

on track

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

Winter 2004

GRAHAMS

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

ARENA Magazine

Christmas opening hours

Our opening hours over Christmas and New Year will be as follows:

Friday 24th December
9am – 4pm (open)

Saturday 25th December
CLOSED

Sunday 26th December
CLOSED

Monday 27th December
CLOSED

Tuesday 28th December
CLOSED

Wednesday 29th December
10am – 6pm (open)

Thursday 30th December
10am – 8pm (open)

Friday 31st December
9am – 6pm (open)

Saturday 1st January
CLOSED

We will resume normal hours from Tuesday 4th January at 10am



meridian 808 cd player

Having caused quite a stir over the past year with its award-winning G Series components, Meridian Audio has been making interesting moves with its flagship 800 Reference Series. In addition to a new edition of the 800 Optical Disc Player – the 800v4 – the company has introduced the 808 Signature Reference CD Player.

Meridian says their CD player sales are actually rising, and the format is not going away any time soon. They should know: the audiophile CD player is something Meridian themselves invented exactly 20 years ago with the introduction of their first CD player, the MCD. To celebrate, the company has released the 808 Signature Edition CD player; each individually signed by Meridian designers and co-founders Allen Boothroyd and Robert Stuart.

The 808 is available as a player-only or as the 808i, a preamp-equipped model with a set of analogue and digital inputs. Either connects direct to a pair of Meridian DSP Loudspeakers – from the top-of-the-range DSP8000 to the brand-new DSP5200; to an amp plus conventional loudspeakers; or via analogue or digital interfaces to the rest of your system.

To get the very best out of Compact Disc, the 808 employs a high-speed ROM drive to maximise error correction, and multiple FIFO buffering to virtually eliminate jitter. Meridian claims it's the best CD player they've ever made, and the reviewers – notably in Japan, where high-quality CD is an obsession – are mightily impressed. You will be, too.



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congratulations

It's hard to believe that **Tony Graham**, our youthful joint MD has now reached the ripe old age of 70. He celebrated his birthday with old friends and young family on the 20th July. He is still actively involved in the daily running of the business and, with the exception of a few more holidays each year, appears to have no desire to retire just yet – much to the chagrin of his wife Eva. Pictured here at his birthday lunch with Eva.

nspcc

The second annual NSPCC Islington branch charity concert was held at St James's Church, Prebend Street on Remembrance Sunday, and was sponsored by Grahams. The flute quartet "Festive Flutes" presented a lively programme of music on a variety of flutes. Much of the evening contained inventive arrangements of much loved favourites, such as "Carmen," "Nutcracker Suite" and the Beatles hit "She's Leaving Home"; but there was also a picturesque French composition, "Jour d'ete a la Montagne", by Eugene Bozza.

The Islington branch of the NSPCC raised over £36,000 last year, through a variety of events including their quiz night, Christmas Fair and an auction, and always welcomes new members and other support. For more information about the NSPCC in Islington and nationally, please contact Alex McDowell on 020 7596 3700 or visit the website at www.nspcc.org.uk.



stax headphones

There are often occasions when it may not be possible to listen to music through your speakers. Therefore when headphones are required, you want to hear the best sound possible without compromise.

The Stax range of electrostatic headphones gets you a lot closer to the open sound that we come to expect from a loudspeaker but generally fail to achieve with headphones. In fact, Stax refer to their products as "Ear speakers" rather than merely "headphones"

The headphones come in packages that include a separate headphone "energiser" which works in the same way as a standalone headphone amp. This small unit, which includes a volume control, connects to the tape output of your amplifier. This type of connection avoids any compromise in sound quality of your system. The prices start with the entry-level model (SRS-2020 basic) at £349.

arcam



DV29 FMJ DVD player

Arcam has become synonymous with producing home cinema equipment to the same high standard as their hi-fi equipment. At the top of the range is the FMJ series.

The class leading AV7/P7 combination takes care of amplification and processing, while the DVD has now been re-vamped on both the sonic and visual side. The biggest change is the addition of full spec HDMI output. Essentially, this is now the highest quality way to transmit a digital video signal to latest generation plasmas, LCDs or projectors. Each video output now uses a separate video DAC; so regardless of the output used, uniform quality will be achieved.

Other features include: 6 channel audio output; PAL/NTSC progressive scan video; RS232 connectivity and adjustable lip sync delays



Arcam DiVA CD192

Following on from the success of the CD73, the CD192 has been introduced to the range to replace the CD93. The Diva range now has two very strong CD players at competitive prices.

