



The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonographic Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

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EDITOR: Walter Norris,
'Waipapa', Swannanoa,
R.D.1, Rangiora
NEW ZEALAND

SECRETARY: P.O. Box 5175
Papanui
Christchurch
NEW ZEALAND

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

It is with regret that we inform you of the resignation of Bruce Petrie as Secretary, and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking him for services rendered the Society over the past twelve months.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Among these will be seen an illustration that has been used before, but this was long ago. This is of an unusual 'Aeolian' disc which is mentioned in Chris Long's article on the exploits of its company. We are fortunate to be allowed to use an illustration of the Victor Royal as depicted in Larry Schlick's Book "A Portfolio of Early Phonographs". This is again through the kindness of Larry Schlick. Les Stenersen's puzzle plate will be of interest to English collectors, there being an article in the "HILL AND DALE NEWS" of October 1974 by Peter Adamson on the subject.

Talk-O-Phone: Could some one help us Please, with information on the machine we have illustrated in this issue, we copied it from a farm reprint.

OCTOBER MEETING - Adair Otley presented a varied and entertaining programme of films, including 'Christchurch is a Hundred' (1950) and Laurel and Hardy in 'Dirty Work', a gem of early sound comedy.

AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BERLINER DISC PHONOGRAPHS

VICTOR MODEL TYPE 'B'

Further information on the model illustrated last issue.
The price of this model varied between \$16.30 and \$18, and included in the latter price were 200 needles and 30 disc records.
For a charge of \$4 extra a 30 inch horn would also be supplied.

VICTOR "R" OR ROYAL

1901 - 2

NO. 23

This model appeared in many catalogues and to our knowledge has not yet been found in New Zealand. It's main difference from the Trade Mark models is the change in motor design, hence the change in position of the winding handle. This meant that with this model you could wind while playing, something you could not do with the top wind models.

Cabinet is made of quartered oak with metal corners.

Motor has one main spring and according to the catalogue will play two seven inch records on a winding.

The turn-table is seven inches in diameter, but will take ten inch records.

The horn is made of black-japanned steel sixteen inches in length.

In 1902 this machine could be obtained for fifteen dollars (U.S.) and this included a two part needle box which contained two hundred needles, the second half of the box was used for the worn ones. It was normally fitted with Exhibition Junior sound box but a concert type could be had for an extra one dollar fifty if preferred.

We believe that this machine is among the first models that were produced by Elridge R. Johnson which were entirely of his own design.

BERLINER PUZZLE PLATE

It came as a surprise to us to find that puzzle plates were made as early as 1900. We are indebted to Les Stenersen of Auckland, New Zealand, for sending us an illustration of a seven inch single sided Berliner disc which he owns. This is not the first time we have illustrated a puzzle plate. In 1971 we depicted two ten inch double sided discs produced by Zonophone (See Vol 6, Issue 5, page 46). The Berliner also has three titles, these are "The way to kiss a girl" by Burt Shepard; "I want to be a Military Man" from Floradora; "Piano Solo and Patter on Dreams" by John Morton - all recorded in London, England.

Almost all Berliners have the date lightly engraved on them. This can be seen by holding them to the light and looking in the blank space between the end of the recording and the centre hole. This one is clearly dated 20.1.1900. The serial number is 9317 and the matrix 1940-B. An expert on Berliners (Alan Kelly of Yorks, England) says the 'B' after the matrix number indicates that this disc was recorded by "Sinkler Darby" in the Fred Gaisberg's series. The reverse side has "Reproduced in Hanover".

