

The Phonographic Record

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

A society formed for the preservation of recorded sound

Volume 60, Issue 1, January/June 2025



A rare example of a pictorial
New Zealand record duster from the 1920's



THE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD

Volume 60, Issue 1, January/June 2025

Secretary: Mrs Nuong Wright

Joint editors 1965-1972: Pam Rogers and Walter Norris

Editor 1972-2012: Walter Norris

Magazine team 2012-:

Honorary Editor in Chief 2012-2014: Walter Norris

Editor 2012-: Gavin East,

Email: gavexcat88@gmail.com

Technical production and printing preparation: Bethany Bond

Printer: CQ Print, Christchurch

Photographer 2012-: David Peterson

Email: nzphonosociety@hotmail.com

**Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand (Inc.),
4A Lyttelton Street,
Lincoln 7608,
New Zealand.**

For your information

At the time of going to print, the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand (Inc.) is preparing for its sixtieth anniversary celebration. It will be a somewhat smaller scale event than those which marked the fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries but we are expecting a good turnout including some from opposite ends of New Zealand.

This is a shorter than usual issue of the "Phonographic record" but I hope to make up for that with the next issue. Original contributions welcome!

Gavin East
Editor

Lyricphone information wanted!

Adam Miller (nz78adam@gmail.com) seeks information and pictures relating to Lyricphone - gramophones, records, sleeves, needle tins etc. - for an article. Lyricphone machines were sold in New Zealand through Begg's music shops in the World War One period.

WHITEHOUSE AND MONTGOMERY'S QUEST FOR LOUD PHONOGRAPHS

by Robert Feinstein

Editor's note: This article first appeared in the June 2025 issue of "The Antique Phonograph", the journal of the Antique Phonograph Society. I am grateful to the author and to the Editor of "The Antique Phonograph" for permission to reprint it.

The September 1899 issue of *POPULAR SCIENCE* enthusiastically declared: "Bettini's new attachment to phonographs is one of the most important inventions of the age. It can be attached to any size or make of instrument and gives at once a very natural reproduction, clearer and louder than any other machine. It applies equally [to] vocal or any instrumental recitation."

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, impresarios who incorporated talking machines into their productions were faced with the vital need to make them loud enough to be heard in auditoriums and theaters. This was a time when dissatisfied patrons could be more than a little unruly. Lack of clarity and volume in recordings was very much a problem, as that quotation inferred.

British-born Alfred H. Whitehouse immigrated to New Zealand in 1863, where he originally worked as a bootmaker. Several newspaper obituaries of 1929 credited him with introducing both the first phonograph and first motion pictures to New Zealand, after he personally met Thomas A. Edison on a visit to the United States. Around 1893, Whitehouse employed them when he embarked on a career as an itinerant showman and producer. On October 20, 1894, he placed an ad in *THE AUCKLAND OBSERVER* which stated that his "PHONOGRAPH AND VOCAL COMBINATION COMPANY [would be] Introducing for the first time in N.Z. YOUNG'S AUTOMATIC REPRODUCER OR SOUND MAGNIFIER, just arrived by last Frisco mail.



Alfred H. Whitehouse

This invention increases the volume of sound fully four-fold. Each item distinctly heard in every part of the hall." That broadside was soon followed by an announcement in *THE THAMES ADVERTISER* of November 6th which vaunted the "... AUTOMATIC REPRODUCER or Sound Magnifier enabling the Phonographic selections to be heard in every part of the largest hall."

An unfortunately torn, ca. 1898 Whitehouse advertisement, which probably was a flyer, featured a photo of Thomas A. Edison and a letter dated May 28, 1897, that Edison wrote to him. It documented that Whitehouse pioneered the use of an Edison Kinetoscope in New Zealand. The notice also said that his shows used a "... Loud Duplex Concert Phonograph."

