

# **The Phonographic Record**

*Journal of the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand (Inc.)*  
**A society formed for the preservation of recorded sound**

Volume 49, Issue 3     June/August 2014



Photo courtesy Norris family

**Walter Norris**

31 July 1927 – 29 July 2014

# THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD

Volume 49, Issue 3

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## For your information

I had hardly thought it realistic to get another issue out before the end of 2014 but Bethany at Lincoln Digital Print reckons we can do it so here we go! Though it is sad to have to farewell Walter Norris, I hope members will be interested in my attempt at a tribute. I am sure that for many years to come, in old gramophone circles the name "Walter" will mean only one person.

Subscription renewals have been rolling in so a big thanks to members worldwide.

I must offer a special apology to members who have asked for back issues of the magazine. The older volumes are not stored in a way which makes collating a set easy. I would like to have them scanned and available on a CD but we have not so far looked into this. Perhaps it could be a project to mark the Society's fiftieth birthday in September 2015. In the meantime I will sort out the print copies as soon as I can.

Gavin East  
Editor

# Obituary

## Walter Norris 1927-2014

With Walter's death on 29 July 2014, two days short of his 87th birthday, we have lost not only a wise friend and entertaining companion but the Grand Old Man of phonograph collecting in New Zealand and the founding father of our society.

Apart from a few weeks in nursing care in Rangiora at the very beginning and at the very end, and a year of secondary schooling at St Andrew's College in Christchurch in 1942, Walter spent his life at "Waipapa", the mixed sheep and cropping farm at Swannanoa which his father had bought in 1918. Listening to Walter's memories of his early life, I used to think of how hard his parents must have worked and in particular what his father achieved. As a very young man Walter's father had to have a leg amputated as the result of an infection. It was not possible to fit an artificial leg so Mr Norris senior had to use crutches for the rest of his life. This did not stop him leasing land and running sheep to build up the capital to buy "Waipapa", already well established with mature trees and a rambling homestead, when he was in his early 40's. He was 50 when Walter arrived to join sister Esme and complete the family.

In his eulogy at the funeral, Walter's son Thomas observed that in many ways his dad had been lucky in his life with even the worst times being followed by better. Born just too late to be called up for military service in the Second World War, Walter went straight from school to happily working with his father on the farm. Though he was only 23 in 1950, the year his dad died after a period of poor health, at least Walter was old enough to take on running the farm with his mother. Economically the 1950's were good years to be farming. In the early 1950's Walter and Kathleen Moore married and started their family of four. Sandra was followed by Jocelyn, then Thomas and Lewis. Kath's death from cancer in 1978 was a shattering blow. Later, when Walter and Hilda met and married, it was the start of a happy new chapter for both.

Though in recent years Walter had leased out most of the farm, he and Hilda continued to live in the handsome two storey homestead built in 1967 to replace the original house. In his 70's and 80's Walter had spells in hospital with congestive heart failure as well as a recurrent balance problem. Until last year he was still quite well but it was clear to family and friends that for Walter and Hilda life at the farm was becoming increasingly fragile, even with great family and social service support. In the first half of this year Walter's strength faded quickly. He came through a bout of pneumonia but passed away peacefully soon afterwards.



If a funeral could be called “good” then Walter’s certainly was. On a fine, clear winter’s day at least 300 people crowded into the venue at Northbrook to hear his four children give thanks for his long and full life centred on family, farm and community (Walter served on the old Eyre County Council for many years). David Peterson and I represented the Society at the interment in the cemetery behind the little Swannanoa Church and it was very moving to see our old friend laid to rest near Kath and his parents, only a few paddocks from the farm he loved.

It was also touching and very heartening to hear the four children talk fondly about their dad’s eccentric habit of bringing home funny old gramophones since Walter, unlike some collectors, kept his hobby in balance with his family and the other strands in his life. His collecting “career” was quite remarkable in that he was so active for such a short time. Though, as his son Thomas points out, he had a lifelong interest in Edison and things mechanical, the collecting spark was ignited only in about 1960 when Walter saw an Edison Gem in the auction rooms in Rangiora. In quick succession he bought more machines, met Pam Rogers and other early collectors, discovered old Mr Woledge, the retired Edison agent, and formed the notion that there ought to be a club or society for people interested in old gramophones. Walter saw himself as saving machines and at this time, when few people were interested in any sort of “antiques”, Edison machines and cylinders were still being dumped. Walter spent the 1960’s actively collecting and then pretty much stopped. By then prices were often higher than he thought fair and he had more than enough to house.

