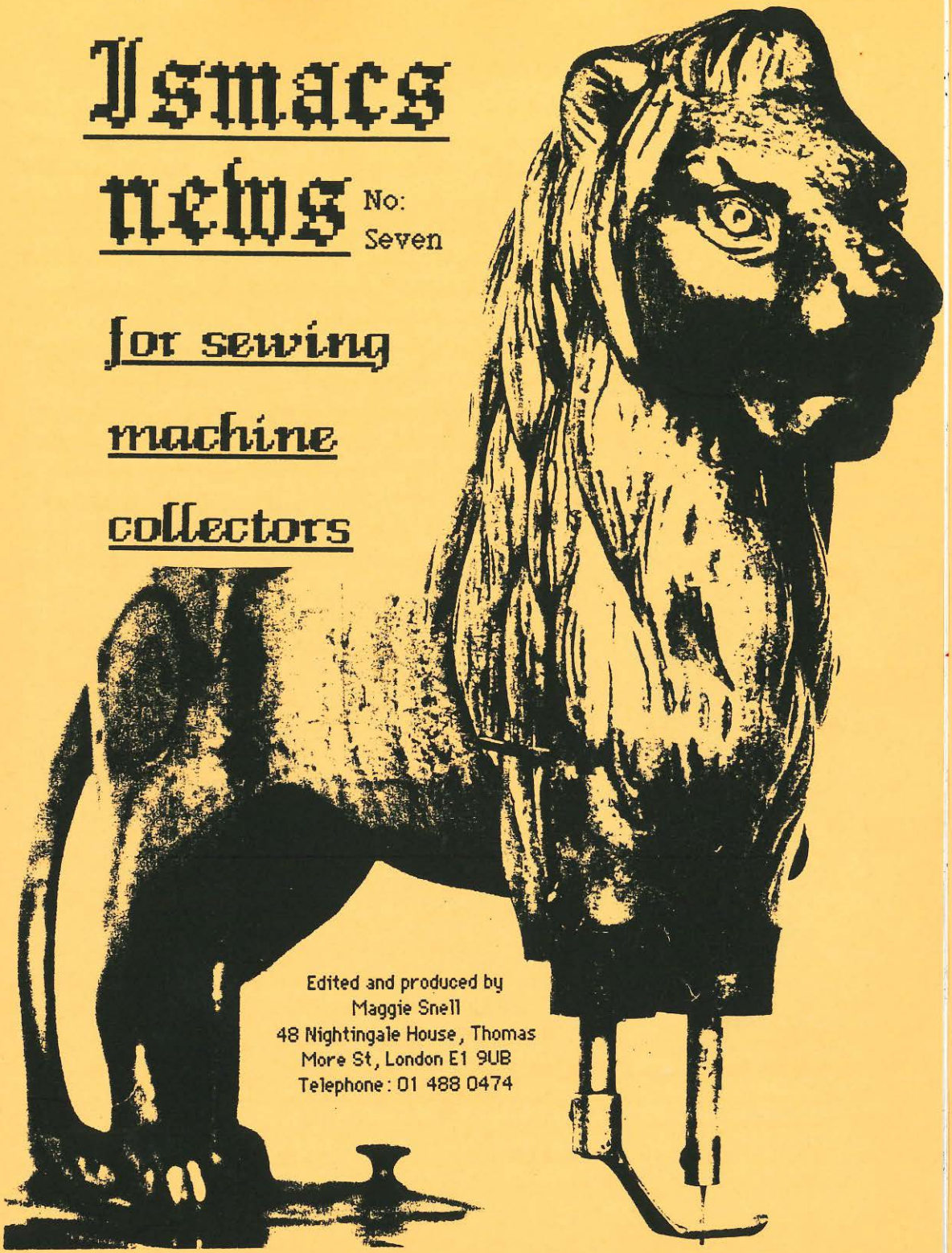
Ismacs news

No: Seven

for sewing machine collectors



Edited and produced by
Maggie Snell
48 Nightingale House, Thomas More St, London E1 9UB
Telephone: 01 488 0474

Beauty and the Beast

WE'VE BEEN RATHER spoiled over the past year as members have regularly brought their latest and most unusual machines to our regional collector meetings -- so it must have been difficult for people to decide what to take to the Big One.

However, one glance at the "creme de la creme" table where members were to vote on what desirable machine that they would most like to own quite took the breath away.

Lording it over the cast-iron jungle was an 1867 Kimball and Morton Lion. Bronze paint gleaming, the sinewy beast (who had lost its treadle in its fight with time) battled it out with three other mouth-watering entries.

Our name has been changed to **The International Sewing Machine Collector's Society (ISMACS)**.

At the AGM Graham Forsdyke argued that with sewing machines being collected the world over, it won't be long before another group is formed, in America or on the Continent, and it may want to call itself International.

As we were the first, and 25% of our members hail from overseas, we thought it better at the outset to be recognised as the premier international society for sewing-machine collectors.

Nearest rival turned out to be Bernard Williams' French Avrial pusher model we described in News 4. Bernard has had a base cast up to complete the machine since we last viewed it at the regional meeting at his home, and very well it looked too.

It was unfortunate for Carol Head that her fine-condition and very rare 1872 Britannia Sewing Machine showing the company's BSMC monogram intertwined within the iron anchor-shaped flat base and twisted rope-work on the frame and hand-wheel was duplicated (in all but condition) on the Junker table, and that probably cast a shadow in the voting.

Graham Forsdyke, now totally converted to SMs -- he has even advertised to exchange some of his rare typewriters for equally-rare SMs -- submitted the prettiest machine on the table, an elegant French model, which sparkled with mother-of-pearl and gold leaf. But like

the Eurovision Song Contest, a watered-down version of last year's winner rarely pays off, and this time the beauty lost out to the beast.

Every dog has it's day, and in the "junk-corner" competition, the real nasties that elsewhere may have been have been aimed at the council tip were being displayed in all their glory. There was a wonderful Original Express painted in tasteful colours of red, white blue and green, with a solid wheel to boot.

But the winner had to be only the second example of the Britannia Anchor machine I've ever seen (the first being Carol Head's on the next table). Sadly this one was more rust than paint, every possible moveable part being jammed solid. How to restore such a rotting hulk was a major topic of conversion and owners Hillary and Richard Stephenson took away a bottle of wine to give them Dutch courage.

Graham's "Feelie" competition stumped everyone (even me and they were my machines). One was a portable Dorman in a tiny rectangular box with compartments for needles, cotton reels, etc. The other, a Eugenie was hidden within a loose black dustbin sack.

Nearly 40 members and friends enjoyed numerous activities in addition to the competitions, but first we had to get the business part of the meeting out of the way. Chairman Brian Matthews welcomed everyone, and read out apologies for absence, and unfortunately many of our regular attenders could not make it on the day. I put on my secretary/treasurer's hat to dispense the paperwork bit (report page 7), and GF led a discussion on the magazine.



