

# 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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Page 41

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Pamela G. Rogers.

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New Zealand.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

LET US HELP YOU SPEND YOUR MONEY!: It has given us very great pleasure over the last few weeks to welcome a considerable number of new members. Several of these have ordered all the back issues of The Phonographic Record and we would like to draw the attention of the others to the fact that they are available at a cost of \$5.00 NZ a set, postage paid. We also recommend the purchase of the Society's enamelled badge which features an early disc machine. The cost of the badge is \$1.00 NZ postage paid.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The fifth Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on September 28 1970. Nominations must be in the hands of the Secretary not later than September 14 1970 for the offices of Patron, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, three members of the Executive and Auditor. The nominations must be in writing, nominated and seconded by financial members and signed by the person nominated indicating that he or she is willing to serve in such capacity.

1908 CATALOGUE REPRINTS: We have been pleased (but not surprised) by the reception accorded these two reprints. If you have not placed your order we suggest you do so - the two for \$1.00 NZ posted surface mail anywhere in the world.

WANTED TO BUY anything pertaining to EDISON, COLUMBIA CYLINDER AND DISC PHONOGRAPHS. Victor and Standard Disc Phonographs as well as parts, Horns, Records and all items pertaining to these machines. A quarter will bring you Air Mail our latest announcement; A. NUGENT, Jr., 3804 Charles City Road, Richmond, Va, 23231 U.S.A.

WANTED TO EXCHANGE OR BUY Gramophone and Phonograph Needle tins and containers. Particularly require tins from the United States. Pam Rogers, 73 Flockton Street, Christchurch 1, New Zealand.

WANTED TO BUY old and unusual phonographs for a museum; E.T. Drake, P.O. Box 110, Martinsville, Indiana 46151, U.S.A.

THE PHONOGRAPH IN CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND

by Walter Norris

My mother, on her eightieth birthday was able to relate this account of when she first saw a talking machine of any kind. She said that she was a school-girl at the time and along with an older sister attended a small school at School Road which is a few miles West of West Eyreton. This school is approximately 27 miles from Christchurch and on what was a branch-line from Kaiapoi. She said that the phonograph was brought to the school by a man named Knott and that he played the children a cylinder recording of the Drummond School children singing 'Way Down Upon the Swanee River'. He then made a record of the West Eyreton School children singing a song called 'The Fire Brigade'. In the



evening this man showed lantern slides in the West Eyreton hall and played the recording he had made of the children's singing.

On making further inquiries into these events I found an older resident by the name of Frank Sheat who also attended the same school. He said that he also well remembered the occasion and then, to my delight and surprise, produced one of what he called 'Knott's Papers'. These, he said, were printed and sent on ahead and handed round so as to inform everyone - Knott was coming. That was the heading 'Knott is Coming, Knott is Coming'. This leaflet, unfortunately, is torn and part is missing, but I have photographed the main part for you. It now appears that Knott was also a showman as he not only recorded voices but also took photographs which he showed on the screen in the evenings; he put on acts and gave recitals. I tried hard to find out what make, type and size of phonograph was used but to no avail for although everyone referred to it as a Graphophone the news-sheet of Mr. Sheat spoke of 'Edison's latest marvel'. This complicates matters and until I gain further information the answer will have to wait. For the evening's entertainment the charge was one shilling for adults and sixpence for children. We worked out the date of this event but although not certain we think it would be about 1897 or 1898.

Could some New Zealand collector help with some more information about this man Knott as he must have visited other small towns and districts.

#### THE RADIO COLLECTOR by J. Whitley Stokes

Today's junk - tomorrow's antique; a truism nowadays but nevertheless something to ponder over. Keep anything long enough and it will acquire antique value. Anything? - well almost anything because it seems there is no limit to the things people will collect. Certain it is that with some people the urge to collect things is so deeply rooted that it almost amounts to an instinct. However when it comes to ascribing motives to the activity of collecting we are dabbling in the realm of psychology and anyhow it is possible to be an historian without being a collector. So, be that as it may, the following contribution is intended primarily for the benefit of radio collectors, whether existing or intending.

