

Object of the month no.1

The Scophony Baird Cinemaster



Although not the most aesthetically striking object in the collection this little machine is quite significant being one of the earliest, if not the first tape recorder manufactured in Britain. It dates from 1948.

During World war two it was realized from monitoring of non-allied broadcasts that Germany had a means of recording complete broadcasts with excellent sound quality, superior to the disc cutting equipment, magnetic wire recording and steel tape recording

machines of the allies. This remained a mystery until after the war when the discovery was made of the 'AEG Magnetophon' generally accepted as the first tape recorder. Scophony was one of the companies in the United Kingdom selected by the government to research tape recording technology. With the drive at the time to get industry producing innovative and above all exportable products the selected companies were on the strength of their findings given an option to produce products using their research.

Scophony came up with two ideas initially, a portable machine, which to date no examples have been found and this machine which, was envisaged to add a soundtrack to home movies. Sadly it was not a commercial success, although quite widely advertised. It's selling price of 75GNS, £2815.15 in today's prices made it very much a luxury product. Until the Centre found this example only 3 had been documented as still in existence. This, the fourth was recently discovered locally.

The Cine Soundmaster was developed into the 'Soundmaster' one of the first practical tape domestic tape recorders which will be the subject of the next 'object of the month' from our vintage technology collection.

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