



The Phonographic Record

Journal of the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

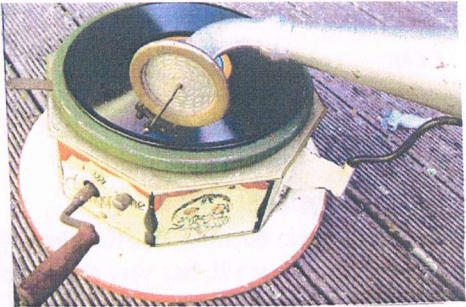
Volume 45, Issue, 1

October/December 2009

BINGOPHONE



BINGOPHONE THREE VIEWS



PICTURES ON CASE



UNUSUAL ZONOPHONE

THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD

VOLUME 45, ISSUE 1

OCTOBER/DECEMBER 2009

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

We are fast approaching the end of another year with only one meeting yet to be held as well as our annual Christmas function.

Our members have been most helpful with providing material for this issue of the magazine. The committee also has agreed for another issue in full colour.

We have good stocks of parts including horns.

Your editor and secretary wish all members a very Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2010.

Walter Norris
Editor

ILLUSTRATIONS

Front cover

BINGOPHONE

Robert Sleeman obtained this little beauty, and demonstrated it at a meeting at his home. Although small, has very attractive designs on the sides of the case, an attractive machine.

ZONOPHONE

This model we have not seen. This picture was taken at Donley's Swap Meet.

VISIT TO TIMARU

Picture taken left to right, David Peterson, Alan Brehaut, Gavin East
Tony Airs, Roger Brown, John Shaw, David Peterson, Gavin East, Walter Norris
Tony Airs, Gavin East, Alan Brehaut, John Shaw, David Peterson
Walter Norris, John Shaw
Alan Brehaut with his Symphonion music box.

QUEENS DOLLS HOUSE RECORD

See article by Mr Crook

AUTOMATIC VICTROLA MODEL 1A

This machine was offered on eBay and quoted as rare. We in New Zealand believe this to be so. We have not seen a complete machine like the one illustrated in this issue and believe this is a Transition Model.

Your Editor, has one of this Model H.M.V. made in England, but incomplete. The horn, Record Changer, Reproducer and Turn Table all missing. The Electric Motor, which is unusual, came with it, and has an Eddy Current Motor Works like a Power Meter with a Ball Governor. We would like to hear from any member who has seen one. There is no horn and the previous owner tried to make it all electrical with an electric amplifier and speaker.

What would you like? This is a box of spare parts in the Shlick Collection.

Back cover

UNUSUAL POSTER

See article by Gavin East

RECORD DUSTERS, another article by Gavin East.

See article, Delights of Dusters

FINCH MUSEUM owned by Fulton Finch

Last year we were taken to a first class museum in Milton which we can recommend you visit if any member is in the area. It is just off the main road, is a private museum, and is one of the best organized I have ever been to. Everything in order and in its place.

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would now like to give my report to the 44th Annual General Meeting of the Society. In these days of financial uncertainty the Society appears to be secure and progressing nicely.

The magazine continues to its high standard thanks to the dedication of Walter Norris who has now added coloured photos for our enjoyment. Walter has been producing the magazine for approximately the last 37 years, what an achievement! Thank you so much Walter.

Parts are continuing to sell well. My thanks go to the people involved in manufacturing the parts to a high standard and Gavin East who looks after, sells, packages and posts these items for us as well as keeping our financial records. Thanks also go to David and Wilf for all the behind the scenes jobs they do, and to Shirley who continues to very capably tackle the secretarial duties for us.

Members' attendance at meetings has been good and we have had very interesting meetings at the New Brighton Museum and Oxford Museum during the year. I would like to thank members who willingly open up their homes to us. This does make for comfortable, warm meetings, especially during the winter months. A visit by the society to Alan and Lorna Brehaut's private museum was a highlight for the members who took part. One of my concerns with membership is that there are no new members coming in, nor are there any young people interested in joining our society. The society's collection on display at the Oxford Museum is still drawing interest from the general public and the children love the dancing Rastus.