A pretty glass plaque — a present from Pfaff, pictured here two-thirds size — was given to every member who attended the Ironbridge meeting.

It transpired the supplements had proved particularly popular and

NO BOBBIN.

NO WINDING.

TWO-REEL LOCK-STITCH

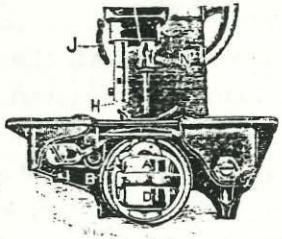


FIG. 3.

SEWING MACHINE COMPANY,

LIMITED.

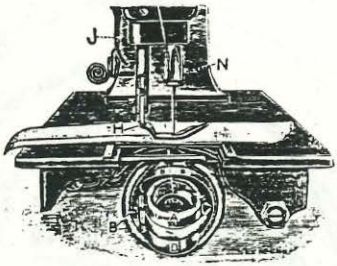


FIG. 4.



FIG. 6.



FIG. 7.

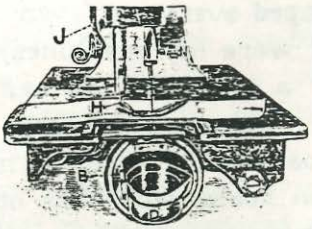


FIG. 5.

. . . ABSTRACT OF . . .

Instruction Book for the "B" Size.



FIG. 8.

Under Thread.—The under thread when in position is contained in the case A & D, Figs. 3 & 4. To remove the same, press the spring B towards the case, at the same time pulling it outwards as shewn in Fig. 4, then lift top half of reel case A from the lower or fixed half D as shewn in Fig. 5, place reel on spindle E, Fig. 6, as shewn in Fig. 7, pass the thread through both slots on thread lead F as shewn in Fig. 8, and under tension spring G as shewn in Fig. 9, replace the top half A as shewn in Fig. 4, then close the case as shewn in Fig. 3, taking care that it is locked in position by the spring B, and leave about two inches of thread projecting beyond the tension spring G.

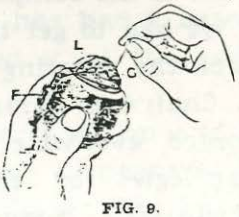


FIG. 9.

Please Address all Communications to the Company,

ARGYLE STREET, NECHELLS,

BIRMINGHAM.

NO SPOOL.

NO SHUTTLE.

AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE.

we talked about ways of getting members involved in on-the-ground research.

After members re-elected the previous committee en bloc and voted to change the Society's name to International Sewing Machine Collector's Society (ISMACS), we talked about regional meetings and the next AGM. London was put forward as a possible venue, and though Glasgow is a long way for most people, an enterprising idea was proposed for a weekend visit to Clydebank, Glasgow's People's Palace (with Kimball and Morton Lions) and the Edinburgh Science Museum.

We seem to have more possible venues than days available, (particularly in the Midlands) and though we didn't set a date for the next meeting, mid-to-late September was the most popular bet -- more details in the next ISMACS News.

Events followed fast and furiously, starting with Graham's quiz. Forms were handed out to each new arrival and we swapped papers later to check the answers. There was little surprise when Carol won, and I was glad Graham coerced me into being the guinea-pig before the event -- I was never very good at anagrams. You have a chance to tackle it yourself on page 14/15 -- answers page 18.

There were three prizes of bottles of wine to those with scores nearest 60, 40 and 20, with side prizes of miniature SM models for the highest score in each section. Those who feel it's all too complicated should take heart from a 12-year-old guest who'd never seen an old machine before the meeting. She won two prizes with 20 points by just looking and listening (and frankly guessing).

An extra prize was given to Ken Waite who has enthusiastically and energetically enrolled numerous new members from among the modern SM trade. Good on yer, Ken. Jack Hampton, joint managing director of Pfaff, couldn't attend but donated a quantity of very pretty glass wall plaques (see picture) and we gave one to every member who attended the Ironbridge meeting. There are still a few left, and I will send one to any member who sends me a large, strong, padded stamped-addressed envelope until supplies run out.

Graham presented a slide show of machines from my and Bernard Williams' collections, and there was a lot of feedback from the floor.

One of the most popular machines on members' display tables was the dainty, and generally rare, Northampton-made Dorman. Norma Simms brought the mint example she bought as a result of her appeal

on Scottish radio all the way from Dundee (and an apron on which was printed a giant "Sans Rival" machine featured in News 6). The Stephensons had an incomplete version which they wanted to compare and hopefully restore. There was another in the auction (report page 9), and a fourth in the feelie competition.

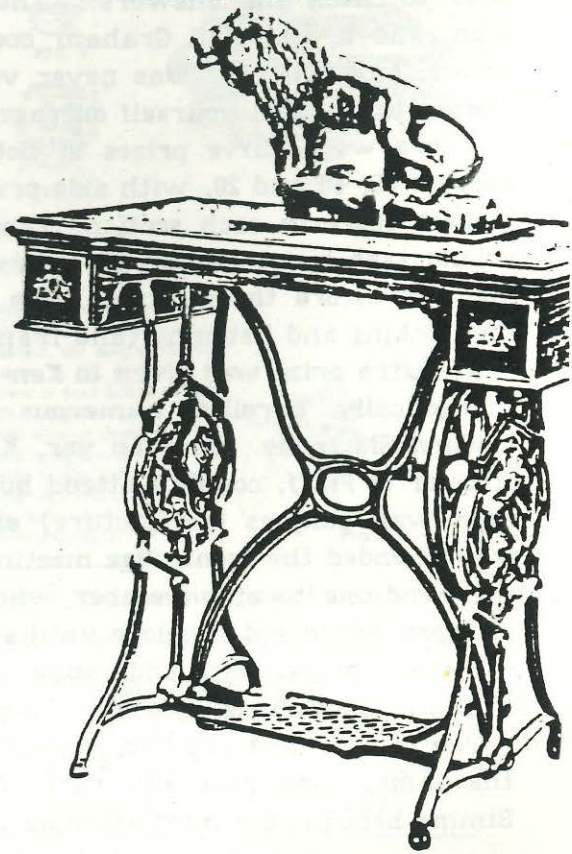
Vera and Leonard Hemming concentrated on Birmingham-made machines, including several by the Royal SM Company, and also showed their unusual Two-Reel Lock-stitch SM Company illustrated in the full-page advertisement on page 4.

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum was a magnificent and comfortable venue, and though few members found time to explore its many delights, some said they would like to make a return visit. Librarian John Powell really put himself out to make us welcome, providing strong tables, a slide carousel, a tea urn and cups and saucers no less. We've also been invited to hold another meeting there in the future. MS

Second Thoughts

ACCORDING TO a Kimball and Morton instruction book, the Glasgow company claimed to be amongst the pioneers of the sewing machine ..... "their business experience beginning in the very early days when the sewing machine was an even greater wonder than the gramophone now is".

