



The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

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COLUMBIA A J



SCHLICK PHOTO

**COLUMBIA DISC GRAMOPHONE NO 2
1901**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Here we are in Mid Winter, another year half over. We have not heard from anyone who wants either the Columbia Elbow or the HMV Metal Horn we illustrated in the last issue. Please would members who have need or either of these let us know, to give us an idea if it is worth making a quantity of either of them.

Meetings have been well attended of late with a new member at home and several abroad.

We are always grateful to those members who have written to us and sent material to be included in The Phonographic Record.

We are again indebted to Larry Schlick who again attended Donleys Show and Market and took lots of photographs which he has kindly sent to us. It is most interesting what appears each year at Donleys. He says he tried his best to cover the show and I have included part of his last letter.

Walter Norris, Editor

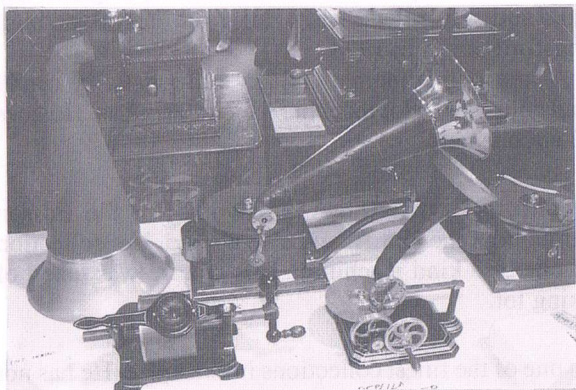
LETTER FROM LARRY SCHLICK

Now on with the Show!!! I tried to get a more personal touch by interviewing some of the dealers this time and had a nice interview with Randy Donley who, with his brother, now manage the whole show. I personally don't think there were as many dealers this time as before but Randy said there were actually more. Fewer dealers took two or three spaces as before. I talked with one dealer, a good friend, who mentioned that he had spent over \$18,000 at the show but hadn't sold as much as in past years. Randy said that this Saturday was the biggest they had ever had, with over 2,000 paid admissions. On Thursday, the day before the dealers set up, there is a sort of impromptu flea market in the parking lot. Only registered dealers are allowed to set up, and there is a constant flow of activity all day long. You have to realise that almost every dealer is also a collector. Randy named off a few dealer/collectors who stand out prominently ... Charles Hummel, the Oliphant Brothers, Al Chaffmes, Ron Sitko (reproduction parts), Norm and Jayne Smith, Kurt Nauk (records) and Bill Landon who brought an Edison with a polyphone attachment and sold it before he even got it off the truck. Everything seems to be more expensive than the last time. The prices I quote are asking prices... I don't get into whether the machine sold or not, nor what the final selling price was. Randy surmises that shows like this will eventually die out as a result of increased activity and scope of computer e-bay and internet buying and selling. The dealer can reach an incredibly larger audience worldwide and in most cases get fantastic prices for scarcer items. Many dealers lament the fact that there don't seem to be as many new collectors around. I can imagine, what with the basic price of the more common machines starting at around \$700 on up, there are not that many young collectors who are starting out with that sort of disposable income. Today's collector buys off the internet, doesn't travel great distances to shows, and probably has greater than average wealth. I have heard of fantastic prices paid for items on the internet. A friend bid \$2,700 just for a small horn for an early Victor machine. My personal opinion is that the over-all quality of machine in general was down. The Oliphants from California, I felt, had the best selection. It is interesting to note that they had two Vic. VI's for sale, one highly and spectacularly refinished and one all original and very clean, both for the same price. You have pictures of both. Ray Phillips from California has beautiful and exact reproductions of the Edison Tin Foil phonograph and the first model Berliner machine (quite small) for \$1,500 each. I have recorded some random asking prices ... Victor front mount E \$1,450, Victor MS oak machine w/oak horn refinished \$3,800 ... Ed. Triumph 2 min. rough horn \$1,500... Victor R w/ record hold down (screw plate) brass elbow \$1,875... Ed. Fireside 4-min. small brass belled horn

DONELYS



CHARLIE HUMEL



RAY PHILLIPS COLLECTION

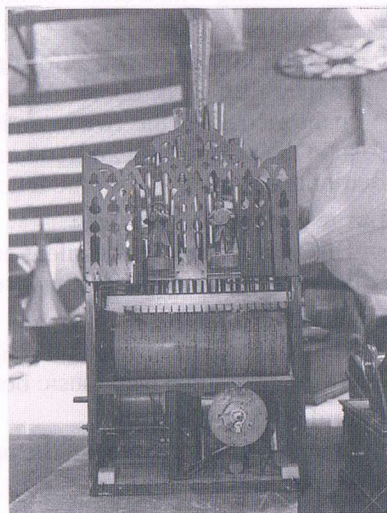


ELABORATE MACHINE BRUNSWICK



UNUSUAL ORGANETTE

SCHLICK PHOTOS



CYLINDER TYPE ORGAN

\$875 (wrong horn for that machine). Columbia BY w/oak horn \$3,500... Ed. Standard, 2 min. repro small horn \$500... Victor V I, w/record cabinet \$7,500... Ed. Amberola #30, refinished \$350... Columbia BF 6" cylinder, repro horn, all rough \$600. Generally Ed. Homes and Standards went from \$550 — \$1,200 depending on what went with them and 2 and 4 min capability.

