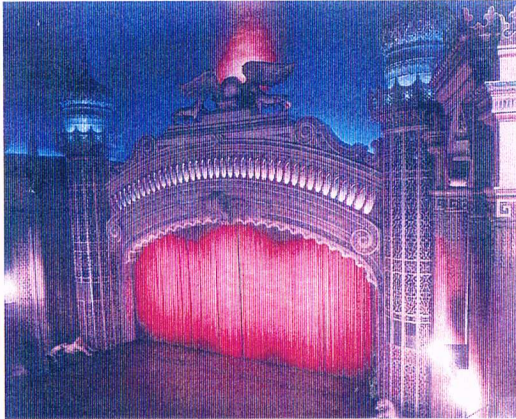


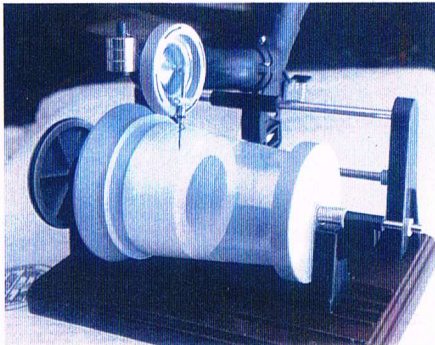


The Phonographic Record

Journal of the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand
A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound
Volume 46, Issue 3. Mar/July 2011



PROSCENIUM, CIVIC THEATRE



CLOSE UP



REX LABEL



**NEW EDISON CUP
PHONOGRAPH**



VICTOR MODEL O

THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD

VOLUME 46, ISSUE 3

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For your information

We are grateful for all the material which we have received to include in this issue of The Phonographic Record and we thank members who have written, emailed etc telling us how they enjoy our magazine.

In this issue we include photographs of the Christchurch Edison Hall before and after the Christchurch earthquakes.

We have a good number of early issues of The Phonographic Record which are available at cost of postage only.

Payments in Foreign Currency

We are in the process of moving the Society's cheque account from the National Bank to Westpac, partly for ease of branch access and partly because of bank fees. The National Bank now charges \$15.00 to deposit a foreign currency cheque which absorbs most of the value of, for example, a subscription renewal from Australia. For now at least, Westpac charges \$5.00.

So we have to ask that all payments by cheque in a currency other than New Zealand dollars have \$5.00 added to it to cover the bank deposit fee.

Walter Norris
Editor

ILLUSTRATIONS

Front cover

Proscenium Civic Theatre

See article by Les Stenersen

Rex Label

New Edison Cup Phonograph

These are made in Japan and are new

Close up on the same machine

Two Metal Coins

Left hand one, RCA Exhibit and official color television communication centre.
Right hand one, Light for Freedom, Power for Progress. Commemorating Thomas A Edison's invention of the first incandescent lamp October 21, 1879.

Victor Model O

Photograph taken at one of Donleys Shows, asking price \$1950.

Plate 2

Melba Gramophone

On sand with picture at rear of a Melba Record - "Mad Scene" from Hamlet.
Signed note "To my Dear Maria, from devoted friend."

Reproducers and winding handles

Edison Light Bulbs

Reproducers, handle and ear phones

Money Bank

These were produced in my youth, to encourage children to save. In Issue I Volume 46 was a Magic Metre illustrated. These were banks, which registered the amount put in them, on the dial on the front

Two Cabinet Gramophones

Picture of a Melba Motor belonging to Roger Cole - see article

Machine Collection of various models including Columbia cylinder. Camera phone and record Dancers.

Coin and Plate collection dated 1877 - Augst 12 1935; note the coin for Diamond Jubilee 1879-1954 and the Clay Edison Bust

Stamps

Marconi featured on Canadian stamp and telephones on a Guernsey one.

Back Page

An interesting organ owned by Lynn
Bilton (left) pictured at a Donleys Show

Larry Schlicks workshop

Original Buckle in a cellophane cast - Cost \$3.22

Polyphon

A German machine larger than a Victor. All original except for horn. Owned by Terry Lewis

Player Phone Disc Record

Close up of Polyphon

Showing re-producer and tone arm

An Organ-ised Story

By Les Stenerson

In my mid teens I was a regular in Auckland N.Z. Mostly on a Saturday night I would travel to the centre of the city and if it was not a full house would get a ticket to the Civic theatre.