The player is built around Arcam's new up-sampling multi-DAC module, also used in their top of the range FMJ AV7 processor and makes good use of modern surface mount technology. It has two sets of analogue outputs and both optical and co-axial digital outputs. An upgrade to convert the CD73 to the CD192 is available to existing CD73 owners.



linn kinos

After the success of the Kisto high-end multi channel AV processor Linn has brought out the more affordable Kinos to complete Linn's home theatre electronics range.

It is available in two forms - Kinos and Kinos +.

The main difference is that the Kinos will have an independent record path for uncompressed audio, while the Kinos + has an independent record path module, which includes an additional DSP and DAC to allow independent recording of compressed sources.

Aside from these differences, both are able to process a full range of audio formats. The Kinos has a wide range of connection options including seven digital inputs, seven analogue inputs, two scart sockets, two digital outputs, twelve video inputs, composite 's' and component outputs as well as a built-in Knekt multi-room module that can be used to drive four additional rooms or to work as a remote receiver.

Another thoughtful idea is the inclusion of a PS2 connection on the fascia, allowing a keyboard to be connected for setting up and fast text entry for naming sources.

Overall, this product is designed to be used with a Unidisk 1.1 or 2.1 to form a cost-effective yet sonically high performance AV solution.

linn unidisk sc

The Unidisk SC (£2995) is the latest offering from Linn in the multi-format/multi-channel field, featuring their "silver disc engine" universal disc playing technology, as found in the flagship Unidisk 1.1.

The idea is to combine a CD, SACD, DVD-A and DVD-V player with a multi-channel processor, allowing for a cost effective high quality audio/video solution. The SC will function as the central hub of a complete audio/visual system with the emphasis being placed on producing sound, in any form, to a very high level.

The SC has four analogue inputs and four digital inputs, enabling a variety of other sources to be connected and enjoyed in 5.1 surround sound. It will output video signals in progressive scan, component, s-video and composite. It will also function inside a Linn Knekt system.



linn exotik

Linn has finally decided to replace their long-serving Kairn pre amplifier with the Exotik.

The Exotik will be available in two forms: The first is a high quality analogue version, which provides excellent two-channel replay as well as multi-channel pass through.

There are six analogue inputs and three pairs will be configurable as a 5.1 input for SACD and DVD-A and one tape output. Linn has also added a Knekt receiver to the Exotik, allowing for easy integration into a multi-room system - this is in addition to four on-board room outputs.

The second version is a digital pre-amplifier, which will have multi-channel processing built-in. As well as the analogue inputs and Knektivity, there will be six digital inputs and two digital outputs available as standard.

There will also be a digital up-grade available in future for the analogue pre amplifier.

This offering from Linn will have huge appeal to all types of customer; those wanting high quality two-channel reproduction and the ability to experiment with multi channel as well as those who are fully committed to the multi-channel audio formats.



competition



The Naim CD5i sets a new reference standard at the entry point into high quality compact disc replay. The classic Naim trademarks of fabulous music making coupled with excellent build quality, reliability and simple operation are brought together in the CD5i to make an entry-level player truly worthy of the Naim badge.

The drawer and transport suspension are borrowed from the CDX2 as is the magnetic disc clamp; a low inertia, resonance-controlling device that ensures both rigid coupling and mild damping without adding to the task of the drive servo mechanism by increasing rotational inertia. This allows the Philips' sourced VAM1202/12 transport to deliver a performance considerably better than its use in a conventional tray mechanism. It also utilises the same Naim-developed replay and control software as their flagship CDS3 player, ensuring that the CD5i presents the maximum information from disks in an entirely musical and believable manner.

The die-cast zinc and extruded aluminium casework is a development of that used in the existing 5 series and results in an inert case with great resistance to pollution from external vibration.

The CD5i continues the trend of the latest Naim reference products by including RCA phono sockets alongside the traditionally used DIN sockets. RCA phonos ensure easy connection to other manufacturer's amplifiers with a variety of interconnect cables allowing fine-tuning of the sound which is potentially beneficial when used in a budget system.

The CD5i costs £825.00

If you would like to win a Naim CD5i just answer the following questions and send your entry (including your contact details) by email to naimcomp@grahams.co.uk or on a postcard to: Naim Competition, Grahams, Canonbury Yard, 190a New North Road, London N1 7BS by 31st January. Winners will be drawn and notified by 15th February.

1. **From which other Naim model has Naim borrowed the drawer and transport suspension for the CD5i?**
2. **How much is the Naim CD5i?**
3. **From which company has the VAM1202/12 transport been sourced?**
4. **Who was the late founder of Naim Audio?**



B&W Nautilus the snails have landed!