BOOK REVIEW

The Indispensable Man

W.T. Norris

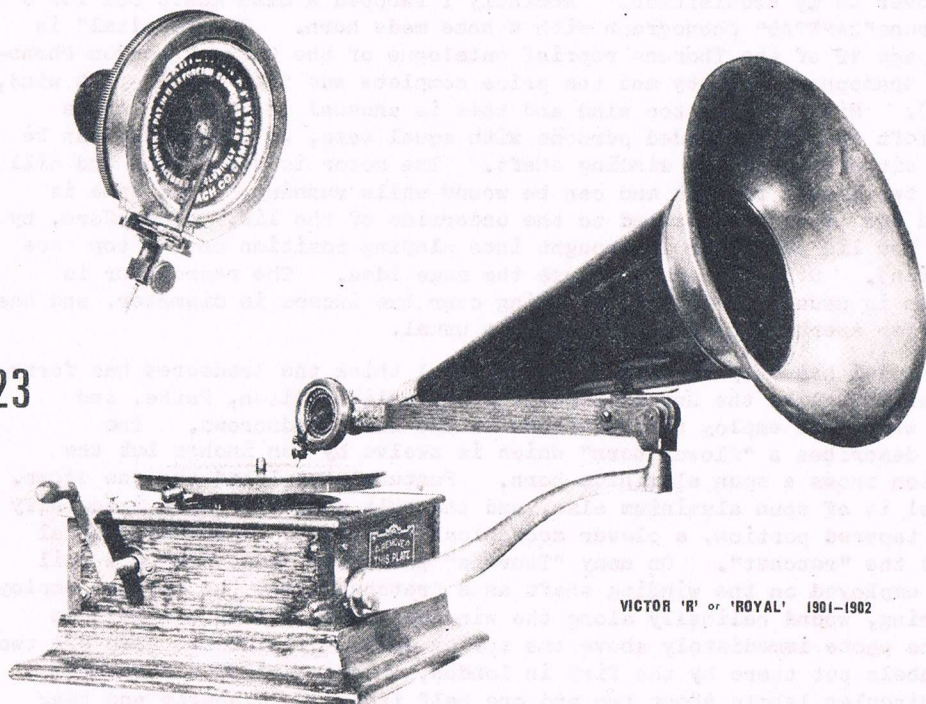
This book is well worth watching out for, if only for the fine collection of illustrations it contains. It covers the story of Thomas Alva Edison's life and inventive genius in 130 photographs, the most unusual collection about the inventor ever assembled and told in the words of:- David Sarnoff, Mary Pickford, Harvey S. Firestone Jr., Thomas W. Martin, Giorgio Valerio, Sherman R. Knapp, and Walker L. Cisler. Published by Shorewood Publishers, Inc., New York in 1962.

MY ONLY SWISS PHONOGRAPH

Bill Dini

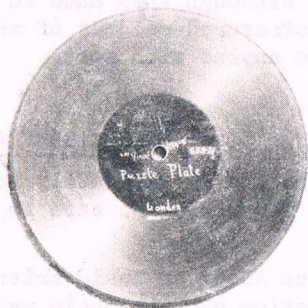
The firm of Thorens in Switzerland is one of the best and longest known in the history of mechanical and recorded music. Early in the piece they made cylinder music boxes and subsequently both phonographs and gramophones were made by the firm at Sainte Croix, Switzerland. Their trade mark, the Swiss Cross, is universally seen and known. Thorens also made plain gramophones to which vendors attached their own names. In England, for instance, Gamages and Charles Robey. It is said that over 50% of all gramophones had motors made by this major pioneering company.

NO. 23



VICTOR 'R' or 'ROYAL' 1901-1902

This is the later Victor 'R' and comes with either the Exhibition (pictured) or Concert reproducer, a slotted crank and seven inch turn table. This is the first machine to use the famous Victor trade mark label, 'His Master's Voice', showing Nipper the dog listening to a Berliner Gramophone machine. The horn must be threaded to take the special Victor brass elbow and no other horn or elbow is correct.



BERLINER

Puzzle Plate



?

But over to my acquisition. Recently I swapped a disc music box for a tatty Thorens "CAPITAL" phonograph with a home made horn. The "Capital" is shown on page 12 of the Thorens reprint catalogue of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society and the price complete was 55/- (with crank wind, 1/6 extra). Mine has the top wind and this is unusual in that it can be wound by left and right handed persons with equal ease, as the handle can be fitted to either end of the winding shaft. The motor is two spring and will play four two minute records and can be wound while running. The case is walnut and the motor is attached to the underside of the lid. Therefore, by reversing the lid the motor is brought into playing position on the top (see illustration). Other makers also use the same idea. The reproducer is larger than is usual for this type, being over two inches in diameter, and has also a larger aperture (above stylus) than usual.

