



# 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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## 'THE WONDER OF THE AGE'

A set of two 12" long playing records compiled and produced for Argo by Kevin Daly ZPR 122-3 reviewed by Pamela Rogers.

In future when you are asked what is so fascinating about the early history of the talking machine as to make you a collector, you will be able to hand your questioner this set of two 12" L.P. records and say "it's all there!" And it is! All the romance, the absurdities, the frustrations, the music and the history - from the announcements of Edison's invention through the end of the nineteenth century, the first world war and into the jazz era. Beautifully produced with a wonderful variation of voices reading extracts from Gaisberg's 'Music on Record', 'Joe Batten's Book', 'The Fabulous Phonograph' by Gelatt and many other contemporary books and newspapers, this tale of sound recording 1877-1925 also introduces the voice of Patti, Melba, Caruso, Tamagno, Marie Lloyd and many others. The story is divided into sections and although I found them all absorbing and fascinating, from a personal point of view I enjoyed best the Great War on Side 3 and Dance Crazy, Side 4.

Included in each set is a four page leaflet which not only contains credits and acknowledgements but also a history of this period of talking machine history written by Ernie Bayly. This set comes in a cardboard box with a cover design of a most attractive outside horn gramophone.

Note for New Zealand members: Mr. Norman Tait of The Record Room, 608 Colombo Street, Christchurch 1, will be getting supplies of this set. If you order from him please tell him you are a member of the Society.

WANTED TO BUY: Any Edison, Columbia, Victor or Standard Disc Phonographs, complete or incomplete. Good two minute cylinder records, record lists, new or used copies of the book FROM TINFOIL TO STEREO and PORTFOLIO OF EARLY PHONOGRAPHS. In fact we buy anything pertaining to the Early Phonograph line, especially the table model outside horn type phonographs. Dealers send us your net prices prepaid on anything you may have in my line. Also want the four minute glass styli or the genuine original sapphire styli or complete reproducers. Write me for anything you need and I may have it. Deal with the oldest complete dealer in these lines.  
A. Nugent, Jr., 3804 Charles City Road, Richmond, Va. 23231 U.S.A.

WANTED TO BUY: Discs for Orpheus Disc Music Box. Size of disc 18 3/16" in diameter with brand name 'Orpheus'.

E. Radke, 72 Bridge Street, Lane Cove, N.S.W. Australia 2066.



WANTED TO BUY OR EXCHANGE: Diamond 'A' reproducer for Edison Opera or Concert, horn with threaded end for Columbia Regal disc gramophone, brass horn for Pathe disc gramophone, musical boxes.

For exchange: Edison Standards, Homes, Firesides, Triumph Model F, Amberola 30. Jack K. Root, P.O. Box 2827, Wellington, New Zealand.

#### AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF EDISON PHONOGRAPHS

##### The "Suitcase" or Early Model A Standard

The Standard was probably the most common of all Edisons and ultimately ran to seven models. The "Suitcase" (so called in New Zealand) was, like the early Home, fitted with suitcase clips to hold the lid. It was introduced in 1898 and was more compact than the previous Triumphs and Homes, the feed-screw being placed alongside the mandrel. The "Suitcase" was 12" x 9" x 9½" high, weighing 17lbs and the motor had only a single spring. The speed control was, like the Home, above the top-plate and accessories included the "Automatic" reproducer, a recorder, two way hearing tube, a speaking tube, camel hair chip brush and oil can. A 14" brass horn was an alternative to the speaking tube. The case is quite different from "New Style" cases introduced in 1901 and has square corners and flat lid with suitcase clips. The top-plate was rebated into the top of the case and could be lifted out and put in upside down to work on the motor similar to a Columbia BK (jewel). Like the later Model A's the "Suitcase" was fitted with a shaving device. The serial number was stamped on a boss on the top-plate to the right of the lead-screw and also in small numbers on the running surface of the reproducer arm web as in "Suitcase" Homes. The winding handle was of cast iron fitted with a slotted end. There are two variants of the "Suitcase" model. One, and it is suspected the earlier, has two suitcase clips, one at each end; the other has four clips placed front and rear like the "Suitcase" Home. The latter's nickelled name plate is also placed along the bed plate under the mandrel and gate, whereas the former's plate is across the bed plate to the outside of the gate. The price of the "Suitcase" Standard was \$20.00.

