

On track

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

Summer 2007



"One of the five best hi-fi shops in the world"

ARENA Magazine

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meridian exceeds expectations

In February Jude Martins and David Graham were invited to the **Meridian** factory for a pre-launch look at an unusual new product. For the last two years, Meridian has been working quietly and closely with partner Ferrari on the **F80**. "This is probably the most interesting and unusual product we've come across in the past 20 years," commented David. The F80 is a transportable all-in-one home entertainment system; not much larger than a mains powered radio. It contains a superb FM/AM/DAB radio and a CD / DVD player. It has analogue and digital inputs including an input for an iPod with an optional docking station to follow.

The F80's performance is impressive. Its size suggests the performance level of a portable radio, yet it delivers on the scale of a good quality hi-fi system. "You can't believe what it does by simply looking at it," was David's initial reaction when he first saw it.

Meridian have used powerful digital signal processing technology (DSP) which removes the need for traditional passive crossovers and allows them to produce stunningly high levels of sound from what are relatively small drive units. Much of the technology has naturally filtered down from other Meridian products. The digital amplifiers produce a real 80W of power, 75W more than your average transistor radio!

The collaboration with Ferrari has allowed Meridian to develop a unique cabinet design using a special alloy-injected composite which provides a rigid cabinet enclosure for the two front main speakers and rear facing subwoofer.

"It certainly does more than you would expect and I can't wait to get my hands on one," concludes David.

The F80 (£1,495) is available in a range of standard Ferrari colours - red, yellow, white, black or silver - with a range of custom finishes on the way.

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signature diamond

Diamond and marble are the materials at the heart of the new, limited-edition speaker from **B&W** with a bespoke look and feel from leading British designer Kenneth Grange CBE. These are the finest two-way floor standing speakers that B&W has produced in its 40 year history and each pair takes the equivalent of six months worth of man-hours to make.

The limited-edition of 1000 individually numbered speaker sets will be available from July (£11,000) and are finished in either white or a Japanese inspired Wakame veneer. The large tweeter pod is carved from Italian Grigio Carmica or Belgian Black marble – and is perfectly suited to the mechanical and acoustic demands made upon it. This is the first time marble has been used in this way in a speaker and means that, due to natural differences in the marble, no two speakers will ever look exactly the same.

supernait sound from naim

With their latest offering - the **Supernait** (£2,350), Naim has produced an integrated amplifier that draws on all of the technologies utilised within their reference-series products. This means that with 80W per channel of amplification, the Supernait is able to cope with a wide range of speaker loads. Sonically, this translates into an amplifier that provides unprecedented levels of control. The Supernait is designed with maximum flexibility in mind. It has six analogue inputs, five digital inputs and a subwoofer output. The front panel allows for connection of an MP3 player via a 3.5mm input socket and the use of headphones. It can be used as a pre amp or power amp, and is upgradeable with the addition of a Flatcap, Hi-cap or Supercap power supply. The most interesting feature is the inclusion of an on-board DAC converter; this allows users to connect an external digital radio or music server and benefit from a significant improvement in sound.



meridian G95 surround receiver

Complete surround system in a box – just add speakers

The new **G95** is a full 5.1 DVD-Audio/Video Surround Receiver with stereo and surround modes, a slot-loading DVD drive and five built-in 100W power amplifiers to drive your loudspeakers. It plays audio CDs, MP3 CDs, Video CDs and, of course, DVD and DVD-A. It can decode Dolby Digital, DTS, MPEG and MP3 and includes Meridian's famous up-sampling and Trifield surround processing. Two tuner options are available: AM/FM (£4,150) and DAB/FM (£4,395).

The G95 includes a high-resolution video processor/scaler, delivering the most advanced, high-quality video available today from both DVD and external inputs at up to 1080p, including a whole host of analogue and digital inputs. Different video inputs are converted to a single format, so only one display connection is required.



abbey road studios visit

Unless you're an employee or you have booked a recording session, there is slim chance that you would have entered Abbey Road Studios. Well, courtesy of B&W, we were privileged to be given a lifetime opportunity of an exclusive guided tour.

