

unusual installations

For the past fifteen years we have carried out many whole house installations. These not only include music and home cinema, but also CCTV, data networking, phone systems, door entry, lighting control, and integration with heating, ventilation and alarm systems.

We are often challenged with unusual system integration problems. A recent installation included an on-site pager system that via the security and lighting control system, not only brings on lights to make the house appear occupied but also sends text messages to local pagers to alert the on-site security staff. In these unfortunate days of rising crime many of the homes we work in require the highest levels of security and peace of mind for the owners.

The Crestron control system in the house also pauses the DVD player and displays exterior CCTV images in the basement home cinema room should an intruder be wandering around the grounds. Our idea of automatically opening the door and letting the Rottweiler out into the garden was considered to be one step too far!

to have it all

In the past our “To have it all” section has generally featured whole house systems that tend to be at very top end of our range. In this issue we are featuring a single room home cinema installation which is stunning in its looks, performance and value for money. The installation is one we carried out recently in North London and is in a fairly typical family home.

This installation is particularly interesting because it features a beautiful cabinet and discrete installation. The main display is the **Pioneer** 50” plasma which floats on the cabinet. The amplifier and DVD player are the superb **Arcam** DV29 and AVR-300 combination which provide DVD audio and HDMI digital input to the plasma. All of the equipment is controlled using a simple **Marantz** hand held touch screen control unit.

The **Artcoustic** speakers form an integrated part of the cabinet and are supplied in a matching colour. The equipment is fitted into the lower cupboards utilising a discrete infra-red receiver that allows the remote control to work with the doors closed.

We have also provided a local input for the customer’s i-pod so this can be used as an additional audio source.

The total cost of the equipment was around £13,000 including installation.



competition winner

In last issues newsletter we ran a competition to win a Naim CD player. The lucky winner who was pulled out of the hat was **Ian Jenkins**. Ian is pictured here with his prize which arrived just in time to replace his 15 year old CD player that was on its last legs.



On track

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

Spring 2005



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

in this issue...

Grahams Hi-Note
maintenance program

Calendar **competition**

To have it all – installation feature

Fine tune your AV system

Loewe Xelos 42" plasma

Arcam MS250 – advance info on Arcam's new music server

Arcam Solo – all-in-one system

B&W Mini Theatre – speaker package

New **Meridian** DAB (digital radio)

Yamaha YSP-1 – one speaker surround sound!

HDTV – laymans guide and what's the future?

Recommended **CDs**

B&W factory visit

Staff changes

B&W launch new 800 series at grahams hi-fi

On February 17th at Canonbury Yard, Grahams Hi-Fi hosted the first UK dealer launch of Bowers & Wilkins new 800 Series.

The event was well attended by over 70 customers who came to see and hear the new range as well as talk to designers, engineers and technical staff who were on hand from B&W.

Three months on, we have had the opportunity to demonstrate the range to many customers, old and new, who were equally impressed. The 800 Series promise to provide an even greater advance in performance than was heralded in 1997 when B&W launched the Nautilus 800-Series has been fulfilled. These remarkable loudspeakers redefine the reproduction of recorded sound. The new 800 Series is a much bigger range than ever before (13 speakers in total), with new models added to reflect the continued growth of the home cinema and multi-channel audio market, including four centre-channel speakers.

Beneath their elegantly curved exteriors, the new 800 models contain a mixture of brand-new technologies, refinements to existing ideas, and all the detail improvements made in the Signature 800 Series – the best acclaimed range in B&W's 38-year history.

The most radical enhancement in the speakers is the use of a diamond dome tweeter, incorporated into the six top-of-the-range models (denoted with a 'D' suffix). The new range is priced from £1,600 for the 805S going up to £13,000 for the flag-ship 800D.

Please call us to arrange a demonstration.



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yamaha YSP-1

As a concept, the idea of one speaker providing a complete surround sound experience is very attractive. Up until this point it has remained a concept, but the clever people at **Yamaha** have managed to turn it into reality.

The **YSP-1** is an integrated processor, digital amplifier and a 42 drive unit speaker with four inputs and the ability to add a subwoofer for extra impact. All of this is packed into a sleek case measuring 100 x 19 x 12cm. From an on-screen menu system, there is the ability to program in the shape and dimensions of your room and also where the speaker will be positioned. The really clever part is the way the speaker will then use the walls to bounce sounds around the room providing the sense of surround sound. The YSP-1 actually does an eerily good job of convincing you that you are in the middle of the action and, with its plasma/LCD friendly dimensions, should prove a very successful alternative to having five speakers dotted about the living-room.

meridian adds DAB (digital radio to its 'G' series

Meridian has announced that it is now offering a digital radio option on their G01 pre-amplifier, G51 integrated amplifier and G91 all-in-one DVD/AV receiver. This facility will now allow customers to enjoy digital radio broadcasts as well as existing FM radio stations.

