



“One of the five best hi-fi shops in the world”
ARENA Magazine

Christmas opening hours

Our opening hours over Christmas and New Year are as follows:

Saturday 24th December
9am – 4pm (open)

Sunday 25th December
Closed

Monday 26th December
Closed

Tuesday 27th December
Closed

Wednesday 28th December
10am – 6pm (open)

Thursday 29th December
10am – 8pm (open)

Friday 30th December
9am – 6pm (open)

Saturday 31st December
9am – 6pm (open)

Sunday 1st January
Closed

Monday 2nd January
Closed

We will resume normal opening hours from Tuesday 3rd January at 10am



the end of an era

By David Graham

It is with some sadness that in September we said farewell to **Vic Lowe**, our (now retired) stores manager. Vic started his career at Grahams back in 1973 – 32 years ago.

When Vic joined us the stores were located in the basement at Pentonville Road, with no daylight and only the sound of the Northern Line, that ran below the building, for company.

After a few years he had worked his way up the building passing the service department on the ground floor, straight over the sales dept on the 1st floor and found himself physically elevated to the second floor. Now the sound of trains had gone, but at least he had daylight and a view over the reservoir.

During the days at Pentonville Road, which was his first “sentence” from 1973 until 1989, he was one of the younger members of the staff. He had to endure a lot; handing fridges, freezers, washing machines, televisions, hi-fi, the receptionist on the 1st floor, and lunch times in the Belvedere Pub across the road.

Anyway, 32 years on and there are a number of things I’m going to miss about Vic. When he leaves the average length of service will drop by about two years, and the average age of the staff will go down by about 20 years.

His packaging skills are renowned world-wide and over the years we have had many compliments about the quality of our boxes that have been shipped around the world.

His support of the best football team in North London will be greatly missed – especially now as we have a number of Tottenham degenerates amongst us.

We will all miss his good humour, loyalty and biscuits. Mind you the biscuits can be replaced.

We held a farewell party for Vic which was also attended by many ex-members of staff, which showed the amount of respect and friendships he built over the years (or maybe it was just the free drink!).

We wish him many happy and healthy years in retirement.

calendar

We have had to postpone our 2006 photographic calendar competition but hope to run it for our 2007 calendar. Please contact us or visit our web site for details on how to enter.

Our Grahams 2006 calendar is now available for collection. If you would like to reserve one to collect at a later date please phone or email us as soon as possible as we only have a limited stock.

On track

Keeping you on track with the developments at Grahams Hi-Fi

Winter 2005



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in this issue...

Linn's new speakers

PURE DAB Digital Radio

Pioneer new plasma screens

Cedia Show Report from Indianapolis

iPod interfaces

Naim CD Player, DVD Player and trade-in offer

New B&W Speakers

All things Crestron

Limited Edition prints from James Balston

New Staff

Cedia Certification

Recommended CDs

Jude Buys B&W 802Ds

Christmas Opening Hours

Farewell to Vic Lowe

linn's new speakers

Linn has been working very hard to produce a range of high quality loudspeakers and stylishly elegant surround-sound speakers.

The **Artikulat** range combines Linn's expertise in the fields of both speaker and amplification design to produce a fully integrated Aktiv speaker package. All of the models incorporate Linn's 3k driver array which allows for better integration of both treble and midrange whilst the servo-driven bass units ensure a very accurate reproduction of the low end bass frequencies. These developments combined with the built-in Chakra amplification add up to a highly musical and innovative product. Finishes available are cherry, maple, rosenut and black ash. Special finishes are also available.

The **Komponent** range is a quality alternative to the mass-produced surround packages that are to be found in the market place. A full package of floor-standing, stand-mount and centre speakers are available with matching sub-woofer. They use a scaled down 2k version of the 3k array used in the Artikulat range, which again, helps to create a clean and integrated top end. The cabinets are aluminium extrusions that are available in black or aluminium finishes. They also incorporate a clever cable-routing system to hide the cables.