My curiosity has been aroused about Young's device, and if it was in any way similar to Bettini's "spider" diaphragms. Allen Koenigsberg's PATENT HISTORY OF THE PHONOGRAPH, 1877-1912 lists a William W. Young as the inventor of a "Sound Reproducer and Modifying Instrument," a "Sound Regulator," and several "Talking Machine Diaphragms." However, I do not think this was the Young whom Whitehouse referred to in 1894, as those were patented between 1906 and 1909.

Among the members of Whitehouse's ensemble was Edmund Montgomery, a former London ballad singer, with a tenor's voice, who had arrived in New Zealand in 1887. By 1897, Montgomery had formed his own traveling troupe, which was originally named Montgomery's Triple Alliance. The name would be changed multiple times, but most frequently it was called Montgomery's Entertainers.

In 1899, there were articles in the press which mentioned Montgomery's use of Bettini attachments. I am including excerpts here, with their varying capitalizations:



Edmund Montgomery, ca. 1906

WANGANUI CHRONICLE of February 13th: "The micro-phonograph is said to be the finest machine of its kind introduced into the Colony."

WANGANUI CHRONICLE of February 18th: "Montgomery's Triple Alliance Company appear[s] at the Oddfellow's Hall on Thursday and Friday next ... they will introduce in New Zealand the Bettini Micro-Phonograph. This wonderful instrument is said to reproduce sound with its natural sound volume and can be heard all over the hall."

PATEA MAIL of March 3rd: "The Micro-phonograph proved of course to be the old friend, and gave some excellent records, which were well received and applauded."

FEILDING STAR of April 4th: The selections on a micro-phonograph [sic] were very distinct and plainly audible."

And in the February 27th edition of PATEA MAIL for that year Montgomery placed a classified ad which announced: "Harmony Hall ... MONDAY, February 27th ... SPECIAL SELECTED PROGRAMME by the Triple Alliance Company. Illustrated songs, Micro-phonograph, Kinematograph

Harmony Hall.
MONDAY, February 27th.
SPECIAL selected programme by the Triple Alliance Company. Illustrated songs, Micro phonograph, Kinematograph and Monophone. Enthusiastically received everywhere. New pictures, first-class Artists, Great Wargraph. Thrilling scenes of the late Spanish War, Great Cavalry Charge, Storming Forts, Battle ships in Action, etc., etc. New songs illustrated by Ed. Montgomery, the famous Tenor Vocalist. Comic songs by Harry Hall, the well known Comedian, and other selections by New Zealand favourites.

PATEA MAIL Feb 27, 1899

At the start of the new century, Montgomery took time off and travelled through England, France, and possibly the United States for seven months, in search of new talent. In Paris, he visited the Universal Exposition of 1900, but whether or not he contacted Lieutenant Bettini, who had a booth in the Palace of Electricity, remains unknown.

The Papers Past and TROVE databases, yielded scores of newspaper notices about Montgomery's Entertainers performing in New Zealand and Australia, but little personal data about him. They continued to appear into 1912, and then he and his group completely dropped off the radar. Finding biographical information about Whitehouse has been easy, but Montgomery remains something of an enigma.

There were other entrepreneurs who were pleased with the loudness of their Bettini attachments, in New Zealand exhibitions and shows. Among them were the very active team of St. Hill and Moodie, Messrs. Turnbull and Jones (this duo also showcased Roentgen rays), Mr. H. G. Alpe, the ubiquitous Mr. James, and also a Mr. Arlow. At the Canterbury Jubilee celebrations of 1900, held in Christchurch, the anonymous Microphone Company demonstrated an "EDISON-BETTINI".

All of this has made me wonder if Lieutenant Bettini himself ever visited down under. In a letter she wrote me on March 1, 1980, his daughter, Madame Consuelo Rolo, did not have the answer to that question: "Whether or not my father was in New Zealand, I don't know."

