Usmacs news No. Nine

for sewing machine collectors



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Cover Story

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village two miles away, with a welcome by the local mayor. This included some obscure propaganda for the nuclear power industry which baffled not only your correspondent with his meagre command of German, but also, apparently, many of the locals as well.

But it was certainly a warm welcome and the mayor was thanked by Otto in his official opening of the meeting. A quarter of an hour was allowed for each of these speeches and then the schedule allowed for a one-hour-15-minutes visit to the exhibition of Langdraf's machines in the Town Hall display room. As we were there already and had all inspected the machines whilst waiting for the speeches to start, time began to drag a little.

But the machines were worth an extended look with pride of place going to a first-class Florence on cast, pierced legs. The smallest machines were well displayed in glass cases and there was a good collection of go-withs for the fringe collectors.

Next item on the programme was an early lunch as guests of Mecanica - billed as the smalled sewing machine factory in Europe. The welcome meal consisted of boiled beef and vegetables with wine or beer.

At 1.20pm the schedule showed a tour of the Mecanica factory -- but strange groups were beginning to form around open boots in the car park. The bring-and-buy session was timed for two hours later, but the real business was done in the frantic hour after lunch with quite a few machines changing hands and much discussion going on about the exchange rates between the various countries.

When Otto did manage to round up the visitors they were given the tour and showed how various parts were made and assembled into the bought-out machine chassis. The Mecanica works has some very sophisticated, computer-controlled machinery to produce the industrial machines which are well thought of in the European rag trade.

At 2.30 tea was served and the first offical "contact session" began. Here was the chance to talk with people who previously one had only known through letters.

The offical swap meet began at 3.10 and some good machines were on offer. But by then most of the disposable money had been spent and few machines changed hands. It appears that German collecting is in its infancy compared to the UK, and those who took a large range of machines to sell found that only those at the lower end of the price

scale attraced real buying interest.

A dinner had been planned for the evening at a local inn but the advent of a local beer festival changed the schedule and many of the members dined under canvass on sausage and sauerkraut.

The Sunday morning was devoted to another contact session with the chance for visitors to give a brief talk on any aspect of collecting, and the competition for the best machine, which was judged by an international jury.

During this session visitors were given a chance to display their favourite machines and although the quality of the exhibits was perhaps not up to that seen at English meetings, there were some fine machines on display including an Avriel "La Populaire" from France, a beautiful English Dorman, an American Monitor and, reasonably enough, a Nuremburg Princess from Germany.

A 1920s industrial Singer with the proud label announcing that it was the 1852 Singer Number One brought many smiles from the more knowlegeable guests.

Maggie, who had humped copies af our magazine from England, set up a desk and was kept busy explaining our society to prospective members of whom seven signed up on the spot being thankful for some sewing-machine-oriented publication --- even it it was in a foreign language.

Otto distributed the prizes for the competition and closed the session by announcing that there were already plans to hold a meeting next year, probably in Hamburg. He also presented your secretary with a charming needlework case, and even I came away with a fine quality wallet-size tool kit.

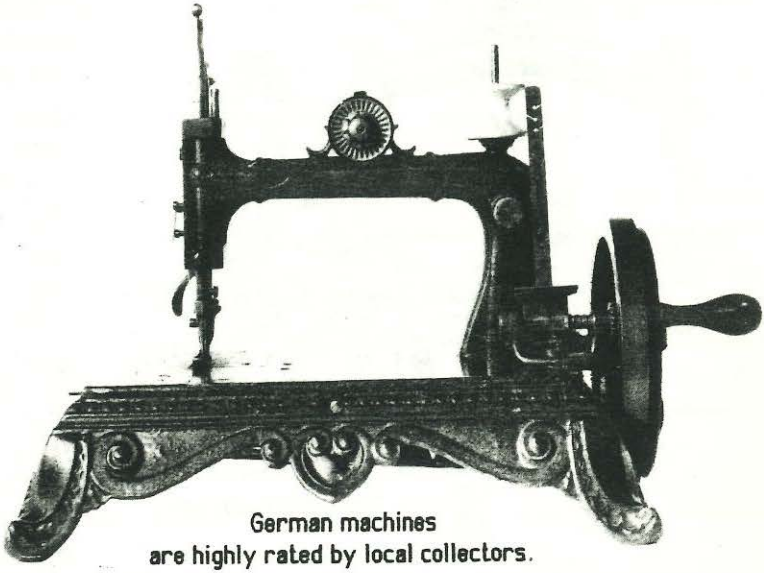
The meeting was certainly a success and a triumph for Otto's organisation, but I do feel that it could have been compressed easily into one full day which would have kept up the momentum. And by reducing costs and time away might have meant an even-bigger turnout. Otto apologises to English collectors who did not get notice of the event and promises early warning of any future get-togethers. GF

Second Opinion

WHAT TURNED OUT to be Graham Forsdyke's bad luck at our Ironbridge AGM had the opposite effect at Otto Landgråf's Schweinfurt event. Because the machine he and German members Peter and

Marianne Wilhelm entered in the 'best machine' competition in both places was the same -- a very pretty and brightly-coloured French model called La Petite Parisienne.