Linn's new range of high-performance power-amplifiers heralds the introduction of a new Chakra topology. Essentially this technology was developed for use in the flagship Klimax range of power-amps; the technology provides for increased power, reliability and efficiency. There are several different models available ranging from a 2 channel 100w amp right up to a 6 channel 100w amp which can be used at the heart of a multi channel system. 2, 3 and 4-channel 200w versions are also available.



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rega cartridges

Having taken time-out to revamp their turntable range, Rega has now turned their attention to their cartridges.

The range has been streamlined to include the new Bias2, Elys2 and Exact. Rega has also improved the sound quality quite considerably by utilizing the coils from Exact cartridge on both the Bias2 and Elys2. It now means that an entry-level price of £55 gets you an unprecedented level of refinement.

rega speaker

We are pleased to introduce a new addition to our entry-level range of loudspeakers. The Rega R1 bookshelf and R5 floorstanding models now offer a very smooth, detailed and controlled sound that sets new standards for speakers at this level. They have high quality veneered cabinets and come in a choice of cherry, maple or rosenut finishes.

humax 9200T

The latest addition to the Humax free-to-air digital tuner range is the 9200T. This model offers the ability to receive free-to-air channels and also stores up to 100 hours of programming on the 160GB built-in hard disc. Other features include twin tuners – allowing you to record a programme while watching a different programme – and USB connectivity to allow connection to PC/MP3 players for audio and picture viewing.

naim cd555

Naim has announced the introduction of a flagship CD player to complement their ground breaking 552 pre-amp and 500 power-amp combination. This product was launched to the public, here at Grahams on the 10th November by Naim Audio.

The CD555 will be a two-box player which will comprise a transport/DAC in one box and a highly regulated power supply in the other. These boxes will be joined by 2 Burndy interconnects which will uniquely separate the digital and analogue signals allowing for much greater reduction of cross-talk between signals. A significant “super-charging” of the power supply has been achieved with the addition of more regulators and a 40% increase in transformer size from previous models, again to minimise potential interference. Another important advance is the isolation of the DACs in a “quiet room” shielded enclosure; this ensures that the DAC chips can be kept away from varying electrical and magnetic fields. All in all, it promises to be a stunning, no compromise product and a worthy addition to the Naim range.

naim n-Vi

Not only are Naim well established as providers of high quality stereo equipment, they are also now experienced in the audio-visual sector having introduced the DVD5 DVD player, AV2 amplifier and n-SAT speaker package.



The n-Vi will be a high quality integrated audio-visual solution ideal for using as a stand-alone AV system or as a compact addition to an existing Hi-Fi system. It will have DVD-Video, DVD-Audio and CD replay capability. The amplification section will consist of an A/V processor, audio pre-amp and 5 channel power-amp. It will support Dolby Digital, DTS and Dolby Pro Logic II and has both DVI and progressive scan outputs as well as three digital and three analogue inputs. It will be available with an optional FM/DAB radio module and a video scaler module, including an external video input which will be available from Spring '06 onwards.

naim trade-in scheme

Due to the non-availability of laser mechanisms for certain CD players, Naim has announced a trade-in scheme, which will enable customers to exchange their older CD players for new models at a discounted price. This scheme allows for machines that can no longer be supported to realise some value for their owners. The offer relates to CD3/3.5, CD2/CDI and CDS models and will run until January 31st 2006. If you have one of these models and you are thinking of upgrading, please give us a call and we can supply further details.

what's new at grahams



new mythos speakers

The new Mythos Gem compact loudspeakers from Definitive Technology are the latest and smallest in the Mythos range. They are ideal for those who want quality performance without intrusion in their living space. The new range comprises the Mythos Four, a small tower speaker; the Mythos Five, a compact tower; the Mythos Seven to act as a centre channel loudspeaker and the Mythos Solo, a single enclosure housing the left, centre and right speaker and the compact Gem.

