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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AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF DISC PHONOGRAPHS

A RARE SPRING MOTOR

Since last issue was printed we have had a number of interesting letters and among these is one from a new member, Mr. Christopher Proudfoot, who informs us that he has seen No.11 (The Rare Spring Motor). He says it is almost exactly as depicted in the last issue of "The Phonographic Record".

The differences seem minor but they are as follows: the base has a plain chamfer and the motor has slightly tapering sides. This is enamelled black with two gold lines. We believe there are two ratchet wind models, but do not know what the differences are.

ENGLISH SPRINGMOTOR NO. 10

Mr. Proudfoot feels we are wrong about any Berliners being made in England, as these, he says, were all imported from 1897 till 1918. Before this date the only gramophones on sale in England were hand-driven ones with spoked wheels made in Germany by Kammerer and Reinhardt, and marketed by Parkins and Gotto of Oxford Street. (We described this model - which we called No. 5 - in the June issue of 1972.) We are grateful to Christopher Proudfoot for the information and his interest and for taking the trouble to write.

1896 - 97 FIRST BERLINER SPRINGMOTOR NO.12

The model illustrated in this issue, NO.12, is another springmotor model, another one we have not seen in New Zealand, nor have we discovered it in any Catalogue, advertisement or publication of any kind. Where does it fit into the chain? Is this the model that Fred Gaisberge had a hand in the production of? We cannot say.

The name, "The First Berliner Springmotor" is given to it by its owner, Mr. L. Schlick, and after this he put a question mark. It has similar characteristics to NO.11 in that the base is wood, the motor case is made of metal, and the horn is supported by a pillar. The two major changes are the method of winding and the reproducer, both of these being the same as the later and better known "Trade Mark Model". The turn-table is seven inches in diameter, the horn is metal and is connected to the reproducer via a leather elbow.

It was around 1896 that Berliner needed someone to sell his newly-made springmotor. His directors iscovered an energetic New York promoter and advertising man named Frank Seaman, and it was he who took keen interest in the gramophone, having very optimistic views of the gramophone's future.

He suggested that the Berliner directors give him sole right to promote and sell the gramophone. In eturn for this, he would set up his own company to advertise and distribute gramophones and records. greement was reached, and in 1896 a fifteen year contract with Seaman was signed, thus giving the rights o Seaman to manage the enterprise. Seaman had set up a company known as Seaman's National Gramaphone ompany of New York City. The Berliner Gramophone Company of Philadelphia was to manufacture machines nd records, and the United States Gramophone Company - Berliner's own patent-holding company of Washington - as to continue as a controlling body of all Berliner Patents.

Seaman, after taking control, set out with great gusto to advertise his product. He opened an office t 874 Broadway, and from there poured out full-page advertisements "Talking Machines that talk, talk". o start with, all he had to sell was the hand-turn model, but by November 1896 Johnson had delivered a uantity of springmotor gramophones for sale at Christmas, and being half the price of Cylinder Machines, 25 each, they sold like hot cakes; so fast that Seaman had to apologise for being unable to fill orders.

By the Christmas of 1897 Seaman realised that his advertising policy, along with his cheap prices, ad paid off, and that, in fact, he was unable to supply anywhere near enough machines to meet the demand hereby created. He was forced to advertise an apology for delays in supplying orders for his products, tating that in spite of greatly increased workshop facilities which were being utilised day and night, nd foreign orders being declined, he was still unable to meet hundreds of unfilled local orders.

ODEL NUMBERING: We have had a letter from E. Bayly pointing out the confusion caused by model number- ng. We therefore must point out that our model numbering has nothing to do with the model number given y the manufacturers. This was done so as to provide a handy reference for anyone possessing a copy of ur magazine. Many of the machines we have illustrated do not have a model number given them by their akers. The dates of production and sale seem very uncertain also, and name variations occur here and here.

