

The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonographic Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 4

APRIL 1975

EDITOR: W.T.Norris,
'Waipapa', Swannanoa,
Rangiora R.D.1,
NEW ZEALAND.

SECRETARY: Mrs Drummond,
P.O.Box 5175,
Papanui,
Christchurch,
NEW ZEALAND

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

We are sorry to have to repeat ourselves as regards the supply of parts. We are trying to fulfil all orders, but due to delay in manufacture of some items, many orders are held up. Please when ordering parts, use the latest parts list.

This issue contains a letter from what appears a patient member in dire need of spare parts, which we consider to be humorous, although written in all seriousness.

Adair Otley has suggested an idea for fund raising. This is to sell sets of 35mm slides along with our posters at Ferrymead. We therefore can offer these to you. The first set issued costs 60 cents per set, or 20 cents each. Two of the four are coloured and two are depicted among illustrations.

List as follows: The Edison Advert. B & W.
His Masters Voice C.
Edison in his Laboratory B & W.
The Tinfoil Machine C.

All orders to the Secretary care of the Box number, 5175 Papanui, Christchurch.

OBITUARY

Major H.H. Annand

It is with regret that we announce the recent death of Major H.H. (Gerry) Annand, President of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society and a member of this society. Major Annand occupied a senior position amongst English collectors; his writings in the 'Hillandale News' e.g. on the personnel of Edison recording groups, will be greatly missed.

BACK ISSUES

Back issued of "The Phonographic Record" will henceforth be available to members at the increased cost of N.Z.\$2 per year's issue.

ILLUSTRATIONS

We seem to have more labels in this issue than usual, but this seems unavoidable. The Vocalian Labels are to illustrate Chris Long and John Stokes' articles. The first one (Vocalian) is made, we think, in Australia, is white, black and gold in colour and is ten inches in diameter. A.C.O. also produced by Acolain Vocalian Co. is pink and gold in colour, but produced in London, England.

Small Vocalian seems identical to Broadcast Label in diameter and is made up of three colours, gold, orange and black. Pixie Grippa. Among several which have been discovered in Australia and New Zealand, this model belongs to A. Burtoft of Sydney, Australia. The photograph was kindly sent to us by Jack Roote of Wellington. Could someone supply us with information on Pixie Grippa.

Edison and Phonograph and Mirth Melody and Music. These are illustrations of two of the 35mm slides the Society has for sale.

Apex Label fits in with the article in the series by Adair Otley on "The Gennett Record Company".

AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BERLINER DISC PHONOGRAPHS

FROM ONE TRADE MARK TO ANOTHER

We have just received an interesting letter from Ernie Bayly, Editor of The Talking Machine Review. He has kindly supplied us with additional information on Berliner discs and Angel Trade Mark. This information is as follows:

"The number on the Berliner discs, 45048 is definitely the German patent number. I have a copy of the patent, which is identical to British patent 15232. The German patent and the British were applied for on the same date, viz. 8th November, 1887. It was a kind of "blanket" patent covering all Emil Berliner's work to that date. The DRP in front of the German one merely abbreviates Deutsches Reich Patent.

You comment on the size of the original discs. In fact they never were 5 inches. They were 12.5cm. We British (which to me still means friends anywhere in the Commonwealth) erroneously jumped to the nearest equivalent in inches, thus five inches. Similarly the "five-inch" Zonophones of 1906 were always advertised in Europe as 12.5cm !!

(On checking some Berliners and G & T discs randomly I find that some are seven inches and some are 17.5cm!!!)

The "Angel" trade mark was designed by Theodore Birnbaum, American who was in charge of the Gramophone Company's operations in Berlin, and who succeeded Barry Owen in London for a few years until her returned to USA due to health reasons."

We also recommend an article on Berliner Discs and Trade Marks which appeared in two copies of "The Talking Machine Review." These were the August Issue No.23 and the November Issue No.24 both of the same year, 1973. In this issue we illustrate four labels in an attempt to show the progress of The Gramophone Company in its change from The Angel Trade Mark to the Victor Dog or His Masters Voice Trade Mark.

NO.1 GRAMOPHONE CONCERT RECORD

This record is quite common in New Zealand; has a black paper label with gold lettering and plain reverse side, except for "reproduced in Hanover", in raised type. Not all have plain reverse side, but the illustrated one does.