We are proud to announce that we now have a set of **B&W Nautilus** active loudspeakers on demonstration in our reception area. They are really quite something to behold both visually and sonically. Four channels of high quality stereo amplification are needed in order to drive them, but once hooked up, they provide the most transparent, open, detailed and smooth sound that could be expected from a speaker that costs £35000!

naim av speaker package

Naim has expanded their speaker and AV range with the launch of a surround sound speaker package, which comprises five satellite speakers and a sub-woofer. The speakers will be ideal to complement their AV2 processor and with the DVD5 DVD player will allow, for the first time, a complete high quality Naim AV package. Speakers will be available in a selection of finishes.



competition



dynavector L-300 pre-amplifier

After a long wait, the **L-300** has arrived from New Zealand. It has five line-level inputs, one balanced input and a phono input for turntable enthusiasts. The internal phono stage is arguably the best ever from Dynavector, and like the P-75, it can be configured internally for moving magnet, moving coil or the impressive Dr Tominari setting. The DVD input can be configured to let it pass through signals from a home cinema processor so you can adapt your stereo system to play movies without losing any musical quality! Superb sound and a remote control make it the perfect partner for the Dynavector HX 1.2 power amplifier.

Priced at £4000, and an additional £790 with the phono stage.



Arcaydis 135 bookshelf speakers

The Arcaydis Concept 2 floor-standing loudspeakers have always provided us with excellent sound that is highly adaptable to its environment. The new 135 model is a compact stand-mount speaker, which follows on from the Concept 2's adaptability. It comprises a 28mm silk dome tweeter and 135mm woven bass driver (hence the model number). This combines to give a very natural and warm sounding presentation. The speaker will present an easy to drive 8ohm load and is available in Oak or Beech veneers.

to have it all

Second time around...

A long-standing customer originally purchased this 1950s property in North London in 1993. Eleven years later it is now the home they had always dreamed of. Their first architect and builders left a lot to be desired, and left the house in a terrible state: 'a Frankenstein's monster', as the owner puts it.

That is all behind them now. In 2000 they finally set about redoing the house for the second time with the help of Grahams and Belsize Architects. Nearly every room in the house had to be completely redesigned and now as you enter the modern wood and slate entrance hall, you feel you are walking into a very modern and stylish hi-tech home.

For David Graham it was a bizarre case of déjà vu. Grahams had already pre-wired the house for a Linn Knekt control system before the previous builders botched it up. "The install never happened, because the building work was so badly done," says David. "So we were pleased to be able to come back and finish the job". The owner had been a customer of Grahams since 1992, and we haven't thrown away any of his old system. The equipment we use, like the Linn kit is built to last. Everything got reused somewhere in the house. For example, we converted his active speakers back to passive use and put them in the conservatory. This allowed him to use his existing amplifiers with his new Akurate active loudspeakers in the cinema room .

Grahams have wired all the rooms for just about everything. There's a giant 50-inch Pioneer plasma screen in the home cinema room and LCD TVs are installed in the gym and kitchen. A couple of Sky+ boxes and the Linn Knekt system serve up movies and music all over the house. As a banker, the owner often works from home into the small hours and loves being able to hook up his PC to the Linn system and use iTunes to access music all over the house.

The full installation included structured wiring for data and TV/Satellite, ADSL, telephone system, home cinema, Lutron lighting control and the Linn Knekt multi-room music system.



Photo: Chris Richardson



pioneer pdp435xde

Following on from the hugely successful PDP 434, Pioneer has launched two new Plasmas - the **435XDE** (43" £3995) and **504XDE** (50" £6300). The XDE panel is beautifully designed with stunning high-resolution images. It includes a brand new media receiver unit, which incorporates both analogue and digital (freeview) tuners to enjoy Digital TV as well as digital radio. Additional features are: PIP (Picture in Picture); JPEG; future ready for HDTV (High definition TV) and has a PC card slot for displaying digital photographs or camcorder pictures. Mounting options include tabletop stand, floor stand and both fixed or swivel wall mounts. The PDP 435XDE is now available for demonstration.

Until the 31st December you can trade in your old TV and save £250 on the 43" and £400 on the 50" Pioneer plasmas.

new LCD TVs

Most well established manufacturers of conventional TVs have identified the future of televisions to be the LCD panel. This situation has, in a remarkably short space of time, seen the CRT TV market replaced and dominated by flat panels resulting in a lot of mediocre quality flat panel screens coming on the market. LCD panel screens are here to stay and if you are considering buying a new TV and want something special, read on.



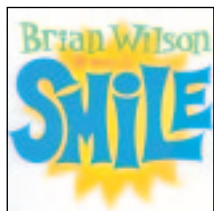
Loewe's has introduced two new ranges - the Xelos SL and the Spheros.