The Civic was a magnificent cinema built on leased land owned by the Auckland City Council with a lease of 60 years. The Cinema had a Wurlitzer organ (which had the largest lift in the world rising to 38 feet) and a gondola barge which rose up in front of the stage. The whole theatre and foyer is decorated in a Moorish or Hindu style, set in an auditorium which created the impression that the audience is seated in an open air amphitheatre. Children were heard to say what happens if it rains mum? In the ceiling the stars were like the southern hemisphere and the cloud machine gave the total impression that the cinema was open to the sky.

After the film was finished I used to sneak down to the front of the balcony and wait while the Wurlitzer and the Gondola rose up with the Gondola orchestra playing and accompanied by the Wurlitzer organ. Under the balcony there was a cabaret with a dance floor and when the music started after the movies the dancers could be seen to commence dancing for the night.

I was fascinated by the sound of the Wurlitzer Organ and wondered where all the sound was coming from. Little did I know until later that large chambers containing hundreds of pipes make the sound of the Wurlitzer, and the console where the organist played was the control centre for the pipework, piano and other percussion instruments.

One day many years later I noticed an advert in the local paper advertising the Civic Wurlitzer for sale and I vigorously campaigned for the organ to be kept in N.Z. But it was announced that it would be sold to an Australian collector. Fortunately when the Australian saw the difficulty involved in removing the organ he gave up the project. Then came Len Southward (Later Sir Len) who removed the organ and transported it to his museum in Paraparaumu.

Some time later I received a call from a Wellington collector offering me a Wurlitzer piano console and various pipework, which I purchased from him.

Amongst the pipework was a rank of Wurlitzer pipes, all the rest were church organ pipes. I later received a phone call from another collector in Wellington asking if I would be prepared to sell him the Wurlitzer pipes which came with

the piano. I asked him why he wanted these pipes and he said that he had purchased the Wurlitzer which had been installed in the Regent Theatre in Auckland's main street Queen Street. The Regent Wurlitzer had been installed in 1924 but when the Civic organ had been installed in 1930 the Regent organ was very little used because the Civic organ was so much larger, so it was sold in 1934 to a High School in Wellington. During a severe storm the roof of the High School was damaged and water got into one part of the Wurlitzer. It was advertised for sale and the collector who phoned me had purchased it.

I went to Wellington with the intention of selling the rank of pipes but instead I purchased the Wurlitzer with a deposit of \$100. Fortunately I had a very large collection of phonographs and Gramophones and I was able to sell off half of my collection which gave me the \$10,000 I needed.

A truck and trailer were obtained by a donation from a friend with two 20 foot containers which were driven to Wellington and the whole Wurlitzer was loaded into the two containers and transported to the local cinema near where I live. A group in Auckland helped to unload the containers onto the stage behind the screen. Fortunately there was a large space behind the screen to take all the parts which looked like the largest jig saw puzzle you ever saw.

An organ builder friend and many helpers got to work to restore and rebuild the Wurlitzer into the Cinema. This only took five years of spare time! Until we had the first concert, the takings of which I donated to the Auckland Spinal Unit. \$2,500. The organ was on a lift which had a turntable on top so that as it came up it turned to face the Audience. The piano was on a platform on the opposite side of the proscenium and was played remotely from the organ console.

I arranged concerts with overseas and local organists for about 10 years and then I sold the Wurlitzer to a Trust which increased the size of the organ to the same as the Civic organ and still runs concerts to this day. This organ which is housed in the Hollywood cinema at Avondale Auckland is referred to by visiting overseas organists as one of the finest organs in the southern hemisphere.

After a while being without an organ I decided to purchase a Fairground organ but this is another story.

A couple of lesser known gramophones

By Roger Cole (Nelson)

From time to time I do a bit of repair work for a local antique dealer and several months ago he brought me a few machines, including a very rough HMV Melba table model. It has a broken spring, the sound box was missing and some scumbag had drilled a large hole in the side a bit to the rear of the winding handle and fitted an escutcheon to it, for what purpose I have absolutely no idea. I could see it had some potential and managed to secure it as recompense for the repair work I did.

Then towards the end of last year we were in Marlborough and in an antique store there I spotted an HMV Tasman table model. I didn't buy it at the time, but after coming home and thinking about it for while - I have never heard of an HMV Tasman - I decided to try to get it and managed to do a swap for a spare HMV 109 and a cash difference.

