



MACHINERY HALL.

for Sewing Machine Collectors

Issue No 2 1985

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Sting in the Tale

THERE'S A SM-COLLECTING belt encircling the Bristol/Winchester/Basingstoke conurbation and this dedicated band got together in June at the Bristol home of Diana and Peter Herbert for the first SM collectors' meeting. Their son and his friends were poring over three Land Rovers in the front garden but Peter gallantly stayed indoors with us.

It was a very relaxed informal gathering, as you can imagine among friends of similar interests who've known each other for years. Brian and Vera Matthews picked up Carol Head and Kim Kelly en route, while Bernard and Sheila Williams combined the visit with a short caravan holiday.

Graham Forsdyke and I left London early and spent the pleasant sunny morning looking round the Industrial Museum, Lifeboat Museum and Graham's hero Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Steam Ship Great Britain and Clifton suspension bridge. We even included a boat trip through the docks area which has been developed for tourists and industry in a similar way to my own St Katharines and East-End dock area of London.

There were some interesting machines to look at, including the ugly duckling that collectors rejected at the Luton auction that has been transformed into a swan. Although the ABC failed to reach its reserve, Kim Kelly later did a deal. And, as GF predicted, she has done an incredible amount of work to restore it to its former glory and get it

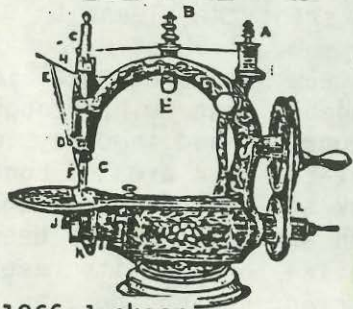
to sew its name -- her trademark with all her machines. You can read about the ABC plus a fascinating history of her recently-purchased Little Wanzer elsewhere in the magazine.

Bernard saw for the first time the Bradbury I had collected for him after the May Christie's auction and we did a bit of wheeler dealing in the Land-Rover car park. I've been trying to prize his duplicate Hopkinson for some months to upgrade my own C4/5 version and at last I'd found a machine that with some cash adjustment did the trick. It was a small, quite plain black model but with a boat-shaped shuttle one-third the size of a normal one, but bigger than that of a Moldacot. I now have a duplicate Hopkinson for trade -- any offers?

Bernard brought along a Swedish Wheeler and Wilson-type head manufactured by Mora Mekaniska Fabric about 1868. It had solid-brass arms and an ordinary type metal foot rather than the more-familiar glass foot. The casting underneath was also slightly different. An advertising picture showed the workers standing with examples of other machines to the W&W outside a wooden shack which was obviously the factory.

There was a general discussion about Bernard's Little Dorritt. It's date, 1876, was when the writings of Dickens were most popular. Although the casting was more ornate, there were many similarities with Guhl and Harbeck's Original Express and there were promises to research the 475 patent number and try to swap parts between the two machines to see if it were possible.

The nicest thing about visiting collectors in their homes is seeing the way they display their machines. The Herberts had most of their hand models behind glass on alcove shelves. Below them was an American buttonhole model with the word 'American' cast in its treadle. Opposite, in the bay window of the front room, was the Dolphin monopod displayed at Luton and a Britannia pub table on which Peter had replaced the correct Wheeler and Wilson head. The last two machines were sadly missing their wheels and foot plates which were often removed to turn them into occasional tables. Another ornate tripod lived in the hall.

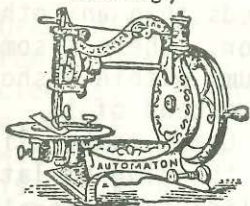


1866 Jackson

Carol brought along two different models by W Jackson & Co. The earlier, 1866 rocking-arm version, was originally sold for £4 4s, but was in 1872 demoted to £2 2s. when the totally-different Automaton was introduced. Main feature of this machine was a patented straight needle with a right-angled screw which, Jackson claimed, couldn't be incorrectly fitted. A slim looper hook passed round a

THE AUTOMATON.

(New Patent Needle and System for fixing the same, which cannot be set wrong.)



£6.

On Treadle.

£4 4s.

Guaranteed 5 yrs.

This new Lockstitch Sewing Machine differs from and supersedes all others for Family and Dressmaking purposes, for the following reasons: The needle cannot be set wrong, and no screw-driver is required; the cotton cannot become entangled; and will work any size cotton or silk, and sew from fine cambric to twenty pieces of calico, and do every variety of work. Quick, rapid, elegant, and can be worked without personal instruction. Illustrated prospectus post free. Old Machines taken in exchange at a fair valuation.

MY OLD KIND OF LOCK-STITCH
MACHINES FROM £2 2s.

brass bobbin in a round brass bobbin holder.

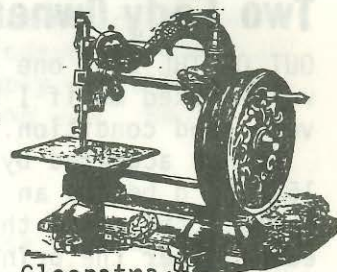
Another interesting machine was the Challenge look-alike the Matthews brought. It was a 'Lifeboat' by the Atlas SM Co, with a Justice holding her balance trademark.

It's amazing what you can learn from contemporary advertisements and articles written at the time SMs were first produced. Usually it's the main way to accurately date and identify individual machines. Imagine my delight when the Friday before the meeting I found a beat-up 1866 book with Newton-Wilson ads, including one for the Cleopatra I took to Bristol.

Sadly it wasn't illustrated because the top of the frame of this chain-stick machine is an ornate snake with a forked tail and grotesque face. The NW Prince-of-Wales-feather trademark was also cast into the base.

Carol later dug deep in her cuttings drawer and found ads for her two Taylors, Kim's ABC and my Cleopatra. But the NW ad was dated 1868 and the machine re-named Penelope. We have a mystery.

