In this issue

ETCetera

Journal of the
Early Typewriter
Collectors' Association

No. 95 -- September 2011

What ARE They??

ETCetera

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Early Typewriter
Collectors' Association

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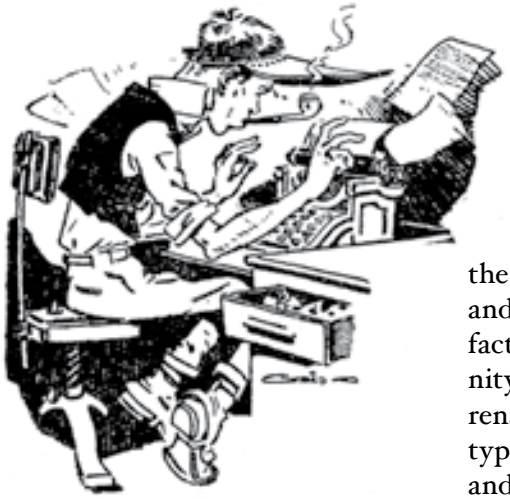
On Our Cover

The Traeger Morse typewriter (Museum Victoria collection, Melbourne) and the Hall prototype (?) (Flavio Mantelli collection, Rome).

In our December issue: Martin Howard on the McLoughlin



Editor's Notes

Alan Seaver has written up a fine report on Midwest Typefest 2011, the meeting at my house, which you can find in the August *Typex*, along with Marty Rice's Oliver-typed report on the Delaware meeting. Here I'll just mention a few of the activities at the Typefest: we oohed and aahed at each other's machines, held a live typewriter auction, visited a local antique fair, conducted a ten-minute typing contest (which Matt Cidoni won, participating from New Jersey via Skype), and organized a type-in at a local coffeehouse.

Perhaps you don't know what a type-in is. The concept was developed by Mike McGettigan, who organized the first such event in Philadelphia last December 18th. It's not the standard collectors' meeting, because the emphasis is on actual typing and it's conducted in a public place, such as a coffeehouse, bookstore, or bar. Members of the public are invited to stop by and type.

The Philly type-in got some press (newspapers, NPR) and has since been imitated in Washington state, Phoenix, Staten Island, and here in Cincinnati.

At our own event, *Typex* editor and repairman Mike Brown presented some helpful repair tips, there were public typewriters set up for bemused coffeehouse patrons, and we composed letters, blogs, and whatnot on antique letterhead provided by Peter Weil. I think these happenings play an important role in awakening the public to the continued existence and use of typewriters, and to the fact that they have a small community of admirers. A quiet typewriter renaissance really is underway, and type-ins help to give it momentum and prominence.

Another idea that has been floated is a typewriter "flash mob": a group of typists descends on a public place. They take out their machines and amaze the people! I don't think it's been tried yet. Here in Cincinnati I don't know where I'd find enough willing volunteers. But there are more enlightened places—say, Melbourne (see the story on p. 6).

If you look closely at the two letterheads on page 14 of this issue you'll see that at least two different caps-only typefaces were available for the Sholes & Glidden. (Notice the differences in the numerals.)

I am now able to provide two distinct Sholes & Glidden fonts to anyone who requests them by e-mail.

THE FIRST FONT HAS NO SERIFS. IT IS BASED ON A COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY MARK TWAIN ON HIS S&G.
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR
STUVWXYZ 1234567890

THE SECOND FONT HAS SERIFS AND LOOKS CONSIDERABLY MORE ELEGANT. IT IS BASED ON A LETTER KINDLY LENT TO ME BY MIKE BROWN.
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR
STUVWXYZ 1234567890

Consider installing these fonts and bringing your computer closer to the historic Sholes & Glidden. (It's already connected to the Type Writer by its QWERTY keyboard!)

The Hammond Typewriter in The Netherlands

by Frank Notten

The Dutch Royal Library has almost concluded a massive project digitizing a huge selection of Dutch newspapers (http://kranten.kb.nl). When I discovered this source, I decided to search for more information about my Hammond Multiplex typewriter and the Dutch company that imported it to the Netherlands: J.A. Ruys, Handelsvereeniging, Rotterdam. I was amazed with the information I found.

According to a 1924 article, G. H. Voorhoeve, president of a company dealing in flour, went to the USA and obtained the license to sell this typewriter back in his country in 1891. In 1904, Jacob Adolf Ruys (at the time an employee and nephew of Voorhoeve) separated the Hammond import business from Voorhoeve's company and founded Ruys Handelsvereeniging. The first advertisement that I found from Ruys for the Hammond was published on 17 November 1904.

The first Dutch advertisement for the Multiplex was published on 1 April 1914 (*Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*). This dates the beginning of the Multiplex to 1914 or 1913. It reads: "the newest in the area of typewriting is the Multiplex Hammond. Ask for information or a demonstration." In 1917, the sentence "still available from stock" was added to the advertisement. As late as 13 December 1918, a slightly different advertisement for the Multiplex stated that there were "still some No. 12 Hammond machines in stock"! In March 1919, the Multiplex (still called the "newest model") was directly available from stock, but only in limited numbers. Then, in April 1921, a remarkable advertisement was published: "because of exchange for the new Hammond Multiplex, we got some good used visible typewriters in stock. These are for sale for little money." I guess you can still call it a Multiplex advert, but certainly not a very good one!

In February 1923, a big ad in English was published, telling the public that Ruys had been appointed sole agents and distributers for Corona Typewriters. This was the beginning of the end of the Hammond typewriter in the Netherlands. It even seems that the Hammond Folding, introduced in the USA in 1923, never made it to the Netherlands: I have not found a single trace of this machine in the Dutch newspapers. In an address book published on 1 May 1924 for the cityhall of IJsselmonde, Ruys placed many small advertisements, all for different typewriters, including one for the Hammond. This was the last Hammond advertisement I found in the Dutch press, and I guess it might have served to sell some remaining stock.