The Tasman looked to be of a similar vintage to the Melba and enquiring of the Society - in particular trying to determine the correct sound box for the Melba - I found that there was a 1923 catalogue copy available listing HMV models that were made for the Australasian market and both of these models were included, detailing for both a No 2 sound box. In the meantime I had corresponded with an Australian member and he established that the last of the Exhibitions was correct for the Melba, (based on a collector he knew in Australia who had one), so I got one of them from him. The Tasman came with a Mark 3 Exhibition and I cannot imagine anyone substituting an Exhibition for a No 2 as an improvement, so I'm sure the Exhibitions are correct.

There are several differences between the models I have and the description in the catalogue. As you will see from the photo, the motor for the Melba is triple spring while the catalogue lists it as 2 spring with a No 2 sound box. There is no doubt that the motor is original, as there are no extraneous holes in the deck plate and the winding handle lines up perfectly. I think, therefore, that my machine is earlier than 1923 and the Exhibition is more likely to be correct. Also, my Melba is mahogany laminate exterior with maple veneer on the inside of the case while my Tasman is full mahogany. Both are described in the catalogue as maple with mahogany finish. The Tasman has the common double spring motor with both springs in a single barrel.

I have now restored both machines to "used but excellent" condition (see photos). These are two of my more prized machines and evidence that some quite good collecting is still available if one keeps one's eyes peeled. It would be nice to add some more of the Australasian models to my collection - a Zealand, an Austral or a Jenolan would be welcome! I would imagine that the "Bungalow" floor model is also peculiarly Australasian too.

Reports of Meetings

By Gavin East

March 2011

At last report we were hoping to have a meeting at my place in Lincoln late in March if the aftershocks tapered off and people felt more like venturing out at night. Things did settle down for most of us and the turnout at 4a Lyttelton Street, Lincoln on Monday 21 March was great to see. Roger Brown, Derek Cockburn, Lyndsey and Bill Drummond, John and Anne Hastilow, Joffre Marshall, Walter and Hilda Norris, David Peterson, Bob and Nu Wright and Nu's sister Khan all managed to find somewhere to sit on my motley collection of chairs dating back to about 1780. We are sorry to have to record apologies from Wilf Boon, Shirley McGuigan and Robert Sleeman though if a few more had turned up I'm not sure on what (or whom) they would have perched.

After noting with appreciation the many messages of sympathy and support from members outside Christchurch and from our fellow societies in Australia, we moved on to discuss money matters and parts. We have a problem with banking as the National Bank is about to start charging \$15.00 to deposit each foreign currency cheque. Obviously, this will almost wipe out the value of a subscription! I promised to compare the charges of other banks, particularly Westpac. On the parts front, we have a nice new batch of cygnet suspension springs being plated and are sorting out one or two issues with Columbia aluminium horns and HMV Monarch elbows.

A couple of things reminded some of us of the early days of the society. Joffre Marshall often plays his accordion in concerts at rest homes and when performing recently at the Kate Sheppard retirement village met Ivan Skilling, whose cheerful presence at meetings many of us remember from the 1960s and 70s. I'm not sure if we knew this at the time of the meeting but the whole Kate Sheppard complex has now been forced to close because of building subsidence caused by soil liquefaction in the February earthquake. Ivan and the other residents who thought they were secure in their old age have been scattered up and down the South Island and many have had to move in with family. This has been one of the saddest human impacts of the earthquakes.

Ivan Skilling also featured in the group photo of the 1967 Christchurch phonograph convention which Walter had come across. Several happy minutes were spent reminiscing and identifying nearly all the people in the photo.

Until a few months ago Bob Searle was a regular at meetings and enjoyed them though he was obviously not in very good health. Bob has now had to move into rest home care and has asked his partner Piet to dispose of his large collection, most of which has been stored in garages and sheds for thirty and more years. Robert Sleeman helped Piet sort things out and was able to buy some machines, after which David Peterson negotiated successfully for the remainder as a bulk lot. I helped David extract the cabinet models from their closely packed shed. It was an exciting afternoon as there were machines stacked on top of each other and we couldn't be quite sure what was going to emerge! The biggest thrill was exposing a very large and unfamiliar cabinet that might have been an early radiogram. I reached down its right side and said, "Whatever this is, I can feel a winding handle", then, feeling a bit like Howard Carter in Tutankhamen's tomb, we opened the lid to expose the gorgeous gold hardware of a Brunswick Cortez, a huge and expensive model intended as Brunswick's answer to the Orthophonic Vitrola. When we had cleared enough space we took the grille out to reveal a beautiful oval wooden horn. The Brunswick will have to wait its turn on David's restoration list but will be a magnificent monster when its cabinet finish is revived.