For better or worse it appears that there are more and more phonograph buffs who are becoming interested in early radio equipment and at the editors' request the following article has been written.

Perhaps some phonograph collectors have been put off from collecting radio gear because of a belief that it might require too much technical knowledge or be too difficult to obtain information on the subject. Although it is true that there is no society of antique radio enthusiasts in New Zealand or, to my knowledge, any other country except the U.S.A., this need not deter a would-be collector. After all our Society has been in existence for less than five years so now is the time to start looking for these old radios.

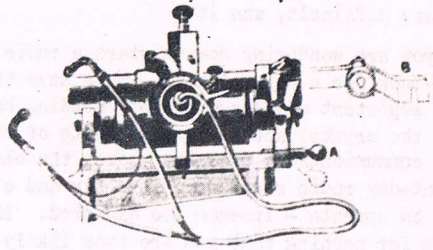
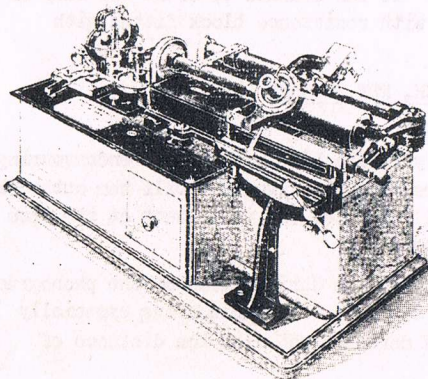
Although at first glance it might seem to the talking machine enthusiast that there is a vast difference between phonographs and radios the connection is closer than it appears. There is one particular aspect of radio development which owes much to the phonograph and that is the use of a horn to amplify sound waves generated by a diaphragm. As a matter of interest the acoustical structure of an early type radio horn-speaker is identical to that of a gramophone; the only difference being in the way the diaphragm is caused to vibrate. Whereas in the case of the talking machine the diaphragm is caused to vibrate by a mechanical linkage to the reproducing stylus, in the case of the loudspeaker movement is imparted to the diaphragm by electrical means. To this very day the speaker used in every radio and television receiver bears evidence of talking machine history for the paper cone used is a lineal descendant of the pleated diaphragm used by Monsieur Lumiere. In fact for a short period during 1924-25 radio speakers were actually produced by an English firm (Sterling Telephone



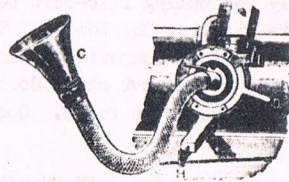


THE EDISON "M" AND "E" ELECTRIC  
PHONOGRAPH

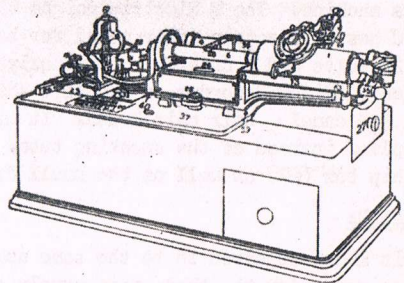
BELOW:- An Electric Motor  
Phonograph.- an improvement  
over The Spectacle Model and  
very similar to the Mand E  
Electric. Note the drawer which  
is further over and the metal  
support



The listening tubes in position



The speaking tube in position



THE EDISON "M" AND "E" ELECTRIC PHONO-  
GRAPHS.

