

The Phonographic Record

Journal of the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

A society formed for the preservation of recorded sound

Volume 54 Issue 2, July/December 2019



Roger Brown took this photo in the Oxford Museum during our November 2019 meeting. On and around the Museum's 1875 Studebaker buggy are, from left: Peter Harris, Bob Wright, Denis O'Rourke, Nu Wright, Kathleen Campbell, Steve James, David Peterson, Wilf Boon and me.

THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD

Volume 54 Issue 2, July/December 2019

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For your information

I have been touched and encouraged by the positive comments on the previous issue, both for its content and its presentation, so I hope this issue meets with an equally warm reception. Adam Miller's and Chris Neave's articles are full of information new to me. Once again Bethany Bond has done a fine job of laying out the magazine, adding the graphics and arranging the printing.

We congratulate the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Ltd on achieving its centenary this year. It is hard to imagine our doing the same, or what the world will be like in 2065 if we do, but then when I attended the foundation meeting in Pam Rogers' home in 1965 I could never have imagined editing the magazine fifty-four years later.

The Committee and Christchurch area members would like to wish all our members and readers a happy Christmas and a good start to 2020.

Gavin East
Editor

Two 1913 German record advertising labels by Adam Miller

Record companies and their outlets used a variety of means to encourage sales. Illustrated below are a pair of 1913 paper advertising labels for use in Germany. Measuring 3" across, they show detailed hand-drawn illustrations of two 10" issues from the Zonophone and Gramophone Concert labels. At the top they extol the reader to "Order it!", with the catalogue number shown predominately below.

It is unclear what they were intended to be stuck onto, possibly the matching sheet music, or current record catalogues? Anyone seen others? The Gramophone Concert No. 12900 (mx 2-940934) is *Dixie Girl* (Lampe) performed by the Palais de Danse Orchestra. The Zonophone No. 17289 (2-520998) is *Berlin Wackelt*, (Morena) performed by an unnamed orchestra under Giorgi Vintescu.



Flexible 78rpm Records

by Adam Miller

Introduction

Celluloid is a compound of nitrocellulose and camphor, first registered under that name in 1870, and is regarded as the first thermoplastic – that is easily moulded and shaped. In the late 1920s a variety of record manufacturers commenced developing records made of variants of celluloid (under various tradenames), playing heavily on its combination of lightness and unbreakability¹. Some were completely composed of this material, while others used it as a thin layer pressed onto a card base. Still others pressed small records from a type of resin.

1. Durium

Durium are the most widely encountered of the flexible discs nowadays, along with their American counterpart Hit-of-the-Week. In April 1932, the first of the 10" celluloid coated card records appeared, selling through newsagents at 1/- each. The plan was to issue a new record each week, each single-sided fine-grooved disk having two titles on the playing side. The surface was brown, with label lettering in silver. The shiny surface was not conducive to applying the required copyright royalty stamps, so these are often found on the reverse.



Durium offered a good mix of quality dance music by American and British bands, including sought-after vocals by Al Bowlly.

To assist playing, a “record lock” was included to hold the record flat and to stop the light disc slipping when played.

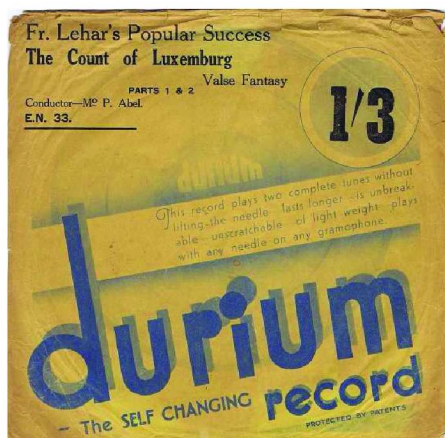
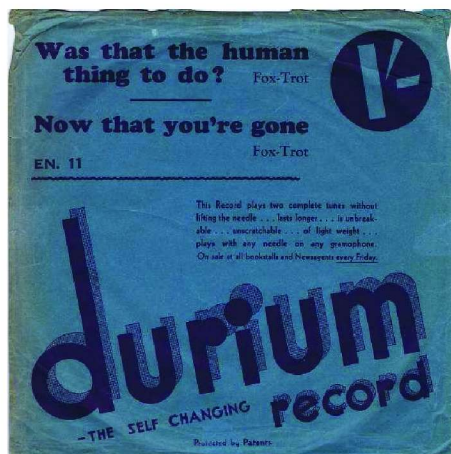
Use of new, loud, needles was encouraged, but the thin playing surface was easily scored through by the heavy soundboxes of the time.

Most are now dished, but if not cracked, still play well.

¹ Some were not truly flexible, even if unbreakable, such as Duophone and some early Worlddecho issues. These are out of scope of this article, as are the many 1950s-60s 78rpm vinyl records.

The sleeves were atypical of the times in showing the titles, as well as having a seal against tampering.

The price soon rose to 1/3d which was reflected on subsequent sleeves, along with more detailed instructions for playing the discs.

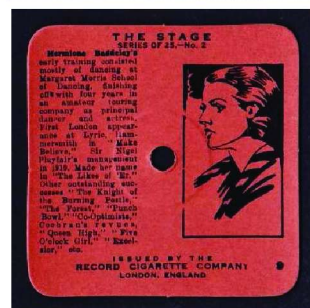
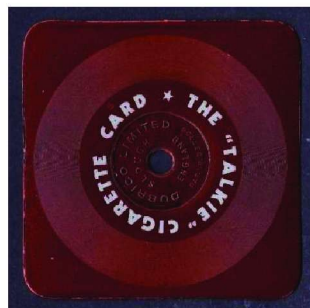


By the time of the last issue in January 1933, some 45 had been issued in the EN- series, along with some parallel issues locally and abroad on F-, BD-, GE- (Germany), and SC- (Scandinavia). Some of the earlier (1930-32) US-based Hit-of-the-Week masters were reused.