COLLECTING IN NEW ZEALAND

THE SELECTAPHON

By BILL DINI

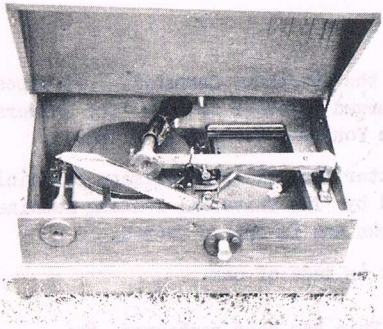
One of my recent aquisitions is an unusual "Wedding-cake" - shaped underhorn gramophone of German rigin (see illustration). The style and construction of the case is two ply discs each twelve and a alf inches in diameter, with a highly embossed brass shell three and one half inches deep, clamped etween the discs. A six and one half inch gap formed by the folds in the shell leads inwards and forms he horn, which naturally has brass sides and wooden top and bottom. The inward folded brass sides aper in, and lead into an outside brass elbow from which springs the reproducer arm. Four long bolts lamp the embossed shell and horn sides between the ply discs, and this forms the complete case, sim- licity itself. The embossing, (or should I say relief) stands out in places half an inch from the ackground and is very handsome, consisting of cornucopias overflowing with fruit and leaves. Above nd below the main scheme are rows of small circles, standing out, consisting of 270 on both top and ottom rows.

The general effect is striking, especially when polished, and forms an attractive contrast to the ark stained and polished wooden discs. The elbow is also polished brass. Above the elbow is a ickel plated reproducer arm with a wooden reproducer. I have seen wooden reproducer arms with a etal reproducer, but never the reverse! Under the ten inch turn table is a metal plate with the word SELECTAPHON" engraved on it, and another small plate marked "MADE IN GERMANY".

ZON · O · PHONE

COIN IN THE SLOT MACHINE

Photographs William Hoffman



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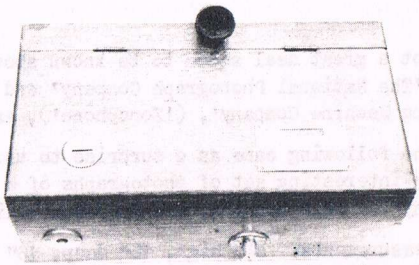

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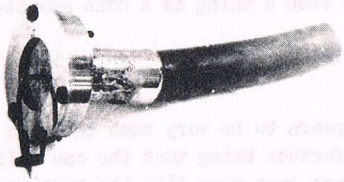
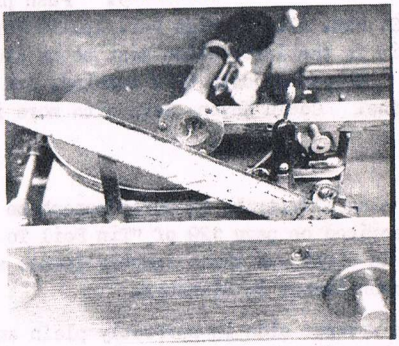


reproducer



close – up

zon-o – phone record

Emerson record & sleeve

The robust motor is, I presume, a selectephon product, the only identification on it is a large "S" with a vertical bar through it like a N.Z. dollar sign, and is enclosed in a circle. This is what leads me to believe it is of selectaphon manufacture. Altogether it has a very unusual appearance, and I should think is quite rare. The tone and volume are surprisingly good for an instrument of such small size and with a somewhat crude horn.

ZONOPHONE

Not a great deal seems to be known about the beginnings of the 'Zonophone Company'. It appears that 'The National Phonograph Company' and one other Company merged together to form 'The Universal Talking Machine Company', ('Zonophone'), and this took place in Yonkers, New York, in 1888.

The following came as a surprise to us; we received a letter from William Hoffmann containing a very interesting set of photographs of a machine manufactured by 'The Universal Talking Machine Company'. This machine, Mr. Hoffmann claims, has Berliner works and is coin operated.

Measurements: 8½" high, 10" deep, 18" high and the cabinet is made of oak.

Directions on the plate:
1. Wind up machine.
2. Drop a nickel in the slot. (This has been restamped, the original instructions were 'cent'.)
3. Push plunger (slowly) as far as it will go.

U.S. Pat. Allo Foreign Pat. Appl'd For. UNIVERSAL TALKING MACHINE CO. NEW YORK.

This is the information sent to us along with a set of photographs, some of which are in this issue. We cannot date this machine, and had no idea there was such a thing as a coin operated Zonophone. Could anyone help with more information?

ZONOPHONE LABEL

We also illustrate an early zonophone disc label. This appears to be very much the same as the one described on page 129 of "Tin Foil To Stereo", the main difference being that the one illustrated is eight and three quarter inches across, whereas the first ones were like the Berliners, only seven inches in diameter.