DAB is very easy to use: instead of remembering the station frequency, the user simply scrolls through the names of the available stations and chooses one to listen to. Additional benefits are freedom from background noise and the display of comprehensive information about the station, programme or music being played.



loewe xelos A42 plasma

Loewe has added the **Xelos A42** plasma to their range of flat panel TVs. The range now covers LCD TVs from 22" to 37" and the 42" plasma.

For those of you who have owned Loewe TVs, the quality of the picture on the older conventional CRT TV sets have set a standard that most plasmas and LCDs were unable to match - particularly the larger screens.

However, the Xelos A42 is the sharpest and most natural picture we have yet seen on a TV of this size, particularly on standard TV and satellite broadcasts. It offers television in a home cinema package with a 16:9 widescreen format and is available as table-top, wall- or stand-mounted options and comes in Platinum finish.

Design is simple and elegant, with clean lines and comes inclusive of a fully-integrated digital (Freeview) tuner and stereo sound.

Its many features include a HDMI High Definition-ready input ensuring high playback quality when transmitting digital picture and audio signals. It has up to seven inputs, including VGA, RGB Component, etc. One feature of particular interest to us is the line level audio input which allows the TV's internal speakers to be used as a centre channel when used in a surround sound system. There are also new on-screen menus allowing easy navigation, with intelligent direct access to Teletext.

We now have a unit on demonstration in our reception area.

mini theatre audiophile sub/sat system from B&W

Bowers & Wilkins has announced a high-performance compact home cinema system called **Mini Theatre**. Available in three different system configurations - distinguished by three subwoofer options - each system provides levels of detail resolution and clarity not previously seen in this product category.

Common to all Mini Theatre systems is a new satellite speaker called **M-1**. Although diminutive in size, the M-1 has been engineered with the same design attributes and ethos as B&W's larger ranges.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the M-1 is the weight and strength of its curved aluminium cabinet.

The M-1's drive units were developed by B&W specifically for the design. The 1" metal dome tweeter benefits from refinements developed for the new B&W 800 Series and includes Nautilus™ tube loading and neodymium magnets.

The result of this detailed cabinet and drive unit engineering has allowed B&W's engineers to borrow another feature from the new 800 Series and utilise the simplest of electronic in the M-1's crossover.

Pricing range from £850 to £1,575 depending on the subwoofer specified. Options are the **AS1**, **AS2** or the recently introduced **PV-1**.



arcam solo

Arcam is renowned for producing high quality audio equipment, be it CD players, amplifiers or radios. However, the Solo is their first product to combine all the components together.

Not only have they managed to combine all the components together, they have also been able to maintain a high level of sound quality. The CD section uses the latest Wolfson 24 bit DAC and optical output common to their stand-alone players. The amplifier section would put many separate amps to shame, coming as it does with 75w per channel, four line inputs, one tape loop, pre and zone two outputs and even an attenuated MP3 player input! The real advance though comes with the inclusion of both FM and DAB radio, it has 30 presets to satisfy even the most avid radio listener.



advance product information - arcam MS250 musicfile server

Grahams has been installing hard-disk based 'CD jukebox' style systems for a number of years for both single and multi-room systems. This technology allowed us to move away from multi-disc cd changers which generally provided only an adequate level of sound quality, with limited track and title information, to a central storage of CD's with multiple outputs to feed different rooms and full track and title listings. This technology is now a few years old but continues to break new ground in ease of access, extended storage and sound quality. We already offer units from **Audiorequest**, **Linn** and **Imerge** and hope to add the **Arcam MS250** later in the year when it is launched. Many of you will probably own an I-Pod or similar device, these units are simply "proper" audiofile version of an I-pod with multiple outputs and greater storage. For the very best performance we always recommend you store the music in its uncompressed format. This will allow you to compress down to other portable hardware in future if required without having to re-load the music.

The Arcam MS250. This is an audiophile quality stereo CD player and music server solution in one box with a 250 Gb internal hard drive. Arcam has devoted a lot of research and development resources to produce the internal Arcam custom-designed sound card. The unit is capable of storing up to 400 CDs uncompressed, or up to 3,000 CDs in compressed audio formats.

