

William Ewart Gladstone

Audio Guide transcript of National Sound Archive recording

Recorded in 1890 the vigorous voice of the Grand Old Man seems to rise above the limitations of early recording technology as he congratulates Mr Edison, on his invention. It becomes easier to understand how Gladstone's oratory reached the back of crowded halls before the days of loud-speakers.

'My dear Mr. Edison, I am profoundly indebted to you for not the entertainment only but the ... that it has been made readily to enjoy, the request which you have just made of me, to reveal the record of my voice is one which I cheerfully comply with so far as it lies in my power. So I lament to say that the voice which I transmit to you is only the relic of an organ, the employment of which has been over played. And I offer to you, so much as I possess – and so much as old age has left to me with the utmost satisfaction...'