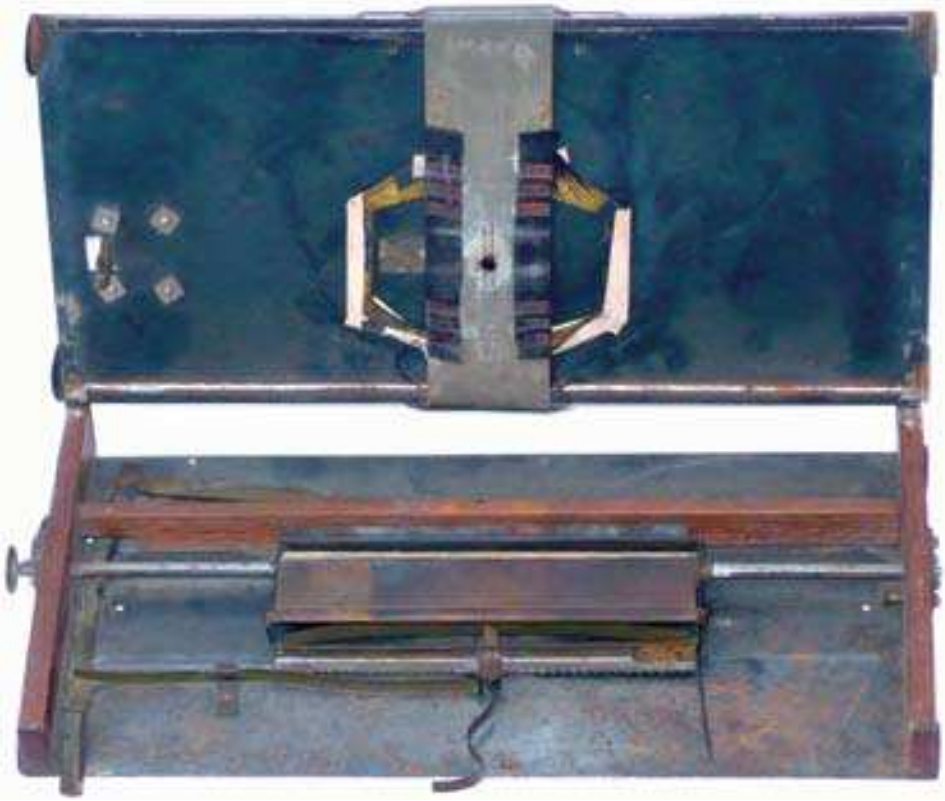
On 8 December 1925, fate helped Ruys get rid of any possible remaining Hammonds, when a huge fire destroyed the five floors of the Ruys building. Several newspapers covered the disaster that luckily didn't claim casualties. The only person present, a concierge, literally managed to escape the flames by throwing a typewriter through the shop window. Not known is how many Hammond typewriters burned in the fire. The company survived the fire and became the successful Dutch agent for Olivetti typewriters in the next few decades.

What surprised me most during my online investigation were the large number of advertisements for hiring junior typists, explicitly asking for ability to type on a Hammond typewriter. J.A. Ruys apparently was a smart businessman, because according to many advertisements, his company not only sold new Hammond typewriters, but also gave Hammond typewriting classes, assuring a group of loyal customers. It is also interesting to go through the many newspaper advertisements selling secondhand Hammonds, ranging from 275 guilders in the beginning of the century to as little as 50 guilders in the late twenties. It seems that at the time, the Hammond typewriter was a very common and much used typewriter in the Netherlands.

Several times, Dutch newspapers published stories about the adventures of the eccentric inventor of the Hammond typewriter, James B. Hammond. This way we learn that in 1911 he left in a 28.5-meter-long yacht to sail the world. He took his personnel with him, as well as his car and his pets. Remember that this is still 1911, when cars were unusual, and sailboats with cars even more so! His plan was to keep on sailing for the next 27 years, until he would celebrate his 100th birthday. Sadly, only one and a half years later, in 1913, another short article announced his death. More information about this colorful person and his typewriter company can be found in the archives of the *New York Times*. (See nytimes.com/search for stories about, for example, how James Hammond was declared mentally ill and temporarily lost his company.)

A Hall Prototype?

by Flavio Mantelli



The machine pictured here for the first time was found right before the end of last year not far from Boston, together with a late World 2 (labelled "The New World"), a copy holder from 1873, and a Franklin typewriter table. There was no information from the previous owner; the machines were simply part of the estate of his uncle.

It is a square index caps-only machine with a rubber-type plate and inkpad on the underside of the index plate, neatly hand made of wood, brass and burnished metal. The index is moveable using a wood handle, while the pointer, which also works as the hammer, is fixed in place. The carriage is moved by a spring-driven escapement engaged by a simple lever. The machine measures 11" by 5¼" by 1¼", suggesting it was a prototype or demonstration machine of some sort, possibly a patent model to be submitted to the US patent office: in fact, patent models were inventions in miniature that had to measure no more than 12" square. Unfortunatly, a thorough US patent search did not provide proof of this. Therefore, the exact date of manufacture and the inventor's name remain unknown.

Several top collectors and experts worldwide have been contacted to try to obtain some information on this machine and a few theories have been proposed on what it could be. It is unanimous that the typewriter is not a production-line machine, and for its size and the materials used it could well be a patent model or demonstration prototype for investors that was very neatly made by someone with the expertise and the right kind of machinery.

As for the inventor, there is no agreement, but the only theory proposed so far by more than one expert is that it could be a early Hall prototype. What is not in line with this theory is that on the actual Hall typewriter the pointer and the rubber type plate move while the index is fixed in place, and the whole body moves along the frame while the carriage doesn't move. These are certainly major differences that would make us think we are looking at the invention of someone else who maybe had seen Hall's design, or vice versa. On the other hand, however, it does seem to make sense that Thomas Hall would have tinkered with different methods as he developed the basic concept of the index machine; in line with this, a patent search showed that there is a huge gap between Hall's first patent of 1867 (for a type-basket upstrike machine) and his famous index machine patent of 1881. Looking at the

1881 patent it's evident it is not just a patent drawing, it's the actual production machine. There is no way Hall could have come out with the finished machine straight from the drawing board; there must have been some intermediary attempts in his previous 14 years of involvement in the typewriter field.

Moreover, while there certainly are differences between this model and the actual Hall typewriter, there are also several features on it that are completely consistent with the final production model and, therefore, perfectly fit with the early Hall hypothesis. The most evident is the square index design, with the anatomical handle at the bottom and with the rubber character plate fixed on the underside of the index plate, printing through a hole in the metal frame. But this is nothing as compared to the most striking similarity, which is found while looking at the rubber roll and the spring blade sheet metal paper holder that can be pushed in to secure the paper. This is a characteristic Hall feature. How likely is it that two people would come up with that idea? The same goes for the side wheel just outside the frame that can be turned by hand to rotate the rubber roll to feed and remove the paper.

Trying to reproduce Hall's train of thought, it would make sense that if you want to invent a typewriter, you begin with the actual system to print letters on paper. That's what all the inventors did. It would also make sense that when you develop something like this index system, you would not immediately think of mounting it on an escapement system to move it along the paper. You would fix it in place and make the paper move, just as was done here, beginning with a very simple spring driven system. Once happy with this setup, you would look at details and start improving. Hence the separate patent for the escapement that Hall made later on. The Martin book also says that two years before the Hall went to market, two copies of an earlier version were on display at a Paris exhibition, without providing further mechanical details. And it is logical, of course, that there were different pre-production variations. One more detail in line with all the above, proposed by collector and master restorer Jürgen Berndt from Germany, is that this prototype's top metal plate is burnished exactly like the Hall, and he's never seen this on any other typewriter.

With no proof, however, all the above remains pure speculation. Hopefully a document or patent drawing will come out and shed light on this early typewriter mystery.