We were fortunate to have on loan from one of our members, George Foster, his "Suitcase" Standard which we found was fitted with a polyphone attachment and two black japanned horns. We found the motor was bolted direct to the bed plate which had square corners and no screw holes, a cast boss for the number, a nickelled name plate with rounded corners and a gear cover which has both lugs in line. The motor, on close inspection, appeared different from all later models in that the chassis was lighter and had thinner webs. The spring case is smaller being only three inches in diameter. The handle shaft is smaller than usual, being only a quarter of an inch in diameter. Also we found that the main gear train gears are all smaller and therefore would not interchange with the later model Standard. We hope to hear from anyone who has this model and who has noticed differences which we have missed.

The Automatic Speaker which was common to the Spring Motor "Suitcase" Home and "Suitcase" Standard was held into the reproducer arm by a different method from later models. This was effected by two clamps screwed diametrically opposite to the top surface of the reproducer arm, one end being surface hinged and the other end slotted to allow the clamps to be swung open and the reproducer removed.

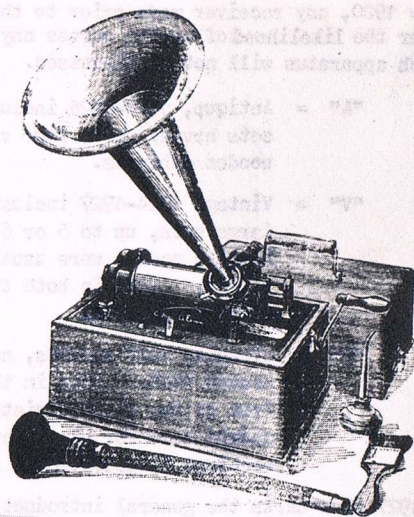
#### THE RADIO COLLECTOR (IV) by J. Whitley Stokes

Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties facing the novice collector will be the problem of identifying and dating any radio gear which may turn up. To this end the Antique Wireless Association in the U.S.A. recently made an attempt to classify broadcast radio receivers into age categories; but first we had better define such a receiver. By definition a broadcast receiver is one designed and marketed primarily for the purpose of receiving radio broadcasts in the home. As broadcasting did not commence in the U.S.A., or anywhere else in the world,



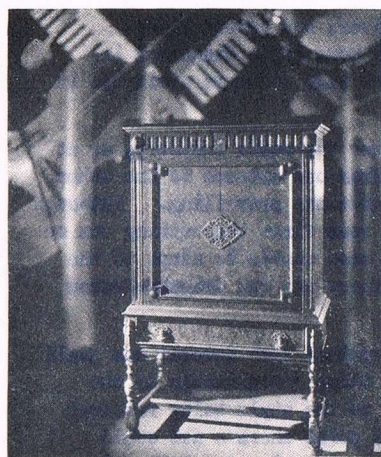


EDISON SPARK PLUG

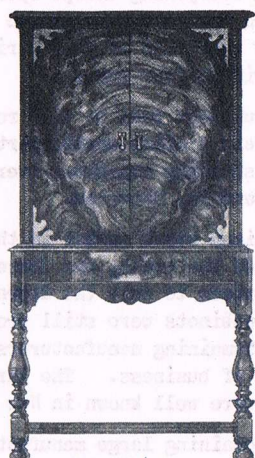


EDISON EARLY MODEL A  
STANDARD

the BALKITE SYMPHON,



1928



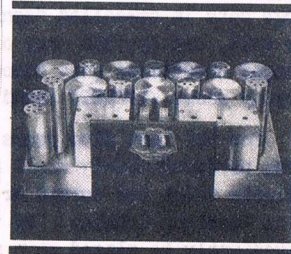
RCA  
RADIOLA 62  
SUPER-HETERODYNE

1929

The SCOTT  
All-WAVE custom built  
SUPERHETERODYNE

Span the  
Oceans!

HERE'S A RADIO THAT ACTUALLY BRINGS  
the WHOLE WORLD to your DRAWING ROOM



1932

THREE EARLY RADIOS



before 1920, any receiver made prior to this is obviously not in the broadcast category. However the likelihood of coming across any pre-1920 radio gear in New Zealand is quite remote so such apparatus will not be discussed. Here is the classification mentioned above:

- "A" = Antique, 1920-1923 inclusive. These were usually small sets having up to four valves and were contained in small wooden cabinets.
- "V" = Vintage 1924-1927 inclusive. Often these were fairly large sets, up to 5 or 6 valves if of American origin. English models were usually smaller having up to 4 or 5 valves. Sets in both these categories were invariably battery operated.
- "C" = Classic, 1927 onwards, no upper limit but usually set at around 1940. Sets in this category are not the ordinary 'run of the mill' variety but are special high quality models made for the enthusiast or connoisseur. The SCOTT receiver illustrated is an example of a classic.