Only difference was that our German friends won with an accompanying monopod treadle at Schweinfurt, whereas Graham, who refused to carry his treadle up two flights of stairs at Ironbridge and left it at home, came low in the ratings.



German machines are highly rated by local collectors.

As may be expected in a German competition, a somewhat ordinary (C9) Junker and Ruh Atlas-type was considered by the international jury from Germany, Holland and Switzerland a desirable machine, taking precedence over a good-condition boxed Dorman and a wonderful 1860s American Monitor.

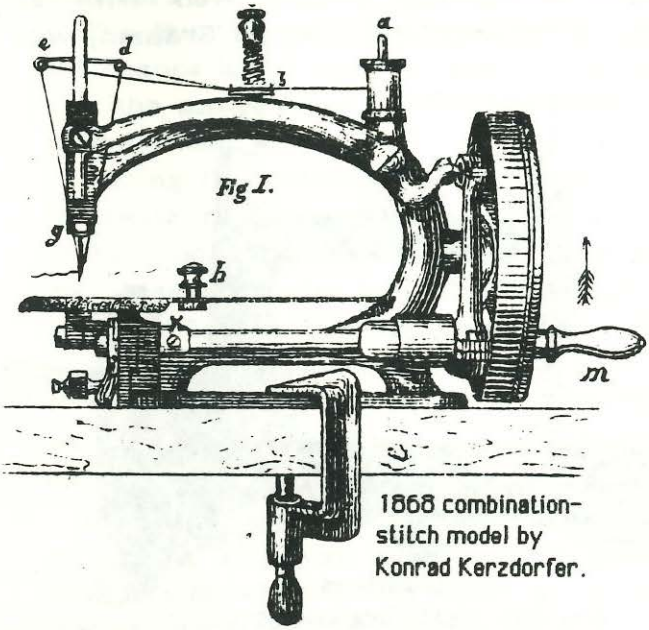
Long-time Dutch member D Bekkers won a prize for his Newton Wilson Cleopatra which has a dragon's head and tail incorporated into the frame's casting (see picture News 2, page 3). A Taylor, Arm and Platform, Willcox and Gibbs' industrial model and a Wheeler and Wilson 7 lookalike (by Gaer and Rempel of Germany) were also entered.

The machine I wanted to take home was an 1868 German combination-stitch machine of a type I haven't seen before (see drawing overleaf). It was manufactured by Konrad Kerzdorfer of Ansbach, West Germany, which is also the home town of newly-recruited lady member Irmgard Kroppelt-Naderer who was good enough to give me a spare instruction book on this interesting machine. We will feature this machine in a later magazine when we can get the instruction book translated from the German. (Any volunteers?)

Walking into the reception at the Ratthaus (German for town hall)

was like a home from home, as I recognised many of our own members by sight or from their names.

Ken and Mary Waite, who get everywhere, were accompanied by their German friends Gunther Sensse and his wife. Burghard Schack, who can often be seen haunting the Portobello Road was there with his girlfriend. And Swiss members Peter Frie and Remy Ciocca both drove hundreds of miles with their respective partners and car-loads of interesting machines.



1868 combination-stitch model by Konrad Kerzdorfer.

I was also pleased to welcome an old friend Eric de Vlieger back into the ISMACS fold. His family's firm near Amsterdam supply used industrial machines and has created admiration among the modern sewing-machine trade on the Continent and in the UK by its magnificent displays of antique machines at trade exhibitions. Eric also gave out copies of his famous calendar illustrating some of the rarer models.

(Eric has written an article on how he found the super-rare Krems machine -- see page 23.)

Another new member who decided to join us at Schweinfurt is Brother Aurelian Binswanger. He belongs to a missionary order and lives in beautiful surroundings at an abbey at St Ottilien, West Germany, where he works as a tailor surrounded by his small collection



This must be the prettiest setting for a small private collection -- a German Abbey in its own grounds -- the home of new member Brother Aurelian Binswanger.

Seven collectors decided to join our group at Otto's meeting -- their details are given in the new-members' list at the back of the magazine -- and we look forward to meeting them and others at the next Continental meeting next year -- we'll try to organise an English coach party

There was also considerable interest from the contingent at the German meeting over visiting our AGM which is planned for June -- probably in the Birmingham area. The exact venue and date will be decided in time to publish full details in the next issue of ISMACS News.

Hopefully some of our own members will be spurred into action when they realise that Continental enthusiasts are willing to drive from Holland, Germany and Switzerland, often hundreds of miles, with a couple of nights in hotels, just to attend a collectors' meeting.

Our thanks and congratulations to German member Otto Landgraf and his colleague Christine Then for a tremendous effort. MS

Next Meeting - Sunday February 22

AN EXCITING VENUE for our next regional meeting is Les Gent's factory in the centre of Leicester.

