

winter bulletin 2022/3



signals  
hi-fi for grown-ups

Welcome to our latest end of year news round-up.  
What, you may wonder, has been going on in darkest Trimley? The answer is events, and quite a few of them!

In these uncertain times, our manufacturers and suppliers have been keen to maintain interest and various open days have taken place over the last couple of months. At the time of writing, we have just finished the last one of 2022, the Chord Ultima Road-show and I think fatigue is setting in!

I had better confirm our Christmas / New Year opening arrangements.

As with last year, it's all very simple:

Saturday 24th December 2022 - open until 14:00

We then re-open 09:30 Tuesday 3rd January 2023

As ever, sincere thanks to all those who've been buying from us over the past year. You've no idea how it cheers our accountant!



I know, thirty. WTF?!

With signals turning thirty in 2023 we have absolutely no excuse to delay Audio Show East any longer.

Several brands will have new and exciting products to show so, hopefully, even this aging curmudgeon will manage to be upbeat about it. A full signals yearbook is being readied for the spring, so you'll be able to read about some of what's coming.

The booking page for Audio Show East will go online in January too.

## INVITATION

Here is your invitation to our first event of 2023. It's an opportunity to hear some completely new products from a company most of you know very well.

Rather than have formal presentations, what we have in mind is more of a music playing social gathering, with drinks and nibbles in the afternoon & early evening of 11th and 12th January. Call it a late New Year party.

We will be able to say more in January and there will be a booking option on our web site from 5th January '23. That way we'll know if both of you can make it!

AUDIO  
SHOW  
EAST

[www.audioshoweast.com](http://www.audioshoweast.com)

Trinity Park Ipswich 28 + 29 April 2023

New!



BLUESOUND

Not especially new to the market but fresh to our shelves over the past year or two is Bluesound. We've had our fingers burned in the past with a very plausible low cost networked audio product, so we decided to see how this one settled in before engaging!

Bluesound is not dissimilar in concept to the market leading networked audio system (hint: starts and ends with an 's') but we think this has more to offer.

The range seems to be developing at a rate of knots and the control interface, arguably the most important part of these systems, has achieved wide acceptance as one of the best in the business.

There are two PowerNodes, devices with full streaming capability and built in amplification. Both have HDMI inputs and can integrate with HDMI ARC (audio return channel) equipped TVs.

The Node line level player, pictured below, seems to have acquired cult status as the 'sensible shoes' streaming solution for people who want excellent quality but don't want to break the bank. Routing it through a higher quality DAC brings dividends.

There's a range of loudspeakers, including sound-bar and sub. All can access High Resolution audio from probably the widest range of sources.



VERTERE™

At the other end of the spectrum, and gracing our front cover, is Vertere Audio's Dynamic Groove DGIS turntable.

We've now got one of our own and it looks just the same!

On the face of it, with Linn, Rega, Naim (Solstice) and Nottingham already here we needed another turntable brand like a hole in the head. We were, however, very impressed with what we heard and now find ourselves in possession of the 'entry' DGIS deck, three Vertere cartridges (two moving magnet and one moving coil), a collection of cables, a phono stage and power supply options.

I would say that the more you spend, the better it gets, but the cheapest, Audio Technica-based MM gives an unsettlingly good account of itself. The deck will therefore hold appeal to those who enjoy making gradual improvements over time.

The question of how this compares to the latest version of the Linn Majik LP12 and Rega's venerable Planar 10 is best answered by listening to them and we are equipped to arrange this.

Despite the bizarre appearance of the arm and the very stylised shape of the deck and platter, this is a very serious piece of kit. As the name implies, dynamics are one of its strengths. Pitch stability and, by extension, timing are also handled unusually well.

There is a range of products above the DGIS, namely Magic Groove MG1, Super Groove SG1 and Reference Groove RG1.

Somewhat intimidatingly, their price list kicks off with the Reference Tonearm at £43,850. I'm not sure that we're entirely worthy, but we'll be happy to take you to wherever you want to go with the brand :)



The new Dynaudio focus loudspeakers look superficially like powered Evokes. Similar drivers and cabinets.

In reality, they are sealed box designs, fully active and equipped with high end streaming capability, the ability to accept an analogue input and are the first active speakers to have Dirac Live.

The Dynaudio pitch puts it succinctly :

“A complete hi-fi system... without the clutter of a complete hi-fi system. These high-end active speakers bring true high-resolution wireless streaming, from every conceivable source, to your home.