Larry Schlick

ILLUSTRATIONS

Columbia AJ:

We have five good illustrations of this machine and they are all photographs supplied by Larry Schlick. Larry says the one on the Front Cover is correct and the one inside is the same machine but with different horn. He says the horn fits and makes the machine more colourful, probably not authentic but where else could this small horn go on? Three other views of AJ and the motor.

Bill Dini:

These two pictures were taken when Bill visited Larry in 1989, Bill is holding the horn of what Larry says is an unknown German coin in the slot disc machine.

In the Spring of 1989, Bill Dini set off on a world trip. He visited the U.S.A., England and Europe. He crossed the Atlantic in the Concord and so fulfilled a wish. He was an early flyer, built a small plane of his own and flew with Kingsford Smith in 1928.

He visited a number of collectors in U.S.A. and among them was Larry Schlick. Larry kindly sent us a photo he took of Bill with a German coin in the slot machine which Larry has. He does not know anything about this machine, can anyone help?

Charlie Hummel of New Jersey:

He is the most knowledgeable dealer/collector in the U.S.A. He works for the Edison Foundation, setting up Edison exhibits throughout the U.S.A. and also abroad. His collection is legendary with a generous sprinkling of one of a kind machines. This picture was taken of Charles talking with a collector on the parking lot.

Ray Phillips Collection:

A. R. Phillips Jr. from California also has one of the finest collections in existence. He has not more than fifty of the choice machines which includes an Edison treadle machine

In the picture are the two reproductions which we advertised for sale last issue at \$1,500 each. Also in the picture are two trade mark Berliners belonging to the Olliphant Bros. Ray owns the Bettini horn which is a reproduction, there are two sizes of these which he sells for \$500 each.

Large Elaborate Machine:

This was for sale at the silent auction and the last bid Larry saw was over \$1000. This is a Brunswick with a double ultoner reproducer.

Unusual Organette:

This most unusual organ looks like a hand turned roller organ made to look like a grand piano. There are also some nice music boxes in the back ground.

Cylinder Type Organ:

Larry says he forgot to get the name or price, looks a most interesting machine. Larry thinks it was made in Europe.

Hans Scheller:

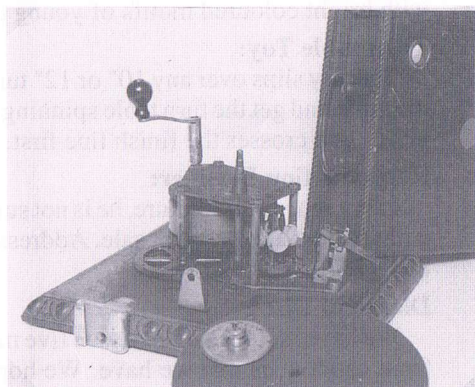
Hans is a new member who lives in Switzerland. He sent us a photograph of his collection which we have included in this issue.

COLUMBIA DISC GRAMOPHONE

SCHLICK PHOTOS



WITH UNUSUAL HORN

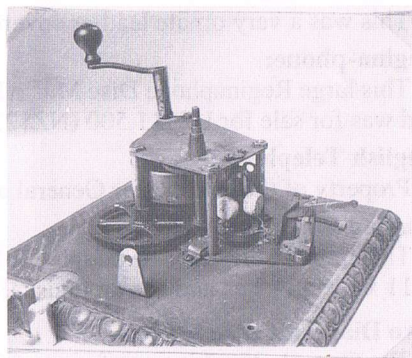


MOTOR AND CASE



Col. A S 1901 Cat. Leather album / 1901 photo

ANOTHER VIEW



MOTOR ONLY



BILL DINI WITH UNKNOWN COIN-IN-THE-SLOT



Decca:

David Peterson brought this childrens gramophone to one of our meetings. It has a white case with bright coloured motifs of young children and scenery all over it. See article by David.

Turn table Toy:

This toy slips over any 10" or 12" turn table and the three horses spin very freely. You start the machine and get the turn table spinning rapidly then stop it and the horses stop slowly and you see which one crosses the finish line first. Larry says this is the only one of these he has seen.

Reproduction Berliner:

Larry sent us this picture, he is not sure if these are for sale or not. Ernie Tuff who we think made it has hand crank parts for sale. Address is P.O. Box 355, Rushford, Minnesota 55971, Phone 507 864 7137.

Diamond Discs:

We have included in this issue five model diamond disc machines. These illustrations are taken from catalogues that we have. We hope to include more models in the future issues. We have noticed that Edison appears to have used the same basic cases for both cylinder and disc phonographs.

Morocan Leather:

This was a very ornate leather covered case and was for sale at \$1,500.

Regina-phone:

This large Reginaphone Disc Music Box and Phonograph combination was in mint condition and was for sale for US\$11,500 (NZ\$23,000). One of these has not been seen in New Zealand.

English Telephone:

Property of the Postmaster General and for sale for \$775.

Russian Portable:

This model Larry says he bought for \$300 and was the only thing he purchased. It all folds up to 11 x 8 x 5 inches and has an unusual horn.

Two Diamond Disc Models:

The Console No. 1 is one of a set of four models all black in colour and all complete with the long playing attachment. These we think were the last diamond disc machines sold in New Zealand and are quite rare. So far we only know of two in collectors possession. The long playing records never took on. Edison was 10 years ahead of his time.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

It has been an interesting and busy few months with the introduction of a computer system to handle the Society's affairs.

Contact through e-mail has proved successful and time saving in many cases, although we still look forward to the personal letters, photos, etc.