Further digging has led us to assume the earlier chain-stitch machine was adapted to incorporate a shuttle mechanism and a name change. For too long we have put off researching this interesting manufacturer who made the Princess of Wales, Queen Mab, Queen Bess as well as the Cleopatra/Penelope. Carol is looking into it, but if any of you have information, contemporary articles, instruction books or advertisements we'd appreciate good photocopies.



Cleopatra

Apologies for absence were received from Jennifer and Martin Gregory, Winchester who were working and London-based Wilf Grove who'd taken a holiday after a gigantic effort getting the £7 Howe he bought at the Luton auction into working order.

NEXT MEETING

A major topic of conversation was how we were going to entice collectors to future meetings. We decided the dedicated few would probably travel anywhere within reason, so we proposed to break away

from the norm and for the first time in three years go north of Birmingham. As there are more paid-up members in Leeds than any other town we felt that would be a good place to head for. There's some beautiful scenery and interesting Industrial museums within a short drive of the city for anyone who wants to make a weekend of it.

So we've thrown down the gauntlet -- would any Leeds member like to volunteer a front room, shop or office. We're thinking of late September, early October to avoid clashes with holidays so there's plenty of time to organise things. I'm getting colour photographic slides prepared of my collection and could be persuaded to show them at the meeting -- but my ego demands a large audience.

Subscriptions Due

WE'VE HAD TERRIFIC response for early return of subs for which we're grateful. But to those still dragging their feet we have to say this is the last magazine we're sending without payment. If we haven't heard from you by the time the next magazine is ready to be printed in September we must assume your interest in SM-collecting has declined. So pay up now, while you remember.

Sad news for American late payers, but due to international subterfuge, the £ has strengthened against the \$, so we now need close on \$15 to meet our £10 fee. All I can say is the early bird catches the worm.

MS

Two Lady Owners

OUT OF THE BLUE one day, the telephone rang and an educated lady's voice asked me if I was interested in buying a Little Wanzer in very good condition.

It was acquired by a Miss K M Robinson, since 1890 when, aged 15, she'd become an apprenticed sleeve-hand. Using only black materials she sewed the sleeves by gaslight for 12 hours a day, earning her the princely sum of 2/6d (12.5p) a week.

Miss Robinson, who I'm told was quite a character, considered herself lucky because she was able to walk home from her Chalk Farm, London job each evening. The other girls who worked 'below stairs' with her slept on site in the attic four to a double bed -- two at the top, two at the bottom.

After three years Miss Robinson's eyes began to fail and she left to become a nanny with my telephone caller's family, helping with various brothers, sisters, cousins and grandchildren until she died 15 years ago.

Sewing for the children on the Little Wanzer was always a pleasure for her. And now the machine is mine I shall continue to treasure and look after it as well as she did.

Kim Kelly

So-All, Inc. Researched

OUR SO-ALL WAS purchased -- quite reasonably -- around two years ago from a local antique dealer who, knowing of our interest, had contacted us. He knew nothing about the machine and nor, in fact, did we, apart from thinking it must be reasonably unusual, especially with its needle-feed.

As is so often the case it would not stitch initially, but investigation soon revealed that the machine had been wrongly timed. With this corrected it was simply a matter of adjusting the height of the needle until a satisfactory stitch was formed.

As there seemed to be no information available about So-Alls we decided to do a little delving of our own.

Fortunately the machine came in its box and with its instruction book though, alas, with no tools or attachments.

The booklet gave the full company name, So-All Lockstitch SM Co (Patentees & Mfrs, 3 Oxford St, London W) and with this information we paid a visit to the Public Records Office at Kew on the outskirts of London. After a search through the indexes to find the company's registered number, 37620, it was simply a matter of requesting the company file and waiting, and waiting ---. Be warned, the simplest of requests takes hours.

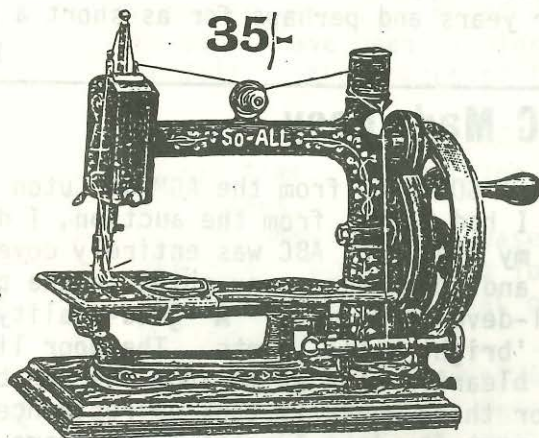
The file revealed the following information:

Company incorporated: 26 November 1892

The objects of the company included the purchase of the patents of: John Morton, William Urie Morton, James Raeburn Urie Morton and Herbert Ackroys Steward, and the application for a US patent.

The share capital was £35,500 (£1 shares) with 500 founders' shares and 35,000 ordinary shares. At the time of incorporation seven ordinary shares were issued to various clerks, a solicitor and an engineer C T H Bennett, presumably the man responsible for building the machines.

In the file is a letter dated 4 June 1894 which refers to the bankruptcy of 'Wilmot Holland, lately carrying on business in the name of the So-All Lockstitch SM Co.' It goes on to state



that owing to the small number of shares applied for, no allotment of shares had been made and that the application money had been returned to the subscribers.

The company was officially dissolved on 15 September 1896.

Unfortunately no information was given on production dates but it would appear that at best the machines were only produced for four years and perhaps for as short a period as eighteen months.

Ian and Claire MacGillicuddy

ABC Made Easy

WHEN I GOT BACK from the AGM at Luton and looked again at the machine I had bought from the auction, I decided this time I had flipped my lid. The ABC was entirely covered with sticky-brown, old oil and there were many chips in the paintwork which showed some well-developed rust. A good-quality rust was also to be seen on the 'bright-metal' parts. The poor little machine looked wearily and bleakly back at me from the car boot.

