



The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonographic Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

Volume 7, Issue 6

August, 1972.

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Please address all mail to the Society's Post Office Box No. 5175, Papanui, Christchurch, New Zealand.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Monday, 25th September, 1972.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Nominations in writing for the positions of Patron, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, three members of the Executive, and Honorary Auditor, must be in the hands of the secretary, not later than the 11th September, 1972. Each nomination must be signed by the persons nominating, seconding, and accepting, and all parties must be financial members.

WANTED TO PURCHASE, SWAP OR BORROW FOR COPYING

A reproducer and reproducer carriage for a Columbia 20th Century Premier Graphophone.
M. Tucker, 28 Meredith Avenue, Hornsby Heights, N.S.W., 2077, AUSTRALIA.

WANTED 15½" Polythone or Regina music box discs.
Contact Alan Brehaut, 22a Cain Street, Timaru, NEW ZEALAND.

We're past the middle of the year and in New Zealand we are looking forward to the spring - and Christmas. Yes, it isn't so very far off and before long we'll be sending off Christmas cards to friends overseas. So that you will have something different and attractive to send, buy your supplies now from the Society. The design was featured in the last issue of the magazine and the cards are available from the secretary at 8 cents each plus postage.

PARTS. Have you studied out latest parts list? Let us have your requirements immediately. We have three new parts for you and ask you to write them on to your Sales List No. 3. They are:- Amberola '30' handles, \$3.25; top bracket for front support cranes (it fits under the wooden motor frame), 50 cents; gold painted key which fits H.M.V. machines which have a straight slot (this includes the Lumiere), 40 cents. Is there any other part which you suggest we make in modest

quantities? We would prefer to make parts which are commonly required - at present unusual or single requirements are not normally catered for.

In this issue you will see a photograph of the clubrooms at the time the contractors were about to put the lower half into place and restore the roof. Since that time, the vestry has been added to the back and the porch to the front and the building lowered on to the foundations. But this is only the beginning especially from the financial angle; it was because of the concern of Christchurch members that our clubrooms not only be paid for as soon as possible but also be restored, painted and decorated that at the June meeting of the Society, Kathleen Bissett was appointed convener of the fund-raising committee. Kathleen called an immediate meeting and at that, the following ideas were put forward. We are including the programme in the magazine firstly, because there is less chance of Christchurch members losing this than a separate sheet of paper and secondly, as we realise that most members, wherever they may live, will have been involved in fund-raising at some time and may be able to add to our ideas.

FERRYMEAD FUND-RAISING by Kathleen Bissett.

We propose to hold a stall at Ferrymead each open day (the first Sunday of each month) and as we do not want anyone to feel left out of fund-raising efforts it was proposed that each member brings to the monthly meeting, one article for the stall. Suggestions - jam, preserves, an oven cloth or apron, a throw-over or toy, some dolls clothes, all new things which can be easily sold. A roster will be prepared so that four Christchurch members will be asked to make cakes and two, sweets, each month; the latter two being asked to man the stall. So that this will not be too burdensome financially, the cost of the eggs, butter and sugar used in cooking will be refunded to each member concerned at the meeting following. Besides the monthly stall we shall be in August, bagging and selling manure and displaying (with the other Ferrymead Societies) at Rangiora. In September a scrap metal drive will be held in the city and raffle tickets will be on sale. October will see a sponsored work day during which we shall work for the aged while we are sponsored by our friends. In November we hope to have a second-hand auction and a stall at New Brighton (a seaside suburb of the city). The raffle will also be drawn this month. December brings our participation in the Kaiapoi Christmas procession, our stall there and in the week before the festive season, the selling of Christmas trees, almost a Society tradition now! In January we plan to have a team of members picking fruit and donating the proceeds to the funds. In February we shall repeat the 'Make Your Money Grow' project which was so successful last year. If possible we shall repeat January's fruit-picking and shall be taking part in the 'Ferrymead Extravaganza'. In March we have plans for picture and magic lantern evenings and also coffee and record evenings. From time to time we shall be reporting on these events - just to let it be known how we get on!

It has been felt that the selling of souvenirs of Ferrymead could be a source of income for us. Felt flags, postcards, book marks, car stickers and posters are all possibilities and one of our members is looking into the making of a small folder of colour photographs of phonographs etc. to make an 'identikit', a useful aid in identifying 'one of those old gramophones'. This could also be sold as a slightly more expensive souvenir of Ferrymead. And while we are busy 'selling' we think it is time we 'sold' the Society (in the nicest way) by displaying at the Agricultural Show and other such events and perhaps by being publicised by an article in a national weekly.

AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BERLINER DISC PHONOGRAPHS - No. 6.

We are indebted to our good friend Larry Schlick of the United States who has not only furnished us with information but has also sent us clear photographs of his machine.

This machine, it is clear, was produced early in 1896 as we have an advertisement concerning



BERLINER

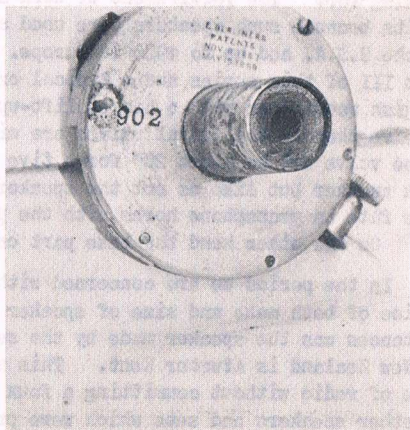
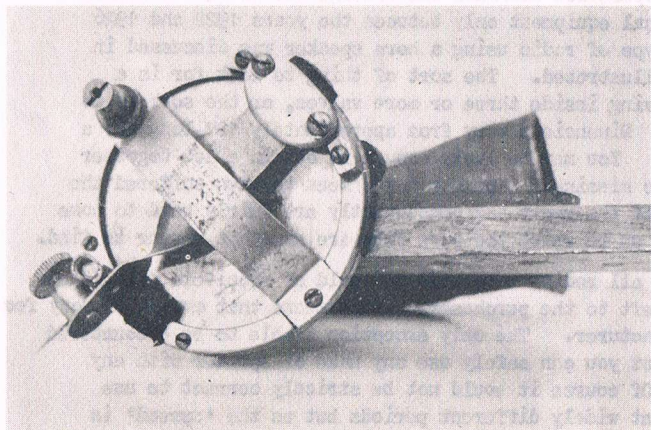
1896

Model No 6



A Rubbing of the plate

The Elbow



The Reproducer

it and dated May 23rd of that year. It sold for twelve dollars and the records, which were claimed to be indestructible, sold for fifty cents each.

There is a number of differences between this and the previous model (No. 5) described in the last issue; the major ones being that this model has a seven inch turntable, not a five inch, and the drive pulley is made of hard rubber and not brass. In fact all castings appear to be made of either hard rubber or cast iron. The horn is made of metal and the horn support is of wood. Close detail of the reproducer is shown and it will be noticed that there are also differences here. We believe the main reason for these changes is because the five inch turntable model (No. 5) was produced in Europe and the model illustrated was manufactured in the U.S.A.

MEASUREMENTS:

Base of wood $9\frac{1}{2}$ " x 16" x $7\frac{7}{8}$ " thick.
Hand turn pulley of hard rubber $3\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter.
Fly wheel, made of steel, 3" diameter.
Horn support, made of wood 10" x $1\frac{1}{4}$ " tapering to $\frac{3}{4}$ ".
Turntable 7" diameter.
Horn 15" long and $9\frac{1}{4}$ " across the flare.

On the machine is an oval aluminium plate with the words 'Berliner Gramophone Co. Philadelphia, Pa.'

One photograph shows the original cardboard elbow which is like wrapped paper.

We can supply a copy of the instruction leaflet for this machine at 20 cents a copy.

THE RADIO COLLECTOR (V) by J. Whitley Stokes.

Since writing the original articles I have frequently been asked a question which usually goes something like this:- "I don't want to start collecting radios in the same way that I collect phonographs, I just want to have one old radio in working order that uses a horn-type speaker. How do I go about acquiring one and how do I get it working?"

To deal with the acquisition part first. The obvious thing here is to employ the same methods used in garnering phonographs, likewise with sufficient knowledge of the subject know what you are looking for. The requirement of horn speaker operation confines the vintage between quite narrow limits because such speakers were used as original equipment only between the years 1922 and 1926 in the U.S.A. and up to 1928 in Europe. The type of radio using a horn speaker was discussed in Part III of this series and a typical example illustrated. The sort of thing to look for is a longish wooden box with a hinged lift-up lid having inside three or more valves, or the sockets to receive them if the actual valves are missing. Dimensions vary from approximately 12" long for a three valve set to about 20" for a five valver. You may be lucky enough to obtain a set together with speaker but like as not the speaker will be missing. Speaker horns seem to have suffered the same fate as gramophone horns with the passing of the years and consequently are fairly hard to come by. On the other hand the base part or 'unit' on to which the horn fits are somewhat easier to find.