In case you are wondering what all this has to do with the March meeting, among the machines surplus to David's requirements was a neat mahogany HMV 181, one of the 'saxophone horn' models of c. 1925 fitted with the No 4 soundbox. I had been reading an enthusiastic article about these machines in the MAPS magazine and had thought it would be rather nice to own one. Well, the 181, after a very nice job of checking and tidying by David, arrived at my place the day before the meeting. I played several 78s on it and I think that everyone shared my approval of its looks and sound.

Not, of course, that anyone got out of the house without hearing some diamond discs on the C-19! In the 1960s Bob Searle had bought from Mr Woledge, the former Edison agent who was our first Patron, a lovely SI-19, the rare inlaid Sheraton Laboratory Model, plus a quantity of records in Edison imitation book boxes. Robert Sleeman has been fortunate enough to acquire the Sheraton though it is very sad to learn that, just after he had polished it and given it pride of place in his living room, the February quake threw it over and snapped one of its legs off. I am very pleased to have been able to buy some of the records, including a good number of electric recordings and played one or two using an Edison reproducer on which Mike Tucker did a great repair job a few years ago. One of the electric diamond discs, "Pipe o'briar" sung by Bob Pierce to his own piano accompaniment, has the most "lifelike" sound of any diamond disc I have ever heard.

April 2011

This report will take fewer words than the last one but that does not mean it was in any way a less interesting meeting. On the evening of Monday, 18 April we paid our second visit to Ray and Nancy Drury's amazing property in Whincops Road in Halswell. Before Roger Brown suggested the previous visit, most of us had no idea that a lifestyle block on the southwest margin of Christchurch housed a large collection of restored vintage and classic cars plus a full size electronic theatre organ. Since retiring from his business, Drury Crane Hire, Ray has been able to indulge his passion for cars and organ music on a grand scale. Rows of immaculately restored cars fill at least two large buildings. The cars are all in running order and on inflated tyres so Ray can start them up and move them around when he needs to clear space for Richard Hore, the well known Christchurch organist, to give a performance on the Allen theatre organ. Ray, Nancy and Richard frequently put on these concerts with the proceeds going to charities such as child cancer research. You can read more about this by Googling Drury Theatre Organ Charitable Trust.

So once again, thanks to Roger's organising, we admired the cars and then took our seats as Richard settled down at the console of the Allen organ and asked for requests. I suggested "The world is waiting for the sunrise" into which Richard launched with great enthusiasm. Walter Norris then asked for the old Carrie Jacobs Bond melody "I love you truly", after which Joffre Marshall requested "Blaze away". It was amazing to hear and see the skill with which Richard handled not only the keyboards and stops but also the many foot pedals. We couldn't help marveling too at the training and patience of his seeing eye dog sitting just behind the organ bench, Richard having been blind since early childhood.

After the recital we thanked Richard, attended to some routine business, gave Ray a \$40.00 donation to the Trust and enjoyed tea, coffee and biscuits before taking another look around the collection and heading home, looking forward very much to the next visit to Whincops Road.

May 2011

For the May meeting we gathered once again at "Waipapa", Walter and Hilda Norris' farmhouse at Swannanoa north and west of Christchurch. The earthquakes have not caused much damage out this way but even "Waipapa" has had its dining room chimney cracked and loosened. Fortunately the living room chimney is intact and we enjoyed, as we have so often, sitting round the huge fire

place with a wood fire blazing away and Walter's venerable hand crank five-inch Beliner gramophone a safe distance above on the mantelpiece.

Trish Matunga of the accountants Gilbert & Associates of Lincoln has been a great help to me and the Society in getting the annual accounts prepared and audited since I took on the position of Treasurer. For several years I have been reminding the firm that they have not actually charged us. Murphy's law being what it is, Gilbert & Associates have chosen a time when our cheque account is low to present us with a bill for \$1,610.00 for work on the accounts for 2006 to 2009. I have spoken to Trish about this wonderful piece of timing and she assures me that we don't need to lose any sleep over it. Somehow our account has slipped through the cracks of their computer system as we have an unusual financial year cutoff date, 8 August. Trish and Gilbert & Associates provide a great service at a reasonable cost so we will get this bill out of the way as soon as we can.