I welcome the new members who have joined the Society over the past few months, from Switzerland, the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand, It is pleasing to see the membership continue to grow.

Orders have been steady as well and I would take this opportunity to thank Tony Airs our parts and packaging expert for his time and effort in seeing that orders are despatched quickly and efficiently.

As it is the end of our financial year, annual subscriptions are now due. Accounts will be enclosed with the magazine.

Shirley McGuigan, Secretary

LYNDSAY DRUMMOND — LIFE MEMBER

At a meeting earlier this year Mrs Lyndsay Drummond was awarded Life Membership of the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand.

It is a fitting way of thanking Lyndsay for the years of service, and recognition of the time and commitment she has given to the Society.

On behalf of all members I thank Lyndsay for her many years as Secretary and wish her and Bill well in their retirement.

Shirley McGuigan, Secretary

MAY MEETING

Held at the home of Joffre Marshall, Rangiora on Monday 28th May with 18 members present. It is very pleasant to see even during the colder winter months the numbers attending the meetings.

Gavin East showed his new acquisition, a Six Tune Music Box and spoke of its history. Brian Reed shared the story of his find at the Kaiapoi Auctions, an HMV 202 Gramophone. Jason Blazey had several old and interesting records.

The meeting was followed by an interlude of enjoyable music from Joffre and colleagues Raelene and Alf.

JUNE MEETING

Held at the home of Lyndsay and Bill Drummond, Christchurch on Monday 25th June with 15 members present.

Correspondence included confirmation of several new members, also a couple of magazines returned with address unknown, a timely reminder to all to please notify us of any change of address details.

General Business included a discussion of the annual Theatre Royal Book Sale where records are often available and also of the new Tender Centre operating at Woolston.

JULY MEETING

Held at the home of Marcia and Derek Cockburn, Christchurch on Monday 23rd July. A good attendance with 17 members present.

Tony gave a report on parts in stock, orders have been steady. Sales List to be updated and sent out with the magazine.

General discussion on Auctions/Sales through the internet.

Annual General Meeting to be held on Monday 24th September. Any enquiries to the Secretary.

EDISON DIAMOND DISCS — NEW ZEALAND PERSPECTIVE

(Part 2)

As for the repertoire, I think B. A. Williamson could have found a fairly uninspiring selection in any one record supplement from the 20s, whatever company. If Edison had put out nothing but Hawaiian guitar records and buyers had wanted them, we would have to say that they were a

success even if collectors now show little affection for them. And really the Edison disc repertoire is a good mix. Sure you find the vaudeville sketches and band selections, the ballads and recitations but there are many operatic recordings. The Edison "house artists" such as Anna Case, Arthur Middleton, Thomas Chalmers and Marie Rappold were popular. Anselmi, Martinelli, Bori and Urlus occasionally feature in collections found here as does Muzio at her best. Flesch and Rachmaninoff, I gather, felt that their talents were wasted with Edison. If their discs had sold as well in America and Britain as they did here, perhaps they would have been less resentful.

In the field of dance music and popular syncopated piano the Edison catalogue was strong, surprisingly so for anyone with an image of Mr Edison personally vetting every record released (actually it seems that by the 20s the Old Man was interested more in the goldenrod rubber project, leaving the phonograph side more and more to son Charles). The company may not have had a band with the fame of Paul Whiteman's but there were hundreds of good bands around then and many a diamond disc machine in New Zealand must have earned its keep on foxtrots, onesteps and waltzes. As for popular piano, I have owned and thoroughly enjoyed discs by Ernest Stevens, Ray Perkins, Muriel Pollock and Zez Confrey, whose *Kitten on the Keys* sounds great on a Chippendale!

"Sounds great"? Yes, I have never had a problem with the sound quality of the discs. The early black-centre ones can be a bit fierce but the clear Edison sound comes through. Many of the later discs are as quietly surfaced as most contemporary lateral-cuts.

So what went wrong? The Long Playing models and the Edisonics are hardly known here but the abundance of Long Playing reproducers and discs found with earlier machines shows that New Zealanders were supporting the company as late as 1927. Perhaps several factors combined. Electrically recorded lateral-cut discs may have made diamond discs sound "weak" by comparison. Mr Woledge used to claim that an Edison machine might not be as loud as the opposition but its sound would carry further! Perhaps the spread of radio hurt sales, more so as the company never did have a really low-price machine despite years of asking by frustrated dealers. Perhaps more record buyers wanted particular artists, be it Frank Crumit or Chaliapin, and went where they could get them.

All this must read like a partisan promotion — if this were an old car magazine, I would probably just happen to be advertising a quantity of the very same gear for sale. No, it is just that the diamond disc was very much to the fore in New Zealand when it was new and remains popular with collectors. Its lack of success in other parts of the world surprises me.

By Gavin East

DIAMOND DISCS

Edison Long Playing Records are no larger size than ordinary short-playing records. If the same amount of music, however, were to be recorded on the old-fashioned record, it would have to be as big around as a dining room table. There is a mile and a quarter of music groove on these new records.

Edison Long Playing Records cut the cost of phonograph music in half. Six minutes of music on the ordinary short record costs at least 75 cents. On the Edison 40 Minute Record, it costs only 38 cents and on the 24 Minute Record only 44 cents. Never before was good music so economical or so convenient.

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH COLUMBIA No. 2

1901

MODEL AJ

FIRST STYLE

We are indebted to Larry Schlick for the excellent photographs he has sent us of machines in his collection, what we believe to be the next model.

