

# 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 1

October, 1970.

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New Zealand.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDERS: We have been delighted at the response of members to our Parts and Reprints List. We are in the process of forwarding the orders. However, we would remind members that at present we are a collectors' society and not a commercial business and that our low prices are maintained only because some of the members are prepared to give a considerable amount of time for which they are completely unpaid, to the organising and despatching of orders and answering the many queries involved. We DO supply to non members on a commercial basis but prices charged under this category are approximately double that to members.

ALL GOODS are supplied by surface mail unless airmail is requested and paid for at the time of placing the order. Air mail rates in this country are already high and there is a probability of their rising higher in the near future. Surface mail does take a long time but we understand that so far we have 'never lost a parcel'. Thank you for your orders - we are happy to help a little - we hope you are equally happy to perhaps wait a little.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: There was a good attendance at the Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Society which was held on September 28th 1970. The decision of Mr. William Anderson to resign from the Committee led to the appointment of Mr. Ivan Skilling to replace him and the separation of the positions of Treasurer and Secretary brought Mr. Roger Cole on to the Executive, which, for the current year is as follows:-

PATRON Mr. A.O. Alleyway, PRESIDENT Mr. W.T. Norris, VICE-PRESIDENT Mr. W.S. Dini, SECRETARY Miss P.G. Rogers, TREASURER Mr. R.L. Cole. COMMITTEE: Messrs. J.L. Marshall, A.M. Otley and I.A. Skilling.  
AUDITOR: To be appointed.

Much discussion centred around the possibility of buying or building clubrooms to help overcome the storage problem which is growing as we widen our range of parts and reprints. A committee was appointed to investigate the various alternatives from buying a small already established hall to purchasing a section and building what we want on it.

RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT: It gives us very great pleasure to announce that we have received from our sister society The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society small supplies of reprints issued by them. In return we have sent supplies of the two 1908 reprint catalogues, (Gramophone Company and Columbia). We would therefore ask that members of our Society who are also members of the English Society assist us and themselves by observing the following:- If you are resident in New Zealand or Australia would you please order your reprints from the address on the front page of this magazine. If you are resident in the United Kingdom or Europe would you please order from Mr. L.L. Watts, 64 Fifth Cross Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, England. Any other mutual members may order from either Society. This is an attempt to give collectors a better service particularly as regards postal distances. The reprints concerned are as follows and we quote the prices which are the New Zealand



equivalent of the English prices; all include postage.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. 1898 catalogue of EDISONIA (London) Ltd. showing early Edison and Columbia phonographs   | 80 cents |
| 2. 1905 catalogue of the EDISON BELL (London) Company showing the phonographs made or marketed by the Company   | 80 cents |
| 3. 1906 catalogue of the English COLUMBIA Company depicting the accessories and phonographs marketed in the United Kingdom. (This is a <u>must</u> for all those members who want parts for early Columbia disc and cylinder machines.) | 80 cents |
| 4. Catalogue of the THORENS (Switzerland) Company - a compendium of three catalogues of cylinder and disc machines  | 95 cents |
| 5. Catalogue of the MAESTROPHONE range of talking machines of PAILLARD (Switzerland) Ltd. showing disc machines.  | 95 cents |
| 6. Complete listing of EDISON CONCERT Cylinders by Peter Betz   | 55 cents |
| 7. 1913 ODEON Royalty Record Catalogue (16 pages and cover)   | 45 cents |
| 8. 1914 illustrated COLUMBIA Celebrity Record Catalogue (40 pages and cover)  | \$1.10   |
| 9. The EDISON BELL story (limited supplies only)  | 80 cents |

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY THE VINTAGE PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 10. 1908 GRAMOPHONE COMPANY'S catalogue of disc machines including the Monarchs, the Sheratons, the Ionic, the New Melba etc.   | 75 cents |
| 11. 1908 COLUMBIA catalogue of cylinder and disc machines<br>(These two still only \$1.00; the two posted free anywhere in the world)<br>All prices in New Zealand currency | 30 cents |

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL: Please note that this is the last issue of this magazine which will be sent under the 1969/70 subscription. If you have not done so please RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION NOW!