After this, Durium Products Ltd shifted their focus to advertising (and their name to Sound Distributors Ltd), producing many smaller, mainly 3 (but up to 7½”), discs in an E-5000 series, suitable as give-aways or mailouts. This lasted until 1936.



1933 3" advertising record for Ovaltine



1934 Talkie Cigarette card



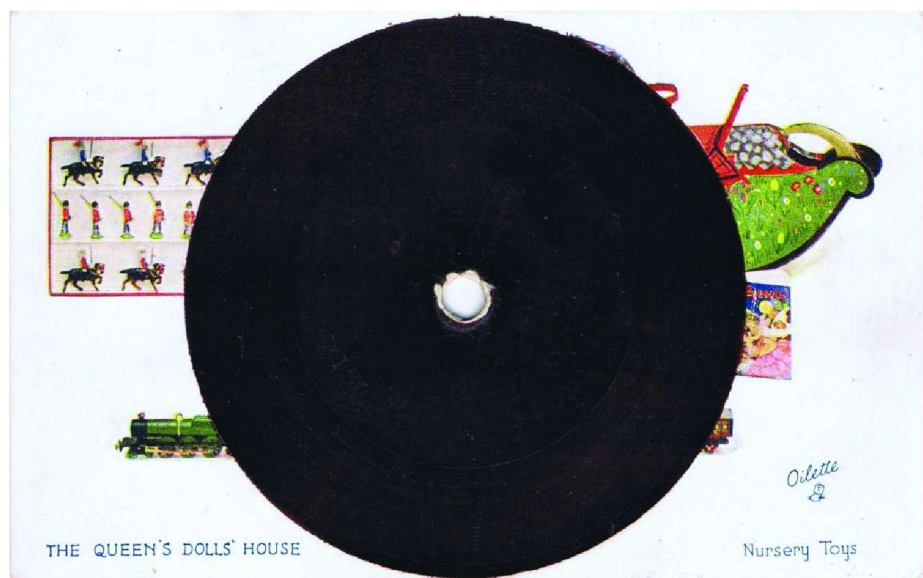
1934 Italian 4" Durium advertising the new Fiat 508. (ebay)

In 1934 they issued, on behalf of the Record Cigarette Co, a supposed range of five series of 25 cards to be placed into cigarette packets. These tiny ($\frac{2}{4}$) records consist of interviews with celebrities of the day (film, stage and sports) with a picture and brief bio on the reverse. They were placed into transparent envelope-style sleeves. Their extreme scarcity today implies that the issue target was not met.

2. Tuck's Gramophone Postcards & Xmas Cards

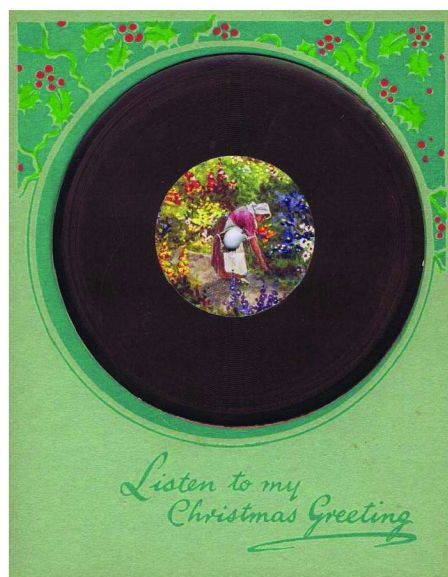
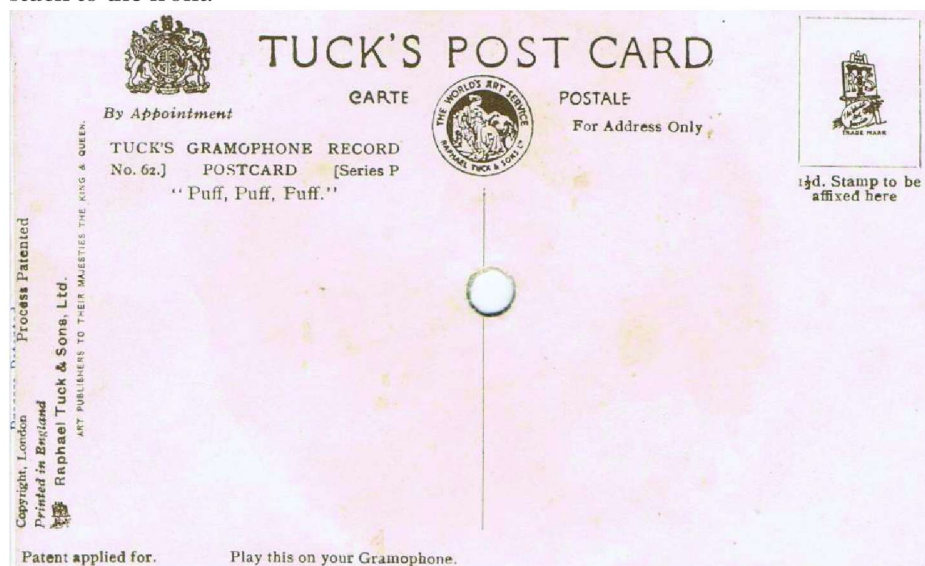
Raphael Tuck & Sons were a significant producer of postcards from the mid-Victorian era through to 1959 when they merged with some others to become the British Printing Corporation.