The late Mr Whitehouse had a very interesting career. Born at Birmingham, he came to New Zealand in 1862 aboard the sailing ship John Dunstan, and took up his trade as a bootmaker at Matakohu, where he married a daughter of the Rev. John Davis. Mr Whitehouse was very fond of travelling, and went round the world three times, when transport conditions were much different from what they are today. He invariably brought home some new invention. He was the first to introduce moving pictures to New Zealand, after paying a personal visit to Mr Edison. Later he brought out an improved phonograph.

Mrs Whitehouse died 19 years ago, and four years later Mr Whitehouse retired. He leaves a family of three sons and four daughters to mourn their loss. They are Messrs H. D. Whitehouse (Whangarei), C. Whitehouse (Te Awamutu) and R. Whitehouse (Auckland), and Mesdames Collison (Te Awamutu), West (Manurewa), Coppehl (Tauranga) and Trethowen (Opua). There are 19 grandchildren.

NORTHERN ADVOCATE April 17, 1929

A Unique Collection of Animated Picture Subjects
**HUMOROUS SENSATIONAL
FASCINATING**

**SEE OUR GREAT COMEDY SCREAMS
YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST LAUGH**

EDMUND MONTGOMERY

The Pioneer of
PICTURED MELODY
in New Zealand



EDMUND MONTGOMERY

Songs and Ball
Illustrated by
Magnificent Pict
Tableaux

Operator and Exhibition, Mr. EERT GILBERT Mechanician, Mr. LAWRENCE PETER
Musical Director, Mr. EDDIE DEATHARTY

ADMISSION, 3s., 2s., 1s. CHILDREN HALF PRICE

Doors Open, 7.30 Curtain at 8

MANAWATU HERALD June 4, 1908

MR. ALFRED H. WHITEHOUSE

Mr. Alfred H. Whitehouse, who died at the Knox Home, Tamaki, this week, was the son of Mr. Abel Whitehouse, an early colonist. He travelled considerably and during a visit to the United States met Mr. Thomas A. Edison, the famous inventor, and brought back a phonograph to the Dominion, being the first man to introduce one to this country. He had been an inmate of the home for 10 years.

Mr. Whitehouse is survived by three sons and four daughters.

THE SUN April 13, 1929

The death occurred at the Knox Home, Auckland, on April 7, of Alfred Henry Whitehouse, aged 73 years, one of the original Albertland settlers.

AUCKLAND STAR January 20, 1900

FOR SALE, cheap, "Bettini" Reproducer and Aluminium Horn. Suits standard phonograph. Will sing 12 times as loud as old style reproducer.—Box 491.

AUCKLAND STAR January 20, 1900

Meeting Reports November 2024 to June 2025 by Gavin East

Eleven members enjoyed Nu Wright's hospitality for the November 2024 meeting. Some had recently visited the Autohaven classic car museum in Christchurch and were very impressed. The Society's new Certificate of Incorporation had arrived, a relief in these days of hurdle after hurdle for groups like ours to have to jump through. Lindsey Best suggested that the Society have a display at the Terrace Station Antiques and Collectables Market to be held at Hororata on Saturday 15 February 2025. The Society's HMV 163 Reentrant is currently out of action with a broken spring but Roger Brown has undertaken to repair it so it can continue entertaining visitors to the Oxford Museum. People unfamiliar with old gramophones are often amazed at the sound coming from a 163 with no power cord in sight! Not many new finds were brought to this meeting but we admired Robert Sleeman's tiny Symphonion disc musical box.

There was no meeting as such in December 2024 but once again many of us had a very enjoyable meal at the Plough Hotel in Rangiora. January 2025 saw us back at Nu Wright's for a catch up. Edan Bowman had added a nice Edison Bell Winner needle tin to his growing collection while Lindsey Best had found some "Voices of Victory" personal recordings produced in the US during World War Two by the Gem razor company. Kathleen Campbell showed us her recently acquired "See-A-Show" 3D viewer.