As usual there were interesting letters from members, this time including Paul Dodington in Canada and our longtime US member Larry Schlick who has kept Walter supplied with photos and information since the early days of the Society.

We were rather startled to notice that the latest batch of HMV Monarch Senior elbows had accidentally been chrome plated. As chrome plating is applied over nickel, it has been quite easy to have this corrected. Parts sales are quiet though a cygnet horn and crane kit are heading away to a member in the UK.

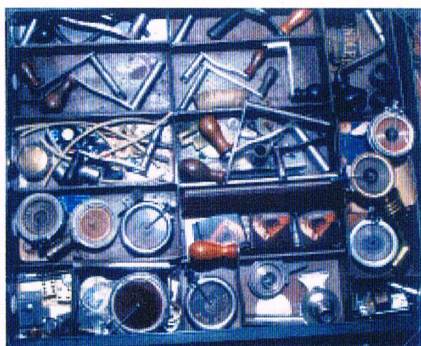
Robert Sleeman thanked David Peterson and me for the help we have given him sorting out and assessing the damage to his collection caused by the February earthquake. I am typing this on 22 June and have to convey the most unwelcome news that Robert's collection was walloped again in the force 6.3 quake centred near his home on Monday 13 June. This time the force of the quake was north to south, the opposite of the previous big one, and Robert was devastated to look into his collection room to see heavy cabinet gramophones thrown over on their backs and much more destruction. David and I will help get things stabilized and protected shortly. These are truly dreadful times to be living through in Christchurch (or what's left of it). We are all on edge expecting the horrible rumble and shuddering of another big shake as happened last night when a 5.4 biffed books and records around again in my place, luckily without causing any more damage.

Back to more positive matters, Walter always has interesting things to show us and this time had fished out of his collection a couple of small Columbia cylinder machine restoration projects, a B almost complete and an AA lacking several major components including reproducer carriage. There aren't many AA's around but who knows, a donor machine could surface on eBay.

After supper we headed out of the Norris homestead, down Two Chain Road and



MELBA GRAMOPHONE



REPRODUCERS AND WINDING HANDLES



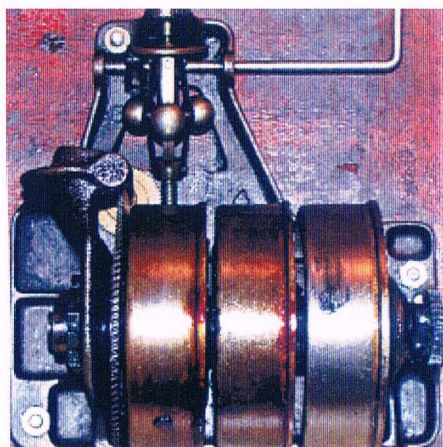
EDISON LIGHT BULBS



MONEY BANK



TWO CABINET GRAMOPHONES



MELBA MOTOR



EDISON HALL BEFORE AND AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE



MACHINE COLLECTION



STAMPS FOR THE COLLECTOR



METAL COINS AND PLATES



most of us, back to town down the long straight of Tram Road. Derek and Marcia Cockburn have offered to host the next meeting at their home in Christchurch - earthquakes permitting!

World Record Controller

William Dunn



In 1923 Pemberton Billing "World" Records were introduced in England. These constant linear speed discs, by rotating slowly at the outer windings in gradually increasing in speed as the pickup crossed the disc, offered up to 8 ½ minutes playing time per side, but they proved unsuccessful for four reasons.

1. A special playing deck equipped with a wheel that tracked the disc surface to control the turntable speed is required, and not all gramophones were suitable for mounting the "World Record Controller"

2. The increased playing time put an unacceptable strain on the needles of the time, which were designed to play only one or two

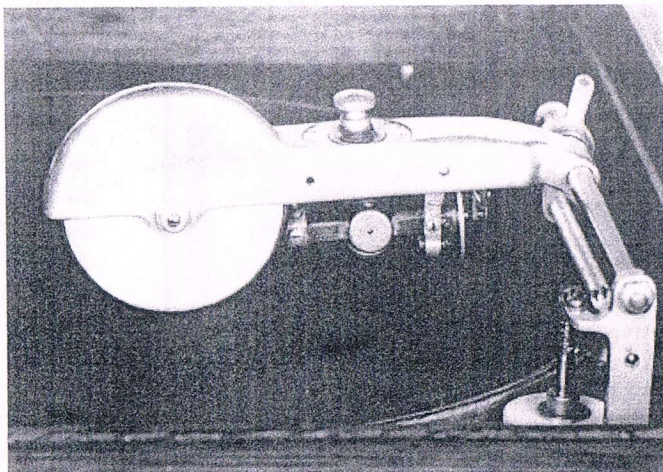
standard sides—they were worn out after 3-6 minutes.