For three weeks it took up residence on the kitchen table. Over the next few days I spent every spare minute cleaning it with '000'-grade steel wool and my beloved 'magic mix' -- equal parts meths/white spirit/0-cedar polish -- and gradually the black paint began to show through the grime. The paint was crazed and chipped and some had been scraped off by an enthusiast who had been trying to scrape off the dirt. It was about C2/3 and I was going to have to DO something to this machine.

I rubbed down the 'bright' parts with fine 'wet and dry' paper and Brasso, finishing them off with '000' steel wool and Solvol Autosol chrome cleaner. A quick rub with Tesco's spray-on furniture polish removed any metal polish from the paintwork.

The next job was to repair the chips in the paint. Using a small water-colour brush and Humbrol matt black, I carefully touched in just the bare metal, putting on three or four coats and rubbing down with '000' steel wool between each coat. This took three evenings and the next night I finished off with a very quick rub with 'magic'-mix -- quick because the new paint is apt to dissolve in this.

This treatment made the new paint and old paint have much the same appearance and when I polished them with Tesco's polish they had much the same kind of shine.

I could now begin to see the outline of a hand-painted flower in the centre of the base and some shadows of gold lines and scrolls. The ABC must have been quite pretty once, and I thought how much nicer the machine would look if its pattern could be replaced. I'd

never painted gold or flowers on a machine before, but I decided this time I was going to try.

There were several pots of Humbrol in the cupboard left over from when my son used to paint toy soldiers and model aeroplanes. I have one of those special pens that draughtsmen use for drawing-in water colour and I tried using it with some gold Humbrol. The result when I traced over all the faint marks where the gold had been wasn't at all bad. And emboldened by the result, I mixed up some colours which I fancied the flowers might have been -- pink, white and pale green -- and used them to fill in the shapes of the flowers.

When everything was dry I gave it a good polish -- and repeating the process each week makes it shinier every time. The machine now looks really attractive and what's more, it sews.

The ABC is an unusual-looking machine. The one-inch deep base is a figure-eight shape and at the handle end is a 'tower' which looks like a pillar box. The mechanism underneath is very like that of a Singer New Family.

After the Bristol meeting Carol Head sent me an 1869 advertisement which described the ABC as the 'last American wonder.-- the best hand and treadle lock-stitch SM the world has yet produced; price four guineas. American-made, on Singer's principle; will make a shirt or an overcoat; and for practical utility, is unsurpassed by any £10 machine in the kingdom and not approached by any known machine sold at the same price.' The advertised machine was sold through G W Jenings, 52 Cheapside and 371 Oxford Street. But my machine includes an address 140 High Holborn, next door but one to Newton Wilson at 144.

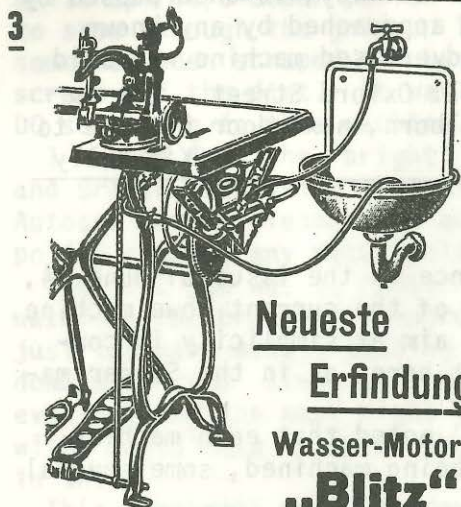
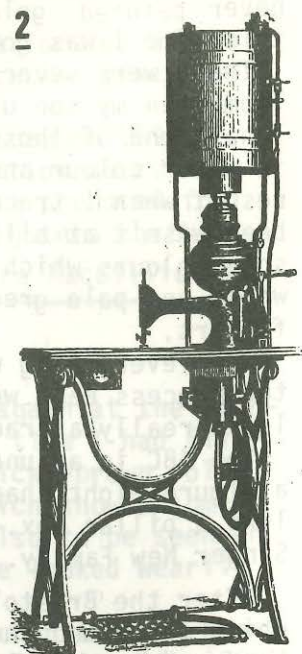
Kim Kelly

A Practical Man

THE ENGLISH MECHANIC and World of Science in the issue of June 14, 1872, drew attention to the complexity of the current Howe machine. 'It is usually supposed that Americans aim at simplicity in construction and economical production but here, as in the Singer machine, we have examples to the contrary.'

The article, signed 'A Practical Man' noted that each machine contained 130 parts, nearly every one being machined, some several times.

'On consideration it really is astonishing to find such extravagant examples from the Americans who are usually allowed to be above all other makers throughout the world in devising and making the most simple and economical articles, especially in light domestic machinery.' It goes on to note that Wheeler and Wilson are 'exceptions to this complication' but their power is limited.



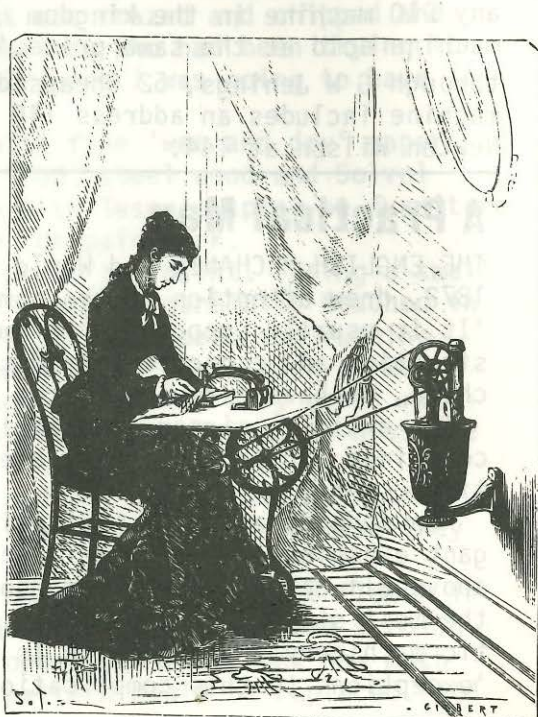
**Neueste
Erfindung!**

**Wasser-Motor
„Blitz“**
D R. P. a.

zum Anschluss an die Hauswasserleitung.
(Wasserverbrauch sehr gering, da keine Turbine.)
Speziell zu Maschinen für Berufsnäherinnen.