Many collectors will have shared my experience as an absolute beginner in being asked to “Waipapa”, climbing the steep stairs in the old house and staring down the barrel of a wooden horn as I entered a wonderland of ancient machines and records. It was this eagerness to meet other collectors and encourage that motivated him to found the Society with the help of Pam Rogers and Bill Webb and others. Even at his last meetings he was stressing the need for us to find and help new members. Through our magazine and in other ways Walter did more to further interest in early phonographs and gramophones than anyone else in New Zealand.

I am conscious that there is a lot more I could write, for instance about the recent years when we local members were always so glad to see Walter and Hilda at meetings and listened avidly to Walter’s reminiscences. I will be happy to receive memories of Walter from other collectors.





Lewis and Catherine Norris have emailed some family photos from which I have chosen this one of Hilda and Walter, taken in 1996 at a reunion of Walter's mother's family, the Woodfields – Ed.

# THE G & T MODEL 3a 1904-1907

©M. Tucker 2014

When I first saw this machine many years ago I was immediately attracted to it and indicated that if it ever came up for sale I was interested.

The opportunity finally came to acquire it and as I still felt the same attraction, it is now in my collection. (Figure 1)

While this machine is described as being in the No. 3 Series, it bears little resemblance to the No. 3 and the New No. 3, and in fact little resemblance to any other G & T machine.

The cabinet has sloping sides and steam impressed ornamentation, giving it a very distinctive appearance. The support arm has a purpose designed slope to the mounting to suit the sloping side and the “on-side” wooden travelling arm has a self supporting fitting to obviate the need for a rest.

The serial number is impressed in the base (Figure 2)

The horn is 9 3/4 x 15” nickel plated zinc. The leather elbow fits inside a ring on the travelling arm and the reproducer is placed through the opposite side of the ring and into the elbow. A finger screw is then used to tighten a clamp over the elbow to hold it and the reproducer in place. The reproducer is a G & T Concert variety.

The 8” turntable is cast iron with bevelled edge . The brake is a dubious device, mounted to the deck, and which is spring loaded and designed to move under the edge until it reaches the thicker part of the bevel.

The speed control is a knob protruding through the side of the case to the right of the winder.

Unlike other Model 3 types, the motor bears no real resemblance to the Trademark Model, the support casting is entirely different and there is a nickel plated spring barrel with a bevelled gear on top to allow side winding. The drive gear is no longer of the fibre type. (Figure 3)

The machine plays well and is visually attractive.

Thanks as always to Mike for an interesting article on a very neat and unusual front mount or travelling arm machine – Ed.





Walter's family have kindly deposited his scrapbooks and other paper material with the Society. Here we see him with an impressive Edison Triumph at the 1964 phonograph collectors' convention held in Christchurch. This and other photos in the albums may have been taken by Bill Gamble, the photographer for the Christchurch Star newspaper.

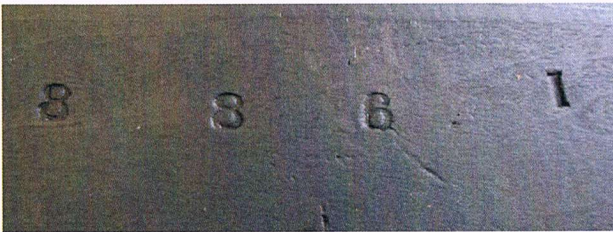


## GRAMOPHONE & TYPEWRITER LTD. MODEL 3A

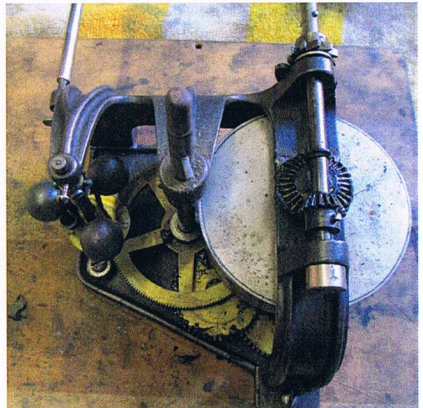
1.



2.



3.