3. At this time many horns still lacked mains electricity and the spring motors of the time were not equal to the Pemberton Billings records extended duration.

4. At 7/6 a record, not sufficient advantage existed for the average listener to warrant the additional expense.

World Records and the World system is however still the best known application of the constant speed disc theory which was accompanied by a mechanism for fitting to gramophones. The "controller" as the attachment was called was mounted alongside

the moved upper part of the steady speed across the record. The upper part incorporated a rubber tied wheel driven by the record surface and driving a conventional friction-disc centrifugal governor. The latter provided progressively less rotational speed to increase. A preset



speed selector control mounted on top of the assembly, allowed the friction plate control to be set on four speeds "A" "B" "C" and "D" with "D" being the fastest speed. All "World" records so far have been The first company to print timings on its labels was World Records of London in 1923. The invention of the variable speed disc was the work of Noel Pemberton-Billing c 1880-1948, an English playwright, aviator and sometime M.P. The records started at 33 1/3 at the edge and finished at 78 RPM at the centre. The concept has since been incorporated in the C.D. More than one track was laid down on each side of the record with one "Blank" or "Run in" grooves between tracks. Later Controllers were equipped with a scale running parallel to the feed screws. A patent selector scale was laid on the record (see plate) and by reading the track numbers from the record the controller could be set at the correct position on the feed screw and the needle could be laid into the correct groove. Not the easiest devise to use!

Time is of the essence!?

In the advertisements and articles of time the length of playing time was greatly exaggerated; some of the claims were'

"3 to 5 times longer than any other record."

"Lets your gramophone play continually without attention."

A record in my possession (No 6) states on the record label

"Plays continually from 10 to 100 minutes!"

It is my opinion that the extended playing time was a byproduct and not the real intent of the invention. The reasons for the development of the "World Record Controller" is the subject of another article.

The History of the Edison Cylinder Phonograph



Phonograph Catalogue/advertisement
"I want a phonograph in every home..."

The phonograph was developed as a result of Thomas Edison's work on two other inventions, the telegraph and the telephone. In 1877, Edison was working on a machine that would transcribe telegraphic messages through indentations on paper tape, which could later be sent over the telegraph repeatedly. This development led Edison to speculate that a telephone message could also be recorded in a similar fashion. He experimented with a diaphragm which had an embossing point and made indentations in the paper. Edison later changed the paper to a metal cylinder with tin foil wrapped around it. The machine had two diaphragm-and-needle units, one for recording and one for playback. When one

would speak into a mouthpiece, the sound vibrations would be indented onto the cylinder by the recording needle in a vertical (or hill and dale) groove pattern. Edison gave a sketch of the machine to his mechanic, John Kreusi, to build, which Kreusi supposedly did within 30 hours. Edison immediately tested the machine by speaking the nursery rhyme into the mouthpiece, "Mary had a little lamb." To his amazement, the machine played his words back to him.

Although it was later stated that the date for this event was on August 12, 1877, some historians believe that it probably happened several months later, since Edison did not file for a patent until December 24, 1877. Also, the diary of one of Edison's aides, Charles Batchelor, seems to confirm that the phonograph was not constructed until December 4, and finished two days later. The patent (#200, 521) on the phonograph was issued on February 19, 1878. The invention was highly original. The only other recorded evidence of such an invention was in a paper by French scientist Charles Cros, written on April 18, 1877. There were some differences however, between the

two men's ideas, and Cros's work remained only a theory, since he did not produce a working model of it.

Edison took his new invention to the offices of Scientific American in New York City and showed it to staff there. As the December 22, 1877 issue reported, "Mr. Thomas A. Edison recently came into this office, placed a little machine on our desk, turned a crank, and the machine inquired as to our health, asked how we liked the phonograph, informed us that it was very well, and bid us to a cordial good night." Interest was great, and the invention was reported in several New York newspapers, and later in other American newspapers and magazines.