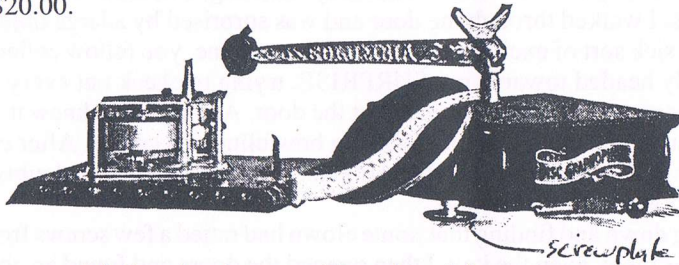
Has a single spring motor wound from the top the same as the trade mark Elridge Johnson machine.

Has a seven inch turn table, threaded spindle top with a screw plate to hold record down. A leather elbow, cast aluminium horn support and a brass belled horn.

The motor has a four ball governor on base board, nicely carved edging, with a slip over the top, all made of Oak.

This cover is some times missing, it is the only Columbia model which is wound from the top. It has an ornate carry handle fitted to one side.

The reproducer is a small one, the width is $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches and the depth is $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches. In 1901 it was sold for \$20.00.



AJ Graphophone, with cabinet top removed.

Illustration taken from the Columbia Catalogue

REPLY TO RUSSIAN ZONOPHONE RECORD LABEL INQUIRY

In regard to the Russian record label illustrated last issue, I can provide some information. I can read Russian, albeit with some difficulty. This is written in an archaic script and there was a change in some of the letters used in the alphabet in 1918. This predates that time.

The top word, above the label is easy, it is simply *Gramophone*. The words below the label are a little difficult. The first word could be *the Best* and the last two words are *You Peace*. The first word may not be a good translation. It could mean something like 'providing' or 'bringing', but not literally. The idea being that the gramophone brings you enjoyment and peace of mind.

The words in a straight line below are something like *Cost, Durability, Quality*. Then below that *Without Competition* and at the bottom *New Model*.

I cannot make out the Russian writing on the record itself as the reproduction is too indistinct, except it is written by Tchaikovsky and the last word is *Orchestra*. Otherwise I could give you a translation of the label.

As I do not know where the writing came from I can only guess that it was on an envelope which contained the record and is an advertisement for the new model gramophone.

I hope this is of some interest.

Kindest regards from James F. Lowe,

49 Kingston Parade, Heatherbrae, NSW 2324, Australia.

DECCA NURSERY GRAMOPHONE

A Decca 'nursery' gramophone (see illustrations), turned up in an auction in Christchurch recently. The case has colourful images of popular nursery rhymes, and the machine appears to date circa late 1940's — early 1950's. It is interesting to note that the diaphragm in the soundbox is well protected from the possibility of children damaging it with their small fingers, and the winding handle appears to have a 'clutch' type arrangement preventing the machine from being over-wound.

David Peterson

A LUCKY FIND

Having been collecting gramophones/phonographs for the last eight years or so the interest was starting to wane. I decided to concentrate on ONLY Phono's, knowing a BC Columbia or Opera will happen to come my way one day. I have always enjoyed looking at the bits and bobs at auction houses. Having a little spare time one Wednesday morning, I headed to a couple of viewings before the auctions. I walked through the door and was surprised by a large object at the back of the room. Yes that sick sort of excited feeling went through me, you fellow collectors know what I mean! So I slowly headed towards my SURPRISE, trying to check out every other object but somehow my full concentration had been left at the door. As I neared, I knew it was a very large gramophone, possibly and early electric, amazing how blind one can be. After crawling all over my find, I slowly lifted up the waste needle container, only to confirm my doubts — 'HMV 202' — all the people close by moved away?

So after calming down and finding that some clown had rattled a few screws from the tone-arm, everything else was there, even the key, I then opened the doors and found an absence of screws around the wood grill. Removing the grill I found that the person had removed the — HORN — what the H——L for?

Numerous thoughts went through my now sore head but what the heck, I decided it was worth having a phone-bid but didn't dream of ever owning this type of machine. Running short of time, I headed off to do a small job. Finished the job in record time, decided to get in touch with Dick Hills as he was familiar with these machines. As I informed him of my find the phone went quiet, Dick! Are you there? Thinking he had either dropped the phone or was taking a closer look at the floor, Dick!! are you there? Yes, Brian, tell me more, came the reply. More was not enough for Dick, so we did a very quick trip back to the auction with about 45 minutes to spare before the start. I decided to carry on with my phone bid and sat patiently waiting for the call from the auction house. The phone rings and I'm bidding. After a few tense minutes, I became the proud owner of the 202.

After informing a few people in the Society, of my success, I was told that finding a horn would not be so easy; I have now mounted a 163 Re-entrant horn, with much ease. All that was required was two stays of wood mounted on each side to secure the horn. I then made up two 'Z' brackets to secure the sides of the horn to the original mounting blocks, all being stained and painted. I have chosen to do it this way as it might take some time before the correct horn turns up, but I am willing to wait, as I plan on pursuing my hobby for another 40 years or so — that's if I don't get moved out into the garage! Happy hunting! Brian.

P.S. If you know of a lonely 202 or even a 193 horn looking for a home please drop me a line — 152 Dyers Pass Road, Christchurch 8002, New Zealand. Email: breid152@xtra.co.nz

By Brian Reid

Reprinted from "THE PHONOGRAM", May 1900

Printed each issue for those interested in Phones, Graphs, Grams and Scopes.

