

# The Phonographic Record

*The Journal of The Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand*

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

VOLUME 32, ISSUE 2

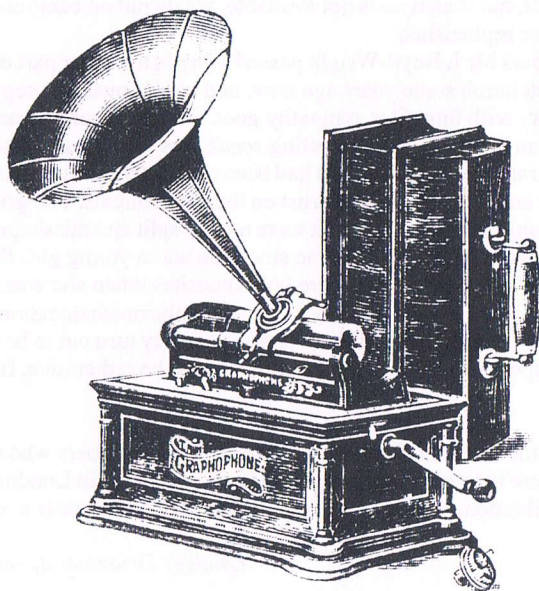
FEBRUARY/APRIL 1997

**EDITOR:** W. T. Norris,  
"Waipapa",  
Swannanoa,  
Rangiora R.D.1.,  
NEW ZEALAND.

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

BE No 30

## The "LEADER"



Improved Lyric  
Reproducer

Extra Sensitive  
Recorder

Oak Cabinet

Triple Spring Motor,  
playing about four  
ordinary records each  
winding

Flower Horn

Price £6 6s.

Weight 27 lbs.

The "LEADER"

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

We have had an interesting letter from Harold Braker, Canada, along with photographs of how to restore an Opera machine, this along with an article comparing the Opera with the Triumph. Harold has written for us before on Victor motors and in this issue he has also supplied us with a condensed chart which will have to be compared with photographs of models we have displayed with an article by Harold included in the June 1988 and 89 issues.

Because of MMP, New Zealand now has a coalition government, which so far has made little change. This has made it difficult for exporters and manufacturers.

We are sorry to report that through lack of support and finance, changes are being made to Ferrymead. The main entrance is to be shifted and the building that houses our collection, the Dini Collection and the Radio Society, is to be demolished. The Dini Collection is to be moved — we are not sure where. The Radio Station 3XP, has been a big success and proven to be Ferrymead's most progressive venture. The station started with low power and short hours but have increased both and are now well received all over Canterbury and beyond. Our Society does not know what is to happen but we will have to have somewhere to house our collection and supply of spare parts etc.

We are appreciative of kind letters and support from members both in New Zealand and overseas. The Society can always use material for the Phonographic Record, also photographs of your collection, clippings and articles of interest to other members.

## SECRETARY'S NOTES

Several members took the time to send Christmas/New Year greetings to the Society and this has been much appreciated. After a break over the holiday period, it is now back to business and we are accepting orders once more — these are despatched at approximately six-weekly intervals by Peter Mattison who does a sterling job. Members are reminded of our new item of transfers as set out in the October/December 1996 issue. We have reasonable stocks of most parts, but if an item is not available, we do put on back-order and members will be advised as soon as stocks are replenished.

One of our long-standing Australian members Mr I. Boyd-Wright passed away in the latter part of 1996. Mr Boyd-Wright attended a meeting in Christchurch some years ago now, and was a loyal and supportive member and I personally will miss my contact with him. Our sympathy goes to his brother and nephew.

John Harper, an Australian member and fairly new on the collecting scene, has written as follows:—

"I came across an A85 machine recently in rather sad condition. It had been in a damp basement for many years and all the veneer was gone off the case and there was a bit of rust on the mechanicals. The grille was in about twelve pieces and some of it was missing. The records with it were mostly split and misshapen from the damp. An old lady had it and it had been in the family all the time since she was a young girl. She was upset when she saw the condition of the records some of which were her favourites when she was young.

I have redone the grille piece by piece and it looks good, and I have cleaned up the mechanicals and now have it running nicely. I took the cabinet to a restorer to have it done properly as it may turn out to be a fairly rare machine. It hasn't come back yet but I expect when it is all re-assembled, will be rather nice. Its serial number is SM1053."

**NOTICE:** Don MacKenzie, long time member from Hamilton, would like other members who may be travelling to the United Kingdom, to know there is a very good gramophone shop situated in London. "The Talking Machine" is at 30 Watford Way, Hendon, Central London, NW4, and well worth a visit by enthusiasts.

*Lyndsey Drummond, Secretary*

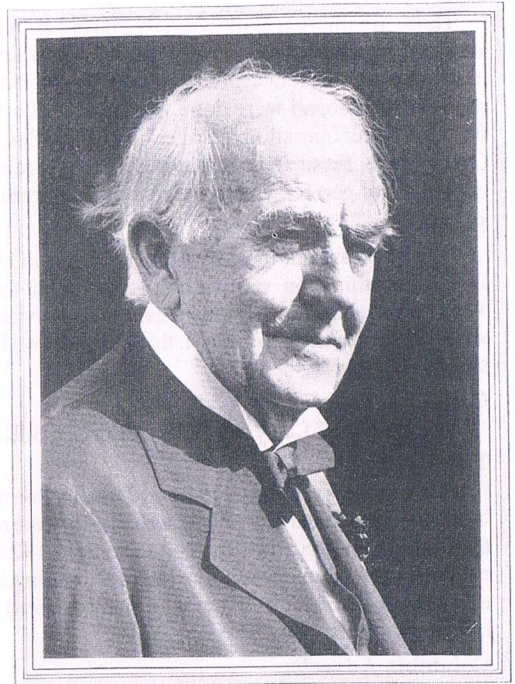
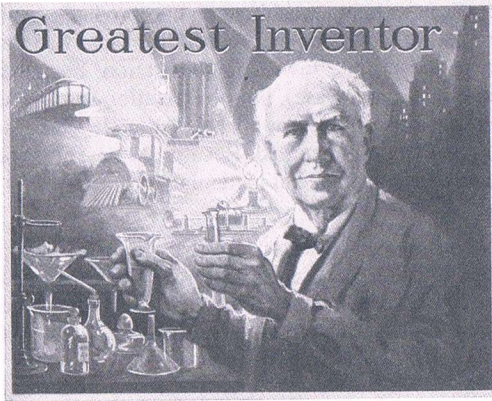
## ILLUSTRATIONS

**Edison:**

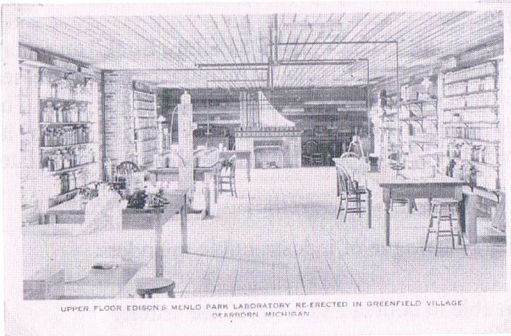
Taken from Popular Mechanics 1931 the year of his death, now 150 years since his birth. He is regarded



# EDISON



A RECENT photograph of Thomas A. Edison, whose memory is honored throughout the world for his services to mankind and his contributions to human progress.



