

# G&T GAZETTE

Established 1995. Incorporating the *Edison Echo*

January/February/ March

2013



The native with a peace pipe in one hand and a gramophone disc in the other seems a most unlikely figure-head emblem for a record company! Steven C. Barr in his "The Almost Complete 78rpm record dating guide (II)" had this to say about the ARC. This firm operated from c.1904 until 1906, they pressed client titles and seemed related to European Odeon, considering the 10 5/8" size of some issues.

Note the circular retail stamp which reads R.W.Parker. Chemist Auckland - in the 9 o'clock position.

## Amazing record find at Hunterville.

There have only been a couple of times when I've experienced the thrill and excitement of a truly wonderful find as a record collector of long standing.

It all began at the end of December when Jill and I were driving to Wellington from Auckland. Having broken the trip by car with an overnight stay in a Turangi motel, we began our journey back home at 9am and motored on for about two hours when we stopped for a coffee break in Hunterville. We pulled over opposite a cafe and got out of our car to find we were parked outside a shop that seemed to be dedicated to selling parts for restoring cars, an observation that was based on an extensive display inside of automobile manuals. Row after row of them on tables a sloping racks. After we'd purchased an embroidery we'd spotted hanging on a wall for Jill's collection, we both headed towards the door. It was then I noticed a room off to the side of the building that displayed a bookcase with a pile of 78s on the bottom shelf. On enquiring if they were for sale, I was told to wait at the counter while the shop's owner brought them out for my inspection.

What ensued for the next half an hour was a series of trips to other parts of the building for pile upon pile of 78s for me to inspect. It did not take me long to recognise the significance of what I was fortunate enough to stumble across. The majority of the first pile were all very early single sided Victor recordings, plus a few even earlier Gramophone and Typewriter Company discs, I realised that the first lot came with no paper covers and were spaced from one another with cardboard squares which indicated that they may have been the residue of a dealer's stock.

After a price for the items was settled at \$2 a disc I was told by the owner Mike Johnson that the records he held in stock had come from Auckland. When I finally got them home and went through them carefully, my joy knew no bounds. In one fell swoop, I'd enriched my collection of Music Hall artists beyond my wildest dreams, a situation which normally might have easily taken me years to achieve. In fact although I have been on the

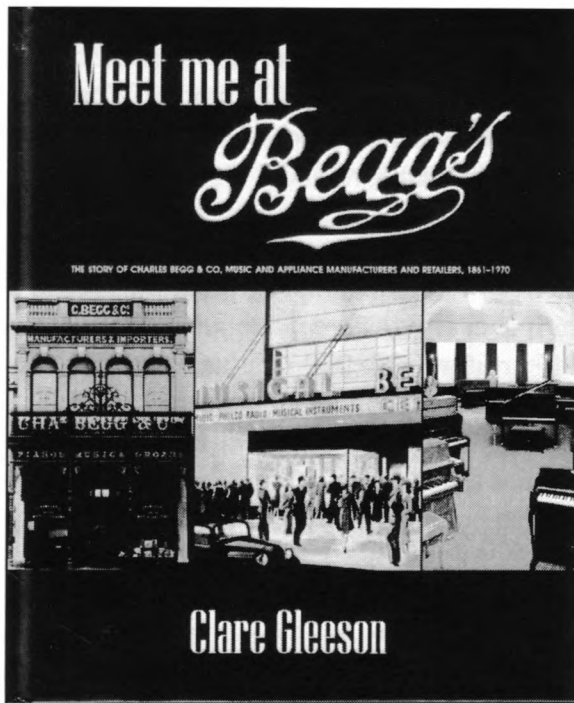
look out for records of this calibre ever since I got my first Billy Williams disc, my Music Hall representation is very shallow, leaving out on technical grounds my three Edison cylinders of Harry Champion! What follows are some of these records with added comments by Des Wilson who kindly came to listen to my finds and to tell me a bit about them.

Possibly the most spectacular record label to turn up in this collection of recordings was my first American Record Company pressing, a 10 3/4 inch pressing featuring Len Spencer giving a descriptive recitation called 'Auction Sale of Household Furniture'. No.030625. (see cover illustration). From my very limited reference material on this company, I conclude it was one of the first it ever issued with its very distinctive Americana label displaying an Indian Chief and its slate blue shellac pressing. It plays well and from what I can deduce was probably recorded in 1904 when the company issued its first batch of recordings.

Up until the 30th I'd never had occasion to have any representation in my collection of the company known as The Twin. According to Des, 'The Twin' company was a Gramopne Company label which they launched after they acquired the Zonophone Company. It became an outlet for their first double sided discs. In Des's assessment the comedian George Lashwood was the pick of the bunch with other contributions by Billy Williams who was represented with four titles and ever popular Florrie Forde with two. While I've got a bit of work cut out to find a little bit more about Mr Lashwood, I'm fairly familiar with the other two artists.

Two G&T's by the tenor Harry Macdonough caused me a bit of a blip until I located him in Bennett's 'Voice of the Past'. It is interesting to note that his 'Death of Nelson' 2-2747 was recorded in the UK in November 1902 while his 'For all Eternity' number VM3-2100 was apparently made in America and released in England two months later in January 1903.