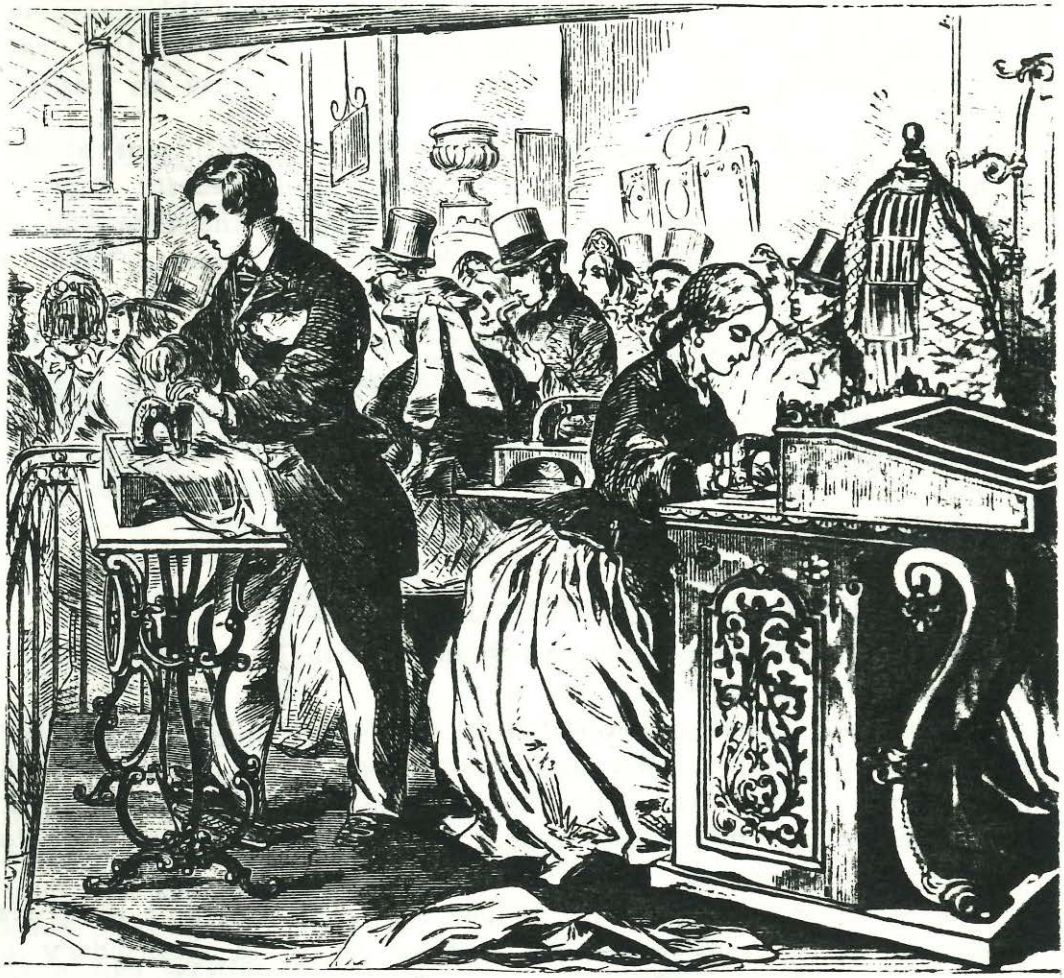
Les supplies computerised stitching machines to the shoe-making and garment industry. His specially-adapted models produce a pre-programmed pattern for decorating and assembling shoes, leather-work, garments, etc. He has offered to put on a demonstration for visitors on the 22nd.

This is an ideal opportunity to put on a show of any industrial machines we have, particularly if they relate to embroidery or shoemaking, etc. Bring along, too, any go-withs -- postcards, tools, tins, cotton-reel holders, etc, plus, of course, any newly-found and interesting machines.

Although Les's factory is only a short distance from the motorway, you will probably need a little help to find it. Drop me a line or phone me if you would like to attend the meeting, so we have an idea of numbers for catering, etc, and I'll send you a map by return of post.

As usual our meetings will take place on a Sunday between approximately 2 and 5pm. The address is: Les Gent (Computer Stitchers) Ltd, Syston Street East, Leicester LE1 2JW.

Where Are They Now?



MESSRS. R. E. SIMPSON AND CO.'S SEWING MACHINES, AS SEEN IN THE PROCESSES COURT.

THE PICTURES IN a past issue of machines which have failed to come to light in present-day collections caused great interest but for this edition of the magazine we've changed things a little.

For a start, the machines we are dealing with are a lot earlier and, secondly, we don't even know what many of them look like!

Sewing machines first really came to the public notice in England at the Great Exhibition in 1862 where in the Process Hall there were 14 British manufacturers displaying their wares. Some of the names are well known to us -- Bradbury, Newton Wilson, Thomas and Whight

and Mann; but for the remaining 10 I know of not a single survivor.

It could be, of course, and in a couple of cases most likely, that some of the "makers" were simply agents or dealers but the Mechanics Magazine of August 22, 1862 -- when the event was in full song -- calls them manufacturers so, for the purpose of this piece, we will go along with them.

The first mystery man is one W Carver of Manchester who showed two machines which, in their favour, were the most productive models in the exhibition, producing 20 pairs of trousers every day. Not to their credit, perhaps, was the fact that the machines bore an uncanny resemblance to those on the Thomas stand.