1927 also marks the general introduction of "all-electric" radios, that is sets which could be operated directly from the power mains and which did not require separate batteries. From this time on the so-called "furniture" cabinets appeared, housing all the works including the loudspeaker, inside one often very ornate cabinet. It was during this period that radio-gramophones first made their appearance: these were and still are known in the States as combination radio-phonographs.

During this transitional period (1927-1930) nearly all American receivers were housed in all metal cabinets which contained everything except speakers. This latter unit was also contained in a metal box and in use was generally placed on top of or alongside the radio proper. From the collector's point of view receivers of this period are thus easily recognisable and the date of manufacture known to within four years.

At the peak of the American business boom in 1929 radio receivers had become almost unrecognisable if compared with their earlier counterparts. They were often disguised in enormous and very ornate cabinets standing sometimes over four feet high and were available in various 'period' styles e.g. Chippendale, Sheraton.

With the collapse of the American stock market in the same year the radio industry, or at least that part of it which survived the crash, was forced to go from one extreme to the other and produce "midget" sets at low prices to suit the depression conditions prevailing. Although large sets in so-called "console" cabinets were still produced by some firms the writing was on the wall, and by 1932 many of the remaining manufacturers who had been unable to adapt to the changed conditions were forced out of business. The largest of these was the Grigsby-Grunow Company whose MAJESTIC brand sets were well known in New Zealand.

For the next five years the remaining large manufacturers, together with several new small firms produced mainly small low priced receivers. Such sets are today recognisable by the cabinets which had curved or arched tops which led in later years to the style being referred to as American Gothic. By this time dimensions had shrunk to the point where a set could conveniently be placed on a mantelpiece - hence the cabinet style designation "mantel" which incidentally continued in use in New Zealand up to 1965.

From the point of view of appearance a turning point was reached around 1936 when the loudspeaker was removed from its hitherto invariable position above the receiver chassis to a position alongside it. These remarks apply to mantel or table cabinet styles: console models



had been produced in highboy style, sometimes with the speaker still above the chassis, and in the more common lowboy style with the speaker below the chassis. Plastic (bakelite) cabinets were first produced as long ago as 1933 but were little used before World War II when production of domestic receivers was halted in most countries.

If any reader wonders why so much space has been devoted to American radio, it is because American sets dominated the market in this country for over a decade and thus are the ones most likely to be found by a present day collector.

### CONCLUSION

#### THE ORO-TONE COMPANY (Continued)

LATER MODEL HEAD We notice that a needle attachment we came across lately was called an 'Oro-phone' reproducer. This appeared to be a later model, having an aluminium diaphragm. It plugged into the Diamond Disc arm in the same way as the one shown on page sixteen of the last issue.

ELECTRIC PICK-UP ATTACHMENT One of the most interesting and ingenious attachments is one similar to the acoustic pick-up in that it attached to the Diamond Disc arm in the same way, but had a magnetic head into which fitted a diamond tipped offset stylus. This stylus was designed to play Diamond Discs only but could be removed and a plain needle inserted to play lateral discs electrically on a Diamond Disc Machine. (Both Diamond Disc stylus and pick-up are illustrated). We do not know if ball sapphire offset styli were made by Oro-Tone for these pick-ups.

ELECTRIC MICROPHONE This we have not seen in New Zealand but it was described in the No. 100 leaflet; we feel it came out before the magnetic pick-up. This is supported by Mr. Owen Hills of Kaiapoi (just out of Christchurch) who claimed to have the first magnetic pick-up seen in or near Christchurch - this was in 1928. The electric microphone was in the form of a button which plugged into the same place as the recording horn 'C' marked on the illustration on page sixteen of our last issue. It picked up the sound which could be fed into an amplifier.

HOME RECORDING On our illustrations page we reproduce a photograph of a Speak-O-Phone 10" double sided aluminium disc which was discovered in a rubbish dump. We feel that the recording (electrical) would be made in a similar method to that of the acoustic Oro-Tone. Any information about this company and the method of record making would be appreciated.  
(Home Recording to be continued)

#### EDISON SPARK PLUG

Many of our readers will be interested to see an illustration of a spark plug. Along with many others in this country, Walter Norris has a collection of these and with his interest in Thomas A. Edison and all his inventions was pleased to collect this particular one. It appears that Edison may have amalgamated with Splitdorf and Albanite, two companies whose names also appear on the plug. This model appears to have been produced later than the ones with a pipe thread. As most members have a few side interests in collecting we suggest that they gather up all early spark plugs they see. The early type particularly are getting very hard to find in New Zealand.