Devoted to the Arts of Reproducing Sound.

(Part 6)

Swiss dairymen have discovered that cows will give one-fifth more milk if soothed by sweet melody at milking time. Consequently a milkmaid with a good voice commands a higher price than otherwise. Possibly at no distant day the cows may be entertained with Phonograph concerts during the milking time, or better yet, the prima donnas of the future may measure their relative values as vocalists by the amount of milk they can coax from the charmed cows.

"Is this new play immoral?" asked the friend. "No sir," answered the theatrical manager. "Are you sure?" "Absolutely. The demand for tickets has been the smallest of any week since the house was opened."

— from The Washington Star

To be continued

F



F is for FARMER
All through his labors
Out in the barn
Entertaining his neighbors.

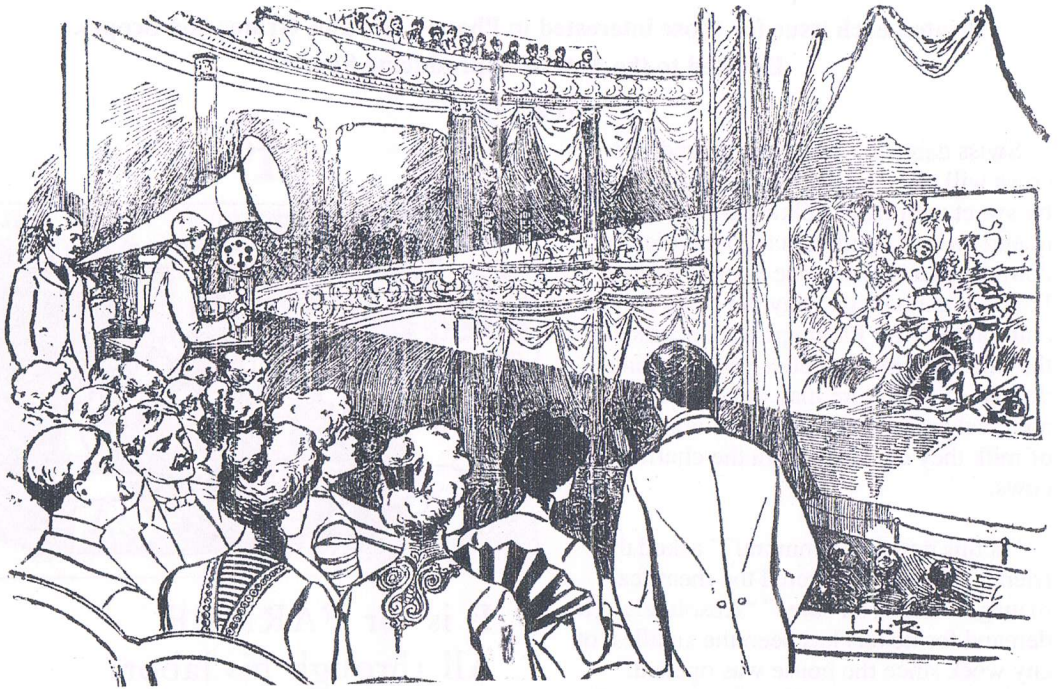
LANTERN AND PHONOGRAPH

An Evening with Song Pictures

While spending a few days last summer in the beautiful village of Wayne, Me., I learned that Pastor Erwin Dennett of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., and also a former Pastor of Wayne, was to lecture on a certain evening in the Town Hall on "The Flag That Never Knew Defeat;" the lecture to be illustrated with the lantern and the Edison Phonograph.

The evening came and found me among the large audience of townspeople who had assembled in the Town Hall to hear their former Pastor. At 8 o'clock the hall was darkened and after one or two opening scenes, suddenly the most beautiful of earthly banners, the Stars and Stripes appeared on the canvas. The lecturer repeated a little poem entitled "Our Old Flag" and then loud and clear there came from the Phonograph the beautiful song "The Flag that has Never Known Defeat." As the words rang out through the audience:—

"Uncover while the flag goes by!
'Tis Freedom's starry banner that you greet.
Flag famed in song and story.
'Tis Freedom's flag — Old Glory —
The flag that has never known defeat."



and with the beautiful picture before the audience, the effect was thrilling. As the lecturer proceeded to speak of the horrors of war, there was flashed upon the canvas a picture of "The Night before the Battle," the boys sleeping on the ground with guns stacked by their side. Then with wonderful distinctness came the old song, seeming to come from the field itself,

"Just before the battle Mother
I am thinking most of you
While upon the ground we're lying
With the enemy in view."

No one can realize unless he witnesses it, the impression made by the combining of that picture with that dear old song of the past.

But as the lecturer went on, the exciting scenes consequent upon the opening of the war with Spain, began to pass before us; the recruiting tent on Union Square, N.Y., the crowds about the bulletin in front of the great newspaper offices, and at last a regiment marching down Broadway on their way to camp. Then, as in imagination the audience stood on the sidewalk amid the cheering crowds, suddenly a military band began playing that beautiful march "Under the Double Eagle."

Why it seemed as if we were really in New York seeing the boys off to camp or the front.

Incident followed incident, until at last we reached Manila Bay, May 1st, 1898; and then a beautiful picture flashed on the canvas; and Dewey stood before us on the bridge of the Olympia directing the fight. The audience went wild as Frank Stanley's strong voice was heard "When Dewey comes sailing home again."