The reverse side is perfectly plain and does not seem to have anything etched in relief on the surface of the record. "Tin Foil" states that the first seven inch has "Universal Talking Machine Co." etched on the reverse side. Information and illustrations of early zonophone disc labels and machines would be a great help to us for future use in "The Phonographic Record".

THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH IN CHRISTCHURCH BETWEEN 1879 AND 1914

("Lyttelton Times", 14th January 1891)

Last night there was a very large audience at the Oddfellows' Hall to hear Edison's phonograph. The interesting lecture by Professor Archibald on the discovery and development of the phonograph was listened to by the audience with wrapt attention, while the lantern slides illustrating the lecture were most instructive of the history of the marvellous talking machine. A long programme of musical selections was then given, amongst the cleverest of which were the rendering of "Silver Threads" by the Adelaide Brass Band, airs from Boccaccio by a Melbourne Band, marvellous examples of rival cornet soloists, and Mr. Vane's wonderful banjo playing. Of the items given it was very noticeable that the imperfections, as well as the merits of each, were carefully preserved, and just as wonderfully reproduced, while the agonising efforts of the tin whistle soloist, in his efforts to produce the top notes of tne "Blue Bells of Scotland" were laughable indeed. So too were the asides of the different vocalists, J.L. Toole's "How Will That Do?" at the end of his song, being very characteristic of the man.

Specimens of vocal music were also given, and in the items by the Orpheus Quartette Company of this town, and in "Oh Sactissima", "The Drinking Song", "Sailors' Song", and "Beware", even the individual voices were recognisable, as was the characteristic "tag" given by one of its best known members. After these examples of the phonograph's musical ability, Professor Archibald both sang and spoke into the machine, and the immediate repetition of his words brought the wonderful powers of the machine most vividly before the audience. After the very successful platform speaking done by the machine, a number of the audience availed themselves of the opportunity of further investigating its marvels by listening to its recitals through the ear tubes, and so obtaining a closer audience with singer or speaker, to their manifest advantage.

Tonight the phonograph will be on exhibition again, and a majestic recital for children is announced for Saturday afternoon at three o'clock.

(To be continued).

RECORD LISTENING POST

By BARRY SHEPPARD

Hi there! For some time now the Society has said "When are you going to do an article for our magazine". Well, at last I have come up with an idea which I hope the readers will like - a Review of Records. Each month (if, of course, the President lets me) I will be reviewing a recording or recordings which I hope the reader will find of interest.

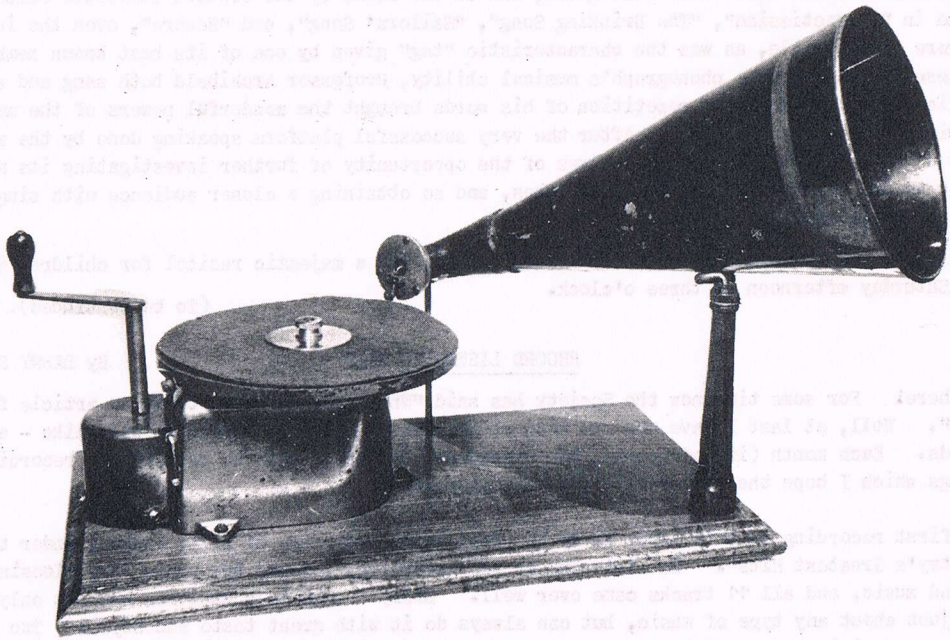
The first recording in this issue is by the well known orchestra of Billy Vaughn, under the title of "Country's Greatest Hits". On listening to the recording, I found the music very pleasing as background music, and all 11 tracks came over well. Billy Vaughn is a musician who not only can perform just about any type of music, but can always do it with great taste and style. Two of the 11 tracks are original compositions composed by Vaughn himself. Also swinging along on the L.P. are two great Country hits, "My Man" and "Stand by your Man", of which two Gold Records were awarded to Tammy Wynette, a great singer in the Country field.