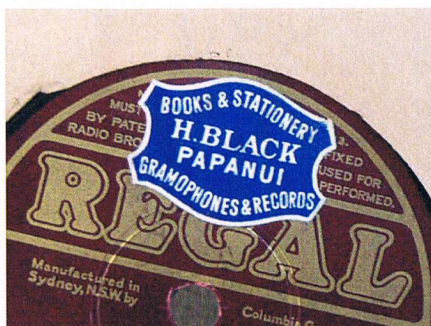




These two photos were taken at the May 2014 meeting at David Peterson's home. In the upper one we see, between David's Opera and L-19, Bob and Nu Wright, Laurence Varlet, Wilf Boon, Robert Sleeman and the Editor.

The lower photo shows Wilf Boon with the newly-restored Columbia BF.





As Trade Me watchers will know from the questions posted on many listings of records and piano rolls, there is now an increasing interest in collecting New Zealand gramophone and music shop labels. Here we see some samples from David Peterson's collection.





# Meeting reports April-August 2014

By Gavin East

For the April meeting we enjoyed Bob and Nu Wright's hospitality at their home in Aylesford Street. This was I guess a milestone meeting in the history of the Society as we thrashed out the pros and cons of continuing to supply parts. I had brought this to a head by stating that I wanted to retire from storing and packing parts. While David Peterson and Robert Sleeman were happy to step in and pack and post orders, storage was another matter with no practicable free long term solution available. With both our main parts makers now retired, we have no sources of replacement stock. Of course we can have any item made but the problem is finding someone to make a small run of a part to the required standard and for a reasonable price. Robert Sleeman observed that the world is a very different place from when we listed our first parts. Not only are there other suppliers of reproduction parts but also original items available via the internet. In the USA there is a whole industry of "parting out" or, as we would say of cars, "wrecking" for parts. All things considered we had to accept that the Phonograph Society's parts operation is no longer viable so with some sadness we set up a subcommittee to manage the withdrawal.

Otherwise the meeting included the usual lively conversation and discussion of recent Trade Me auctions etc. Robert Sleeman showed an unusual plated circular base containing a musical movement and I handed round an interesting recent book covering the wide range of Edison's inventions.

On Monday 26 May 2014 we congregated at David Peterson's home in Cephas Close, Upper Riccarton. After a fairly routine meeting Wilf Boon showed us the very handsome Columbia BF cylinder machine owned by a family connection of his and recently restored with help from David Peterson in locating a governor. As the photo shows, one of the last of our stock of aluminium witch's hat horns really sets this machine off.

David had chosen two excellent records to play on each of the machines in the corners of his living room. On the mahogany Opera we heard Arthur Fields singing "Ragging the chopsticks" on Blue Amberol 3836 from 1919. When I said I hadn't heard this song before, David flattered me by saying he thought I must know them all. No possibility of that, given the stupendous output of Tin Pan Alley! The second Blue Amberol we heard on the Opera was that old favourite "The whistler and his dog", number 3055.



The L-19 Laboratory Model diamond disc machine was fired up for a late acoustic and an electric disc. First, from 1926, when Edison was doggedly sticking to acoustic recording, David played Billy Jones and Ernest Hare singing “Hokey pokey diddle-dee rum” on disc 51677. Then from 1928 we were treated to “Louisiana Bo Bo” on disc 52244 played in great style by B.A. Rolfe and his Palais d’Or Orchestra. I’m a bit puzzled as to why Rolfe is given the title “Trumpet Virtuoso” on his diamond discs when I never seem to hear a trumpet solo – but they are splendid records all the same.

Wilf Boon invited us to his home in Bowenvale Avenue, Cashmere for the June 2014 meeting. After the business part of the meeting Wilf played us a TANZA 78 with vocal by John Hoskins, the brother of Wilf’s late wife Pam.

For July 2014 we returned to Lyndsey and Bill Drummond’s home in Colwyn Street, Bryndwr. By now most of us had learned the very sad news that Walter Norris was in the last days of his life in hospital care in Rangiora. Roger Brown promised to keep us in touch with any developments.

David Peterson described a satisfying gramophone motor repair done for a non-member who had contacted the Society – a type of request which is becoming more and more common. Robert Sleeman showed us an interesting collection of cylinder musical box parts obtained recently. As there is one large, good quality complete movement along with two tune sheets, one of which is probably for the complete mechanism, there is potential for rebuilding at least one box, whether with a new case or using an old one – though caseless movements and empty cases seldom seem to fit each other!