In the period we are concerned with nearly all radios were made and sold as receivers only, the choice of both make and size of speaker being left to the purchaser. This means that except in very few instances was the speaker made by the set manufacturer. The only exception liable to be encountered in New Zealand is Atwater Kent. This means that you can safely use any make of speaker with any make of radio without committing a faux pas. Of course it would not be strictly correct to use together speakers and sets which were produced at widely different periods but as the 'spread' is really quite small the matter is not of much significance. When searching for your radio and/or speaker it is worth while keeping an eye open for a gadget known as a 'B' eliminator. The 'B' is not an epithet though strictly speaking the full title should be B. battery eliminator. This

item, as its name suggests, was used to supplant or 'eliminate' the need for B batteries (more on these later). Eliminators may be recognised as small metal boxes about 6" square by about 9" long, usually with ventilating slots or holes visible.

Now for the *modus operandi*. Because all radios using horn speakers were of the battery-operated variety it will be necessary to provide batteries or their equivalent eliminators to supply the power necessary to operate the receiver. It is important to realize that no battery set can be operated directly from the power line. In simplest terms the eliminator(s) provide(s) a means of altering the household electric power to make it equivalent to battery power. Are you still with me?

Any receiver will need three separate types of battery known respectively in North America and this part of the world as A, B, and C. (L.T., H.T. and G.B. in Britain). Getting a bit too complicated already? Not to worry! Personally I don't find it any more complicated than knowing the various types of reproducers used in just one make of phonograph.

Nearly all American receivers used an ordinary six-volt car battery for the A supply and this is still the simplest way though the original drawbacks still remain. Such batteries are heavy, bulky, messy and require frequent trips to the local garage for recharging. It may be mentioned in passing that there was such a thing as an A battery eliminator but it was rare even in its day and is now virtually extinct. The only alternative to taking the battery for recharging was to have a home type charger and these may still be found.

And, finally, the C battery. Luckily this is no problem as 4½ volt batteries are still being manufactured in New Zealand (Eveready No. 714). Otherwise 4½-volt flat torch (flashlight) batteries may conveniently be pressed into service. In New Zealand and Australia these are available as Eveready No. 703 and usually no more than two are required. It is possible to use modern "solid state" power units to provide both A and B power but your decision to use such items may depend on how much of a purist you are. One thing is certain, you will never find any antique batteries capable of working your radio! Because there are now no modern equivalents of the old 45-volt battery blocks available you are left with only the two choices: an antique B eliminator or a modern custom-built one.

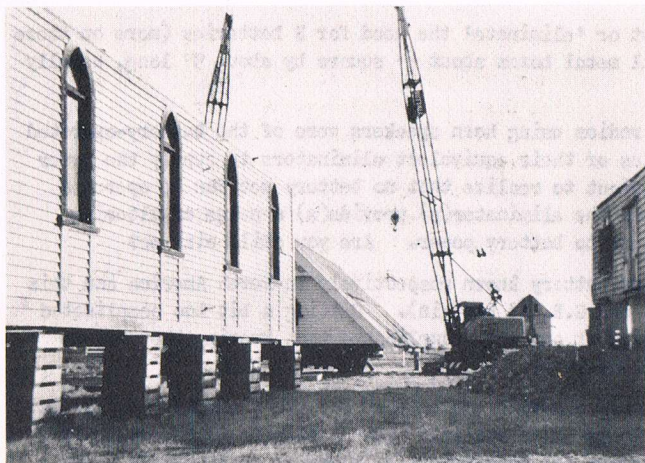
To be continued.

COLLECTING IN NEW ZEALAND

Three Interesting Recent Acquisitions by Bill Dini.

Recently I was fortunate enough to obtain from a collector in Christchurch, three of his rarest and most interesting instruments. Each of these is the only model I have seen and if there are others in New Zealand, I would be interested to compare them. The instruments are a CONCERT ROLLER ORGAN an ORPHENION disc music box and an AMORETTE disc organette. Strange to say, I had been offered the Concert Roller Organ and the Amorette some time ago but while dithering on price, I lost them to the collector from whom I have just obtained them. The Orphenion I have known of for a long time; indeed I once tried to obtain it from a previous owner from whom the collector obtained it. Seeing that I consider the instruments somewhat rare, I thought a detailed description would be of general interest.

