



The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

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CLAUDE E. WOLEDGE

It is with sincere regret that we announce the death on April 26 of the Society's Patron, Claude E. Wledge. Mr. Wledge, who was in his eighty-third year, was elected Patron at the inaugural Meeting of the Society and had held that position ever since. Most of you will have come to know a little about him through his articles in this magazine; some of us knew him personally and have spent many evenings talking, asking questions and listening. His memory of the early days of the Talking Machine and more particularly in Christchurch was remarkable and it was nothing for him to list the names of the buyers of a certain model of phonograph. While he recognised the merit of other manufacturers of phonographs and records he was essentially an 'Edison' man and he loved to read and discuss the various facets of Edison's life and work.

Phonographs were not his only interest. He followed sport keenly, particularly rugby and Saturday afternoons in the season were reserved for 'listening-in.' He was keenly interested in world affairs and in music; in his lifetime having played a number of musical instruments.

The photograph we have chosen for our illustrations page is not the best we have of Mr. Wledge but we think it is the one he would have wanted us to choose. It shows him playing his Edison Amberola A as he had done so often over the years. He sometimes spoke of his reluctance to part with it should he have to leave his home. We are happy for him that he parted 'from it' and not 'with it'.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

This issue of The Phonographic Record will reach you a little earlier than usual to enable us to post with it a pre-Conference supplement prepared by three of our members who are on the organising Committee of the Convention. This supplement introduces to those attending some of the subjects to be discussed at the Convention; to those who will not be there it provides much information of value.

ONLY A GRAMOPHONE BETWEEN THEM March 8 was the date of a wedding which was very much a 'Society' affair. Member Roger Cole married Ruth, daughter of member David Williams and a third member, Colin Gordon was groomsman. On our illustrations page is a photograph especially requested. It shows that even on a wedding day a gramophone can come between the happy couple. Best wishes for the future to you both!

EDISON AND MOTION PICTURES by A.J.R.

In our last issue, I wrote of the zetrope and how Eadweard Muybridge used the principle of 'persistence of vision' to show the movement of various animals.

Edison had seen Muybridge's pictures in 1886. About this time he was very busy developing the phonograph and it had occurred to him that if it was possible to record sound, he should be able to

cord motion in a similar manner. His description of a suitable piece of apparatus is interesting - an experimenting upon a machine which does for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear which the recording and reproduction of things in motion..... The invention consists in photographing continuously a series of pictures occurring at intervals and photographing these series of pictures in a continuous spiral on a cylinder or plate in the same manner as sound is recorded on a phonograph."

Two important points should be noted here - firstly that Edison proposed using only a single camera for recording. Muybridge it will be remembered, had originally used a series of cameras to record his galloping horses although the Frenchman, Marey had used only a single camera. Secondly, considering his thinking on the design of the phonograph he envisaged the one machine being used for both recording and reproduction. In his description of the proposed machine he does mention the possibility of recording the pictures on 'a continuous strip' but says that "there are too many difficulties in the way." It should be noted that Edison was not the first to suggest using a series of photographs in strip - as long ago as 1864 L.A. Ducos, a Frenchman, had worked out (on paper) the idea of a chain film of photographs unrolling and by the persistence of vision giving the appearance of motion. His ideas were never put to the practical test.

As may be imagined, Edison's proposal to record his photographs on a cylinder meant microscopic-sized pictures - in fact, they started out at only $\frac{1}{16}$ th inch square but were later increased to $\frac{1}{8}$ th inch. Problems kept arising and in 1889 Edison decided that he should abandon the cylinder principle in favour of long lengths of celluloid which could be rolled up, was the break-through he was seeking. It is reported that when Edison saw the fifty feet long pieces specially produced for him, he exclaimed "That's it - we've got it - now work like hell!"

And work like hell Edison's faithful assistants did. On October 6th 1889, when Edison returned from the Paris Exposition, his assistant, W.K.L. Dickson took him into a darkened room and cranked the handle of a machine on which he had been working. It was the 'kinetoscope' and attached to it was a phonograph. As Dickson cranked the machine his 'vague, flickering image' appeared on the screen and raised his hat and his recorded voice said "Good-morning, Mr. Edison, glad to see you back. I hope you are satisfied with the Kinetophone-graph." Here, then was the first example of talking pictures.