In 1929 they announced a line of playable postcards, created by affixing to the face of obsolete stock a $3\frac{1}{4}$ " resin (resorcinol-formaldehyde) disc (probably pressed by Worldecho) of a short song – nursery rhymes, carols & hymns and instrumentals, with an occasional advertisement (including one for Anchor butter). The tunes bore no relation to the original postcard image, and a new paper backing was required to name the series and tune, and exhort the buyer to "Play this on your Gramophone". They were sold through newsagents in sets of 4, in envelopes which advertised the various series available².

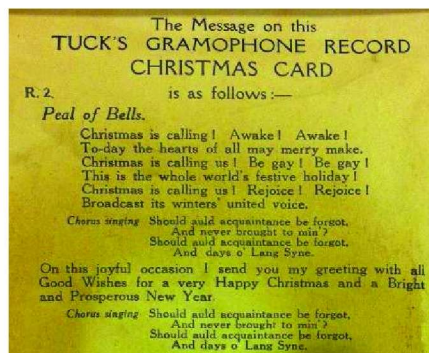


2. Dr. Rainer Lotz has published the Tucks' discography at lotz-verlag.de.

These cards were issued for only about one year, and very few were ever actually posted, being very much a novelty. Still quite commonly located today, most are playable with some work required to hold the postcard in place. In parallel Tucks also issued a short series of Xmas cards (5" x 6 1/4") with a 4" disc stuck to the front.



These were issued in boxes of three, with matching envelopes, for 2/6d. These are significantly scarcer than the postcards



A Tucks Xmas Greeting card, and the lyrics of the song, as pasted onto the inside of the box lid. Note the colourful "label" pasted on the playing disc.

(to be continued)

E J Thwaites – Moving Pictures And The Talking Machine In Australia

by Chris Neave

Two of the more memorable inventions introduced to Australia at the end of the 19th century were moving pictures and the talking machine. The following brief historical overview of these inventions includes the involvement and innovations of Australian inventor E J Thwaites.

Who Was E J Thwaites?

Ernest Jardine Thwaites (1873-1933) was an inventor and entrepreneur. Research has shown that Thwaites was a very interesting and important Australian inventor. Despite this, there is no entry for him in the Australian Dictionary of Biography; he is not considered a 'significant and representative person(s) in Australian history'. He appears to have lived all his life in Melbourne.

While no dedicated biographical information could be found, the following two obituaries from 1933 provide a lot of interesting details about the life of this amazing man:

(1) Thwaites: A distinguished inventor, of whom few of his fellow Australians have ever heard, has just died in Melbourne, after a long illness. Mr. E. J. Thwaites, who was 60 years of age, made the first Australian moving picture in 1896, using a camera he had made, himself. In 1892 he constructed, and successfully demonstrated, a phonograph. It was the first phonograph made in Australia. The cylindrical record played by it recorded a performance of the Brighton band. In 1897 Mr. Thwaites, in conjunction with Mr. R. Harvie, photographed the Caulfield Cup. And using projecting apparatus of his own manufacture, showed the moving picture in the Melbourne Opera House on the night of the race. This was a feat hitherto not achieved anywhere else in the world. When Pianolas were first imported, Mr. Thwaites became interested in the manufacture of the rolls played on them, and he was the first to make these rolls in Australia. He retired from business some years ago. (*Chronicle [Adelaide] Thur 20 July 1933*).

(2) The Late Mr E. J. Thwaites. On 12th July, the death of Mr. E J Thwaites occurred at his home in Sunnyside Ave, Camberwell, after a long illness. Mr. Thwaites was undoubtedly a very interesting and clever pioneer in Australia of many of the modern inventions. In 1892, when 19 years of age, as a student of the Workings Men's College, he constructed and successfully demonstrated a phonograph at an exhibition of work. On arrival of the Vice-Regal party some surprise was created through the strains of the National Anthem being heard although no choir was visible.

In response to inquiring glances of the public, Professor Kernot explained to

the visitors that the National Anthem was being conveyed to them by means of a phonograph using a cylindrical record. This was the first phonograph made and demonstrated in Australia. In 1896, using a camera he made himself he produced the first Australian moving pictures. In 1897, he photographed the Melbourne Cup, and using projection apparatus of his own manufacture, successfully showed the moving picture at the Opera House, now the Tivoli, in Bourke Street, on the night of the race. This was a feat hitherto not achieved in any other part of the world. Later he photographed many other races, and showed them at the same theatre. When Pianolas were first imported, Mr. Thwaites became interested in the manufacture of rolls played on them, and he was the first to make them in Australia. Mr. Thwaites retired from business several years ago. He has left a widow, two sons and two daughters. He was 60 years old. (*The Argus [Melbourne] July 1933*)

The First Australian Filmmaker

For Thwaites the most important event in his life and the one he is usually remember for is the movie camera he built and the earliest moving pictures he took in Melbourne in 1897. The following newspaper extract briefly records this important occasion in Australian cinema history:

Cinematography: First Melbourne Street Scene ever shown in the world (Bourke & Swanston Street) with Trams, Cabs, Bicycles & Pedestrians in life-like motion. Produced by a Melbourne native, Mr. E. J. Thwaites. (*The Argus [Melbourne] 20 Sep 1897*)¹

To elaborate on Thwaites and the moving pictures in Australia the following information was posted on the internet by two Australian cinema historians Chris Long and Luke McKernan (<http://www.victorian-cinema.net/thwaites>):

An engineer and inventor based in Melbourne, Thwaites constructed a movie camera in 1897 and with the assistance of Robert William Harvie started taking and processing films of local scenes from around March 1897 onwards. Finding a commercial outlet in the Melbourne Opera House, Thwaites and Harvie particularly specialised in speedy news reporting, notably the screening on the evening of the event of horse races such as the Caulfield Cup, VRC Derby and Melbourne Cup of 1897. Thwaites continued filming sports events in 1898, including cricket and Australian Rules football, and devised a flip-book with scenes printed from his films, but left film production in mid-1898 for the marketing of Edison Phonographs

Thwaites' early moving pictures have secured him a place in Australia's and the world's Moving Picture History.