THE SONORA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY by Walter Norris

As a number of disc machines made by the Sonora Company have been found in New Zealand, a little about the company may be of interest. This company, in 1907 began as The Sonora Chime Company and later, after reorganisation, changed its name to The Sonora Phonograph Company and used as its trade mark a bell under the last letter 'A' of the word Sonora. (Please see our illustrations page). In the early days of the company, the Victor Company brought a law suit against the Sonora Company for infringement of Berliner's patent but Sonora withstood this onslaught, something many other companies did not manage to do.

Many claims were made by the Sonora Company and here we state but a few. They claimed that they were the first to make a portable gramophone and the first to produce a thirty and forty-five minute motor. They produced for their better models, a motor meter and also claimed they were the first to do this. It was in the form of an indicator dial which showed how much spring was wound; it was an extra and cost £25 except in the case of the models 'Supreme' and 'Invincible' to which it was fitted as standard equipment. Other features included a tone control, an all wooden tone passage and automatic stop, another first claimed! One of the most useful features was that, by a simple means, hill and dale records could be played providing the correct needles were used. These were supplied with the best models but were an extra on the cheaper models. The needles supplied were a diamond point for playing Diamond Discs, a sapphire ball point for playing Pathe type discs and what was called by the Sonora Company, an improved multi-playing jewel needle. For this needle 200 playings were claimed before appreciable wear. In a test carried out it was claimed that a disc wore out after eighty-five playings when ordinary needles were used but when the multi-jewel was used, the record played 428 times with very little wear.

The multi-jewel needle came on a card in which the needle was visible. The diamond and the sapphire needles were fitted into a little felt lined box. Multi-jewels came in three



# EDISON BELL RADIO

BUY BRITISH GOODS

WRITE  
FOR  
CATALOGUES

"THERE IS NOTHING  
BETTER THAN THE BEST."

WE SUPPLY YOU WITH  
THE BEST—

1st EXAMPLE  
(OTHER EXAMPLES WILL  
APPEAR SHORTLY)

THE EDISON BELL  
"GEM" 2-VALVE SET

PRICE £3-0-0

(Valves, Batteries, and Marconi Licence extra.)

EVERY HOME SHOULD POSSESS THIS SET.

Manufactured by an ALL-BRITISH FIRM with 33 YEARS' REPUTATION FOR QUALITY.  
J. E. HOUGH, LTD., Edison Bell Works, London, S.E.15, & Huntingdon.



## SPECIFICATION:

12-10-4" deep, highly polished  
base, fitted chrome panel and  
nickel-plated fittings.

A Grid Bias battery is fitted in  
panel which enables good musical  
quality to be obtained. This set is  
supplied with Coils suitable for  
300-500 metres. Coils for higher  
wave lengths can be supplied at  
extra cost.

This is a very efficient  
2-Valve Set and will give  
good Loud Speaker results  
at 25 to 30 miles, it having  
one Detector and one Low  
Frequency Stage.