Carver appears in Manchester directories firstly with a partner, Pearson, in 1858. But by 1861 he was on his own, described as a sewing-machine maker. Two years later he had moved to larger premises and was now a manufacturer of sewing machines of "every description", mostly, from contempory advertisements, copies of others' designs.

Then there was a Mr Salisbury of Coventry with but a single machine, but one that carried a bobbin underneath instead of a shuttle. This bobbin was made to turn through half a revolution and then return allowing its slack thread to be caught up by a hook and twisted around the thread carried down by the needle. Salisbury called his machine the Knotstitch and he was certainly in business one year later when a mention of the model appeared in The Engineer.

The machine exhibited by Guinness and Co of Cheapside was said to be the most recently patented. It was a shuttle model but with a system of triple cranks replacing the more conventional cams. At the time the company had only a domestic model on show, but by the Dublin International Exhibition three years later it included industrial machines in its catalogue. The judges must have approved for Guinness was the only English machine to get any form of mention by the judging panel.

A mystery surrounds the entry from Simpson of Cheapside. There were perhaps two Simpsons busy in the sewing machine trade at this time, R E Simpson who, we know, exhibited in Dublin in 1865 and had addresses in Glasgow and Edinburgh directories, and the other, R S (a little too close for comfort) was based in Lancashire. Whether these were one and the same is not clear at this stage.

However it was R E who exhibited in '62, showing a shuttle machine with twin under feeds, one either side of the needle by which, it was claimed, the cloth could turned more easily.

We have no details at all about the machines exhibited by Ferrabee of High Holborn (probably an agent), McKenzie and Co of Glasgow (although a firm of the same name was listed in the local directory from 1860 to 1866), McKernan of Cheapside (probably an agent), Pearson of Leeds (probably the William Pearson who produced sets of pirate castings for sale to would-be manufacturers), Service Co of Mitcham (no knowledge) and Smith and Co of London Wall (almost certainly an agent).

But whether agent of manufacturer proper, all produced machines with their names on. Where are they now? GF

Collectors are Happy People

WHAT IS THE attraction in collecting? Even Goethe , himself a zealous lover of curios, said: "Collectors are happy people". Everybody can shape and form his own hobby, depending on his personality and the amount of money he can spend. Nobody needs directing. Each collector who once felt the joy about a single-purchased piece will never give up his collecting activity.

Finding out and acquiring, gathering, ordering and keeping, the background or the triumph about a little discovery can please a lot. Of course, time plays an important role. Reducing the hours of work leads to more leisure activities, and with these the relaxation and joy needed in everyday life. The hobby is even more important for the pensioner. Using the spare time wisely is essential for the retired person.

The profession often plays a great part in choosing a hobby. One knows the products of the present, and also is confronted now and then with products of the past. Thus it is no wonder when a telecommunications employee collects telephones, a professor of music collects lullabies or a village community collects objects which are connected with the village.

Restoring or cleaning is often connected with the acquisition of an object; if the objects are technical instruments, also the repairing. The years-long experience in how to deal with the

collected items leads to technical ability, skill and empathy.

I, as an engineer, am particularly interested in historical sewing machines. These old models can be very original and constructed in various ways. How much care our great-grandfathers spent on them! If one considers the equipment at hand then, one can only look with respect at these products.

Properly speaking, sewing machines from 1850 to 1870 were the products of craft-shops. After that time industrial manufacturing started in Germany. Up to the turn of the century the manufacturers did not yet know or value the production of single pieces on the basis of a drawing. The masters in the firms had specimens from which single parts could be produced. Of course, such a quick change of fashion as today would not have been possible. Some models were produced for 30 years or even longer.

In our quickly-progressing time we should not forget the traditions of the past and, as a consequence, the products of the past.

Collecting should not consist of pure gathering only. It should also be attractive to learn more about the historical background. Old brochures, catalogues, literature, newspapers, etc are documents of that time. A few weeks ago I discovered, for example, in a hand-written chronicle of my hometown Schweinfurt, the following item: "At the local Whitsuntide (in 1854) a little sewing machine could be seen for an entrance fee to a stall". The stall was packed the whole day with ladies from Schweinfurt. All wanted to see the wonderful instrument.

In respect to space, collecting sewing machines is not as easy as collecting stamps or coins. My aim has been and still is to own a cross-sectional collection of about 250 object dating from 1850 to 1960, but even with 150 models exhibition space has already become a problem. I intend eventually to present the completed collection to a museum.

One should concentrate on a particular theme. A point will be reached where the aim and the wish for single objects will cross with each other. Quantity should not be the main thing, but the preservation, quality and originality of a single piece.

One can confine oneself to a certain period of time, or to a certain brand, or one can limit the collection by special types of sewing machines. Another possibility is the restriction to one machine of each

brand. There once existed more than 150 factories for sewing machines in Germany, so it will take a long time to exhaust this field.