Another famous first for Edison is the first example of colour pictures which was in 1896 and featured Annabelle, a theatrical favourite of the day.

In such a short article about a most complex subject I have been forced to mention only a few of the highlights of the early history of motion pictures, but I have done so in the hope that you will be encouraged to read deeper on this fascinating aspect of Edison's work. Lest one should think that Edison was always correct in everything he said, I will close with a quotation from a letter he wrote to Eadweard Muybridge in 1893:-

"I have constructed a little instrument which I call a Kinetoscope, with a nickel and slot attachment. Some 25 have been made but I am very doubtful if there is any commercial future in it and I fear that they will not even earn their cost. These Zeotropic devices are of too sentimental character to get the public to invest in."

OVERHAULING THE MOTOR (Continued) BY ROGER COLE.

Gear Noises. Having located the gear responsible, try slightly moving one or the other gear wheel if possible. Otherwise, lubricate with plenty of graphite grease and put up with the remaining noise. The only other alternative is to get new gears either from a wrecked machine or by having them made. Many noises will disappear as soon as load is put on the turntable (i.e. when the needle is placed on the record.)

Bearing noise. The most troublesome bearing is the one at the top of the motor where the turntable shaft passes through the top plate of the motor. Plenty of graphite grease should fix this but if it is very bad some building up with weld and re-turning the shaft may be necessary.

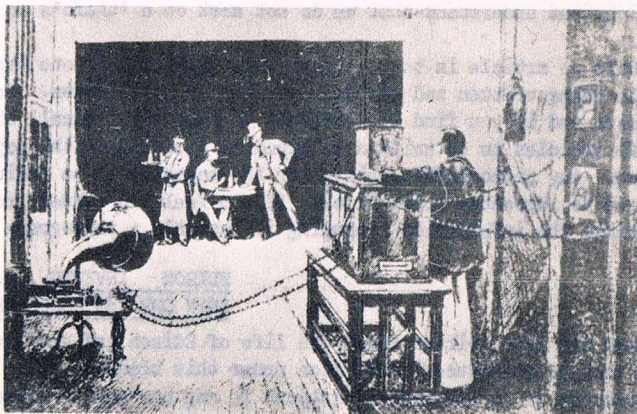


THE LATE
CLAUDE E. WOLEDGE

PHOTOGRAPH - WILLIAM A. GAMBLE



RUTH & ROGER COLE



THE FIRST KNOWN PICTURE SHOWING THE
COUPLING OF SOUND AND FILM

sometimes the slackness may be taken up by hammering the top and bottom sides of the top plate towards the centre. But do not get carried away - test after every few taps: The same procedure can be used when a turntable is loose on the shaft. With other bearings, dryness is again the usual trouble and good application of grease will do the trick. Note:- on many machines the winding mechanism includes a spring wound around a shaft to stop it from turning in the wrong direction. Never try to dismantle this part as it stops the mainspring from unwinding via the handle. Grease as well as possible but do not use too much!

Once all trouble spots have been attended to, you are ready to re-assemble the motor. The spring unit is always first, followed by the other gears. Ensure that all gears are well lubricated with grease. A graphite grease is usually used but any other general purpose grease may be used. After reassembly, oil the pad controlling the governor and ensure that all moving parts are well lubricated. Take care with the governor: The ends of the shaft usually fit into holes in the end of short rods; these holes being off-centre to facilitate adjustment of the governor in relation to the driving gear. As well, the whole governor unit can move backwards and forwards more than a quarter of an inch. It is vital to ensure that the governor is operating freely and there should be a fair bit of fore-and-aft play when the unit has been fastened in to place. Once the motor is reassembled, wind it fully and check operation to ensure that it is working properly and that no further lubrication or adjustment is necessary. Remount motor on to the top of the mounting board and the job is done.

HOW THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD IS PRODUCED

This issue is the second to last of volume four and the twenty-sixth published. Over this period of three and a half years, we have, partly by design and partly by circumstance, formed an editorial pattern and we feel that it is time we told you how we go about producing the magazine and how you can assist us.