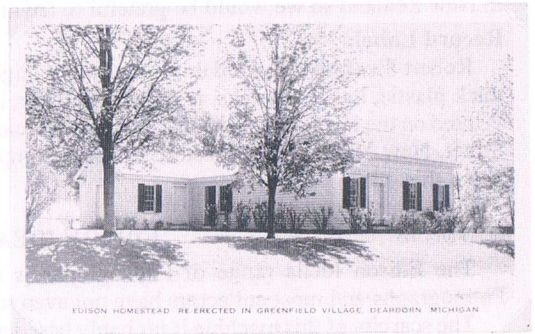
UPPER FLOOR EDISON'S MENLO PARK LABORATORY RE-ERECTED IN GREENFIELD VILLAGE, DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

**Upper Floor Menlo Laboratory**



EDISON'S MENLO PARK LABORATORY, RE-ERECTED IN GREENFIELD VILLAGE, DEARBORN, MICH.

**Menlo Park Laboratory**



EDISON HOMESTEAD, RE-ERECTED IN GREENFIELD VILLAGE, DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

**Edison Homestead**

in the United States as the worlds greatest inventor. The others which are post cards are of Menlo Park after it was shifted to Greenfield village Dearborn by Henry Ford.

### **Opera Restoration:**

These are photographs taken by Harold Braker of Opera parts being machined on his own lathe see his article. First operation, first machining operation after bracket front face and reproducer faces had been machined as reference points. Second operation, boring the horn elbow. Third operation, boring the reproducer hole, all were done within .005 of originals (height above base). Fourth operation, cutting slot for reproducer operating linkage. Fifth operation, cutting the slot for the reproducer activating lever. Edison Opera Plate, these are computer generated from an original, and acid etched. Results are nearly perfect copies if not perfect. Can have more made from software which is on file at nameplate supplier.

### **Stamps:**

This set was sent to us by Steven Ramm in U.S.A. who is a keen collector of phonographs on stamps, in fact anything on stamps connected with the hobby. This set is to commemorate Marconis 100th Anniversary of wireless transmission. These stamps are from St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The 90 cent stamp shows Walter Winchell, the \$1.00 shows Fred Allen, the \$1.10 shows Hedder Hopper and the \$2.00 shows Eve Arden.

### **Columbia B.E.:**

Four views of Larry Schlicks Columbia B.E. and motor, photographs by him.

### **The Victory:**

Photograph kindly sent to us by Don Taylor who in his book "The English 78 Picture Book" on record labels:— says that these seven inch records were not childrens records. Crystalate manufactured and pressed the discs from their own master starting in 1928, and were sold by Woolworths for six pence each. The catalogue ran from one to three hundred, ending in 1931, when Victory was replaced by Eclipse. During its three years The Victory label was manufactured in several colours, yellow and red and purple, some later issues were pale blue.

### **Columbia Adverts:**

One is of cylinder and disc and the other advertising a catalogue of indestructible cylinders.

### **Barrel Organ:**

Photo of a barrel organ which Bob Turner has been able to collect and restore, see article.

### **Pathephone:**

A rather ornate machine which was for sale at Portabello Antiques, the asking price was \$1,200 New Zealand. We believe it does not have the correct reproducer. We are fortunate that one of our members was able to photograph it for us. Many thanks Tony Aires. This is the first time we have come across this model in New Zealand so we would be grateful to anyone who has one similar, and can identify it.

### **Record Label:**

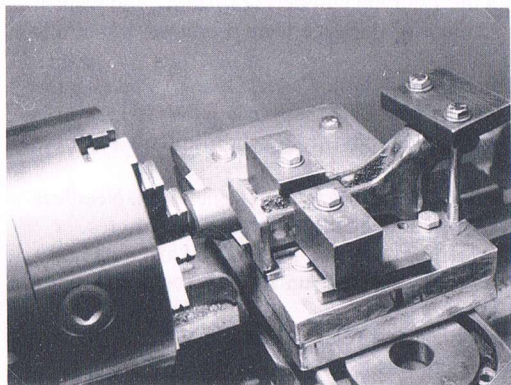
Robert Sleeman collected this record at a garage sale and brought it to our March Meeting. It is made of thick plastic, has four tracks, is brown in colour, is 15½ inches in diameter and has warped out of shape. Printed on the label is Wide Range World Broadcasting System, Sound Studios of New York, 50 West 57th Street, New York. Under Western Electric Company Licence, Speed 33⅓. Can anyone tell us anything about this one?

## **EDISON IDEAL PHONOGRAPH**

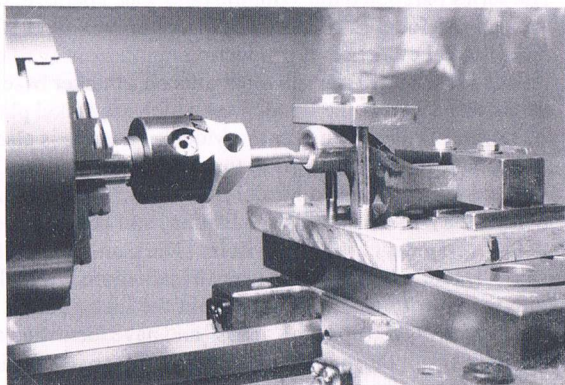
The Edison Idelia range of Phonographs is one of the most elusive of the 20th Century Edison Phonographs and most collectors have not even seen an example.

The scarcity of this machine is probably based on its high price (US\$125) which was 2½ times the price of the next most costly machine, the Triumph, and the fact it was essentially only an upgraded Triumph and provided no mechanical/technical advances over that machine.