Man verlange Prospekt von der
**Deutschen Luft- und Wasserkraft
Maschinenfabrik, Dresden-A. I.**

Vertreter gesucht!



Steam Machines

WE'RE NOT SUGGESTING that these early inventions ever actually worked but practical or not, they are certainly interesting. All were taken out of old magazines by Otto Landgraf.

Picture 1: Steam engine for SMS invented by L Dausin, France in the early 1870s. The tiny engine, which was set on a kitchen range, was regulated by the modified treadle mechanism.

Picture 2: This engine from Lois Heinrichi, Zwickau (Germany) was heated, we are asked to believe, by a parafin lamp which also provided light for the operator. It was claimed to produce .10hp when advertised in 1884.

Picture 3: The German Aero-and-Hydro-Power-Machine Co of Dresden offered this water-powered engine in 1913. The flow of water and, therefore, the speed of the machine was regulated by a tap attached to the treadles.

Picture 4: All we know about this one is that it was invented by an optimist named Tysons who claimed that it worked by steam.

Spreading the Word

THE THOUGHT of talking to a group of people about collecting old SMS may sound daunting, but it can be quite enjoyable once you get going. During the past couple of years I have given several such talks, mainly to Women's Institutes or similar women's organisations.

It helps to be organised. I can just squeeze 20 machines in my Fiesta and to save time -- and using a list -- I load them in the reverse order to which they will be displayed and talked about. I also try to arrange for strong tables to be available, as some trestle types are a bit flimsy. I went to one house recently and was shown a very fragile-looking Regency table. The machines ended up in the middle of the floor in the huge sitting room on some strong thick curtain fabric. I was terrified that the odd spot of oil might seep through to the pale-green carpet.

I usually take along a selection of photographs of various machines -- the earliest models in the Science Museum -- or interesting parts of machines -- end plates, trademarks, advertisements, etc. These are put in date order, the date being noted on the back with a few very brief notes in case my train of thought is broken by nervousness, a question or just forgetfulness.

After the Ohs and Ahs and strange looks when people arrive and see the machines, the audience soon settles down and becomes amazed that collectable machines aren't Singers or Fristers after all.

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My talks usually last three-quarters of an hour to an hour, depending on how enthusiastic and responsive the audience proves to be. Questions at the end can vary and are not too taxing. There's usually a 'How much is it worth?' or 'Have you got them insured?'. After the talk it's usual to take coffee and biscuits with the members before the task of loading up, driving home, unloading and filling up the gaps in the shelves. I end up completely exhausted and vowing never to do it again,

Most organisations will contact you a year in advance for a suitable date, and you won't have a clue if you are free or not. So you give a date and it usually turns out to be one of the busiest weeks of the month.

The WI asks how much you charge for your talk and will pay travel expenses. Others will just say thank you and here's a potted plant and no expenses. The WI sends a reminder and a thank-you note and you may even be mentioned in the local paper.

It does take a considerable amount of time before and after the actual talk, but if you enjoy meeting new people and chatting about your collection it's worth doing. Who knows -- one day a lady may have that elusive machine you've been seeking for years. CH

Go-Withs

AN INTERESTING item for sale on one member's table at Luton was a shareholder's certificate from a SM company. And in the auction was a large photograph of a lady sitting at a 1920s treadle machine, a couple of Singer posters, some postcards and an 1857 newspaper with two articles about SMs, plus some photographs of machines in the Science Museum SM collection.

The lot could have been bought for less than £30 and could have formed the basis of an interesting accompanying collection for those members who find buying more than the occasional machine tugs too hard at the purse strings.

The Matthews have long collected bobbin holders and I've

accumulated a few sewing birds and dogs to which seamstresses used to clamp material and prevent it trailing on the floor. I've occasionally seen these items at fancy prices in antique fairs but mine and the Matthews' cost very little when we found them grubbing around the junk end of the market.

Other things I've found over the years include enamel signs, cotton reels -- miniature ones and a couple 6-inches high -- a tin casket with Singer SM advertising transfers, though whether it was used for biscuits or cotton I just don't know. I also have a pack of playing cards again advertising Singer and 'with the compliments of Singer SM Co Ltd' printed in

gold on the back of the cover, together with a 'Harrods Ltd' tin needle-holder and another one in polished wood which looks like a miniature skittle.

Not every Go-with needs to be old. I once missed an 1851 stereo-card of a SM display at the 1851 Great Exhibition, but a kind friend at Christie's sent me a photographic copy. A SM collector in Germany exhibits etchings and she gave me a couple of prints she'd made of a claw-feet Singer and an Original Express. And another collector friend in America made me a wood cut of her hand-operated Florence because she couldn't bear to be parted from the real thing.

In America postcards and trade cards are very highly prized -- almost as much as the machines themselves. At home super-show-man Singer used this method of advertising to great advantage, but hardly at all in Europe. Maybe one of our American members could fill us in on some information on this interesting branch of collecting.

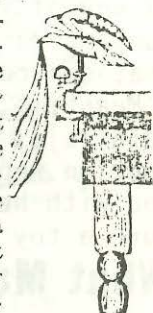
Some people collect SM tools for binding, quilting and button-holes, etc -- they were introduced very early, by the end of the 1850s early 1860s --and often came in fitted plush-lined boxes or tins with the company's name stamped on them, eg Willcox and Gibbs.