#### INDEX OF PARTS.

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Brass Mandrel to hold wax cylinder. (Assembled with Main Shaft.) | 19. Governor Adjustment Screw.   |
| 2. Turning Rest, to shave cylinders.                                | 20. Governor Brake, or Switch.   |
| 3. Feed Spring.   | 21. Armature Pulley.             |
| 4. Back Rod.  | 22. Armature Shaft Center.       |
| 5. Sapphire Knife Spring Knob.                                      | 23. Governor Block.              |
| 6. Main Shaft. (Always assembled with Brass Mandrel.)               | 24. Phonograph Body.             |
| 7. Main Shaft Pulley.   | 25. Body-holding Screws.         |
| 8. Governor Frame.  | 26. Shaving Knife Lever.         |
| 9. Governor Shaft.  | 27. Chip Box.                    |
| 10. Governor Shaft Center.  | 28. Feed Nut.                    |
| 11. Swing Arm.  | 31. Speaker Adjusting Screw Lug. |
| 12. Straight Edge.  | 33. Top Plate Cover.             |
| 13. Speaker.  | 34. Back Rod Sleeve.             |
| 14. Speaker Arm.  | 35. Lock Bolt.                   |
| 15. Speaker.  | 36. Governor Contact.            |
| 16. Speaker Lever.  | 37. Top Plate.                   |
| 17. Speaker Adjusting Screw.  | 38. Speaker Clamps.              |
| 18. Speaker Arm Lift Lever.   | 39. Belt-tightening Screw.       |
|   | 40. Idler Pulley.                |
|   | 41. Governor Top Brush.          |



Co. Ltd.) using pleated diaphragms made under licence to Lumiere. Here endeth the first lesson - not so very difficult, was it?

If you are wondering how to start a radio collection the best place to begin at is the beginning and look for a crystal set. These have the virtue of being extremely simple to use and also have the important advantage of not needing batteries for their operation. One of the fascinations of the crystal set is that in spite of the amazing progress which has been made in the field of radio communications over the years, the oldest crystal set can, without any alteration, bring in present-day radio stations as sweetly and clearly as one could wish. And it doesn't cost anything to operate - licence fee excepted. In fact it represents the nearest thing to getting something for nothing that you are ever likely to encounter.

Although most crystal sets were of the 'home brew' variety and thus not of interest to the collector, there were many factory-built sets imported in the early days of broadcasting. One of the earliest was a product of The Canadian Independent Telephone Co., another was the 'Geophone' made by The General Electric Co. England. Both these were built into small wooden boxes with hinged lids closely resembling file-card boxes. Another very common receiver was the 'Brownie' made by The Brownie Wireless Co. London. This set had a distinctive cabinet, with a sloping front, moulded from a black composition sometimes contemptuously referred to as "moulded mud". Of course there were many others but space does not permit a description of them all. Suffice to say that there are still some to be found. Good hunting!

(To be continued).

#### AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF EDISON PHONOGRAPHS The M and E Electric

##### The Model M:

After the Improved Spectacle Model came the M Electric. This was similar in many ways to the previous machine. The M Electric weighs 65 lbs. is 20 inches long, 9½ inches wide and 11 inches deep and has an electric motor wound for battery power. It is powered by a battery (chemical) giving 2½ volts and 2 amperes. Originally it was supplied complete with the Edison Automatic Reproducer, Edison Recorder, a sapphire shaver, 14" polished brass horn, two way hearing tube, oil can and camel hair chip brush. It will be noticed that with this model, the 14" brass horn was supplied instead of the speaking tube. Reference to our illustrations will show that this model had a chip box (27) as well as the small drawer in the front.

##### The Model E:

This model appeared to be the same as the model M; the main difference being that the electric motor was wound for the then, main supply of 110/120 volts DC. It was claimed to be at the time of its release, the most convenient model made, and was equipped with resistance block fitted with lamps attaching plug and cord.

#### THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH IN CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND BETWEEN 1879 and 1914

During the past few years, Mr. R.C. Lamb of the Canterbury Public Library has been endeavouring to extract a full history of the phonograph in the local papers from its invention till the outbreak of World War I. Evidently the Canterbury Times recorded a full story of the instrument at the time it was first publicised but so far this report has not been found.