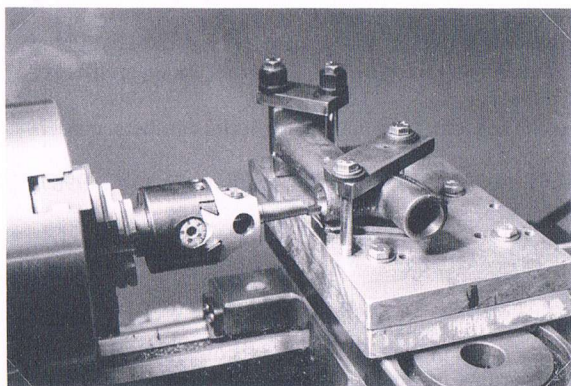




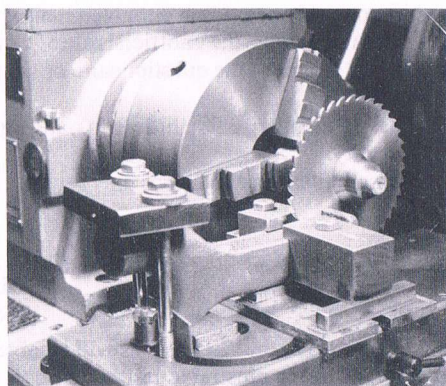
First Operation



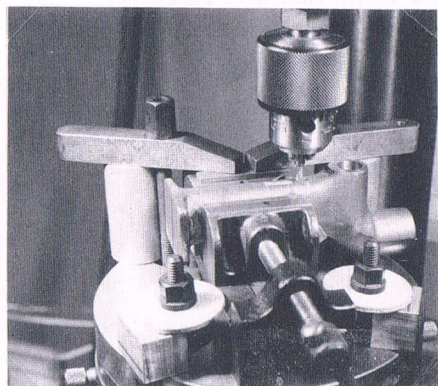
Second Operation



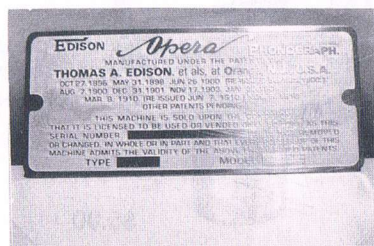
Third Operation



Fourth Operation



Fifth Operation



Edison Opera Plate  
 Photos Harold Braker



The Idelia was first issued in late 1907 as the "Ideal" and shortly thereafter was re-named the "Idelia". The series paralleled the Triumph (and was, I believe, within the Triumph numbering system), and went at least up to Model E. It is estimated that only around 100 machines of this type were produced, but at this time, no real evidence of production numbers is available.

The Ideal has a Triumph top works on a thicker base (similar to Amberola 1's and Operas), and all parts are oxidised except the lid tongues which are nickel plated and are unique to these machines. The motor is the normal Triumph one for the Model. The case is also unique, but the lid lifting handle and the two case lifting handles are identical to those used on the later Opera.

Recently I obtained a Model B Ideal, converted to 2/4 minutes, flat carriage and cygnet horn. Needless to say I was thrilled at this acquisition, and became keen to learn more about the Series. See photos.

Correspondence with Eric Reiss (The Complete Talking Machine) was timely as he had just obtained a Model B Idelia, and was also keen to learn more. From this grew his decision to undertake a research project with the view to learning more about the Idelia Series.

I have followed up local "leads" and have identified another Ideal and a Model E Idelia in Australia. The owners of both those machines are happily providing information for the research project.

At present, the vast bulk of Idelias located overseas are Model B's and all have been converted to 2/4 minute play. The only known Ideals at this time are the two in Australia, and the Model E in Australia has peculiarities which will be discussed in a later article. These facts alone make the research project interesting and important in providing enlightenment about these unusual machines.

I have undertaken the unofficial role of local co-ordinator for the research project and would be delighted to forward copies of the questionnaire or simply to hear from anyone who has, or has access to, an Ideal or Idelia.

Please remember, every little helps, and a great deal can be learnt from comparing serial numbers, models and locality.

Please write to me (Mike Tucker) at P.O. Box 636 Hornsby, 2077, Australia, or Phone/Fax (02) 9987-4010.

*Mike Tucker.*

## COLUMBIA SERIES

No. 30

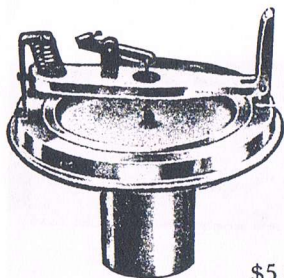
Model or Type BE

1906

Also known as the "Leader" as will be observed by our cover picture. This is the second model in the B series; the BM we illustrated last issue came seventh according to Howard Hazelcorn. What follows was taken from a catalogue a copy of which was sent to us by Larry Schlick.

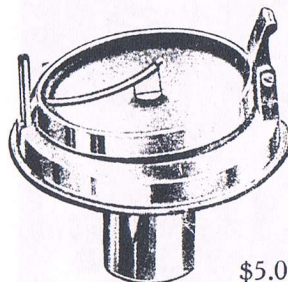
Columbia Lyric Reproducer

Columbia Extra Sensitive Recorder



\$5.00

FOR USE ONLY  
ON CYLINDER  
GRAPHOPHONES



\$5.00

As will be seen in above illustration, the new Lyric Reproducer is radically different from all earlier styles. The improvement in reproduction is astonishing. It can be used on all Lyric Reproducer Graphophones. Liberal allowance made for all old reproducers taken in exchange.



The early model BE had a weighted  $1\frac{3}{8}$ " brass nickel reproducer but the later models were all fitted with the Lyric reproducer. This is fitted with a spring instead of the weight. This model reproducer was fitted to all models except for BC, BCG, Bm. A claim for Columbia fitted with the "Lyric" reproducer was that the machine could be played in a boat, something you could not do with an Edison.

**Horn:** We have this model illustrated with a straight unsupported flower horn (on the cover) and one with a floral horn - 22" bell and 31" long supported with a nickel plated horn crane. You could also obtain with 14" brass horn with spin brass bell.

Columbia machines are now not so easy to find as they were a number of years ago, but the odd one still turns up. More Columbia machines have been found in the south of the South Island than anywhere else in New Zealand. We don't quite know the reason but we think there must have been a good agent for Columbia in the area.

We would be grateful for good clear illustrations of our next model — the B.F. Peerless.

## OPERA RESTORATION

*Harold Braker*

**Editor:** We have an excellent letter with photographs of work Harold has undertaken to do on his lathe and I will condense this as best I can. Harold undertook to restore three machines — two for other collectors and one for himself. He says:—

"My restoration work was as authentic as I could do. However, the first collector to give me a deposit wanted his Opera to look more glamorous which meant I had to have it gold plated, maroon horn bracket and elbow and the horn and case to be slightly reddish in colour. The results if I must say so were spectacular, at least three of us thought so.

I have enclosed photos of the main machining operations which I performed on my lathe for the Opera horn bracket. I also include photographs of reproduction name plates which I had made.

Since I provided an article on Victor and Victrola spring motors a number of collectors have enquired as to which motor might fit an early case, so I made up a supplement (page 9) entitled "What motor fits an early case."

Building up three Operas from Amberola mechanisms was more work than I thought so as I went along I made detailed drawings of the modifications so that I can supply the information and dimensions to anyone who may require to do the same with my spare brackets — a labour of love. For example, the Amberola version of the Opera bedplate is not drilled for the Opera handle, but the Opera bed plate is drilled for the Amberola version, so I speculate that all Opera works are in fact Amberola (B) I works.

