.A., Oxon, will deliver an intensely interesting Lecture, and exhibit the incredible capabilities of Edison's Astonishing Talking Machine.

Songs by famous artists, Speeches by Mr W. E. Gladstone, Instrumental Music performed in Europe and America, will be actually reproduced with marvellous fidelity. The Phonograph is capable of reproducing the same voice from the same record many thousands of times. By this means human speech may be preserved for ever, and the voices of the living and the dead will mingle in futurity.

THE PHONOGRAPH, the Most Wonderful Achievement of the Ingenuity of Man.

POPULAR PRICES—3s. 2s. and 1s. Plan now open at H. D. JACKSON'S, on Saturday and Monday next at Mr BOLTON'S, next Theatre.

EARLY APPLICATION FOR SEATS
ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

WM. JINKINS, Business Manager.

WANTED, a HUNDRED BUSHELS of
OATS for cash at the lowest price.
Apply MAIL OFFICE. 750-4

WANTED PARCEL BOY.
R. T. MELHUISH,
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WANTED AT ONCE.

GOOD SKIRT HANDS.
757-4 c EVERETT REOS.

Phonographs ALMOST GIVEN AWAY.

A Practical Up-to-date Sound Reproducing Instrument, which will take any Standard Record and bring forth the Words, Music or other sounds equal to a £10 Machine.

MUSIC, MIRTH & MELODY

FOR

16/9



to furnish your house with a Phonograph, owing to its high price, there is now no longer any need to delay your purchase on this account, as the small cost of our machine places it within the reach of everyone.

We have arranged with one of the largest Phonographic Manufacturers in the world for the sole control of this machine in Australia, and as an advertisement for our business are going to send out the first 1000 instruments at the ridiculously low price of 16 9 each. After the sale of this number the price will be considerably increased. The price of the Records is very low, only 15/- per dozen, 8/- per half-dozen, or 1/4 each. We will deliver one machine, carefully packed and carriage paid in New South Wales, for only 19/-, or with 3 Records 23/-, with 6 Records 27/-. To the other States the extra carriage will bring the cost a little higher—viz., 21/6 for machine with the price of the Records added. Payment by P.O.D. preferred.

Don't Delay Send Orders in at once and cut this ad. out as it may not appear again
ADDRESS ALL ORDERS TO—

UNIVERSAL SUPPLY CO.,
I.M. DEPT., 480, GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY, N.S.W.

P.S.—For only 29/6 we will forward Phonograph with 6 records, or 12 records for 37/6, duty free and carriage paid to any railway station in New Zealand.

Top & bottom right see "Old advertisements". Bottom left see "Early days of the phonograph in Nelson".

MAXWELL ROAD GENERAL CEMETERY.

Blenheim, April 10th, 1890.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that with the object of establishing a Special Fund in connection with the Cemetery, a Lady who for many years has been much interested in it, has suggested the idea of publicly exhibiting what may justly be regarded as one of the marvels of Modern Science—

The Phonograph, or Talking Machine,
of the celebrated E. S. Edison.

Before this is done, however, it is thought advisable to introduce the same by a private exhibition given to a few scientific gentlemen, and those who are specially interested in the care of the Cemetery.

I have, therefore, to request your co-operation and support in the above scheme, and with this view to solicit your attendance at the Lyceum Hall on Monday Evening next, at half-past seven.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. M. HUTCHESON,
Secretary.

Tickets for the Private Exhibition, &c., may be obtained from Mr. Gibson.

Left John Prouse, right see "Early days of the phonograph in Nelson".



20/5/96.
George and I leave for Wales in the morning. will send some more p.c. from there. much love. J.M.H.

certify that phonographs did not suffer from foot and mouth disease, I was ready to set up the collection for exhibition at Roselands, a huge shopping complex 10 miles from the centre of Sydney. The place is frighteningly big - parking for 30,000 cars is provided, half of it under cover. The area for my showing was in "Fashion Square" the centre of the complex with literally thousands of visitors each day. Publicity was well in hand - I had to insist on one change in the advertising, in which my collection was hailed as "The largest in Australasia". When I pointed out that there were a number of collectors in Australia and that for all I knew some of them may have had larger collections, I was told that it was too late to change the advertisement, but that they would alter the wording to read "Greatest in Australasia" and this I had to accept.