This model has only two minute speed and I think the leadscrew has forty threads per inch like the German Excelsior and unlike Edison, Pathe, and Columbia, which all employ fifty threads to the inch leadscrews. The catalogue describes a "flower horn" which is twelve by ten inches but the illustration shows a spun aluminium horn. Fortunately, I had the one shown. The mandrel is of spun aluminium also, and the belt pulley is spun integrally with main tapered portion, a clever mechanical short cut. Another unusual feature is the "ratchet". On many "Thorens" and other gramophones, a coil spring is employed on the winding shaft as a "ratchet", but the Capital employs a flat spring, wound helically along the winding shaft. This can just be seen in the photo immediately above the spring drum. Inside the case are two similar labels put there by the firm in London, which retailed the Capital. They are circular labels about two and one half inches in diameter and bear the following:-

"Briscoephones" Phono Stores. 813 Romford Road, Manor Park. E. Sheet Music Records etc. Try the Briscoephone, Loudest, Clearest and Best. The address "813 Romford Road, Manor Park E", has been struck out with a pen and a new address written in "280 Barking Road, East Ham".

Thorens are still in business and I believe are lately turning out small disc music boxes. It is interesting to note that although they made so much gramophonalia, Thorens never, to our knowledge manufactured records of any kind. The editor would be interested to hear from anyone with more information on the "THORENS" Company.

RECORD LISTENING POST No. 8 by:-

BARRY SHEPPARD

Quite an interesting bracket of pressings have come my way lately for review, and should prove interesting and enjoyable for those who care to purchase them.

In a recent issue of our Magazine I reviewed an Album of music written for Bette Davis films; now - there is another selection of Film Music pressed by the same Company - PYE - such film scores as:- The Sea Hawk/Elizabeth and Essex/Gone With The Wind/Now Voyager/and Captain From Castile/concluding with film scores from some of the movies made famous by Humphrey Bogart. The memorable sounds coming from these Albums were a great thrill to me, and took me back to many of the films which I have seen. As well as the main title, each Album gives tracks from many other films which may long be remembered:- King Kong/Johnny Belinda/Wuthering Heights/The Robe/Captain Blood/Airport/

Of Human Bondage/ - all of which take you, the listener, back into the past of great Movies. Soundwise, the recordings are very well done and should delight those who are constant filmgoers.

Also from the PYE Company comes another 'oldie' with the title: "San Francisco" (RCA - VIC-1515), which covers the beautiful singing voice of Jeanette MacDonald. Featured on this pressing are the famous songs from San Francisco/The Merry Widow/The Vagabond King/Rose Marie/Maytime/Naughty Marietta/ and Monte Carlo; all of which Jeanette starred in, and for the age of the 'original' the tracks on this L.P. are of Top Class reproduction.

Now we turn to another major recording Company, the Decca Record Company Ltd., second largest to the great E.M.I. Co. in England. There is a new release produced by this company which is reminiscent of the past. The Album is entitled: "New Year in Vienna" (DECCA. SXL-6572) presenting Willi Boskovsky conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, playing a brilliant selection of all the Strauss family favourites. A brief mention of this world famous combination of Conductor and Orchestra would be appropriate here:- Willie Boskovsky - (the greatest living interpreter of Strauss music) - has been conducting the renowned Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra for these Annual New Year Concerts of Strauss music, following the wonderful tradition set by the late Clemens Krauss who died several years ago. This Album is truly an excellent buy for Strauss music-lovers.

Now the next release comes from that 'Little Dog' Company - (E.M.I.) - an 'old Master' Artist of many years ago, Reginald Dixon - with the title: "Reginald Dixon Recalls the Hits of World War II" (COLUMBIA. SCXO-6555). On this recording those old numbers go spinning out memories once again:- American Patrol/Don't Fence Me In/Paper Doll/White Cliffs of Dover/Ferry-boat Serenade/The Trolley Song/Wishing/Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree/ and many more. I don't really have to say anything more about this pressing because time alone is the best Reviewer of all; even way back in the days of the old 78's Reginald Dixon was in BIG DEMAND!

