

## Report of West of England Group meeting at Westhay on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

At the home of the ever-welcoming Anne and Bernie Brown, we had a brief AGM, at which Roger Mackey was elected Chairman, (on the retirement of Paul Collenette, after 16 years). We were treated to “Blue Moments” by our member Paul Baker. These were Blue Amberols, played on his Edison Standard (model D; no end-gate), with Diamond B reproducer and Cygnet horn.

Several of them were from foreign series, starting with the stirring *Triumphal March* by the National Military Band (cat. no. 23332), and the lively *Popular Refrains*, well-recorded in Paris by the ubiquitous Garde Republicaine Band (27032). From Edison's London studio came the comical *Let's Have a Song About Father* by Harry Bluff (23708). Also unusual was no. 22539 from the only 12-strong Hawaiian series, of *Akahi Hoi*, recorded in 1909 for wax Amberol by Toots Paka's Hawaiians. Though the real rarity was purple Amberol 29025 of *Any Place Is Heaven If You Are Near Me* sung by Thomas Chalmers.

Billy Murray naturally was represented, with the excellent Rachel Grant in *All I Want Is a Girl Like You*, and as ¼ of the Premier Quartet in *Down In Dear Old New Orleans*. More good vocals continued with *When Francis Dances With Me* by Ada & Billy Jones.

We heard the wistful WW1 ballad *Somebody's Waiting For Someone* sung by Betsy Lane Shepherd & Marion Cox, and the evergreen *Till We Meet Again* by Gladys Rice and the versatile Vernon Dalhart - who also sung the bluegrass-type *New River Train* (5032).

The sudden contrast in musical style after WW1 was highlighted by the ragtimey *I Want a Daddy* by the Tuxedo Dance Orchestra; *Broken Doll*, given novelty treatment by Jaudas' Society Orchestra, and *Bo La Bo* by Lopez & Hamilton's band (emulating the frantic Original Dixieland Jazz Band) in 1919. Another curiosity was Frankie Marvin, singing/yodelling *Watermelons Smiling On the Vine* (5620 – dubbed from an electric Diamond Disc).

Paul certainly provided an entertaining and varied series of “blue moments”; we then enjoyed a splendid tea prepared by Anne Brown and Connie Little. Afterwards, we had members' records; some blue-coloured, e.g. Columbia, Phonocord, Filmophone and Oxford (cylinder – coloured Cambridge blue...). Others had “blue” in the title, such as *Beyond the Blue Horizon*, *Birth Of the Blues* - by agile pianist Edythe Baker, and *Wedgwood Blue* intermezzo (composed by Albert Ketelbey, a WoE Group favourite). Then there were *Chinese Laundry Blues*, *Blue Hawaii*, *Bluebottle Blues*, and others too humourous to mention.

Amongst members' Blue Amberols, were *Who Pays Mrs Van Winkle's Rent?*, the hilarious *Aba Daba Honeymoon*, the unique announced B.A., *Cavalry Charge* (23330), and the authentic blues number *Broken Busted Blues* (Noble Sissle & Eubie Blake). Not forgetting dance bands, we heard *Blue Skies* by Don Voorhees' Orchestra (5269).

By then it was late evening, so much had we enjoyed the efforts of Paul, Bernie, Anne and Connie, which were very much appreciated.