Step by step we were taken through the destruction of the Merrimac by Hobson, the death of Bagley, the destruction of Cervera's fleet and scenes about Santiago; when the troops rushed up the hill at San Juan, the Phonograph began playing, "The charge of the Rough Riders." The clatter of the horses hooves, the firing and the yells of the men could be distinctly heard, and as the cry rang out, "Three cheers for our gallant Colonel," the face of Roosevelt appeared on the canvas and the enthusiasm rose to high pitch.

But there were good things yet to come. As the speaker dwelt upon the loss of our men by battle and disease there came upon the screen the picture of a soldier dying in the hospital camp. Round about him were the Red Cross nurses, the chaplain and an army officer. Amid profound silence the Edison Quartette began singing "Break the news to Mother" and as the audience looked upon the picture and heard the singing, men and women were in tears all through the audience.

But one of the most thrilling moments of the evening was when Cassi the chief trumpeter of the Rough riders began sounding the bugle calls of the army. There on the canvas, on his horse, was the bugler, his cornet to his lips sounding his calls over the camp. It was one of the most realistic moments of the evening, and as he sounded "Taps" as given over the graves of Captain Capron and Hamilton Fish, the picture dissolved into a beautiful view of the Rough Riders graves by moonlight. The effect can hardly be described.

The lecture was illustrated by about ninety beautiful views, many of them coloured. The closing scenes represented the city of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to earth as shown by the angel to John on Patmos; and while the lecturer was describing it as the city where no bulletins will be issued and strife will be unknown, there came sweetly floating on the air the beautiful solo "The Holy City." The audience went away charmed with the effect of the wonderful combination of picture and music.

A more apt and ingenious arrangement I have never witnessed and everyone said that the Edison Phonograph excelled anything that they had ever heard.—*Spectator*

Taken from "The Phonogram", August 1900

HARRY LAUDER

Breaking the Record

There are a couple of gramophones about the house somewhere, and mention of this reminds me that I have not told you my experiences the first time I sang for one of the big companies. I was ushered into the "recording room" and placed in front of an enormous "receiver".

When the orchestra and the operator were all ready I was told to "fire away". I proceeded to "fire". I managed the first verse all right and then sprang my first "gag". But I forgot where I was and waited for the applause. Deep stillness reigned supreme! I couldn't help it — I burst out laughing and fell off the stool on which I had been placed to bring my mouth up to the level of the receiver. The operator rushed out from his box, the musicians screamed with merriment — and the record was spoiled.

"This is the daftest thing I ever did," I remarked on scrambling to my feet. "Fancy singin' a sang into a big tin tube! Look here," I said to the manager, who was standing by holding his sides, "hoo much am I to get for this, because there's nae use o'bein daft if yer no to be well payed for't?"

There was more laughter all round, and then I was told that my fee be — well, the figure was all right, mind I'm not tellin' ye!

"Ca'awa'," said I, "I'm yer man".

The next record was a great success. I have since sang hundreds of times into the gramophone and phonograph, but I always remember the day that I fell off the stool!

Taken from a book about Harry Lauder.

Supplied by Bob Wright.

BRING BACK VINYL!

Bring back vinyl!!! Well, the call never worked to Bring Back Buck Shelford either. CDs are compact disks, robust and convenient to use, but they have a serious drawback compared to vinyl — the range of titles available is really very limited. New releases are plentiful of course, but the back-catalogue re-issues are mostly mainstream popular artists.

A lot of artists from the sixties and seventies are impossible to find on CD in New Zealand — even the popular ones — original albums by Paul Simon for example. Mega-selling acts too — where are the early Pink Floyd albums? Are you finding those earlier country albums? There are literally thousands and thousands of both popular and obscure artists and titles that people want to acquire and will never find locally on CD.

So why are so many titles unavailable? In the UK, for instance, with a population of about 60 million, titles are deleted once they sell less than 300 copies per year. This equates to just 15 copies a year in New Zealand, clearly not worth the bother to multi-national record companies. And in the case of independent labels, cult artists, and obscure titles, local sales figures get vanishingly small.

This issues of availability is one of the factors creating the renewed demand for vinyl. Unlike the old shellac 78s, there was never anything “wrong” with records. Vinyl was a mature technology when it was superseded by Cds. As a result, good quality vinyl is becoming a medium for collectors to gain access to music that they will never find on CD. If second-hand record shops focus on diversity rather than volume, unlike retail outlets that rely on volume sales of relatively few titles, then they should be able to cope with the prospect of selling just one copy of a title every few years.

Prior to the arrival of vinyl, 78 rpm records were pressed in two sizes — 10 and 12 inches. Ten inch records were typically used for releases by popular artists — swing and dance bands of the time, whereas the 12 inch disc was the preserve of ‘serious’ music — the classics.

The ideal of the three and a half minute pop-song originates from the time constraints imposed by 78rpm, three and a half minutes was the maximum playing time available on a 10inch disc. A 12 inch disc gave four and a half minutes of playing time, not much extra from today’s perspective, but a 30% increase over 10 inch discs, so that a 35 minute classical item required “only” eight 12 inch sides rather than ten 10 inch sides. (HMV’s Meistersinger took up 68 sides!)

When vinyl came along, Columbia’s 33rpm LP was seen as a very attractive replacement for 12 inch 78s, with substantial gains in both playing time and sound quality, and it was in fact conceived to suit classical music. The new playing time corresponded to the typical duration of a classical work, and the low surface noise was a significant development for the playback of the quieter classical movements.