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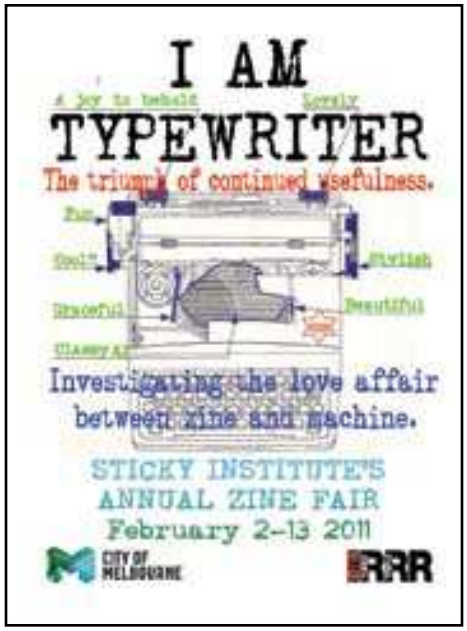
The Great Melbourne Typewriter Fest 2011

by Robert Messenger

Melbourne, an Australian city with close early ties to the Sholes and Glidden, fell back head-over-heels in love with the typewriter in February this year. For 11 days it staged a Melbourne City Council-backed festival called "I Am Typewriter: The Triumph of Continued Usefulness." Melburnians launched five zines about typewriters, inspected 21 of Museum Victoria's most historically significant typewriters, fashioned typewriters out of cheese, felt and cardboard, toyed with 11 things to do with typewriter ribbons, wrote love letters on typewriters, and attended two two-hour-long typewriter presentations in the Rare Books and Maps Room of the august State Library of Victoria. And on the eve of St. Valentine's Day, dozens of manual portable typewriters and hundreds of typewriter enthusiasts gathered from far and wide to celebrate this wonderful writing machine at a subway fair beneath Melbourne's main rail terminus, the 101-year-old French Renaissance-style Flinders Street Station.

What a grand time was had by all! And for that, tribute must first and foremost be paid to organizer Eloise Peace, coordinator of the festival host, the Sticky Institute, a group of young people who use 1960s and '70s typewriters to write zines. On the advice of Richard Polt, Eloise invited me to go to Melbourne for the festival, primarily to talk at the State Library on the final day of the event. Naturally, I couldn't resist the chance to take along 30 typewriters from my own collection, to give the Sticky zinemakers a close-up, hands-on experience with some of the great portables of history.



Eloise picked the perfect venue for my presentations. The State Library, on Swanston Street, is just four blocks up one of Melbourne's main thoroughfares from where a Sholes and Glidden had been delivered on the Friday afternoon of November 24, 1876. It had arrived at the Melbourne docks earlier that day on the steamship The City of Adelaide, from San Francisco through Honolulu, Suva and Auckland. The S&G had been imported by W. H. Masters and Company. William Henry Masters was born in 1843 at Eramosa, Wellington County, Ontario, and subsequently lived in Chippawa in Niagara Falls. He arrived in Melbourne on the Explorer from Liverpool in England in 1869 and almost immediately set about introducing Australians to the very latest American inventions: first the Nicholson steam-driven sewing machine in 1874, then the Sholes and Glidden, followed by the Edison-Bell telephone in 1880 (Masters owned the first Melbourne telephone exchange), the electric light (he staged the first floodlit football match played anywhere in the world, in 1879) and finally, in 1888, an electric tram from Thomson-Houston of Boston.

The busy four-day schedule Eloise Peace set for the unforgettable last weekend of the festival left me breathless—in the nicest possible way. My first port of call was to the Sticky Institute itself. There I watched, enthralled, as youngsters zealously and meticulously put the finishing touches to their zines for the next day's fair. Eloise ran a jam-packed, humming office with cool collectedness.

My duties, such as they were, started with a Friday morning tour of Museum Victoria's Scienceworld typewriter collection at Spotswood, a 20-minute train trip from Flinders Street in central Melbourne, out past the very docks where 134 years earlier Masters's Sholes and Glidden had been offloaded. The Spotswood facility had suffered no real damage from Victoria's heavy flooding of the previous month, but as history and technology curator David Demant explained, one impact was an invasion of crickets which had been washed into the building. It was me chirping when Demant and volunteer typewriter curator David Thompson led us to four tables laid out for our benefit with 21 mostly rare machines.

These included a Sholes and Glidden (above), a Caligraph 2 (once owned by the famous Melbourne Argus newspaper), a Hammond 1, a Columbia Bar-Lock, a Hall, a Lambert, a Williams 1 straight, a Bennett with a black paper plate, a mysterious Edelmann masquerading as a Columbia, and an Australian-invented Traeger Morse typewriter (*see p.8*).

The Sholes and Glidden had been sold to the museum by Mrs. Jane Belton, of South Yarra, on July 14, 1923. Quite how Mrs Belton, neé Bookless, had come by it

we shall never know. She was the second wife of a notorious Melbourne character, Samuel Philpotts Belton (1861-1928). English-born Belton, a licensed victualler, had been declared bankrupt in 1894 with 10 shillings in assets—so this glorious S & G, one presumes, was unlikely to have been his.

Putting theories of the provenance of the Belton S & G to one side for the time being, I relished the special joy of being able to get so close and personal with it, as well as the Caligraph, the Williams, the Lambert and the Traeger. I had seen an S & G and a Lambert before, but from behind thick glass in a display cabinet at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. The S & G and Lambert in Melbourne were in much better condition, the S & G looking slightly larger, with a striking gold, red-white-and-blue crest on each side.

The next day's five-hour fair in the Degraves Square underground below Flinders Street, next to Sticky's headquarters, was a sight to behold. Dozens of tables were laid out on both sides of the broad subway, along about 60 yards. The place was packed all afternoon. Eloise arranged for Tom, a typewriter seller and repairman from Elgin Street, North Carlton, to come along and offer free typewriter servicing. His skills were much in demand. I counted at least three Consuls, a Bluebird, an Adler, an Empire Aristocrat and several Japanese-made Imperials and Royals. One young lady brought along a Remington Model 1 portable; it had belonged to her grandfather, a noted Australian journalist of the 1930s. Tom found it was in almost perfect working order.

At my stall I did brisk business in selling my newly-published typewriter book and typewriter-themed T-shirts. The stand was designated as "Resident typewriter expert ... typewriter addiction support area ... peer to peer understanding." Very understated! I also took along two 1940s Royals, a Voss, an Olympia SM7 and a Kolibri for passers-by to use.

Next to me was the "Love Secretary", a handsome young man in drag who helped people compose saucy letters to give their lovers on Valentine's Day. Further down, a man made tiny cut-out paper typewriters. It was definitely a day on which typewriters were feted in full, and in every way imaginable.

On the Sunday, I gave my two well-attended presentations at the stately State

Library. Both lasted almost two hours, so by the end, coupled with an earlier interview on ABC Radio, I'd talked typewriters almost non-stop for five hours. What an exhausting delight! For the presentations, I displayed 30 typewriters, ranging from a Remington 2 to an Olympia Traveller C, and including a Blick 5 and Rem-Blick, an original Simplex index, a Bennett, Standard Folding, Noiseless, Imperial Model B, Olivetti ICO MP1, Hermes Featherweight and a Rooy.