No 3 Abbey Road is a solid Georgian house, almost anonymous in a busy north London road. Its significance is only hinted at by the daily gaggle of tourists, photographing each other on the famous zebra crossing and adding their names to the graffiti on the wall.

Upon entering the hallowed doors of No 3, it immediately struck us how much bigger it was on the inside than the outside. Passing underneath the small black sign that says Abbey Road, you think of all the world-famous classical, jazz, rock and pop musicians, including The Beatles, to have recorded here. You realise how honoured you are to enter a place that is somehow more than just a crucial part of the history of popular music.

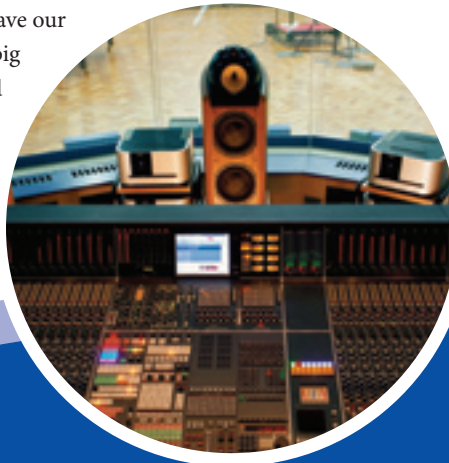
Abbey Road Studios are quite simply 'the most famous recording studios in the world'. Opened in 1931, the official title was EMI Studios and only changed its name after the famous Beatles album. Today, it is probably the most technically advanced recording, mixing, mastering, interactive design and digital facility in the world

Our host guide and all the staff were fantastic. They were accommodating and took time to explain and demonstrate what they were working on at the time. The most fascinating project we encountered was the careful restoration of an old archive recording of real life sounds recorded live in the trenches during the First World War.

As many as 40 of the **B&W 800 Series** reference speaker systems are used throughout the Abbey Road studio complex and no fewer than 33 **Classé CA-M400** mono power amplifiers. The famous Studio One uses ceiling mounted B&W **HTM2Ds** for surround purposes. The value of this outstanding reference system can be appreciated through the superb sonics of projects completed, including the recording and mixing of numerous musical scores to include the latest Star Wars Trilogy, the new 'CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY', 'LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY', 'HARRY POTTER', 'RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK' and 'BRAVEHEART', to name but a few.

Studio Two, is the famous one. The Beatles recorded here and this has guaranteed its place in musical history. Today, bands want to share some of the historic atmosphere and choose it for its vibe and also its 'natural' live sound – Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* was also recorded at Abbey Studios.

Leaving the building we resisted the temptation to have our picture snapped, although we did walk away with a big smile thinking.... BEEN THERE, DONE THAT, and we GOT THE T-SHIRT!



b&w sponsors live from abbey road

Inspired by the 75th Anniversary of Abbey Road studios, **Live from Abbey Road** is a twelve episode sixty-minute music TV series independently produced for a worldwide audience that showcases the highest quality global talent. The overall aim of the show is to capture performances that "sound like an album and look like a movie".

Each show features three artists. There is no studio audience and no host, but each musician speaks about their work, and behind the scenes footage of the musicians working on their performance and leading-up to the performance are included. Shot in high-definition with 35mm lenses in the intimacy of the famous Studios One and Two at Abbey Road, the recordings are designed to look like succinct music movies, giving a personal insight into the world of music and its makers.

B&W 800 Series loudspeakers were used throughout the recording, mixing and mastering of Live from Abbey Road.



new windows in your home?

Over the past few months we have been evaluating the **Lifestation** - a high-performance multi-media server from **Passive Technology**. This server runs the latest version of Windows Vista Media Centre.

How does this differ from any standard PC?

Well, the secret is in the design of the case work, where they have produced a product with a hi-fi appearance and smart passive cooling technology, allowing the server to run virtually silently (with the exception of the internal hard disc drives). Additional utilities have also been developed to allow control from Crestron type systems as well as locking-out the user from complex system settings so they have less chance of messing up the configuration.