A Crestron touch panel with iPod user interface which mimics the iPod



panasonic dvd recorders

Panasonic has introduced two new DVD recorders. The DMR-EH60D comes with a 200GB hard drive (up to 350 hours of recording) and has both a free-view and regular TV tuner, allowing you to record two TV channels at the same time. The DMR-EH50D has an 80GB (up to 140 hours of recording) and a regular TV tuner. Both models support DVD-R/DVD-RW/DVD-RAM for recording but will play back DVD+R/RW, MP3 and JPEG.

cedia show report Indianapolis

In early September David Graham attended the US CEDIA trade show in Indianapolis. This was an opportunity to not only see the latest developments in technology and new products, but also to look at new training programmes that will be relevant to us here in the UK.

High Definition TV (HDTV) which is already reasonably well established in the US was displayed in earnest and with very few exceptions, the quality of all the plasma, LCD and projector images were absolutely stunning. We are already seeing the price / performance of these product types coming down to more affordable levels and can't wait until we start to get HD transmissions here in the UK.

As a taster, we now have an HD satellite receiver on demonstration so you can see the quality of HD images which will start transmission in the UK over the next few months.



A highlight of the show was the **Crestron** stand, where the new Adagio range of integrated multi-room units was unveiled. It will complement the existing range of Crestron home products by making the entry-level more affordable. The new Adagio range includes a number of "one box" systems which incorporate a full-function Ethernet based control system, audio distribution and power-amplifiers. A couple of new keypad and touch screens were shown which now no longer require custom programming (although they still can be), and can be easily configured at the time of installation. These products are expected to be available in the Spring.

iPod interfaces

Many manufacturers were partnering with Apple to provide a suitable iPod interface for their systems. The Crestron version was probably the most elegant by allowing a full graphical replication of the iPod interface on their touch panels. Whilst everyone is going "iPod mad", there are much better ways of getting audio into your system than using what is primarily a portable device. All of the music on your iPod is usually already on the PC or MAC in your home, and there are a variety of different ways of getting this music into your system which will still leave your iPod free to be used whilst on the move.

The best solution is to store all of your music on one of the latest generation Imerge or Crestron (also launched at the show) music servers. Here your music can be stored in original CD quality and still linked to your iPod via iTunes. These music servers, whilst providing larger storage than an iPod, also provide a higher quality of sound.

cd sound quality have we moved forward?

When CD was launched in 1983 it set a standard for digital reproduction, over 20 years later many people seem to think it's a good idea to compress their music and accept a standard of sound inferior to what we had in 1983. Is that really progress? DVD audio, SACD and soon to arrive HD DVD or Blu-ray potentially offer performance well in excess of this and our take on this is that we want our customers to have at least as good a sound as was provided in 1983.

So keep the iPods for portable use and talk to us about providing the best sound quality solutions for home use.



B&W CMI

It is inevitable that the technology behind any flagship product will eventually trickle down the range. The new B&W CM1 bookshelf speakers are evidence of this phenomenon. Split into four simple parts, the tweeter, mid/bass unit, flowport and crossover all share remarkable similarities to the 800 series. This all adds up to a class-defining sound from a compact bookshelf speaker. Available in cherry, maple and wenge (walnut).

B&W XT series

Modern, sleek and elegant are words we would use to describe how, increasingly, people would like their speakers to look, and as plasma and LCD technology become more widespread this type of design is more likely to satisfy. B&W has now developed a range of speakers that go a long way towards addressing this. By incorporating technology from other ranges, the XT series speakers are able to offer high performance stereo, and when combined with the PV1 subwoofer, offer exceptional surround sound performance. The XT4 is the floorstanding model and the XT2 is the bookshelf model, an XTC centre channel is also available.

crestron factory visit

by David Graham

On my way back from Indianapolis (see show report opposite) I spent the day visiting Crestron in New Jersey. Since I was last there around five years ago, their facility has grown around five-fold. The tour of the company encompassed visits to their R&D department, manufacturing plant and warehouse. I was with a couple of other UK dealers and some of the guys from Crestron UK who were also equally impressed with the whole set-up.