The Edison Speaking Phonograph Company was established on January 24, 1878, to exploit the new machine by exhibiting it. Edison received \$10,000 for the manufacturing and sales rights and 20% of the profits. As a novelty, the machine was an instant success, but was difficult to operate except by experts, and the tin foil would last for only a few playings.

Ever practical and visionary, Edison offered the following possible future uses for the phonograph in *North American Review* in June 1878:

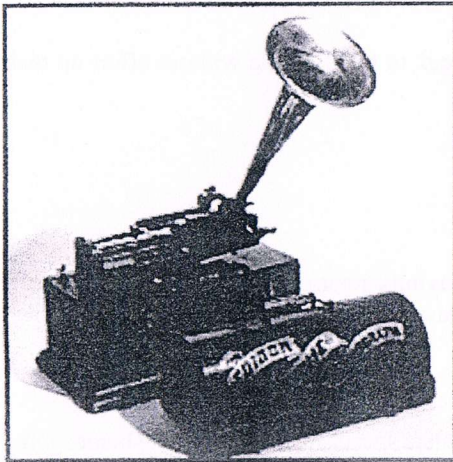
1. Letter writing and all kinds of dictation without the aid of a stenographer.
2. Phonographic books, which will speak to blind people without effort on their part.
3. The teaching of elocution.
4. Reproduction of music.
5. The "Family Record"-a registry of sayings, remiscences, etc., by members of a family in their own voices, and of the last words of dying persons.
6. Music-boxes and toys.
7. Clocks that should announce in articulate speech the time for going home, going to meals, etc.
8. The preservation of languages by exact reproduction of the manner of pronouncing.
9. Educational purposes: such as preserving in the explanations made by a teacher, so that the phonograph for convenience in committing to memory.

10. Connection with the telephone, so as to make the instrument an auxiliary in the transmission of permanent and invaluable records, instead of being the recipient of momentary and fleeting communication.

Eventually, the novelty of the invention wore off for the public, and Edison did no further work on the phonograph for a while, concentrating instead on inventing the incandescent light bulb.

In the void left by Edison, others moved forward to improve the phonograph. In 1880, Alexander Graham Bell won the Volta Prize of \$10,000 from the French government for his invention of the telephone. Bell used his winnings to set up a laboratory to further electrical and acoustical research, working with his cousin Chichester A. Bell, a chemical engineer, and Charles Sumner Tainter, a scientist and instrument maker. They made some improvements on Edison's invention, chiefly by using wax in the place of tin foil and a floating stylus instead of a rigid needle which would incise, rather than indent, the cylinder. A patent was awarded to C. Bell and Tainter on May 4, 1886. The machine was exhibited to the public as the graphophone. Bell and Tainter had representatives approach Edison to discuss a possible collaboration on the machine, but Edison refused and determined to improve the phonograph himself. At this point, he had succeeded in making the incandescent lamp and could now

resume his work on the phonograph. His initial work, though, closely followed the improvements made by Bell and Tainter, especially in its use of wax cylinders, and was called the New Phonograph.



Edison home phonograph

The Edison Phonograph Company was formed on October 8, 1887, to market Edison's machine. He introduced the Improved Phonograph by May of 1888, shortly followed by the Perfected phonograph. The first wax cylinders Edison used were white and made of ceresin, beeswax, and stearic wax.

Businessman Jesse H. Lippincott assumed control of the phonograph companies by becoming sole licensee of the American Graphophone Company and by purchasing the Edison Phonograph Company from Edison/ in an arrangement which eventually included most other phonograph makers as well. He formed the North American phonograph Company on July 14, 1888. Lippincott saw the potential use of the phonograph only in the business field and leased the phonographs as office dictating

machines to various member companies which each had its own sales territory. Unfortunately, this business did not prove to be very profitable, receiving significant opposition from stenographers.

Meanwhile, the Edison Factory produced talking dolls in 1890 for the Edison Phonograph Toy Manufacturing Co. the dolls contained tiny wax cylinders. Edison's relationship with the company ended in March of 1891, and the dolls are very rare today. The Edison Phonograph Works also produced musical cylinders for coin-slot phonographs which some of the subsidiary companies had started to use. These proto-"jukeboxes" were a development which pointed to the future of phonographs as entertainment machines.