The server comes complete with two built-in Freeview Digital tuners, Raid array hard discs which provide fault tolerance to protect your valuable media, an elegant Bluetooth wireless keyboard, small media hand control and high performance graphics output with 1080p resolution for stunning results. The server is well supported, with on-line remote monitoring and as an option, end-user training / configuration services are also available for those who want a little extra hand-holding.

If you want a central device that can store your family photos, manage your video and audio collections, synchronise with your iPod and much more, then this may be the product for you. If on the other hand, it all sounds like too much hard work, then you should consider our discrete DVD servers from Kaleidescape and music servers from Imerge and Crestron.

linn celebrates 35 years of the LP12

What better way to celebrate 35 years of the Linn LP12 than by improving what has always been a benchmark design.

Way back in 1972, the launch of the LP12 turntable revolutionised the way people listened to music. For the first time, due to the turntable's design, more sonic information was being extracted from the grooves of LPs than ever before. Over the years Linn has improved and upgraded all the individual components from bearings to springs, motors to power supplies and arms to arm leads. They have now introduced three new products:

Linn Ekos SE Tonearm

A key element of the new design is the Titanium arm tube which provides better damping, leading to lower surface noise and less distortion. The stainless steel main bearing provides improved rigidity to the bearing and reduces the movement of the arm. Difference in ambient temperature no longer affects bearing friction or play (£2,950).



Linn Keel sub-chassis and armboard

Until now, the LP12 sub-chassis had consisted of various pressed metal parts with a separate laminated MDF armboard. The Keel unites all of the sub-chassis elements and the armboard



itself into one solid piece of machined aluminium. This now provides a more rigid and stable support for the tonearm and platter. The lack of screws, fixings and joins between sections greatly reduce vibration and provides greater accuracy when aligning tonearm and cartridge (£1,950).

Linn Trampolin

This improvement is a fairly logical one. Linn has replaced the melamine board with an aluminium one. The aluminium is acoustically deadened, which reduces vibration borne from the surrounding environment (£140).

All of the above upgrades are backwards compatible with older LP12s and available individually.

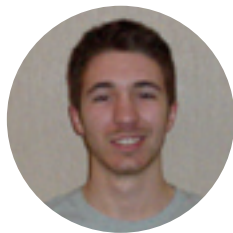
We will be holding a Linn open week from the Tuesday 12th of June 2007 through to Saturday the 16th of June 2007. Customers can pop into Grahams to hear the Keel and Ekos SE upgrades; normal opening hours apply, appointments will not be necessary. As a special promotion, during this event we will be offering a 10% discount on any purchase of LP records.

what's new at grahams

new staff

Joe Hewlings

Joe joined Grahams last autumn in his gap year before going to Bristol University to read Languages. He is working with our custom install team assisting our project managers. Like many of our staff, Joe lists music as his main passion



Darren Karp

Darren joined our Custom Install Sales Team last December.

He brings with him many years of technical

sales experience in IT, networking, AV and telecommunications.



equipment for disposal

New regulations regarding disposal of waste electronic equipment come into force on 1st July 2007. The scheme known as WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations) has been established throughout Europe in an effort to help protect the environment.

Grahams is keen to support this project and have contributed financially to ensure that local facilities are made available to enable our customers to take their old equipment directly to these disposal centres at no charge.

A list of centres will be published shortly, once final negotiations are complete.

If we are installing new equipment in your home, we can take away and dispose of your old equipment on a "like for like" basis. We cannot accept old equipment for disposal at our showrooms.

We are operating under a Government backed scheme run through 'Valpak' and our registration number is 2270.

to have it all

"Would Sir like a glass of wine with Sir's movie?"

This issue's "to have it all" features a delightful country residence that we recently completed. The owner purchased his first surround sound home cinema system from us a few years ago when he was a bachelor living in an apartment overlooking the Thames. Having now married, the bachelor pad was discarded for a family home located in the English countryside some 70 miles from London on the south coast.