Radio interviews were set up and the first reporter that I met was Haddo d'Audany from Auckland, now working with 2UE. I was interviewed live from 2GB and told that the switchboard was jammed with inquiries - looking through the glass of the studio I saw Jim Bradley, an old friend from soap-opera days.

Television appearances too had been arranged-the John Law's "Tonight" show featured some of the exhibits, including the bird in cage, which decided to provide an impromptu encore and wouldn't stop...and a girl singer crooned "The Impossible Dream" into the gaping maw of the Klingsor. Then we appeared on the "Fun-fair" children's show on Channel 7 and the floor manager was another old friend, this time from WNTV-4, and Movietone News arrived at the exhibition with a very "with-it" director whose constant comment was "Too much-too much!" I couldn't help wondering if his remark referred to the prices I had had to pay for some of the exhibits.

However as a result of all this publicity - radio, T.V. and Press the offers of more exhibits began to roll in. One message read that a lady had a gramophone with animals on it and copper records and was I interested. It didn't click with me until on arrival at her home, I was told the gramophone was in the washhouse, and sorry for troubling me as I probably wouldn't be interested but here were some of the records which proved to be 15½ inch Regina musical box discs (with a coppery sheen) and the machine the excessively rare Columbia Graphonala de luxe of 1912, with Regina musical box built in...now a centre piece of the collection. A man arrived at the exhibition area carrying a Red Gem...an elderly collector presented me with an Edison Concert sized cylinder and box in the complete French and Italian language courses on Blue Amberol turned up...and a lady said she had a bigger phonograph than the Columbia; BC on display turned out to be another exactly the same and complete with 5 foot long brass horn in perfect order...a dealer contacted me, resulting in the addition to the collection of a very nice "underhorn" Pathe disc machine, a Thorens Camera-phone in new condition, a Max-Wurcker reproducer, a strange and elaborate portable called a "Rex-o-port" and a needle-type Edison portable.

I was contacted by a number of collectors including Mr. Jim Cocks, who entertained myself and family in the apartment he has completely devoted to his collection and he didn't even mind the one-year-old investigating the piles of interesting material which completely jammed the flat.

The public showing was so successful that I was asked to stay on at Roselands for an additional week and then to return for the August school holidays. In the meantime the collection was carefully crated and shipped for exhibition at Wollengong, a steel town 50 miles south of Sydney. This again proved fruitful. As a result of a radio interview a 15½" table model Polyphon with about 30 discs joined the collection - these discs also fit the Regina and so extend the repertoire considerably.

Wollengong has a large continental population and I enjoyed the experience of listening

to some of my Italian Operatic records with an Italian steel worker who spoke hardly any English and as my Italian is confined to expressions like "Bel canto" - "Bellissima" and "Una bacio" we conversed by means of the records.

From Wollongong to Newcastle, another industrial city 100 miles north of Sydney, where I saw the biggest Symphonion I have ever seen - all of 8 feet high. This however would have made too great a hole in the by now dwindling resources, so regretfully I passed it by. It had a surprisingly soft tone for its large size anyway - or so I consoled myself by thinking. Newcastle was rather less fruitful than the other centres. I landed a Puck in one of its many variants, as a result of a contact I had made in Sydney.

Up to Surfers Paradise for a break-apart from an Edison Standard in a shop, with a huge price tag, we saw no phonographs for sale. Gilltrap's Auto Museum display a black handle wind Gem, a diamond disc machine and a delightful little Symphonion Musical Box - the smallest coin operated one I have seen, as well as the very fine collection of vintage and veteran cars.

Back to Sydney and a great rush to re-assemble the collection for the school holidays showing at Roselands as the holidays started 3 days earlier than we had been told. Went chasing out into the country after an advertised Nicole Freres Music Box but was too late. However the advertisers turned out to be Colin and Coleon Parker, members of the Australian Section of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society and I spent a happy half day sifting through collectable items of every description and ended by taking away with me a Tanzbar mechanical accordion and a "box of bits" in fact several boxes of Edison parts, including the works of an "excelsior" coin-operated phonograph. This was good news for Bill Main, whose Excelsior I had on loan at the time, especially as the newly acquired works included the coin mechanism - missing on Bill's, but now very simple to copy.