This whole experience was one I shall never forget. Happily, it was well publicised, in newspapers and on radio. The *Sunday Age* wrote of "zine-fiends" saluting "the ongoing artistic resilience of this pre-digital technology". But we came together as mutual friends, hardly fiends, united in our shared love of typewriters. Eloise Peace promised an event which would "investigate the love affair between zine and machine". She delivered in spades. Her tribute to the typewriter, in particular, entitles her to the much-vaunted but yet-to-be-instigated Sholes Prize of 2011. Eloise, take a bow. (At least the author awarded her the "Olivetti Eloise", which was something for her troubles.)

The Traeger Typewriter

by Robert Messenger

Australia has produced at least one typewriter inventor—of sorts. Alfred Herman Traeger is best known for his development of a pedal-powered radio, which from the late 1920s provided a means of direct contact to the outside world for Aboriginal communities and white Australian settlers living in the nation's vast "outback." But Traeger's wireless sets required a working knowledge of the Morse code, which few of the people in need of his radios had. In 1933, Traeger overcame this problem by devising a Morse typewriter.

When he developed his wireless, Traeger was aware of earlier, World War I-era pedal-powered electricity generators. As a young man, he had seen a travelling Pathé picture show, the screening of which was made possible by a bicycle-mounted power unit. While it generated only a low voltage, it gave Traeger the idea he would, in 1929, turn into the vital element in the success of the Royal Australian Flying Doctor Service. As one biographer would have it, Traeger made "generator armature winding an art form." His two-way network became "the heartbeat of outback life."

The Traeger Morse typewriter is rudimentary to say the least, yet it was highly functional. Strictly speaking, the Traeger "typewriter" is no more than an automatic Morse keyboard. While it resembles a typewriter, it simply comprises of keys connected to a working face of pivoted steel bars, with notched long and short spacings corresponding to the Morse alphabet. An oil-filled dashpot was necessary to produce smooth movement of the keyed arms.

Yet the Traeger machine helped provide what the Flying Doctor Service founder, the Reverend John Flynn (*right*), had described as a "mantle of safety" for Australians living in extreme isolation.

An image of "Flynn of the Inland" is featured on the Australian $20 note, and Flynn is revered within the Uniting Church as one of its equivalents of a saint. Traeger, on the other hand, is almost forgotten. Though he continued inventing almost to the time he died, in 1980, and though his pedal-powered radio was later used to aid people in parts of Africa and North America, Traeger's achievements have disappeared from Australian consciousness.

Alfred Traeger was born on August 2, 1895, at Glenlee, near Dimboola, 225 miles north-west of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia. His father, Johann Traeger, was a farmer, born in South Australia, where Johann's German parents had migrated in 1848. Johann took his family back to South Australia in 1902, when Alfred was seven. The Traegers settled near Balaklava, 58 miles north of Adelaide. Alfred attended the Balaklava Public School.

Alfred was described as a "curious, patient, precise child." At the age of 12 he made a crude but effective telephone receiver, and was able to transmit between the toolshed and the family home, 55 yards distant. Traeger used whatever he could lay his hands on: bits and pieces of equipment from around the farmyard were patched together to make a microphone and earpiece; the diaphragm for the earpiece was made from a tobacco tin lid, the magnet was the prong of a pitchfork and the carbon for the microphone came from the kitchen stove. Farm fencing wire was also called into service.

Traeger was sent to the Martin Luther School in Adelaide before spending two years at a technical high school. From 1912 he studied mechanical and electrical engineering at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries, gaining an associate diploma in 1915. Traeger's special interests were in ammeters and generators. He went to work for first the Metropolitan Tramways Trust and later the South Australian Postmaster-General's Department.

By the outbreak of World War I, Traeger had also developed a passion for aircraft, and during the war he tried to enlist with the Australian Flying Corps. However, he was turned down because of his German ancestry, even though his grandparents had long since become naturalized Australians.

Traeger's bent for inventing led to him applying to the US Patent Office in March 1920 for a combined variable-speed clutch and free-wheel device for motorcycles. In 1923 Traeger joined Hannan Brothers in Adelaide, handling their car generator and electrical repairs.

He had already become intrigued by radio. While at the school of mines and industries, Traeger had studied the work of Guglielmo Marconi and Heinrich Hertz on the nature of radio waves. Traeger obtained an amateur radio operator's licence, with the call sign VK5AV, and became a member of the Wireless Institute of Australia, the oldest amateur radio society in the world (established 1910).

For his final practical examination at the school of mines and industries, Traeger had to build a high-voltage generator. It was through this device that, in 1925, Traeger was introduced to John Flynn. On a salary of £500 a year, Traeger joined Flynn's mission.

Flynn had founded the Australian Inland Mission of the Presbyterian Church of

Australia in 1912, and in 1928 the AIM established an Aerial Medical Service. At the time of meeting Traeger, Flynn had declared "the practicability of the Flying Doctor proposal depends almost entirely on the widespread adoption of wireless by bush residents." In 1926 Flynn and Traeger carried out wireless experiments in outback areas, and succeeded in transmitting the first radio telegram. But the awkwardly-sized and weighted, heavy-duty copper oxide Edison batteries proved unsuitable for remote homesteads.

Traeger overcame this problem by inventing a small, low-cost (£33 each), durable, easy-to-operate pedal-driven generator which was "comfortably" capable of producing 20 watts of direct current power at a pressure of 300 volts, sufficient to run a high frequency transceiver. He enclosed the generator's fly-wheel and gears in a cylindrical metal housing, with pedals outside and a cast base to be screwed on to the floor beneath a table. Traeger built the transceiver into a box, employing a master switch to separate the crystal controller transmitter from the receiver.

From 1929, Traeger travelled to outback areas across Queensland, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, installing these sets and teaching the users Morse code and how to use their radios. He found, however, that for many people, grasping a working knowledge of the Morse code presented a fresh challenge. So in 1933, Traeger invented his typewriter Morse keyboard, enabling outback users to type their message in plain language and have it transmitted in Morse. He later developed a voice-capable transceiver.

Traeger was honored for his work with the Flying Doctor Service (as it had become known in 1942) by being appointed an OBE (member of the Order of the British Empire) in 1944. Traeger had suggested the idea of a School of the Air, and in 1951 this became a reality through the work of Adelaide Laetitia Miethke, a South Australian teacher.

Traeger continued inventing: In 1974 he patented a gas turbine-driven car and used solar power to convert salt water to fresh water. He died on July 31, 1980, at Rosslyn Park, Adelaide.

Whether Traeger also had any knowledge of Charles Elmer Yetman's Morse-transmitting typewriters may never be known. Yetman, of Oak Park, Illinois, had first applied for a patent for an automatic telegraphing machine in September 1893, and followed this with a design for a "combined type-writer and telegraphic transmitter" in September 1895. He incorporated improvements to these in a patent application filed in February 1901. The first two patents were assigned to the World Flash Company of Chicago.