Our next review once again brings a feeling of nostalgia, a brand new release entitled: "The Great Gatsby" from the FESTIVAL Warehouse, which is the original soundtrack recording. Listening to this recording is like seeing the film all over again; as most of the numbers are bright and jolly. Presented by Nelson Riddle and his Orchestra - Nelson Riddle (who is of course very well known for his film score work) puts great effort into this score and thus makes this double-album a delight to the listener. Many swinging numbers are heard:- What'll I Do/The Sheik of Araby/Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue/Who?/Yes Sir, That's My Baby/Alice Blue Gown/Kitten on the Keys/ and a stack of others, just as well known. For my readers who like the old timers I think this one is a very good buy; plus for added attraction - inside the double-cover there are colour stills of scenes from the Movie "The Great Gatsby" - the soundtrack of which is pressed here on the Paramount label (L-45481/2) and is released by FESTIVAL RECORDS.

The last pressing up for review in this issue is an Import - with the title:- "The Zeigfeld Follies of the Air" which was first recorded on 27th January, 1936. Listening to this waxing took me back to the 'Good Ol' Days' of the Bright Lights and back further to the dimmer gaslights of the Music Halls. Artists of nostalgia heard in this Album are:- Fanny Brice, James Melton, Patty Chafin, Al Goodman's Orchestra and the famous Zeigfeld Chorus; which adds a great deal of listening pleasure to this Album. The record jacket itself gives many interesting notes concerning the recording, the first of a series as planned by its manufacturers - NOSTALGIA ENTERPRISES. This recording is a great Collector's Item, I'm sure, and as a matter of interest to local readers it can be 'plucked' from the bins of THE RECORD ROOM here in Christchurch.

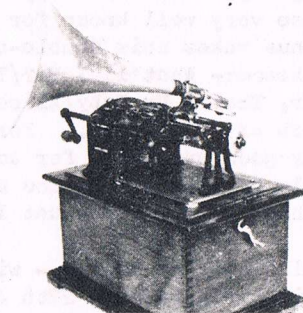
Well - that's all till next time, so - HAPPY LISTENING!

THE INDISPENSABLE MAN

THE INDISPENSABLE MAN, a new and original play, by the author of "The Indispensable Man," is now being produced at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London. The play is a comedy, and is the work of the late, lamented, and much-loved, Mr. W. M. Thackeray. It is a play of the highest quality, and is one of the best of its kind. It is a play of the highest quality, and is one of the best of its kind. It is a play of the highest quality, and is one of the best of its kind.



closed



THORENS "CAPITAL"

PHONOGRAPH

cover of book reviewed



sample page



THE "GENNETT" RECORD COMPANY, U.S.A.

(Edited by Adair Otley)

(Part 5) - "How to run a Record Company on a Shoestring" - the Artistic Angle.

Gennett Records were, at all times, manufactured as cheaply as possible, and most of the jazz artists in those days, (many of whom have since become famous names giving the Gennett label its collecting glamour), had then just one attraction for the Company - they could be hired cheaply.

The average Dance Band recording fee was \$250., for which at least four numbers were expected to be recorded; but any Leader who had exaggerated ideas of his worth to the Company - financially, was not encouraged to continue his contract. Such Band Leaders in question were those of King Oliver and Joe Candullo whose contracts were terminated due to their suggestion that they might receive railway travelling fares to and from their recording dates with the Gennett Company.

On the other hand there were some artists who worked on a royalty basis; one was the famous Duke Ellington and his eight piece Band of the 1926 era who earned themselves \$19 for three months sales at a cent-a-side royalty on their Gennett recordings of:- 'If you can't hold the man you love' and I've got those (want to go home again) blues' on two record labels:- for GENNETT-3291 and BUDDY-8010. In order to make the best of the starvation-price coloured talent available, Gennett actually built a studio at Birmingham, Alabama.

Most of the Bands and Artists who recorded for Gennett were on the lower rungs of the professional ladder, going either way, and in no position to resist the chances of publicity and added prestige. Those who actually started their recording careers in this way were:- Guy Lombardo's Band, Cliff Edwards, Jack Smith (the whispering bari-tone), the entertainer Johnny Marvin and the comedian Jimmy Durante. Other artists e.g. The Two Black Crows (Morgan & Mack) stuck out for extra money and were rejected, so they eventually began recording for COLUMBIA.....and made a Million Dollars for that Company.