We carried out one of our "usual" whole house installations including Lutron Homeworks lighting control throughout, a Crestron audio and control system, remote monitoring CCTV, a superb home cinema system utilising the Meridian MF1 D-ILA projector and the customer's existing Meridian Digital Theatre system. This was all supplemented with several Pioneer plasma screens, the bedroom one being on a motorised bracket that neatly moves the plasma screen towards the viewing position when it is turned on.



The heart of the system is located centrally in the house in a custom built cupboard in the ground floor hall. Whilst the whole house is structurally wired for data, we have also provided remote access to the security cameras, remote control of the lighting as well as allowing Grahams to support and update the system from our offices here in London.

The user interfaces are a Crestron colour in-wall touch screen in the kitchen and three wireless web tablet touch screens, for the kitchen sitting area, cinema room and bedroom. We have also programmed the Sky+ remote controls to operate the Crestron system, allowing the home owner to use the easily manageable Sky+ hand control, to seamlessly operate the plasma screen and audio system.



Being a wine lover with an extensive collection of fine wines, our customer has a purpose-built wine store in the garden. This has, without question, got to be the largest personal store of wines we have seen in a customer's home. The owner assures us he does not collect the wine for anything other than drinking (which seems logical to us). Having done a bottle count, we estimate it will take over ten years to drink the store dry.

His wine collection includes a number of 6L bottles of wine (known as a Methuselah or Mathusalem). These contain enough wine for around 30 glasses - useful if you are having a dinner party or are quite thirsty!

When asked how he justified spending so much on wine, the answer was "What else should I spend my money on?" - "Well hi-fi our course!" we replied.





cineversum blackwing two D-ILA projector

We have just added the new **Cineversum Blackwing Two projector** (£5,995) to our range. This is one of the few projectors to use D-ILA technology which is also incorporated into our reference projector, the Meridian MF1. We have found this preferable over the widely used DLP technology because it produces images that are more natural and “film like”.

The BW2 is a true 1080p ultra-high definition projector that is future-ready for the latest Blu-ray or HD DVD sources. It has multiple HDMI inputs as well as analogue connections with a built-in scaler up to the 1080p projector resolution.

This projector has flexible mounting options allowing it to be positioned above or below the screen, and even has a lens shift option to allow the projector to be mounted “off centre” of the screen without distorting the image.

The performance of the Blackwing Two sets new standards at this price point and is now on permanent demonstration.

cube from quadraspire

The **HiFi Qube** (£200), is a performance hi-fi cabinet that can house your hi-fi and audio visual components discreetly whilst enhancing your system both sonically and visually. It can also be connected to both the CD and LP Qubes to create a media wall. Glass doors, door lock, adjustable feet and castors are available as optional extras. Not only is this ideal for hi-fi but also a great compact TV cabinet.

The **LP Qube** (£160) is a brilliant solution for all your LP Storage needs. Each Qube can hold up to 150 LPs, with glass dividers providing good protection and optional glass doors to keep them dust free.

Additionally there is also the **CD Qube** (£120), ideal for all CD and DVD storage.



All these Quadraspire products are available in their usual range of finishes.

b&w new 600 series

Bower and Wilkins are never satisfied with resting on their laurels. It is now the turn of the **600 Series** to undergo a complete re-vamp. Already one of their most popular speaker ranges – this new series represents a huge leap forward in performance and offers levels of technology that have previously not been attainable at this price level.

All elements of the new 600 Series speakers have been revised and improved. The aluminium dome Nautilus™ tube tweeter is the most technologically advanced that B&W has ever offered in an entry-level product range and it brings high frequency smoothness, detail and clarity rarely heard in speakers at this price. Likewise the bass/midrange and FST™ midrange drivers have also been greatly improved resulting in drivers that set new standards for an entry-level range.

The new range comprises two stand/wall mount speakers the **686** and **685**; two floor-stand speakers – the **684** and **683**; two centre channel speakers – the **HTM62** and **HTM61** and three active subwoofers – the **ASW608**, **ASK610** and **ASK610XP**. Finally to complete the range for the Home Cinema, B&W has introduced the **DS3** selectable dipole/monopole rear channel speaker. Prices start at £280.