Lindsey Best kindly invited us to his home in Christchurch for the February 2025 meeting. Several members had taken part in, or attended, the Antiques and Collectables Market at Terrace Station Homestead, Hororata on Saturday 15 February and all agreed that it had been a very successful event on a perfect warm summer day. Edan Bowman showed us the latest additions to his needle tin and record duster collections. Steve James showed some very desirable early discs including Berliners and seven-inch Zonophones. Our host Lindsey is a prominent member of the Christchurch bottle collecting group and we were able to admire his impressive display of Christchurch stone ginger beer bottles.



Lindsey Best took this photo of Wilf Boon manning the Society's display at the Antiques and Collectables Market at Terrace Station Homestead, Hororata on Saturday 15 February 2025. The visitors who enjoyed a 78 played on a 1928 portable might have been surprised to learn that the gentleman operating the gramophone was also a 1928 model, i.e. 97 years of age!

Of the four other monthly meetings covered in this report, April 2025 was a routine, though as always enjoyable, gathering at Wilf Boon's home in Christchurch. The other three were visits "away" starting with Sunday 23 March when we had a great day in inland Canterbury at Coalgate and Hororata. First port of call was Tony Airs' home at Coalgate where we saw not only Tony's phonograph collection but also some very special cars including the 1911 FN Type 1600 and the 1922 10/30 "duck's back" Alvis which Tony has owned since 1959. After lunch at the Hororata Cafe we drove the short distance up to Terrace Station where Kate Foster welcomed us warmly. Kate is the great-granddaughter of Sir John Hall who took over the station in the early 1850's and was later Premier of New Zealand and instrumental in the granting of women's suffrage in 1893. At the end of his life Sir John was Mayor of Christchurch at the time of the Christchurch Exhibition of 1906/07 so it is appropriate that a room in the homestead has been made available to display Tony Airs' comprehensive collection of items relating to the Exhibition. Old cars also featured prominently at the Terrace Station visit as we were able to go into the carriage house where, as well as horse-drawn vehicles from the time of Sir John and Lady Hall, there is a collection of veteran and vintage cars, many of them restored and maintained by the late Richard Foster, Kate's husband, and rallied enthusiastically by Richard and Kate. A personal favourite is the huge 1910 Clement Talbot tourer which Kate's grandfather bought secondhand in 1932 and which is in largely original, unrestored condition. Besides being the custodian of the family legacy at Terrace Station, Kate Foster is passionate about the homestead garden. Many of us enjoyed the chance to look around the garden (Google "terrace station hororata" to see!).



Kate Foster took this photo of our group in front of Terrace Station Homestead.

In the front row are, from left: Tony Airs, Wilf Boon and Denis O'Rourke. In the middle row are Barry Hancox, Nu Wright, Gavin East, Beth Lomas and Steve James. At the back are Peter Harris, David and Louise Peterson, Robert Sleeman and Edan Bowman.

Edan Bowman arranged for our May 2025 meeting to be a visit to the Post and Telegraph Office at Ferrymead. I for one had not realised what a comprehensive and well-displayed collection the Office houses, with phones going right back to the first Bell designs of the 1870's.

Sunday 22 June 2025 saw us enjoying another "field trip", this time a visit to David and Louise Peterson at "Oak Grove" in Ohoka. David, Louise, Heather and Ginny the spoodle made us most welcome. Some of us had not seen David's collection before and were, as they say, "blown away" by not only its content but also its arrangement and the condition of each item.

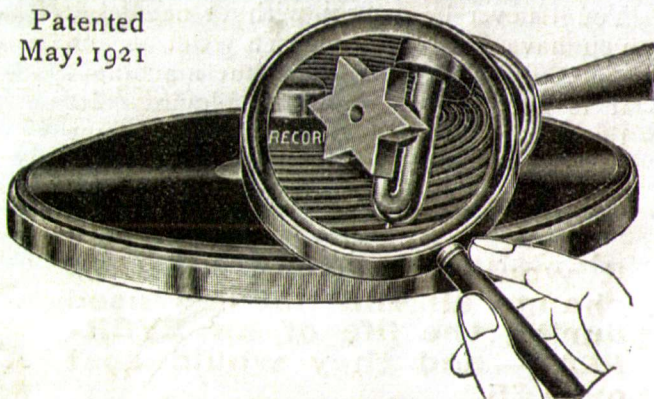
New member: A warm welcome to Jeremy Richards, Auckland.