The second article was a report by this paper of an exhibition in Christchurch of the phonograph on June 14, 1879 only eighteen months after it was invented! Surely a remarkable thing especially taking into account that at this time phonographs had not been marketed and also the distance of New Zealand from the United States.



However, let the Canterbury Times of June 14, 1879 speak for itself:-

'During the week one of Edison's Phonographs has been on exhibition in High Street and has attracted a large number of visitors. The Phonograph is capable of receiving any sound, vocal or instrumental and of making these sounds permanent, to be repeated with startling fidelity either a moment afterwards or after a lapse of even years. Not merely the sounds are reproduced but every trick of the speaker's voice so that as has been well said the notes of some gifted singer may be metallized by the Phonograph and at some after period uttered again and again for the delight of a new generation. The instrument now under notice is one produced by Edison himself and a full description of its mechanism has already appeared in our columns. It may however be stated in brief that Edison's Phonograph discovered by an accidental pricking of the finger while experimenting with a telephone, consists in the first place of a mouthpiece at the back of which is a thin metallic diaphragm capable of vibrating in sympathy with the vibrations of the voice. At the back of the diaphragm a small steel pin is supported in a central position and when the disk vibrates this pin is moved to and fro in lengths corresponding exactly with the length of the vibration. At the rear is a brass cylinder having a diameter of about 4 inches and cut into its surface is a continuous spiral groove. A sheet of tinfoil is placed around the cylinder and when a person speaks into the mouthpiece the cylinder is revolved and at the same time moved along behind the pin in the diaphragm. The result of this is that the pin follows the groove of the roller and produces a series of indentations upon the tinfoil much resembling in their general appearance the dot and dash alphabet of the Morse system of telegraphy. At any subsequent time the cylinder may be restored to its original position and again revolved. The position is reversed. The indentations upon the foil move the little pin to and fro to just the same extent as it moved in forming the indentations. In turn the pin vibrates the diaphragm and these vibrations being audible, repeat the words and sounds recorded upon the tinfoil. The arrangement is simplicity itself but it is nonetheless marvellous and so marvellous too, that it must be seen and heard to be appreciated.

From the Lyttelton Times of 24 June 1879: Residents of Lyttelton will have an opportunity of inspecting this invention today as it will be shown from 3 - 9 p.m.

From the Lyttelton Times of 1 July 1879 (to the Editor): Sir, if a person speaks to Thomas Edison's Phonograph or speaking machine, in a distinct language, will it speak his words so that he can understand them? Also could I recognise the voice? (from Reefton June 22, 1879).

Editor's Reply: The Phonograph gives a faithful reproduction of the tone of the voice but its distinctiveness is very variable. A clear sharp voice is reproduced very well: a husky one makes little impression. - Editor Lyttelton Times.

From The Weekly Press, 11 February 1882: A model of Edison's Phonograph is on display at the scientific exhibition at St. Mary's Merivale schoolroom.

From The Lyttelton Times of 31 December 1890: Professor Archibald has consented to exhibit the Phonograph and explain its workings.

From The Lyttelton Times of 26 December 1890: Edison's Phonograph was privately exhibited at City Hotel, Dunedin. 3 January 1891 - drawing immense audiences at Dunedin.