If used in a multi-room application, the MS250 has four independent analogue zone outputs with volume controls. It can allow you to access any four tracks simultaneously and, depending on the distribution amplifier, at independent volumes. The video output allows you to connect it to your television to provide on-screen display and allows you to choose a programme choice by artist, album, genre or your own customised play-list.

The music stored on the MS250's hard drive can be backed up via Ethernet or a USB port to an external hard drive or another MS250. It is scheduled for production during the middle of 2005 and whilst the final pricing has not been confirmed, it is expected to be in the region of £2,500.

A unique aspect of the MS250 is that, unlike other music servers, its CD drive incorporates a CD 'burner' which will allow you to 'burn' any music stored to the MS250 to a CD-R or CD-RW disc. Furthermore, it has two analogue inputs for external sources, allowing analogue sources such as vinyl and tape to be digitally stored and copied to CD if required.

Another useful feature is that it is not only capable of playing anything stored on your iPod or other portable music storage device, but it also allows you to transfer music to the portable storage device in uncompressed or MP3 formats.



what's new at grahams

the layman's guide to HDTV



what is it?

High Definition Television (HDTV), as many of you will know, has been broadcast for some time now in Japan and the US, whilst here in the UK we opted for lower resolution at the time of switch-over to digital broadcast. However, Sky has recently announced that it will be launching their HDTV broadcasts in 2006. Simply put, as the name implies,

HDTV will provide a picture of much higher quality and resolution than even conventional DVD players (although at this stage there are no additional sonic benefits). Neither the BBC or ITV have any immediate plans to start broadcasting in HDTV, although 2010 is being suggested as a possible start-up date.

Sky's HDTV channel line-up will include a combination of sports, movies, entertainment and documentary programming.

TV pictures on a conventional CRT television are created by horizontal lines that scan backward and forwards across the screen. The more lines the better the definition, and in the case of HDTV we have almost twice the number. Simple.

what do I need to get it?

It is generally thought that the benefits of HDTV will be most relevant on larger types of screen, for example plasmas, LCD TVs above 37" and most of all, of course, projection systems. But it is fair to say that if you have recently purchased a quality screen, it is possible that it would be HDTV-compatible. Increasingly, newer TV sets are being branded as 'HD-ready'.

BUT

- It will of course be necessary to purchase a new Sky receiver box, which may be bundled with new Sky contracts.
- This will probably (although little information is currently available) have to be connected by a new HDMI lead (digital). Most HDTV content will be protected by HDCP (High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection). This means most HDTV content will only be able to be viewed on display devices that have HDCP software built into them.
- If your TV does not have the above connection, then you will not fully benefit from the HDTV transmissions.
- Freeview etc. does not provide HDTV, although it is possible that cable TV providers will not want to be left out of the race.

Other acronyms that you may come across:

DTV Digital television, but not necessarily high definition. Sky and Freeview are examples of digital television in the UK

HD-DVD High definition DVD

BD Blue ray Discs, a competing higher resolution DVD

HDMI connector (High Definition Multimedia Interface)

HDCP High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection

calendar competition

Many of you will be aware of the "Grahams" calendar that we produce each year. Over the years we have produced a number of bespoke calendars and the 2006 calendar is going to be something special.

The introduction of digital photography has opened up a new interest in "photography" and now the levels of resolution and performance are generally acknowledged as being on-par with celluloid film.

Our idea for the 2006 calendar is to invite budding photographers to enter our competition to have their photograph(s) included in the calendar. The theme is simply "Sound & Vision" - with any direct or tenuous link to the subject.

There will be a prize for the overall best picture (*of a digital SLR camera*) and runner up prizes for all entrants whose pictures are used in the calendar. Our judging panel will include professional photographers Chris Richardson and Dag Alveng.

Chris Richardson has been taking photographs since the late 60s. Having changed the way people looked at Hi-Fi in the late 80s, by turning a boring black box into an exciting and unexpectedly angled object, he was courted by many manufacturers and magazines to work this magic for them. Grahams has worked with Chris over the years and he has shot many of our installations that have featured in magazines.

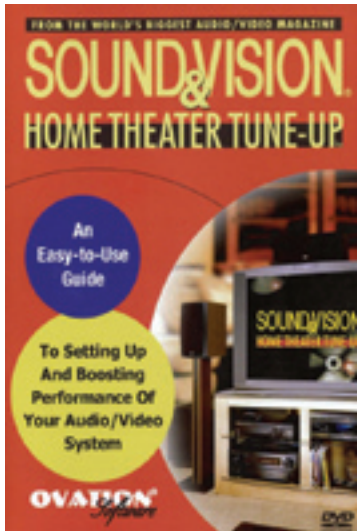
Dag Alveng lives and works in Norway and has been a customer of Grahams for over 15 years. He is an internationally acclaimed professional photographer. His famous work is exhibited at many exhibitions across the globe and published in many books.