Lastly, my sincere thanks to everyone, including those international and local members who correspond with us; without your input, help and enjoyment of collecting, the society would no longer exist.

I have enjoyed my time as President and would like to thank you all for your help and support over the last year.

Roger Brown.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

By Wilf Boon

February Meeting

Once again we have to thank Gavin East for making his home available to hold the 23rd February meeting. The number present was a little depleted with the absence of Joffe Marshall and Walter and Hilda Norris but there were still ten members able to attend. Roger Brown (chair) opened the meeting 8.00pm with apologies, five in all, and then continued by saying he had expressed the society's sympathy to our member Bob Searle on the recent death of his mother who had reached the wonderful age of 95.

Arriving in the mail this month were various overseas magazines and also an interesting letter from Canadian member Paul Dodington, including the reason for why his home was being given a Maori name, a bit unusual I would think for one living in Canada. Paul tells us that his home known as "Wharerah" is located on a cliff overlooking the water of the beautiful Musoka Lakes, and was first established as a summer hotel or boarding house in 1913 by a late aunt Annie Dodington and school friend Gladys Hughes. It was Gladys, having spent some time in school in New Zealand, picking up a little of the Maori language who named the home "Wharerah" which means "The house of the Rising Sun" - A name which describes the beautiful sunrise over the lake.

In General Business - The sale of various machines in local shops and on Trade Me were discussed and later Gavin produced two recent additions to his record duster collection plus recent purchases of Staffordshire figures and 18th century Delft pottery. The evening closed listening to some of Gavin's recently acquired Edison diamond discs. Two in particular were the recordings of "Nola" and Ramona" and these were later followed by supper.

March Meeting

It was with much pleasure that the March 23rd meeting was able to be held at our home here in Bowenvale Avenue. Fortunately, at this time of the year the evenings are still reasonably warm and darkness doesn't fall till about 8pm so that those attending were able to admire the beauty of our Bowenvale Valley which at the moment is still very green. Those present at the meeting; Roger Brown (chair), Wilf Boon, Derek Cockburn, Lyndsey and Bill Drummond, Gavin East, Walter & Hilda Norris, David Peterson, Robert Sleeman & Bob Wright.

There is little to report this month apart from Gavin apologizing for omitting to record that the 2007-8 accounts have been filed with the Companies Office and that Roger is looking into alternative quotes for our insurance, just checking out the market. Roger also asked if arrangements could be made to confirm a definite date to visit Alan Brehaut a Timaru member.

Quite a bit of interest was shown when Gavin produced a fairly rare 78 record in very good condition he had recently found. It was a Columbia 10" 78 long playing record of "Long Long Ago" & "The Little Brown Jug" both titles being recorded on the one side) and was originally sold by the K. More Company in Christchurch.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm with the invitation to attend supper served by Pam Boon.

April Meeting

The April 27th meeting took us to "Waipapa", Swannonoa, the home of Walter and Hilda Norris with nine members attending. The meeting got underway 8.15pm with Roger Brown who brought us up to date with the previous meeting. I think it would be most appropriate at this point of time to compliment Roger for his professional approach and the enthusiasm he has shown in taking over the position as President. His efforts are much appreciated.

The visit to Alan Brehaut's has been rescheduled to the 13th of May. At Roger's suggestion, it was agreed that we present Alan with a copy of Ivan Taylor's recent

book on the history of horse-drawn coaches and the early days of travel in New Zealand.

In General Business - As usual Walter had found something from his long time collecting that was of much interest to look at. It was what is called "The Crook's Radio Meter" a slightly more modernized version of the original 1877 invention which was invented by William Crook - Briefly, the radio meter which resembled an incandescent light bulb in shape, demonstrated how four vanes with different coloured surfaces - black and white - suspended in a vacuum could be made to revolve simply by being exposed to the sun or just a common light bulb. Within a few seconds the vanes will revolve quite rapidly and continually until the source of light is withdrawn. And finally Joffre Marshall showed the initial stage of his next model steam engine project and this brought the meeting to a close around 10pm and then it was time to enjoy the lovely supper Hilda had prepared, it was a very good evening enjoyed by all.