The Lion illustrated on the front cover was produced around 1867 when the company was established. For some reason they made another more-ornate Lion style 36 years later based on the celebrated original by J Vasteugh Gyorgy. This was when the gramophone first became popular in 1903. The model reproduced could have been bought with stand for £9 9 0. I want one. MS



Secretary's Annual Report

A YEAR AGO this month we produced the first magazine of the newly-formed SMCS. We had a potential 56 members (43 UK, 13 overseas) and £223 in the bank inherited from the joint SM and Typewriter Collectors' Society.

With fingers crossed we promised to send you six magazines with a minimum of 16 pages each. We did better than that, and one of them reached a massive 36 pages. We've also produced three special supplements concentrating on individual British manufacturers.

Membership grew as well, and the week before the Ironbridge AGM, exactly doubled up with an interesting mix of 62 private collectors, 27 connected with the modern SM trade, 12 antique dealers some of whom collect as well as sell old SMs, and four museums including London's Science Museum. And those numbers are reflected at home and abroad with 76 home-based members and 30 from overseas.

One unexpected bonus was the success of our regional meetings. We developed a policy of travelling round the country which worked amazingly well. There were a couple in the south-west at the homes of Diana and Peter Herbert in Bristol and Vera and Brian Matthews at Basingstoke. Two in the Midlands with Vera and Leonard Hemmings in Birmingham and Bernard and Sheila Williams at Burton on Trent. And one in the North at Mike Kneeshaw's shop in Leeds organised by the indefatigable Ken Waite who has enrolled more members than anyone outside the committee.

These very popular and informal events attracted an average of 20 members a time, culminating the highly successful and enjoyable Ironbridge AGM that you can read about elsewhere in the magazine.

Treasurer's Report as at 30 April, 1986

Income	**£**	**Expenditure**	**£**
From SM & TW Society	223.00	Printing magazines	568.00
Subs UK 85/86	640.00	Photocopying	24.59
Subs overseas 85/86	301.00	Production & materials	39.07
Subs UK 86/87	24.00	Postage	141.04
Subs overseas 86/87	78.00	Stationery	31.14
Advertising	35.00	Miscelaneous	13.00
Bank interest	7.32	Bank charges (clearing	
	1308.32	2 foreign cheques)	1.27
Less expenditure	818.11		818.11
Balance	490.21		

As you can see, almost all the expenses were taken up with producing and distributing the magazine. When we started we anticipated the year's expenses being approximately £500. But as new subscriptions flowed in we spent more money on an increased-sized magazine with proportionately-higher postal charges.

So, whereas in May '85, printing charges on a 16-page issue were £60 with approximately £14 postage, to print a 36-page number in April '86 cost £138 and £24 to post. Then there are miscelaneous expenses like stationery, Letraset, typewriter and printer ribbons, advertising, photocopying and the AGM expenses, including the hire of the lecture room at Telford.

We are more than solvent; in fact, happily, our finances are quite healthy. But to progress and develop still further we would ask you to please rush back your subscription, and pass on the good news about our growing Society to your friends and colleagues and increase further the size of our membership.

We are holding the subscription rate at £8 (UK) and £10 overseas for another year. And at the AGM we voted to change the name to ISMACS -- International Sewing Machine Collectors' Society -- so put this new name on your cheques and postal orders. Though the bank will accept SMCS for a while if you have already posted off your fee.

The committee and I thank you for your encouragement and support. Between us, I think we've proved there is a need for an independent SMCS -- let's look forward with confidence to another great year. MS

Foreign Cheques

We lost £1.75p on a single £8 West-German cheque. That's what the bank charged to clear the cheque through the system. OK, so club funds will cover this one. But can we please stress to our overseas' members the importance of not using private cheques to pay your subscriptions.

Eurocheques and travellers' cheques are OK, but cash, preferably £10 in sterling, is even better. Your help is appreciated. MS

Round in Circles

I GOT CAUGHT UP the other day in trying to find out something about the "Circular Motion Machine".

There it was, listed in an 1873 advertisement from a Plymouth Agent

R I Watts and Co, who boasted that his was the only establishment outside London where: "the facility is offered to inspect and compare every description of sewing machine".

Available were Grover and Baker, Jones, Howe, Wheeler and Wilson, Shakespeare (spelt incorrectly) and many other mouth-watering names, including the Circular Motion.

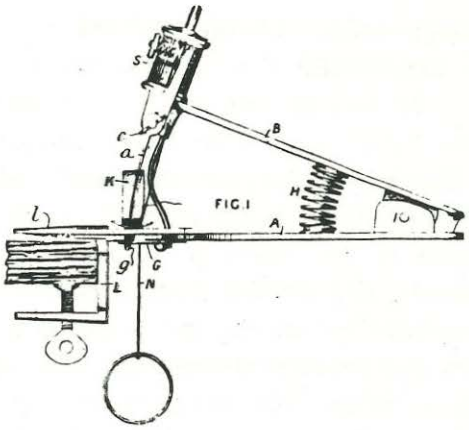
More investigation was called for and the answer came in an advertisement placed in another magazine a year later by Watts' competitor J R Chislett.

JR was only able to offer five types of machine, (including the "Little Weir") ; amongst them was the "Circular Motion" which we learn was specifically designed for "stitching new elastic into old boots" GF

Auction Reports

Christie's, South Kensington - 8 May 1986

SEVERAL GOOD machines have been turning up in auction lately, and the prize piece at Christie's was no exception.



It was a small clamp model (I tend to think of it as looking like a stapler) American in origin and patented by W G Beckwith in May 1871.

The earliest models were operated by a cord attached to a ring, as shown in the patent drawing. However, the later, Christie's, version incorporated a handle. It was painted black with gold-filigree patterns and although not in the best condition (7) was still pleasant enough. Other non-painted nickelled versions were also produced.

The £420 price tag seemed to me incredibly cheap for this very desirable, and rare, machine and English collectors have missed out on a bargain. Believe it or not it is going to Germany to a typewriter collector.

£80 for a Wanzer would normally be a high price to pay, but this C9 version -- a rare beast indeed -- shone with bright paint and gold

patterns. No wonder it was originally bought in such large numbers. Unfortunately most that survive to the present day are dull and pitted and are worth very little.

An Improved Home Shuttle also incorporated some pretty floral decorations, although it needed a little love and attention, particularly on the metal work, to bring it back to showable condition. However, it was a reasonable buy at £35.

The rest were a motley collection of poor-condition Willcox and Gibbs, including a Dresdonia Industrial version with an old vacuum cleaner (£11 to £35); a £15, C4, Jones; a German Atlas-type (C7), £40; a C7 boxed Weir, £50; and a Moldacot missing its bobbin with a very sad-condition tin, £55.