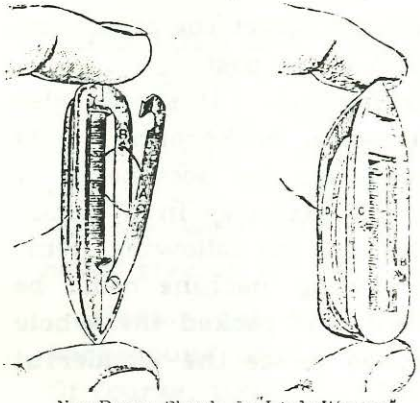
Of great importance is contact with other collectiors. Informatior and objects can be exchanged. With the growth of the collectior automatically comes knowledge about that particular field. Thus ther is a double collection -- one spiritual and one material.

One more point: the hobby should not be taken too seriously There should remain a bit of dreaming and playing.

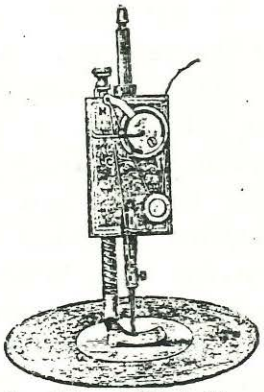
Otto Landgraf/Courtesy Leertaste Magazine

Ironic, I Call It

THERE TURNED UP the other day a Countess machine. I'd never seen a Countess before, but this machine was no stranger. It was simply a Little Wanzer Time Utilizer, on the usual marble base, with a minimum of cosmetic treatment to give it a new identity.



New Patent Shuttle for Little Wanzer

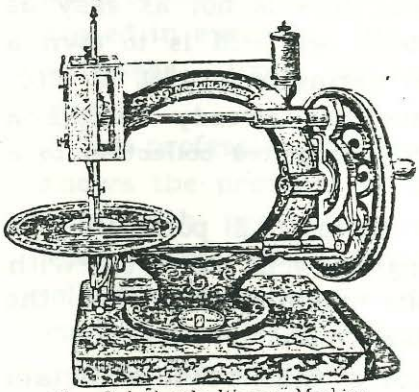


New Take-up for Little Wanzer

In place of the normal name on the top support was Countess and the end cover carried a crudely - stamped Atlas Machine Co with the Camden Town address.

Rivetted onto the circular base of th machine was the Atlas medalion with the company's trademark -- the figure of Justice. As I said -- ironic that.

The Little Wanzer was originally patented in 1869 and severa improvements were made to it in 1878 Carol Head has provided the illustrations.

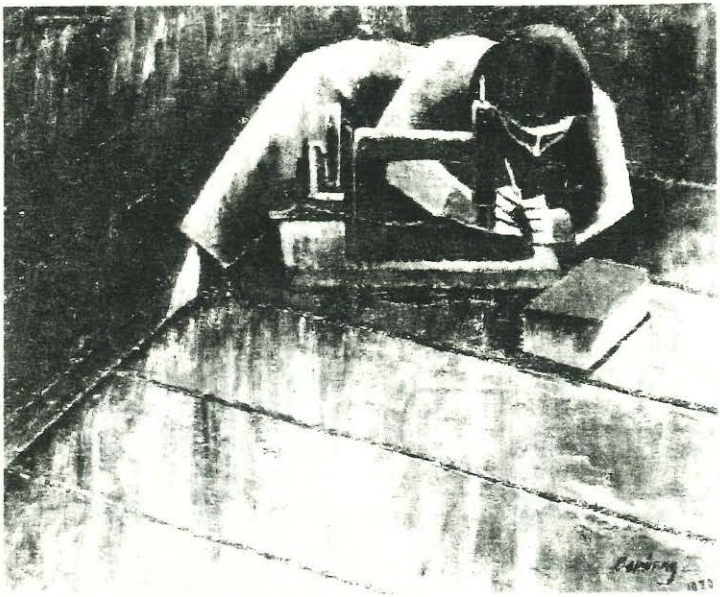


New Style Little Wanzer Machine.

Graham Forsdyke

Art and Industry

THE MOTTO ON my Lancashire-mill home town, Blackburn's, Coat of Arms is Arte et Labore --and this art-and-industry concept is graphically illustrated in this 1920 cubist-style painting, called "The Machinist" by David Bomberg (1890-1957).



It was one of very few among 200 paintings exploiting an industrial theme in a recent Christie's exhibition to celebrate the centenary of the New English Art Club. It was one of half a dozen or so of the paintings that caught the eye of a Radio 4 Kaleidoscope reviewer, which is what encouraged me to check it out.

Bomberg, born in Birmingham of Jewish stock, was regarded among the avant-garde of European abstract and cubist artists. But this more readable, though still cubistic work, was one of several he dealt with portraying scenes of life in the East End of London.

The painting was lent to the exhibition by industrialist Erich Sommer, whose collecting interest is in art, not sewing machines. Our thanks to him and Christie's for giving us permission to reproduce the photograph.

MS

Easier Than You May Think

NEVER HAVING been to a London auction before, I persuaded Pete to have a day in London for Christmas shopping on 13 November -- the day of Christie's sale.