Crestron's new Adagio Touch Panel

We were privileged to be hosted by Randy Klein Executive VP and Crestron owner George Feldstein, who also gave us a guided tour of his home.

We are certainly looking forward to receiving their new products early next year and were very grateful for the opportunity to see the factory and visit George's home.

the house that george built

This recently built home contains one of the most impressive implementations of Crestron systems we have seen. The bedroom suite has more touch screens in it than we normally put into one house including two of their large 15" models (cost £12,000 each) in the master bedroom, one TPS-2000 touch panel in the shower!, one by the bath and a 15" in-wall also in the bathroom (used primarily as a TV). This may be excessive by our modest UK standards, but George does own the Company!

The house included most of what we normally do with our own larger house systems, just being American it tended to be a little bigger. In the basement there is a superb home cinema, games room and a music room. The outdoor pool is absolutely beautiful and includes a number of discrete external speakers. The Crestron system takes charge of all the lighting, heating, aircon, security, music and entertainment throughout the house.



Above: George's swimming pool

Left: the steam room / shower with a Crestron in-wall touch panel which can also be used as a video monitor





james balston photographer

James originally trained and worked as an interior designer. Having always had a keen interest in photography, he began to take it up more seriously, initially for the purpose of shooting his own design projects. Gradually he began to receive commissions from fellow designers and architects to a point where photography became his main career.

While most of his work is now based around architectural and interior subject matter, he also takes in landscape, travel and still life. James's work has appeared in numerous publications including: Conde Nast Traveller, Grand Designs, Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph, Tatler and Living.

Limited-edition prints are being displayed in our reception.

new staff

We are delighted to introduce some changes to our team at Grahams.



Philip Cottle – Installation Engineer.

Philip started at Grahams in April this year. He comes from New Zealand where he worked as salesman and installer for an AV retailer. His hobbies include rock climbing, skiing and music.

Rob Smith - Stores Manager

With 15 years experience in retail, the last 10 spent in Selfridges' warehouse, Rob brings to Grahams experience in logistics and has in the short time that he has been with us, completely reorganised the stock rooms. His passions are ska, reggae and Tranmere Rovers.



Darren Hancock - Technical Sales



Darren joined us in April this year. He lives in Cambridgeshire where he previously managed a hi-fi and home cinema retail outlet. He has a thorough knowledge of custom installation sales and is now part of our technical sales team. Darren is also a musician, playing bass for London-based rock band – Black Bikini Alpha who have toured in the US and had a number one download "Save Her" in Finland!

cedia certification

We are delighted to announce that **David Philips** and **Gerrad Ferrier** have recently passed their CEDIA installer certification examinations. They join **Chris Soczewki** and **Will Hammond-Clay** who are also CEDIA Certified Installers.

The CEDIA Certification program defines a series of benchmarks for designers and installers and was set up to provide a valid, credible and reliable method of certifying individuals working within the industry.

To maintain their certification all CEDIA certified professionals are required to develop their skills in a CPD training program. This ensures designers and installers always possess the most up-to-date knowledge and skills.

Grahams has always invested a substantial amount of time and resource in staff training. We are a founder-member of both CEDIA and BADA, our trade associations. We are actively involved in improving educational standards within the industry, which in turn brings benefit to our customers.

who's new and who's who at grahams

grahams recommended music



1. Paul Weller As Is Now

The man himself describes this new album as "the best thing I've ever done, and certainly the best in the last ten years". In 1995 Paul Weller released 'Stanley Road', which was, in terms of sales, his most successful album ever. As is Now is a powerful, guitar based, rock 'n' roll album, and a fitting answer to the critics who felt that his last album of covers was a sign that the founder member of The Jam was losing his cutting edge.

