

Eden Valley Museum

OBJECT OF THE MONTH AUGUST 2023

Home Entertainment 1898 - late 1950's

The museum holds a small collection of 78 rpm gramophone records.

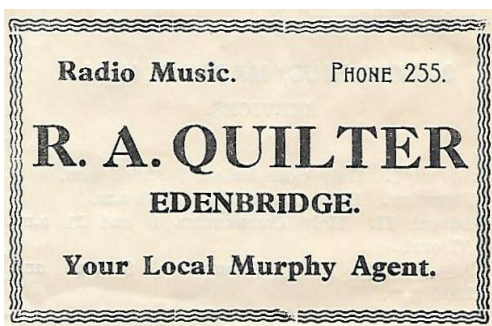
Prior to 1888 music was recorded on wax cylinders and played on mainly wind-up phonographs, but in 1887/8 the German American Emile Berliner (1851-1929) developed a method to record onto a flat disc still using wax. Shortly afterwards, Fred Gaisberg (who worked for Berliner) found a better material, Shellac, which was being used to make buttons at a factory in Newark, New Jersey. Berliner started to use the material to make the 78 rpm records. Shellac is a resin secreted by the female lac bug on trees in the forests of India and Thailand; the end product can be considered a natural form of plastic.

Whilst earliest speeds of rotation varied widely ranging between 65 to over 100 rpm (revolutions per minute), by 1910 most were recorded at about 78 to 80 rpm. In 1925, 78 rpm was chosen as a standard for the motorized gramophone (as opposed to a wind-up gramophone), because it was suitable for most existing records, and was easily achieved using a standard 3600-rpm motor and 46-tooth gear.

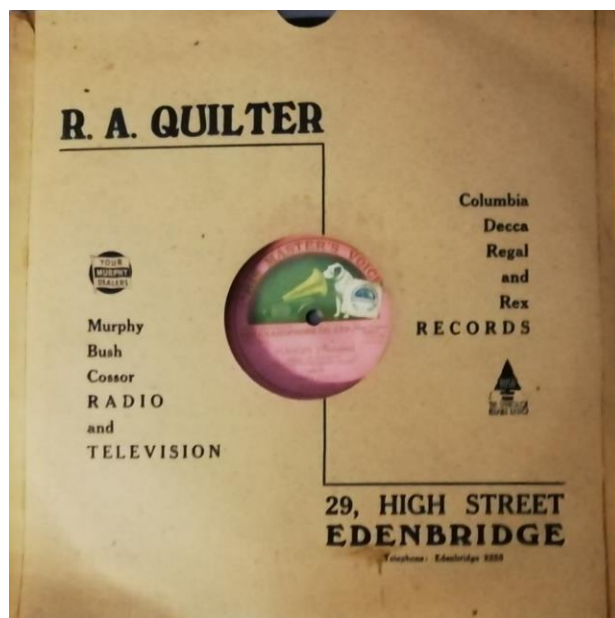
78's came in a variety of sizes, the most common being 10 inch (25 cm) and 12 inch (30 cm) diameter and were originally sold in either paper or card covers, generally with a circular cutout allowing the record label to be seen. Most 78 records were issued in plain paper sleeves with no additional accompanying materials.

The term 78 did not come into use until after World War II when the need arose to distinguish the 78 from the newer record formats such as LP's and 45's; before that they were just called records.

The duration of 78 rpm recordings is about three to five minutes per side, depending on the disc size: 12 inch, c. four to five minutes; 10 inch, c. three minutes



Advert, c.1940



The 78 above in our collection, *Je Suis Seul* (Manon) sung by Enrico Caruso, c.1911, is a single sided 12" record from HMV – His Master's Voice. It was purchased at Quilter's electrical shop which was at no.29 High Street, Edensbridge as shown. EDEVT:538
On display in the Upper Hall Gallery cabinet

Other 78's in our collection, all 10 inch:

Pee Wee Hunt and his Orchestra: *Twelfth Street Rag / Somebody Else, Not Me* (1948)
Capital/Decca

Nellie Lutcher & Her Rhythm: *Hurry on Down / Fine Brown Frame* (1947) Capitol/Decca

Mario Lanza: *The Song Angels Sing / Because you're mine* (c.1952) HMV

Stan Kenton and his Orchestra: *Down in Chi-Hua-Hua / I been down in Texas* (c.1943)
Capitol/Decca

Joe Loss and his Band: *In the Mood / At the Woodchopper's Ball* (1940) Regal

All EDEVT:289

All of the songs can be listened to on www.youtube.com/