Send in a digital signal (wired or wireless, it's your choice), and it'll stay that way right up until the last possible moment – meaning it stays pure all the way from the recording studio to the speaker driver.

There's no clutter, no fuss... and no catch”.

If you're looking for a catch, it's possibly the lack of an obvious, tangible control box but I suspect we can get over it!

For those who can stand a pair of loudspeakers (they come in black or white lacquer & walnut or blonde real wood veneers) but don't want clutter, your dreams have been realised.



The arrival in late summer of the eagerly awaited (by me at least!) Chord Ultima 3 preamp (above) and Ultima 6 power amp finally gave us an appealingly priced UK built pre-power combination.

We already have a pair of the Ultima 3 mono bloc power amps and have been impressed by them. The Pre 3 is more than capable of allowing these far more expensive mono bloc amps to show what they can do.

With Chord's own Dave and Hugo TT2 DACs already being equipped with volume controls, the perception is often that the preamp is unnecessary unless you have additional analogue inputs.

Counter-intuitively, when you consider the extra electronics and cabling involved, the advantages of a good active pre-amp are considerable. As the first part of the amplification stage, the preamp 'drives' the power amp, adding scale and dynamics that enhance musical replay. Subjectively, the power amplifier seems more powerful, in control and at ease with no loss of subtlety or detail.

The Pre 3 / Ultima 6 combo driving ATC SCM 40s was very popular with listeners at the recent Road-show. Even the lowly Ultima 6 has the ability to play loud without ever sounding stretched.



Linn have been busy over the past year. First, we had the new Selekt LP12 replacing the Akurate LP12 and bringing the new Arko Tonearm and Kendo MC cartridge. A new MC cartridge came out for Majik too, it's called Koil, naturally.

Later in the year, Akurate DSM was discontinued to be replaced by an upper tier version of Selekt DSM.

Options seem almost limitless with the new Organik DAC now available for it in either stereo or dual mono configurations.

Essentially, there are two casework structures, Classic Hub and Edition Hub, the latter being the more expensive version. In the manner of the Klimax Radikal, it is quite feasible that the heavier, more rigid and £5k more expensive casework actually sounds better.

Beyond DAC choices of standard, Katalyst or Organik, there are HDMI input options and 5.1 processor boards that can support full 5.1 sound from a single device.

Even better, you can drive a two way speaker such as the Titan 606 or 707 actively from a single Selekt DSM unit.



New!

Down in Southend, Rega have been burning the midnight oil too. The Elicit Mk 5 amplifier was launched in the spring of 2022 and has hit the spot for a number of buyers. It's a far more forthright performer than the Mk4 and does not seem in any way compromised by the new in-built DAC.

Given how much better we think it is, I was surprised to learn that the power section is largely unchanged over the Mk 4 and that the new work was on the pre-amp. Where the old Elicit seemed just a little marginal driving, say, ATC SCM40s, the Mk5 seems in its element. The newly revised matching Saturn CD player has been restyled to the new, cleaner, aesthetic.

Next, and just going into production on the week this is written, is the new Elex. It looks identical and comes with an in-built DAC too. The only minor issue is that these DACs do not have USB inputs, so do not work with Melco or Innuos music server / stores.

A revised Brio will be next but it's some way off. Rega have so many parts in stock to build exiting Brios that they've decided to cut the price of the existing model to a bargain £549.

Beyond the amplification, the price of the Kyte speakers has been reduced to £399 from £549. The affordable speaker world is a very competitive place indeed and this change pulls the Rega System One (Planar 1 / Io / Kyte) package back below the magic and originally intended £1000 price point.

Finishing has been improved to a smooth matt on Planars 1 and 1 Plus, and there is now a wood-grain option too if preferred.

# Deals!

It's amazing how quickly circumstances have changed. Product shortages have given way to offers of one sort or another. Anyone would think the public need tempting!

A little while ago, we made a bulk purchase from Naim of some of their more mainstream items. We shamelessly copied what another dealer was doing and offered enhanced trade-in terms. Since we did not particularly want more older kit to sell, we decided that this could go straight to our preferred charity, St Elizabeth's Hospice.

Here is the deal subtly revised: super sharp prices and, if you want rid of working old stuff we will get it to St Elizabeth's Hospice. No trade-in? Talk to us! Remember, stock is limited.