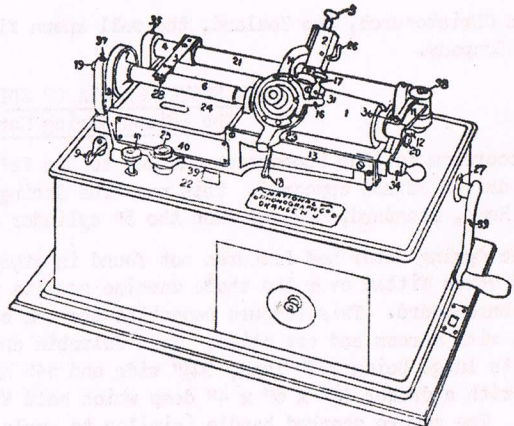
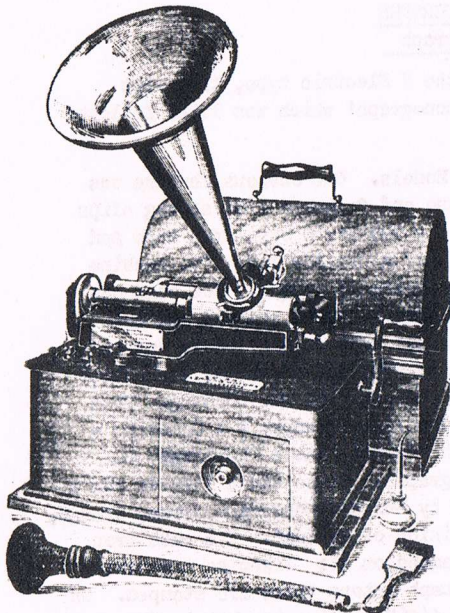
FOR PERFECT  
RECEPTION THIS SET  
CANNOT BE BEATEN.

WRITE  
FOR  
CATALOGUES

12

Mention of "The Wireless World," when writing to advertisers, will ensure prompt attention.

13



THE EDISON SPRING MOTOR PHONOGRAPH  
INDEX OF PARTS.

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Brass Mandrel to hold wax cylinder. (Always assembled with Main Shaft.) | 19. Main Shaft Center.                |
| 2. Turning Rest, to shave cylinder.  | 20. Swing-arm Center Adjusting Screw. |
| 3. Feed Spring.  | 21. Back Rod Sleeve.                  |
| 4. Back Rod.   | 22. Top Plate.                        |
| 5. Sapphire Knife Spring Knob.   | 23. Speaker Clamps.                   |
| 6. Main Shaft (Always assembled with Brass Mandrel.)                       | 24. Phonograph Body.                  |
| 7. Main Shaft Pulley.  | 25. Body-holding Screws.              |
| 8. Drive Belt.   | 26. Shaving Knife Lever.              |
| 9. Start-and-Stop Switch.  | 27. Winding Key Sleeve.               |
| 10. Speed Adjusting Screw.   | 28. Feed Nut.                         |
| 11. Swing Arm.   | 31. Speaker Adjusting Screw Lug.      |
| 12. Swing-arm Center.  | 33. Winding Key.                      |
| 13. Straight Edge.   | 34. Lock Bolt.                        |
| 14. Speaker Arm.   | 35. Back Rod Set Screw.               |
| 15. Speaker.   | 36. Swing-arm Center Set Screw.       |
| 16. Speaker Lever.   | 37. Main Shaft Center Set Screw.      |
| 17. Speaker Adjusting Screw.   | 38. Swing-arm Spring Washer.          |
| 18. Speaker Arm Lift Lever   | 39. Top Plate Lug.                    |
|  | 40. Body-holding Screw Washers.       |

THE EDISON SPRING MOTOR PHONOGRAPH



grades, full, medium and soft and as an extra cost 50 cents (US), the diamond costing \$5 (US), and the sapphire \$1 (US). Standard needles in tins and packets were also made by the Sonora Company.

The gramophone cabinets were of a very fine standard, the appearance being so good that one of these machines in good condition is worth space in any collection. Many of these models had a bow front - another first claimed and they were available in six different woods, golden, fumed, early English and Mission oak, mahogany and brown mahogany. Many of the models, if not all, had a universal tone arm; thus enabling hill and dale discs to be played without an attachment. I have found this useful for playing Marathon hill and dale discs which are of the needle cut type. Like Edison with his Diamond Disc machines, Sonora made machines for the millionaire and the client who wanted a high class machine. The Sonora Company claimed they made the first machine which sold for over \$200; they also made machines with wooden tone arms; and machines priced at fifteen thousand dollars.