The next meeting in May will be held at the home of David Peterson.

SOCIETY TRIP TO TIMARU

By Roger Brown

In May 2009, another trip to Alan and Lorna Brehaut's wonderful collection was arranged. David, Gavin, Walter, John, Tony and Roger set forth on the two hour trip to Timaru. As usual we stopped in Temuka for lunch and then on to Timaru.

A warm welcome was received from Alan and Lorna who gave us afternoon tea to sustain us for our tour of their collection. Time certainly goes quickly when one is looking at and listening to so many beautifully restored machines. Alan showed us his recently restored acquisitions and we listened to them in awe.

A highlight for the group was to hear the DuoArt playing, Alan also collects early lighting, oil lamps etc and these are beautifully displayed and a joy to look at. Time as usual had run away and we reluctantly took our leave.

A big thank you must go to Lorna and Alan for their hospitality and another very enjoyable day.

EDISON TELEPHONE

Edison was the first person to introduce a transformer in his telephone to overcome patents. He invented a loud speaking telephone. See last Issue.

The principle of this telephone is printed below

Edison's Electro-chemical Telephone

This telephone works on a principal which has not yet been touched on, and which was discovered by Edison. If a sheet of blotting-paper which has been soaked in a saturated solution of caustic potash be laid on a flat surface, and a strip of platinum-foil be drawn along its surface, a certain amount of resistance to motion will be experienced, owing to friction between the two surfaces; if the paper be now joined to one pole of a battery, and the platinum strip to the other, it will be found that the friction will be considerably diminished, and that the amount of this diminution will vary with the strength of the current flowing.

Fig. 1 illustrates the manner in which Edison utilized this principle in the receiver.

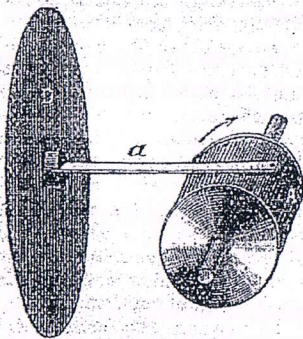


Fig. 1- Edison's Electro-chemical telephone

The transmitter used is the ordinary Edison Transmitter above described, or another transmitter will answer equally well. Instead of a sheet of paper, he used a cylinder, A, Composed of lime, caustic potash, and mercuric acetate, which was mounted on a spindle and made to rotate when desired in the direction indicated by the arrow. Upon this cylinder pressed a piece of springy platinum, a,

which was joined at the other end to the central part of a large mica disc, D, which played the same part as the iron diaphragm in the Bell receiver.

If the cylinder rotates in the direction indicated, and a certain amount of friction exists between it and platinum, it is clear that the platinum will be pulled in the direction of the cylinder by a definite amount depending on the amount of friction existing between them; and it is clear that the mica disc will be kept in a strained condition, its centre being pulled by the platinum strip. If a current be now passed from the platinum to the cylinder the friction will be diminished, and the disc will partially return to its original position owing to its elasticity.

If these currents be sent frequently enough, the disc will vibrate at a rate sufficient to produce sound. If the pulsating currents generated in any ordinary transmitter

be sent through it, the disc will vibrate and emit sounds similar to those which were communicated to the transmitting instrument. The cylinder is usually turned by hand, and the sounds emitted may be made quite loud; in fact, this is often known as Edison's Loud-speaking Telephone.