In the fall of 1890, Lippincott fell ill and lost control of the North American Phonograph Co. to Edison, who was its principal creditor. Edison changed the policy of rentals to outright sales of the machines, but changed little else.

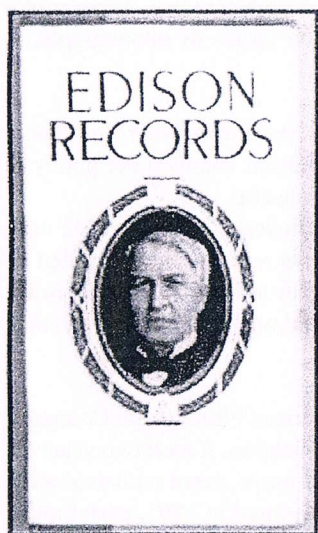
Edison increased the entertainment offerings on his cylinders, which by 1892 were made of a wax known among collectors today as "brown wax." Although called by this name, the cylinders could range in color from off-white to light tan to dark brown. An announcement at the beginning of the cylinder would typically indicate the title, artist and company.

In 1894, Edison declared bankruptcy for the North American Phonograph Company, a move that enabled him to buy back the rights to his invention. It took two years for the bankruptcy affairs to be settled before Edison could move ahead with marketing his invention. The Edison Spring Motor Phonograph appeared in 1895, even though technically Edison was not allowed to sell phonographs at this time because of the bankruptcy agreement. In January 1896, he started the National Phonograph Company which would manufacture phonographs for home entertainment use. Within three years, branches of the company were located in Europe. Under the aegis of the company, he announced the Spring Motor Phonograph in 1896, followed by the Edison Home phonograph, and he began the commercial issue of cylinders under the new company's label. A year later, the Edison standard phonograph was manufactured, and then exhibited in the press in 1898. This was the first phonograph to carry the Edison trademark design. Prices for the phonographs had significantly diminished from its early days of \$150 (in 1891) down to \$20 for the Standard model and \$7.50 for a model known as the gem, introduced in 1899.

Standard-sized cylinders, which tended to be 4.25" long and 2.1875" in diameter, were 50 cents each and typically played at 120 r.p.m. A variety of selections were featured on the cylinders, including marches, sentimental ballads, coon songs, hymns, comic monologues and descriptive specialties, which offered sound reenactments of events.

The early cylinders had two significant problems. The first was the short length of the cylinders, only 2 minutes. This necessarily narrowed the field of what could be recorded. The second problem was that no mass method of duplicating cylinders existed. Most often, performers had to repeat their performances when recording in order to amass a quantity of cylinders. This was not only time-consuming, but costly.

The Edison Concert phonograph, which had a louder sound and a larger cylinder measuring 4.25" long and 5" in diameter, was introduced in 1899, retailing for \$125 and the large cylinders for \$4. The Concert Phonograph did not sell well, and the prices for it and its cylinders were dramatically reduced. Their production ceased in 1912.



A process for mass-producing duplicate wax cylinders was put into effect in 1902. The cylinders were molded, rather than engraved by a stylus, and a harder wax was used. The process was referred to as Gold Molded, because of a gold vapor given off by gold electrodes used in the process. Submasters were created from the gold master, and the cylinders were made from these molds. From a single mold, 120 to 150 cylinders could be produced every day. The new wax used was black in color, and the cylinders had been lowered to 35 cents each. Beveled ends were made on the cylinders to accommodate titles.

Catalogue for Edison cylinder records, September 1911

A new business phonograph was introduced in 1905. Similar to a standard phonograph, it had alterations to the reproducer and mandrel. The early machines were difficult to use, and their fragility made them prone to failure. Even though improvements were made to the machine over the years, they still cost more than the popular, inexpensive Dictaphones put out by Columbia. Electrical motors and controls were later added to the Edison business machine, which improved their performance. (Some Edison phonographs made before 1895 also had electric motors, until they were replaced by spring motors.)

At this point, the Edison business phonograph became a dictating system. Three machines were used: the executive dictating machine, the secretarial machine for transcribing, and a shaving machine used to recycle cylinders. This system can be seen in the Edison advertising film, *The Stenographer's Friend*, filmed in 1910. An improved machine, the Ediphone, was introduced in 1916 and steadily grew in sales after World War I and into the 1920's. In terms of playing time, the 2-minute wax cylinder could

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