The CONCERT ROLLER ORGAN is the big brother or de luxe model of the 'Gem Roller Organ', two of which, at least, are owned by members. The Concert takes, or should I say, plays, the same barrels as the Gem and has the same works but it has a solid (not veneered) walnut case elaborately decorated with gold stencilled designs and 'Concert Roller Organ' in gold lettering on top. A glass panel above the handle reveals the rotating barrel and the driving and resetting mechanism in action. Beside the mechanism is a black stencil of a vase of flowers. The size of the case is 18" x 15" x 12½" high; the wooden barrels are 6¼" x 2" diameter and have metal spikes, like brads, to play the twenty notes which the instrument has. To get longer notes, two or more spikes are placed in line. The barrel does three revolutions to complete one tune and then automatically resets itself. The instrument plays quite loudly and has the advantage over the Gem organ in that the mechanism is encased and thus free from dust.



ALMOST THERE !

At Ferrymead

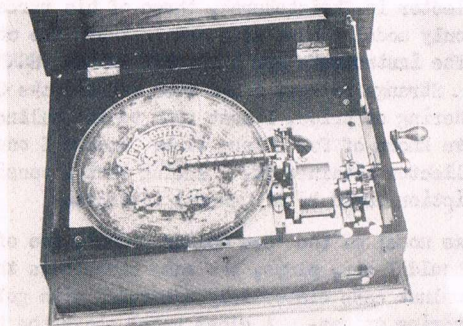


The Amorette

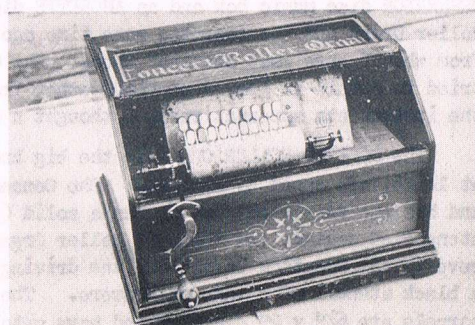


The Concert Roller Organ

Two views



The Orphenion



Eight barrels came with the Concert.

The ORPHENION disc music box is contained in a handsome walnut veneer case of $19\frac{1}{2}$ " x 14" x $8\frac{1}{2}$ " high. With it came 29 zinc discs of 11" diameter; these discs are rim driven by a very robust mechanism which has a speed control unusual in music boxes. It has two combs, one horizontal and one vertical and has fifty teeth on each comb. The word Orphenion is written in gold in large script on the underside of the lid and mouldings on the box and lid give it an attractive appearance. The discs are very interesting; the projections are of a 'half-cone on its side' nature and resist damage much more than Polyphon and other types. Also the decorations on the discs, in gold, are attractive. Three types of disc are in the twenty-nine acquired. All have Orphenion written prominently and have a large lyre with a star above. The later numbered records are stained with a purple dye before being gold lettered and look much more distinguished than the earlier plain zinc types. The rear lid of the instrument opens for sound escape and has elaborate directions for playing and changing barrels. The patent date given is May 31st, 1887. Altogether a charming and, I think, rare make of disc music box which plays extremely well.

The AMORETTE is a lightly built disc organette, interesting and with some unusual features. It has a black enamelled case 14" x $10\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8" high. With it came seventeen discs 9" in diameter. While talking of the discs, it is interesting to note that, here again, is a different type of projection, it being rectangular and punched sideways and of various lengths to sustain the notes. The discs have 'Amorette' in large gold letters and in the centre is a gold rising sun and a lyre (but no star this time) and the word 'patent'. It is interesting to note that all discs are numbered in the 4,000's so I presume they started at 4,000 - the earliest record received was 4003 and the latest 4286. The instrument, although playing very well, has a limited range as it has only sixteen notes. The discs are centre drive and quite sturdy; they trip little triggers which, in turn, through levers, open the valves to the reeds. The Amorette transfer on the opposite side of the case from the handle is large and very handsome and the general effect is appealing.

Altogether an unusual group of instruments and in my opinion, desirable collectors items.

ON THE CARE AND PRESERVATION OF CYLINDER RECORDINGS by Paul Tournay.

When you happen to discover a collection of old recordings that have been deposited in some damp, dark, mouldy niche in the previous owner's house or shed, the chances are that the mould and deterioration that haunts such records as Amberols will have you worried. In this article I will try to put forward some suggestions that may save losses and money.

