

C.L.P.G.S – Northern Branch

Report on meeting held on 21st July 2019 – by Albert Pattison

There was an attendance of 21 members at the July meeting of the Northern Branch which is regarded as our 'Picnic' meeting. At our previous venue we actually played our records out on the lawn but in recent years we have just operated indoors. This was again the case with the members' theme being 'British Place Names' A total of 13 portable machines were on show plus a couple of desk tops.

We had a wide variety of recorded place tributes with a total of 32 records spinning out details of various locations. As we were located in Lancashire it was appropriate that the opening number, on the Oriole label, was "Manchester United Calypso" as performed by Edric Connor who was born in Trinidad but came to Britain in 1944, working here for the rest of his life. Whilst Oriole was a 50's label, Nicole was much earlier label, dating back to 1903. On this label we heard Sam Studd telling us about the "Man From Lancashire". This was followed by the Five Smith Brothers with "The Lambton Worm" and Robert Howe with "Up From Somerset" on the Homochord label. This reporter was then pleased to play an Al Bowlly recording with a local connection. The song being "The Blackpool Walk" with label credit going to Felix Mendelssohn & His Orchestra, and the date being 1st July 1938.

Harry Lauder introduced "Bonnie Mary of Argyle" then we were whisked away to "Glorious Devon" which was musically feted by Peter Dawson. We then had a medley on the Decca label entitled "Royal Variety Performance, 1952". This was a vehicle for "Let's All Go Down The Strand" as sung by Jack Jackson.. Like her Majesty the Queen, we then heard Reg Dixon sing "I'm Shy, Mary Ellen, I'm Shy" before Vera Lynn closed the selection with "Let The Great Big World Keep Turning". The music style then switched to Dixieland with George Webb's Dixielanders playing "London Blues" and we stayed in the metropolis to hear Billy Cotton & His Band tell us about "St James Park" with Alan Breeze providing the vocal input. Breeze started with Cotton's band in 1932 and stayed for 36 years! We continued to ramble far and wide with "Serenade from the Fair Maid of Perth" by Heddle Nash, "Hammersmith Riff" from Stan Kenton who was a rare non-Britisher on the day, and "The Lancashire Scotsman" as remembered by George Formby senior. The elder Formby was to re-appear later with "Bits Fra' Wigan" whilst his son was to give us ""The Lancashire Hot Pot Swingers" and "On The Wigan Boat Express" later in the session.

Another American band appeared on the French Odeon label as Miff Mole's Molers played "Birmingham Bertha". The song first appeared in the American film in 1929 which does tend to suggest that the Birmingham mentioned was not the one in mid-England – but no-one really cared about this as the music was very enjoyable. We were then back to both Peter Dawson and England's most eastern county to hear "Young Tom Of Devon". We were then reminded that the cricket season was in full swing as a Yorkshire member played "Victory Test Match Calypso" by Lord Beginner who had also written the number under the name of Egbert Moore. The reason for including the number was the reference to Lords in the lyrics. With the strong cricket rivalry between Lancashire and Yorkshire, the recording brought a few friendly comments with the meeting hearing that the England captain on the day was Yorkshireman Norman Yardley.

We heard "The Voice Of London" a piece composed by Charles Williams who conducted the Queen's Hall Light Orchestra on 12 December 1946., then Joe Loss took us into Berkeley Square to hear the nightingale with Paula Greene vocalizing the words. A trip to "Widdecombe Fair" with Charles Tree as our guide was followed by the splendid voiced David Lloyd and his "Gentle Maiden". We than had successive Florrie Forde numbers in "She's A Lassie From Lancashire" and "Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly" (from the Isle of Man). A third Devonian Dawson session gave us "Devon O Devon" before we travelled all the way to the Isle Of Ske to hear a medley by Bobby MacLeod's Scottish Dance Band on the uncommon yellow YB series label on Phillips. Then it was to Wales for the "Men Of Harlech" as sung on the Broadcast label by The Cenydd Glee Singers. The label described these artists as 'unemployed Welsh miners'.

The two closing numbers raised the musical profile a little as we heard Peter Pears perform "Come Ye Not From Newcastle" before we closed with "Killarney" sung by Ian Colquhoun on Gramophone Concert GC 2-2646. This ended a most enjoyable afternoon with, I'm sure, a good many geographically musical memories been either born or remembered.