Considering that the prices in this sale were depressed in comparison with others offering similar items, a C8 Singer Child's toy in a taped-up cardboard box brought a higher than average £28. MS

Ironbridge AGM, 11 May, 1986

SEWING MACHINES from just £1 to almost £300 featured in the AGM auction. Of the 33 lots only two went unsold. Total turnover was a staggering £1052 and club funds benefitted by £47 -- more than enough to pay for the day out at the museum venue.

Top money was the successful £295 for a good-condition Dorman (C8) which was to be expected, followed by an extraordinary £180 for a late Hurtu head (C7) bereft of its treadle and mounted on four home-made wooden pillars -- the surprise price of the sale.

Perhaps the most striking machine was the Conquest (C9) -- very much a standard Atlas-like German import but with sensational bright-metal feet in the form of winged dragons. This fetched £105.

Two minatures brought good bidding, a Tabitha (making £80) and a rare American Peerless Automatic (C7), just five pounds less.

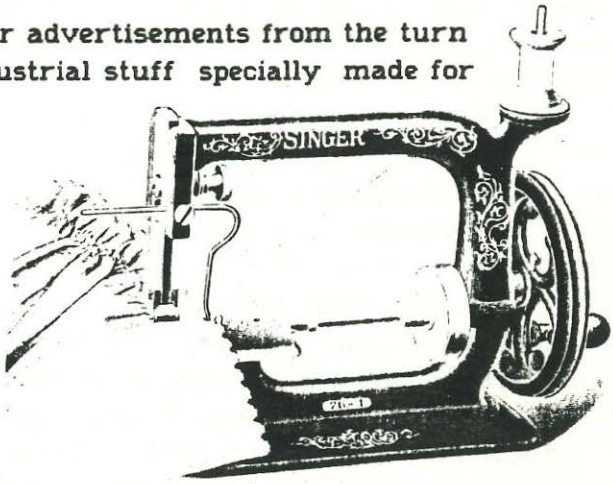
The bulk of the auction entry was made up from the usual collection of Wanzer, Jones and Atlas types at reasonable prices ranging from £1 for an unnamed German heavyweight (C5) to £50 for a bright C8 Wellington.

Go-withs also featured strongly with instruction and advertising leaflets making good prices. Auctioneer GF even found a buyer for a plastic bag full of old cotton reels.

The auction proved that good-quality machines would bring prices equal to those of the London salerooms without the heavy buyers' and/or sellers' premiums associated with the more established venues. MS

Singerling

LEAFING THROUGH some Singer advertisements from the turn of the century -- mostly industrial stuff specially made for "stitching the paper-lining into ladies' hats" and other less-than-exciting purposes -- I found an illustration of a Model Class 76.



Before you quickly turn the page or drop off to sleep let me tell you that this machine is almost the same as the Haberling which caused such interest at the Burton-on-Trent regional meeting -- see illustration in News 5.

In fact, if my memory serves, the Bernard Williams machine is a lot more like the Singer than it is the Haberling patent-application drawing.

There's a strange date anomoly too. The Haberling patent was granted in 1878, but it was over a quarter of a century later that Singer brought out its machine.

Singer claimed that it was made and sold only by them and its advertisement stated that it could provide the dressmaking running-stitch used for gathering at only one twentieth of the cost of doing it by hand.

Presumably this meant that the machine worked 20 times quicker than a seamstress, which is still pretty slow if you think about it. GF

Keep on Looking

IT'S TRUE THAT machines costing hundreds of pounds tend to make the headlines, but collectors with more time (and luck) than money can still find the bargains.

A topical example is the Beckwith which fetched £420 in Christie's. It is identical to the one Rita Heath found while caravanning around the Salisbury area, only hers included the original box and special curved needle and cost the princely sum of £16. MS

In at the Beginning/Part 4

During the past year we have been serialising the recollections of James Bolton, written in 1901, and dealing with his work for 40 years with the Singer SM Co which he joined in 1852.

Should any new member wish to be brought up to date with the Bolton story, I can provide photocopies for a small contribution to club funds. *MS*

* * * * *

Woodruff went to St Louis and after he had been there a while the war broke out between the North and the South, and Mr Dean's business was badly crippled, so much so that he had to discharge Mr Woodruff. Mr Woodruff came on to Chicago to see me after his discharge, applying for work. I told him I had nothing for him, but I understood the agent at Buffalo was seriously ill, and I thought if he would make an application to New York and refer to me, he would likely get the position.

He made application and received a telegram from New York, calling him there. He went on and got the Buffalo agency as the agent had in the meantime died. He was there for some time and got on so well that the company gave him the Boston office. After a while the war of the rebellion became very serious. Mr Woodruff went to New York and applied to the company for a transfer, stating to Mr Hopper that his sympathies for the South were such that he wanted to leave the country. Mr Hopper assigned him to the London Office, where Mr Woodruff went.

It has always been a mystery to me how a man born and bred in Connecticut could become so disloyal to his government, especially as he had neither pecuniary or other interest in the South. However, this sympathy for the South proved a good investment for him as it got him the best office in the gift of the company and other valuable benefits.

While Mr Dean was in New Haven, I called attention to an overhanging feed in the Letter A Family Machine. I showed him that we were getting better results from it, and also told him that the alteration was made in this office; that I did not get them from New York in that condition.

"Now", he said, "if you will let me take that machine, I will take it

right back to New York and show it to Mr Singer." "Well", I said, "Mr Dean, I know something about Mr Singer and improvements" and went on to tell him about the jack feed that I made for Mr Singer, and how he had shut me up on it, and I said, "He will do the same with you".

Then he said, "I am much better acquainted with Mr Singer than you are". "Now", he said, "at one time I was running a theatre in Buffalo and Isaac M Singer put in an application as an actor and said he could play in tragedy. Mr Dean asked him what plays he could do, and Mr Singer replied, "I can do Richard the Third, Macbeth, and characters like that". So Mr Dean said "Mr Singer, I will give you a chance", and he said Mr Singer was employed and played those characters and played them moderately well, and that after a while they went their different ways.

Some years later, he happened to be travelling on Broadway, New York, and saw the sign "Singer Sewing Machines" and a young lady in the window stitching, and he said he just wondered to himself if that could be the actor who played for him in Buffalo. So he went upstairs and, sure enough, there was Isaac M Singer.

"We had a glorious time" and he said "Mr Singer I would like to take the agency for St Louis, I am not doing anything in particular". Mr Singer replied, "If you will buy a stock of machines, we will be glad to give it to you." So he bought a stock of machines and represented them there for years.

A short time after that, I got a letter from I M Singer & Company calling me from New Haven to New York and instructing me to bring the machine with the overhanging feed which I had shown to Mr Dean. So I went to New York Singer looked it over. I told him I had gotten it up for sewing knit hoop skirts, as the Wheeler & Wilson would not feed on that, and the hoop-skirt factories were so pleased with the feed and the machine that they gve me a large order.

Mr Singer asked me the question, why it would not be good for family sewing. I replied, "We have a young lady in the office who takes in that kind of sewing, and it has all been done on the machine with this feed". So Mr Singer said, "Take this mahine over to the factory and tell them if they cannot make anything better than this, to make this". So the machine was left at the factory and was buried there.