There is not much, unfortunately, that can be done about mould and deterioration once it has made its mark, but its progress can be stopped. If you can get hold of some "Chlor Cleorol" (not much) from a local chemist or retailer the best thing to do is impregnate some rag and place it in your storage boxes. The effect of this is that it kills mould. Storage also has a lot to do with the deterioration of the records, as you know they should not be in a damp situation, but in a dry, well ventilated place.

The best material for bonding ageing plaster together, so your records will last, is a light P.V.C. bonding solution (such as Silatex "Bond - Crete" available at hardware stores in New Zealand and Australia). The mixture as it is in the tin is too thick to penetrate the plaster, so the suggested way of using it is to mix one part bonder to two parts water (or until it looks like milk), and then apply it with a fine brush to the cleaned plaster.

After this is completed, stand the records in an open situation, where a steady flow of air can be guaranteed. The solution must not be applied too thickly, it is best to do two coats than damage it with too much the first time. When cleaning the plaster, make sure that it does not absorb great amounts of water, or it will be seriously weakened. Cleaning can usually be accomplished by using a dry, or slightly damp sponge. Do not under any circumstances patch up holes with plaster, or you could end up with a larger hole than you bargained for.

The Editors,
"The Phonographic Record",
CHRISTCHURCH.

It is with regret that I note in your April issue a gross breach of faith with the spirit of collecting.

I refer to an article on page 28 of Vol. 7, Issue 4 of "The Phonographic Record". Under the heading "A Space Saver for Label Collectors", the article consists of detailed instructions for cutting up a gramophone record, and for the disposal of the unwanted recorded portion, in order to display that part on which the label is mounted.

Whilst acknowledging that an area of undoubted historical interest exists in the printed label of a recording, and that a number of collectors, the writer included, retain in their collections recordings obtained partly or solely for the interest inherent in the label, it is with shock that one reads an article devoted to the destruction of recordings, in a journal produced by a Society "Formed for the preservation of recorded sound" - and carrying this wording in the magazine heading.

It is to be hoped that the offending article appears by oversight, and is not intended as an indication of Society policy.

I remain,

(MICHAEL WOOLF)

Editors' Note:- We would like to thank Michael Woolf for his letter and raising what is, we admit, a debatable point. Even though we had taken it for granted that no member would use any record of historical or musical value we certainly concede the points that some members would retain a badly damaged record because of this and also that what is of value to one member is of little interest to another.

RECORDS OF RECORDS by G.B.E.

"Skylark", sung by Arthur Lennard; Edison-Bell 2-minute black wax cylinder No. 5911.

Arthur Lennard was a versatile Music Hall artist apparently as much at home in sentimental songs such as "Skylark" as in more cheerful comic numbers, e.g. "I think three makes jolly good company". "Skylark" is a "straight" song about a little boy who, seeing a skylark, implores it to take a message to his mother in heaven from "poor dear daddy and me". The bird obliges, and consequently the child meets his mother that night, i.e. he dies in his sleep. A section sung after the second verse contains the father's reaction ("a desolate man", etc.). The music to go with these gay, carefree sentiments is in the form of a stolid waltz - the chorus, though tuneful, strikes me as falling just short of true effectiveness. Many Victorian numbers (e.g. "Champagne Charlie") have, in print, fairly feeble tunes, thus "Skylark" could possibly be seen as a Victorian rather than Edwardian type of song, even though it was composed (by the productive E.W. Rogers) about, I would guess, 1900. Just as many of the great Cockney and quasi-Cockney artists (e.g. Elen Chevalier, Marie Lloyd) were singing their marvellous numbers by the 1890's, so "Skylark" may have carried the "tear-jerker" tradition into the later period of the Halls.

This cylinder is one of the earlier Edison-Bell moulded records, having a square-cut end and raised lettering, and made probably about 1905. The announcement is unusual (to this collector anyway) in that it puts the listener in the picture immediately by stating that "Mr. Arthur Lennard sings his popular song "Skylark"...Edison-Bell Record". The song is well enough recorded (piano accompaniment) with the addition to the second verse omitted - a soprano handles the second chorus, presumably impersonating a child's treble - but the problem is that the song's and Lennard's merits are just as hard to assess from ancient recordings as are those of some of the great comic songs and performers, because of the absence of that vital element in the Halls, the audience. No doubt this song would be more effective if we could listen to Lennard and his audience pulling the stops out and letting the tears gush. Still, however, another significant aural relic of that vanished era.