In George Frow's book "The Edison Cylinder Phonograph" (1st Edition) page 91, George says that the Amberola (B) I was introduced in early 1911 (US). The motor was basically that of an Opera - - - how can this be? if he says on page 111 that the Opera was introduced in Nov. 1911 (US). To my way of thinking the Opera always used the Amberola motor and not the other way around.

A lot of collectors refer to the Amberola BI and III as Opera motors. I have had a chance to compare a number of original oak and mahogany Operas and all have Amberola works modified to fit the Opera, even casting numbers are the same. Even the oak Opera borrowed from the Triumph for its case.

On page 37 of George Frow's book we are informed that the Model F "Triumphs have been discovered on Opera cases." If this is so, why have all oak Operas that I have come across have modifications made to the cases to fit Opera motors, e.g., the oak Opera case has the wood motor frame and crank handle holes modified with a notch and hole elongation (and large washer escutcheon). So to my way of thinking, it is the Triumph motor that 'drops' right into the so called Opera case, without modification and it is the Opera motor that requires the modification to the case. To my logic its a Triumph case!

I would be interested to hear from members if they can agree or disagree with my comparisons.

A few added notes:

The familiar Triumph case measures inside exactly the same as the so called Opera case.

*(Continued on page 25)*

## What Motor Fits an Empty Case?

This chart will help to determine the motor that fits by measuring the crank hole position relative to turntable spindle centre. **Note:** Motors in Photos 8(5) and 8(8) have the same spacing, but are not likely to be interchangeable for obvious reasons. Some motors, e.g. Photo 8(7), have extra undrilled mounting screw "bosses" in the top casting and are drilled in different patterns. So, if you feel you have the correct motor but the mounting holes don't line up, then I think the correct thing to do is to drill and tap the "bosses" which are under your motor board holes rather than drill new holes into the motor board. Also, be aware that speed controls and levers may vary in location and style, particularly in Victrolas.

Motor Model	Photo Ref.	CHA ←	CHB →	CHD ↓
1-spring SPUR motor	2(b)	2"	x	1-3/8"} varies
2-spring SPUR motor	3(c)	2"	x	1-3/8"} varies
3-spring (Vic 6 & D)	4(d)	2"	x	1-1/2" (from casting top) 1-1/16" (from flange top)
Victor 1 & "0"	5(e)	2"	x	1"
Victor 1 & "0"	5(f)	2"	x	1" (approx.)
Victor 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 (spiral drive)	7(l)	x	2-1/4"	1-3/16"
	7(j)	x	2-1/4"	1-3/16"
	7(k)	x	2-1/4"	1-3/16"
Victrola (1-spring) non-geared	8(1)	2-3/16"	x	2-3/16"
Victrola (2-spring) geared	8(2)	x	2-7/16" plus	1-1/8" plus
Victrola (2-spring) non-geared	8(2b)	2"	x	2"
Victrola (Vic 3 but reverse geared)	8(3)	3-1/8"	x	5/8" plus
Non-geared (early schoolhouse)	No picture Similar to 8(3)	2-1/4"	x	2-3/4"
Victrola (Vic 6 geared)	8(4)	x	2-1/4"	1-3/16"
Victrola non-geared	No picture Similar to 8(4)	2-1/4"	x	2-3/4"
Victrola non-geared	8(5)	2-1/4"	x	2-1/4"
Victrola geared	8(6)	x	2-1/4"	1-1/4"
Victrola non-geared	8(6b)	2-1/4"	x	2-1/4"
Victrola geared	8(7)	x	2-1/4"	1-1/4"
Victrola non-geared	8(8)	2-1/4"	x	2-1/4"
Victrola geared	8(8b)	x	2-1/4"	1-1/4"
Victrola geared	8(9)	x	2-1/4"	1-1/4"
Victrola geared	8(10)	x	3-3/8"	1-1/8"
Victrola geared	8(10b)	x	3-3/8"	1-1/4"
Victrola geared	8(11)	x	3-3/8"	1-1/8"
Victrola 12 non-geared	10	x	4-1/2"	2-1/16"
3-spring Zonophone (SPUR motor)	No picture	2"	x	1-3/4" plus

← **CHA:** Crank Hole Ahead of Spindle

→ **CHB:** Crank Hole Back of Spindle

↓ **CHD:** Crank Hole Down From Motor Board

**Plus:** Indicates approx. 1/32 ±

**Non-geared:** Crank connected directly to spring shaft



*(Continued from page 23)*

Both the oak and mahogany Operas place the bed plate in the centre of the wood shelf whereas the Triumph bed plates are placed approximately one quarter of an inch back from the centre.

Wood shelf showing is approximately one and a half to one and nine-sixteenth at front and  $1\frac{1}{16}$  to  $1\frac{1}{8}$  at the rear. This measurement I have measured on my four Triumphs.

Because the oak Opera also uses the Triumph bed plate wood shelf, it requires a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " notch to fit the Opera bed plate onto. And, because the Opera crank handle is a quarter of an inch forward and one eighth inch up from the Triumph that is why the oak Opera cases have an elongated crank handle hole and the larger round escutcheon (i.e. washer) to cover it up.

Finally, to sum up on Oak Operas and to quote George Frow again and this taken from his first edition, the model F. Triumph was introduced in Nov. 1911 (US) and the oak Opera in Feb. 1912 (US). Frow says on page 112: "Some contemporary Triumphs have been noticed in the same Opera and Concert cases, but no explanation is yet known." Maybe Wendell Moore or George Frow have explained this in their revised book, I don't know, but I would speculate that the model F Triumph used the oak Opera case before the Opera was introduced. SO what about the model G Triumph? If it shared the same style case as the Opera, this would further explain why all the cases I have come across have been modified to take Opera works."

### THE BARREL PIANO

Barrel pianos were most popular between 1870 to 1920 and were seen (and heard) on the streets of large European cities and in the pubs of London and Paris.

Street models were small and either carried on the backs of the operator (sometimes with a monkey) or mounted on a two wheeled cart. They were usually hand-cranked and required quite an effort to turn a larger piano all day. The operators used to make a good wage for an unskilled job, provided they weren't chased away by irate residents for making too much noise. Barrel pianos have a much simplified piano action complete with covered hammers and sometimes dampers, and a strung frame of wood or metal and should not be confused with a barrel organ which uses true blown pipes or reeds.

The photograph shows a pub or saloon barrel piano which is a more substantial instrument intended for a fixed location. It is driven by a very large spring motor about four or five times the size of a gramophone motor. In operation the customer selects a suitable tune from a tune sheet and turns a small handle to the corresponding number. They then wind the large handle about seven or eight turns. They put a penny in the slot and the piano plays two choruses of the chosen song. The whole procedure is repeated when another tune is required. A set of keys unlocks four locks that safeguard the money drawer.