Another possibility is bobbins and shuttles, though without the machine available it is often hard to track down which model they belong to. But several dif-

ferent ones could make an attractive coffee-table display. And don't forget instruction books and leaflets, though from long experience I've found these the most wanted and difficult items to locate.

Another interesting field, as Brian Matthews suggested recently, is locating contemporary advertisements and articles from

This is a device for holding the work while sewing, and is a substitute for the old and yet prevailing custom of pinning the work to the dress above the knee in running a hem or seam. It has assumed many forms, the bird being ornamental and holding the work in its beak, one part of the bill having a spring to keep it closed against the stationary portion. A pair of spring jaws answers the purpose.



Sew'ing-bird.

old magazines and newspapers -- though this is a whole new and complicated subject that I may persuade our new Chairman and/or research editor to write about one day.

An English person would probably call this sideways complimentary-collecting interest 'accessories' or 'ancillaries'. I prefer the more expressive Americanism -- 'go-withs'. It's obvious when you think about it -- anything that goes with your main collecting interest. MS

I putta da advert in the pressa
With my phone and my addressa
Now every time the bell it ringa
The damn machina is always a Singa
Graham Forsdyke

Playtime

A NUMBER OF OUR members have expressed interest in toy SMs -- and quite rightly so. Some of these scaled-down miniatures are exquisite in design and construction.

There's a grey area, however, between what were originally made for children to play with and what some patent documents describe as portables. Great play is often made by manufacturers in advertising on the practicality of their models and how they really work, for example the familiar Singer 20. In other words they're toys but not really toys.

We'd like to explore further this under-developed side of our hobby, but there's an acute lack of written information available. If any of you have any patent information, instruction books and contemporary advertising, we would appreciate good photocopies that can be considered for possible inclusion at a later date.

Meantime, to get us going, Hamburg member Hans Clemens has sent details of SMs that appeared in a West-German toy sale -- see Auction Report. And American toy collector Juin Fores will amuse you with her individualistic way of assessing what makes a miniature a toy and vice versa. MS

What Makes a Mugwump

MAGGIE ASKED ME how I decide which are real and which toy machines. Of course, the obvious ones are easy but the borderline cases are something else.

I think I go 'by feel' and try to look at them as a woman who sews a lot. Some are dandy-looking on the outside, and one thinks 'Gee, this could be used either way'. But then, upon closer investigation, the thing has a 'Micky-mouse' bobbin, tension or looping mechanism.

I know some of the manufacturers tried to play both sides of the street and pick up a few adult customers for their better-quality toys, but I do believe that in many cases they knew they were producing a toy. I am guessing

some of the very heavy iron ones, which are unusually small, are mugwumps -- old American description of a politician sitting on the fence with its mug on one side and its wump on the other.

Perhaps they were made small for travel or vacation times. Or as something for the comfortably-off middle-class mother who did her own sewing to give her 10-year-old if she was a VERY good little girl. After all, why not teach the girls to sew for then mother would have a helper.

All of the above simply goes to say 'I don't know either, but I'll give it a try.'

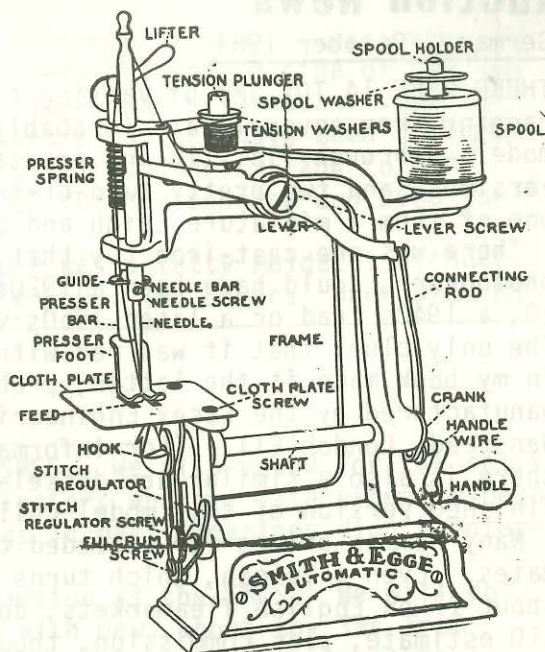
My collection consists mostly of the usual German tin machines, the Casiges, KAVanEE, a US Comfort and a French model

'Couseuse Enfantine' which I haven't seen here before, and a few nice but unidentified models.

When I look at the many varieties which were made but which I don't have, I get a hopeless feeling. Of course, I have the perhaps irrational notion that if only I could get 'over there' I would find one of each with ease. The 'grass-is-greener' syndrome doesn't apply only to fenced-in cattle.

It's true, however, that California is not THE natural habitat of antiques. It's too new and people don't have old family possessions packed away in an attic or basement. Those who came recently sold off everything in the East or central states and climbed on the plane with all four kids and two carry-on suitcases .. at least so it seems when hunting old things.

Two further problems. Dust is getting to me. I'm experimenting with slipping clear plastic bags over machines but I don't want it to look like a store full of pre-



This machine has variously been known as The Little Comfort, Peerless Automatic, F A O Schwarz. My Smith and Egge Automatic is stamped with 1895/97 patent dates.

wrapped goods. Also I wish I knew more about how to repair things.
Juin Fores

Seek and Ye Shall Find

MOST GERMAN collectors find their SMs in antique shops and on the fleamarkets which have grown up over the past few years. Every weekend there are markets within 30 miles of any town in Germany. However, the offered machines are often in bad condition.

It's sometimes possible to find SMs in six to 10 toy auctions held each year. One such sale was held in October -- see auction report. I didn't attend the viewing but managed to buy four machines by post.