Another small feature of Sonora machines was the patented envelope filing system which was designed to help the operator quickly find the record required. As far as I can ascertain Sonora used a very large motor of double springs with a governor under the bottom plate, the turntable shaft forming an axle for the springs. The motor is a Marque Deposee, a well known Swiss motor and fitted, I believe, only to the top models. The portable machine is not unlike a Decca portable with the tone arm going up into the sound shell in the lid.

In Christchurch, New Zealand, the well known firm, 'The Farmers' were agents for the Sonora Company.

#### AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF EDISON PHONOGRAPHS The Edison Spring Motor Phonograph

According to 'The Phonograph and How to Use It', after the M Electric type, the first spring driven Edison appeared. This was 'The Spring Motor Phonograph' which was later followed by the Home, Standard, Gem and then the 5" cylinder Concert.

The Spring Motor had features not found in other Edison Models. One obvious feature was the lid which fitted over the whole machine and its wooden case and fastened with spring clips to the base board. This feature resembles the Gem cover but the Gem has a cast-iron case and fastens with screws and not clips. Some Columbia and Pathes used a similar lid. The machine was quite large being 16½" long, 10½" wide and 14" high and weighing 43 pounds. The case was fitted with a drawer 4½" x 6" x 4" deep which held the brush, hearing tubes and oil can and handle. The square shanked handle (similar to early Triumphs) was kept in the drawer and it had to be removed to fit the lid. The machine was introduced in 1895 and the motor was called Triton; it was a three spring and played fourteen two minute records with one winding. This Triton motor was used in Triumphs right up till the Model E, the last Triumphs F & G having a two spring motor. The earliest models had a nickel plate with 'United States Phonograph Co. Newark, N.J.'; later the caption was 'Spring Motor for Phonograph'. These had a further plate on the front of the carriage with the engraving 'Manufactured by Edison Phonograph Works, Orange, N.J. for use only in The United States of America and The Dominion of Canada'. The cast iron bed plate has a boss under the lead screw but no number is stamped on it; likewise the Triton motor frame has a boss in front with no number on it. On Triumph motors these are stamped. On Triumphs and Spring Motors the bottom belt pulleys are both 2 1/16" in diameter but in the case of the Spring Motor the top belt pulley is also 2 1/16" in diameter whilst the Triumphs are 1 5/8" in diameter. The cast handle of the Spring Motor had a nickel scroll attached on which were raised the words "National Phono Co. Orange N.J." In 'Talking Machines', the book by V.K. Chew, the Spring Motor is well illustrated on page 16 but on page 36 is shown as the Triumph Model A. This is open to question as George Frow in 'A Guide to the Edison Cylinder Phonograph' page 9 says that it was called initially the Spring Motor (1895 - 1900) and in the new style (or common) cabinet it is called Triumph A (1900 - 1906). The Spring Motor case and lid were in light oak and had no transfer but the 'Trade Mark' transfer appeared twice on the bed plate which



differed from later Triumph bed plates by having four bosses cast to centralize the upper carriage. Earliest models had recording tube and hearing tubes or a 14" brass horn and the reproducer fitted was the Standard Speaker which combined reproducing and recording stylii. Later models had the Automatic Speaker and Edison Recorder. When first introduced the Spring Motor cost \$10.00.

The editors, when first compiling this article had not seen a Spring Motor, but before its completion member Bill Dini acquired an immaculate Spring Motor and has materially assisted in supplying first hand information and in the composition of this description of a most interesting and very early Edison phonograph.

#### THE RADIO COLLECTOR (II)

Let us assume that you have been successful in finding a crystal set, have duly refurbished it, and are now anxious to try it 'on the air'. A few words on how to go about this may be needed so read on.