The Phonograph In Australia

Thomas Alva Edison's invention, the phonograph, was perceived in Australia soon after it was patented on 24 December 1877. In the February 1878 edition of the Telegraphic Electrical Society Journal (Sydney) the writer tried to

appraise the new sound recording and replay device and wondered what its practical use would be if “... he [Edison] himself can hardly say what its practical value is or will prove to be.”

The first phonograph reached Australia as early as June 1879, when an agent of Edison’s company demonstrated the device to an amazed audience in the Collins Street Independent Church, Melbourne. However, following more demonstrations in Sydney and Melbourne in 1879 and 1880, the public interest in the phonograph faded.

Professor Douglas Archibald Tours Australia

It was the merit of Professor Douglas Archibald, who reintroduced the phonograph in Australia, when he arrived in Sydney on 28 May 1890 in order to give a series of public lectures and demonstrations of Edison’s Perfected Phonograph, after he had launched such a lecture series in Britain the year before. In an article for the London trade magazine *Phonogram*, Archibald wrote. “As I was bound for such an outlandish place as Australia, where a phonograph of this civilised and highly organised type had never been heard (...).”

During a period of 18 months Archibald appeared in almost every city of the then six British colonies in Australia and in New Zealand to demonstrate the use of the phonograph by recording the human voice and by playing cylinder records with some speeches by prominent persons such as the British prime minister William Gladstone as well as Thomas A. Edison, but also with popular vocals and instrumental performances. However, in this early stage, the phonograph was not seen as an entertainment application but as a recording device for office use. The early Edison phonograph was a heavy and clumsy apparatus run by an electric motor that required several primary batteries. It was an expensive item and unaffordable to most Australians.

Editor’s comment:

Many thanks to Chris for this article which reveals much about the early phonograph scene in Australia new to me. Even allowing for some caution reading obituary tributes it is evident that Thwaites was a remarkable inventor.

¹ This film was part of the programme for the Melbourne Opera House performance 20 Sep 1897. The Melbourne Opera House dates from 1872 and became the Tivoli Theatre in 1914.

Nevertheless, the Australian promoter of Prof. Archibald's lecture tour James MacMahon saw a lucrative opportunity and travelled to New Jersey in the US in late 1890. There he approached Edison and purchased some coin-operated machines for music reproduction in order to install them at public places. These machines arrived in Australia in 1891. Some other operators followed and in the mid-1890s the phonographs for music entertainment and even for home use became more widespread. The lack of music cylinders forced the phonograph distributors in Australia to produce recordings of their own. Thus, local singers and instrumentalists made the first recordings in Australia. And most of these records were produced on request as was shown in an Allan & Co. Melbourne advertisement from 1898: "[we] are able to supply records of any popular song at a few hours' notice."² Since a recording head was also available for owners of the Edison phonograph (or Graphophone) it enabled them to not only use their phonograph for playback purposes but to also make their own recordings. Recording heads were sold until the early 1900s. Thus lots of private recordings were made and I wonder how many have survived.

The phonograph and record business in Australia was initially an Edison monopoly until the British patents expired in 1903. In the years before, the Edison Company required a 15% royalty payment on all cylinder recordings made in Australia and it was uneconomical to produce local records on a larger scale. Even the main competitor of Edison, the British Gramophone Company hesitated to enter the Australian market with its gramophones and disc records. The first advertisement for a spring motor gramophone did not appear until 1899.

Thwaites – Australian Made Phonograph

Thwaites' contribution to the history of the Phonograph in Australia is not so well known. It is hoped this article will help rectify this omission. In 1892 Thwaites did something amazing which puts him firmly in the Australian Phonograph history picture with an early Australian prototype Phonograph. The story of what happened in 1892 was reported in his obituary in 1933 and is worthwhile reiterating: In 1892, when 19 years of age, as a student of the Workings Men's College, he (Thwaites) constructed and successfully demonstrated a phonograph at an exhibition of work.

On arrival of the Vice-Regal party some surprise was created through the strains of the National Anthem being heard although no choir was visible. In response to inquiring glances of the public, Professor Kernot explained to the visitors that the National Anthem was being conveyed to them by means of a phonograph using a cylindrical record. This was the first phonograph made and demonstrated in Australia. (*The Argus (Melbourne) July 1933*).

² This advertisement was for the Graphophone and informed readers that Allan & Co. (Melbourne) had 'over 1000 splendid records in stock', including popular songs by Australian singers: Bert Gilbert, Ada Reeve and Ada Baker (*The Argus [Melbourne] 25 June 1898*)

However, we know that the first demonstration of an Edison Phonograph was in Melbourne in 1879 and more importantly again in Sydney in 1890 by Professor Douglas Archibald. So Mr Thwaites may not have been the first to demonstrate the Phonograph but he seems to be (without any other evidence) the first Australian to build his own Phonograph and demonstrate it. No known copy of a Thwaites Phonograph has been located. E.J Thwaites also opened an Edison Phonograph Company in Melbourne in mid-1898 and was known to have made cylinders 'on request'. However, sales must have been small as a premium price was required for this service, and few, if any, of these pioneering recordings have survived.