To be continued.....

AGM Quiz

The quiz GF dreamed up proved so popular that we decided to reproduce it here for the edification and amusement of those members who couldn't attend the AGM. No answers may be the same within any one section. Answers on page 18. MS

Section One

Give a SM named for:

1. a poet
2. a singer
3. a room
4. an area of London
5. a naked equestrian
6. a soldier
7. a song writer
8. a pastry cook
9. a god
10. a school prefect
11. an Italian city
12. a flower
13. a wild beast
14. a province in Canada
15. an English county
16. a related group
17. a precious stone
18. a royal

Section Two

Name a maker who was, or is, in the business of:

19. aeroplanes
20. typewriters
21. motor cycles
12. dry cleaning
23. prams
24. cycles
25. guns
26. musical instruments
27. vacuum brakes
28. wringers
29. motor cars

Section Three

30. Who was killed by a run-away horse.
31. What is the suffix for British-built Singers
32. In what year did Howe bring his machine to England.
33. Complete: ..... and Mann
34. Names of the Howe brothers
35. Which British SM company was taken over by the Japanese.

Section Four

Town of origin of:

36. Florence
37. Taylor
38. Shakespear
39. Lion
40. Britannia
41. Bradbury

Section Five

42. Makers of the Lion
43. In which year was the Thimonnier exhibited in Britain
44. Name the members of the combination that con-trolled early manufacture.
45. Within two years date Singer No. 2,000,001

Section Six
Who made the
46. Time Utilizer
47. Whirlwind
48. Europa
49. Family Treasure
50. Dorcas

Section Seven
Anagrams. Sort out the machine or manufacturer

51. Spine Law Scores F
52. We Lend A Nose Whirl
43. Lo, New Glint
54. Thick Web
55. E Grins
56. Drab Ruby
47. Rancho
58. Rate Lab
59. Coma Told
60. Peak Rashes

Any Excuse

A SEWING-MACHINE salesman tried to tell me recently that it was Remington's wife who first suggested the idea for putting the company's latest product -- the Sholes & Glidden typewriter -- on a SM treadle to operate the carriage-return more efficiently than by hand.

The company produced both SMs and typewriters (as well as guns) so it may be true. Sounds like a romantic folk-tale to me. Anyway, it's a good excuse for a pretty picture. MS



Judkins' Paper

FURTHER INSIGHT into the very earlist days of the British SM industry has come to light following the discovery of a copy of a paper read by pioneer Charles Judkins to the Society of Arts on January 18, 1854.

He demonstrated his machine to the learned members, saying that he derived a "high degree of satisfaction from the reflection that few inventions have wrought so little injury to the interests of the labourers in the department into which it enters as a competitor".

Now whether he actually believed this is open to conjecture for, at that stage, he might have been simply hoping to ward off what he felt might be to come. But he went on to say that if his machine did not increase speed and production it would be useless.

"All machines must, more or less, interfere with the artisan on their first appearance in the labour market for the simple reason that they rival his occupation and cast him upon other resources before they have sufficiently multiplied production to make him a participator in the cheapness of which they are the authors."

He went on the the same stylish way to explain that SMs would open up new channels of employment and "transfer the labourer from a task destructive of his constitution to one which is promotive of his health". Judson explained that his machine should, therefore, "instead of being resisted as a foe and a mischievious intruder, come into the category of a public blessing."

Judkins, who was obviously no mean salesman, next suggested that some of the resistance to the SM was as a result of the invention not being "entirely British".

Had it been, he insisted, it would have already taken over from, and ended the plight of, the sempstress: "hundreds and thousands of whom at this moment toil in unwholesome localities at a pernicious avocation for many hours a day for wages that barely tend to hold life and soul together".

After much more of this saving-womankind rhetoric he gets down to the hard sell, telling of how one of his machines was exhibited before the Royal Family of Belgium who were staying at Windsor Castle. There was also made in London, by two machines, a travelling wrapper for the distinguished visitors which was converted from "shapeless cloth in just four hours". It contained, the Society was told, a greater number of stitches than one operative could have made in a week of hand work.

Modesty then overtook Mr Judkins, who felt it necessary to explain that he did not wish to take credit for entire originality in the present machine. What he did want was the recognition for "having improved upon the ideas of others, overcoming difficulties which to them appeared insuperable, discovering the vital defect of all previous attempts and bringing the machine into practical and profitable application".

His version of the history of the SM concedes the part of Howe who, he said, first conceived the first attempt at stitching by machinery in

Boston in the United States. And that's as much credit as Howe gets, for Judkins then continued: "after the expenditure of a great deal of money, it proved an utter failure".

In the five years following Howe's first machine of 1846 Judkins explained that there were numerous attempts to put the machine right..... "attempts as honourable to the ingenuity of their authors as they were unfortunate in their results".

Into this sea of failure swum our hero.

"Collecting specimens of these inventions I proceeded to examine in which respect they failed to fulfil the necessary conditions and, detecting their deficiency at length, contrived to produce a practicable working machine and offer it to the public."

But Judkins then explained to the Society that his "exultation received an immediate check". His machine was alleged to infringe Howe's patent. Claiming that the law was being used to protect an unworkable machine and hold back an improved one, Judkins then told of how he and a group of Americans evolved a "completely different principle, doing away with the shuttle". He admitted that to be on completely safe ground and well away from Mr Howe's lawyers, he brought his new machine to Britain.

"The favour in which I was received led to the foundation of the Lancashire SM Company". But it seems that founding the company was the least of his troubles for he came up against considerable "jealousy and apprehension and found that manufacturers dreaded to experiment with what might cause a rebellion in their establishments".

Having set the scene, Mr Judkins went on to describe his 500-stitches-per-minute machine thus:

"The vertical descends and passes through the two pieces of cloth to be united, carrying with it the thread to perhaps half an inch below the underside of the cloth; as the needle rises, the thread is left behind in the form of a noose, or loop, through which the horizontal needle passes; the horizontal needle immediately reversing its motion leaves a loop into which the vertical needle descends."

Judkins put forward various suggestions for the use of the high-speed machine, then concluded his paper by re-interating the fact that no-one was going to lose out by the invention of the SM. Everyone had everything to gain -- including, we suspect, the fast-talking salesman fleeting Mr Howe's wrath.