If your set does not have any missing parts and seems to be in working order it is only necessary to obtain a pair of high-resistance headphones, connect up aerial and earth wires and you are in business. You may have been fortunate in getting a pair of early type 'phones along with your set but if not then no matter, modern headphones can be used. If you already have an existing outside aerial in use for a household radio it will save having to erect one if you can make use of it for testing your crystal set. Unless you are quite close to the nearest broadcasting station, say within five miles, some sort of outdoor aerial is essential; an inside aerial can only be used if the station is close enough. An outdoor aerial need not be more than fifty feet long but keep it as high as possible. The earth wire is usually connected to the nearest cold water pipe but if this means crawling under the house you may prefer to connect the wire to a tap instead. Suitable wire can be purchased at most radio and electrical shops.

Having installed aerial and earth wires it is now only necessary to connect them to the appropriate terminals on the set, aerial wire to terminal marked 'A' or 'AERIAL', earth wire to 'E' or 'EARTH', headphones to 'T' (telephones) or 'PHONES' and you are all set to listen in. This is when you make acquaintance with the legendary 'cat's whisker', unless your set has what is known as a permanent detector. The Brownie receiver illustrated in the last issue is an example of a set using a cat's whisker and crystal type of detector. Such detectors can easily be recognised as they are always contained in a glass tube. True, some of the very earliest detectors were of the open variety but the working parts were exactly the same.

The art in adjusting this type of detector lies in finding a sensitive spot on the surface of the crystal on to which the point of the cat's whisker is oh! so delicately placed. Many are the tales now told of the days when father was listening-in and had at last succeeded in locating that elusive spot; the rest of the family had to tiptoe around, hardly daring to breathe, as the slightest vibration could cause the cat's whisker to part company with the crystal and then the process had to be repeated over again. "Them was the days!"

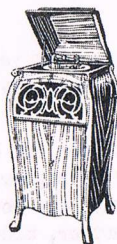
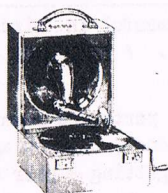
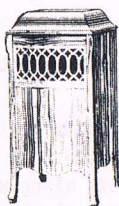
'Tuning-in' a crystal set simply means locating a station on the dial in just the same way as one does on an ordinary domestic radio. Most crystal sets have a knob which has to be rotated in order to bring in a station although some of the earliest ones had a form of slider which had to be moved longitudinally instead.

Unfortunately it is not possible to use a loudspeaker with a crystal set and it was this drawback that eventually lead many users to either add an amplifier or else scrap the set entirely and go in for a valve type receiver. Anyone who has listened in with earphones for hours on end knows how uncomfortable - even painful - it can become and it was this, coupled with the fact that earphone listening is inherently somewhat unsociable, which led to the eventual demise of the humble crystal set.

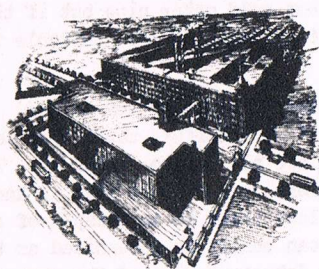
Next in line came one-valve receivers but as these were still not really powerful enough to work a speaker they were seldom manufactured commercially. However, there is one example to be found and



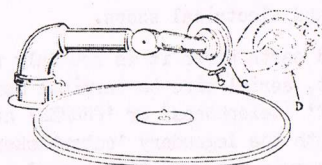
THE INSTRUMENT OF QUALITY  
**Sonora**  
 CLEAR AS A BELL



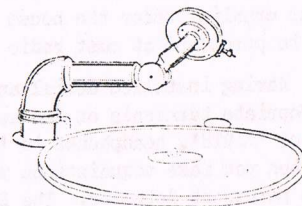
THREE SONORA GRAMOPHONES



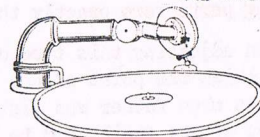
THE SONORA FACTORY AT SAGINAW  
 MICHIGAN U.S.A.