27,000 RECORDS

WITH ONE

Everplay
A PERMANENT NEEDLE

Patented
May, 1921



Everplay on Record Seen Through Magnifying Glass

TRIED! TESTED! PROVEN!
Cannot Injure Records.

Plays Perfectly on
ALL GRAMOPHONES and ALL RECORDS
Using Changeable Needles

SOLD BY
Repeating Gramophones, Ltd.,
102, NEW BOND STREET,
LONDON, W.1.

¹ Bowman found this remarkably ambitious piece of promotion from the 1920's. One hopes the
sting department didn't keep losing count at play number 26,999. Has anyone seen one of these

Plays Without Scratching

Because of its softness and proper size, EVERPLAY offers no noticeable friction, and as it rides smoothly along in the groove, it picks up no noisy scratches of surface defects. That is why the surface noise as compared to ordinary needles, is so greatly eliminated.

Brings Out Full Tone of Music

You'll be delighted to find how clearly it plays each note—how distinctly it brings out each word. This is because EVERPLAY remains a perfect fit to the record groove. Many old records sound good again when played with the EVERPLAY. It brings out words and instruments never heard before.

Plays Loud or Soft

The tone of the EVERPLAY is easily regulated by the length of the point. The **shorter** the point the **louder** it plays. Complete instructions accompany each needle.

Guaranteed to Satisfy

There is no possible way the EVERPLAY Needle can get out of order. Each one is carefully assembled by a skilled operator and passes a rigid inspection.

We guarantee it to give full satisfaction. It should play 27,000 Records if properly treated. If you ever find one that is imperfect in any way, we will replace it free. **Every EVERPLAY agent is authorized to replace free any needle that fails to give satisfaction.**



Everplay

A PERMANENT NEEDLE

Exact Size
of EVERPLAY

No Bothersome Changing of Needles with an Everplay.

You'll never be caught without needles if you have an EVERPLAY. Get it and you're fixed for the life of your machine—it is good for many years' playing. Its tiny point is fed by a fine, coiled wire, nine inches long—long enough to play 27,000 records—more than are played on the average gramophone.

**It would take nine days to
change all the needles used
during the life of an EVER-
PLAY—and they would cost
over £5.**

Why Records Wear Out.

There is a pressure of from three to seven ounces on the point of a gramophone needle—from two and one-half to six tons per square inch. No wonder records wear out. They are made principally of a kind of sealing wax, vegetable fibre, and a polishing dust, such as "rotten stone," so that the friction will grind the needle instead of the record.

It takes only a short time for a record to wear the point of a common steel needle down to a shape. The sides of the needle rest on the rims of the groove, wearing it away and bringing unpleasant noises and scratches into the reproduction.

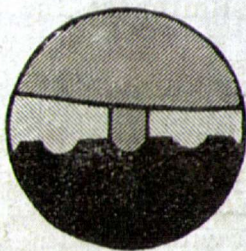
The so-called "permanent jewel needle" is so hard that it soon wears the record groove and destroys perfect reproduction. In time constant use blunts and distorts its point into a shape that will quickly ruin any record.

Also the seemingly harmless needles of wood or fibre, because of being soft and **porous**, pick up dust and loose particles of grit from the record and then, holding them like little jewel settings, cut the very life out of the grooves.

The point of a wood or fibre needle is in many instances worn so quickly that **it plays "garbled" or indistinctly before finishing one record.**

The point of the EVERPLAY is softer than diamond, sapphire, or the ordinary steel needle, but is harder than wood or fibre and is not porous. It is made of a soft, special alloy metal, which offers no grinding resistance to the records as it glides along. The grit and dust are cleaned away and can do no harm.