These new speakers have soft touch front panels that hide the driver chassis and its fixings and are available in a range of contemporary finishes – Wengé, Black Ash, Light Oak and Red Cherry. A new diamond-cut B&W logo integrated with the brushed aluminium tweeter trim adds a jewel-like finishing touch.



what's new at grahams

grahams recommended music



1. Bryan Ferry Dylan-esque

Bryan Ferry has always been a great interpreter of other people's songs, like 'The In Crowd' and 'Let's Stick Together'. In 1973 he recorded Dylan's 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' as the opening track on his debut solo album, 'These Foolish Things'. Ferry said "I just thought it would be great to make a whole album of Dylan songs, and, at the end of last year, finally, it happened". Apart from providing excellent vocals, he also plays a mean harmonica.

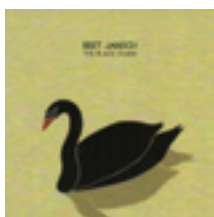
CD £13.00



2. Rickie Lee Jones The Sermon On Exposition Boulevard

This is an extraordinary new album. Lee Cantelon had written a book, 'The Words', the words of Jesus in a modern language written for people who felt alienated from organised religion. He asked Jones to read a few passages for a recording project. She hijacked the project by improvising songs with her own melodies and lyrics, inspired by the book. This is Jones at her most creative, as she has produced a very stimulating and genuine rock album.

CD £13.00 SACD
+ DVD LTD EDITION £13.00
(whilst stocks last)



3. Bert Jansch The Black Swan

'The Black Swan', released forty years after Bert Jansch's debut album, was one of the best albums of 2006. His distinctive guitar playing and singing has had a lasting influence on musicians as diverse as Jimmy Page and Dick Gaughan. Every track on this album was either written or arranged by Jansch, who is joined on vocals by Beth Orton, on a few tracks. The album also includes a version of 'A Woman Like You', a song he previously recorded with his group, Pentangle.

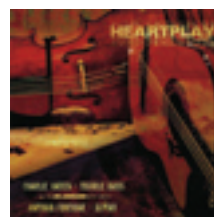
CD £13.00 LP £13.00



4. Christine Collister Love

Since the 1980s Rega's Roy Gandy has often invited Christine Collister, one of his all-time favourite singers, to perform a concert for his friends at "The Barn" in the grounds of his house. Gandy had long felt that "recordings rarely captured the emotion, depth and feel demonstrated in a live performance – something was lost in the recording process". This all-analogue recording of interpretations of classic popular songs recorded at Gandy's home is a sonic treat.

CD £14.00 LP 180g £18.00



5. Charlie Haden & Antonio Forcione Heartplay

Charlie Haden, the legendary bass player, has recorded many duets albums over the years, with the likes of Ornette Coleman and Pat Metheny. On this album he is joined by Naim's most popular artist, the guitarist Antonio Forcione. This laid back album contains compositions from the two artists, as well as Fred Hersch's excellent 'Child's Song'. This live recording, direct to a two-track reel to reel tape recorder, allows the sound of the instruments to shine through.

CD £13.00



6. Handel Messiah

Recorded in 2006 to mark the Dunedin Consort's tenth anniversary, this is the first version of Handel's Messiah, originally premiered in Dublin in 1742. Their director, John Butt, says "the challenge, in this recording, has been to try to recapture something of the freshness of the first public performances". This has been achieved by a small, enthusiastic group of singers, with the soloists joining in on the choruses. The Linn hybrid SACDs play on all CD players.

2 X SACDs (hybrid) £13.00

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 1 CD is £1.00 and for 1 LP or up to 4 CDs is £3.00. There is a maximum charge of £5.00.

competition

Win an Arcam Solo Music and rDock



Arcam is renowned for producing high quality audio equipment, be it CD players, amplifiers or radios. However, the Solo Music was their first product to combine all three in one sleek, easy to use system. Solo consists of an audiophile CD player, a 75W per channel amplifier combined with a DAB radio and high quality FM tuner. You can win one of these together with an rDock (featured in the last issue of 'on track' and a great way to integrate your iPod with your audio system) in this competition. We also have a second rDock to give away to the runner-up. Just answer the four following questions (all the answers are in this newsletter) by post or email to comp@grahams.co.uk by 15 August 2007. The winner and runner-up will be drawn from a hat of correct entries and will be notified by Grahams.