Continuing a rapid survey of this series of meetings, August 2014 found us back at my home in Lincoln. The final sales list had generated a number of large orders for which David Peterson and Robert Sleeman had done great work packing and posting once I had extracted the ordered parts from their various hiding places in my house and garage. I had been thinking about our hundreds of copies of reproduction posters and signs so suggested that most of these be given to the Oxford Museum and to the Foxton sound and film museum of which member Marty Fifield is an enthusiastic supporter.





From Walter's albums comes this photo taken in the mid 1960's showing him with the Tanzbar roll-playing accordion he loved to demonstrate.



The original of this photo is a tiny cigarette card from ca. 1928, one of the set "A Sporting Holiday in New Zealand" issued by W.D. and H.O. Wills. I don't collect cigarette cards but found this one in Dad's desk – many years before noticing the gramophone! It looks to me like an HMV Monarch Intermediate with smooth oak horn and the later "drop in" elbow -- Ed.



J. J. D. H. D.  
ELLA SHIELD'S CATCHY CHORUS SONG

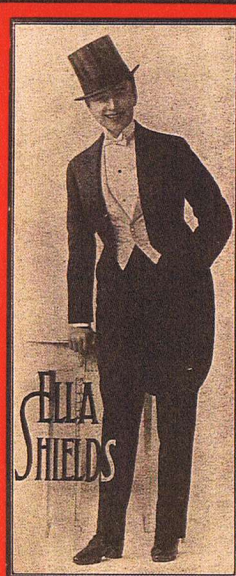
# ROLL 'EM GIRLS

(ROLL YOUR OWN)

by Micky Mair,  
Bobby Heath and  
Archie Fletcher.

WITH  
BISHAW  
UKULELE ARRANGEMENT

Featured  
by



Published  
by Albert  
& Son  
Lydney  
Melbourne  
Wellington, N.Z.  
London  
New York

THE  
MUSIC  
MUSE  
New York



PRICE  
2/-  
NET.

From my sheet music collection here are covers from the 1920's showing two stars of the English music hall who had a lot in common besides their lifespans. Ella Shields (1879-1952) and Talbot O'Farrell (1878 or 1880-1952) worked their distinctive turns for decades, she as one of the greatest male impersonators, he (though English by birth) as a stage Irishman and singer of sentimental ballads. Both wore top hats, both were still working in old age as members of Don Ross' "Thanks for the Memory" company, both made records and Google searches on both show the links which allow us to view their short films, made in the 1930's, preserved in the British Pathe archive – Ed.



# OULD DONEGAL



Sung by

*Daily Sketch Photo.*

## TALBOT O'FARRELL.

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Price 2/- net cash.

B. FELDMAN & CO. 125, 127, 129, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.



Words by **TALBOT  
O'FARRELL**  
and  
**M. LINDLEY.**



Music by  
**A. RAWSON.**



# Advertisements

## **Phonograph Society of New South Wales Inc:**

From cylinder to CD, the Society is for those interested in all aspects of historical sound recording and reproduction at its monthly meetings in Sydney. One subscription for all: \$A30 pa Australia and overseas. Write to The Secretary, Phonographic Society of NSW (Inc), P.O. Box 215, Epping, NSW 1710, Australia, or visit our website [www.phonographicsocietynsw.welcome.to](http://www.phonographicsocietynsw.welcome.to)

## **Phonograph Society of South Australia:**

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## **The Antique Phonograph Society:**

The California Antique Phonography changed its name at the beginning of 2012. We are now **The Antique Phonograph Society**. Our mailing address remains P.O. Box 169 Victorville, CA 92393 USA. However, our website changed a few years ago to: [www.antiquephono.org](http://www.antiquephono.org)  
Rates for members outside North America are \$40 USD (check) or \$42 USD (through the website/paypal)

## **The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Limited (CLPGS):**

To join us, contact the Membership Secretary: Tim Wood-Woolley, 28 Park Terrace, Westcliff on Sea, Essex, SS0 7PH, United Kingdom or e-mail [clpgsmembership@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:clpgsmembership@blueyonder.co.uk). For more information visit the CLPGS Web page at [www.clpgs.org.uk](http://www.clpgs.org.uk)



## **Wanted to buy (or exchange for what you need):**

One HMV Model 1 or 1a tapering tone arm with gooseneck. See pages 87-88, Phonoservice book of HMV gramophones. Bruce Leask, 20 Hind Place, Palmerston North 4410, New Zealand. Phone (06) 3550636.