The same was true for the 7 inch 45rpm disc developed by (RCA) Victor. Whilst sound quality similarly improved, the need for low surface noise was less of an issue for “bright and brassy” popular music such as jazz. A there was very little gain in playing time compared to a 10 inch 78.

In the early 50’s, there was no interest in the 45rpm disc outside the USA, in the States, working people were sufficiently affluent to acquire the new record players and popular music in the

format. In contrast, Europe was still recovering from World War II, times were austere, raw materials were very limited, and only the wealthy could afford the luxury of upgrading gramophones and records. Whilst some ordinary folk could afford to buy records, buying into a whole new format was out of the question.

All these factors meant that 45 rpm was a lame duck outside the USA. The perception was that vinyl was a "high-end" product, suited to 33 rpm LPs, whose attributes were appreciated by the classical music market only. As a result of this view, 78s hung around in the popular music field until the end of the 50s.

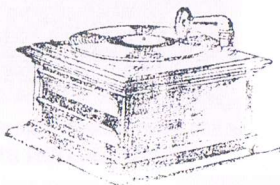
Collectors of older vinyl LP titles will know that thrill of flicking through a boxful of someone's throwouts and coming across that elusive LP, usually with an attractive photo of the artist, and a lot of information on the back. It may just be a personal preference title or one of those rare and valuable finds. There is something about a vinyl LP, that a CD might never have, however old it gets. Or is that just nostalgia on my part?

(Thanks to Larry of Alltime Records, Box 5642, Wellington, NZ, for the basis of this article).

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286 LAMBTON QUAY
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THOMAS EDISON

The boy who loved experiments

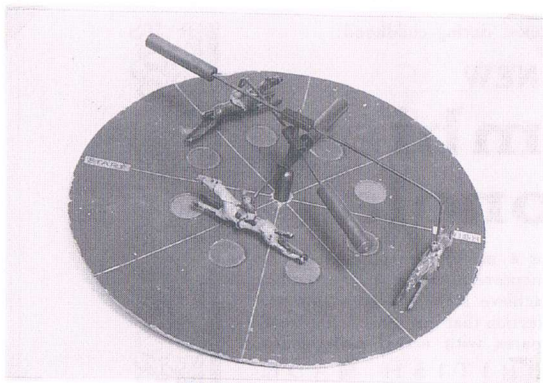
One sunny autumn afternoon in the year 1850 the little Ohio town of Milan was brimful of activity and excitement. More than six hundred wagons had come in since the morning, all piled high with grain from the vast cornfields of the west, and the giant elevators were hard at work transferring their loads to the sailing vessels, of which a small fleet lay moored upon the canal.



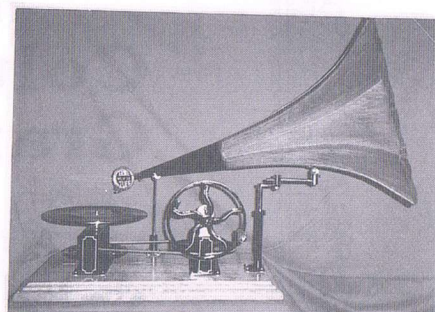
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THREE DIAMOND DISC MODELS

But it was not to watch this loading of the ships that the people of Milan had gathered down by the canal on this particular afternoon. That was an everyday affair now, and they were getting used to it, though it was not so very long ago that Milan had been a pretty, quiet little village, with no canal and no grain warehouses and only about a hundred inhabitants. To-day all eyes were fixed on six great covered wagons which were carrying treasure-seekers and their baggage out to the newly-discovered goldfields in California. They were almost ready to start now, and every moment the excitement grew more intense.

Among the crowd stood a tall, dark-eyed woman with a fine, thoughtful face. She was holding by the hand a little boy of about four years old, who wriggled with impatience in her grasp. He was a delicate-looking boy with a beautifully shaped though unusually large head, and bright eyes that looked eagerly round for a chance of escape. Presently the chance came. With cheering and shouting the first of the wagons was set in motion, and the little boy's mother let go his hand that she might wave a farewell to the adventurers. Away went the child, and in a moment there he was in the thick of things, slipping between the wagon wheels, trying to peer under the covers, cheering the straining horses, watching how the great wheels turned smoothly on their axles. But he came back quite safely to his mother, who had been terribly frightened when, missing him, she had seen him so perilously near the great hoofs of the horses.

She had many such frights in the years that followed, for there never was a boy more apt at getting into scrapes than young Thomas Edison. He had an immense and eager curiosity and he would go anywhere and anything for a new experience or a new piece of knowledge. Almost from the time he could walk he loved to be down on the tow-path of the canal and among the big wagons, and when he grew a little older the grain warehouses and shipyards were his favourite playing places. He was in and out of his father's timber yard, watching the men cutting shingles, asking endless questions, making all sorts of experiments. He picked up the odd pieces of wood and made little plank roads leading from point to point on the tow-path; he climbed into all sorts of dangerous places to get a better view of something that interested him.

Once he fell into the canal and his terrified mother saw him borne into the house dripping and unconscious. Once hurried messengers came to say that Tommy had fallen into a huge pile of wheat and was being smothered, and she watched in agony while men hastily shovelled and spread the heap until the little boy was extracted from its depths, calm and unhurt. A little later he came home with blood pouring from a finger of which the top had been clean cut off; he had been holding a skate strap while another boy sharpened an axe upon it and the axe had slipped.