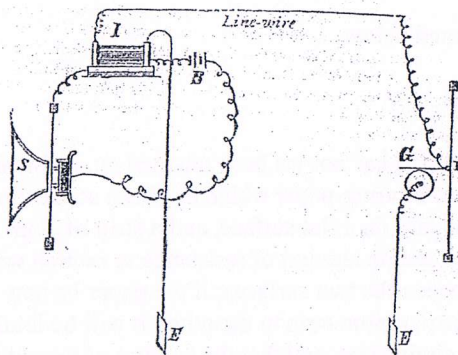


Fig 2 - Edison's Electro-chemical telephone

Fig. 2 is a diagram of the connections where this instrument is used. At the sending station, *s* is the transmitter, *I*, the transformer, *B* the battery, and the line is shown with the ends connected to earth. At the receiving station, *P* is the mica disc, and *a* the platinum strip pressing on the prepared cylinder, which is shown joined to earth in the usual manner.

20TH CENTURY BC SUCCESS

Bill Dunn

The repair and restoration of the Columbia BC does not differ from that of any other phonograph machine except for the area of sound reproduction.

If a part is missing, there are two options;

- (1) Scrounge for the missing part from the phonograph collecting community (with the BC it can be likened to finding hens teeth)
- (2) Have the missing part cast from an original, if the original part is available. This however demands that the collector has the hand skills to turn the rough casting into the finished part.

The Columbia BC is a solid machine and unless the part is missing, the motor, upper deck gearing and shafts, should not require more than a clean, service, polish and/or nickel. I have just finished the restoration of three BCs and have found the wear in moving parts is generally not detrimental.

So what is the real problem with the BC? The reproducer (damaged mica, missing or broken stylus, or stylus bar, missing or broken brake shoe assembly)

The stylus bar assembly, can easily be hand made and a stylus fitted. A damaged mica however, is a different proposition because it is very difficult to remove without further damage. A replacement mica is nearly essential if one wants to

have the reproducer housing renicked. The risk of the mica "layering" is high. If successful, clean and polish with "Autosol". Liquids are a no, except if the two mica layers part; the old shellac must be removed gently (no scratching) a cloth damp with metho is used to gently rub to soften and remove the old shelac. The heart of the BC is of course the brake assy and as life would have it, the most easily damaged or destroyed through rough handling, neglect or just old age. Age and wear deteriorates the partly vulcanized brake shoe and hanger assy, although some still survive in working order.

The good news is that this assy, can be remade. The amber brake wheel if cracked or chipped can't be repaired but it can be replaced.

I have had success turning wheels from a block of amber and turning replacement brake assembly from nylon rod, which allows for the pinning of the hinge elements.

Having successfully produced a brake wheel and brake shoe assembly, the really difficult task is just beginning! The linkage bars joining the mica to stylus bar should be the same size as the original (these were made of aluminium and often they are worn or broken at the hole end). A light constant pressure should be applied to the diaphragm and this is where the spring wire attached to the stylus bar linkage is the most frustrating to get correct in both gauge and shape.



This notch is at the stylus bar linkage and prevents the linkage sliding along the wire when the stylus is lowered to the cylinder.

An excellent decal set for the BC is available from the US (Pattie Valenti) apsco@antiquephono.com

I have included a DVD and a CD with some files so that you can print off some photographs. The DVD has a few minutes of a BC playing with one of my brake assembly.

Happy days.

AN UNUSUAL HMV POSTER

By Gavin East

This colourful and unfamiliar poster of (I would guess) c. 1930, 28 inches wide by 20 high not including the frame, turned up not long ago in a local antique auction. It is probably a relic of a record shop somewhere in New Zealand as the auctioneer concerned had previously sold a number of HMV artist posters in similar crude frames.