The Xelos range is elegantly designed, high definition ready and great value for money. The TV sets range from 20" to 37" and include options for wall-mount, tabletop and floor standing. They are available in Platinum and Anthracite. The Spheros range has a pure and simple design and is beautifully sculpted. The high definition widescreens consist of 20", 32" and 37" LCD's and the 42" Plasma panel. They are available in high-gloss Basalt or Platinum and like the Xelos, included four installation options. New features include: 16:9 Widescreen ratio, option for integrated freeview receiver, built in hard disk recorder, Online plus, HDMI input for HDTV (High Definition TV) and in some models a built in FM radio. Loewe handsets operate the TV, DVD, VCR and even some basic lighting control functions all off one handset. Some Linn A/V remote control handsets contain some basic Loewe TV functions.



what's new at grahams

grahams recommended music list



1. Brian Wilson *Smile*

Smile was scheduled to be The Beach Boys' follow up to the hugely successful 'Pet Sounds', but was abandoned in 1967 due to Brian Wilson's increasing mental problems. Certain tracks like 'Heroes and Villains', 'Surf's Up' and 'Good Vibrations' were used to augment later albums. Finally completed, with the help of the original lyricist, Van Dyke Parks, this is a new recording of the never released album. It sounds stunning. The double LP has been delayed but after 37 years what's a few weeks?
CD £14.00
2 X LPs £18.00 (hopefully)



2. Rickie Lee Jones *The Evening Of My Best Day*

This is singer-songwriter Rickie Lee Jones' best record in more than twenty years. Her eponymous debut album came out in 1979, which was followed, the next year, by the equally excellent 'Pirates'. Here she is joined by people such as Sal Bernardi and David Kalish who played on the earlier CDs, as well as great musicians like Bill Frisell and David Hidalgo. But most of all it is Rickie Lee Jones herself, sounding like nobody else. An original album from an original artist.
CD £14.00
2 x 180grm LPs £22.00



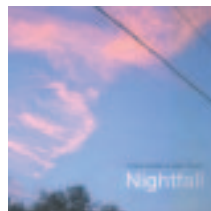
3. Ray Charles *Genius Loves Company*

This is the last studio album of Ray Charles, who died on June 11th 2004 at the age of 73. The man nicknamed "genius" by Frank Sinatra, recorded this album of duets earlier this year. Although it was not made as a tribute album, these collaborations with many of his admirers, some of today's top artists, such as Norah Jones, Diana Krall, B. B. King, Van Morrison and James Taylor, to name just a few, will do until a definitive greatest hits album comes out.
CD £14.00
SACD (hybrid) £17.00
LP £15.00



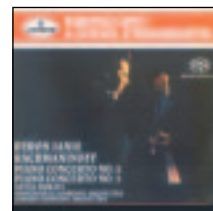
4. Various Artists *The Trojan Records Sampler 2002*

This should be in everyone's collection. 20 complete ska and reggae classics, all recorded between the mid 1960s and the mid 1970s, from the bulging vaults of Trojan Records. Even if you have most of the original Jamaican albums this sampler is worth owning to have all these great tracks on one album. Highlights include the Ethiopians' 'Train to Skaville', Desmond Dekker's 'Israelites', Bob & Marcia's 'Young, Gifted and Black' and Althea & Donna's 'Uptown Top Ranking'.
CD £4.00



5. Charlie Haden & John Taylor *Nightfall*

These sessions were recorded at the Californian Institute of Arts, just outside Los Angeles, where Charlie Haden has been the resident double bass teacher for many years. For this album of ballads he has chosen the fine British pianist, John Taylor, best known for his work with Azimuth. The recording, by Ken Christianson as in other Naim recordings, is exemplary. The album, which is also available on 180grm virgin vinyl, is dedicated by Haden to Haden to Naim's founder, the late Julian Vereker.
CD £14.00
180grm LP £17.00



6. Byron Janis *Rachmaninoff Piano Concertos No. 2 & 3*

This superb recording, like many from Mercury Living Presence, was made using three microphones – a stereo pair, plus a central microphone. All previous releases mixed the centre channel into the two outer ones. Now, with SACD's multi-channel capability, all three discrete channels are available, allowing the listener to hear the recordings as they were originally taped. This hybrid disc has a separate new stereo SACD mix, as well as a CD stereo mix which plays on all CD players.
SACD (hybrid) £11.00
180grm LP (Piano Concerto No. 3 only) £18.00

This selection of music is available for collection or by mail order.