A large wooden barrel is pinned and holds ten tunes, much like a Swiss music box. Not having any dampers makes it very loud but I intend fitting a set in the bass at a later date. It would have been made around 1890 in England and the barrel was probably repinned around 1915, judging by the tunes.

This piano has been completely refurbished locally, but still retains its original finish. All the inlay is real and not transfer, the cut glass window has been resilvered and all the brass work rebuffed and lacquered. The mechanism is intact and original but new hammers and restringing with new wrest plank and pins has been provided.

Altogether I have a beautiful and unusual instrument, but the way I acquired it is worth telling.

The barrel piano first surfaced at an antique fair in Sydney and it was written up in a local antique magazine. It was not sold and next appeared at an antique complex in Windsor, N.S.W.

I saw it there and really could not believe my eyes. What a striking instrument! I enquired the price and after picking myself up off the floor, asked to hear it play. The attendant duly wound it up and put a penny in the slot. What a horrible conglomeration of sound issued forth. I'm a musician but I could not recognise any tune or even work out if it was playing a waltz or a foxtrot. This then was the reason why no one would buy it. Well, I could not afford it and would not want it at that price anyway.

About three months later an advert appeared in a local paper with this same instrument at a much lower price. I took my wife to inspect it but she did not want me to buy it. However, I made an offer which was accepted and it was all mine, for better or for worse.



When the piano arrived home I immediately took the cabinet apart to find out how it worked. I had already borrowed a book explaining the mechanism, so I had some idea what to expect. Briefly the original restorers had done an enormous amount of high quality work, but did not know how to line up the barrel correctly. Subsequent people involved did not either. I lined it up as told in the reference book I had and it worked! I had to retune one string that sounded strange, otherwise that was all there was involved to have a spectacular and beautiful mechanical musical instrument.

Reference: *PLAYER PIANO*, Arthur W. J. G. ORD-HUME, pub. Barnes & Co New York, complete chapter on barrel pianos.

*Bob Turner, N.S.W. Australia*

## EDISON: THOMAS ELVA

His first 150 years

Born Feb. 11th, 1847 and died Oct. 18th, 1931 — aged 84

He was a wonderful person who took out more patents than any other man. At the hundred years commemoration we had a number of stamps issued to commemorate the date, but as far as we know no stamps are being issued by anybody to mark the 150 years.

We have included a fine photograph which appeared in the December issue of "Popular Mechanics", 1931.

## THE WORLD'S GREATEST INVENTOR

Source, *Popular Mechanics*

We may sit at home, bathed in coloured lights and listen to gifted voices, to deathless music. Or we may project animated figures on a screen and hear their voices from a horn. Or a bell rings; answering, we may hear a voice from another continent.

All these conveniences, within arm's reach in the modern home, bear the stamp of one man's brain — Thomas Alva Edison's. No king, no explorer, no militarist accelerated practical culture more than Edison. Indeed, he ranks with the five men whose lives have most influenced the career of the human race.

Aside from his name, his influence and example, he has created a fabulous fortune in gold and material out of no more material substance than the stuff that ideas are born of. Other men barter, buy and exchange, but they do not add to the world's wealth. Out of sheer common sense and persevering search, Edison presented mankind with an inheritance valued at more than \$35,235,000,000. The prodigious total tends by contrast to make paupers of millionaires. The sum bears comparison with all the ransoms ever offered for kings, with all the bribes involved in political corruptions, with all the gold mined from the earth in the last century. Yet he has remained humble.

"Well," he says, "if worse comes to worse, I've got a good trade. I can always make \$75 a month as an expert telegraph operator and a I can live on that."

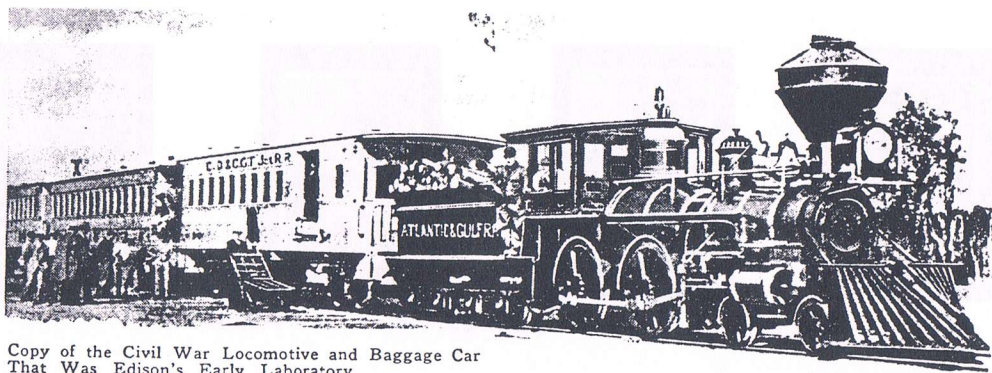
Edison was born at Milan, Ohio, on Feb. 11th, 1847, the son of Samuel Edison, a mechanic. His close observation led him to ask many questions. He listened solemnly to the answers and then proceeded to investigate matters for himself. His boyhood escapades are still recounted by the citizens of Milan as part of the town's folklore. He was almost smothered once beneath a pile of wheat.

A playmate, aiming an axe at a skate strap cut the tip off Thomas' finger. And once the inquisitive youngster set fire to a barn, for which offence he received a public whipping.

When his family moved to Port Huron, Mich., Thomas attended a school for three months. That constituted all the formal education he ever received. Thenceforth he was on his own. Before the age of twelve, he had read Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" and Hume's "History of England."

Young Edison made the cellar his first laboratory. In order to keep others from tampering with his bottled chemicals, he pasted poison labels on them. All his pocket money went to buying more chemicals from the drug shops.





Copy of the Civil War Locomotive and Baggage Car  
That Was Edison's Early Laboratory.

At length he convinced his parents that they ought to let him apply for the news concession on the Grand Trunk railway in order to increase his stock of chemicals. In one of the baggage-car compartments, Edison was allowed to set up a rolling laboratory, in which he kept jars, bottles, test tubes and every chemical compound he could afford to buy. In the same baggage car he set up a printing press and published "The Weekly Herald," sold at three cents a copy, and with a circulation of 400 per month.

The rolling laboratory and printing plant flourished until one day the car lurched and caused a stick of phosphorous to ignite and set fire to the car. The conductor rushed in, lost his temper and threw the young inventor off the train after cuffing his ears. Edison grew deaf from the unkind blow of this conductor.

From news vending Edison drifted into telegraphy. He worked in railroad and commercial telegraph offices, acquiring a facility in receiving and sending that is still talked about by veteran Morsemens. His dots and dashes came with such lightening rapidity that the best keymen would have to ask him to repeat. From Cincinnati, Louisville and Indianapolis he went to Boston and took over the high-speed press wire.