#### THE WELLINGTON CHAPTER - 1969-1970

by the Chairman D.H. Cameron

Since the inception of the Wellington Chapter of the Society, following the 1969 Phonograph and Record Collectors' Convention held in that city, regular bi-monthly meetings of collectors have taken place. These have been informal gatherings in the home of the host member for each meeting; this has given that member the advantage of having all his reference material and collection on hand. In this way each member has been given the opportunity to expound his or her own particular interest within the hobby. Much trading in information and material has taken place. Such



**ORO-TONE Electric Pick-up  
Attachment.** (Note fitting for  
Diamond Disc)

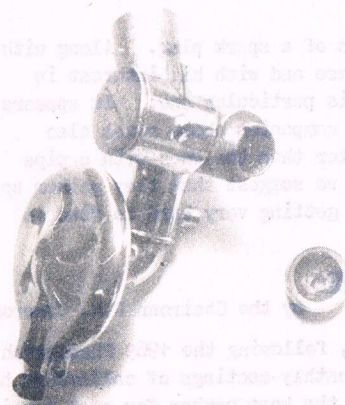


**THE SPEAK-O-PHONE FOR HOME  
RECORDING**



**THE ORO-TONE COMPANY**

**Diamond-Tipped Offset Stylus**



**Later Model Head—Two views**



informality has greatly eased my job as chairman and I hope this will continue. I am particularly appreciative of the good work of our Chapter Secretary Jack Root who has diligently summarised each meeting and circulated a copy to each member giving a written record of everything played and discussed. (Both Jack and I wish to thank Wellington members for unanimously re-appointing us to office for the 1970-1971 year.) Some topics covered at the monthly meetings have been: Singers of the 19th Century, Colonial Life and Culture, Celebrity Hillandale Discs and Cylinders of Lesser Known Companies. There have also been programmes devoted to members' favourite records, members' requests and of course, straight out selections from members' collections.

The Chapter has not been without its share of misfortune, most notable being the death of member Fred Spencer early last year. However it is pleasing to have gained several new members in our ranks. I hope we shall continue to meet informally, at least while the group is small. It is intended however, to have one or two guest speakers this year (such a programme will be advertised in advance in these pages.) On behalf of the Chapter I wish all members a successful new year and extend an invitation to any member who is visiting Wellington to attend one of our meetings. As the venue is usually decided only one meeting in advance, please contact either me,

Don Cameron,  
25 Agra Crescent,  
Khandallah,  
Wellington 4, NEW ZEALAND.  
Phone: 797-005 (evenings)

OR

Jack Root,  
P.O. Box 2827,  
Wellington, NEW ZEALAND.  
Phone: 50-704 (business)  
Phone: 785-157 (evenings)

#### HOLIDAYING IN THE NORTH ISLAND OF NEW ZEALAND

by Bill Flecknoe

My holiday in the North Island proved to be very rewarding in many ways. It was the first trip of my wife and myself north of Wellington and as South Islanders we had been told that all New Zealanders live in the North Island. I discovered that not only the people but also most of the cars are there also and they go so much faster to get out of each other's way. The farther north I went the faster everything moved and as a slower paced Southerner I wondered what the hurry was.

At Featherston I called to see Ernie Hunt, a former employee of Thomas A. Edison. He has recently created an interesting cylinder machine contained in a Decca portable case; I took some very good colour slides of it. Ernie has presented to the Society library a scrap book of his life and interests; this I found time to read and it proved to be most interesting and entertaining. I also called to see Frank Murtagh at Hastings and spent a few hours, all too short, looking at cinema projectors of various kinds. I called on or phoned several other members (who unfortunately were away) on my way to Thames where I met Reg McCarthy who has a very good collection of machines mostly acquired on the Coromandel Peninsula.

I had spent so much time on the early part of my trip, and wanting to see some of the country above Auckland I had regretfully not had the time to call on any Auckland collectors. On the way home down the east coast of the North Island I called on Mr. F. Krippner at Frankton Junction. He has an amazing collection of records of all kinds. Then on to Palmerston North where I visited Tyson Bennett in hospital. My wife and I later spent an enjoyable evening after receiving an invitation from Mrs. Bennett; Tyson is now fully recovered. I had a further adventure in this town and this is related in my second article.

