

SCOTTISH GROUP MEETING

December 2 2017

We were treated to another well researched and fascinating presentation by Peter Chaplin; this time on **Private and Not So Private Recordings**. This explored a wide range of private recordings, touching on what they are and in some cases the difficulties of establishing what they contain. Although some have labels with comprehensive information, others have very little or none. Although some were privately recorded, many were the products of the small commercial recording studios which, particularly in the 1940s and 1950s, existed in most towns of any size.

First, we heard an extract from a 1950s 33.33 rpm recording produced by one of these studios in Edinburgh – Graham's Recording Services – of the George Reid Dance Band, simply inscribed 'Irish Tour' on the label. This had seemingly been compiled from tape recordings made during the tour. Butlins Holiday Camps had recording booths and next we heard a man singing 'On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe' at the Filey camp in 1946.

Peter played an off-air recording from the BBC Scottish Home Service in 1950 of W. B. Mooney playing one of his own compositions 'Rondino'. This was not so 'private' as it would have been heard by many people on the radio at the time. Peter has restored many private recordings for others and as an example played the 'Lewis Bridal Song' sung by a young Edinburgh woman who was able to hear herself again after more than 60 years.

There followed a private 1950s recording of the soprano Mary Wilson accompanied by the pianist Ella Lamb who in the 1920s had, under her maiden name Ella Gardner, made vocal recordings for Parlophone; and thanks to Billy Gray we were treated to one of these – 'Bonnie Wee Thing', Among the other things heard was a recording made in 1970 by Peter of the Southport Odeon Cinema Compton organ; Billy Williams' widow describing how he died; a recording by the local radio station about the presentation of a gold headed cane to the captain of the first ship to reach Montreal after the winter of 1948; a 1928 HMV private recording of a string trio including Princess Victoria on piano playing 'Salut d'Amour'; and a recording of a local jazz group recorded in the 1950s, including Jim Baikie on guitar. This had been found in Jim's loft by his son and now restored by Peter Chaplin to be heard again by the family.

The presentation was greatly enjoyed by the 13 members present.

Ken Jobling