VICTROLA



MODEL 1A



VICTROLA GRAMOPHONE

TOP DECK



CHANGER ARM



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE



TOP DECK CLOSE VIEW



LARGE RE-ENTRANT HORN

VISIT TO TIMARU



DAVID PETERSON, ALAN BREHAUT,
GAVIN EAST



TONY AIRS, ROGER BROWN, JOHN SHAW,
DAVID PETERSON, GAVIN, WALTER NORRIS



TONY AIRS, GAVIN EAST, ALAN BREHAUT,
JOHN SHAW, DAVID PETERSON



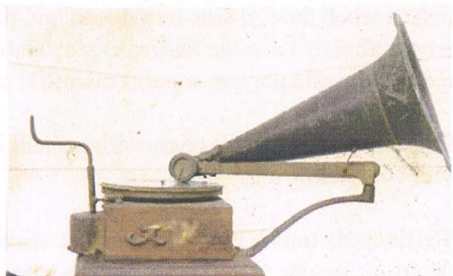
WALTER NORRIS, JOHN SHAW



QUEENS DOLL HOUSE RECORD



ALAN BREHAUT WITH HIS SYMPHONION
MUSIC BOX



FROM SCHLICK COLLECTION

The picture shows Pan with his pipes, squatting on a red label HMV record and surrounded by figures symbolic of music in its many forms. I take it that the Beef-eater at upper left represents "The Yeomen of the Guard" by Gilbert and Sullivan. The poster is signed "Sep E Scott" and a quick search on Google shows this to be Septimus E. Scott (1879-1962), a prolific English painter and illustrator who designed some of those famous railway posters of the 1920s and 30s.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

Courtesy Timaru Herold

Just as vinyl once gave way to compact discs as the main physical medium for music, could CDs be replaced now by a fingernail-sized memory card?

Perhaps not entirely, but SanDisk, four major record labels and Australian retailers Best Buy and Wal-Mart Stores are hoping that albums sold on microSD memory cards will at least provide an additional stream of sales.

The companies are expected to unveil plans to sell memory cards loaded with music in the MP3 format, free of copy protections.

Called "slotMusic," the new format is meant to address two intertwined trends. Most albums are still sold in a physical format - 449 million were sold on CDs in 2007, while 50 million were sold digitally, according to Nielsen SoundScan - yet CDs are decreasingly popular. Albums sold on CD dropped almost 19 per cent in 2007.

Given this, the record labels - Vivendi SA's Universal Music Group, Sony BMG Music Entertainment, Warner Music group and EMI Group - are hoping slotMusic can be another physical revenue source and one that is more versatile than CDs, given the kinds of gadgets people carry around these days.

Unlike when the CD was introduced and people had to buy new players, many people already have the ability to play slotMusic albums, since many cell phones and multimedia players support microSD cards.

These new albums will come with a small USB dongle that lets buyers use them with computers, too.

"Particularly in this kind of economic climate, the idea of being able to use an electronic device you already own to enjoy music rather than going out and buying a dedicated player is pretty compelling." Said Daniel Shreiber, who heads the audio-video business unit at SanDisk, which created the microSD Card format and is working on the technology behind slotMusic.

THE DELIGHTS OF DUSTERS

By Gavin East

Ironic, I suppose that I should be so keen on record dusters when any house of mine could be named "Dusthaven". Not a speck of dust out of place, that's my motto. If I have worked out where to put something on a shelf I want to know exactly where to put it back. Anyway, dusters (or record cleaners - or cleaning pads - or buffs - or brushes) have appealed to me since the day in 1966 when I found my first one, from the Nelson dealer Andrew Balting, in a gramophone in a second-hand shop in Richmond, near Nelson. No, I didn't slip it into my pocket but nor did I have to buy the machine as the shopkeeper was happy to take a few bob for the duster. Over the years some more came my way but even in those days they were scarce, a gramophone containing one being very much the exception rather than the rule. Two dusters did appear fairly often: the wooden "doorknob" HMV (hard to find in unscratched condition) and the dark metal Columbia with the hinged handle.