It was here that his mind began to bear on practical problems. Armies of cockroaches sallied forth from hidden retreats no sooner than the "ops" had eaten lunch. How to exterminate these pest? On the wall beside his table Edison fastened two strips of tinfoil; one strip was connected with the positive pole of a battery and the other strip with the negative pole. When a cockroach crossed the deadline, it electrocuted itself. He also invented a "rat paralyzer," which consisted of two insulated plates connected with a main battery. The rat would serve to complete the circuit and kill itself.

One day in the autumn of 1877 Edison handed John Kruesi, his modelmaker, a rough sketch. The inventor estimated that the machine would cost about \$18. Kruesi followed specifications and produced an instrument consisting of a metal shaft mounted on two supports, resembling a horizontal screw. The shaft ran through a drum, on both sides of which was a little tube. Parchment was stretched over the ends of the tube, and the centre of each diaphragm had a needle.

After wrapping a thin sheet of tinfoil around the drum, Edison proceeded to turn the handle, shouting at the same time, "Mary had a little lamb." Turning the screw backwards, he withdrew one of the tubes and turned the screw forward on the other. Out came his voice, repeating the words he had uttered.

"Mein Gott im Himmel!" cried Kruesi. "I was never so taken aback in all my life," said Edison. "I was always afraid of things that worked the first time."

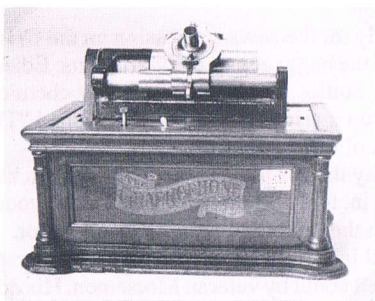
The "Wizard of Menlo Park" soon had a fame that reverberated around the world. But nothing astonished people so much as his incandescent lamp.

With a carbonized thread inside a bulb from which the air had been exhausted, he succeeded in attaching it to and electric current, thereby creating a new form of illumination. The first lamp remained lighted forty hours. Thirteen months of time and \$40,000 were spent on that first bulb. But he needed a substitute for carbonized threads and forthwith he began to carbonize everything conceivable, even strands of hair plucked from a man's growing beard.





Stamps Marconi 100th Anniversary of Radio

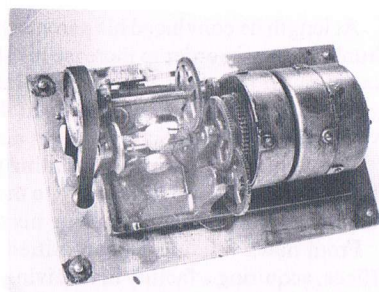


B.E. Columbia

Victory Label



D. L. TAYLOR



Columbia B. E. Motor

## NEW Columbia Records

Happiness  
For  
Sick  
&  
Well



Cylinders  
AND  
Discs

MARCH, 1906.

Gold Plated Cylinder Records,  
25 cents each

10 in. Disc Records, 60 cents each

7 in. Disc Records, 35 cents each

Our cylinder Records can be heard on  
all cylinder Talking machines with  
waxhorns of standard size. Our Disc  
Records are used on all Disc Talking  
machines.

Columbia Phonograph Co. Gen'l  
New York London Chicago



2 - Minute - 35c.

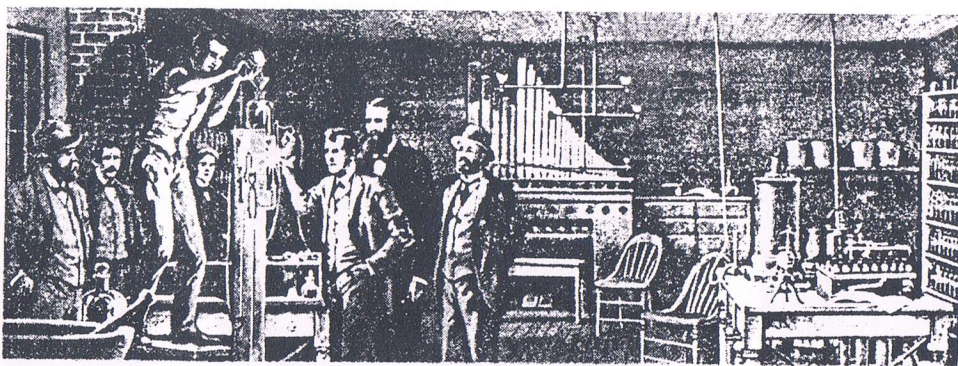
4 - Minute - 50c.

Columbia Adverts



Barrell Organ





Two months after Edison and his assistants had seen that first incandescent light, the managing editor of the New York Herald stormed into the newsroom and accusingly laid a copy of that day's paper on the city editor's desk.

"How," demanded Connery, the managing editor, "did that stuff get into the paper, Mr. Orr? You've made a laughing stock of the Herald.

"Lights strung on wires, indeed! What will the owner say?"

"He'll probably say," Orr replied calmly, "that it is the biggest newspaper beat in a long time."

"But don't you know," continued Connery, "that it has been absolutely demonstrated that that kind of light is against the laws of nature?"

The Herald's article aroused such public interest that the railroad ran special trains to Menlo Park, where incredulous visitors saw the strange glow lamps strung on wires between gaunt leafless trees.

Later Edison worked out the whole system of incandescent electric lighting from a central station. He developed a new type of high-speed dynamo which greatly increased the quantity of his output. The first commercial electric-lighting system in the United States was opened in New York, and it proved highly successful.

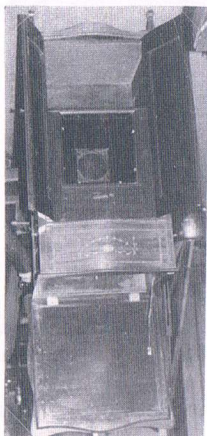
At no time in his career has his famous laboratory been idle. The germs of inventions sprang from his mind in a neverending stream and he kept scores of trained assistants busy with detail work. In rapid succession he invented the carbon transmitter for the telephone and the magnetic ore separator. In 1882, he built the first electric railroad line and a locomotive to run on it. Between 1900 and 1910 he entered the Portland Cement industry. He invented the "long kiln," introduced the "poured" house, and perfected the alkaline storage battery.

In 1912 he introduced the "kinetophone," a talking-movie system, of which he said: "The synchronization of sight and sound is an old idea of mine that has finally been realized. In one way or another it has been in mind for more than thirty years. Back in the late 70's when I invented the phonograph, it was stirring, and in 1887, when I was able to perfect the motion-picture camera, that idea of combining sight and sound persisted.