We went to the preview in the morning. There were 19 machines including Challenge, Shakespear, Agenorias, Weirs, a Taylor's Patent Friction lockstitch machine, and a very pretty octagonal-frame model

inscribed Bartlett Pat. 1865, maker Goodspeed & Wyman for Bartlett SM Co N Y.

As we had come on the coach we did not intend bidding for anything. We then had lunch and went round the shops until it was time to return for the auction.

As each lot came up it was shown on a video screen. We were very surprised at the relaxed and even distracting atmosphere during the bidding. Prospective buyers were walking about and chatting to one another. The prices seemed to be quite low for several of the items. The machine lots were over in no time and we left.

Our general impression was that it was much the same as our local auctions and no-one should be frightened off by the London rooms' awesome reputation.

Diana Herbert

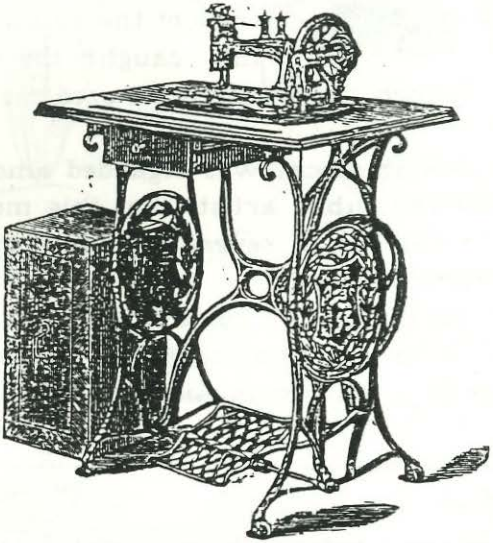
BIESOLT & LOCKE,

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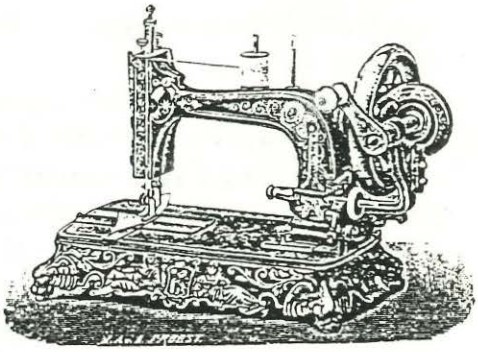
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(MAR. 1, 189c)

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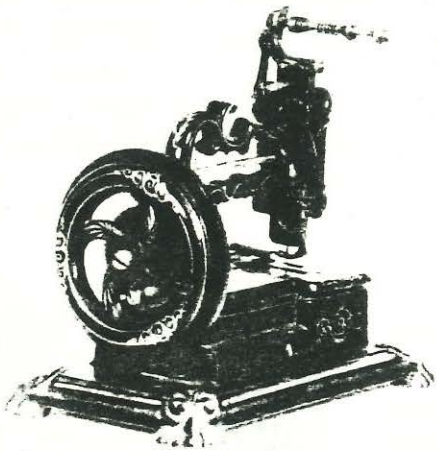
AGENTS WANTED.

Auction News

Christie's, South Kensington, 13 November, 1986

IT'S BEEN A LONG time since a single collection of 20-plus sewing machines appeared together in a London auction. And this one was more interesting because it was the cream of an old man's lifetime's collection.

Sadly many of the machines were in distressed condition or had been badly restored in the worst-possible way -- ie unnecessary re-painting and chromed stitchplates where the originals were nickelled.



Weir-style Raymond with Beaver transfers and unusual heavy-cast base with claw feet.

Even sadder were the 200 or so models rejected by the auctioneer -- mainly Singer-Family types haphazardly piled on top of each other in damp garden sheds -- and which will probably stay there.

Most that were rescued were middle-of-the-road models, but there were two or three interesting examples -- including the by-now-obligitory, for Christie's, Taylor. It was the rarer 1866/7 Patent Friction model which operates by a friction drive to the camshaft rather than driven by belt or gears (described more fully in News 4, page 11).

The stitchplate had been chrome-plated and there was some re-painting to the body of the machine which gave it an uncharacteristic glossy appearance -- most of the Taylor machines I've seen tend to be dull with a rough finish. However the gold-leafed name was resplen - dant across the rocking arm, and it was a good buy at £160 (plus the recently-introduced 10% buyer's premium which now brings Christie's into line with the other main London salerooms.)

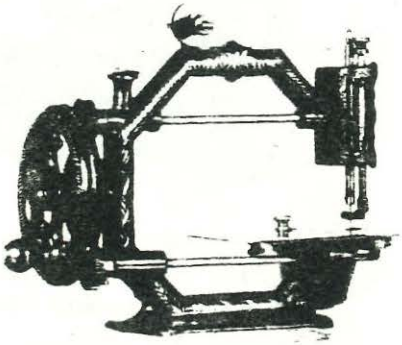
The first lot, a Little Wanzer completely re-painted apart from a tiny bit of remaining transfer that had been painted round on the stitchplate, was knocked down for a maiden bid of £10. This was followed by £65 for a C5 Imperial SM Co Challenge with only 50% of its gold remaining and a new slider on the dull stitchplate. The "J Weeks

& Sons, Bideford" who attached his gold transfer to the base of the Challenge was probably the original supplier.