Other Highlights Of The Phonograph In Australia

W J N Oldershaw

In Sydney in early 1896 W.J.N. Oldershaw opened a phonograph store. Oldershaw opened his *Edison Electric Parlour* at 162 Pitt Street, Sydney. A catalogue of the Edison Electric Parlour dated 1 June 1898 has survived. This interesting catalogue shows the Edison Electric Company selling among its many products; the *Graphophone*, the *Berliner Gramophone*, Edison Automatic Speaker (reproducer), Edison's Kinetoscope, Kinetophone and Edison Films. What an exciting shop to have been able to visit.³

Anthropological Recordings

In 1898 the first anthropological field recordings of Torres Strait Islanders were made by Alfred Haddon and in 1899 Fanny Smith (a Tasmanian Aboriginal) made some song recordings for the Royal Society of Tasmania in Hobart. But the most important field recordings of Aboriginal people were made by Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer during his expeditions to Central Australia between 1901 and 1912.⁴

First Australian Record Company

The first attempt to set up a local record industry was undertaken by Edwin C. Henderson, who established the *Federal Phonograph Record and Supply Co.* in Sydney in 1903. The company initially sold cylinder records on the 'Federal' label of the Italian tenor Carlo Dani, who had visited Australia the year before. Repertoire of local concert singers was immediately added. However, the brown wax cylinder technology Henderson used was inferior to Edison's imported moulded cylinders, which soon drove 'Federal' out of business. In October 1904, in the next attempt, Henderson set up the Australia Phono Record Company. However, due to disagreements between Henderson and his financier the company was liquidated in April 1905. But Henderson did not give up. By late 1906 he developed his own manufacturing process for moulded cylinders and in 1907 the first recordings made under the "Australia" label were offered to the public.

3 Source: Chris Neave

4 Source: Sound Beginnings: The Early Record Industry in Australia by Ross Laird, Sydney 1999

The catalogue comprised a repertoire of concert songs, marches played by the Naval Brigade Band or the Australia Military Band as well as instrumental pieces by unnamed interpreters. But Henderson's company was not able to follow the technological innovations in the recording industry and when a fire destroyed part of the production facility in Sydney, this was the end of Henderson's efforts to establish an independent Australian music industry.⁵

Sydney Retailer Max Wurcker

An important Sydney retail merchant selling Edison products was Max Wurcker (1859 -1942). Between 1909 and 1913 Wurcker was a jobber (distributor) for Edison phonographs and cylinders. Wurcker's historical significance was that he manufactured and sold his own Australian developed phonograph reproducer, the *Wurcker Reproducer*, for use with Edison machines (2 & 4 minute cylinders). His address during the period 1900-1933 was 99-101 York Street, Sydney.⁶

Record Production in Australia

A similar attempt to establish a local phonograph and music cylinder production was made with the labels 'Empire' and 'Entertainer' in Melbourne in 1908. But little is known of this operation and it seemed to be that production had ceased by 1910. Despite the Australian record market being controlled by the Edison Co. in the early days, nearly all distributors depending on the imports from Britain and the U.S, the Australian record business grew considerably in the first decade of the 20th century. A local phonograph and record dealer in Melbourne reported in September 1907 that his shop has 1,000 phonographs and 50,000 records in stock. However, in the World War years (1914-1918), Australia became again dependent on the British and U.S. imports.

End of the Cylinder Phonograph Era

Sales of both disc and cylinder recordings were both becoming more widespread by the end of the 1890s, but by mid 1899 disc reproducer advertisements were appearing more frequently suggesting greater market acceptance of the flat disc record. While the disc record (78rpm) format eventually won out, the cylinder struggled on. Edison did not give up on his cylinder phonograph and by 1912 he had developed a four minute cylinder made of blue celluloid, a very hard and durable material which he called the "Blue Amberol". He also did not forget his cylinder Phonograph customers and continued to produce Blue Amberol cylinders until Edison Records closed down in 1929.

Conclusion

It is hoped this article has provided an understanding of the place held by Ernest Thwaites in the social history of Cinematography and the Phonograph in Australia before the First World War.

5 Source: Ross Laird, *ibid*

6 Source: Chris Neave



Max Wurcker Ltd (Manufacturers & Importers), 101 York Street, Sydney. This interesting photo shows a corner of the Edison cylinder store room in York Street, Sydney and was taken on Saturday 8th February 1908. (Craig Nugent, Melbourne)



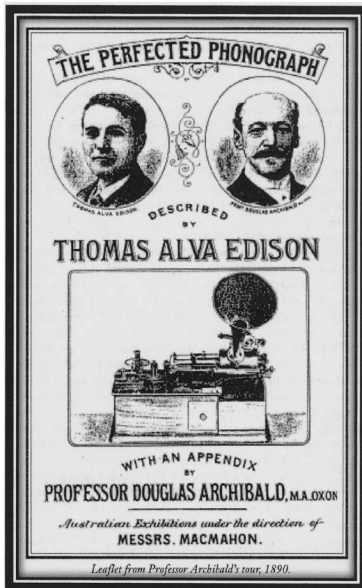
Max Wurcker (1859-1942).

Wurcker was an important Sydney retailer to sell Edison products.

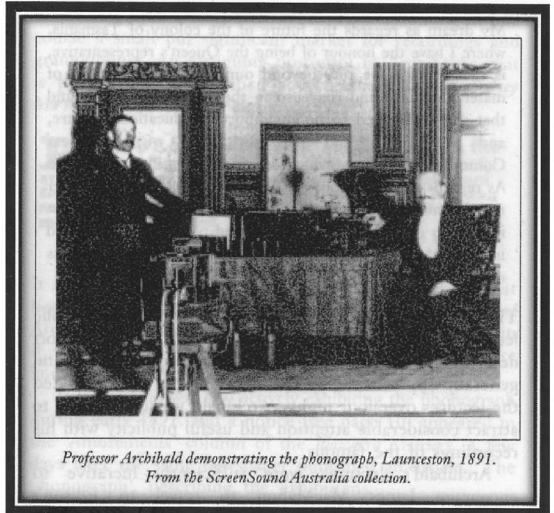
Between 1909 and 1913 Wurcker was a jobber (distributor) for Edison phonographs and cylinders.