GF

Answer to Quiz

Section One

1. Milton
2. Jenny Lind
3. Boudoir
4. Belgravia
5. Lady Godiva
6. Wellington
7. Tom Hood
8. Queen of Hearts
9. Atlas
10. Monitor
11. Florence
12. Pansy
23. Lion
14. Alberta
15. Essex
16. Family
17. Gem
18. Princess of Wales

Section Two

19. Vickers
20. Frister & Rossman
21. Husqvarna
22. Harris
23. Bradbury
24. Starley
25. Remington
26. Whight & Mann
27. Gresham
28. Kimball & Morton
29. Peugeot

Section Three

30. Edward Ward
31. K
32. 1847
33. Whight
34. Elias and Amasa
35. Jones

Section Four

36. Florence
37. Driffield
38. Birmingham
39. Glasgow
40. Colchester
41. Oldham

Section Five

42. Kimball & Morton
43. 1851
44. Howe, Grover & Baker, Wheeler & Wilson, Singer
45. 1878

Section Six

46. Wanzer
47. Dorman
48. Coventry SM Company
49. Robinson
50. Newton Wilson

Section Seven

51. Princess of Wales
52. Wheeler & Wilson
53. Wellington
54. Beckwith
55. Singer
56. Bradbury
57. Anchor
58. Alberta
59. Moldacot
60. Shakespear

Obviously there are alternative answers and these were allowed at the AGM, even the suggestion that the Jones machines was named after singer Tom Jones.

Birth of an Empire

IT WAS ONE man's dread of hen-party "sewing days" that led to the formation of one of the most successful sewing-machine businesses.

Sewing days back in America in the mid-18th century were rather like washing days in the present time -- only worse.

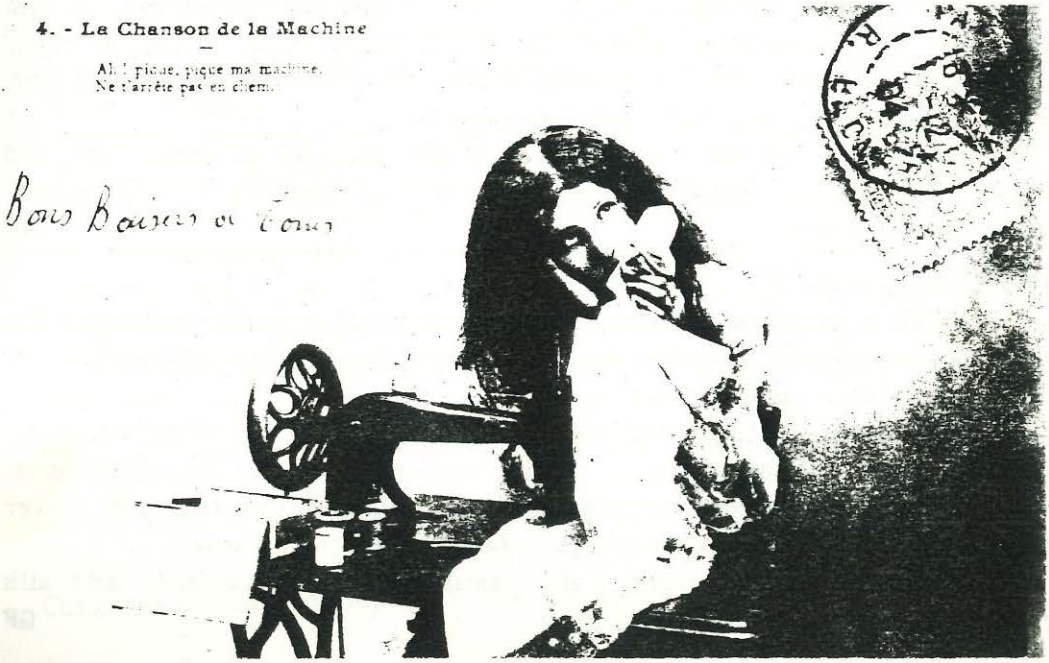
Once a week, or whenever occasion demanded, the women of a family would gather at one home and enjoy themselves with chatter while ploughing through a great pile of sewing.

No man could be expected to enjoy such activity and James Gibbs was no exception.. He was a homely farmer in the state of Virginia who decided to invent a sewing machine -- not to emancipate women but to free men from the visitiation of a group of needlewomen bent on putting the family's wardrobe to rights.

He started work with no knowledge of what others, including Howe and Morey & Johnson, were about and by 1856 was able to patent his chain-stitch machine .

Pity his family didn't like long walks or we might have had the motor car 40 years earlier. GF

WE REPRODUCE this postcard from the magazine of the French SM Dealers' Association. It was first posted 18 December, 1904.



What's His Cut

IT'S A HUMAN TRAIT, or even failing, to be interested in what the other guy makes out of a deal and now, thanks to a wholesale pricelist put out by Bradbury, Greatorex and Co of Aldermanbury, London, we can get the low-down on 1870s profit margins.

The list -- the original is still owned by Gresham and Craven of Chippenham -- was produced by Bradbury G&C when they took over the wholesale London agency for both Gresham and Weir. They stressed that their discounts were the same as those offered if the machines were bought by the trade direct from the manufacturers.

Weir's SM retailed at £2 15s and gave the trader a 15s profit. He could increase that by 2s by ordering six machines at once. A better percentage was offered for "treadle and table complete". Here the retailer would buy at £1 5s to sell at £2 2s.

Gresham's more up-market machine also gave a better deal to the shopkeeper. The standard machine costing him £3 would be sold to the public at £4 4s but he would only make 4s (20p) on the sale of a £1 5s treadle. By far the best deals were on accessories on which the retailer double his money.

GF

Going Cheap

THEY HAD THEIR recession back in 1876. An advertisement in the Aberdeen Daily Free Press stated "As the drapery trade is rather dull, the public need not think it strange if SMs are offered extra cheap and made to sell only, without regard to quality".

It then goes on to extol the virtues of the Wheeler & Wilson SM and stated that genuine models can only be obtained from the official agent, Anthony B Johnston.

GF

King's Award

NOWADAYS a successful manufacturer may get a Queen's Award for Industry -- although no-one seems to know how companies qualify -- but back in 1873 things were a little grander.

Being presumably impressed with the quality of the SMs produced by the Wheeler & Wilson Company in the USA, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria decided to show his pleasure by confering The Imperial Order of Francis Joseph on the firm's founder, Nathanial Wheeler.

This probably took the form of a giant and garish pendant and silk ribbon. I wonder where it is now.

GF

US Patent Models

WE ALL GET sick of government red tape from time to time, but one aspect of American legislation which has proved a goldmine of information for collectors and researchers was the idea of patent models. Back in 1780, when the American patents office was opened, the administrators of the day insisted on a working miniature model of every patent application.

Clearly from the start the new patent office hadn't given sufficient thought to the problem of storage and the models were initially housed in a hotel named Blodgett's in Washington, which also housed the city's Post Office.

In 1814, with the hotel's shelves already groaning under the weight of models, the whole idea almost came to an abrupt end. The invading British troops who were sacking the town were about to burn the hotel and its contents to the ground, but relented following a personal appeal from the head of the patent office, a William Thornton, to the commander of the British forces. By 1823 there were over 1,800 models at Blodgett's, but then America went invention crazy and just 13 years later the inventory showed 10,000 models and clearly a new building was needed.