By the time a well-worn C6 Shakespear with clean partial gilt, and a pretty Singer chainstitch which will recover to C8 after polishing were sold for £35 and £30 respectively (both stitchplates being chrome-plated), it was obvious this was going to be a cheap sale.

Two Geo Wight Atlas/Davis types and a Jones, all with chromed stitchplates and in C5, realised £10 for the lot and an industrial Wheeler and Wilson with rubbed paint was £18. The machine head from a treadle Howe (probably the brightest and best-condition machine in the sale) sat on a badly-constructed brass four-legged base, and a C6 Willcox and Gibbs together brought £12 and another C8 Willcox with mahogany box was £25. Though the C4/5 re-painted Weir with a replica cast shoe on a Willcox and Gibbs baseboard didn't deserve to raise its £35 price tag.

But it was the Wheeler and Wilson 7 treadle that took me by surprise. It isn't a rare machine and doesn't command a high value. But it was in relatively good (7) condition, complete and with a walnut hinged cover and sold for only £18. As Diana Herbert said: "I would have bought it, but how do I get it home on the bus?"



This pretty octagonal-framed machine was probably made in America in the 1860s

There were two Agenorias both condition 7. On one, three-quarters of the gilt had survived, but not the shuttle cover on the chromed stitchplate, and I can't help feeling that the name had been re-painted on the serpentine arm. The other was an honest machine with bright gilding and rusting stitchplate that can be improved with polishing whilst still retaining its originality -- the better buy at £55 whilst the former machine brought £60.

A second Little Wanzer with a trace of transfer and wooden box was £20, and a very nice Shakespear which will clean up to a C9 was excellent value at £55 (though the cataloguer got himself confused by calling it a serpentine-arm machine. A Shakespear has an almost-circular frame).

There were three Weir-type machines (in addition to the re-painted one mentioned earlier). A fair-condition C6 version with just a few incorporating the Weir name on the stitchplate, was really an earlier incorporating the Weir name by the needle feet, was really an earlier New England model. The paint had been rubbed off the edges, and at one time the cast frame had been broken and had received an excellent repair.

However, the best of the bunch was a C9 Charles Raymond machine with good transfers incorporating a beaver trademark and a heavier-than-usual shoe with claw feet. I've seen very few of this version and considering it's excellent condition must be considered a good buy at £120.

My favourite machine was an 1860s octagonal-framed model with complete good-condition transfers (C9, £140). The endplate had been inscribed by hand "Bartlett Pat. 1865 maker Goodspeed & Wyman for Barlett S.M.Co. N.Y.". And though the information is probably correct, I strongly suspect the inscription was inspired by Frank Godfrey's book "The International History of the Sewing Machine" rather than being the work of the original maker. No Victorian manufacturer would write his name in such a haphazard, do-it-yourself manner.

Bruton, Knowles & Co, Southam Tithe Barn, 20 November, '86

BY ONE OF THOSE strange co-incidences that are sent to keep us on our toes in the collecting business, another small collection of sewing machines came up for sale just a week after the Christie's event -- this time in an old barn on the outskirts of a tiny village near Cheltenham.

But whether machines turn up in London or way out in the country we manage to track them down, and the auction was one of the subjects discussed at Carol's regional meeting as there were four un-named machines listed in the catalogue which could have been anything.

One turned out to be the Thomas with the fancy holly pattern cast in the frame. Sadly the machine was in dreadful condition, completely rusty, and with no paint at all on the back of the heavy-cast, solid, wheel (which, incidentally, had the name cast on its face). So £48 (no premium) was a fair price to pay if the model is missing from a collection, even if the condition left a lot to be desired.

A second "un-named" machine that would have been desirable in

better condition was a Nussey & Pilling's Little Stranger (see picture News 4, page 3). It was optimistically catalogued as being "decorated with mother-of-pearl". This decoration comprised a few bits of pearl let into a chipped-paint stitchplate. The rest of the paintwork was also badly chipped and the metalwork was rusty. And like the C6 Little Wanzer it so closely resembled, it was missing its shuttle. Each machine realised £40.

The third mystery machine was the second Atlas in the sale. This one, though rusty, had quite a bit of gold and brought £30. The other one, condition unknown, was £38.

The prize piece in this small collection had to be a miniaturised cast-iron treadle initialled M (possibly for Muller) on the pedal. The machine head was a turn-of-the century Leigh-and-Crawford-style cast-iron toy. It was probably one-third the size of the £60, C6, Wilcox and Gibbs treadle and, at £170, was bought for nearly three times the price by one of our members.

The best-condition machine in the sale was an H-section-framed Gresham (see picture News 5, page 5) which after a good cleaning up and polishing of the bright-metal parts will turn into a condition 9. This must have been reflected by the £120 price tag, a good auction price in anybody's saleroom. A C7/8 Challenge with a lot of gold on the frame but rough on the stitchplate and base brought a reasonable £60.

A sad swan-neck Jones went for £35, and an industrial Willcox and Gibbs straw-hat machine with a re-painted base fetched £30.