He was also an importer of musical instruments, including pianos and violins.

By 1925 he was advertising the sale of 'Players and Organs'. (Craig Nugent, Melbourne)



A leaflet from
Professor Archibald's tour of
Australia, 1890. (Ross Laird)



The caption for this photo reads:
Professor Archibald demonstrating the
Phonograph, Launceston, 1891. (Screen Sound
Australia Collection)



Photo of
Mr E. J. Thwaites from
his Obituary Notice
which appeared in The
Argus newspaper

Melbourne July 1933.
Mr Thwaites is the male
passenger

Meeting Reports February to December 2019

by Gavin East

With almost a year of monthly meetings to look back on I will try to select some of the topics of interest. February 2019 saw our usual late summer trip inland to Oxford, meeting at the Museum before going on to Roger and Voila Brown's home at Coopers Creek. Steve James, Peter Harris and Wilf Boon arrived in positively regal style as passengers in Denis O'Rourke's 1953 Mk VII Jaguar. We admired the new entrance to the Museum and had time for a good look round as this was a purely social meeting with no formal business.

At the March 2019 meeting at Lyndsey and Bill Drummond's home, Roger Brown showed us an incomplete Pathé cylinder phonograph and asked our advice on obtaining a reproducer and horn. Though small spun aluminium horns suitable for Pathé machines turn up in New Zealand, Pathé floating reproducers are in very short supply with several members having machines lacking them so we agreed that the parts would have to be sought overseas.

In April 2019, meeting at Wilf Boon's home, Roger Brown and I reported on our visit to Graeme Dodd at Prebbleton to check out his collection for a club visit. Graeme is well known in car racing and rallying and has some very special post-vintage cars including a Formula One racer. Roger and I suggested that our group might visit Graeme in warmer weather with better light in the evening.

Kathleen Campbell put on an entertaining magic lantern show, including a delightfully gruesome set of slides of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves", when hosting the May 2019 meeting. I had brought along a small HMV Monarch given to our historical society at Lincoln. The machine has lost its horn and horn elbow but we still have a few reproduction Monarch Intermediate horns so agreed to donate one to the Lincoln group. The original elbow was one of the late "drop in" ones which we never made (as far as I recall) so we will give the Lincoln group a reproduction elbow which can be modified to display the machine and replaced if a correct elbow becomes available.

At Bob and Nu Wright's in June 2019 we agreed to move most of our savings account to a term investment. This may not seem a very interesting item to report but it was the start of a long drawn out, frustrating and ultimately unsuccessful saga with Westpac. The regulations and Government information requirements affecting business investment accounts

are now so rigorous that for our society, with our four bank signatories, the process was going to be so time-consuming and complicated, if it could be done at all (about which Westpac staff were not sure) that we eventually decided to abandon the project and move to a slightly better savings account.

Also at the June meeting David Peterson and I described the first part of another “saga” and one with a much happier ending, the Jeans piano roll collection. A Trade Me listing of a roll collection had caught my eye as the photos showed a good number of Ampico and Duo-Art rolls among an unusual assortment. To cut a long story slightly shorter, the rolls had been collected in the 1960’s and 70’s by the late Paul Jeans who lived in Auckland and is still remembered by collectors there. He had a standard foot-pumped player piano and loved classical music so bought rolls of any and every make, standard and reproducing, for their music and taped over the ends of the tracker bar on his piano to stop the reproducing rolls activating the top and bottom notes. After Mr Jeans’ death his son had brought the piano and rolls to Christchurch. He intends to keep the piano and some rolls but decided that the collection in cupboards in his garage had to be reduced. The rolls offered on Trade Me were the tip of the iceberg and in the end David and I were able to buy several hundred Ampico and Duo-Art rolls along with some good standard 88 note ones and some others we don’t often see in New Zealand, e.g. a few Welte Licensee, several Artechco reproducing rolls and two rolls for a photoplayer used to accompany silent films.

After enjoying getting together at my place in July and Peter Harris’ (where Peter showed us his Hupfeld Claviola pushup piano player) in August, we were back at my hideout in Lincoln for September and the AGM. There being no need to change any hats the whole Committee was re-elected as in the previous issue of the magazine. The AGM and monthly meetings were soon done and dusted, after which Steve James showed us some of the great Victorian and later sheet music he has been finding and I played a roll or two on the Ampico including J. Milton Delcamp’s recording of “Marionette” by Felix Arndt which was specially for Kathleen Campbell who collects puppets and puts on shows with them.

David and Louise Peterson hosted the October meeting at “Oak Grove” in Ohoka where David treated us to a magic lantern show. With two very keen magic lantern collectors, David and Kathleen, in our ranks we are continuing the tradition of the early years of the Society when Pam Rogers had a fine collection and Walter Norris enjoyed putting on a show complete with Victorian animated slides.

On a sadder note we had just learned of the death of Christchurch collector Alan Williamson at the age of eighty after a short illness. As far as I recall Alan was never a member of our society but many of us knew him and he was well known for his fine collections of antique guns and bottles among many other interests.

For November we again accepted Roger and Voila Brown's kind offer to have us come up to Oxford. Once again it was an informal meeting and a lot like the February trip except that this time Steve, Peter and Wilf could wave regally from another of Denis O'Rourke's fine cars, the 1949 Mk V Jaguar.

Just before going to print we had our end of year function, a buffet dinner at the Garden Restaurant in Christchurch. This year we had much more spacious seating and I'm sure that all those attending enjoyed the meal.