CD £14.00 (includes free bonus DVD whilst stocks last)



2. Jackson Browne Solo Acoustic Volume 1

This live album consists of twelve songs selected from the singer-songwriter's various solo concerts over the last few years. By just accompanying himself on guitar or piano, the strength of the songs, the lyrics and melodies, come to the fore and make for a more intimate experience. This is accentuated by his intros on some of the numbers and his exchanges with members of the audience. The CD is mastered by Doug Sax.

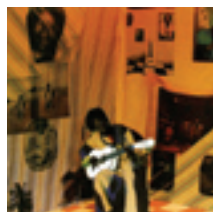
CD £14.00



3. June Tabor At The Wood's Heart

June Tabor describes herself as "a singer of songs that tell stories". There are many examples of such songs here. They range from traditional, 'The Banks of the Sweet Primroses', through El-lington's 'Do Nothing 'Til You Hear From Me', to new, 'The Cloud Factory', written by Bill Caddick, one of June Tabor's favourite songwriters. Her group includes Martin Simpson on guitar, and Mark Lockheart and Iain Ballamy on saxophones.

CD £14.00



4. Cheikh Lô Lamp Fall

Lamp Fall, his third album for World Circuit, was recorded in Dakar in Senegal, London and Bahia in Brazil. This diversity sums up the album. Cheikh Lô plays flamenco guitar, is an excellent drummer and is a powerful singer. He is joined by a variety of musicians including Pee Wee Ellis on saxophone, his compatriot Samba N'Dokh on talking drum and a forty strong bloco drum troupe for the Brazilian sessions.

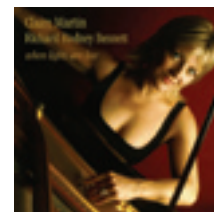
CD £14.00



5. Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane Quartet At Carnegie Hall

John Coltrane's five month residency with the Monk Quartet at the Five Spot in New York in 1957 is the stuff of legends. The discovery this year of these Voice of America recordings provides the evidence. They were the two sets the quartet played at the Carnegie Hall on the 29th November 1957. This is a great opportunity to hear jazz from the missing period between 'Blue Train' and 'Kind of Blue' and the mono sound is excellent.

CD £14.00



6. Claire Martin & Richard Rodney Bennett When Lights Are Low

A very simple, highly enjoyable album featuring Claire Martin on vocals, and Richard Rodney Bennett on vocals and piano. There are no strings, or overly elaborate arrangements, just an excellent selection of great songs beautifully played and sung.

As expected the recording from Linn Records is exemplary, the hybrid SACD playing on all CD players in stereo and in multi-channel with the appropriate equipment.
SACD (hybrid) £14.00

This selection of music is available for collection or by mail order. Contact us by phone, e-mail, fax or post. Our contact details are on the front page of this newsletter. Postage & Packing for up to 3 CDs is £1.50. There is a maximum charge of £4.00.



jude buys himself a diamond

Jude Martins, Senior Sales Advisor at Grahams has been hankering after some large, high quality speakers for many years. This has been postponed for a long time due to either lack of space or funds. Having moved house last year and now having the right sized room (14' x 16') to accommodate the likes of the B&W 802D, he decided to take the plunge - knowing full well the excellent results we've been able to achieve with them in our demo rooms.

His (and his wife's) initial concern was the sheer size of the speakers dominating the living room, but this slowly melted away as he got used to their presence. The improvements incorporated into the new upgraded model provided stunning results. Having upgraded the speakers to a level beyond the rest of the system, he was expecting the limited power output of the old power-amp to be inadequate to drive and control the speakers, especially at low to normal listening levels.

The 802D is a forgiving speaker and whilst it did not expose the low power output of his existing amplifier it certainly benefited from a better one. He is now using a more powerful amplifier and has a system which gives him a great deal of pleasure, and cites the old cliché 'I am now rediscovering my music collection!'