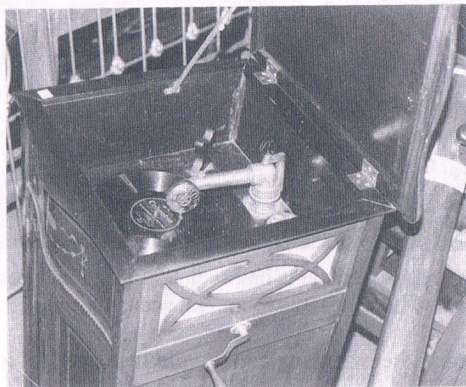
"The problem of actual synchronization was the least difficult of my tasks. The hardest job was to make a phonographic recorder which would be sensitive to sound a considerable distance away, and which would not show within range of the lens. You get some idea of the difference when I make this comparison: If you estimate the volume of sound at a distance of one foot from the recorder at 100, you find that at a distance of two feet it diminishes to 25."

In his long life Edison has hardly known illness. He has a hardihood that survived excruciating labour. One of his chief assistants once begged the inventor to tell him how he acquired such uncanny powers of endurance. In a humorous vein, Edison replied that he ate Welsh rarebit for breakfast every morning. The assistant, following his employer's example, soon found that the diet made little difference to his own stamina.

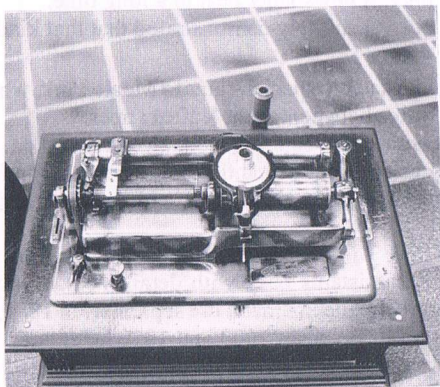




PATHAPHONE



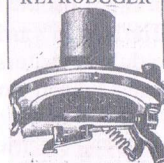
Four Views



Ideal Edison Phonograph



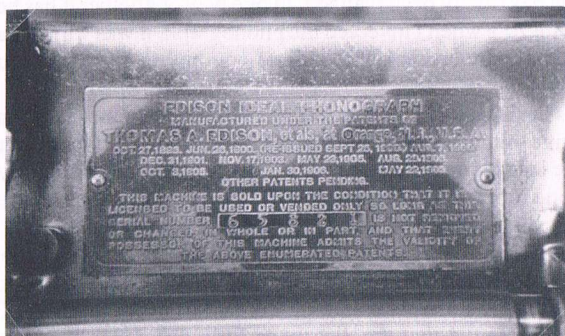
THE SPECIAL  
SPRING-TENSION  
REPRODUCER



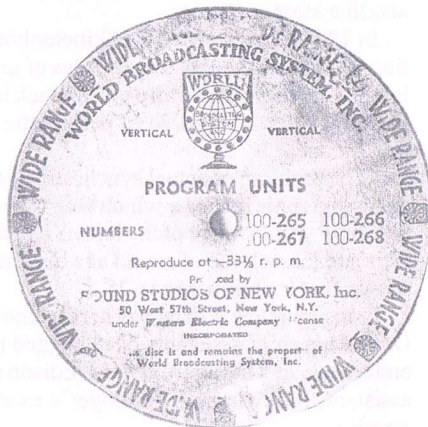
Brings out the full tone of  
**COLUMBIA**  
INDESTRUCTIBLE  
CYLINDER RECORDS

(As illustrated, for attachment to  
Columbia Cylinder Graphophones.)  
Can also be supplied for attachment to  
all other makes of cylinder machines.

Price . . . \$3.00.



Ideal Plate





Edison's constitution, which allowed him to work from eighteen to twenty hours a day over long periods, is a marvel to science. He has allowed himself few vacations and rarely indulges in outdoor sports. But observers noticed that in his daily habits he maintains a rigid discipline. He works with steadfast concentration and remarkable patience.

### REPORT ON THE FINAL GENERAL MEETING OF 1996

This was held at the ever welcoming home of Lyndsey and Bill Drummond in Bryndwr on the 25th November. The usual meeting format was observed, but an impending holiday period and break for a while from formalities was evident in periodic departure into light hearted rhetoric and personal asides. This contributed materially towards the evening being less formal and was generally very enjoyable.

Very little was forthcoming in the display line of newly acquired items as verbosity prevailed as the order of the day — or evening.

There were fourteen members present and we, the visitors, greatly appreciated the hospitality so willingly offered by Lyndsey and Bill who were heartily thanked for their continuing efforts for the Society.

Other executive members were recognized and Christmas and New Year wishes all round concluded the evening's gathering.

*Report by B. A. Bisphan.*

### REPORT ON THE PRE-CHRISTMAS DINNER

This was partaken on the 17th November at the Redwood Sequoia Restaurant on the Main North Road. There was not a large attendance of members which was rather disappointing as the venue is one of the best we have in the city where the eighty-eight different dishes of food are a real gourmet's delight. I am afraid I tried to compensate for several of those missing as did some of the more adventurous ones present. All those there agreed the standard of fare offered to us was of the highest we have enjoyed in some years. I have a venue tentatively for '97, so possibly we'll return to the Redwood in '98.

*Report by B. A. Bisphan.*

### REPORT ON THE FIRST MEETING FOR 1997 OF THE VINTAGE PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY

The meeting was held at Tony Air's home on the 24th February, 14 members were present. During the business part of the meeting some of those present who produce part of the equipment which the Society sells, expressed dissatisfaction with some outside contractors' performance in producing parts, who show little care in the handling of delicate pieces, use cheaper ways to produce materials with short cuts to provide an inferior and in one case a totally unusable product, and refusing to make redress of any sort. One actually charged for having to rectify his own error!

From the reports from those concerned, it was clear that real artisans are a dying race and the dollar the easiest way possible is the order of the day for an increasing number of people today.

Among interesting articles brought by members was a twelve inch magnetic disc used for recording and was capable of erasure and re-recording, made by Pye of Cambridge, England. Unfortunately the recording and playback head, a detachable unit of a regular Collaro pick-up are is missing from the player. Dick Hills also brought a gramophone pick up head made in Germany based upon the early Brandes earphone principle of two oval coils on magnets facing a Stalloy diaphragm with distance adjustment for clarity.

A booklet shown was produced by Invicta of Sheffield, England, depicting Eels brand springs of all kinds for gramophones and other mechanisms requiring them. The many hundreds of coiled and flat springs were numbered and priced in the then English currency of shillings and pence. I am sure we will never see prices like three shillings and eightpence, 2/4d and 4/2d for precision equipment such as these were ever again. Pure nostalgia! What price casual subcontractors?

*Report by B. A. Bisphan.*

## THE VOICE OF A GENERATION

Contributed by Bryan Blanchard, Timaru, New Zealand

John Derrick Snagge, for years "the voice" of BBC radio, he made the Boat Race famous. Born in London, England in 1904, died in Slough, Berkshire on March 25th 1995, aged 91.

The list of John Snagge's broadcasts reads like a list of top news, sporting and ceremonial events of recent British history.