President's Report 2019

by Gavin East

Our society's fifty-fourth year has not been marked by any major upheaval but it has presented its challenges and changes. As with hobby groups everywhere, fewer people attend meetings than was the case in earlier years. It takes an effort to recall those early meetings in a central city church hall with four or five or more rows of chairs! However our current system relying on members' willingness to host meetings works well and I am sure we enjoy the monthly opportunity to catch up.

Looking at our ongoing functions, thanks are as always due to Shirley McGuigan for her work as Secretary. Though we no longer charge an annual subscription and there is little activity in the parts department, our membership files and correspondence still demand attention for which we know we can rely on Shirley.

It is always encouraging to hear from Roger Brown about the enjoyment visitors to the Oxford Museum get from our collection on long term loan at the Museum. The positive response to the last issue of the magazine has also been encouraging and is a reminder that, as Walter Norris always stressed, the magazine is the one thing that every member gets from the Society.

If there is an area which presents a challenge we cannot at present meet, it lies in the steady stream of enquiries from people needing gramophone motors repaired.

Thank you to everyone in the Society for your support over the past year.





Robert Sleeman has supplied this photo taken, probably in the mid 1960's, by the late Wally Gollidge of Nelson and showing Wellington collector William (Bill) Main with his fine HMV Monarch Senior, ca. 1912 and Edison Triumph A, ca. 1901 with later cygnet horn etc. for playing Blue Amberol cylinders.

We can be sure that these two machines were for use, not just for show, and may well be to this day as Bill is the doyen of New Zealand operatic record collectors and photographic historians.

A Needle Tin of Possibly Very Early Date

by Gavin East

I don't have a lot of needle tins but keep an eye out for anything unusual and at a "collectables" fair in Christchurch in 2018 spotted the tin illustrated. It has the recording angel trademark printed in red, white and black on a cream background above "Regd Trade Mark" and "Full Tone Needles".

My first thought was that it could be a German tin, made for the English market, copying the early Gramophone Co. trademark but on looking closely at the back, and noting the size and shape of the tin, I concluded that it must be Gramophone Co. and quite early. A spot of research has led me to think that it is very early so I hope that what follows is of interest.

It would be reasonable to assume from the recording angel trademark that we could be looking at a tin from the years in which this trademark was used on record labels, i.e. 1901-1907 for G&T and 1908-1909 for the Gramophone Co. "predog" label. However I understand that for all or most of its existence G&T used the "His Master's Voice" trademark on needle tins, first in stamped relief form, then in the familiar printed colours. The company was evidently using the dog and gramophone picture on needle tins for several years before putting the picture on machines and record labels. I have seen coloured HMV needle tins with the dog and gramophone picture and which have "The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd." printed on their undersides. I also have a record cover from ca. 1906 showing several Monarch horn machines and also showing a needle tin with the dog and gramophone picture. This suggests that a needle tin with the recording angel trademark is likely to date from early in the G&T period or even earlier.

Oakley and Proudfoot's indispensable "His master's gramophone" states that The Gramophone Company was founded in 1897, became The Gramophone Company Limited in August 1899 and changed to The Gramophone & Typewriter Limited in December 1900, changing back to The Gramophone Company Limited in December 1907.

On the underside of my tin, below "Approximately 200 Full Tone Needles", there are two lines of tiny print which I can make out, with a magnifying glass and angled light, as "The Gramophone Company Ltd"

and “incorporated in England with limited liability”. I suggest that the tin dates from when the Company was using this name, i.e. 1899/1900, making it by far the earliest needle tin I have seen and a contender for first needle tin made in Britain or Europe.

I don't know how Berliner customers in the USA in the 1890's were getting their needles. I understand that some tubular wooden needle containers with “Berliner Gramophone” labels have been seen in the US but that they have been judged to be of dubious authenticity (like the record duster, once seen on eBay, made of wood and with what appeared to be a copy of the “Berliner Gramophone” transfer from a Trademark machine - or am I becoming too suspicious in my old age?).

Two more examples of this tin are now known in local collections and it is illustrated on page 269 of “Grammophon Nadeldosen” by Horst-Dieter Linz but only in a group of “no-name” tins.

I would be interested in your thoughts on the above. I'm rather chuffed at finding a needle tin which, if I'm right on dating, is pretty much contemporary with my Trademark machine.

My tin appears to have its original contents which look slightly shorter (about 14 mm.) than later HMV needles.



**A MOST INGENIOUS INVENTION:
An Early History of the Pianola in
Australia**

Christopher Neave



The front cover of Chris Neave's book (see review) shows noted Australian photographer Harold Cazneaux in his Sydney home ca. 1909

Book Review

by Gavin East

“A most ingenious invention : an early history of the Pianola in Australia” by Christopher Neave. Published by the author, January 2019. 98 pages, illustrated, softcover, 30 cm. Price A\$25.00 plus postage. Available from the author at PO Box 837, Katoomba, NSW 2780 or email neavec@tpg.com.au

The standard 88 note player piano of the 1920's, whether it be a Gulbransen, Gurlay, Barnard, Aeolian or one of many other brands, survives in such abundance that one might suppose that it burst on to the scene fully fledged. Once in a while one comes across a reminder that this technology has a longer history, the reminder taking the form of the push-up piano player with its row of wooden fingers designed to operate on the keyboard of a separate piano. In my years of collecting in New Zealand I don't suppose I have seen more than ten or so, few if any of them in working order, and of those many will not have survived. Only a few very late examples were made to play 88 note rolls so for most push-ups the challenge of finding the correct rolls, added to the need for restoration and the space requirements, all conspire to relegate these instruments to the category of impractical curiosities best avoided by all but the most dedicated enthusiast.