I was more interested in dusters like my first Balting one: circular, flat-topped and with what appeared to be a layer of celluloid over aluminium. Some looked like record labels, usually Columbia or Brunswick, some advertised particular shops. One thing they had in common was tiny print on the rim acknowledging a 1922 patent of the Philadelphia Badge Co. of, not surprisingly, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. I kept a lookout for "Philadelphias" with New Zealand record shop names and slowly built up a collection at the rate of one or two a year. The pace quickened with the advent of the Internet and Trade Me but I think most collectors in New Zealand would agree that record dusters are hard to find. I now have a reasonable coverage of New Zealand dusters from Whangarei to Dunedin and am very pleased when a "new" one comes my way.

My collection poses several questions to which I don't have the answers. For one thing, who made them? Were they made in a factory in Philadelphia to order from record shops in faraway New Zealand? Was there a salesman in a Ford Model T roadster chugging round the country with a case of samples and telegraphing orders back to Philadelphia? Or were they made somewhere closer under licence? And the designs - does a Brunswick one for a New Zealand shop mean that the shop owner chose the design from the Philadelphia Badge Co. catalogue or would such a duster have been supplied though Brunswick? My guess is that individual shops commissioned dusters from the Philadelphia Badge Co. through an agent and that the dusters were actually made by the company in Philadelphia - but I would be glad to be corrected by anyone with more information. Google brings up heaps of references to the Philadelphia Badge Co. as a producer of political campaign buttons. The company does not seem to exist any more. I emailed the public library in Philadelphia and asked if they knew of a company history or other infor-

mation. They referred me to a few advertisements in old advertising trade publications but could find nothing more. Still, it was nice of them to try to help.

When were the New Zealand Philadelphia dusters made? From around 1922 one might assume. Nearly all my ones have a "feel" of the 1920s and references to Edison, Cheney and Cliftophone machines would seem to point to a pre-1930 date. Some mention radio but I can't recall seeing a New Zealand named duster that appears to date from later than the 1930s. Coverage of the country is also something of a mystery. There are dusters from shops I have not otherwise heard of but none (so far) from likely sources such as Edison Hall in Christchurch.

So much for New Zealand, but of course the internet has opened the door to a whole world of dusters, many of them much more striking than anything so far found here. For example there are the dusters with photos of popular recording artists. On eBay there are almost always yellow dusters, appearing to date from the 1940s, advertising Bing Crosby, the Andrews Sisters and other stars. Of more interest to me are some very attractive maroon dusters showing Okeh artists of the early 1920s. there are at least four in this "series": Vincent Lopez, Aileen Stanley, Sophie Tucker and the blues singer Mamie Smith. I have the first two but am not losing any sleep over the others as these Okeh portraits, along with other choice early dusters such as the beautiful one made for the American department store Strawbridge and Clothier, can fetch over US\$250 on eBay. This sort of price has caused much wailing and gnashing of teeth on collector websites but there you are, supply and demand and it's not exactly in the league of stamp collecting.

It was only recently that it occurred to me that, while I have seen Philadelphia dusters from the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and I think there are South American ones, I haven't seen any from Britain or Continental Europe. An English collector tells me that they do not seem to have been made for English shops which instead relied on the standard ones made by the big record companies.

The internet and eBay have also introduced me to Australian dusters and this is an area where our transTasman members could no doubt add a lot to my knowledge. There are highly attractive (and usually expensive) Sydney and Adelaide dusters which are similar to Philadelphias but do not carry the inscription. A Vocalion in my collection has on its rim "AE Patrick, maker, 94 Wilson St., Newton, Syd" but most have no rim marking. These Australian-made dusters very often carry a lot of script and have an earlier look about them. A few months ago I obtained via eBay what I consider my best duster, the Sonora one from EF Wilks Ltd., Sydney. It was disfigured by a paint or ink line right across it but to my great relief this proved water soluble and came away with half an hour's rubbing with damp cotton buds. This Wilks duster, with its reference to "all makes of disc records stocked", to me

has a look of about 1916, certainly earlier than 1922.