NO.2 VICTOR MONARCH RECORD

Almost the same as above, but here lies a puzzle; Gelatt says in his book, "The Fabulous Phonograph", that Emile Berliner saw the dog Nipper picture in London and on his return to the United States took out a copyright for it. This was in July 1900. Prior to this, he claimed Berliner was still producing the etched label like we illustrated last issue. So where does this label fit in, or was it produced for the American market only? The reverse side, along with its ten inch diameter, is the same as No.1.

NO.3 GRAMOPHONE CONCERT RECORD

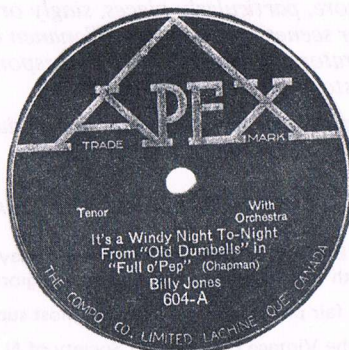
This appears to us to be the record of change. The label is black, except for the picture of the dog and machine, which is nicely coloured. The record is also like Nos. 1 and 2; single sided but has the trade mark, (Angel with a quill), in the centre on the reverse side.

NO.4 "HIS MASTERS VOICE"

This record is almost the same as No.3 except for a few changes; the major one being the change from GRAMOPHONE CONCERT RECORD to HIS MASTERS VOICE RECORD. This record is also single side like No.3 and the reverse side is also the same.

ADVERTISEMENT

For exchange, Pathe three inch slip on mandrels, made to slip on standard size cylinder mandrel. Help wanted: Could anyone supply photograph or copy of Marathon Disc Gramophone. Wanted also, motor turn-table and tone arm for the same. W.T.Norris, Swannanoa, Rangiora R.D.1 New Zealand.



CONNECTED TO
"THE GEMNET RECORD CO".

PIXIE GRIPPA PORTABLE



NO.1



NO.2



NO.3



NO.4

FROM ONE TRADE MARK TO ANOTHER

ADVERTISEMENT

I have for some years collected old sheet music, both for itself and its covers, and would like to purchase more, particularly pieces, singly or bound in albums, with coloured lithograph pictures of singers or scenes signed 'Alfred Conanen del', 'J' Brandard', 'Rd. Childs' or 'H.G. Banks', to name a few illustrators. I would like to correspond with any other enthusiasts. Gavin East, 60 Garreg Road, Christchurch 5, New Zealand.

Wanted to purchase an Edison Opera or Triumph, please write J.D. Warren 6c Paris Court, Realty Gardens, 41 Conduit Road, HONG KONG.

A DAY AT A COUNTRY FAIR

J.L. MARSHALL

On Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th March a two day Vintage Fair was staged by the Southbrook Steam Club combined with the Ashgrove School from Rangiora and held on farm property at Southbrook.

This two day fair proved to be one of the most successful to be held for some years.

Members of the Vintage Phonograph Society of N.Z. (Inc.) staged a very comprehensive display of Phonographs, Gramophones both horn and cabinet style, paper rolled organ, music box, and other interesting machines.

Throughout the two days, steady streams of people young and old alike visited our display. Many children were fascinated by the cylinder record, and music coming out of a paper roll organ and music box.

Our public relations ranked high during this two day Fair. To those who so willingly assisted me or loaned machines I say thank you. To those who were unable to attend: well I say you missed a good day out. Perhaps we will see you next time.

Other items of interest included traction engine display, chaff cutting, threshing, aerobatic display, hay rides behind miniature traction engine, pipe and brass band display, wood chopping, stationary exhibits of many kinds all of interest. An open air harvest festival Church service provided an outdoor scene never before experienced at a rally of this type. Marching teams provided an excellent display to the live music of the Rangiora Brass Band.

FEBRUARY MEETING REPORT

G.B. EAST 5.3.75

Rod Cornelius spoke at length on his collecting interests, in particular the machines and records of the graphophone company and its relations, in which field he is an acknowledged authority. Illustrative material included a bell and tainter cylinder of C.1889 and numerous photographs of the Cornelius collection. On his graphophone 'BKT' (One of the Company's 'Tone-Arm' Machines) Rod played a selection of two-minute cylinders of various makes, including the Edison 'Advertising Record', William Howard Taft on 'Irish Humor' (Edison 9997?) There were also a very forward international indestructible band recording of 'Stars and Stripes Forever' and a delightful early home recording of unusually high technical quality.