The point as it wears away, is fed by a wire of uniform thickness—so fine it just fits in the groove. No hard or distorted point to cut—no jagged edge to wear on the side of the groove. The life of your records is many times lengthened.



EVERPLAY
needle fitting the entire groove
and nothing but the groove
Magnified 26 times.
Loud steel needles rests on the
edges of groove. Soft steel
needles rests on bottom part of
groove only.

HOW TO USE YOUR GRAMOPHONE

Always play your gramophone with the cover down, for in many instances it will eliminate the "metallic" or "squeaky" sound that is noticeable when the sound waves thrown off directly from the reproducer diaphragm conflict with the sound waves coming from the horn or tone chamber. This condition is known as "tone interference."

Always lower any needle gently on the record. Many valuable records are ruined by dropping a reproducer fitted with a steel needle. Such a sudden "jar" will also injure the delicate mica diaphragm of the reproducer.

This danger is eliminated by using an EVERPLAY. The EVERPLAY is so designed that no harm will result to the record or needle and the danger to the reproducer is greatly lessened. In fact—if a reproducer fitted with the EVERPLAY is dropped on the record there is even less "jar" than there would be if the needle were of wood or fibre.

Keep your records clean. The EVERPLAY cleans them better than plush or brush.

Records should never be treated with any oily substance as it causes them to collect dust and dirt, which are injurious to the record.

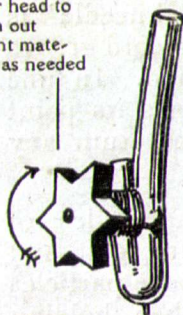
IMPORTANT! Be sure that tone arm moves freely from side to side or **needle point** will be held **tightly against one side** of groove and will not play properly. This is true, no matter what kind of needle is used. Oil base of tone arm occasionally. **It will save wear on your records.**

INSTRUCTIONS.

This needle is ready to play so do not turn star until point is worn out. When the needle point is worn down so that it plays indistinctly or too loudly, adjust by turning star from one point to the next, in direction indicated by arrow. (Do not turn star in a reverse direction to the arrow). **For best results point should not be longer than the thickness of a Post Card,** so keep card as a gauge. Due to the fineness of point it **should not be handled carelessly and should always be lowered gently on record.** No harm can result by point wearing entirely off as the wide part of stem rides above the grooves. One sixth of a turn of the star usually projects the proper amount of point. **The shorter the point, the louder it plays.**

EVERPLAY ELIMINATES NEEDLES

Star head to
turn out
point mate-
rial as needed



{ Fits in holder
Like steel needle

{ 9 inches of point
material coiled
within the needle.

{ Point exactly fits
record groove.

**The
NEEDLE
WEARS—
NOT the
RECORD.**

Enlarged
Size of
Everplay

**The star must not be turned in
a reverse direction to the arrow.**

**Will last 20 years, with average playing.
Saves £5 to £8 in steel needles and a much
greater saving in wear on records.**

**Price is less than that of one good record.
Always ready to play and always plays
perfectly.**

**Point material made of a soft, special alloy
which adds to the life of your records.**

**Many discarded records can be played
again.**

**Eliminates the annoyance of changing
needles continually.**

**Fits the grooves of all records better than
any other needle.**

**Cleans and Polishes the grooves instead
of grinding in the dust.**

**You never make the mistake of playing
with a used needle.**

**No old needles lying around for children
to put into their mouths or get into their
bare feet.**

**Is inserted and removed
from reproducer just like
an ordinary needle.**

Everplay
A PERMANENT NEEDLE

Fully Guaranteed.

nemariam: We regret to advise the recent passing of member Bruce L. Erston North.



Beth Lomas took these photos on our visit to Terrace Station at Hororata on Sunday 23 March 2025. In the upper photo David Peterson and Wilf Boon are seen in the carriage house with glimpses of three of the Foster family's early Humber cars: 1915 at left, 1924 at rear and at right the 1904 Humberette.