Another "Morse typewriter" was marketed as a telegraph transmitter by the National Electric Controller Co. of Chicago. The design (US patent 1,064,373), by Elwood Calhoun Phillips and Thomas Rhodus, of Chicago, was assigned to the Phillips Telegraph Instrument Company of Phoenix, Arizona, in 1913. The specifications included "a character disk, the periphery of which is formed with alternate depressions and projections corresponding with the different characters of the Morse or like telegraph code or alphabet." This National Telegraph Transmitter (serial number 113) sold on eBay in July for $1280.

Ephemera by Peter Weil

This arresting letterhead[1] for the Blickensdefer Manufacturing Co. is an example of a major area of typewriter ephemera that also includes billheads. Both head forms and the written, often typed-documents that bear them are primary sources that include important, often vital information about the history and culture of typewriter manufacturing and marketing. Frequently, this information is not documented by any other means. In this case, we find the clearest image known of the as-yet undiscovered Blickensderfer #3. And, of equal historical importance, the body of the letter that this head introduces informs us for the first time that the Blickensderfer Manufacturing Co., in December 1893, is "not in a position to place our machines on the market" and that "we hope, however, to do so shortly," meaning, 1894. That message undoes the assumptions long held by many that the Blickensderfer typewriter, in the form of the #5, had been manufactured for regular marketing and sale during and after the Columbian Exposition in Chicago throughout the year of 1893. It is these letter and billheads and, often, the contents of the documents on which they are imprinted that are the subjects of discussion today.[2]

The billhead developed in the 18th century from the business card, which, in turn, was the basis for the commercial letterhead of the middle part of the 19th century and beyond, when more industrial forms of postal systems and delivery established the basis for regularized, predictable commercial correspondence.[3] The latter development was an essential component not only for the development of the letterhead, but also for the acceptance and success of the costly typewriter as a regular part of business culture. Part of this development of the business card into a billhead can be seen in this comparison of a ca. 1878 business card for the then distributor of the Sholes and Glidden Type Writer, Fairbanks, Brown and Co., with its similar 1882 billhead.[4]

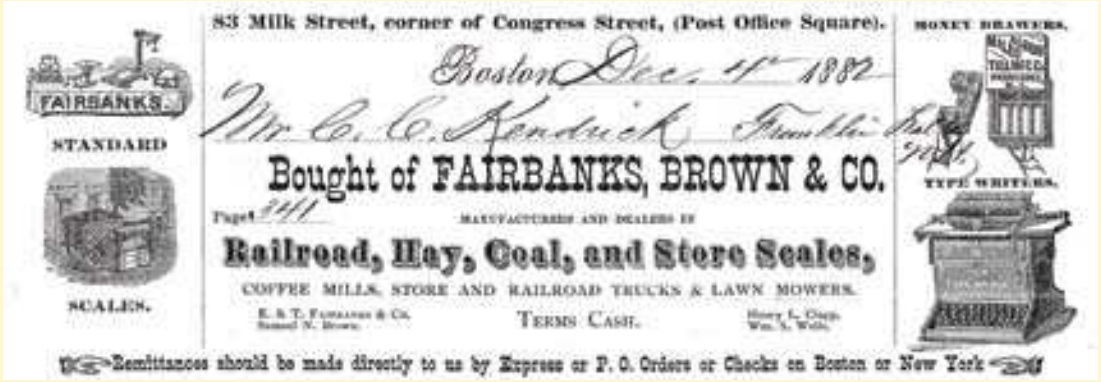
Like business cards, billheads originally were printed from copper plates, and, as with the cards, the headings often included one or more illustrations. In the 18th century, these were often simple emblems, such as an image of the commercial sign on a building used by a firm. By the 19th century,

1. Bert Kerschbaumer collection. This letterhead was only discovered this spring. Note that "terms "letterhead" and "billhead" are used in two ways, one referring to the printed information at the top and the other referring to the total document that includes the printed top and specific written or typed information underneath.

2. The preparation of this column was generously assisted by Bert Kerschbaumer, Martin Howard, Ed Neuert, Tom Rocek and Cornelia Weil. All original letterheads and billheads not otherwise attributed are from the author's typewriter archives.

3. See Maurice Rickard's *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 49-52 and pp. 193-194. Note that the 8.5 inch by 11 inch standard letter size stems from the hand-laying of paper in the Netherlands, and, later, the U.S., in a mold 44 inches by 17 inches. This size mold was considered the most efficient one, given the limits of the worker's arm length. The produced sheet was then cut in quarters of the standard "letter" or "typewriter" paper size. See http://afandpa.org/paper.aspx?id=511. Billheads were often one-half this, i.e., 8.5 inches X 5.5 inches.

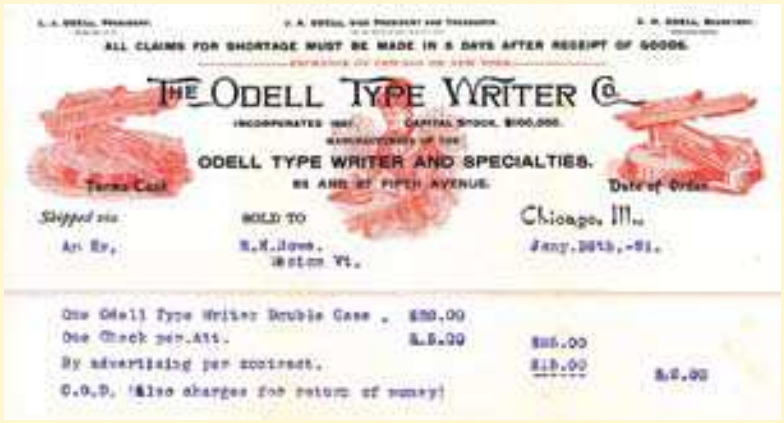
4. Billhead from the Bert Kerschbaumer collection. The business card was included in an "Ephemera" piece on business cards in *ETCetera* No. 76, December, 2006.

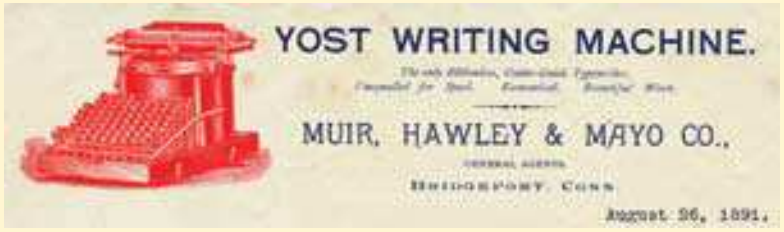


illustrations of products on sale were used. Billhead sheet sizes varied significantly, but the tendency was to keep the size short to save on costs. It was then a billhead convention that a date be placed on the right side of the head's layout, a characteristic later used on letterheads.[5] Billheads and early letterheads were printed on good-quality handmade rag paper, often watermarked. However, about the time that typewriter companies came into existence, in the 1870s and '80s, both types of heads were being used by businesses, and the paper used was changed by many firms to the new less expensive kind that was made industrially with wood pulp. Colored manufactured papers began to be introduced in the 1880s, and in the last two decades of the 19th century, lithographed heads became more common. These trends encompassing paper, method of printing, and design are well represented in this July, 1886, billhead imprinted on blue-green pulp paper with the image of the Caligraph #2.