Full details of the rules of entry are available upon request or can be found on our website at www.grahams.co.uk/calendar/rules.html

The closing date is 1st August 2005. Good luck!



Win a digital SLR camera



DVD and home cinema set-up open evening

Many of you may wonder how we manage to set up our display devices, projector screens, or indeed calibrate AV systems in general.

We now have an easy-to-use guide in DVD format called 'Sound & Vision Home Theatre Tune-Up' which is an entertaining and simple guide to connecting, operating, adjusting and calibrating your home theatre systems, including video and audio.

Grahams will be holding an open day on June 23rd from 3.00 to 8.00pm to show our customers how to boost the performance and optimise their home theatre system with the assistance of this DVD guide. Because spaces are limited, please let us know if you would like to come. We'll also be giving you a free copy of the DVD to take away with you after your visit.

the grahams hi-note maintenance programme

Following trials over the past six months, we are now pleased to announce the release of 'Hi-Note', our new customer support programme.

'Hi-Note' offers our clients the opportunity to keep their entertainment and home automation systems operating at peak performance.

The programme not only comes into its own with complex whole house systems but is also valuable for single room hi-fi and home cinema installations. "Hi-Note" is not an extended warranty insurance it simply provides a way of ensuring all of your house systems are kept in the best working order.

To keep systems working at their optimum, we provide a twice-yearly 'Health Check' which will allow us to check that everything is working as it should. At this time hardware and software updates will also be carried out.

To ensure that costing and responses are appropriate, we have prioritised the service so, for example, a lighting failure would take priority over a routine maintenance call.

We currently offer a number of levels of Hi-Note to meet most customers' needs. We have versions for private homes as well as for our corporate clients.

The key element of our private client scheme is the bi-annual visits, software updates, reduced visit costs and a priority call-out service. Our corporate clients are offered similar elements in addition to emergency call-out and replacement equipment cover outside warranty. The cost reflects these extra elements. An important factor for these clients is the ability to budget costs.

We have a wide range of clients with differing needs so we tailor the programme on an individual basis. For example, many of our clients are too busy working to spend any time doing simple "trouble shooting" themselves. Consequently we regularly get calls from clients to say their remote is not working, and they just want someone to come around and fix it. This fixing may be as simple as changing the batteries or plugging in a cable that has been un-plugged in error.

The cost of the Hi-Note programme is calculated on an individual basis and is dependent on the complexity of systems installed, the time required for the visits, your location and if we include a number of "finger trouble" visits.

We hope you find this service of value. If you want to know more, please speak to Ray Horn or Tony Diamond.



keep it running

staff matters



peter graham

Congratulations and admiration must go to **Peter Graham**, as he completed his 200th (yes two hundredth!) marathon run on Sunday 17th April at the London Flora Marathon.

Peter's first marathon - significantly the London Marathon, in 1990 - was only 15 years ago. Since then, he has travelled and run marathons all around the world. His fastest time was 3 hours 52 minutes, at the London Marathon in 1992.

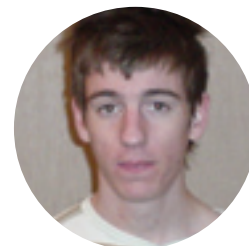
Peter is currently the secretary of the 100 Marathon Club, whose members have all completed more than 100 runs and is also a football referee in his spare time.



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

Chris Soczewki, who has been with Grahams for nearly 10 years, has been promoted and moved into a technical management and training role within the company. He is now responsible for the installation team, including both in-house and external technical training.

James Shorter has joined us recently as a Junior Installer. He is a very determined young man who is passionate about Hi-Fi and AV. His early work experience in the retail sector has given him a positive customer care attitude. Prior to joining Grahams, James learnt some of the fundamentals of our industry with another Hi-Fi retailer.



David Phillips, having finished full-time education, went on to train as an installation engineer working for a hi-fi retail business in Essex, following which he decided to travel abroad. Having got that out of his system, he has joined us as an installation engineer. He has already demonstrated his enthusiasm and skill and we are delighted to have him as part of our team.



Nicky Hill joins us as a junior member of our service and stores department having completing his formal education. He is already demonstrating his potential. His role involves preparing equipment for installation as well as assisting in the stock control and day-to-day running of our service department.