In Germany you have to pay 12 to 15% buyer's premium then a 7% tax on top. That means you have to add 20 to 23% to the hammer price.

Hans Clemens

Auction News

Germany, October 1984

THERE WERE 14 TOY SMS of varying types and quality in this sale ranging from several late (probably 1950s) Vulcan pressed-tin models, through flat tin and pressed-hollow-tin 1910 and 20s versions, and two pretty turn-of-the-century cast-iron machines, one of them a miniature Leigh and Crawford.

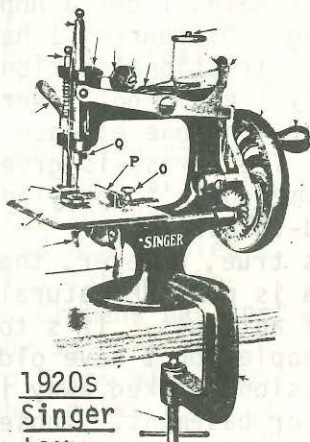
There was one cast-iron toy that, from the photograph, could have been a 1920s Singer 20, a 1940s Lead or a later 1950s version. The only clue, that it was red with no name, in my book made it the latter, probably manufactured by the Essex Engineering Works, Wanstead, London E11. (For information there is also a similar-age deckel-green-finished version of this model called Grain).

Many hammer prices far exceeded the estimates. Even a Vulcan, which turns up for about £7 on English fleamarkets, doubled its £10 estimate, plus commission, though a Vulcan Senior only beat the £12 estimate by one.

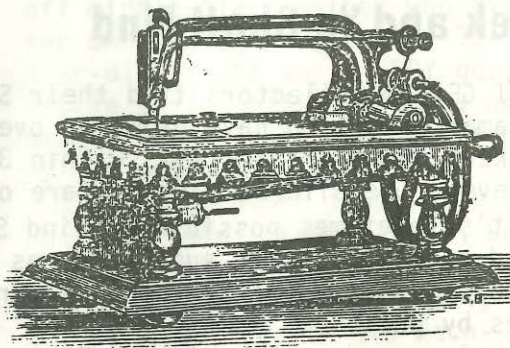
A lovely cast-iron machine (7" x 7") with a front-facing wheel and gold-and-red decorations brought £65. My favourite, an 1890 miniature Willcox and Gibbs-style marked C Boettcher, Leipzig, turned out to be the most expensive: £87 if you include the 20% commission and tax. Only £2.50 cheaper was a cast-iron Bavarian machine that I've never thought of as a toy. But then, who knows?
Christie's, South Kensington, 11 July 1985 MS

CHARISMA, CHUTZPAH, call it what you will, some machines have it, even common ones like the Willcox and Gibbs and Moldacott, while others like the Jones and Wanzer haven't.

But the machine that all collectors, newcomers and long-term addicts seem to fall for every time is the turned-leg Grover & Baker 14. Why this particular model I'm not sure. There are rarer, prettier and older machines around. But when the first such machine in several years turned up in a London saleroom, the high rollers rolled in too. And, despite a mix-up over catalogue distribution enough enthusiasts knew of the sale to ensure that the machine



1920s
Singer
toy



Grover & Baker 14

didn't go too cheaply. In fact, it reached £1,100 -- way over the £400 to £600 estimate which erred, perhaps, on the side of caution bearing in mind the C6 condition. There was evidence of some re-painting and the transfer in the centre may not have been the original, but in any condition the Grover has charisma and to our mind the price was made up from £500 for the machine and £600 for the legend.

The only other machine in the sale was a tatty Moldacot without its tin. It brought a predictable £60. (No buyers' premium). MS

Letters to the Editor

FROM HANS AND SIGRID CLEMENS

First congratulations on the new SMCS. We also voted for the split because it is unusual to find collectors who are interested in both SMs and typewriters and many things in past magazines didn't interest us.

All our best wishes for the expansion of the SMCS. We will do what we can to help, particularly with news about toy SMs from Germany. We know that any group is only as good as its members.

FROM MARGARET AND PAUL BREARLEY

It was nice to meet everyone at our first visit to the AGM at Luton. I would make one point for future meetings. If people are travelling a long way it would be nice if there was more of an 'event' -- perhaps a speaker on a related subject. I enjoyed seeing all the SMs but would have loved to have known more about them. Best wishes. Editor's note: Thank you for your comments. I agree with you. Problem in the past with a joint SM & TW Society was that we would have had to appoint two speakers on two different subjects. But now we have a specialist society we can work on a more action-packed AGM.

FROM PETER STARLING

Herewith cheque for £8 for my sub renewed. I'm sorry you've decided to increase the sub -- I'm sure this increases the argument for a reduced rate for senior citizens! All the best for the Society's future.

Editor's note: When the Post Office agrees to reduce the price of stamps for pensioners I'd be glad to pass on the difference.

FROM DOREEN AND GEOFF HISCOCK

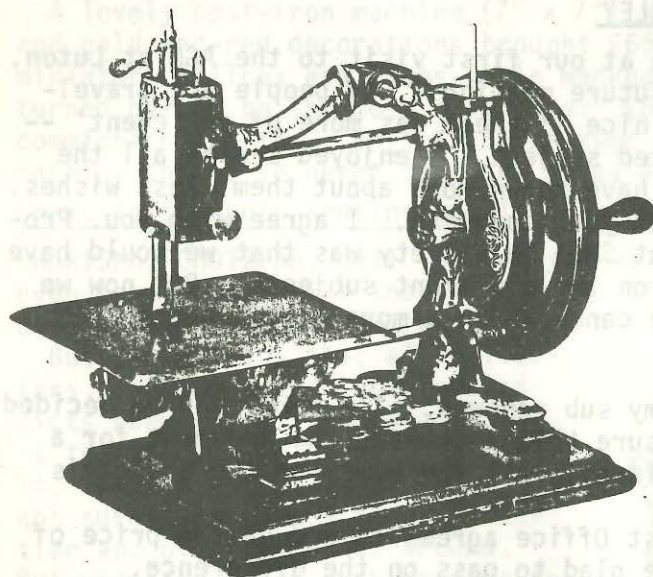
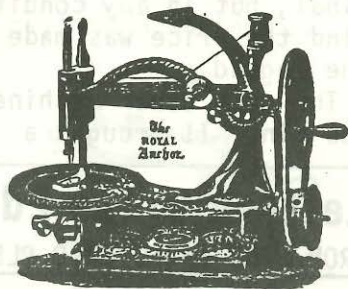
Please find £8 subscription, also the name and address of a new member as our contribution to the SMCS. We think the news letter and the name should stay in the same format etc -- neat without being gaudy.