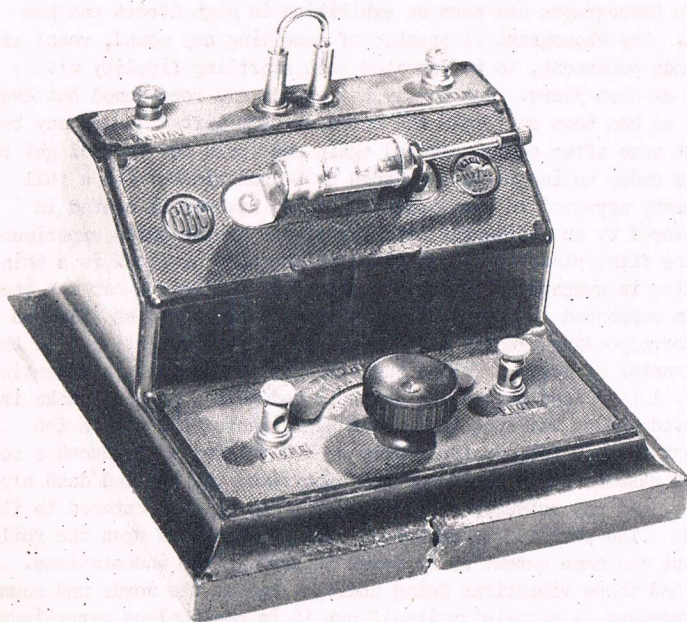
(To be continued)

#### COLLECTORS CORNER

R. Cole

This article is the first of a series in which I aim to give concise resumes of the lives and achievements of some recorded artists, both vocal and instrumental, primarily in the fields of classics and opera. Some will be well known, others obscure; all, however, will be artists considered top-line in their day, and my hope is that the series will give record collectors a broader spectrum of background information to enable them to choose more objectively the records to add to their collections.





A. BROWNIE CRYSTAL SET

## A BROWNIE PANORAMA OF THE LAND WE LIVE IN, From the NORTH CAPE to the BLUFF!

municipal Cities, Towns, Public Buildings, Mountains, Rivers, Glaciers, Terraces, Hot Springs and Lakes. Otira, Buller, and Waipatu Gorges. Views of the Wreck of the Wairarapa; the Brunner Mine, the Big Grave, Gold-Mining, and Sluicing, Gum-Digging, and Bush Life in the Kauri Forest, etc.—a MOST COMPLETE PANORAMA of the country, such as can only be shown by one who has travelled everywhere in it. The Panorama will be enlivened at intervals by Mr. Knott's Recital of "The Lifeboat," "Christmas Day in the South," "The Gambler's Wife," "Beautiful Snow," "Beautiful Water," etc., the whole forming A VERY FINE ENTERTAINMENT.

**DON'T MISS IT!**

MR. KNOTT hopes to arrive early in the day, when he will Photograph the School Children, and Show Them Under the Limelight at Night.

EDISON'S LATEST MARVEL—

## THE GRAPHOPHONE!

ONE OF THE LOUDEST AND MOST DISTINCT IN THE COLONY.

Songs, Solos, Band Selections, &c., by the most renowned Artists, will be given.

Mr. Knott hopes to take the Graphophone into the School during the day, get the Children to sing into it, and the Graphophone will sing their song at night.

**Everybody should See and Hear this Up-to-Date Instrument!**

→ WHAT THE PEOPLE SAY. ←

One gentleman was heard to say: "I am so thankful all my family have been here. I would not have had my children miss it for twice the money."—"Well, Mr. Knott, you have given us a splendid treat!"—"A lot of rough fellows have been heard to say, when going away, 'Well, that's worth a bob, anyhow!'" Country School Committees have again and again remitted the usual charge of 5s. for use of the school, saying, "This is the kind of thing we want to encourage. It is a splendid education for our children," etc.

**Fathers and Mothers, Don't Fail to Bring Your Children!**

Whilst in the neighbourhood, MR. KNOTT will be prepared to take PHOTOS OF INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, PRIVATE HOUSES, &c.

Admission, One Shilling; Children, Sixpence.

Commence at 7.30 p.m.

"KNOTT IS COMING"—KNOTT'S PAPER

## Now on View

PROPRIETOR ... HERR A. SCHLESINGER.

**The Most Marvellous Exhibition**  
Ever presented to the New Zealand Public.

## ZIZKA

The most natural Automaton ever constructed.

This wonderful mechanical work of art was made by the World Renowned artist GUSTAV HULIG, of Strasburg, whose beautiful automatic figures have won world-wide fame.

