

Report of West of England Group meeting at Westonzoyland, Som., on 2nd July 2016.

It was another full house (18 members) at Roger and Nicki Mackey's house, where we keenly anticipated a programme entitled "The Weather". The discs were played on a recently-acquired Expert Minor gramophone (with Meltrope 3 soundbox), and the cylinders on an Edison Amberola 50.

Many dance-band numbers were played – e.g. *Crazy Weather* (Roy Fox), *March Winds and April Showers* (by the very neat and rhythmic Casani Club Orchestra, with spoken introduction by bandleader Charlie Kunz), *Behind the Clouds* (Percival Mackey's Band, vocal by Fred Douglas), *Waiting for the Rainbow* (Jack Hylton singing with his Orchestra), *Blue Skies* (Debroy Somers' Band in a booming public hall), *Sunnyside Up* (The Clevelanders – Harry Reser – with crooner Smith Ballew), and *Blow, Blow, thou Winter Wind* (a swingy version by Ken "Snakehips" Johnson's Orchestra, with vocal by Al Bowlly and the Henderson Twins).

On the vocal side, we enjoyed *Rhythm of the Rain*, sung and growled by Maurice Chevalier, and *Button Up Your Overcoat* by Layton & Johnstone trying to set a speed record. A change of pace was set, however, by Richard Tauber, dramatically singing *Winter Journey* (Schubert), and Norman Allin with *Arise, ye Subterranean Winds* (Purcell), *Blow the Wind Southerly* sung in a wonderfully pure voice by Kathleen Ferrier (unaccompanied), and from a 1916 HMV, *O Sole Mio* by Caruso.

Nicki provided us with a sumptuous tea, and we resumed with an amazing variety of members' records. These included a couple of the excellent sixpenny Eclipse records – *Make Hay While the Sun Shines* (Leslie Sarony) and *Between the Showers* (Jay Wilbur's Orchestra). Another good 8-incher was a Broadcast of *Singing in the Rain* (Harry Bidgood's Band, frantically fitting a 3-minute orchestration into 2 ½ minutes).

"Rain" songs continued with *It Takes a Little Rain* (Indestructible cylinder), *It always Starts to Rain* (sung by the amusing Claude and Jack Hulbert), *Didn't It Rain* (sung by Rosetta Tharp on a c. 1948 Brunswick), *What Do We Do On a Dew-dew-dewy Day* (Clyde Doerr's Orchestra – with hot trumpet – on a Blue Amberol), and *Whether It Rains* (Kenn Sisson and his – little-known but very good - Orchestra on Brunswick).

In contrast, we heard several songs about sunshine, such as *On the Sunny, Sunny Side* - a 1909 Homochord brought along by our Billy Williams specialist, *Take In the Sun* sung by Irving Kaufman (cunningly disguised on the Currys label as "K. Irving"), and the matchless Noel Coward in his sublime *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*.

Songs with "Weather" in the title included *Stormy Weather* (Jack Payne and his Band), *Weather Reports* (Flotsam & Jetsam with jokes about the BBC weather news), *Charming Weather* (the lively, precise Bohemian Salon Orchestra, with this tuneful number from Robert Stolz' show *Wild Violets*).

It being midsummer, we were not quite *In the Shadows* (Alhambra Orchestra on Blue Amberol) when we reluctantly ended a most enjoyable afternoon/evening with Roger and Nicki, whom we thank warmly.