Anchored At Last

MY IRON-COLLECTING friend Julia Morgan and I nearly came to blows in May when she hit the jackpot -- finding a crazy-cheap Anchor SM at a Dutch flea-market. She left it behind.

She and her husband discussed whether I'd like it but decided 250 gilders (about £50) was too much to pay. In a brave attempt to restore harmony I gritted an 'it doesn't matter' cliché then rang Graham Forsdyke for consolation. He ran up a huge bill telephoning everyone he knew in Holland who didn't collect SMs. But the information was a week old and there seemed little chance of tracing the machine.

Two weeks later I bought an Anchor from a London dealer who'd found it near a ferry port at a price not dissimilar to the Dutch one. Question is, can this be a different machine and if so, is its mate still at large in Holland. It would be an incredible co-incidence for two such rare models to surface within a month of each other. Any feedback or information would be appreciated.



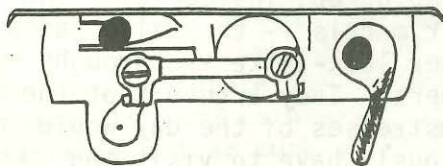
My Shuttle Anchor differs in shape from the 1871 Royal Anchor CH wrote about in S&R15, though both were supplied by Thomas Bradford & Co of London and Manchester. Advertisements showed him to be a Royal SM Co agent in 1869.

My machine still has the anchor barb above a straight, square-section cross arm but without the rope decoration. In addition there is a square, plated-metal stitchplate, Challenge-shaped feet,

wheel and back-plate and the shuttle mechanism is straight out of the Royal SM Company mould. Comparing the Royal Anchor illustration with Hans Peter Luzi's Challenge, pictured above, and Wilf Grove's drawing of the Shakespear shuttle mechanism* will help you check out

what the Shuttle Anchor looks like.
*NB An additional piece of information for those who strip their SMs for cleaning, the connecting rod is shown with two slot-headed screws. The left screw unscrews to the left and the right one unscrews to the right.

MS



Shape-up

JUST WHY MANUFACTURERS back in the early days of the industry adopted certain designs occupies a lot of collectors' thinking time.

The Anchor recently unearthed by MS is typical. Here is a machine made by the Royal SM Co using just about every part of the more common Challenge with the exception of the top frame which carries the Anchor design. I've checked and all of the mechanism is interchangeable.

So the question is: with a supposedly successful design in the Challenge, why did Royal go to all the cost and trouble of procuring the Anchor? And as the surviving numbers reveal, either Royal only made a limited number to retain some exclusivity or the machine got the cold shoulder from the public.

GF

Cash Discount

MANY MANUFACTURERS who pirated designs from others or built machines under licence aimed to grab a share of the market by undercutting their rivals' price. The easiest way to do this was to cut down on quality, reduce non-essential features and reduce costly decorative work.

Not so with Frister & Rossmann. Under an agreement with Willcox & Gibbs they produced machines in Germany which were sold throughout Europe including Great Britain and in direct competition with the British end of the W&G empire.

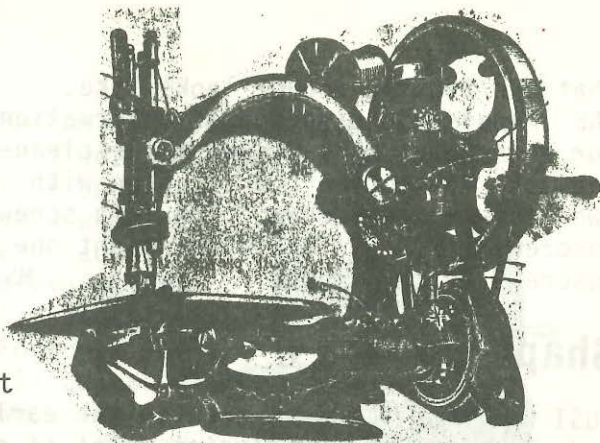
And their machine went up-

market. Certainly no W&G medalion but a lot of gold-leaf decoration and nickel plate on the rocking arm and on the drive wheel. Both these items would obviously have to be polished before plating adding costs to the W&G system of simply painting the rough cast metal. F&R replaced the wooden handle with a white porcelain version and housed the machine in a Singer-Family-type case with a fair amount of Tunbridge-ware work in the wood.

At a time when many machines were being sold on the then novel hire-purchase system, F&R adopted a cash-only policy.

They ignored the chains of specialist SM shops that were springing up, instead offering their models -- they also had a Singer look-alike -- through drapers. They argued that the seamstresses of the day would obviously have to visit the drapers and, therefore, would be regularly exposed to the charms of the F&R offerings.