In the lower photo we are enjoying hearing about the history of the station from Kate Foster. The homestead has grown in stages between ca. 1852 and 1897. The section visible in the photo dates from the 1860's.





Walter Norris at a convention in the 1960's with his Columbia AB. Finding this machine led Walter to seek five-inch diameter cylinders, a quest which led to the famous discovery of the Sembrich Bettini cylinder.

"Dog & Baby"

NEEDLES
OF QUALITY

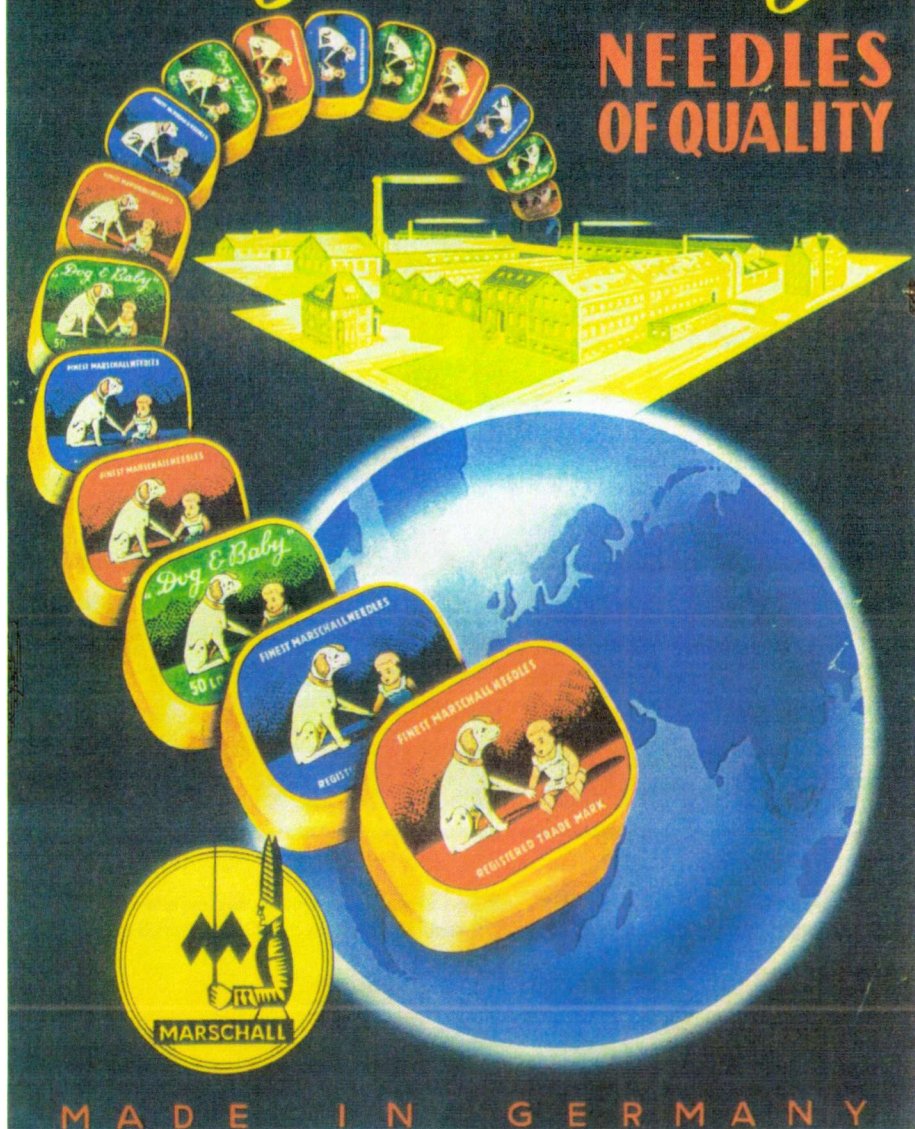


Image courtesy Mike Tucker