It was decided to re-organise the Post Office into what was to be known as the United States Patent Bureau and a new system of indexing the patents by numbers rather than by inventors' names was introduced.

Whilst grounds were being broken for the new building Blodgett's Hotel was burned to the ground just 10 days before Christmas, destroying all Bureau records and every model. In 1840 the new Patent Bureau building was ready and was soon filled with new models to such an extent that in 1870 the law was changed to require working models only when specifically requested by the commissioner.

Again fire hit SM history. In 1877 no less than 76,000 models were destroyed, but even so the storage capacity of the Patent Bureau was being overcome and in 1880 the law was changed and then effectively prohibited the submission of models except for those claiming to be flying machines or those capable of perpetual motion.

Two official acts of near vandalism were permitted in 1908. First, Congress decided to dispose of the accumulation of nearly 156,000 patent

models. Secondly, and perhaps an even greater crime, the Smithsonian Institution, given the choice, selected only 1,061 models. The remainder were stuck back into storage until 1925 when Congress again moved to dispose of the models. The entire collection was purchased by Sir Henry Wellcome who was already assembling a vast collection of early medical equipment, and hoped to open a patent museum.

The models were moved to a warehouse in Tuckahoe, New York, but Sir Henry died, aged 82 in 1936, without realising his dream. Two years later the trustees of the Wellcome estate sold the entire collection to a Broadway producer Crosby Gaige who, with his business syndicate, displayed a selection at the Rockefeller Centre in New York City. Around 700 were sold to the organisers of the New York World's Fair and another 900 went to the University of Texas at Austin. The World's Fair models were eventually purchased by Tunicliff Fox and are now owned by the Hagley Foundation, Dellaware.

The vast bulk of the collection remaining was then sold by the Gaige syndicate to a group of businessmen calling themselves the American Patent Models, Inc. who rented a floor at the Rockefeller Centre to unpack, sort and identify their purchases. Around 500 models went on show in various department stores across the country.

However, the syndicate's backers were running short of funds and 3,500 cases of packed models were moved to a warehouse in New Rochelle just before bankruptcy was declared in 1941, and the entire collection was put up for auction. The historic sale was held in 1941 and developed into a battle between O. Rundle Gilbert, an auctioneer from Garrison, New York -- a town near the famous West Point army college -- and a junk dealer representing a Japanese scrap metal dealer. Gilbert paid a very reasonable $2100 for the collection but had also to put up 11,000 bucks in back-storage charges.

Now Gilbert found himself with something of a problem. To solve it he sold off a few models which raised the funds for cataloguing the others. In 1943, just as the first 15,000 models had been unpacked and catalogued, a fire destroyed them all. Even six years later, in 1949, Gilbert had not even opened all the cases for they then suffered yet another fire which destroyed all but a few thousand boxes -- a tragically small percentage of the 75 truckloads originally purchased.

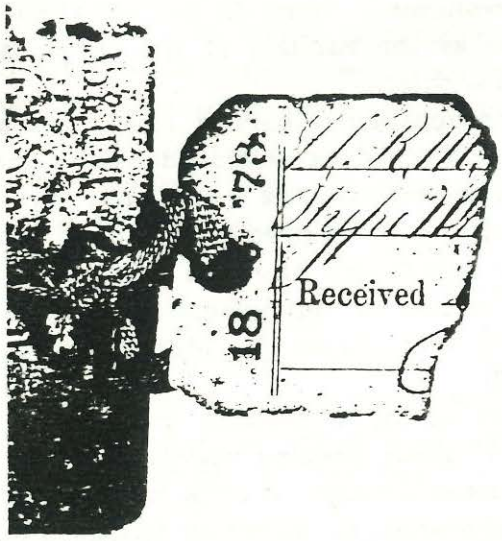
One thousand models which had survived the fires were displayed in a barn museum in New Hampshire, and in 1952 these were moved

to a new museum in an abandoned hospital in Plymouth, New Hampshire.

It wasn't until 1970 that the auctioneer finally despaired of achieving a permanent museum. He then offered the Smithsonian the chance to buy back all the remaining models but this offer was declined because most crates were still unopened and the contents unknown. Gilbert then decided to dispose of the models piecemeal by sale and auction. And it is from these sales in the early 1970s that most of the models in private hands today have come.

Fortunately the directors of the Institution were far-seeing enough to select some of the more interesting SM models, including many of the figurals, although they did let many historical items go by.

Few SM patent models seem to have survived with the exception of those in the Smithsonian. As far as is known, only two have escaped America's shores and these are now in the possession of MS.



NB A recent increase in interest in patent models in America has spawned a whole new business with some very dubious items being offered as actual patent-office models. It seems that some antique dealers will call anything that is a little quaint, small or broken a patent model but conclusive proof can obviously be had by the existance of the original tag attached to the machine when it was accepted by the Bureau -- and a goodly number of patent models which have survived also have this cardboard evidence still attached.

This article was originally compiled by GF for Typewriter Times from information supplied by Californian typewriter collector Dick Dickerson. Graham has modified it for ISMACS News. MS

That's Expensive

PERHAPS ONE of our members well versed in the import laws of the immediate pre-Second World War period could explain whether there were heavy duties to be paid on certain foreign machines landed in the UK.

I can only guess that there must have been. From an Army & Navy Stores catalogue for 1935-36 we can read that a British-made Jones hand machine was on offer for £5-5s. Yet a secondhand chainstitch Willcox, rebuilt, carried a £6-15s price tag. And a new Willcox was a staggering £11.

Strangely a Pfaff at £7-7s was more in line with the British prices.

Surely the Willcox was cheaper to make -- it had hardly changed for half a century -- so why was it so expensive? Step forward trade members and explain. GF

Feedback

From Peter Starling

Re: Bernard William's note on Greshams. Mine is earlier than his (11,525) but seems to be the same as the earliest of his three, so I can't add anything to what he has written.

Re: GF on Agenorias; mine is again apparently earlier (3842) and also seems to fit the description of his first machine described. I can't make out the date on the registration mark cast into the frame, but there is a tiny registration mark stamped in the brass needle-head plate which the 24th of something 1869. The cast mark may have the same date but I can't see how to check whether it does or not without scraping out the paint, which I don't particularly want to do. (See Martin Gregory's note below and all will be revealed).

As it has never been mentioned again, I assume you've had no nibbles at my suggestion * (News 3) about keeping registers of known machine numbers. The above two items brought it back to my mind.

* Editor's Note: Not a word. Anyone want to volunteer to look into it?

From Martin Gregory

Congratulations on No. 6 magazine. A few notes:

Page 10 Hebden Bridge is near Halifax, not Manchester. *

Page 26 Sear Roebuck used Franklin & Minnesota as trade names to

badge machines made by White (Franklin) and Jos. Davis (Minnesota). Singer had their own shops and would never badge for another distributor.

Page 26 Agenoria again! We have two with different decorations and totally different sets of castings. Only the brass headplate of Agenoria and registration mark for 24/01/1869 is the same on both.

