

Report of meeting of West of England Group at Westhay, Som., on 17th September 2016.

Many members of the Group were again welcomed by Bernie and Anne Brown at their home in Westhay. Bernie's theme this time was "Transports of Delight".

Beginning with marine travel, Gracie Fields asked us to *Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Good-bye* – from the film soundtrack of *Shipyards Sally*. Still shipboard but on Blue Amberol (2039) was *Sailing down Chesapeake Bay* by the Premier Quartet, and the rousing *Row, Row, Row* by the National Promenade Band.

Further cylinders followed (on the Amberola 75), starting with an early motoring comic song *The Little Ford Rumbled Right Along* on Indestructible 3455, and *Caravan* – an oriental-style fox-trot by Julius Lenzberg's Orchestra (Blue Amberol 3983). Remember the camels; we haven't finished with them yet...

Then we switched to the table-model Sonora gramophone with swivel tone-arm for both lateral- and vertical-cut records. We heard Pathe red rooster (5367) of *Le Tram* march. The Garde Republicaine played with its usual rambunctious. (Now if only the Philadelphia Electric Rapid Transit Band – yes, really – had recorded it...).

Changing to lateral discs, on the HMV 156, we were amused by the vigorous collegiate dance-band Waring's Pennsylvanians in *Wobbly Walk*. Unfazed, *Felix Kept on Walking*, according to the Jack Hylton Orchestra.

Trains were comically mocked by (British) Hollywood actor Reginald Gardiner on Decca F 5278, (which was available on 45 r.p.m. into the 1970s). Though the most atmospheric tour-de-force about trains was *Orient Express*, played by Sidney Torch on the (Regal, Edmonton) Christie organ – which survives in South Wales. The realistic effects that Torch could produce from the keyboard were astonishing.

Bernie concluded appropriately with Flanders and Swann's magical *Transport of Delight* – an affectionate swipe at the London bus.

After Anne's wonderful tea, we resumed with members' records. Cars were represented by *He'd Have to Get Under* by Stanley Kirkby on a centre-start Pathe; and the hilarious *Beep Beep* about a bubble-car and a limousine, on a 1958 Columbia. Another Columbia – from 1954 – featured *Space Ship*, by Charles Williams' Concert Orchestra, with eerie electronic effects.

Rather more primitive transport was represented by *Riding on a Camel in the Desert*, amusingly sung by Leslie Sarony on an Edison Bell Radio. More civilised quadruped transport was provided by the horse as in *Thanks for the Buggy Ride* - both by The Two Gilberts on Regal, and by Earl Oliver's Jazz Babies (Harry Reser) on Blue Amberol.

Much more seriously – it being wartime – we heard the earnest Peter Dawson in *The Air Pilot*, and the (melo)dramatic Malcolm McEachern in *Minesweepers*.

Returning to trains, we heard *When the Midnight Choo-choo Leaves for Alabam* by Collins & Harlan on US-Everlasting (also issued on Indestructible); and *This is the Way the Puff-Puff Goes* (Rhythmic Eight, on Zonophone).

Altogether we had covered most forms of transport except submarines and helicopters (too difficult to rhyme), and we are most grateful to Bernie and Anne for a splendid programme.

Paul Collenette.