1. What is the name of a single bottle of wine containing six litres?
a) Jeroboam b) Magnum
c) Methuselah d) Bigone
2. Which famous car manufacturer did Meridian collaborate with to design the F80?
a) Lotus b) Ferrari c) Skoda
d) Porsche e) Reliant
3. How many B&W 800 Series reference speaker systems are used throughout the Abbey Road studio complex?
a) 670 b) 40 c) 8 d) None
4. Which anniversary is the Linn LP12 celebrating?
a) 35 b) 135 c) 17 d) 2000

highgate choral society

"An impressive sight and formidable sound", said the Independent about the Highgate Choral Society [whom Grahams are proud to sponsor]. Under the baton of Ronald Corp, the 200 singers of one of London's oldest and most respected choirs lead a hectic schedule. They perform five concerts a year, go on foreign tours and commission new works from contemporary composers. The choir also regularly commands sell-out performances and critical praise for their high-quality concerts and enterprise in championing rarely-performed works – most notably, its staging of Hector Berlioz's monumental requiem mass (the Grande Messe des Morts) to a packed St Paul's Cathedral in 2003.

Having returned from its latest foreign tour to Lyon, the choir's busy programme continued in May with a special performance of Stabat Mater by Paul Patterson (a Highgate resident) for the Highgate Festival. Next year HCS will perform its latest commission called A Hundred Spirits Whisper by Julian Knight. This is just one of the highlights to come from a choir that the Evening Standard has called "standard bearers of London's great amateur choral tradition". www.hcschoir.com

competition winner

The first prize winner in the **Naim Hi-Line** cable competition (featured in our winter 2006 newsletter) was **Tom Deeming**. The 25 runners-up all received a Naim CD.

Congratulations to Tom and our runners-up.



our musicians

As you are probably aware, everyone at Grahams is a music enthusiast but some of our staff take that enthusiasm a little further by creating music rather than just listening to it. **Alex Lewis** (Hi-Fi installation engineer) and **Darren Hancock** (one of our Custom Installation project managers) are both avid musicians, playing in successful bands with strong followings. We thought you might like to get to know a little more about them and perhaps log on to their websites to hear their music.

sumi masen

Alex started playing in a band whilst at school. His school friend Jac received an electric guitar from his uncle when he was 16. Jac learned how to play it over the summer holidays and on returning to school he formed AMF with a bassist and a drummer from another school. Alex was asked to step in when the drummer missed a band practice. The band were renamed Wet Paint in 2003 when they played at the school's sixth form gig and Alex drummed for nearly all the acts. Indie "garage band" Wet Paint got their first gig in Brentwood, Essex in the summer of 2003. Four years on, now renamed Sumi Masen (which translates from formal Japanese to "Can I have your attention please") they have progressed from being an indie rock band to an electro experimental rock five piece. Their musical influences are eclectic and include bands such as Pink Floyd and Radiohead. Sumi Masen has recently played two gigs, one at the Lark in the Park in Islington and also at the Pleasure Unit in E2. To hear their music check them out on www.myspace.com/sumimassenmusic.



the teasers

The last few months have been a roller coaster ride for Darren and his band The Teasers. Last year they came second place in the unsigned category at the Vodafone National Music Awards and started this year by recording a music video. In February they played a headline show at the Circolo degli Artisti in Rome to a rave response followed closely by a slot in London for a Warner Chapel showcase. Along with their own promotional photo shoots, they were asked to be the face of t-shirt manufacturer Sleazy Rock And Roll and to feature on the SRAR website.

In April they supported The Sunshine Underground in Austria which was so well received that they have been offered headline shows. A two-week tour of Italy and Spain has been confirmed for the beginning of November which will coincide with their single release. Various shows in and around London have also been confirmed along with new recording sessions towards the end of the summer.

Go to www.myspace.com/teasers to hear and see The Teasers.