THE LATEST LONDON SENSATION, THE ONLY

## ALLY SLOPER

A Marvel of Mechanical Ingenuity, must be seen to be believed.

ALSO THE MARVEL OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY  
THOS. A. EDISON'S (America's Greatest Genius)

ASTOUNDING INVENTION,

## The Phonograph, & Talking Machine

The most Scientific Invention of the Age.

Press Opinions.—No matter how familiar a person may be with modern machinery and its wonderful performances it is impossible for him to listen to mechanical speech without his experiencing the idea that his senses are deceiving him. We have heard other talking machines produce something like articulation. But here is a machine that talks in such a way there can be no doubt but that the imitations are those of nothing else than the human voice.

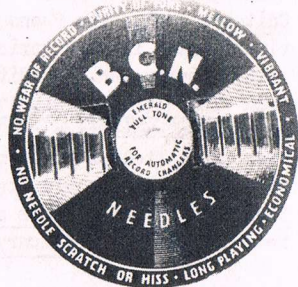
ADMISSION—LONDON POPULAR PRICES  
6d. 6d. 6d.

YOU CANNOT ASK MORE FOR LESS.

MANAGER ... J. E. PETHERICK.

Printed at the Lyttelton Times Office, Christchurch.

AN EARLY POSTER PRINTED  
BY THE LYTTELTON TIMES



B.C.N. THORN NEEDLE  
CONTAINER



CAMPOLI, ALFREDO

- Violinist.

Born Rome, 1906. His father was a professor of the violin, and his mother was a prominent soprano who for several years toured with Caruso. It would have been surprising if some musical ability had not rubbed off on young Alfredo; his father taught him the violin from an early age, and encouraged him to copy on his fiddle the ringing of the famous Italian baritone Mattia Battistini. Campoli thus acquired a "bel canto" style in his playing which is very much admired.

At the tender age of fifteen, Alfredo toured with both Melba and Dame Clara Butt in the British Isles, thus early establishing himself as a soloist; the coming of the depression, however, put a temporary stop to solo work and Campoli was forced to forgo this occupation and formed his own orchestra to do broadcasting and recording of light music. This meant that, unlike so many other musicians, he did not have to entirely divorce himself from his profession during this period.

His technique was remarkable, almost gymnastic, although his own musical tastes were more in the quieter types of music; he adopted the virtuoso style, it seems, simply to give the public what they wanted - quite understandable, in a profession in which success equals public popularity. He recorded for both Columbia and Decca, being perhaps best known for his Decca pressing of *La Folia/La Campanella* on AK 1670 and 1671. I had no difficulty in obtaining this set, and would recommend it to all lovers of the violin. I treasure it all the more for having heard Campoli play the latter piece in the flesh.

MORESCHI, ALESSANDRO (Professore)

Male Soprano.

Born 1858, died 1922. The last of the castrati, and the only castrato known to have recorded. It is for this reason alone that his recordings are treasured, for when he made his Red Label G & T's in Rome in 1902 and 1903, his voice was well past its prime; moreover, Moreschi would never have been numbered among the really great members of his class.

Moreschi was a member of the Sistine Chapel, and directed the choir of that institution for several years, including in 1904 the recording on black G & T's of 12 12" and 4 10" discs of religious choral pieces.

The Castrati were for about 400 years the unique product of the Roman Catholic Church in its attempt to follow what it believed to be the command of St. Paul not to allow women to have any active part whatsoever in the running of a Church Service. Whether this interpretation was sound may be a matter of debate; the fact remains that the only solution to the problem of using soprano voices in the Churches was a surgical one. Originally the operation was performed to retain a voice proven to be of great beauty, but the acclamation and comfortable living of the castrati induced many impoverished parents to perform the operation themselves in the hope that their son would become one of the famous, and be able to support them in comfort in their old age. Not surprisingly, these efforts were usually unsuccessful, but serve to illustrate the social position of a good castrato singer.

