

**Topsham, 2nd March 2019**

**I**t was a full house for our first meeting of 2019, when Paul Collenette concluded his presentation **Edison Records: The Final Years** with the events of 1929.

As a last ditch effort to revive the loss-making record division, Edison moved the operation to new premises at 261 Fifth Avenue, New York in January 1929.

The Blue Amberols had been acoustically dubbed from Diamond Discs for many years, but from about February 1929 they were dubbed electrically until June, when the process was discontinued. These very late cylinders sold in small numbers, and surviving examples are rare. On Paul's Opera we heard BA5663 *Sweethearts on Parade* by the Golden Gate Orchestra, and BA5685 *Carolina Moon* by the B.A.Rolfe Orchestra.

The Fifth Avenue premises proved unsuitable for recording, so the studios were again moved to 23<sup>rd</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Street, New York. Several late Diamond Discs were played on Paul's C-250 using a Dance reproducer, including 52520-L *Sonny Boy* by Murray Kellner's Ensemble and 52545-R *You were meant for me* by the Piccadilly Players.

Never ones to conform, Edison records did not have A and B sides. L and R meant left and right, the records on dealer's shelves being filed with the R side on the right.

Charles Edison realised that the Diamond Disc was obsolete, and that the Company had to enter the lateral cut market if the record division was to survive. In February 1928 lateral cut masters were recorded alongside Diamond Discs, but pressing problems delayed their introduction until August 1929. By then some of the popular hits recorded earlier were already out of fashion.

To play the 'New Edison Needle' records, Paul fitted an Oro-Tone attach-ment to the C-250, and in a departure from his normal choice of repertoire played a movement from Haydn's String Quartet in C Major on 47007-L, a rare 12-inch record. Returning to lighter music, we heard several 10-inch records including 11007-L *Etiquette Blues* by Bob Pierce and 14014-R *In Old Tijuana* by Billy Murray. Paul concluded with the last officially issued record 14077-R *Perhaps* by Luigi Romanelli's Orchestra, but then surprised us all with 14078-L *Every day away from you* by Walter van Brunt, recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1929. This record should not exist, and is presumed to be 'one that got away'.

On 24<sup>th</sup> October 1929 the Stock Market crashed, and on 1<sup>st</sup> November Thomas A.Edison Inc. announced that production of records and phonographs would cease, the Company concentrating in future on radio and dictating machines.

Many of our members had never seen or heard an Edison Needle record, and it had long been thought that they were never sold in the UK, but examples have been seen bearing the stamp of the London music publishers Francis, Day & Hunter. Some may still be out there waiting to be discovered!

We thank Paul for a most informative and meticulously re-searched presentation.

**Roger Mackey**