(Part 6 - Next Issue)

VOCALION RECORDS - THE MELBOURNE SCENE - 1928 to 1931 (Part I) By C. Long

I was handed copies of Roger Cole's and John Whitley Stokes' interesting articles on Vocalion only a few days ago. Unfortunately, I can only marginally help you with information on English Vocalion, but I can help with more detailed information on the short-lived Melbourne company, Vocalion (Foreign) Ltd.

The earliest Vocalion records to reach Australia were hillandale-cut discs, during the earlier part of the first war period. The masters were of mixed American and English origin, and covered a very wide field of musical taste - from dance records by Harry A. Yerke's Jazarimba Band, to orchestral recordings of Vaughn Williams conducting complete sets of his own works and even speech recordings by Sarah Bernhardt! These discs appear to have been discontinued around 1916 in favour of normal lateral records. The earlier Vocalion records made after the discontinuation of the hillandale releases bear the word "LATERAL" printed in large letters across the label. Even in 1919 this practice had not been discontinued, as the author possesses a Vocalion sample pressing dated 20th June, 1919, on which are handwritten the words "LATERAL SYSTEM" - not to be played on Edison reproducer. The title recorded on this disc, incidentally, is "Ernani Involami" sung by Miss Caroline Hatchard (London).

Through the early 1920's Vocalion records of English origin were sold in Australia (and presumably also through New Zealand by related distribution agencies there), and many interesting artists - including Horace Stevens, Malcolm McEachern, Gladys Moncrieff, John Charles-Thomas, Alberto Zelman, and Albert Sammons recorded for the company. Despite what has been written by previous contributors on the location of the English Vocalion factory being suspiciously close to the location of the Hayes H.M.V. works, I would very much doubt any corporate connection. Firstly, production commenced with hillandale records, which would seem a deviation from H.M.V.'s company policy. I have read from various sources that Vocalion started on the hillandale system to avoid patent troubles with H.M.V. Also, the artists featured on the records are seldom, if ever, found on H.M.V. or Zonophone discs. I would also like to point out that it would seem odd that H.M.V. would go to the trouble of issuing a complete new label and a different set of matrix numbers for styles of music similar to that found on both their H.M.V. and Zonophone labels.

With the coming of electric recording, the Vocalion and Aco labels both bore the words "Electrically Recorded by the Marconi Company's Process". I have now established from surviving Melbourne Vocalion engineers that the process aforementioned was radically different to the Western Electric processes used by Columbia and H.M.V. For a start, the microphone employed for the recordings was a transverse-current Marconi-Reisz carbon microphone, and not the double-button push-pull microphone of the Western Electric system. The Marconi-Reisz microphone consisted of an octagonal marble block, about 4" average diameter. On the front of the block was carved a long, narrow channel or groove about 3" long, at the ends of which were two exposed metal electrodes. The groove would be filled with specially prepared (and very expensive) polished oval-shaped carbon granules, and over the front of the marble block a diaphragm was stretched so as to make direct physical contact with the carbon granules in the groove. As the diaphragm vibrated against the granules, the pressure between them would vary the flow of electric current between the electrodes. The success of this type of microphone relied on two factors:

1. The pressure of the granules against the diaphragm would act as a dampening system for the diaphragm resonances, thereby flattening frequency response.

2. The special carbon granules were much finer than those used in the Western Electric microphones, and this resulted in less background noise.

The amplifiers used for the Vocalion/Marconi system were also radically different to the Western Electric types. While I have not yet seen a circuit diagram of the Vocalion amplifier used here in Melbourne, I do have two photos of the amplifier and a rather vague description of its contents. The output stage consisted of 8 type 210 valves in a push-pull/parallel configuration. This would have amounted to a power output of under 10 watts-a miniscule amount by today's standards. The whole kit and caboodle was run by a huge bank of batteries, both of the accumulator and "B" type.

To return to the records - ACO was simply the cheap label of Vocalion, in the same way that Zonophone was to H.M.V. Up to this time, the distribution of the Vocalion records, which were all manufactured in England, was undertaken by Picot-Rosenthal of Australia. In 1927 the Australian Tariff Board imposed heavy tariffs on all records imported to Australia. The effect on the industry was staggering in Australia, and thereafter only the locally manufactured records of Columbia, H.M.V., Parlophone, Brunswick and Clifford Industries sold to any great extent.