Moreschi made nine Red Label G & T's, listed below, and these are well worth adding to a collection, perhaps more for historic than artistic reasons.

54764 *Crucifixus* (Rossini) (Victor 5064)54766 *Domine, Domine*54770 *Et Incarnatus est, Et crucifixus*54773 *Crucifixus* (Rossini). Perhaps a duplicate of 5476454774 *Pie Jesu* (Laibach)54775 *Hostias et Preces* (Terziani)54776 *Pregiera* (Tosti)54777 *Ave Maria* (Gounod)54780 *Laudamus Te*. With Boezi, Dado and the Capella Sistina.A QUESTION OF BALANCE

by Frank Puls

Not very long ago, a friend of mine threw out his older records. He had been bitten by the stereo-bug. His living room was a mass of many hundreds of dollars worth of equipment. Then, at



my request, he played a 1910 Melba and a 1930 Roy Fox which I had brought along to test his equipment. After listening to both records for a few moments, he shut them up and exploded "They both sound awful! The Melba sounds 'tinny' and that English dance orchestra sounds 'tubby'. There is no balance!" He took down a stereo microgroove from the rack. I was then treated to a half hour performance of well recorded, but badly played music from a band of amplified harmonicas from the back woods of the Ozarks. When it was finished, he said "There is good balance for you; you could swear that the band was playing right here in this room." I could have sworn right enough but refrained from doing so. Instead I said; "You seem to put the technique of recording before that of the technique of the artiste's delivery, and style. If then you are striving for true high fidelity, then I advise you to throw out all of this expensive gear and invite your local mouth-organ band in for a party. They can play to you in the flesh. A small donation to their funds will therefore be all which may be required of you." I feel that my friend had got his values mixed up somewhere along the line; the question of balance, the old and the new. From the earliest Edison cylinders to the latest stereo microgroove discs. However, my friend did not heed my advice. He now listens to high fidelity stereo sounds of frogs and crickets. If he went out through his kitchen door he would hear the real live sounds of each in its original state in the local creek!

#### REPORT FROM OUR MAN IN SYDNEY

It was good to receive a letter recently from Alan Robb who has left Christchurch to reside in Sydney, Australia. Alan writes:- The latest novelty here in Sydney is known as a 'Bag Full of Laughs' and that quite literally is what it is. For the sum of \$3.50 one obtains a small bag about two thirds the size of a Blue Amberol box, which at will, produces shrieks of raucous laughter to the astonishment, as they say, of bewildered onlookers. How is it done? In much the same manner as Thomas Edison made a doll recite nursery rhymes. A small record, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter, contains non-stop laughter in the best Billy Whitlock or Charles Penrose tradition. Besides replacing Edison's cylinder with a disc, the Japanese manufacturers have updated the mechanism by using a small electric motor instead of clockwork. One simply presses the button and the record starts, switching itself off at the end of the disc.

It is not possible to replace the record but possibly some enterprising toymaker will produce a clockwork version with renewable records. Already we have seen a toy version of Edison's tinfoil phonograph (using wax records) - who knows what the next step will be? Perhaps a replica of an early Edison film projector.

#### B.C.N. NEEDLES

Our illustrations page shows a card packet which is very familiar to many New Zealand collectors as the B.C.N. thorn needles seem to have had a longer history in this country than any other non-metallic needles. The B.C.N. needles were mounted on a circular piece of card, the back of which served as a stroboscope for 78's. The decoration on the card as well as the actual needles were colour coded and were obtainable in five colours EMERALD for Automatic Record Changers, RED for Electric Pick-ups, BLUE for Acoustic Gramophones - Medium tone. YELLOW for Acoustic Gramophones Loud Tone and PLUM for use with Lightweight Pickups. They had the advantage of being able to be sharpened with a special B.C.N. Sharpener.