It was not always like that. Chris Neave's excellent book recaptures the impact the push-up Pianola (capital “P” as it was an Aeolian Co. trademark) and its rivals made in Australia from its arrival in 1900 up to the First World War. Chris has drawn on contemporary newspaper reports and advertisements to place the Pianola in the social history of Edwardian Australia and the result is a fascinating read, all the better for being well written, copiously illustrated in colour and black and white and printed to a very high standard in a generous format.

Chris has uncovered a wealth of information about early concerts and promotions, notably by the colourful “Signor” Lardelli who imported the first Pianola to Sydney in 1900. Another remarkable personality in the story is the inventor E.J. Thwaites whose achievements cover so wide a field that there was not space in the book for all of them (see separate article in this issue). Chris also presents tantalising evidence that a few Welte-Mignon reproducing piano players and pianos reached Australia before the First World War.

And if you want to know what camels have to do with it, that is another reason to buy the book! I highly recommend it.

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

Phonograph Society of South Australia:

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, is published quarterly. 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+8337-7134) E-mail: nelsent@picknol.com.au

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
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@blueyinder.co.uk. For more information visit the CLPGS Web page at www.clpgs.org.uk

Wanted to Buy:

Dancing Rastus or similar figures to fit on old gramophone records.
Please email: v.rbrown@amuri.net or phone 064 3 312 4477 (NZ)

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

Reproducer, arm and “horn” or amplifier for a Mikiphone – or complete Mikiphone in any condition. Bruce Leask, 20 Hind Place, Palmerston North 4410, New Zealand. Phone (06) 3550636.

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. Gavin East, 4A Lyttelton Steet, Lincoln 7608, New Zealand, email: gavexcat88@gmail.com

Wanted to Buy:

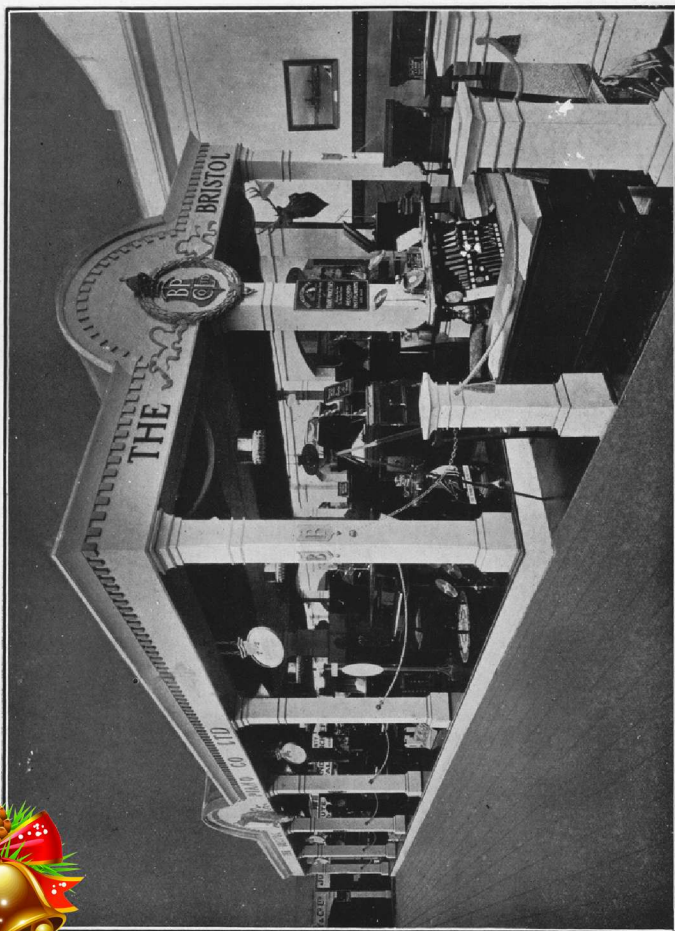
TANZA 78’s featuring vocals by John Hoskins. Please contact Wilf Boon via the Society’s email address, nzphonosociety@hotmail.com or phone (03) 332 2897

Wanted to Buy:

TANZA records Z90: Pixie Williams singing “Maoriland” and “Sailing Along on a Moonbeam”, with the Allan Shand Orchestra. Would be interested in other TANZA records, please send me numbers.
Contact Francis Young at hjyoung@xtra.co.nz or phone 07 549 2767.

Wanted to buy:

Large cygnet crane with adjuster spring. The repo ones the society used to make would be fine. Chris Rogers 3 Windham St Vic Australia 3749 email c.m.rogers@bigpond.com.au



THE BRISTOL PIANO CO., LTD., MUSICAL INSTRUMENT IMPORTERS.
With Branches and Agencies at all main ports and principal towns in New Zealand, this old-established house specialises in Pianos, Player Pianos, Gramophones, Records, Music, and sundry Musical Instruments. The stand illustrated above featured the products of famous overseas houses including Pianos and Player Pianos by JOHN BROADWOOD AND SONS, COLLARD AND COLLARD, WM. SAMES, WALTER COLLINSON, Band Instruments by HAWKES AND SON, and Gramophones by THE "HIS MASTER'S VOICE" CO., together with a miscellaneous exhibit of other high-grade musical instruments.



The New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition of 1925/26, held in Dunedin and commonly known as the Dunedin Exhibition, was one of New Zealand's major events of the period between the two World Wars and attracted visitors from many overseas countries. Bill Pratt of the Canadian Antique Phonograph Society has found a copy of the catalogue from which he has kindly sent this photo of the Bristol Piano Company's pavilion. Bristol, originally the Dresden Piano Company, was a major importer of gramophones and of course pianos including at least a few Welte Licensee reproducing pianos.