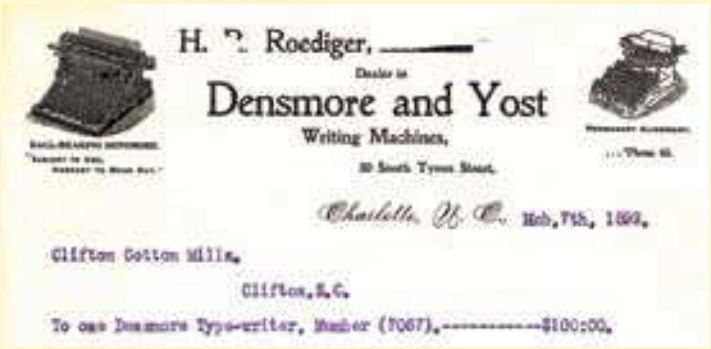
In addition, the changes in paper and printing often were associated with a change in style to the more elaborate materials associated with the designs of bonds, stock share certificates and paper currency. The style is often labeled "gas light."[6] Typical characteristics included heavy three-dimensional lettering, vigorous tonal gradation, shadow effects, heavy scroll and strap work, and backgrounds involving vignetted "cloud–work." Many elements of the new style are found in this 1888 letterhead for the Crandall New Model.[7]

Another competing style, the "art style," taking advantage of the less expensive letterpress printing, created heads that were highly detailed and printed in two or three colors.[8] This style is graphically represented here by this 1891 billhead for an Odell #2 (with the head including both the single-case #1b and the double-case #2), by this Yost letterhead of the same year[9] and by the 1893 Blickensderfer letterhead presented above. These design changes are reflected in many other of the bill and letterhead designs used by typewriter companies, especially in those of the 1890-1910 period, but the earlier, simpler head designs continued to be used by some of the manufacturers throughout the end of the 19th century and into the next. Wagner Typewriter Co. and its owner, Underwood, continued to use the earlier design form, as on this December, 1902, billhead that included a central image of the Underwood #1.





5. This practice was itself derived from conventions on banknotes and check forms.
6. The gas light style derived its name from the attributed chiaroscuro effects of gas lighting (Rickard 2000, p. 51).
7. Note the "gas light's" projection of the letters in the name on the "cloud."
8. A major source for discussion of the technology and the style is Graham Hudson's *The Design and Printing of Ephemera in Britain and America: 1720-1920* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), Chapter 6.
9. From the Bert Kerschbaumer collection. The Muir, Hawley and Mayo firm seen on this piece was the senior distributor in the U.S. of the Yost #1, which was manufactured by the Yost Writing Machine Co. Muir et al. carried out this function from the model's introduction in 1889 until 1892, when the manufacturer became the distributor. This conclusion about the history of the Yost's distribution was researched by Bert Kerschbaumer and the author through other ephmera and confirmed by Ed Neuert's research (from an obituary of W.G.N. Yost in the *American Stationer*, 1895).



After 1910, heads tended to become smaller in scale and occupied a smaller proportion of the page. This was directly related to the use of the typewriter to produce bills and letters for a mass market, a process that emphasized maximization of the specific communicated message and the space for it. Styles in this diminished format tended to follow the relatively simplified ones typical of the different periods of the century. The simplified, diminished form and later style often placed a greater emphasis on a standardized colored logo to represent the typewriter maker and the qualities of its products, as in this 1912 letterhead for the Royal Typewriter Co. and as in this unused art-deco billhead touting Remington Rand's typewriter display at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City.[10]

The role of billheads and letterheads in defining the history of the typewriter cannot be overstated. This is especially important because so many of the *internal* records produced by typewriter manufacturers and distributers, including those of companies ranging from relatively successful ones to those that never sold a machine, have not survived. Thus, we are dependent upon bill and letterheads sent to clients, investors and other members of the public to document serial numbers of both new and used machines. Letterheads also inform us of the production history and even false starts in the production of typewriters. These materials can be used for both absolute dating concerning new machines and for relative dating concerning the serial numbers of machines that survive, setting an earliest or latest date that those machines were made. The 1886 Caligraph billhead (presented above) documents one of the earliest known serial number for a Caligraph, serial no. 10026, a #2.[11] Since the #1's and #2's are in the same serial number sequence, such information is a key to understanding the early years of production by the American Writing Machine Co. Similar examples include this February 1897 letterhead that states the earliest chronicled date for a Blickensderfer that I have found, serial no. 14053,[12] and this March, 1899, billhead for a new Densmore, probably a #1b,[13]

10. There is an extremely rare version of the Remington Remette portable that was sold at and in relation to the 1939 fair that includes special decals and a case in the colors dark blue and orange, the fair's art-deco colors, and decorated with the fair's "Trylon and Perisphere" logo seen here on the letterhead.
11. The Caligraph #2 serial number in this is the earliest I have ever found in bill or letterhead.
12. Note that Blickensderfer serial numbers are in one series throughout the history of the production of all models, adding to the letterhead's overall utility in understanding the history of the company. While the model number is not stated, it is probably a #5. The February, 1897, date precedes the earliest probable date, June or later that year, for the introduction of the #7.
13. Given the date, the documented machine is a #1. Its serial number, 7067, is either at the end of the 1b's production or at the beginning of that of the #1c. See

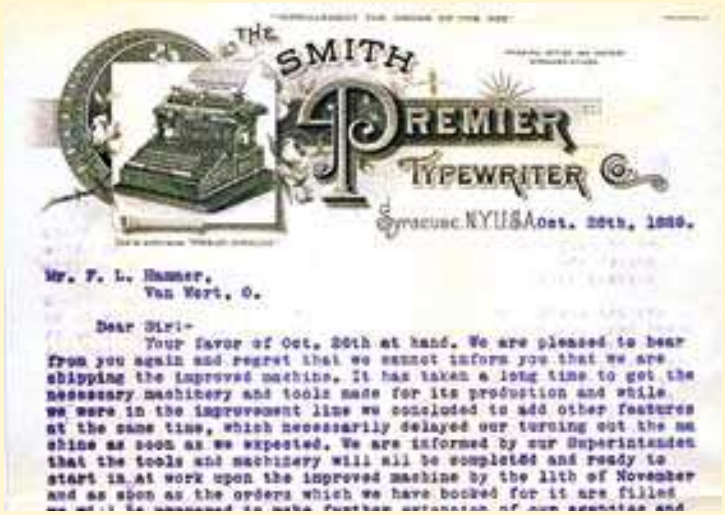
with serial no. 7067. Moreover, typewriter heads are useful both for relative dating and for tracking the post-sale biographies of specific typewriters,[14] as in this 1888 billhead reporting the repair of a Hammond with serial no. 491 (a #1 Ideal) manufactured in 1884, the first manufacturing year, here documented as having been repaired by the headquarters of the company. A similar purpose is served by the Wagner-Underwood billhead presented earlier, but, in that case, additional historical value is created by establishing through a primary source that the Wagner company definitely manufactured the early #5 Underwood.