We were at Paraparaumu discussing our trip, just after leaving an antique shop, when a woman driver ran into the side of our car making a mess of her own car and the side of ours. Fortunately no-one was seriously hurt, only shaken, and after we and the car were examined we were just fortunate to make the inter-island ferry in time for its sailing. The rear of our car was full of various things I had collected and I was very lucky that nothing was broken, thanks to good packing. However this last adventure did little to alter our hope to visit the North Island again soon.



Many 'stars' in the world of music have shone and many still shine with great brilliance, especially during the hey-days of their careers. The 'star' of light music featured here and which still shines today is pianist-conductor-arranger - Monia Liter. Born in Odessa, South Russia 65 years ago, Monia Liter spent the days of his youth in the Malay States; during this time he became a naturalised British subject and studied music in Singapore. For seven years at the Raffles Hotel he led a dance orchestra which also employed a relatively unknown singer - Al Bowlly. In 1929 Liter travelled with Al Bowlly to Britain and it soon became evident that here indeed was a young artist rapidly achieving recognition in the light music field. He was soon engaged with many well-known dance orchestras and also wrote scores for films and revues.

During the mid-thirties he started making gramophone records, one of which still exists today and may possibly turn up from time to time in junk shops or second hand dealers. This is a 10 inch '78' (Australian Pressing) Regal-Zonophone of "Mexican Serenade" (Los Marineros) by von Werner Bochmann, coupled with "Savage Serenade" by Hupfield and the catalogue number is G24487. It is not generally known what other '78' records Liter may have made, but the one mentioned here gives a fair example of his growing talent. While working as pianist in Lew Stone's Band during the 'thirties' he soon began to claim the attention and interest of the public, particularly as Lew Stone's Band was one of the finest of that period. Then prior to World War 2 and up till the outbreak of the war he was employed by another famous dance band leader who is still active today - Harry Roy. All these engagements, however were stepping stones towards his success and this was really achieved in the 'forties' when he organised and soon established his own dance ensemble known as his 20th Century Serenaders. With them he made successful tours throughout Britain and many countries overseas.

Radio broadcasts too added to his popularity and later on, some time during the 'fifties' the Decca Record Company in England pressed a sparkling L.P. record which one might still be fortunate enough to obtain, even though it has been deleted from the catalogues for some time. This 12 inch Decca L.P. catalogue number is LK4183 and is entitled "Lovers in Paris" and contains thirteen admirable pieces skilfully played by Monia Liter and his Orchestra. These do great justice to their arranger and provide a feast for the lover of light music.

#### COLLECTORS' CORNER

by Roger Cole

#### CHARLES GILBERT, Baritone

Gilbert is one of the few French artists who made an impact on the world opera scene; he sang at Covent Garden in 1894 with Calve, Alvarez, Plancon, Bonnard and Dufriehe in the first performance of Massenet's one act opera "La Navarraise", an opera which it seems has fallen to those produced on a grander scale as today it is rarely played in full. Later Gilbert sang in the New York Metropolitan Opera House, notably as Sacristan in "Tosca" with Ternina, Cremonini, Scotti and Dufriehe in 1901 and as Sulpice in "La Figlia Del Reggimento" with Marcella Sembrich in the title role. In 1906 he sang in "Carmen" with Bressler-Gianoli in the title role at the Manhattan Opera House; this opera was one of the principal successes ever presented there. The triumph of Bressler-Gianoli at the Manhattan was all the more remarkable in that a French company went bankrupt the day after it opened in New York with this very opera and this very artist. Gilbert was a great favourite in both London and New York especially in buffo parts to which he brought his considerable sense of humour.

Gilbert's voice is very well preserved on G.C.-3-32988, a pink centre French Gramophone Co. pressing which I am fortunate to possess. It would be best described as a lyric baritone and makes very pleasant listening in spite of the fact that it is sung in French (Malgre moi by Pfeiffer) a language which many find too harsh for opera. He recorded the quartet from Act 3 of "Faust" Seigneur Dieu, que vois-je with Farrar, Caruso and Journet on Gramophone Co. DM 102 and anyone locating either of these discs or indeed any other by Gilbert (he made recordings of duets with Melba) would be well advised not to pass it by. Gilbert recorded few enough discs to make any of them relatively rare.