You won't be surprised to learn that I approach Trade Me and eBay every time with hopes of an unfamiliar duster! It's good for me to miss out on a few as it doesn't do to take this collecting business too seriously, does it? Dusters have their advantages. They don't break, they don't take up much space and they are cheap to post. Most clean up nicely with a damp cloth. It is sad to see a damaged one as I don't think anything can be done to repair cigarette burns or mouldy discoloration under the surface (the latter common on dusters from warm, humid Auckland). Fakes and reproductions don't seem to be an issue at this stage. I haven't tried to deal with all those wooden, leather etc. dusters which probably predate Philadelphias by many years, but did see on eBay what purported to be a Berliner duster. It was wooden, rectangular from memory, with the National Gramophone Co. transfer as found on American machines of c. 1898. I regarded this object with much suspicion, justified or not.

DOLLS HOUSE RECORD

Query from Jim Crook

I have recently acquired an HMV small record only one and five sixteenths in diameter details which follow:

It is an HMV record and sleeve in very good condition and was owned by an elderly lady who collected dolls and of course had a dolls house. I understand there is an HMV gramophone in the Queen Mary's doll house Exhibition in Windsor Castle and that 35,000 of these records were made and sold for sixpence. I understand this is the only gramophone made that will play these records and would like info if this is correct and at what speed the record should be played at.

Jackie Bishop, manager of EMI Archives advises:

Jackie is not sure if the gramophone was generally available for purchase. The original is on display with the doll's house at Windsor Castle and EMI Archives have the masters for the record at the EMI Group Archive Trust.

The website www.emiarchivetrust.org gives the following details about the record: "This record was made specially for Queen Mary's Doll's House, and the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley of 1924. It measures just 3.4cm across and plays 'God Save the King' (sung by Peter Dawson). It was made together with a miniature gramophone, which measured just 10cm, and was an exact replica of a

HMV Cabinet Grand Gramophone. The cabinet and motor took four months to make. Both the gramophone and record are complete in every detail, from the record label and sleeve for the disc, to the trademark under the lid of the gramophone. A total of six different records were made for the Doll's House, and due to popular demand The Gramophone Company made replicas of the 'God Save The King' disc for public consumption.

They were sold through accredited dealers for 6p each.

SCHLICK COLLECTION

By Larry

Many collectors ask me how I came to have about 450 machines. So here is the answer, I bought them on trips to Pennsylvania where my wife's parents live and from there I went to flea markets in the East Massachusetts. Connecticut, all over. This was in the late 50s and you could buy Edison Homes or Standards with horns and records from \$5-\$7, disc machines were about \$15-\$20. I would come back with 25 plus machines on the rack on the top of my 1967 Chevy station wagon. And, of course, I stopped at EVERY shop coming or going along the way (you never knew what they might get in on my way back).

There was another way I increased my collection, in both antique guns and phonographs. I worked as a photographer for a very good daily small town newspaper which based its reputation and circulation on it's rural coverage.

Every spring farmers would get together and help a sick or disabled neighbour to plough and plant his fields for summer crops ... and in the fall they would also gather to help him harvest his corn or beans. And each time our rural newspaper would send their "prize winning" photographer to get a group picture of the 30 to 40 farmers gathered there. After the picture this same photographer would ask his "friends" if any might have an old gun or talking machine they would be willing to part with. This photographer would take the names of any who raised their hand. It was hard to talk some farmers out of their small brass bell horn as they used them as funnels to put oil in the tractors.

TUMBLEWEEDS MAINSTAY 'KIND, GENEROUS'

By Sarah Harvey, Printed Otago Daily Times, Saturday, October 31

Nola McCrorie was a "generous, kind, multi-talented lady" who for almost 40 years was the backbone of the hit country music group, the Tumbleweeds.

Mrs McCrorie died recently in Dunedin Hospital.

She was 80.



The Tumbleweeds have been called New Zealand's first major recording stars and were certainly the first true country group to be commercially recording in New Zealand. Mrs McCrorie was one of the four founding members of the band.