Vaughn rounds off his programme with two tunes which rocketed to the charts by the two most dynamic names in Show Biz, Ray Price and Charlie Pride, "I won't Mention it Again" and "She's too Good to be True".

In all, I think this album is a good buy for light listening. By the way, if you are interested the album is on Paramount PML - 34802.

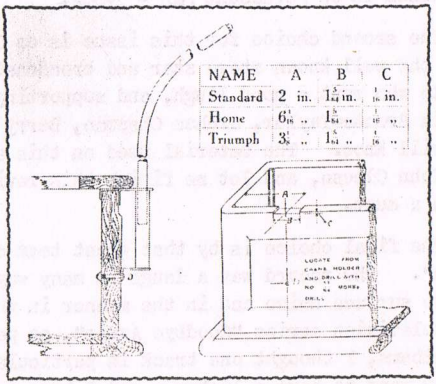
The second choice for this issue is on Starline, (SRS-5084) and the title is "Report on Britain" with the well known stage star and broadcaster, David Frost. The album is a true delight for those people who want a good laugh, and supporting Frost is a line-up of top artists including such names as Tim Brooke-Taylor, Graham Chapman, Barry Cryer, Bill Oddie and Terry Jones, of which I'm sure you will know. The material used on this album was penned to paper by the two wizards, David Frost and John Cleese, and let me finish this review by saying the recording is on the Budget Label, so it is a must.

The final choice is by that great team of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore under the title of "Goodbye Again". The record was a laugh in many ways, but on some tracks I found it a bit hard to follow due to surface noise and in the manner in which the actors spoke. All six tracks are excerpts from the television series "Goodbye Again", so perhaps this is why. Let me finish by saying out of all the albums, I thought one track in particular was outstanding, the title "Mrs. Woolley's Curse", and if you want to have a listen - and I hope you will - the album is on Decca, SKLM-4981.



BERLINER SPRING MOTOR NO. 12

A Selectaphon



Edison Crane

EDISON CRANE

We found these directions for an Edison Crane, but do not seem to have come across them in N.Z. These instructions were printed in the April issue of the "Edison Phonograph Monthly", printed in Australia in 1908. They were for dealers - as it was for them only that this magazine was produced - the idea being to keep them up to date with all new material, and also to give them an up to date record list. We are indeed fortunate to have a number of these available from which to extract items like this one.

This crane was evidently designed to fit three models: the "Standard", "Home" and "Triumph". The parts consisted of a Horn and pieces for attaching the crane to the cabinet. The latter pieces include a metal holder with screws, and a brace to keep the upright rod of the crane in a rigid position. A diagram is included in the illustrations which should help with the following instructions.

STANDARD: Measure 2" (A) from inside of top left hand corner of cabinet to obtain centre line of slot. Measure 34½/64" each side of line, which will give length of slot (B) 15/64". Cut down 1/16". Fit in slot attachment, and locate point (D). Drill hole with 11/64" Morse drill, fit screw and fasten with washer and nut at other side.

HOME: Measure centre line of slot (B) 6 1/16" from inside corner. All other measurements and directions as with Standard.

TRIUMPH: Measure centre line of slot (B) 3⅛" from inside corner. All other measurements as with Standard.

It is interesting to note that it was at this point in time that the Horn Crane hole in the Gem was enlarged from 3/16" to ¼", and dealers were instructed to order special Horn Cranes with the 3/16" end size - if they were needed - for the earlier model.

EDISON BATTERY OIL BOTTLE

By James F. Lowe

(In the April Issue we printed an article about an Edison Oil Bottle, and we asked if someone could help us regarding the type of oil it contained, and what the oil was for. Thanks to Mr. James F. Lowe we now are able to print the answer.)