Editor's note: In "His master's gramophone" by Oakley and Proudfoot these two ten-inch turntable "hornless" models are shown as illustrations 5.7 and 5.8 on pages 159 and 160.

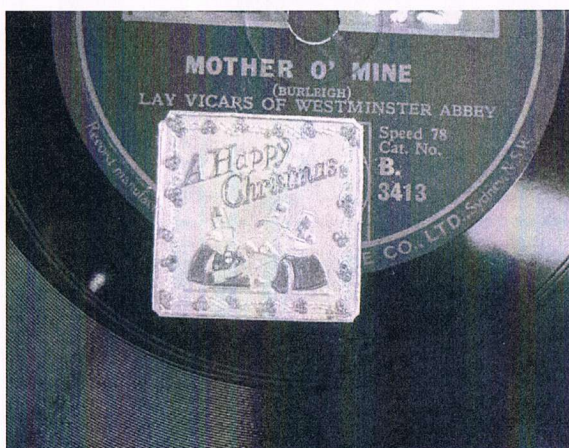
## **Wanted to Buy:**

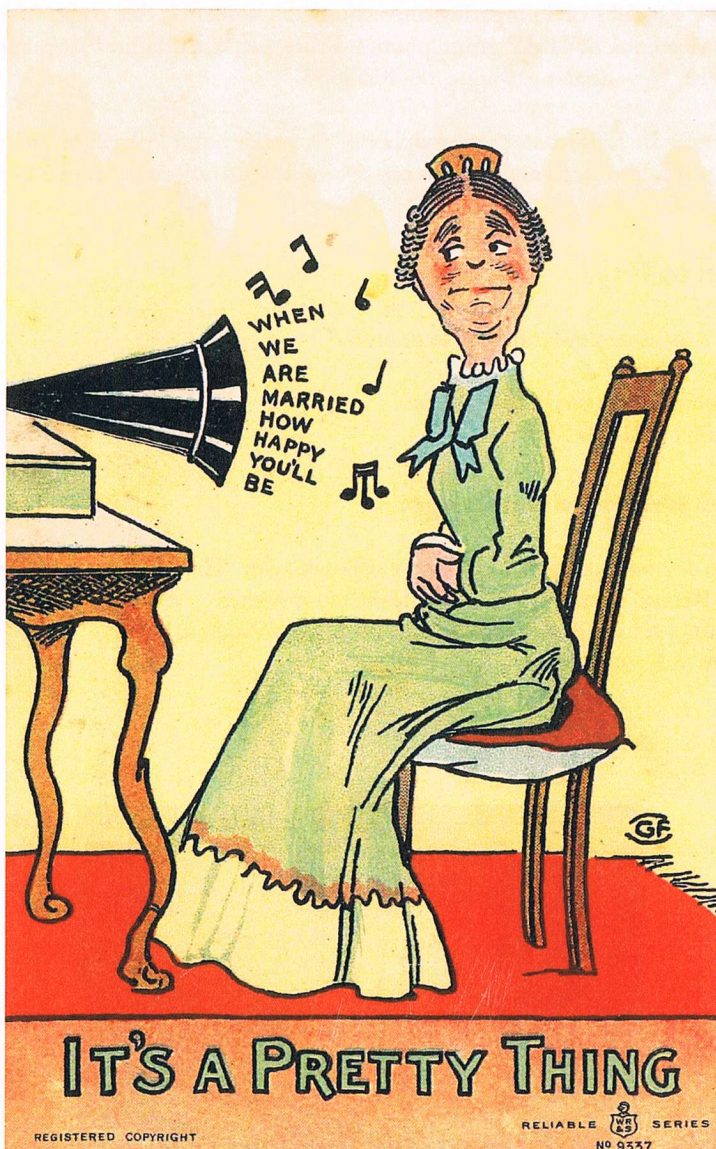
Dancing Rastus or similar figures to fit on old gramophone records.

Please email: [vandrbrown@xtra.co.nz](mailto:vandrbrown@xtra.co.nz)  
or phone 064 3 312 4477 (NZ)

## **Wanted to Buy or Exchange:**

HMV No.4 soundbox, gold finish and early style with "His Master's Voice" printed on front. Record dusters with New Zealand shop names.  
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email: [Gavin.East@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:Gavin.East@lincoln.ac.nz)





With allowances for changing tastes in humour since elderly spinsters were fair game for cartoonists, here we have yet another "comic" postcard from the early 1900's – Ed.