Another day there was a big blaze behind the house, and men, rushing up, found that a large barn was on fire. Young Thomas Edison, it was discovered later, had built a fire within it for purposes of his own, and the fire had spread, and he himself had only just escaped being burnt with the barn. This, his father felt, was too much, and, according to a stern practice of the day, seven-year-old Thomas Edison was publicly whipped in the village square. He had been whipped before with the switch which was hung up behind the old grandfather clock, but this public punishment was a far more serious affair. It did not, however subdue the intrepid young adventurer's spirit; neither did an encounter which he had a little later with an infuriated ram. He was digging out a bumble-bees' nest near the orchard fence when the ram charged at him, knocking him roughly against the fence; but he kept his wits, and managed, bruised and bleeding as he was, to climb up and drop over to the other side in safety.

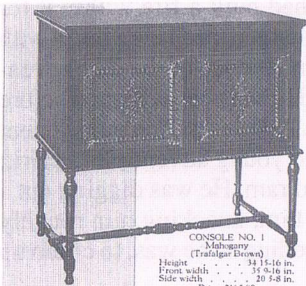
When he was about nine years old the family removed to Port Heron, near the boundary line between Canada and the United States, and here Thomas was sent to school. School seemed to him a very dull place after the bustling activity of the warehouses and shipyards. It did not interest



MOROCCAN LEATHER



ENGLISH TELEPHONE



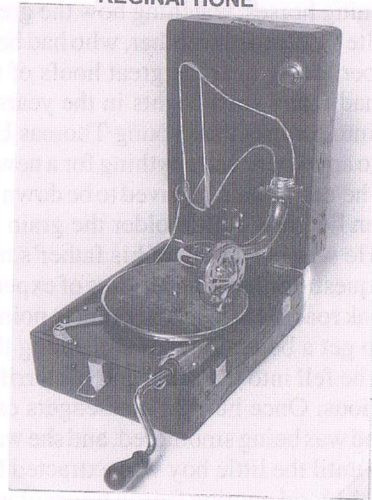
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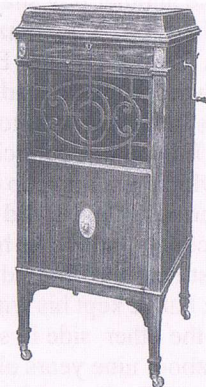
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him; he was bored by the lessons and made little attempt to understand them, and his teachers thought him a very stupid boy. When, after he had been three months at school, the Inspector paid his visit, Thomas distinguished himself by a show of extreme ignorance and dullness, and the irritated master declared that his brain must be addled. This remark roused Mrs Edison to great indignation and she took her son away from the school at once, declaring she would teach him herself. She was a clever, highly educated woman, and the experiment was quite successful. Thomas learned more from her than he would ever have learned at school. He learned to love books and reading and to understand that if he wanted to master any subject he must work at it hard and patiently.

The subject that interested him the most at this time was chemistry. He cleared out a part of the cellar and put up some shelves on which he arranged the bottles which held such chemicals as he could procure. He got hold of a book called Parker's *School Philosophy* and began to work through all the experiments given in it; but he soon found out that he needed a great deal more apparatus and many more chemical substances than he could obtain from the household stores and his father's workshop. So he set to work to earn some money for himself that he might supply these needs.

The Edisons lived in a comfortable house, with a well stocked farm and a large garden that produces far more eggs and fruit and vegetables than the family were able to consume. Thomas asked his mother to let him sell what was not wanted, and she agreed. So with the help of Michael Oates, a Dutch boy employed by his father, he loaded a barrow every week and took it round the town. His wares were good and fresh and his prices moderate, and he found many customers. His mother allowed him to take a certain proportion of the money for himself, and with this he bought the things he needed for his experiments.

His laboratory in the cellar now began to look very business-like. He soon had more than two hundred bottles on his shelves, all of them carefully labelled "Poison" to scare away inquisitive intruders, and the experiments went on merrily.

One of these experiments had a somewhat disastrous result. Thomas became interested in the action of gases that were lighter than air and he persuaded Michael Oates to swallow a large number of Seidlitz powders in the hope that the gas thus generated within his body would help him to fly. Instead it sent him rolling in agonies on the floor, to poor Mrs Edison's intense alarm. The switch came from behind the grandfather's clock and was used with good will, but Thomas was nearly twelve now and switchings had little effect upon him. He was very glad when Michael recovered, and he decided that particular experiment must be written down as unsuccessful and not to be repeated.

Soon the pence that came to him from the sale of vegetables proved insufficient to buy all the apparatus and materials his ambition required, and he cast about for some way of earning more money. He applied for the post of 'train-boy' on the Grand Trunk Railroad between Port Huron and Detroit. The train-boy had the privilege of selling newspapers, fruit and other articles to the passengers on the train, and if he were a good salesman he often made quite a considerable income. Thomas, to his great delight, obtained the post, and his parents, though they thought him young for such work, allowed him to take it. He had to start from Huron at seven o'clock in the morning, and he reached Detroit at ten; he spent the day in Detroit and came home by the evening train, which arrived at half-past nine. But the long hours did not hurt him. He had been delicate when he was a child, but he had persisted in behaving as if his body were strong enough and tough enough to enable him to bear any amount of exertion and fatigue, and it ended by becoming so.

Taken from "Boys and Girls Who Became Famous" (To be Continued)

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