Being involved in television at a time of major changes, our speaker (a foundation member of the society) has very little spare time. Even without this consideration, however, any sense of ill-preparedness was more than amply compensated for by his pervading warmth and sincerity.

MARCH MEETING REPORT

G.B. EAST

Mr Bernie Bisphan spoke on old radio testing equipment as one facet of radio collecting, illustrating his remarks with pieces, including a 'Sparton' dealer's testing kit of c.1934. Mr Bisphan, as many will recall, contributed to the 1971 Christchurch Convention. I was unable to hear him on that occasion due to the necessity of attending a record session at the memory of which I shudder yet.

His accomplished delivery and wide knowledge of his subject made for an interesting discourse, even though some technical points escaped your correspondent. Mr Bisphan pointed to availability of material as a major factor in increasing interest in old radios. While this can be qualified (in my experience a horn-speaker radio is considerably harder to find than a run-of-the-mill Edison phonograph) it must be admitted that an affinity for Atwater-Kents is liable to be less painful to the purse than a longing for Liorets or a craving for Concerts.

VALE VOCALION by J.Whitley Stokes

Further to C.Long's article on Australian Vocalion, I have since dug up something on the history of the English parent company. Mr Long's comments that Vocalion (Foreign) Ltd. was in extreme financial difficulties in 1931 is confirmed by the following information taken from the English trade publication Wireless & Gramophone Trader for Nov. 2, 1929.

It is stated that for the first six months of that year Vocalion Foreign Ltd. incurred a loss of sixteen thousand, six hundred and twenty-four pounds of which eleven thousand, one hundred and ninety-one pounds was in its Australian operations. From the wording of this I infer that Vocalion (Foreign) Ltd. encompassed all Vocalion's overseas interests and not just the Australian branch.

Information is also given that at this same time Vocalion, apparently undeterred by these losses, launched out into European arrangements with the following firms in which it held a controlling interest:

Orchestrola-Vocalion (Germany)
S.A. des Disques Broadcast (France)
Vocalion Chantal S.A. (Belgium)

At the same time a new label was introduced into the home market, Broadcast-International which, judging from the name of the artists appearing thereon, seems to have been one outcome of the continental venture. In 1932 the Vocalion Gramophone Co.Ltd. was still in business with the address given as Holland Park Ave., London, W11, though whether under the original ownership is not known. By then it appears that only the BROADCAST label was being issued. Two sizes were listed, Broadcast Super Twelve, 10" Red Label and Broadcast Nine (not to be confused with the earlier 8"). These retailed at 1/6 and 1/- respectively.

The last reference I have to the Broadcast label is in a 1935 trade annual which lists Imperial-Broadcast as being made by the Crystalate Gramophone Record Mfg.Co.Ltd., City Road, London, E.C.1.

So, although I'm not yet prepared to eat my words regarding Vocalion's being taken over by H.M.V., it is beginning to look as though I may soon have to. Meanwhile perhaps some one will be able to write the last lines of the final chapter.

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

Edited by ADAIR OTLEY.

(PART 8 — Technical Quality and the Birth of the "Pool" system)

At this point however, it should be mentioned in fairness that the Gennett Company never hesitated to make a large capital outlay to save a recurring expense; an instance of this policy was found at the Birmingham, Alabama studio.

While the Acoustic Process of recording remained in use, the painoforte showroom situated in the Company's New York premises made a very satisfactory recording studio; but with the advent of the electrical recording, however, it was found that the acoustics of this studio, constructed rather long with a low ceiling, were quite unsuitable. The Company eventually built a new and up-to-date studio at Woodside, Long Island N.Y., after an unsuccessful attempt to locate a ready-made studio for their requirements. Business was far from flourishing at this time — (as will be seen and noted in a later part of this story).

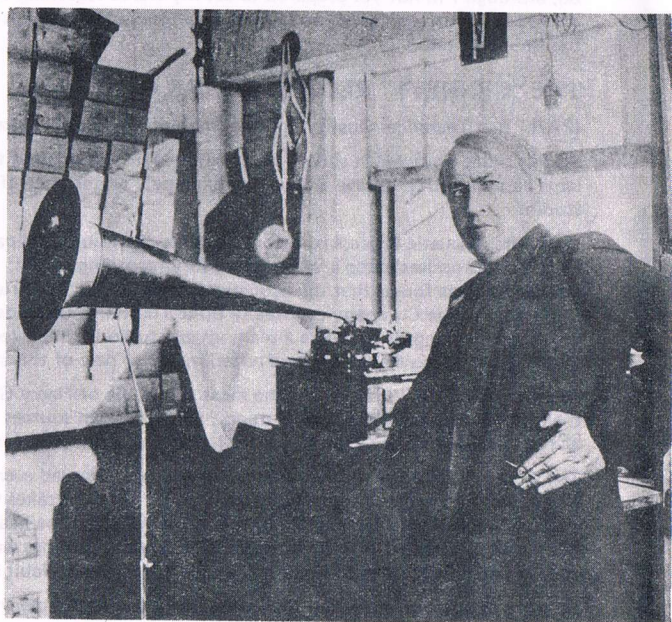
Possibly the "Pool" system was the most profitable of Harry Gennett's brain-children; the entire system bears the impression of his economical mind. When foreign sources would not supply more than a small proportion of the missing 25% of Gennett material — the bulk of it was found from the "Pool".

The system began like this:- No Recording Co. ever issued every 'Master' it made; a certain percentage was always rejected on grounds ranging from performers' mistakes to unsuitability of material. Now these rejected 'Masters' represented a complete loss, chargeable under the heading of "experience" to overhead expenses, and it was suggested that half of the average Company's recordings were rejected in this way; but this was possible unduly pessimistic as most English Companies seemed to fault a quarter, or even less.

Such items obviously worried the frugal Harry Gennett, however, eventually a great light began to dawn.....

Many of those 'Masters' he rejected would be quite good enough for companies of different standards, who, in turn, must be — and in fact were — rejecting many 'Masters' well suited to his requirements.

VOCALION



Therefore, why not have a system of exchanges? The idea then was subsequently considered, and so the "Pool" system was born; with a simple form of operation — put one, take one: come one, come all. The system was later even recognised by the great Columbia Corporation — e.g. they dropped into the Pool the rejected Handy Orchestra (in existence at this time) with their performances of: *AUNT HAGAR'S BLUES* and *MUSCLE SHOAL BLUES* — (issued on Paramount—20112; Puritan—11112; and Banner—1053) — and it would have been interesting to learn what they drew in return! To smaller Organizations, the object of the Pool was the answer to an auditor's prayer, and therefore participated with enthusiasm. Among the larger Company concerns were those of Paramount, Grey Gull, American Edison and Banner; the latter being the least wholehearted about participation — but together — the four Companies controlled a still undetermined number of labels.

Probably American Columbia did not participate after the 1920 period, but at any time after 1922 the Company was indeed very conscious of its status as one of the big-time manufacturers. The presence at that time of the General Phonographic Corporation of Chicago, may be something of a surprise, but this concern seems to have contributed to the Pool, until acquired by Columbia in 1925.

Research has brought to light material formerly recorded by Gennett and Okeh— appearing back to back on (Canadian) Apex records. Recorded material on Okeh has also appeared on Phonola, which may, perhaps, prove to have been 'outside' the Pool — as the Issue numbers were found to be identical with the original Okeh numbers. Further research will no doubt add many South American, Canadian, Australian and Continental labels to the list.

Now these groups required detailed inspection for complete understanding of the functioning of the scheme; as the Pool soon developed far beyond the original conception of a medium for the exchange of rejected 'Masters'.

(Part 9 - Next Issue)

RECORD LISTENING POST — NO.11

by Barry Sheppard

The opening Review in this issue comes from REED RECORDS — and the first in a bracket of four is a double-pressing entitled "Song of a Young Country" (KIWI—SLC—101/2).

This Album takes the listener back to the days of the Gold Digger, and in each song the artist gives a true account of some of the early history of New Zealand. Most of the instrumental sounds heard on these records derive from American Instrumental techniques, propagated during the recent Folkmusic Revival; so I think for those people who follow the early Folkmusic this Album would be well worth buying. Some of the Artists who feature are:- Phil Garland — Barbie and Neil Colquhoun — Dave Calder — Bill Taylor — and Bruce Hall; all of which are well known among Folkmusic.

From the early days of New Zealand we now turn to a modern stage performance by the MANA ARTS FESTIVAL, with highlights from their production of: "Saultalk" (KIWI — SLC — 133).

Recently, "Saultalk" was staged in Christchurch during the Arts Festival and proved to be one of the most popular shows to be staged. Upon listening to this recording, I found most tracks to be bright and gay, but I do think you might need to hear it more than once to really enjoy the modern staging of this fine performance.

The third Album in this bracket if of very good quality, but would possibly have a limited interest. The title is "Easter", and is once again on the KIWI label (SLD—22).

The record demonstrates the music of the New Liturgy for Holy Week to Choirs and Congregations, to assist in making the events of this Week a truly living experience. Directed by Douglas Mews, who is also the Organist.

Soloists: — Helen Bennington — Peter Evans — and Maurice Larsen, with the Choir of St.Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland.

Now the final in this Issue from REED RECORDS is a singer whom I have previously reviewed in an earlier Listening Post, *Kiri Te Kanawa*. In this Issue we are reviewing the Album entitled "Kiri in Concert" (KIWI—LC—34), containing items which were recorded in Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and Melbourne. Some of the numbers, which are a delight to hear, are:- *The Wedding/Show Me (from "My Fair Lady")* | *The Lord's Prayer/ One Fine Day (from "Madam Butterfly")* | *Ave Maria/ and Now is the Hour*. This Album has been designed to record some highlights in the triumphal progress of a young New Zealand singer in the space of a few months; from the time she won a National Song Contest until her departure — to study, gain experience and to win fresh laurels overseas.

This Album is of high recording quality and should please even the youngest listener who likes good music.

Recently PYE Records have released a fabulous collection of memorable song hits on four double-albums that cover the years from 1930-1960. These Albums go under the title of "*The Decade of The.....*" – and each number is presented by the original Artist. Those featured in the lineup are:– *Tony Martin/ Tommy Dorsey/ Art Mooney/ Sons of The Pioneers/ Perry Como/ Glen Miller/ Spike Jones/ Vaughn Monroe/ The Browns/ Kay Starr/ Carol Channing/ Connie Smith* and a host of others; far too many to mention here. They are all heard on 80 tracks – covering the four Albums, and, thanks to the Recording (Back-Room) Boys, are of high quality.

This mammoth selection should be a welcome addition to the Vintage Record Collector, and by the way, the Albums can be purchased separately. (R.C.A. VPM–6058/61) are the Catalogue Numbers.

The last group of recordings for this Issue come also from the PYE Warehouse and once again a bracket of four, but this time all under title of, and presented by, the one and only GLEN MILLER. The title of the Four Volumes is "*The Legendary Glen Miller*". As may be expected, these four 'single' pressings cover a very wide range from Miller's well known numbers like *In the Mood and Little Brown Jug*, to some of his lesser known numbers. For the Glen Miller fans (of which I'm sure there are many) I think this big release from PYE is a real must! Each track is carefully re-recorded from the 'old master', giving these Albums a bright new look; but still presented by the Original Band.

Again, if you wish, you can purchase these Albums separately, the Catalogue Numbers being (R.C.A. LFMI-7500/3)

A LETTER FROM HARRY ...

31 March 1975 (Easter Monday)

Hey, Bill, I'm typing this on the last day of March, but I'll be posting it tomorrow, on All Fools' Day.

When last I heard from you, it was by letter written on 7th Feb., and in it you said that your hand were "itching to get hold of the few parts" which I still need to complete the "Triumph Model F" which was entrusted to me nearly to years ago. Also, you said that you were "waiting for the other parts to be finished plating."

Now, Bill, you must rise from your sitting position and go to whoever is holding those parts and claim them (polished or not, plated or not) and send them up to me pronto. They are (a) a back-bracket (b) a cygnet-to-bell connector and (c) a horn adjustment fitting spring.

Do it straightaway, Bill. Don't put it off until tomorrow. You know as well as I do that tomorrow never comes.

If buffing or polishing or plating have not yet been done, that won't matter in the least. I can finish all that sort of work up here. You sent up bell and cygnet (in fibreglass) "in the rough" and gave me a far bigger job than the small still-missing parts can possibly give me. Did I grumble? Of course I did not.

Have I ever kept you waiting for money, Bill? Of course I have not. I pay all just and proper claims instantly, for I try to behave towards others as I would wish others to behave towards me.

Yet you are preventing me from obtaining a refund of my expenses to date on this little reconditioning job. Without adding it all up, I must have spent so far (in recoverable costs) about \$60. Of course I'll get my money back, but only when the whole job is finished. I'll get repayment, but in depreciated dollars, and such dollars are continuing to depreciate all the time I'm being held up.

You must "Come Alive", Bill, as the slogan tells us. Then your hands will cease to itch, and perhaps your ears will cease to burn. Any well-brought-up little girl will tell you what it means when your ears burn.

Harry.