Each normal-sized magazine contains approximately 3,300 words. The Society has eighty members whose range of collecting is wide, therefore to try to do our best to interest as many members as possible, we feel it is preferable to print say ten shorter articles and produce ten pictures than three longer articles. After the format of the magazine has been planned there comes the planning of the illustrations; this often means taking photographs especially for the occasion. When all is organised the full text has to be typed ten words a line double spacing so that the printers can estimate quickly the length of any article and thus give us the very fine layout which you see in each issue. We are telling you this so that you will sympathize with the following rules and regulations and understand that we do not work on a 'there's no reason for it - it's just our policy' basis.

While no article is to be longer than 800 words in one issue, this does not prevent a longer article being written and divided over two or more issues. We are sorry this restriction is necessary and if you find it difficult to adhere to, recall the old saying 'quality not quantity.'

All articles to be written or typed on one side of the paper only and preferably with double spacing. Any photographic prints for the magazine to be medium to light in tone. Darker tones are inclined to reproduce solid black. If you feel you cannot present a finished article we would still appreciate the information including if possible a photograph even if only in the form of a negative.

EDISON INVENTS.....

IRON ORE and CONCRETE by Walter T. Norris.

Much has been written about the life of Edison and his inventions and it is from these publications that we reproduce information under this heading.

Concrete is an interesting subject in any age and at present precast concrete is the modern method of producing permanent buildings in a short space of time. Although this is a new idea by today's standard, Edison thought of precast concrete nearly sixty years ago. He became interested in producing iron ore from low iron deposits of which only 18 to 20 per cent was pure iron. He settled on a site 1200 feet above sea level in a place named after him near Ogdensburg about 60 miles West of

Newark, New Jersey. He designed and built some of the largest and fastest rock-busting machines then heard of. The first stage consisted of two huge rollers capable of crushing rocks the size of a piano and from there to smaller ones, ending up in crushing the stone to the consistency of sand; after which it was fed over his newly invented Magnetic Ore Separator. The ore power could not be used as a powder so it had to be mixed with a sticky substance and converted into briquettes.

All this proved, after years of experiment to be a successful venture in that Edison achieved production of between 1,000 and 1,500 tons of briquettes per day. This was in 1897 - but it was too late. The price of iron ore was between six and seven dollars per ton when he started production but by 1897 the price had fallen to \$2.65 which meant that Edison was losing thousands and was forced to close down. After closing the 'Ogden Baby' as Edison called it, he turned to cement manufacture.

He purchased a tract of limestone in Eastern Pennsylvania and brought his Giant Rollers from Ogdensburg to crush rock. This plant was completed in 1907 and was capable of turning out 1000 barrels of cement every twenty-four hours while other manufacturers could turn out only two hundred. Edison, not content with this, improved his plant to the point of producing 1100 barrels per day. He also improved the quality of the cement, grinding it more finely, and being more exact in his weighing and measuring of the mixture.

In 1908, he conceived the idea of poured cement houses which could be cast in one piece in about six hours. His aim was to produce cheap housing for workmen and to do it on the scale of mass production. A house of six rooms was to be built with the aid of cast iron moulds and was to cost three hundred dollars. The house was to consist of cellar, roof, floors, walls, stairways, doors, windows and baths all produced in one piece leaving only plumbing and electrical wiring to be done afterwards. This was in the staggering time of four days. It appears Edison put up several of these houses near West Orange in 1910; these were plain in design and did not take on although, through the use of a special additive, a jelly like glue type substance which caused the concrete to flow evenly, a smooth finish was achieved.

Note:- If we have interested you in this aspect of Edison's work we suggest you read 'Edison' by Matthew Josephson.

MELBA'S GIFT BOOK of Australian Art and Literature

Nellie Melba was an Australian by birth and upbringing and for the whole of her lifetime was proud to introduce herself so.

Her talent showed itself early in her life and after early training in her own country she arrived in England with various letters of introduction to men of music. But no-one did anything for her. She had however, one letter left - to Madame Mathilde Marchesi in Paris. Marchesi was one of the most famous living teachers of singing of that time. Melba waited anxiously for Marchesi's verdict after she had sung. She was not left long in doubt. Marchesi's excited cry to her husband "Salvatore, Salvatore, at last I have found a star!" was to be fulfilled to the limit over the years.