(Part II - next issue)

'THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD NEWSLETTER'

SEPTEMBER 1974

Nº 6

This newsletter covers the months of July, August & September.

JULY MEETING

Bill Flecknoe exhibited the Society's 11" table model Symphonion disc musical box, the case of which he has expertly restored. The instrument was donated by the 'Society of Rural History Workshop', another Ferrymead group, and is complete, though possessing but one disc; we would welcome opportunities to acquire more. After outlining his restoration of the case, Bill exhibited two of his own machines, an Edison 'Triumph' Model D and a 'Mignon' gramophone; the Triumph he has restored from a very sorry state to virtually mint condition, the gold deck lining and corner decoration having been reproduced painstakingly by hand, while the 'Mignon', believed to be of Belgian origin, is an extremely compact lidless table model of c.1920. Bill lastly presented to our admiring gaze his method of woodgraining a Society fibreglass cygnet horn bell, involving the application of a base colour followed by two coats of graining, and the use of masking tape to achieve the appearance of the original sections of wood.

Our guest speaker was Mr. Cyril Evans, who spoke on the organ in Christchurch's Civic Theatre. This organ, he explained, is not, as might be supposed, of the Wurlitzer variety - indeed it fits into no standard category, being a 'concert' or 'orchestral' organ, built by William Hill & Son & Norman & Beard Ltd., and installed in 1929 at a cost of approximately £10,000. The completion of the Christchurch Town Hall has left the future of the Civic Theatre in doubt, while the organ's total height of 28 ft. and its estimated weight of up to 40 tons make most transfer proposals impracticable. Mr. Evans, along with member Clarrie Stewart and many others, is anxious that the instrument should be preserved.

AUGUST MEETING

The production of a stereo LP ('how the chatter gets on the platter', as one humorist present was heard to quip) was the theme of this month's speaker, Mr. Ian Hughes, himself a producer for a local company. Mr. Hughes explained clearly the use of multi-track tapes and 'mother' and 'master' discs.

Joffre Marshall exhibited an LP of modern music-hall recordings which he had purchased (new) for 50c. at the Industries Fair, then demonstrated a musical cocktail cabinet with a moving turntable and model gramophone horn and tone-arm. Joffre then revealed unsuspected musical talent, producing his accordeon and delighting us with a medley of tunes including his own arrangement of 'Good-bye, Dolly Gray', one of the songs on his bargain LP. It was a varied and entertaining programme.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

A.G.M.

The Executive of the Society is, with one exception, the same as last year, and comprises;

Patron Mr. C. Adams

President Mr. W.S. Dini

Vice President Mr. J.L. Marshall

Secretary Mr. B.M. Petrie

Treasurer Mr. W. Flecknoe

Committee Members Messrs. O. de Joux, G.B. East, A. Otley

To conclude the evening, Adair Otley played a selection of discs calculated to arouse nostalgic memories in those who 'tuned in' in the thirties and forties:

The Crusader March (Sousa, arr. Hewitt) Grand Massed Brass Bands,
cond. Oliver
Regal Zonophone G21701

Round About Regent Street (Flanagan & Nicholls) London Piano Accordeon
Band, cond. Wood
G 22594

Trains (Gardiner) Reginald Gardiner
Decca X 1841

Concerto in C Major for Harpsichord and Organ (Soler) - Part 1 Ruggero Gerlin (Harp.)
& Noelle Pierront (Organ)
Columbia DOX-644

Love what has given you this magic power
('The Land of Smiles' - Lehar) Richard Tauber &
Vera Schwarz
Parl. AR 1042

PARTS LIST

Included with this magazine is our latest parts list. This has been produced in an attempt to improve our parts service and to inform members of the current prices and availability of parts.

N/A - in the case of items marked N/A, we are unable to supply prices until supplies are received from the manufacturer and the cost to us is confirmed. We hope to be able to supply this information within a few weeks.

Prices for Section C items are an indication only - we will advise exact prices and expected delay on request.

PLEASE ORDER BY NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION.