



The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 1 & 2

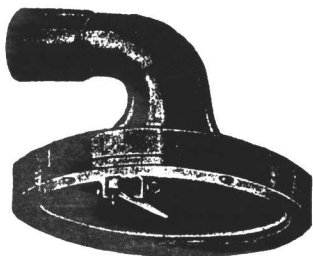
OCTOBER/DECEMBER 1987

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

We are fast approaching the end of 1987, so this edition of the Phonographic Record will be the final one for this year.

Thanks to the interested members who read in our last Issue, our request for material and who have provided enough to help us considerably with the magazine and the next.

Ferrymead:

After having sold the bulk of our collection to members, we are now ready to move the remainder out of the Church and hope to do so before Christmas. Ferrymead Trust have provided us with a room next to the Dini collection near the Administration building.

The Church in the Village will now be used for weddings.

N.Z. Dollar:

Since the fall in share prices the value of the N.Z. Dollar has also fallen and when I last quoted was 59 cents to the U.S. dollar. This will assist overseas members when purchasing "Parts" from me.

Election of Officers:

Our Annual General Meeting was held in September and was well attended.

The executive was re-elected with the addition of one member.

Patron: Barbara Dini.

President: Gavin East.

Secretary: Lindsey Drummond.

Treasurer: Gavin East.

Committee: Dick Hills, Joffre Marshall, Walter and Hilda Norris, Robert Sleeman, Barry Sheppard and Bob Wright.

ILLUSTRATIONS

In addition to pictures linked with articles we are pleased to include some machines in various collections.

Mr and Mrs A. Hibsich of the U.S.A. have kindly sent shots of their Victor VI and Columbia AH disc machines. We know that the Victor VI is much sought-after as the top machine in its range. We guess it's equivalent in New Zealand would be the HMV Melba. The Columbia AH with its large nickelled horn would be more likely to turn up here but would still be rare.

Dick Hills of Christchurch is the lucky owner of the Orthophonic Victrola shown. This is the only such Victrola any of us here have ever seen and it is just about the most impressive cabinet model machine we know. It belonged to Dick's father but its early history is unknown. It may have been sold new here, privately imported or bought in the U.S.A. by a travelling New Zealander. Quite a few interesting pianos came here by the last-mentioned means.

Unfortunately the original gold-coloured reproducer was removed from the machine just before Dick acquired it. He would dearly like to obtain a suitable replacement.

Dick is retiring the Rexophone horn gramophone also shown. This is an attractive European machine of about 1912. When found it lacked the original motor, turntable and reproducer. It has proved hard to find parts to fit, let alone original Rexophone parts. Dick would appreciate any help or advice from a collector familiar with this type of machine.

The Brunswick Panatropé belongs to Gavin East and is an appealing small cabinet model. As may be seen its reproducer seems to be facing the wrong way (diaphragm facing left) but this is actually a convenient arrangement. The Brunswick has an oval wooden horn similar in shape to that of an Edison diamond disc machine and plays very well. It is not too common since it had to compete against the Orthophone Victrola and the first radio-phonographs in the U.S.A.

COLUMBIA SERIES

No. 13

Model Q

1898-1903



Photo

L. Schlick

Later version on Chicago Talking Machine Co. base



Brunswick Panatrope, c. 1927 (G. East collection)

Photos R. Wright

COLUMBIA SERIES MODEL Q

No. 13

1898-1903

The various forms of this model are confusing. It seems that the basic Q machine introduced in 1898 for US\$5.00 had a pressed-steel nickel-plated base, a black funnel horn similar to that of the Edison Gema and a governor mounted on the base plate. Hazelcorn reports serial numbers in the 300,000 and 600,000 ranges, the numbers being stamped into the edge of the base.

These early Q machines had a solid winding key and a distinctive aluminium reproducer with a slanting outlet not used on any other model.

The second series of the Q dates from 1903. These later models had a cast iron base enamelled in black with gold lines, a cast and pierced key and a governor mounted on the motor plate.

The Q was given additional letters when fitted with various improvements. The best-known "de luxe" version was probably the QQ or Mignon which had an oak baseboard under the metal, a curved cover and a nickel-plated horn. Hazelcorn implies that the options did not become available until the advent of the second series in 1903.

The second series seems to have started at 800,000 and gone to just over 1,000,000. Serial numbers were stamped into the top edge of the motor frame. The reproducer was the model D, larger and with a knurled end.

The basic Q is such a tiny machine that collectors finding it have been known to think it must be incomplete. With its straight sound outlet it is actually a highly practical machine. It is occasionally found in Christchurch (one a few months ago) but would have to be classed as rare in comparison to the Edison Gem.

MARKET REPORT By Gavin East

An Edison Disc Phonograph A-100 (Moderne) and about 130 diamond discs sold for \$340 at an antique auction at Kaiapoi recently. This model is scarcer than many other diamond disc floor models and was a good buy especially with the records included. These were nearly all black-centre discs in their original covers and in good clean condition. Those Edison covers are not pleasant to handle when, as often, they are grubby and gritty. Unfortunately not every cover contained its original record, as I discovered on opening what was **supposed** to be 'Voi che sapete' sung by Lucrezia Bori.

A tally of the diamond disc machines that have turned up in or near Christchurch over the last 20 years may interest readers. I can call to mind, in order of Frow's book:

- 1) B-80-5 (4 mahogany, 1 oak).
- 2) A-85-5
- 3) A-100-2 (1 cut down to a table model) and 1 empty case.
- 4) C-200 (Adam) - 1.
- 5) A-250 (Modern Renaissance) - 1.
- 6) C-250 (Chippendale) - 2.
- 7) A-290 (Sheraton, marquetry inlay) - 1.
- 8) B-19 (Chalet) - 1.
- 9) C-19 (Chippendale) - about 20 (2 mahogany, rest oak).
- 10) H-19 (Hepplewhite) - 4.
- 11) IU-19 (Italian Umbrian) - 2 in original state, 1 converted to 78 and 2 empty cases.
- 12) S-19 (Sheraton, Sans Inlay) - 2.
- 13) W-19 (William and Mary) - 1.
- 14) L-35 (London table model) - 4.
- 15) LU-37 (London Upright) - 5.
- 16) LC-38 (London Console) - 3.
- 17) Edisonic - 2 (models unknown to me).

COLUMBIA SERIES No. 13

Model Q

1898-1903

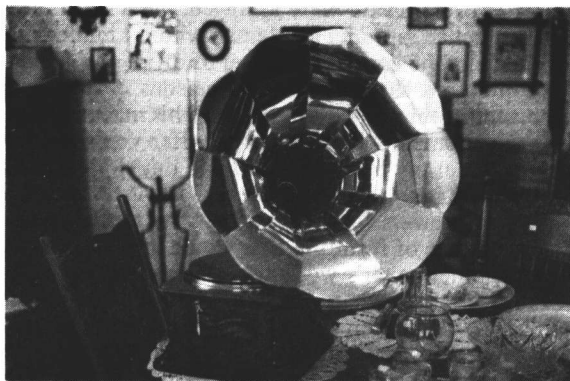


Basic version (pressed steel base)

Photos L. Schlick



Victor VI (A. Hibsich collection)



Columbia AH (A. Hibsich collection)

This is compiled from memory and no doubt fails to include every machine I have seen or heard of. I grew used to calling the Chippendale upright the C-250 until I looked at the plates on local ones and found that almost all were actually C-19.

A local dealer has an HMV horn machine with a mahogany case and tin horn for around \$800. It is a Doric of c.1908 and rather attractive but no great bargain as it has a few problems — wrong soundbox, horn in need of repainting etc.

The following extract comes from **Kaipara, or, Experiences of a settler in north New Zealand**, by P. W. Barlow (2nd ed., 1889) and gives some idea of the auction scene in this country a century ago.

A SALE BY AUCTION

It does not often fall to my lot to do shopping — one reason being that my wife is fond of doing it herself, and another that I detest the occupation. It happened, however, a few mornings after our Mount Eden trip, that some mutton chops were required, and as I was going into the town, my wife asked me to purchase three or four. To avoid the possibility of forgetting my commission, I headed straight for the flashiest-looking butcher's shop in Queen Street, gave my order, and on receiving the chops handed half-a-crown to the shopman, who to my intense surprised returned me a two-shilling piece.

Four fine mutton chops for sixpence! Digest this information, my home readers, and then come out here if you like, and digest the three-halfpenny chops — they are every bit as good as English ones, and one-fifth of the money.

Strolling down Queen Street with my purchases done up in a neat parcel, I was nearly knocked over by a man who suddenly rushed out of a doorway with a gigantic bell in his hand, which he commenced ringing violently. "What is the matter now?" thought I. "Can this be an opposition form of religion to the Salvation Army, in which the bell takes the place of the drum?" Determining to fathom the mystery of the man with the bell, I stationed myself as near to him as possible without running a risk of being rendered deaf for life, and watched events. Nobody appeared to take much notice of the performance, but I saw people from time to time entering the doorway from which the bellringer had emerged. "No doubt," I thought, "some kind of service is about to be held;" and I determined when the bell stopped to form one of the congregation. People were now flocking in pretty fast, and the bellman showed symptoms of fatigue, though he stuck to his work with all the ardour of a religious fanatic. At last the bell conquered the man, and entering the doorway I found myself in a large and rather dark room, along one side of which all sort of articles of furniture were arranged. On a small raised platform with a rail in front, to which a desk was attached, stood a gentleman whom I immediately saw was not a parson, but an auctioneer, for in his hand he carried his baton of office — a small ivory hammer. Round him were crowded about one hundred shabbily dressed persons, a large proportion of whom were Jews. Just as I entered the auctioneer rapped sharply with his mallet on the desk in front of him and spoke as follows;—

"Gentlemen, I have today to offer you some of the choicest articles of furniture that have ever come under my hammer, and I will but express the hope that you have brought with you plenty of money to buy with, and plenty of pluck to bid with, and proceed to business. Jim, move that chest of drawers forward, so that the gentlemen can see it. There, gentlemen, what do you say to that? A pice of furniture that would give a distinguished appearance to the meanest bedchamber — best cabinetmaker's work too. She we say five pounds for the chest of drawers? What, no bidders? Well, start it at what you like — say ten shillings for this magnificent piece of furniture — twelve shillings — fourteen shillings — one pound bid in two places — this remarkably handsome specimen of cabinetmaker's work going for one pound — twenty-five shillings bid," &c. &c., until it was finally knocked down for fifty shillings. The next thing disposed of was a clock, and then a sewing-machine was put up, which was just the thing I knew my wife wanted.

"Gentlemen," said the auctioneer, "the sewing-machine I now have to offer to you is the property of a widow lady in distressed circumstances. I will with your permission read a letter I received from her at the time the machine was forwarded to me, and I am confident that you will

sympathise with this poor bereaved lady, who has not only had the misfortune to lose her husband, but is now, alas! about to lose her sewing-machine!" He then read the letter, the contents of which I have forgotten, though I recollect it stated that the machine was a "Wheeler and Wilson" in good order.

"Gentlemen," continued the auctioneer, "I am sure the letter I have just read must have excited feelings of compassion in each manly breast. Show it by bidding freely for the widow — or rather, I mean for the widow's sewing-machine. Shall we start it at a pound? What! no bid at a pound? Where are your bowels of compassion, gentlemen? Well, say ten shillings — ten shillings for a 'Wheeler and Wilson' sewing-machine — fifteen shillings for this splendid piece of mechanism — sixteen shillings offered — sixteen shillings for a beautiful widow's sewing-machine — seventeen shillings offered — eighteen shillings in two places for the widow — nineteen shillings — in perfect working order — one pound offered for this beautiful machine of a lone widow in good working order — one pound two and six offered — any advance on one pound two and six?"

"One pound five!" I shouted; and the second after down came the hammer, and the machine was my property. It was moved away by Jim into a little sideroom, and the auctioneer took down my name.

I went to inspect my purchase, and to my disgust found it would not move, and also discovered it was not a "Wheeler and Wilson" at all. Catching sight of Jim, who was no other than the performer on the bell, I said — "Look here, my man, this is not a 'Wheeler and Wilson' machine at all, and it is all rusty and won't work!"

"Can't help it, sir," replied Jim. "When you buys at auctions, you buys for weal or woe!"

"Oh! the wheel's right enough, and there is no question about the whoa," I sarcastically remarked, "for it won't move an inch; but I will not pay for it; it's not a 'Wheeler and Wilson,' as the auctioneer stated!" and in a state of righteous indignation I strode out of the place, leaving my chops unwittingly behind me.

There are eight or nine of these rooms, or marts, in Queen Street, and the system of selling all sorts of things daily by auction gives a sort of Cheap Jack air to the thoroughfare. Surely, if this method of disposing of goods of all descriptions is necessary to the happiness of the good citizens of Auckland, some side street might be selected in which the business could be carried on, and the peace and dignity of the principal thoroughfare in the city left undisturbed.

EDISON HALL R. Sleeman

Passing through central Christchurch the other day I found myself in Tuam Street looking up at the building known as Edison Hall. I had often passed this building and had known of its existence since becoming interested in phonographs, but had never bothered to find out much about it. Determined to investigate further I went home and rang the present occupiers for an appointment to look around the place on the following Monday.

On looking up some old Edison musical monthly magazines of the mid 20's I discovered some fascinating pictures of the building. Apparently the building was begun in early 1925 and completed about June of that year. It was built to replace the existing building in High Street just around the corner. It seems that Christchurch was the main distributor for Edison equipment and the building was commissioned with all the requirements for demonstration and distribution including an acoustically designed room for their customers.

Armed with this information I eagerly looked forward to my forthcoming visit with visions of gracefully arched ceilings and phantoms of the opera (or concert) dancing in my head. Who knows what might be lurking behind those doors hidden for goodness knows how many years behind that curved facade. Fantastic visions of locked rooms or barred attics opening to reveal through a tangle of cobwebs long forgotten dusty crates labelled "Edison Hall, Tuam Street, Christchurch, one Edison Idelia complete instructions enclosed", or to find shelves lined with Royal Purples and little boxes labelled "Edison recording head" or "Reproducer". Oh what dreams are made of. Monday morning dawned bright and fine and armed with my camera I set forth on my voyage

of discovery.

Edison Hall is actually not a very imposing building and has changed little since it was built. At 62 years old she is starting to show her age although the front facade is still presentable enough. As you can see in the illustrations it has changed little over the years apart from the entranceway which was moved to the right of the building sometime in the early 70's. It still retains the curved topped windows and the wording across the top. I wonder if this is the only such building left in Australasia. A few photos of other buildings in the next magazine would certainly be interesting. How about it you others out there? Anyway the building is basically a red brick structure facing north. The west wall is now exposed as its neighbour was demolished a few years ago and the site is presently used as a car park. The Edison building is now used as a chemist's supply warehouse.

The first thing that struck me on entering the building was the low ceiling and modernity of the interior. I suppose I half expected the same view as I had seen in the 1925 picture which shows a narrow tall room, but in actuality the building's ground floor has been gutted and relined to make a large bright single workroom perhaps 20' x 60' with a shop counter and offices screened off to the side. The ceiling was apparently lowered 10 years ago when the Post Office used it as a temporary home before moving across the road. The extremely helpful staff showed me through the building. One of them remembered it in use as a child. At the back of the ground floor room a door leads to a rather gloomy yard surrounded by red brick walls on 3 sides and a narrow entrance way. The only illuminating feature in terms of past use is 10 feet up where a gantry and door showed where goods had been loaded and unloaded into the first (top) floor of the building after their trip from the port of Lyttleton 10 miles away. Could this be what I was looking for? Could this be the gateway to Eldorado? The promise of things that might be led me to the stairway which gave me further encouragement. This part of the building had not changed in 60 years, the kauri stairway polished by the hands of music lovers of the 20's led upwards as it turned on itself to the closed door of the first floor. Alas things were not to be. Necessity had taken its toll up here as well. A large store room confronted me with an assortment of boxes and packing materials and without a window save the front ones looking just as they would have in the 1920's and early 30's when the radio station 3ZC complete with its tall tower standing above it on the roof made it a landmark on the Christchurch skyline.

One intriguing fact did emerge, a fact which the old lady may not reveal until the demolition team does its work (not for many years I hasten to hopefully add) is this. As I was leaving I noticed a hole cut in the floor for hoisting goods up and down from the ground floor below and on inspection I found that a false ceiling existed between floors with a depth of about 4' or so. I can only assume that the original Edison Hall demonstration room ceiling on the ground floor could be intact under this false ceiling which was added in the interests of heating and modernity.

So all my hopes if I realistically had any were dashed by the cold truth of progress but I still like to think the old place has at least one more secret. Say, I wonder if there was a cellar to the old place, I never thought of it at the time!! Could be full of, of — well never mind, perhaps as I say when the old place finally goes it will reveal its last secrets but until then, well that's what dreams are made of.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

25 October 1987

Dear Walter,

I noted the comment regarding the Kingston home recorder in the last magazine, and as I have both a Kingston aluminium blank and a "Speakease" Home recording outfit, I hope you might be able to use my comments as an article in the next magazine.

The aluminium blank labelled "Kingston's Wearite Recorders" is 6 inches across and is very thin. I rather imagine that the three holes around the centre are some sort of device to hold the disc firm when recording — perhaps on a clamp which fitted to the turntable. I have a number of aluminium blanks apart from the "Pathe" blank which is used with the Orotone Edison home re-

cording system — the Orotone was reviewed in the December 1970 issue of our magazine. One of these is the "Recordavox", which has been used, and part of the message is "Don't you think this is a wonderful idea of Selfridge's for broadcasting on the cheap — 10,000 miles away too! So much more reasonable in price than radiotelephone." The packet contains the instructions for replaying, as I hope can be seen from the illustration.

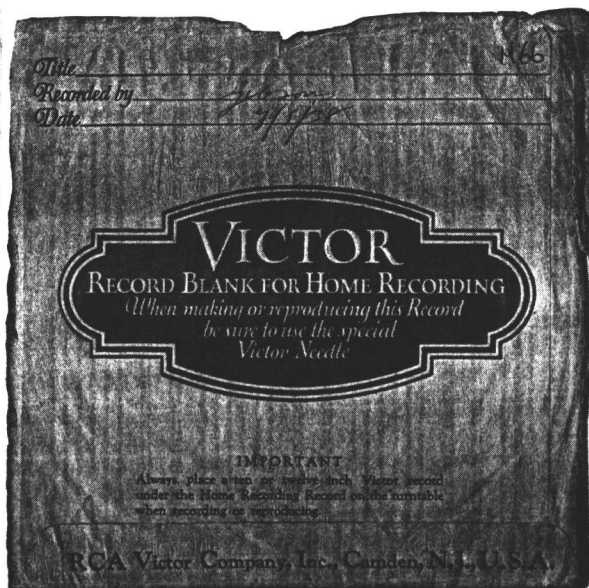
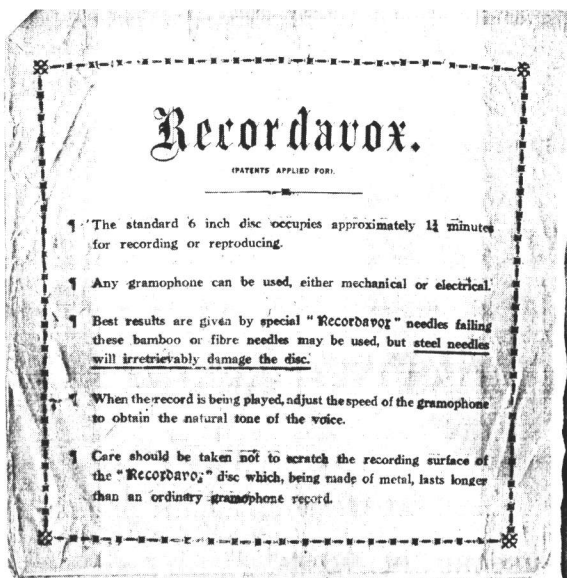
Another interesting item is the Victor record blank for home recording, containing the **VINYL** 6" disc illustrated. Although the disc title is not the same on both the cover and the disc, clearly these discs were being used in 1938 and 1939. It is recorded on both sides and in fact is very much like a "45" rpm record of more modern date.

Readers interested further in articles on home recording should refer to the December 1970 issue mentioned above, also the two subsequent issues for more on "Orotone", and mention of "Kodisk". There is an illustration of the Kingston home recorder in the June 1972 issue. If you have access to "The Hillandale News", the journal of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society, the front cover shows a "FAY" home recorder of about 1935, on the Feb 1974 issue.

The "Speakeasie" in my possession consists unfortunately of an incomplete unit, just the recording soundbox, which is much like a normal soundbox save that the attachment to the tone-arm is by way of an adjustable clamp, and on the outside of the unit is an elbow to take the recording horn. It is of English manufacture, painted red which appears to be original. Looking more closely at the unit it is clear that it cannot be used for replaying, unlike the Orotone. I enclose a photograph.

My kindest regards to all.

Roger Cole.





"MEMORIES OF A RECORD COLLECTOR"

Many people in many different walks of life start collecting all sorts of things, from stamps to rare paintings, to records to unusual bottles, and from postcards to all sorts of pictures and other fascinating objects. Cigarette cards, books on many subjects, and thousands of other items can be found in practically any home, all to be treasured and fondly looked upon as an era of years gone by.

In my case, like many others, it was the old 78 speed records which "got into my blood" at the very early age of eight years. It started innocently enough when a workmate of my father's

owed my Dad some money, I think it was five pounds, a lot of money in those days. Unable to pay his debt, he gave my father a beautiful La Gloria wind-up gramophone with about a dozen records. From that day, the rot set in to my young childhood, and I was fascinated by the gramophone, the records, and everything pertaining to it, until I finally started doing all sorts of odd jobs so that I could earn money to buy more records.

I soon found that there were treasure troves in all the second-hand shops, which were everywhere in those days. I haunted these shops, probably becoming the biggest pest they had, in my constant search for the 78 rpm records, of which there were literally thousands to be had. As my father was particularly fond of band records and marches, I must have bought every one I could find, including the old H.M.V. treasures by Sousa's Band, the Grenadier Guards Band on Columbia, and eventually the big selling Grand Massed Brass Bands on the Regal-Zonophone label, some of which still turn up to this day. However, all that changed, when I bought a record entitled "Vienna by Night" by Marek Weber's Orchestra on a 12 inch H.M.V. This record captivated me and started me on "the road to ruin". I tracked down all the Marek Weber records I could lay my hands on, literally hundreds of them, and my new love of Viennese music soon led me to groups such as Dajos Bela, with his famous version of "Electric Girl" on Parlophone, to the Orchestra Mascotte, Edith Lorand and the many other great Viennese orchestras of that time. Then vocal records took over, from Peter Dawson through to Webster Booth, the Light Opera Company on H.M.V., not to mention Tauber, Jan Kiepura, Richard Crooks, and on the lighter side, such fine performers as Jack and Jill, Leslie Sarony, Jack Daly, and the ever popular Street Singer, Arthur Tracy, through to Carson Robison, the Hill Billies, and then into dance bands and comedy sketches. I think my first comedy record was Will Evans' "Building a Chicken House", and another comedian who always turned up trumps was Norman Long. Among the popular vocalists, I must surely rank Turner Layton as my top favourite, with Sam Browne and Al Bowly not too far behind. And where has all this led you may ask? At the moment my collection numbers well over 40,000 discs, and is the cause of letters and 'phone calls from around the country from people wanting copies transferred on to tape, a job which gives me untold pleasure, as it gives me the chance to hear long-forgotten songs and selections all over again.

I still haunt the ever decreasing number of second-hand shops, but alas, like everything else these days, the good records are becoming harder to find, and when they do turn up they are either worn to a frazzle, or on the verge of becoming handy as a flower pot! It is amazing how the same discs turn up all the time. One can buy dozens of copies of "A Gay Caballero" by Frank Crumit, countless copies of the 12 inch Zonophone waltzes by the International Concert Orchestra, but try and find some obscure item that you want badly, and the answer is "no way"! Thousands of records ended up on the local tip when T.V. took over, and the Broadcasting authorities had more thousands destroyed to make room for the long playing record. I could tell some harrowing tales on this subject, such as the day some years ago when Station 1.Y.A. here in Auckland loaded up two huge trucks with 78's and had them taken to the tip where they were well and truly buried. No amount of pleading was able to save any of them, and now the wheel has turned full circle, and they sorely regret such stupidity so like everything else, record collecting is probably something that will never end, and to all those "nuts" like myself who find it such a fascinating hobby, I only hope your "junk-shopping" days are still as eagerly looked forward to as mine are!

Trevor J. Skelton,
43 West End Road,
Herne Bay — Auckland.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1987

I would like to consider positive and negative aspects of the Society's existence in the past year.

On the positive side we have continued to supply parts, produce a well-received magazine and hold regular members' meetings. Our financial position is unprecedentedly sound. By agreeing to

COLUMBIA SERIES No. 13

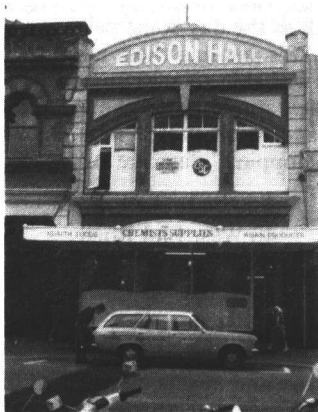
Model Q

1898-1903



Photos L. Schlick

Later version (cast enamelled base)



Edison Hall, Christchurch today

Photos R. Sleeman

move from the church at Ferrymead into smaller premises we have shown that we are capable of recognising the need for change and taking appropriate action. Time will tell how we go at Ferrymead. The dispersal of surplus machines etc. among members has dramatically increased our bank balance but of course this is not an end in itself but a means with which to benefit members.

This brings us to the question which has been overlooked for many years as the Society gained a momentum of its own and came to be seen by many as a self-justifying institution. What should the Society be doing to further "the preservation of recorded sound"? It should be a means for collectors to meet, a source of information and parts better than that which individuals could achieve. I hesitate to describe the Vintage Phonograph Society as a microcosm of the state but it seems to me that the same truths apply — the Society should do for its members what they cannot do or reasonably be expected to do for themselves. This is where our magazine and parts supplies score. An individual could provide either but it is not likely that anyone would if we ceased production.

Our society provides services which members may use as they choose. If we do the best we can and achieve little or no response then we may well have overestimated the degree to which most members are prepared to become involved. The years which we spent trying to maintain a regularly-manned display at Ferrymead had an adverse effect on our meeting attendance if not on our actual membership numbers. Members undoubtedly became wary of attending meetings when they were expected to volunteer for Ferrymead duty.

The biggest problem facing us is the small number of active members in the Christchurch area, by active I mean attending meetings and available to help run the affairs of the Society. If every Christchurch member attended meetings we would need a bigger room. Why don't they? Is it because of personal antipathies, memories of boring evenings? Has there been such a change since the 1960's that people are less prepared to join clubs? Has phonograph collecting become such an expensive pursuit that only a wealthy few can enjoy it? There is an element of truth in all of these but the most important factor as I see it is that most of our local members, while happy to go on year after year paying their subs, receiving their magazines and maybe buying a few parts, are just not interested in getting together every month.

Should we worry about declining attendance at meetings? I think we might consider reducing the number of meetings but before that we should make an all-out effort to provide a varied and attractive programme for the next year, monitoring the response. Perhaps there are ways to involve members which will increase mutual enjoyment and make them feel they want to be involved. Perhaps some do not come because they expect to see and hear old gramophones and they can do that at home? Perhaps, indeed, we agonise too much about low attendance. It might be instructive to circulate a questionnaire to see what, if anything, we could be doing to improve the attraction of meetings. Maybe there are too many meetings — if we had one a year, a sort of annual convention, it would be a success. After all, who would go to an A & P show or industries fair every month? I may have dwelled at inordinate length on the issue of meeting attendances but it does seem sad that we are approaching the point where it may not be a good idea to invite a guest speaker for an attendance of half a dozen or less.

As the 22nd year of the Society ends we can say that in most respects we are doing well. Much of the credit for this is due to the Committee and in particular the Secretary, to whom my thanks are due. Lyndsey Drummond has handled the correspondence and orders etc. with an efficiency which has not faltered despite the pressures to which she is often subjected. The Committee brought a splendid pool of experience, good sense and special knowledge to bear on the year's business. In conclusion I thank all members for their support and hope that the coming year will see more progress toward achieving recognised goals.

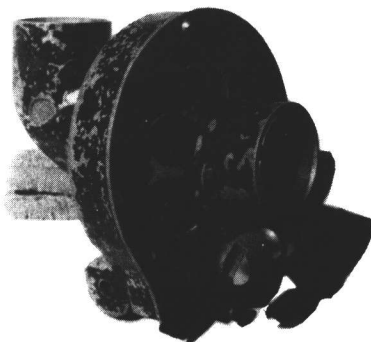


Rexophone (R. Hills collection)

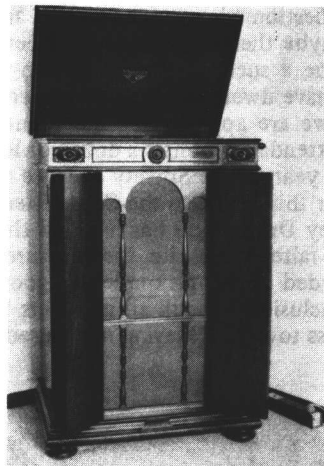


Photos R. Wright

Speakeasie Home Recorder
(R. Cole collection)



Victrola Orthophonic (R. Hills collection)



Photos R. Wright

**EXTRACT FROM CLEMENTS-HENRY, B. GRAMOPHONES AND PHONOGRAPHS:
THEIR CONSTRUCTION, MANAGEMENT AND REPAIR. CASSELL, 1913**

MAKING RECORDS AT HOME

Part 4

Confidence having been gained, a record may be attempted. Wind the machine fully, put on a blank, and adjust the recorder in position ready to lower after the motor has fairly started. Now pause to make sure the sentences to be recorded are fully committed to memory; try them over, if necessary, in the tone that seems suitable. Avoid a too definite inflection on any individual passage, remembering that the recorder exaggerates over-contrasted volume. Then start the motor, lower the diaphragm, and speak without haste or nervousness for, say, half a minute, in sustained but natural tones. While pronouncing very word distinctly, avoid a too pdantic utterance or the record will accentuate this, rendering the subject matter in tones of ludicrous affectation.

After half a minute's speech raise the recorder and stop the machine; dust the blank with a soft camel-hair mop, and remove all shavings. Then put on the reproducer and test the $\frac{3}{4}$ in. or $\frac{4}{5}$ in. length of engraving just produced.

Let it be assumed that the result is fairly satisfactory, serious defects having been already experienced, and dealt with on the whistled cylinders. If the record neither blasts nor falls off to inaudibility in places, and if the voice is readily recognisable as that of the speaker, it is proof that the diaphragm suits the voice, and that the latter was carefully modulated. A certain lack of power may be tolerated if the reproduction is clear and otherwise pleasing. Attempts to increase volume (by louder speech or a nearer approach to the horn) may result in blasting, harshness, or a generally unnatural rendering of familiar tones. To obtain more power, while retaining the better qualities of a subdued record, may necessitate the use of a different diaphragm or horn, or both.

Individual voices, even if superficially similar in key, often require widely dissimilar treatment. The length and taper of the recording horn greatly influences results. Taking a 12 in. by 4 in. cone as the standard for talking records, special qualities of tone and methods of oral delivery will be better rendered by other lengths and apertures.

A high-pitched voice, or one of distinctly nasal production, is best recorded through a narrow-angle horn, 25 in. to 36 in. long, which has the effect of subduing over-staccato inflections. A full and musical bass or baritone is sometimes found to record in a natural manner through a very small mouthpiece but little larger than that of an ordinary speaking-tube. Three useful sizes to begin with are cones of 4 in. by 2 in, 12 in. by 4 in, and 25 in. by 5 in. (the largest will be of service for vocal and instrumental work).

With these, systematic tests should be made, and careful notes taken of the several results for future guidance. The horn-length will be found to influence the action of a given diaphragm to a marked degree. A thin disc that will blast and chatter badly with one cone will work smoothly with another, and a thick glass giving a barely audible result under some conditions will yield a powerful and clear record in others.

Experience must be gained by actual practice and close observation. No hard and fast rules can be given to ensure success for a given subject.

Further Hints on Making Records at Home

Records of Vocal and Instrumental Music:

All that has yet been explained as to recording applies and leads up to the present section, which will deal briefly with the engraving of vocal and instrumental sounds.

Experiments in speech-recording on the instructions already given will doubtless have been varied by more or less successful attempts to reproduce song; experience will have been gained as to the management of the voice and the modifications of horn-length and diaphragm substance to produce a given effect.

Most vocalists have become habituated to an accompaniment of some sort; and it is advisable that the singer, while facing the horn, shall be supported by an accompaniment on his familiar instrument (say, the piano), even if no attempt is made to record the tones of the latter.

It has been explained that an ordinary room is ill-suited for recording; but something may be done to remedy its defects by means of a large three-fold screen of which a number of uses may be made. For records by a vocalist who prefers to stand while singing, a screen of less than 6ft high is not of much service; but a much smaller one may be turned to account for other purposes.

In addition to the screen a top-resonator is serviceable in special cases. This may be a light wooden framing, 3ft or 4ft square, covered with millboard, lincrusta-walton, or stout brown paper. These accessories, in careful use, greatly assist the production of full-quality records without excessive contrast, the modulations of power being more evenly graduated. It should be the smooth blending of the piano and forte passages of musical sound that is studied, after the initial difficulties of recording are overcome. But, of course, these "sound-reflectors" may as easily be misused as light reflectors often are by inexperienced photographers.

As a preliminary test, let the screen be folded as in Fig. 76, the singer taking his stand within it, at v, and facing the 26-in. suspended horn H, the phonograph being raised to a convenient height as already explained. In these new conditions, it will be found that a record of fair power may be engraved with considerably less strain on the voice than is possible without the screen. But the quality of the sound must be carefully observed. If indistinctness, confusion, or booming occurs in parts of the reproduction, the screen must be set open wider and the horn moved farther away. Of course, the usual precautions must be taken to retire a few inches on high notes and to approach nearer on the low ones. If the screen is sufficiently high the effect of the top screen may be tried. This is not applicable to all cases, but it is useful to concentrate a voice insufficiently powerful to record in the ordinary way, except by a too close approach to the trumpet-mouth (and consequently unnatural production).

In general terms it may be stated that the screen, with or without the top resonator, permits the machine and horn to be placed farther away; an advantage tending to be more even and natural reproduction. The extremes of contrast (from "blasting" to inaudibility) are indeed very efficiently modified and toned down by judicious employment of the screens.

To be continued —

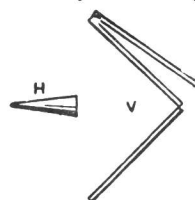


Fig. 76.

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