Colleen Nola Hewitt was born in Dunedin in 1928, the youngest of five children. Her father worked in a bakery and then later in the control room of a taxi business. She went to George Street School, Caversham Primary and Kensington Primary before going on to King Edward Technical College, finishing in about 1943.

After leaving school she was employed by printing company Coulls Somerville Wilkie Ltd, before securing a hairdressing apprenticeship at Zeitha Salon in central Dunedin. On completion of her apprenticeship she worked in more salons, before becoming manageress at Dreaver's Salon on George St, after which she set up her own salon - The Gardens Salon, in Northeast Valley.

After several years she returned to King Edward technical School to brush up her typing and then secured a job in the office of the Dunedin Teachers College before starting in the legal firm of Webb Brash Ward and Co, which later combined with other firms to become Webb Farry. She worked her way up to head legal typist, a role she would continue to thrive in until her retirement in 1985.

Her husband, Colin McCrorie, said Nola was born with musical talents because her mother had played the mandolin while pregnant with Nola, and Nola herself was playing mandolin by the age of 4. She went on to become proficient on the ukulele, guitar and the electric bass guitar. She also had a "beautiful" and "absolutely unique" singing voice, Mr McCrorie said.

During her teenage years, she and sister Myra were in a band and they were later joined by Cole Wilson to broadcast a song. The song was heard by Bill Ditchfield, who went on to start the Tumbleweeds. Ditchfield was at the time in the Hawaiian Serenaders with McCrorie, and Nola had been a hula dancer for the band.

He asked Nola and Wilson whether they would like to start a "cowboy"-style group with him and McCrorie. In 1949, the Tumbleweeds was formed and their first programme was broadcast. The same year Tanza (To Assist New Zealand Artists) paid the group's costs to go to Wellington to make their first records, including *Maple on the Hill*, which sold 80,000 copies.

At the end of 1951, the group set off on an eight-month tour of New Zealand with the Tumbleweek Show. Nola's sister Myra joined in time for the tour.

Mr McCrorie said the group was seen as one of the pioneers of "show business" in New Zealand.

On March 1, 1952, Nola married Colin in a double wedding with Myra and Cole Wilson, at First Church. They had taken about 10 days off from the group's tour for the wedding.

Four years later, Nola and Colin bought a house in Signal Hill Rd, Opoho, where Mrs McCrorie would live until two years before her death, when she moved into Ross Home. The couple had no children, but Mrs McCrorie kept many cats, which she loved like children, Mr McCrorie said.

In 1973, the group toured the South Island with Canadian country performer Hank Snow and in 1974, Nola was a judge at the first Gold Guitar Awards in Gore. She was subsequently invited to be a judge on several other occasions.

In 1985, the Tumbleweeks were awarded the New Zealand Country Music Association Pioneer Award. In 1988, the group was inducted into the Hands of Fame at Taupo and in 1997, the Gore Gold Guitar's Hands of Fame.

Mr McCrorie said his wife was also an accomplished ballroom dancer. Her brother, Dave, taught her to dance, and for three years in a row they were Otago amateur ballroom dancing champions.

Mr McCrorie said people remembered his wife for her generous and kind nature and her many talents.

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Edison Fireside Top cover (lid) for Edison Fireside. Jim Crook, 7 Heynes place, Clive, Napier, New Zealand

o HMV Lumiere or parts for restoration project

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Please contact David John. DDj@infogen.nett.nz or phone 06 378 6328.

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An organisation of enthusiasts interested in the collection and preservation of the artifacts of sound recording and reproduction and research into their evolution. The PSSA NEWSLETTER, containing interesting articles and news, appears eleven times a year. Relevant books and reprints are also sold. Annual dues (Australian currency); NZ, Asia and South Pacific \$28.00; Rest of the World \$32.00; Write to: the Secretary, PSSA, P.O. Box 235, Kent Town, S.A., 5071, Australia. Phone and Fax (+61-8+ 8261-9953. E-mail: etaylor@granite.com.au

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Canadian Antique Phonograph Society:

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