The man who broke the news of the 1944 D-Day landings was for decades the voice behind the Oxford-Cambridge boat race, which he first commentated on in 1930.

He joined the BBC in 1924 and that list of credits was enormous. They included reading Winston Churchill's wartime speeches (Parliament was not broadcast during World War II), the commentary on King George V's funeral and King George VI's and Queen Elizabeth's coronations.

It was Snagge whose mellifluous tones informed Britons around the world that Italy had surrendered in 1943, and announced VE and VJ-Days.

And it was Snagge whose suitably sombre bass reported on the deaths of many of the world's famous people, kings and commoners.

He commented on many sporting events: Cricket, football, tennis and motor races as well as the hugely popular Schneider Trophy air races.

But it was the annual Oxford and Cambridge boat race for which he was best known. A commentary on the event was unthinkable without the Pembroke College, Oxford-educated Snagge's commentary.

In 1949 he made a gaffe which he was never allowed to forget. In an extremely close contest, the BBC's most experienced man behind the microphone informed his massive audience: "Oxford are ahead, no Cambridge are ahead, I don't know who's ahead....but it's either Oxford or Cambridge."

Snagge had a typically dry British sense of humour and never minded the ribbings he received for his remark. Indeed, he relished some of the less famous, but equally amusing, news-reading mistakes.

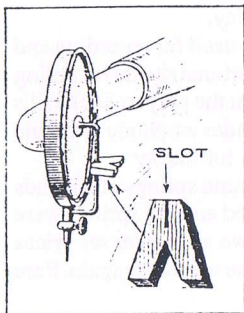
He often dined out on a cricket report in which he announced that Len Hutton was "ill". Sorry, that should read 111."

But one of his favourite was the lead item on a BBC news during the early stages of the African Desert campaign.

As usual, Snagge introduced himself, following a BBC decision that announcers should identify themselves to the public to avoid confusion with propaganda broadcasts from Germany.

"Last night," he intoned, "the 8th Army attacked on a broad front using both its tanks." A pause. "I'm sorry, that should read '....using both its tanks and artillery'."

*Taken from Sunday Star-Times, 31st March 1996*



### SOFTENING TONE OF PHONOGRAPH

The attachment shown in the drawing is cut from a piece of thick sheet rubber, leather, or similar flexible material, in the form shown, and fitted over the needle bar of the phonograph reproducer to subdue the tone of the instrument. In applying or removing the "mute," for such it properly can be called, the ends are pressed together by the fingers; this expands the slot in the opposite side and makes its application or removal very simple.

*Popular Mechanics, 1931*



One of our U.S. members, Tim Fabrizio of New York has spent some time in conjunction with George F. Paul, to produce a book and has asked the Society to let them know details, which are set out below:

**THE TALKING MACHINE,  
AN ILLUSTRATED COMPENDIUM 1877-1929**

*by Timothy C. Fabrizio and George F. Paul*

Seven chapters of authoritative text, 550 full colour photographs, detailed captions, and a guide to values in a beautiful, large format, 260 page hardcover. A bookshelf in one volume!

**SPECIAL OFFER!!!**

Projected date of publication is late April 1997. Price will be \$69.95 plus shipping. Send a cheque RECEIVED BEFORE APRIL 15th 1997, and pay only \$65.00 plus FREE SHIPPING in the Continental US or Canada or personal delivery to any event Tim Fabrizio will be attending. Personal delivery MUST be arranged 2 weeks in advance. Foreign orders send draft in U.S. \$ and include \$5.00 to offset postage (\$70.00). Residents of NY add \$5.20 sales tax per book.

*Each advance ordered book will be signed.*

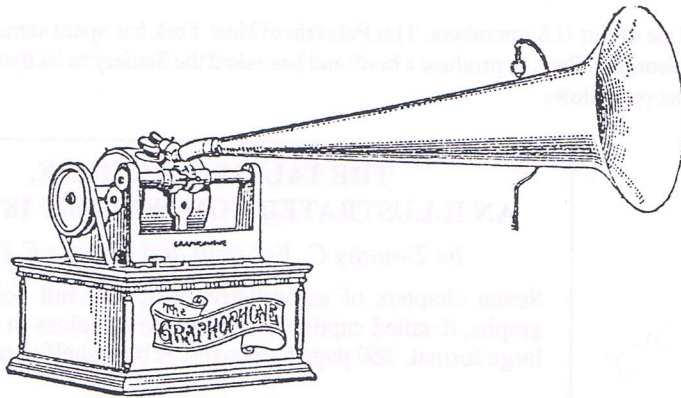
Send orders to: **TIM FABRIZIO**  
**P.O. Box 10307, Rochester, NY 14610, U.S.A.**  
**716-244-5546 e-mail phonophan@aol.com**

P.T.O.

# ADVERTISEMENTS

## For Sale:

Columbia HG —  
price \$2,500U.S. For  
details/questions re this  
machine please reply to:  
Alan Hibschi, 4 La Foret  
Court, Oroville, Califor-  
nia 95965, U.S.A.



## Wanted to Buy:

Wanted — parts for an Edison Red Gem Model D. All I have is the body casting. I particularly want the motor and mandrel, but any other parts such as a base board and lid, the gears etc. would be appreciated. Please reply: Mal Horsfall, 8 Gowan Brae Avenue, Oatlands, N.S.W. 2117, Australia.

## Wanted to Buy:

Can anyone help? I'm endeavouring to build up an Edison GFem 'B' and need the following: Base board, the Intermediate gearing assembly and the Governor assembly.

**Also:** Needed to restore an Edison Home 'B' (combination 2/4 minute type) Feed-nut and sprung arm to Carrier arm, Lock-screw to left-hand end of mainshaft. Please reply: David Murray, 366 Kimbolton Road, Feilding, New Zealand.

## For Trade:

Reproduction Opera horn brackets and name plates. Trade for Edison, Victor, Columbia horn machine parts, back brackets, cases, broken wood horns etc. Write for details: Harold Braker, 8527-111th Street, Delta, B.C., Canada, V4C 7E3.

## Parts Wanted:

Required for key-wind Black Gem (long shaft) — Governor, various gears, mandrel; plus any other interesting cylinder machines. Please reply to: Brian Reid, 152 Dyers Pass Road, Cashmere, Christchurch, New Zealand.

## Wanted to Purchase:

Governor shaft for early Gem. Please reply to: Jim Lowe, 49 Kingston Parade, Heatherbrae 2324, Australia.

## What kind of Music do you like?

We have four great lists coming up soon. Historical and personality 78s on February 1; Edison Discs and cylinders on March 15; Classical 78s and LPs on May 1; and Jazz 78s and LPs on June 15. Ask for the lists you want — they're free! Tom Hawthorn, 77 Columbia Ave., Roseville, CA 95678, U.S.A, Phone/Fax (916) 773-4727.

P.T.O.