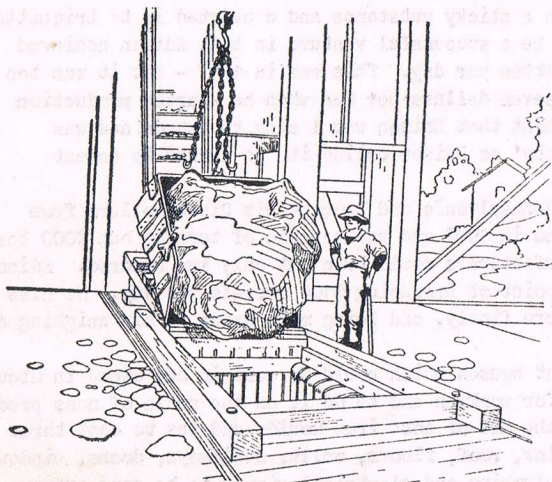
After nine months of intensive training, Marchesi decided that it was time for Melba to make her debut. But where? An offer came from Brussels and it was here on October 13, 1887 as Gilda in 'Rigoletto'. Her success was immediate and it was this reception by the Belgian people which made her write many years later:-

"There is a personal reason for the appearance of this book. I was born in Australia and I glory in the land of my birth. But as an artist I was born in Belgium. I made my debut there; my first appearance in opera was at Brussels, and I can still hear the cheers of my first audience, the kindly warm-hearted Belgians whose generous recognition of the unknown artist from distant Australia gave me hope and courage to persevere."

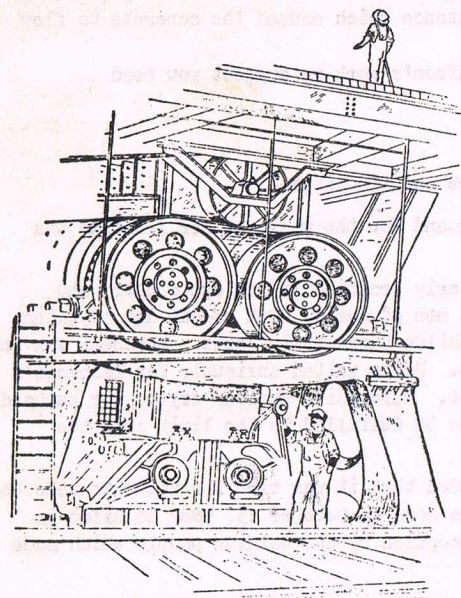
This is the beginning of A Word of Explanation - the introduction to Melba's Gift Book which

EDISON INVENTS.....

IRON ORE AND CONCRETE

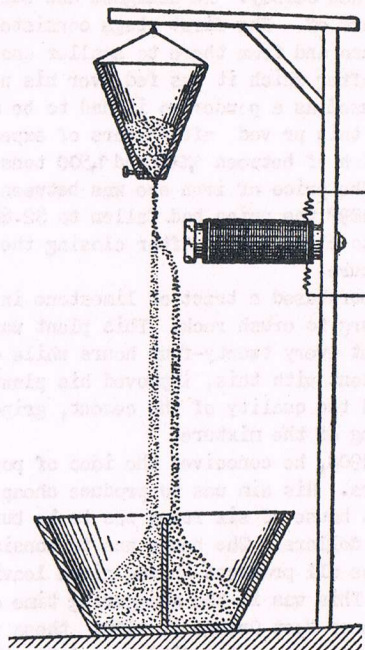


ROCK ENTERING THE CRUSHER

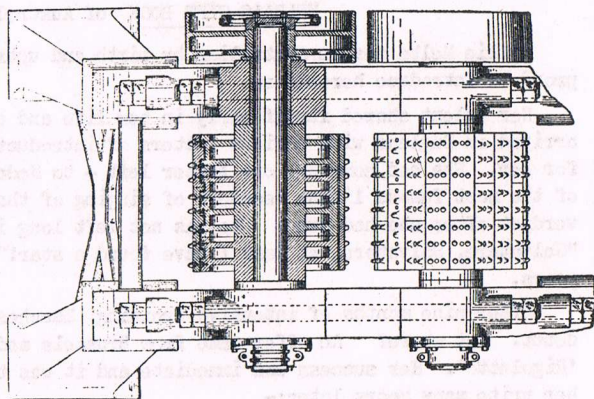


THE CRUSHER

(TOP PICTURE IS THE UPPER PART OF THE MACHINE
PICTURED BELOW)