A broader documentation for relative dating is often served by heads through their inclusion of a model number, as is the case with this 1893 Columbia Bar-Lock piece that specifies that a model #3 is being sold. This is especially vital for the history of Bar-Lock models because the company rarely specified their model numbers in their dated advertising until the beginning of the 20th century.

Manufacturing history and changes in models, intra-model design changes, and even marketing names are also chronicled through such documents, especially letterheads. For example, this letterhead from the Oliver headquarters in 1907 clearly establishes that the #5 model was introduced in 1907 and not the year before, as is often stated in standard histories.[15] In this 1889 piece from Smith Premier sent during the first year of production of its first model, we discover that a major redesign of the product was required.[16] And the documentation of name changes for the company, the typewriter, or both can be seen in these letterheads from the National Typewriter Co. (replacing the Hall Type-Writer Co. of Salem, Mass., in 1889 to become maker of the "Boston Hall"), and this 1902 Fay-Sho letterhead (showing the #6), sent the year after Remington-Sholes gave in to demands from Remington to change the name of the company and its product.

Lastly, stages in the development of typewriters for manufacturing also are detailed in letterheads, especially those to investors and potential ones. The Philadelphia Typewriter Co. worked throughout the 1890s and the first years of the 20th century to finally produce in 1905 the Byron Brooks design for the Travis Typewriter. The company's voracious need for capital from its current investors is documented in this Oct. 5, 1891 letterhead. And a Bennington Typewriter Co. piece promotes the promise of its intended machine, which, despite the enthusiasm and hope expressed in the letter, sadly never made it to the market.[17]

Letterheads and billheads are thus a fundamental source of the information we need to comprehend the history and culture of typewriters and, more subjectively, to find more of the beauty that has been graphically represented of the machines we love. The Grateful Dead has its Deadheads and the world of cars and racing has it Motorheads. Why can't we be *Letterheads*?



Darryl Rehr's *Antique Typewriters and Office Collectibles* (1997), p. 49, photos of model 1b (serial no. 6867) and 1c (serial no. 9457). The machine documented here has a serial no. closest to the #1b.

14. Such individual typewriter histories can also be used in combination with others of the same model to establish patterns of repair and related design problems in that model.

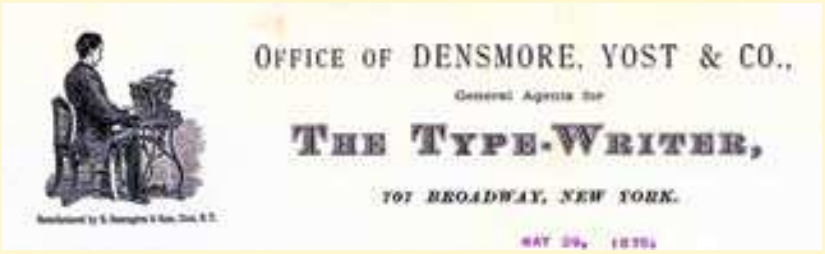
15. For example, see Michael Adler's *Antique Typewriters: From Creed to Qwerty,* 1997, p. 171 and Paul Lippman 's *American Typewriters*, 1992, p. 142.

16. The specific modifications are not specified in the letter. However, according to Ed Neuert, they included changes in the type bars and their supports.

17. Letterhead from the collection of Martin Howard.

Corrections Dept.

At the beginning of the "Ephemera" column of the last issue of *ETCetera*, on the first line related to the first image, I said "There it was in **1876** on Broadway," referring to the first retail store for the Type Writer. I chose the date based on the publication date of the image in *Asher and Adams' Pictorial Album of American Industry*. Three months later, as I was researching letterheads for the "Ephemera" column in this issue, I uncovered scans of two letterheads sent long ago to me by fellow collector and *ETCetera* Secretary-Treasurer and Mailer Herman Price. I thus discovered not only my error in the attribution of the date of the image, but also something more about the complex, tangled history of the marketing of the Sholes and Glidden.


OFFICE OF DENSMORE, YOST & CO.,
General Agents for
THE TYPE-WRITER,
707 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.
MAY 29, 1875.


OFFICE OF THE TYPE-WRITER,
LOCKE, YOST & BATES,
707 Broadway, New York.
DEC. 21ST, 1875.

The first letterhead is from the firm that was the first general agent and distributor of the Type Writer, Densmore Yost & Co., located at the address 707 Broadway in New York City. It is dated May 29, 1875, thereby providing clear documentation that the illustration at the beginning of the June column could have been made at least as early as that date.

The second letterhead is from the second distributor of the Sholes and Glidden machine, Locke, Yost & Bates, located at precisely the same Broadway address. It is dated December 21, 1875. This letterhead is primary evidence that the Densmore et al. company, the one presented in the illustration in the article, could not have occupied the premises in 1876 and clearly supports the conclusion that the image was originally created in 1875 or before. The second letterhead also indicates that the date of the transfer of general agency in the selling of the Type Writer was no later than the end of 1875. This now also seems obvious, but the date of the change and the order in which several firms moved into the position of general agency after Densmore et al. has not been clear.

In addition, both letterheads contain an historically important small statement attributing the manufacturing of the firms' product to E. Remington & Sons, Ilion, N.Y. Beyond the obvious fact that the machine being sold by the firms actually was produced by Remington, the key issues are that the firms were selling a totally new contraption in the midst of the early recovery from a depression and that the firms themselves were virtually unknown to the intended buying public. The year 1875 was barely a decade after the Civil War, and Remington rifles had been either used or purchased by many of the men in that potential market. Remington, beyond all of its role in making the machine, was giving the firms and their product its good name, its badly-needed imprimatur of quality.

In the article in this issue, I trumpet the historical importance of letterheads and billheads as sources of the history of the typewriter. The rediscovery of these letterheads, and the fact that they show my choice of date was wrong, is a perfect reminder to me to take my own advice! The store's image is from 1875 or before, not 1876. *—Peter Weil*

English collector Rob Bowker found an Underwood portable that had been repainted in a less than thrilling color. The solution? Complete paint removal. Meet the Underwood Silver Surfer!