Among the many wonderful inventions of Edison are two in which he combined two of his interests, chemistry and electricity, in the one device. These are the Edison Primary and the Edison Secondary cell (battery). The secondary cell was developed as an answer to the well known lead-acid or 'car battery', and in a modified form is used to this day. The Edison primary cell however is like the 'torch battery' type, and is discarded when exhausted.

The Edison cell uses copper oxide and mercurised zinc electrodes in a 20% solution of caustic soda. It has a terminal voltage of only 0.7 volt, but is capable of delivering a continuous current of 3 amperes over its life. The cell consisted of a glass jar into which fitted a porcelain cap from which was suspended the copper oxide and zinc electrodes. There were two zinc electrodes each side of the copper oxide electrode which was held in place with a copper cage.

My experience with these cells was in railway signalling where they would give over 12 months' service without any attention. When the cell was exhausted it would be removed from service and replaced and the old cell would be returned to have new electrodes placed in it.

Now where does the oil come in? Well, caustic soda absorbs carbon dioxide from the air forming sodium carbonate which very quickly ruins the cell. To prevent this taking place a layer of oil about 6 m.m. thick is placed on top of the caustic soda solution. The small bottle which contained

the oil held sufficient for one cell, and came packed with the dry cell. When placed in service the cell was filled with the caustic soda solution and then the bottle of oil poured on the top.

Of some interest to collectors of phonographs who would know of the often bitter rivalry between the Edison Company and the Columbia Company was that the Columbia people also produced a cell very similar to Edisons, but with one modification which beat the Edison patents. This was the Columbia R.S.A. signal cell. It used the same electrode materials and caustic soda electrolyte but was 'self oiling'. During initial manufacture oil was mixed with the copper oxide and remained there until the electrodes were immersed in caustic soda when the oil would float to the top forming the required impervious layer. So although we may find an occasional Edison battery oil bottle we will never see a Columbia one!

THE MECHANICAL ZITHER (TRIOLA)

In Volume 6, Issue 4, April 1971 on page 32 (illustration on page 34) we presented what we knew about a TRIOLA. We since have had a letter from Mr. Mervyn Thompson of Western Australia with more information on this rather interesting machine.

The Triola comprises a total of fortynine strings of which twenty five are plucked mechanically. The remaining twenty four strings represent six groups of four strings, each group playing a chord when plucked. To operate the machine a paper roll is inserted and the crank handle turned with the right hand. On the left hand side of the paper roll numbers are printed ranging from one to six. The operator simply plucks the base chord with a plectrum on the left hand side of the machine as the corresponding number appears. A most delightful tune results. I believe this machine was made-up until 1910.

The paper rolls I have are all printed in German, except for two, "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" and my most cherished, (being a dinkum Aussie) is called "On the Road to Gundagai".

Editor: We stated back in 1971 that we thought maybe this model could be played by hand, little did we know just how near the mark we were.

THE ROSARY

2316S 1525

I wonder how many copies of this song on cylinder were issued. It appears in most collections of cylinders the writer has purchased.

The hours I spent with thee, dear heart
Are as a string of pearls to me;
I count them over - every one apart,
My Rosary.
Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer
To still a heart in absence wrung,
I tell each bead until the end - and here
A cross is hung.

Oh memories that bless and burn,
Oh, barren gain - and bitter loss,
I kiss each bead and strive at last to learn
To kiss the cross - sweetheart -
To kiss the cross.

A book is written by this name, and the verse used; but what of the writer of the song? The story as told by Mr. Frederick Winter, a London resident, is that 20 years or more ago he wrote a set of verses to the woman he loved, and from whom he was separated. Years past, the lady married and the lover suffered a reverse of fortune - an incurable disease. In solitary existence he sought consolation in writing ballads, but the little poem he had written to the lady was not published. It had been carried about in a note book, and the note book was lost.

Not long after the verses had been written, Mr. Winter was in a Brighton drawing room and he was asked if he would like to hear "The Rosary" - the popular song that had inspired the still more popular book. When he heard the song he recognised it as his poem, the one he lost. It was then that he told the story to those present. Enquiries showed that the publishers attributed the song to Mr. Robert Cameron Rogers, by whom it was included in a volume of verse called "The Wind in the Clearing." Mr. Winter produced written evidence from 4 persons, including the lady to whom the lines were written, stating that they were acquainted with the words of "THE ROSARY" at a date prior to the publication of Mr. Rogers Volume in 1895. ("Edison Musical Monthly" June 1925)