MAGNETIC SEPARATOR



TEETH OF THE CRUSHER

6FT IN DIAMETER SURFACE SPEED 60 M.P.H.

is a collection of Australian Art and Literature. The proceeds of the sale of the book were devoted by Madame Melba to the Belgian Relief Fund during the First World War. Nellie Melba was not unknown for her charity work but this particular contribution is interesting and unusual and incidentally, a varied selection of art and literature of the period.

RECORDS OF RECORDS by G.B.E.

'Alexander's Ragtime Band' and 'That Mysterious Rag' played by the Empire Military Band (with vocal effects) 10" double-sided Beka Grand Record No. 526.

This is a typical 'ragtime' recording of the pre-First World War period, the two famous songs being written (wholly or partly) by Irving Berlin. The Beka Company was one of the numerous Continental concerns which 'invaded' the British market during the 1900's; the resulting 'price war' cutting the price of some 10" discs down to as little as 10d. The Company apparently found a demand for British recordings in Germany as the label proudly states "Recorded in London, reproduced in Prussia". The two items are well-recorded, although, because it is of a band, the reproduction is rather 'blasty'. The vocalist, whoever he is stands out well above his raucous accompaniment.

ELSIE AND DORIS WATERS by Pamela Rogers

I did not find it difficult to buy a Caruso record; in my first purchase of a collection of 78's I bought three Melba records in the original packets. It took me years, however to get one record of the British comedienne Elsie and Doris Waters.

I cannot remember not knowing about Gert and Daisy, the two Cockney women created by the Waters sisters and I have memories of going to the cinema during the Second World War to see the two films they made.

Like many inventions and discoveries, they 'happened by accident.' In 1933 Elsie and Doris Waters, who at that time were earning four guineas a night doing concerts, began to make recordings. They were short of songs and decided to do a sketch for a change. It was most of a night's work to write 'Gert and Daisy' - and after making the record they forgot all about it. Unknown to them the record had been played over the air - and that was the beginning! In 1935, when theatre tickets were a mere 3d. to 1/8 they created a record by taking £1017 in a week at a provincial theatre.

In an age when humour is often sick and slick there is an everlasting quality about the records of Elsie and Doris Waters. It suffers from no pretensions - it is uncomplicated and earthy and genuine with an appeal for all ages. It was no surprise to me to hear in a recent broadcast that the late Queen Mary was a 'fan'; nor to hear one of our junior members talking about a record which he thought was very amusing and to discover that it was a 'Gert and Daisy'. It is hard to recommend any particular recording. My own favourite is 'Gert and Daisy Make a Christmas Pudding' Columbia DO 1530 which adds to anyone's festive celebrations.

'The Coronation Girls' DO1464 and 'Huntin' DO1637 are also fun. And so is - oh but try them for yourself - if you can find them!

FURTHER ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY (Continued)

25. The Book of Jazz (A Guide to the Entire Field)
26. Call Me Lucky by Bing Crosby
27. My Life of Music by Henry J. Wood
28. Enrico Caruso - His Life and Death by Dorothy Caruso
29. Clara Butt by Winifred Ponder

40.

30. Interrupted Melody by Marjorie Lawrence
31. Am I Too Loud? by Gerald Moore
32. The Unashamed Accompanist by Gerald Moore
33. Living Biographies - Great Composers
34. My Friend Mr. Edison by Henry Ford
35. Edison - A Biography by Jefferson
36. The Complete Opera Book by Gustav Kobbé
37. Opera at Home - The Gramophone Company (2nd Edition)
38. Opera at Home - The Gramophone Company (3rd Edition)

(continued)

AMERICAN LIBRARY TO THE LIBRARY