Typist's Corner

Tweaking Your Olympia SM

by Richard Polt

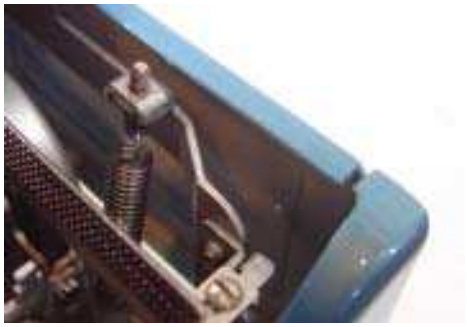
Mid-century Olympias are some of the finest typewriters in the world, beloved by many who choose to write by mechanical machine. Their model designations can be confusing. The SG (Schreibmaschine Gross) series are big office machines. The SF (Schreibmaschine Flach) series are flat portables, as small as possible. The SM (Schreibmaschine Mittelgross) machines are mid-sized typewriters, portable but hefty. They include the SM1 and 2 (postwar machines with no tabulator), SM3/4 (both with tabulators; the SM3 uses movable tab stops and the 4 has a keyset tabulator), SM5/6 (similar to the SM3/4 but recognizable by their glossy, gently textured paint), SM7 (with keyset tabulator and a new, angular body style), and SM8/9 (introducing a basket shift, with the angular body; the SM9 has a keyset tabulator). "DeLuxe" versions of these models include refinements such as a pushbutton paper support release. "Monica" versions lack tabulators. Writers who have favored the SM series include Woody Allen, J.G. Ballard, Don DeLillo, Carson McCullers, James Michener, Neil Simon, and Paul Auster, who still relies on his SM9 today.

Here are a few tips on adjusting and fine-tuning your SM to get the best possible typing experience. Our sample machine is an SM3 which I had repainted at an auto shop. Many of these points can be applied or adapted to other SM models.

First, check to see whether your typewriter suffers from the notorious rubber bushings on '50s SMs, which can soften or even melt over time, leading to friction between the carriage and the body. The bushings can replaced with some simple disassembly and a visit to the hardware store, where you can find many rubber pieces that will fit or can be cut to fit. Here I have inserted several thin rubber layers.

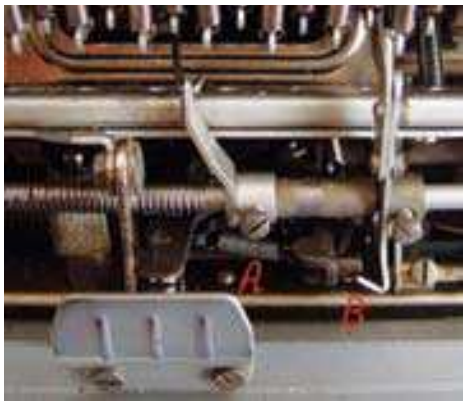
The most obvious place to make adjustments is the touch control (tension adjuster) on DeLuxe machines. You may prefer low tension if your fingers have been spoiled by the ease of computer keyboards. But many typists prefer a higher tension, particularly if they're fast, because the tension makes the typebars snap back into place quickly and reduces the risk of jams.

You may not know that there is an easy way to adjust the ease of shifting. This mechanism will vary a little between models. The photo shows the right rear corner of my SM3; there is another such device on the left that can be adjusted independently. Again, modern fingers will probably prefer an easier touch (achieved by turning the screw to extend the spring). Just make sure that the carriage returns promptly when you release the shift, and doesn't linger in the shifted position.



If your spacebar is noisy, it may have lost its rubber bumpers (seen in this photo from below). An easy solution is to buy a sheet of self-adhesive felt from a craft store and snip off small pieces to attach in the right places. Felt can also help to quiet the machine down when applied to the inside of the body.

Speaking of noise, your typewriter is probably designed to have a quiet carriage return, but I have found that there is often an annoying little rasp when you return the carriage. This is caused by the weakening of a small spring (A) that you can find in the middle rear area of the bottom of the machine. Replace this spring or cut off a loop or two to make it tighter (but not too tight). You need to experiment a little, but it's not too hard.



You may also wish to have a more responsive spacebar, which will space with only a light depression. This can be achieved by using needlenose pliers or the like to form part B, which connects the spacebar to the escapement, into a tighter angle.

Finally, if your platen is hard, do yourself and your Olympia a favor: remove it and send it to Ames Supply Co. for recovering (amessupply.com, 1-800-323-3856).

Happy typing!

New on the Shelf

Richard Amery: Imperial 50, 15" carriage (1940), H.G. Palmer (UK-made Smith-Corona Skyriter)
Clark Bellar: Royal Sabre
Lars Borrmann: German Blick 8, German Densmore 5, Germania 5
Ned Brooks: Olivetti Lexikon 83 DL
Matt Cidoni: Groma Kolibri
Thomas Fürtig: Imperial A #5674 (lowest s.n. known), Libelle (Reliable), Minerva 1, Ruf 24 (Protos)
Adam Golder: Antares Parva, Olivetti Praxis 48, Royal Quiet DeLuxe, Underwood Noiseless desktop
Juan Ramón Gracia: Frister & Rossmann, Graphic, Hartford double keyboard, Victor index
William Lawson: white Royal portable with pharmacists' keyboard (above)
Flavio Mantelli: Bar-Lock 1, Moya 1, Nouveau Siècle
Jett Morton: Sears Forecast 12 (Smith-Corona with box of changeable type), Smith Premier 1
Stellios Peios: American Visible, Sun 2
Ettore Poccetti: Merritt
Richard Polt: Alpina SK 24, Crandall Visible 4, Groma E, Moskva, 1938 L.C. Smith Super-Speed
Herman Price: blue Europa, Gossen Tippa, Mima (Italian toy, above), electric Remington Vertical Adder 21, Best Type-Writer Oil box (below)
Marty Rice: Greek Oliver 9, two-tone green Remington Noiseless Portable
Georg Sommeregger: Calanda S #22034
Peter Weil: maroon Remington Noiseless Portable #N63900

"Manufactured solely from the jaw and head of the blackfish [pilot whale] & porpoise"

Around the World

HBw-Aktuell

July 2011
- Curiosities: Royal 240 with radio built into case
- May 28 Breker auction & collectors' meeting
- Mtgs. in Essen, Germany & Brülisau, Switz.
- Tom Hanks and typewriters

August-September 2011
- Curiosities: typewriter lamp & ABC w/ built-in clock
- "Secret life of words" exhibit in Partschins museum
- Data DVD to be sent to all IFHB members
- New book on Triumph-Adler

Vol. 23 no. 3, August 2011
- James B. Hammond letters (Part II)
- News from Overseas
- Online & baywatch (eBay results)
- Meetings in Wilmington and Cincinnati
- Nick Fisher's favorite machine: Fox 23

Marketplace

For sale: over 150 typewriters. List on request. Juan Ramón Gracia, Spain, graciajuanramon@yahoo.es.

For sale: Soviet Janalif typewriter, Polish keyboard. Richard Rye, polandman62@yahoo.com.

Wanted: Yiddish type shuttle for a Hammond Multiplex; 3 typebars for a Cyrillic Mercedes (8, 1/2, T) or complete Cyrillic typebar unit. Gary Roberts, 108 York St., Chester, SC 29706-1484, USA. Phone 803-581-4354.

This back issue of

ETCetera

is brought to you by

The Early Typewriter Collectors' Association

The mission of the Early Typewriter Collectors' Association is to support communication and interaction within the community of typewriter lovers and collectors, and to encourage its growth. Our magazine, *ETCetera*, serves that mission by gathering and sharing knowledge about typewriter history with the community and beyond.

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