Possibly the best record from this G&T assortment was a Dan Leno monologue presentation with 'My Wife's Relations' on G&T 1205. Bennett doesn't give a date for this, but Des tells me Brian Rust dated this as No-



How many in our group remember when Clare Gleeson came and gave us a talk about her family connection with the firm of Charles Beagg & Co. in 2010? Well her dreams and aspirations of producing a book have become a reality. This richly illustrated 240 page book on this company which owned a chain of retail outlets through the country is an important contribution to our cultural development as a nation. Not only because of the role it played in New Zealand's musical development, but the way it expanded into electrical appliances on the domestic market. This important publication is now on the market and is well worth the asking price of \$49.99. It is published by a local firm called Ngaio Press and its ISBN : is 978-0-9864685-4-4. While I haven't had time to read it, I'm convinced from the illustrations alone that it will be a pleasure to own your own copy of this wonderful book.

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I simply couldn't resist adding this paper bag to the pile of records I purchased in Hunter-

ember 1901. While I'm prepared to acknowledge Leno's status amongst collectors, I must say apart from his very clever patter, I need to be taken aside and told what I should really be appreciating!

The last of the black G&T's was an item by Walter Miller whom I'm told by Des was really Stanley Kirkby. His 'Dolly's a first class girl' on 3-2117 recorded in November 1904, comes over well and I personally rate this as one of the best of the bunch.

Finally in this little group of Gramophone Company recordings there was a Harry Carlton doing an item from the Quaker Girl 'Just like Father used to do' on 4-2112 recorded in January 1911. I liked this very much and as Des pointed out Ray Hedges would have been over the moon if I'd played it for him. Harry Carlton was a pseudonym for Harry Fay.

The remaining 10 inch recordings were all Victor Monarch discs dating from 1903. The earliest recorded on the 6th of January 1903 was made by Herbert Goddard who was really the baritone Emilio de Gogorza. His record of Tosti's Good Bye, was the most worn of the bunch.

Arthur Collins made 'Oh My!' on VM 2153 recorded on the 3rd of April 1903. This would be the most saucy title I have by him. Not because of the lyrics but the way they were implied and delivered with a nod and a wink - do you know what I mean?

Moving on to the 12inch recordings I was excited by the prospect of obtaining so many early Zonophone recordings, especially noting how few of great musical consequence have ever come my way. In fact I'm prepared to say that the 12 inch Green label Zonophones selections contain some very impressive recordings, and more than hold their own against the more illustrious labels of HMV & Columbia.

So it was when I first played Z-040000 The Grand March from 'Tannhauser' played by the Black Diamonds Band, which according to Des was really a recording of the Life Guards Band conducted by George Miller on the 30th April 1909. Beautifully recorded in what sounded like a spa-

cious studio which assisted the band with sympathetic acoustics. Well done Zonophone!

Then came two Harry Dearth recordings. First an International Zonophone Company recording of 'Even Bravest Heart' from Faust on Z-0420i5 recorded April 1910. This was followed by a British Zonophone Company Ltd recording of the 'Prologue' from I Pagliacci on Z-042018. Dearth is a singer I've always admired. It is good to see him rewarded in this fashion with a full orchestral accompaniment and given 12 inches of recording space to do the music justice. I don't know what 'British' or 'International' has with the price of fish in this instance, but that's what is on these labels?

Then a singer about whom I don't know anything by the name of Horatio Germaine aka as Harold Wilde singing 'My Queen' left me pondering a bit even though appearing on the International Zonophone Company label X-042001 with a recording date of March 1909.

Skipping two of Kirkby Lunn's violet label HMVs, along with a John Harrison black label HMV of a Lord Somerset ballad, for another occasion, I'd like to wrap up this pre-amble with two more Zonophone recordings, one a British Zonophone Company Ltd recording and the other an International Zonophone Company disc, subtle labelling distinctions which mean nothing to me at the time of writing. What the artists thought of this subtle distinction I wouldn't venture! However Edna Thornton singing Elgar's 'Land of Hope and Glory' in the Coronation year of 1910, must surely have sold well notwithstanding Dame Clara Butt also doing the same on her specially priced blue label HMV's. Surely the cheaper rendering would have sold more copies - but then again, there's no knowing the British and how they might play a straight bat to this veritable conundrum! But once again the quality of recording and performance is absolutely first class.

Finally Madame Deering alias Eleanor Jones-Hudson singing 'It was a Dream' by Cowen on Z-043012 gets my big tick for once again nothing cheap or nasty about this recording or its presentation. So in summary, a fascinating assortment of songs and ballads. One which I will always remember for all the wrong reasons, especially my over the top reactions to this end and the pleasure they will give me in the years to come.

## **A worrying time -**

As members of our group begin to recognise the fact that our numbers are thinning down its going to be hard to find enough presenters to fill our yearly calendar with suitable programmes. I would like to air some suggestions which might arrest our being at a cross road situation.

First and foremost, in order to fill the vacant spaces in our monthly schedule, which currently stands at two empty slots, could we trim the number of meetings we currently maintain to suit our diminishing numbers? This could be the easiest solution for all concerned.

Secondly, should we be taking a more aggressive approach to the problem with a drive for new members! Perhaps a once a year function like we had at the Sharella for our 50th or openly going public by participating at an annual function like the Antique Collector's fair at the Hutt Horticultural Hall, a two day event which draws in masses of people.

These and other issues like thinking beyond the present set-up need your attention and thoughts!