A hunt around Paddington (the "Portobello Road" of Sydney) landed an immaculate 20" Kalliope musical box with about 30 discs - coin operated again and in new condition...and a contact made during the first Sydney sojourn came to light with a beautiful photograph album playing 4 tunes and two other musical boxes, one of them a key wind Nicole Freres. Nothing else in the Phonograph line however.

At the end of our out-back adventure, we thought of staying and opening the collection as a permanent museum; however as they say "home's best" and so we returned to Wellington - richer in experience, richer in possessions, but certainly not richer in capital.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Collectors attending the Convention will have the pleasure to view all of the machines mentioned in Mr. Woolf's article, when on Sunday the 1st of June at 7 p.m. Mr. & Mrs. Woolf entertain the delegates at their home in Hataitai, Wellington.

DATING PHONOGRAPHS AND EQUIPMENT

by Wally Gollidge.

There is a tendency among "new" or "junior" collectors to claim dates for their phono equipment far earlier than its actual age. This is to some extent also done by dealers and people offering machines for sale. I myself had one old lady offer me a common Edison "Standard", which she was adamant was "an 1888 model", regardless of the fact that the last patent date on the top plate was 1907. 1888 happened to be one of the dates listed on the patent plate.

Quoting the last patent date (even adding on a couple of years) is not too reliable, as the Edison Co. in particular, didn't always advance their last patent date when bringing out a later model.

As an example, the DX Amberola, which could not have appeared until after the advent of the Blue Amberol (Oct. 1912 in U.S.A. and July 1913 in N.Z.) has the last patent date on its plate as 1898!

A few reference books of recent date exist on the phonograph, but none is of much help as far as positive dating goes. The best reference sources are machine catalogues, trade publications, such as the "New Phonogram", "Talking Machine News" etc., monthly release lists, or other contemporary printed matter. Original catalogues are of course, few and far between, but the position is becoming somewhat easier with the reprinting of early catalogues by enthusiastic collectors or dealers and most of these are now available to the public. Another good book for reliable dating is "The Phonograph and How to Use It", National Phono Co., 1900.

Of course the fact that a machine is a 2min, a 2/4 min, or a 4 min model will assist in establishing its date. At an exhibition here I saw a "Red Gem" dated at "c.1905", possibly because the patent plate quotes 1905 as its last date, but as 4 min Amberols did not appear in New Zealand until May 1909 (November 1908 in U.S.A.) the machine was obviously later than this, quite possibly as late as 1912-13.

Generally speaking, most 4 min and late 2 min Edison machines were "gateless" or "open end mandrel", but one machine at least reversed this trend. The earliest "Key Wind Gem" which according to "The Phonograph and How to Use It", appeared in 1899, had no gate; later "Black Gems" being fitted with gates of at least three different types, before the "gateless" Model D, or "Red Gem".

This term, "Model D", or "E", "F" etc., can be confusing to collectors. The first use of a letter to designate a particular model appears to be about 1908 and apparently the Edison Co. Co. at that time, assigned a Model "A" and "B" to their earlier existing models; the "Triumph", "Home", "Standard" and "Gem", although naturally these letters will never be found on any of the quoted machines. A few machines will be found marked "C". Models later than this were listed up to "G". As the "Fireside" appeared after this date, it is shown as "Model A" and I have heard of a "Model B". Amberola 1's or "Concert Amberolas" also were designated as Model "A" or "B".

"The Phonograph and How to Use It", lists these initial dates for the following machines; Edison Spring Motor (the predecessor of the Triumph) 1895; "Suitcase" Home, 1896; "Suitcase" Standard, 1897; Gem 1899. The name "Suitcase" is a term given by collectors, because of the suitcase type side clips which appeared on these early models. These ones were prior to the "Banner" models which date from 1901 and were in production until late 1906, as the October 1906 U.S. catalogue shows all machines fitted with just the plain "Edison" transfer on the front of the case, whereas the March 1906 catalogue shows the "banner transfer". Therefore any Edison machines bought in New Zealand with just "Edison" on the front, cannot be any earlier than 1907, with the exception possibly of the Gem.

With cylinder records, roughly speaking, the first were white or yellow wax, then brown wax, both these at 125 or 144 revs. (according to the Edison Co.), black moulded wax, then indestructibles of various sorts, (including Blue Amberols), all these standardised at 160 revs. In some cases, particularly "Edisonia" or early "Edison-Bell" brown wax, it is possible to date positively, because often on the handwritten "record slip" which was supplied with every cylinder before the titles were printed on the ends, is found on the back the date, e.g. "1.3.01".