And it was a cash-only deal. But as the company pointed out convincingly in their advertising, this could mean reductions of 30 to 40% on prices charged by the



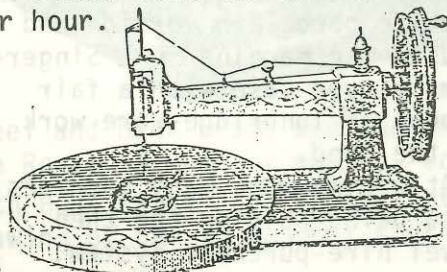
specialist dealers offering hire-purchase terms. GF

Loose Ends

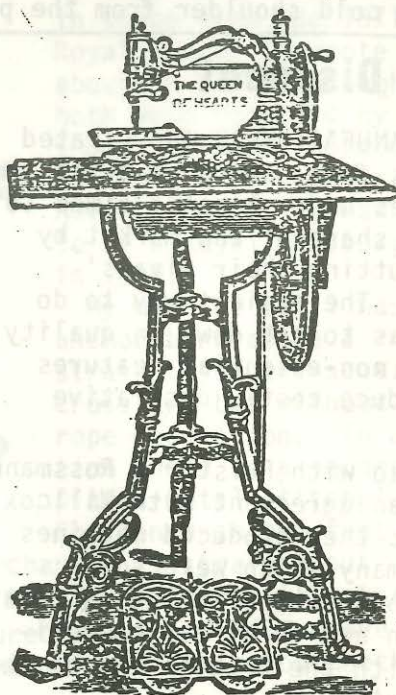
Automatic button-hole machine:

* Wyatt & Burr of John St, Kingsland Rd, London: manufactured an ingenious button-hole machine in 1877. The fabric had to be placed in a clip which was designed like a toothed clamp, with a loose bearing to adjust to any thickness of fabric.

The cloth plate had a guage to measure the size of the hole required. The needle passed through the suit in the button-hole (kept open by the clip) and then through the fabric at the edge of the slit. The fabric was fed round the needle, thus producing an automatic button-hole at the rate of 100 per hour. CH



NEW West-German member Otto Dress recently found a fine Queen of Hearts made by James Starley of Coventry. He's now looking for the treadle to sit it on. MS



Duty Free: From the Sewing Machine News 1886.

* 'All nickelled parts of SMs imported into France are subject to a duty as follows:- New Home, 1s 5½d; Howe from 1s 11½d to 2s 3½d; Wheeler & Wilson, Domestic and others 1s 8d. As a consequence of this, it is suggested that the Domestic will, in future, be imported without nickelled parts. The importers are very naturally protesting against the duties and their desire is not so much to avoid paying the duty as to prevent the wilful and wrongful detachment of parts by the Customs' authorities.'

CH

* Bradbury and Company were awarded first prizes at Exhibitions in Lyons (1872, Paris (1872) and Vienna (1873). Do catalogues or details of these and similar exhibitions survive, I wonder? Is there anyone out there interested in finding out? (If you can't get the machine, get contemporary information).

BM

* Typical Victorian versatility: Mr Chatwood who advertised his Patent Paragon SMs in 1860 (made at his manufactory at Liver Safe Works, Bow Street, Bolton and on show at his showrooms at 22 South John Street, Liverpool) also expounded the virtues of his fire-proof safes fitted with the Patent Paragon lock 'which cannot be picked'.

BM

* The Franklin Company of Hockley, Birmingham proudly announced, in 1870, that their 'Agenoria' had been supplied to His Royal Highness the Nawab-Nazim of Bengal. They also, modestly, described the machine as 'the best and most silent hand and treadle lock-stitch shuttle sewing machine in the world.'

BM

* An 'Alexandra' patent lock-stitch SM was exhibited at the Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853 by the British SM Co Ltd of 71 Oxford St, London W. Has anyone seen another reference to either the machine or firm?

BM

Membership News

NEW MEMBERS

HARRY KABE, National Sewing Centre, 44 Loveday St, Johannesburg, South Africa.

MD

GRAHAM & ROGER OBRART, Malro Schoolwear, Malro House, 245 Wood St, London E17 3NT.

Including Toys

OTTO & ELIZABETH DRESS, 1m Egert 9, 7300 Esslingen, W Germany.

COLIN SCOTT, 29 Plomer Green Lane, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks.

BURGHARD SCHACK, Sielsdorfer Str 1, D5000, Koeln 41, W Germany.

HENRY CADE, 'The Shielan', 5 Roderick Ave, Peacehaven, E Sussex

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

HOWARD & SUE HOPE, 19 Weston Park, Thames Ditton, Surrey CD
Telephone: 01 398 7130 (from August, 1985).

RE-JOINED MEMBERS

D A G BEKKERS, Singel 64, 3311 SJ, Dordrecht, Holland. MD
DAVE SMITH, The Talking Machine, 30 Watford Way, Hendon CD
London NW4. Telephone 01 202 3473.

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Tel: 0256 781834.

To save space and typing time some abbreviations will be used in the magazine. Initials of club officials and regular contributors (eg GF Graham Forsdyke); SM: sewing machine; CD: dealer in collectable machines; MD: dealer in modern machines.

ADVERTISEMENTS

TOY SEWING MACHINES and SM miniature replicas wanted. One or a collection. Photo, if possible, please. Art Chodrof, 2805 Motor Ave, Los Angeles, California 90064, USA.

SEWING MACHINES bought and sold; also typewriters and gramophones, etc. The Talking Machine, 30 Watford Way, Hendon, London NW4. Telephone 01 202 3473. Open every day.

MAGGIE SNELL collects, buys, sells and exchanges early SMs. Large selection always available so send your 'wants list' or telephone her on 01 488 0474.

STOP PRESS: There will be a programme about Elias Howe on Radio 3, 9-25pm August 8.

MEMBER'S private sales, wants and exchange advertisements are free, though all 'for sale' items must be priced. Collector/dealers and any member offering large quantities of machines will be asked to pay a modest fee of £1 per inch (minimum £1). Copyright of all articles submitted and used belongs to the SMCS unless previously assigned and the committee reserves the right to abridge, add to or alter in any other way any material submitted for publication.