Philip Stagg has joined us as an administrator dealing with order processing and purchasing. After completing university, attaining a BA (Hons) in Business Studies, he worked in the aeronautical industry training as a buyer. He then joined the BBC to carry out a similar purchasing role. His experience will help us maintain our well-profiled range of stock.

who's new and who's who at grahams

grahams recommended music



1. Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds Abattoir Blues/The Lyre of Orpheus

This is the thirteenth studio album from Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds and may well be their best, despite the departure of Bad Seed's lead guitarist, Blixa Bargeld. It is a two album set rather than a double album. The first, Abattoir Blues, is a full speed ahead rocking album, whilst the second, The Lyre of Orpheus, is slower and more contemplative. Mick Harvey takes over all the guitar duties, James Johnston makes his debut on organ, and there is a gospel choir accompaniment on many tracks.

2 x CDs £14.00 2 x LPs £17.00



2. Pink Martini Hang On Little Tomato

A most welcome follow up album to 1997's 'Sympatique', which featured music that appeared on films such as 'In The Cut', and tv shows such as 'The Sopranos' and 'The West Wing'. The band, or little orchestra, is based in Portland, Oregon, and is led by the classically trained pianist, Thomas M Lauderdale and the Cuban singer, China Forbes. The songs, mostly original, are sung in French, Italian, Croatian, Spanish and Japanese, as well as English. The CD is mastered by Bernie Grundman.

CD £14.00



3. Karine Polwart Faultlines

Karine Polwart was the winner of the Radio 2 Folk Awards 2005 for Best New Artist, Best Album and Best Original Song for 'The Sun's Comin' Over The Hill'. The Scottish singer-songwriter uses her experiences as a social worker for the songs in this her debut album as a solo artist. She has said "I always look for the wry, sideways view. It's much more effective and makes for better music". This contemporary folk album has great tunes, as well as excellent lyrics.

CD £13.00



4. Madeleine Peyroux Careless Love

This new CD is the follow up to her excellent debut 'Dreamland', which came out in 1996. Her voice is often likened to Billie Holiday and as she says herself "you can't sing an older person's songs at 16, but you reach a point in age and life experience when they fit". This collection of love songs includes contemporary songs from songwriters such as Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan and the late Elliott Smith, as well as an original song, 'Don't Wait Too Long', co-written with Jesse Harris and Larry Klein, who produced the album.

CD £14.00



5. Taj Mahal Mkutano

Mkutano means meeting and the subtitle of this CD is "Taj Mahal Meets The Culture Musical Club Of Zanzibar". Recorded in Zanzibar, Taj Mahal, on vocals, guitar and banjo, and his two other African-American musicians, Bill Rich, on electric bass, and Kester Smith, on drums, meet with the island's leading Taraab orchestra. They bring the blues from America, whilst The Culture Musical Club bring music influenced by their African, Arabic and Asian traditions. Music is the universal language.

CD £14.00



6. Jacques Loussier Trio The Best Of Plays Bach

This hybrid SACD is a compilation of Loussier's three Bach collections on the Telarc label. It celebrates his 70th birthday and marks the 45th anniversary of his original trio, as well as the 20th anniversary of the reformed trio. The trio consists of Jacques Loussier on piano, Vincent Charbonnier on bass, and Andre Arpino on drums. This wonderful selection of jazz interpretations and improvisations includes the famous 'Air on a G String' used on the Hamlet advert.

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 and 1 LP is £4.00. There is a maximum charge of £4.00.

staff visit to the B&W factory

A number of our staff recently visited the Bowers and Wilkins factory in Worthing as part of our staff training programme and by the sound of it a rather nice jolly – sorry, day out working hard.

For all the staff, the day itself was a perfect opportunity to see how a company such as B&W manufacture speakers from beginning to end, with virtually everything being manufactured on site. On the factory floor, none of the staff are kept working on one area of production all of the time, this alleviates boredom and ensures that all staff find their work interesting and enjoyable, leading to a better made speaker. They employ a rigorous testing programme that ensures all products reach their stringent quality control standards.

"One of the most reassuring things was that everyone seemed genuinely happy in what they were doing, and we didn't feel that this was put on for our benefit," said Conor. "What stood out for me was a 1970s 'art deco/space age' style speaker – DM70 – which they have on display in their main reception area, which doubles as a 'museum' for past B&W products."

The most memorable experience of the day for Colin, our Service Manager, was listening to Buddy Holly's 'True Love Ways', simply because that was the tune to which he and his wife had their first dance. Colin said: "Hearing it on the N800s was the only other time that the song has made the hair stand up on the back of my neck".

This was not John's first visit to B&W, but he was "impressed with how things have developed over the last decade".

