

London; 16 January 2018

The subject of this meeting, presented by Keith Harrison and Tim Wood-Woolley, was **Vocalion Records**. Keith explained how the idea of a CLPGS Reference Series publication on Vocalion had come about utilising work by Frank Andrews and numbers of others including Jim Hayes, Mike Thomas, Mike Langridge and Bill Dean-Myatt. The result is RS42, described in FtR No 63, page 418.

The significance of Vocalion in the disc market was illustrated by the number of recordings for which they were responsible: over 16,000 when Aco, Broadcast, Australian Vocalion and Little Marvel are included. Keith outlined the early history of the company from its origins as the Orchestrelle and Aeolian Company in the USA in 1895, its arrival in the UK in about 1915 and the separate UK company formed in 1925. Tim then picked up the story, noting how the company's fortunes were transformed by the introduction of the 8 inch Broadcast disc in 1927. Over a quarter of a million were sold, a good few of them featuring the ubiquitous Harry Bidgood in one incarnation or another. Vocalion was taken over by Crystalate in 1932 and absorbed by Decca in 1937. The name survives today in Dutton Vocalion CDs.

Throughout the meeting we enjoyed a number of the company's records, some of them played on an appealing Aeolian Vocalion portable brought along by one of our members. They included a quite splendid recording from 1917 of *Recondita Armonia* sung by Vladimir Rosing, more Puccini in the shape of Frank Titterton singing *Your Tiny Hand is Frozen* and Bobbie Comber's politically incorrect but endearing version of *Barnacle Bill the Sailor*. There was a big turnout for this meeting reflecting considerable interest in the subject matter and respect for the significant achievement represented by RS42.

London Reporter