The first moulded Edison cylinders appeared in 1902 and were flat ended, with just the "Edison" trademark embossed on the side and the catalogue number engraved on the side near the playing surface, at the beginning of the record. In August 1904, at record No. 8759, the end shape was changed to bevelled and the title, record number, artist and trade mark were printed in white on the end. However, earlier numbers than this, which had been made in the flat end style were from then on made in the new style.

Blue Amberols which were issued in U.S.A. in October 1912, were at first made with flat ends as also had been the earlier 4 min wax Amberols, to differentiate them from the bevelled end 2 min cylinders. At No. 2050, in 1914, the ends were changed to bevelled and all earlier numbers which would have been made from the same original "masters" were moulded in this style. As a case in point, I have a very late copy of Blue Amberol 1898, "Silver Bell" by the American Standard Orchestra. The "superscript" or mould number on the cylinder is 142 and is bevelled end. This cylinder was originally released in U.S.A. in late 1913, but I found it in its late type box and lid, with a collection of 5,000 series cylinders, which were released from 1926 - 28 showing that this record had had at least 143 new moulds made from the original "master" and testifying to its long-lived popularity.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many collectors will welcome this article because of the informative facts it imparts. If you have a dating problem on a particular machine then bring it to the Conference, or if that is not possible a photograph or drawing will suffice. Mr. Gollidge will only be too pleased to give you his opinions of its dating.

EDISON ON RECORD.

by Wally Gollidge.

"Let Us Not Forget" by Thomas A. Edison.
Edison Blue Amberol 3756

This much sought after cylinder which turns up fairly frequently in New Zealand (I have found four copies myself, including a mint, unplayed one), must have been quite a desirable record to own in the post World War 1 days when it was made. There are frequent enquiries from readers in the "New Phonogram", an Edison publication, asking whether any records of the "Old Man" himself, had ever been or would be made. The answer given is usually "No", and "Not likely".

This was the only commercially available cylinder of Edison's voice, as apparently he was most reluctant to have his voice recorded for resale. Evidently it took an important occasion such as a "War Message" for him to relax this rule. It must surely be the shortest Blue Amberol (excepting the rare 2 min Blue Amberols) as it occupies barely half the space of a 4 min record.

The record is introduced with a longish preamble by an announcer... "Thomas A. Edison, the inventor of the phonograph, has never before permitted his voice to be recorded for the public. Today however, he has a message for you that is important enough to cause him to break his long established rule. Mr. Edison will now give you that message. I beg to introduce Mr. Thomas A. Edison.... This is Mr. Edison speaking.... Our boys made good in France, the word "American" has a new meaning in Europe, our soldiers have made extreme courage, generosity, self-restraint and modesty. We are proud of the North Americans who risked their lives for the liberty of the

world, but we must not forget and we must not permit demagogues to belittle the part played by our gallant allies. Their casualty lists tell the story. However proud we may be of our own achievements, let us remember always that the war could not have been won if the Belgians, the British, French and the Italians had not fought like bulldogs in the face of overwhelming odds. The Great War will live vividly in the minds of Americans for the next hundred years. I hope that when we do homage to the memory of our brave boys who fell in France, we shall not forget their brothers in arms who wore the uniform of our allies.

I believe that the National Airs of France, Great Britain, Italy and Belgium should for all time to come, be as familiar to us as our own "Star Spangled Banner".

In the background can then be heard what sounds like "cut" by another voice.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This record will be played at one of the sessions at the Convention.

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FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE:

Cranes for Morning Glory Horns, Red Gems, one piece Key Wind Gem
Cranes, cygnet horn cranes. Gear covers for - Standards (3 types),
Red Gems and Firesides. Governor covers for Amberolas. Winding
Keys several types. Wooden bases for Gems. Phonograph envelopes, 6
types - Puck, Opera, Lambert, Edison, National Phono Co., Pathe.

FOR EXCHANGE:

"Floating Type" reproducers for Columbia (5 different models), Pathe,
2 sizes and two other types suitable for Continental machines. Also
Puck reproducers. Will accept Edison reproducers, even broken or
incomplete in trade.....Wally Gollodge,

179 Hampden Terrace,

NELSON.

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