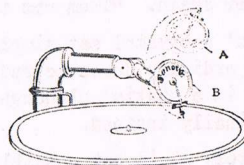
Position to play Steel Needle  
 Records



Sound Box up for changing Record  
 and Needle



Sound Box on Needle. Rest



Position for playing Sapphire and Diamond Records



MULTI-PLAYING JEWEL CONTAINER

THE USES OF THE SONORA SOUND BOX



that one is the Crosley PUP, a diminutive affair encased in a black metal box measuring approximately 4" x 4" x 4" with its one valve sitting exposed on the top. These sets were made during 1924 by the Crosley Radio Corp., Cincinnati, Ohio.

Two-valve receivers were far more common, both in Britain and the United States. The one illustrated in this issue is an example of the British practice during 1923-26. The name Edison Bell will of course be familiar to readers but perhaps not many are aware that this firm entered the radio market presumably as a means of offsetting their losses in the dying cylinder business at this period.  
(To be continued).

WANTED TO BUY... Yes, would the reader of this advertisement who has any of the following records for sale please phone Barry Sheppard at 598-455 Christchurch. The records are by Sandy Powell,... Gracie Fields.... Peter Dawson.... Will Hay.... Elsie and Doris Waters. Also if any reader has any historic speech on events of the past. (Out-of-Christchurch replies - care of the Secretary).

WANTED TO BUY... anything pertaining to EDISON, COLUMBIA, STANDARD DISC and VICTOR; Parts, Reproducers, Horns, Records etc. In fact anything that is possible to secure. Latest Announcement List for a Quarter. A. Nugent Jr., 3804 Charles City Road, Richmond, Va 23231 U.S.A.

#### THE EDISON "M" ELECTRIC PHONOGRAPH

We have been interested to receive several letters regarding the Edison "M". Mr. Sam Zweibel in the United States writes that he owns an "M" Electric and has found it most satisfactory to run it from a rectifier and a transformer. Mr. E. Radke in Australia also owns one of these machines and tells us:-

From research into this particular model it appears that there were a number of variations in some of the components; these were mainly in the nature of minor improvements. The polished mahogany case in which the machine sits and the switch lever being two of these. The switch lever in the later machines incorporated a brake arm which had the effect of rapidly stopping the motor when the current was switched off. This machine having no brake is one of the earliest types. It is equipped with the conventional Edison single reproducer arm. The recorder or reproducer being fitted as required. The machine is also fitted with a record shaver, a drawer to catch the swarf slides under the record from the end. For recording, a voice tube is provided and for reproducing, ear tubes or a nickel plated horn were optional. This machine is shown with the horn fitted. The drawer at the front of the machine, in addition to the recorder and the reproducer, also held battery leads, oil can, brush, screw driver etc. The motor works on  $2\frac{1}{2}$  volts and is battery operated. One type of battery commonly used being the "Bichromate" battery consisting of three glass jar cells. These, less the electrolyte, are shown in the photo. These days, for demonstration purposes, a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  volt storage battery is used. No cover box or lid was provided for these machines; presumably a cloth or canvas cover was used. The mechanism just sits in the wooden case, no screws or fastenings are used, its weight alone keeps it firm. My model has no plate and the whole of the base plate is made of brass, is black enamelled and has conventional gold border lines etc. The machine has a serial number stamped on the raised boss; this has been mutilated but it could be 047D.

#### A GUIDE TO THE EDISON CYLINDER PHONOGRAPH

A hand book for collectors by George Frow reviewed by Walter Norris

This book, compiled by George Frow, Chairman of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society is, for the machine collector a must. It has sixty-five pages covering all spring driven Edison models from 1895 to 1929 and is well illustrated. There are seven pages on reproducers and these are very well described, thirty-three of them being illustrated. This section on its own will be of great value to any collector; to the Edison man it makes the book virtually a necessity. I have to congratulate Mr. Frow on such a fine effort, so well put together, simple and easy to understand and I personally will find it an excellent reference book on the subject of Edison machines. At this time I do not know what will be the price of this book but I understand it is to be produced with a soft as well as a hard cover. We shall be most interested to hear of members' opinion of this very worthy book.