Naim Uniti Atom (or Atom HE). £2499. Receive a £350 allowance for your old system, whatever it is. St Elizabeths get to sell the trade-in and keep all the proceeds. You get a new Uniti Atom for £2149



Naim Uniti Star. £3999. Receive a £550 allowance for your old system, whatever it is. St Elizabeths get to sell the trade-in and keep all the proceeds. You get a new Uniti Star for £3449



Naim Uniti Nova. £4799. Receive a £650 allowance for your old system, whatever it is. St Elizabeths get to sell the trade-in and keep all the proceeds. You get a new Uniti Nova for £4149



Naim Core network ripper / storer / player £2199. Special price £1850 when bought with any of the above. Hard drive extra.

## rega

Do we have deals for you!

As with the Naim offers, we have another trade-up proposal. St Elizabeth's get the trade-in to sell.

Rega's excellent Planar 1 turntable comes complete with Rega Carbon MM cartridge. It's **£299** in matt black or white and **£329** in walnut effect.



Planar 1 plus has a built in phono stage. **£385** in black or white, **£399** in walnut.

Either way, get **£30** back for that sad old deck that's seen better days!

Next level is Rega Planar 2. Better looks, with the glass platter and, with the higher quality arm, better sound too. Available in black white or red with the Carbon cartridge fitted for **£499**.



We'll give you **£50** for your old deck, making the trade-up price **£449**

Further up? Rega Planar 3. Better arm, 24v motor that also allows for Power Supply upgrade, better cartridge options. Priced from **£660** with no cartridge up to **£880** with Rega Exact.



We'll give you **£100** for your old deck, making it **£560 – £780**

Naim's Mu-so Gen 2 makes a superb full range sound-bar and music system all in one. With full streaming capability, it can access your music library locally, from Qobuz, Tidal or Spotify. With Airplay 2, you can share Apple music or BBC sounds.

HDMI ARC means that it will work seamlessly with most modern TVs.

Looks small, sounds thunderous.

RRP is £1299 We have limited stocks at £999

\* shown with optional coloured grille

## Special offer from Melco

Until the 31st of January 2022 (or while stocks last):

Buy a Melco NI00 2TB and a D100 CD Drive for £2500, saving £600 on the normal RRP of £3100

Buy a Melco NI00 5TB and a D100 CD Drive for £3000, saving £600 on the normal RRP of £3600

Buy a Melco NI0 3TB and a D100 CD Drive for £6500, saving £1600 on the normal RRP of £8100

Buy a Melco NI0 3TB and S100 Switch for £7500, saving £1600 on the normal RRP of £9100

Buy a Melco NI0 3TB and a D100 CD Drive plus an S100 Switch for £8000, saving £2200 on the normal RRP of £10200

There are some high value Melco and Plixir combination deals too but typing everything out is getting pretty dull.

We really need to have a conversation!

Deals!







And so to the back page where I always seem to put headphones along with random odds and ends. It feels good to have created my own cliché.

In headphone world, our most recent arrivals are the Focal Utopia 2022 edition. At £4699, expectations were high.

Thankfully, there was no sense of disappointment, they really are excellent. Of course telling someone they're good is hardly going to sell them, so we

have a demonstration set available to play you.

These are our highest-end open back 'phones but for those who crave complete isolation, Focal also make the closed back Celestee and, further up the tree, the £2699 Stellia.

It's probably bad form to have an opinion, but Meze seem to be especially good at closed back 'phones at all price points and the high end £1899 Liric, pictured right, is a cracker.

We may not have a massive range, but we do have the smaller Meze's, Lirics and Celestees on demonstration along with the other Focals, Quad and Grado open back phones.



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AUDIOPHILE  
DIGITAL OPTICAL  
TECHNOLOGY

In early November 2022 we held what was billed as Melco advanced network streaming days.

We discovered that we had the first public demonstration of the single mode fibre system, an update over the dual mode that was launched last year.

Truth be told, day one of the 'show' involved too many comparative demonstrations of the effects of single mode versus dual and of the impact of various upgrade power supplies from both NuPrime and Plixir. As it happens, most of the with the gains offered by the comparatively inexpensive transition to single mode fibre.

Given that we were also set up with the latest and greatest Melco N10 3.8 SSD music server it was a little ironic that this was being side-lined for the very convoluted ADOT comparison.

On day two, we compared the Melco units and kept to a simpler ADOT demonstration regime. We've converted our own Ethernet system over to single mode ADOT and now use the better Plixir supply there too. It's surprisingly easy to hear the gains in clarity due to noise reduction.

If you already have ADOT, please consider upgrading to single mode. It involves two different adapters and the single cable. If you've never tried it, we are happy to send it out sets on a sale or return basis.