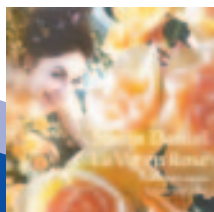
Contact us by phone, e-mail, fax or post. Our contact details are on the front page of this newsletter.

Postage & Packing for up to 3 CDs is £1.50 and 1 LP is £4.00. There is a maximum charge of £4.00.

susan daniel

When international opera singer Susan Daniel approached us to advise her on a pair of replacement loudspeakers, it was only natural that she should use her most recent recording La Vie en Rose to evaluate her final choice. What followed was our involvement in supplying a system for the launch of La Vie en Rose at, appropriately enough, the Chelsea Flower Show, and, of course, Susan is delighted with her new loudspeakers.

All proceeds from the sale of La Vie en Rose go to CancerBACUP, a charity with which Susan is closely involved. Further details are available from Susan's website www.susandaniel.com, as well as the charity's website www.cancerbacup.org.uk. The cd is available from us on request.



vinyl

As Christmas is approaching, the mind turns to suitable gift ideas. What better than something that wraps easily, is pleasant to look at, nice to listen to and will last for many Christmases to come.

Many of you own turntables and some of you may be surprised to learn that the Long Playing record of old is still very much alive and kicking. We stock a wide selection of vinyl, covering all genres from classical and jazz to rock and reggae, with a lot more in between. Most major artists nowadays release their work on vinyl as well as CD, and from a graphic and sonic point of view, it just seems like you get a lot more for your hard-earned cash.

For those of you who have thought that it would be nice to explore this format, the news is also good. The cost of a decent turntable and cartridge is very competitive

when compared to even an entry level CD player, and will outlast most components in the system.

There is also a wide range of cleaning accessories available to allow you to maintain your existing collection, ranging from carbon cleaning brushes to full liquid record cleaning kits.

Our top 5 recommended accessories:

1. **Decca** 2+2 record cleaning brush £9.00
2. **Last** stylus-cleaning pack £20.00
3. **Knosti** record cleaning kit £32.50
4. **Zero** anti-static gun £37.50
5. **Mobile Fidelity** anti-static record sleeves (pack of 50) £20.00

If you have any queries on albums available or you would like to order any of the above accessories, please give us a call and we will be happy to help.

staff changes

Will Hammond-Clay who has been with us for several years as an installation technician is now working in the Custom Installation department as a Project Manager. His experience with the installation team will stand him in good stead for this new role.

Gerrad Ferrier, a qualified electrician, hails from NZ; he has recently joined our installation team, as has Alex Brett Harris or Brett, as he likes to be called.

Jack Watson has moved from our in-house technical department to join our installation team.

We were sorry to say goodbye earlier this year to both **Niall Barker** and **Samantha Harris** who have both moved on to pastures new. **Ian Butler** who worked in our C I Sales Department has changed careers and left us at the beginning of November. We wish them all every success in their new careers.

Congratulations to **Chris Soczewki** upon his recent nuptials to the lovely Genna. We wish them both every happiness in the future.

screen brackets

For a lot of people, the idea of projecting a large, quality image into a domestic living space, normally conjures up visions of a dedicated room and a great deal of expense. However, times are changing and it is now easier than ever to achieve a stunning cinematic experience with the least possible inconvenience. Sharp has a superb XV200 DLP projector which is compact and easy to set up. The choices are to mount it on a wall/ceiling bracket or have it as a "plug 'n' play" item on a coffee table.

The other essential requirement is the screen. It is wrong to assume that a blank white wall or white sheet will suffice. Apart from having a dark environment when watching movies, the quality of screen hugely influences the amount of contrast and clarity we perceive. The stability of the surface adds to the quality of the image and a fixed screen is generally regarded as the best option. However, if this is not possible we have a huge variety of screens ranging from simple stow-away versions to electric remote controlled ones. Screen widths are generally from around five feet wide and come in the 16:9 format ready for wide screen cinema and sports presentations. Prices for a projector and screen combo start at £3500.

On the subject of simple installations, plasma and LCD screens just beg to be positioned as discretely as possible, and to that end we supply a number of different wall-mounting options. One company that is at the forefront of bracket design is Future Automation, who offer everything from the not so humble wall fixing, right through to fully automated plasma lifts, lifting and lowering LCD or Plasma in and out of your chosen piece of furniture or hidden behind pictures.



competition winner

Congratulations to Katharine Moy who won the Rotel RSDX-02 DVD/AV Receiver and a pair of B&W FPM-4 speakers from our competition in our last newsletter. Here she is with her prize.

calendars

Our Grahams 2005 calendar is now available for collection. If you would like to reserve one to collect at a later date please phone or email as soon as possible as we only have a limited stock.