#### AEOLIAN VOCALIAN - a postscript by N.R. Walker

Aeo was probably a Vocalian 'cheap' label along the lines of the Columbia-Regal or Edison Bell-Winner relationship. From an Australian printed catalogue undated, but about 1925/6, the 10" cost



3/6, the 12" cost 5/-. These twelve inch probably start at F 33001 Edith Furmedge (contralto) 'Land of Hope and Glory'/'The Lost Chord' and contain items by the Australian Newcastle Steel Works Bank (also on the 10" G series), Fred Collier the Melbourne baritone and Thea Phillips, the English soprano who settled in Australia. Presumably all recorded in England like the Gladys Moncrieff Vocalion.

The colour system seemed to indicate price. The following are from catalogues:-

A Pink label S/S 12" 9/6	B Pink label S/S 10" 7/6	C Red label S/S 12" 8/6
L Red label S/S 10" 6/6	D Blue label D/S 12" 8/-	R Blue label D/S 10" 6/-
J Green label D/S 12" 7/6	Y Green label D/S 10" 5/6	K Black label D/S 12" 6/6
X Black label D/S 10" 4/6	M Brown label D/S 10" 4/6	

This was a bit too complicated for Australia. An Australian printed catalogue (thought to be (1925/6) gives the following:-

Pink label Section (Celebrity) 12" 6/6	Standard Section (all labels except pink)
" " " " 10" 5/-	12" 5/6 10" 4/-

Vocalion also recorded in Melbourne in the late twenties, issuing the results mainly on Embassy and associated labels with a W matrix number - not to be confused with the 10 inch Broadcast W catalogue number. Recordings in Melbourne were also issued on the 8" Broadcast discs under an AZ matrix number.

Further, a service existed for private discs (single or double sided) with the appropriate catalogue prefix PR. One is known to exist by a young Marjorie Lawrence. For a coverage of Vocalion's local activities see the Australian Supplement to The Hillandale News (No. 6) 'Discs from Down Under' by Peter Burgis. Vocalion Long Play discs are very similar to the World Record LP. An article on the latter (The Hillandale News Nos. 54/55) suggests a connection, with which I would agree.

Lastly I have a curiosity. A single sided disc with no label. The back is embossed Vocalion Talkie Recording. Two typed small sheets in place of the label read "Excerpts from 'Let us be Gay' Voice Test Part 2. AET 130. By members of the Company 3/10/30." In pencil is added: "To be played slowly." They are not joking. It is 33½ all the way and centre start! Your deductions are as good as mine.

#### COLLECTORS' CORNER

Roger Cole.

#### LILLI LEHMANN. SOPRANO.

Born in Warzburg, 1848; died in Berlin in 1929. Her mother, having been a prima donna herself, ensured that Lilli was given a good grounding in music. Lilli made her debut at age 17 as the First Boy in Mozart's, "The Magic Flute". When the leading Soprano became ill a few nights later, Lilli was allowed to fill the gap, and was thus launched on a career which lasted until about 1900.

Stories of her modesty and frugality abound - at one time she travelled by horse-car to the "Met" instead of travelling in more "style".

Probably best known in recording circles for her recording of Casta Diva, a copy of which was recently acquired by Bill Main in Wellington. His description is as follows: "Brown 10½" Odeon-Werk (German pressing) No. 99737, matrix No. XB2978. The aria, recorded in 1907, is somewhat abbreviated, but a very good example of her voice, and one which I will always retain". It should be noted that not all Lilli's discs are backed by her, so turn each disc you look at to discover if she is on the reverse.

Her discs are rare, and are well worth keeping an eye open for. Any collector finding one will have some very good exchange material available if he does not want to keep it in his own collection.