No.3876. The Franklin Co, Manufacturers of Patent SMs, Franklin Works, Birmingham.

No.14365. The Imperial SM Co, Franklin Works, Park Road, Soho, Birmingham. Harris & Judson's patent.

Neither claim Royal Appointments. Both have spring-loaded bobbin winders in which inserting the bobbin engages a small gear wheel.

Page 18. Glossary? Would there be an interest in an article, or perhaps a supplement on basic layouts -- Lots of diagrams type of glossary? It would be useful to newer members.

Editors Note: I have visited Hebden Bridge and Halifax many times, and agree with you. But the advertiser from whom we quoted, claimed a Hebden Bridge, Manchester, address,and who are we to disagree with him?

A glossary of terms is certainly needed and anything you or any member could come up with will be very welcome. Bernard Williams has also offered to help, and Conrad Wennerberg (who provided the fascinating on-going Singer story) has already sent in some useful informationwhich will be reproduced at a later date. It's a big job and a case where many hands make light work.Come on you members. It's time we heard from you.

We Get Letters

From Bill Burleigh, Herts

Please find subscription for forthcoming year. Unfortunately we were not be able to be at the AGM as Norma was having treatment before a major operation. All the best.

From Ruth & Norman Attwell, Essex

I felt I must tell you how much Ruth and I enjoyed our visit to the AGM. It was so nice to meet people with a common interest and to see all the different machines. I think you did jolly well to arrange it all.

We were so comfortable at our B&B place in Saintbury that we stayed Monday night and came home on Tuesday.

From Peter Starling, Norwich

Herewith cheque for £8 for subscription renewal. The magazine has got very interesting, especially without all that stuff about typewriters that we used to get. You're doing a good job -- not forgetting the learned contributors, as I know from experience that an editor can't do much for long without them.

I'm afraid I couldn't get to the meeting this year. It clashed with something else and Ironbridge is a bit far for a day out from here.

ISMACS -- I have an ISMAK about which I've never seen any mention apart from Brian Jewell's "dates and other details not known". Can anyone better this? It hides a two-driving shaft mechanism in a later-type frame and has a rotary bobbin. All the best.

From B & S W, London

We enclose £8 subscription for the new year beginning 1st May. Many thanks for the lovely magazines. Sadly could not make Ironbridge on the 11th, but we hope you had a happy event. Best wishes.

From Jim Andrew, Birmingham Science Museum

We are pleased to see the Society going from strength to strength and would willingly accommodate one of your regional meetings if you would like to use our lecture room.

I hope the meeting at Ironbridge was a success. I could not attend because May 11th was our Traction Engine Rally when the street and Museum were full of engines and people. Thank you for the kind invitation and please pass my regards to the members I met in Kings Norton.

From Ruth Moon, California, USA

Enclosed £10 for next years dues and my new address. I really enjoy the various articles. We seldom see any of the neat SMs listed, but I am interested in buying toy SMs.

I have a very small German tin machine with the letters Vielfach Geschutzt and Made in Germany written on the throat plate. It is 2.1/2-inches tall with the spool spindle adding another 3/4-inch. It has a base of 2.1/2" x 1.1/8" mounted on a board. It has the original spool of thread and is painted aqua with gold edging. It is the smallest

working one I've ever seen.

I enjoy getting them with their boxes or carrying case, with the instructions if possible.

I now have 75 toy SMs. Several are the tin German or Casiege. Also Kay-an-e are plentiful. I have two Vulcans that are different, a Lead, Grain, Essex -- bought in England, and a few unnamed ones, and I recently picked up a beautiful cast-iron F&W Automatic.

Keep up the good work on the news letter.

We Missed You

SADLY, A NUMBER of our regular attenders of regional meetings were unable to attend our Ironbridge AGM, but were good enough to write or telephone. They were: Kim Kelly; Jennifer & Martin Gregory; Wilf Grove; Roy Bamber; Allan Sheen; John Horton; Rita & William Heath; Bill Tarling and Jack Hampton.

Norma Burleigh and Ken Waite's West-German friend Gunther Sensse were both hospitalized and we send them our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

John Hood from the Clydebank Museum and Jim Andrew from the Birmingham Science Museum both wished us a successful day. Jim has offered his Museum's lecture room for a meeting, and John, too, hopes to arrange a Scottish event before very long. MS

Ancient and Modern

ALTHOUGH LES GENT has been dealing in SMs for many years -- he specialises in computer-operated industrial machines -- his collecting got no further than three or four distressed models cluttering up his storeroom.

Then, around Christmas time, he learned about our Society through Sewing Machine Times -- and now there's no stopping him. His collection stands at 22 and is still growing.

He had a field-day at the Ironbridge Auction, adding several of the more-common machines at low cost, and a couple of higher-priced, rarer models.

Les is one of the newer breed of modern SM dealers who is coming to appreciate the contrast and similiarities between Victorian mechanical and Elizabethan electronic technology. And he's fascinated by the convulated ways early manufacturerers attacked tensioning and feed problems.

Les and his wife Rose enjoy meeting other collectors and they would like to host a meeting at their Leicester base so we, too, can see electronic wizardry in action. MS

Committee

Sec/Treas: Maggie Snell, 48 Nightingale House, Thomas More Street, St Katharines-by-the-Tower, London E1 9UB. (01 488 0474)
Research Ed: Carol Head, 3 Windwhistle Way, Alderbury Park, Alderbury, Salisbury, Wilts (0722 710988)
Chairman: Brian Matthews, 8 The Vale, Oakley, Hants. (0256 781834)
Members: Bernard Williams, 80 Manor Rd, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs
Diana Herbert, 22 Willsbridge Hill, Willsbridge, Bristol, Avon

New Members

HISTORISCHES NAHMASCHINEN-MUSEUM, J Strobel & Sohne GmbH & Co, Heimeranstrasse 78-70, Postfach 12 13 09, D-8000, Munchen, West Germany. MD

HANS BARBIAN, 25 Jahnstrasse, Dusseldorf, West Germany.

LES GENT, Syston Street East, Leicester, LE1 2JW. (0533 538727) MD

PETER TANDY, 74 Old Bedford Road, Luton, Beds.

RON NEWCOMBE, 26 Ward Close, Aylestone, Leicester.

VERA & WARREN LANE, 5 St Barnabas Close, Stroud Road, Gloucester GL1 5LH 9Glos 28037)

MIKE GILES, 3 Eastgate, Taunton, TA1 3NB. (0803 72450) MD

Changes of Address

PETER & SAMANTHA WELSH, "White Lodge", 272 Warsash Rd, Locks Heath, Southampton, Hants SO3 6MX (Locks Heath 89375)

RUTH MOON, 214 Via Mantilla, Walnut Creek, Calif 94598, USA Toys

KIM KELLY, 1 Beech Cottages, Bradley, Acresford, Hants SO24 9RY (Preston Candover 559)

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