Compared with the unusually-depressed Christie's sale, these weren't bad auction prices. Which is a little sad for the widow who sold the collection in London a week earlier. Because, and this is where the co-incidence comes in, she first made contact with the South Kensington auction house through the company's Cheltenham office.

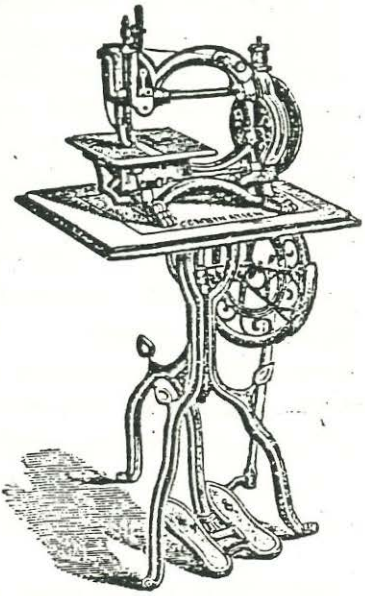
MS

Condition Chart

TO SAVE SPACE in auction reports and advertisements we regularly refer to condition numbers where C10 is like the day the machine left the factory, C6/7 average, and C1 for spare parts only. A complete chart was published in News 1, and a copy can be sent to any member in return for a stamped-addressed envelope.

MS

The stitches could be changed by moving a small handle at the front of the machine and by using an empty shuttle when making a chain stitch. If the bobbin ran out of thread during stitching, the machine would continue in chain-stitch (a useful idea for a modern sewing machine!).



Besides being advertised as "The cheapest machine in the world" (probably meaning the cheapest embroidery machine) it was also described as "not a silent machine", which speaks for itself.

The bobbin could be filled by disengaging the hand wheel (thus saving 50% wear and tear on the machine). The shuttle could be raised by a lever action; it had a thread lifter to prevent missing stitches.

In 1880 the Albion could be had for 2/6d per week, and was advertised on a treadle tised on a treadle stand similar to a Wilcox & Gibbs model. The instuction book also shows a three-legged treadle stand.

CH

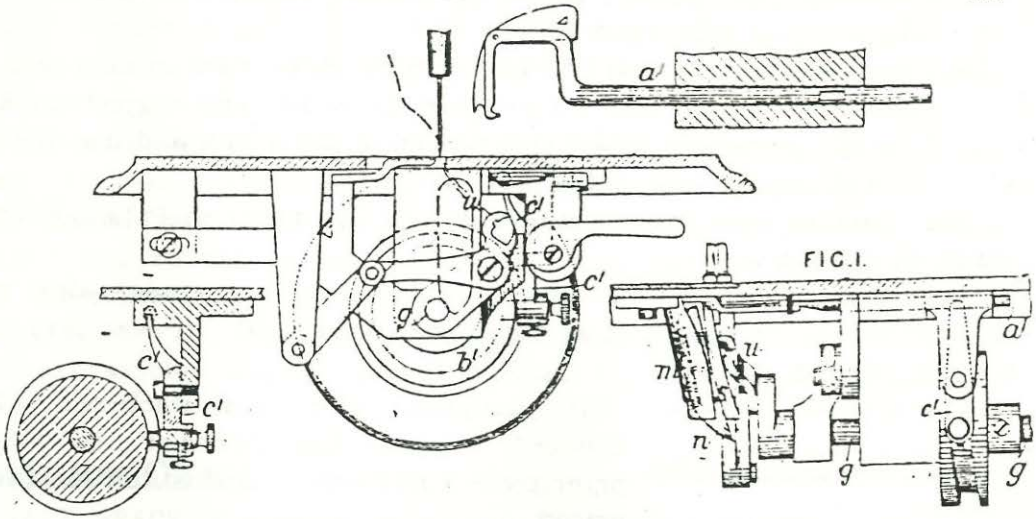


FIG.I.

On Feb 28 1870 the prolific patent agent A V Newton applied for and was granted protection for a machine, claimed to produce a chain stitch and a lock stitch on the same machine. No adjustments were necessary -- if the shuttle was in place a lock stitch was produced, but if the shuttle was removed or even its thread cut, a chain stitch resulted.

Elsie pack the Polaroid camera, the Carmen rollers and the Chinese wok into the car and head home.

The lawnmower with only one wheel missing? Could be its still in the middle of the field where Arthur left it, GF

Double Trouble

AS GF ALWAYS SAYS, the best-laid plans of a rolling stone often spoil the broth.

The plan was to get this magazine to you before Christmas to provide a little light entertainment as an alternative to the 32nd re-run of Herbie meets the best of Morecame and Minder. But we had printer problems and unbeknown to us the Great British Industrial Christmas Holiday now extends well before the traditional break as well as after it.

Therefore we decided to scrap the original issue and rebuild it as a Monster Double Edition for the new year.

Because of this some pages may be incorrectly numbered . Please excuse this -- it was that or reprint at unnecessary expense. MS

London Visit

HOPES OF HOLDING a regional meeting in London have been dashed by the lack of ta suitable venue.

Those of you who attended the highly successful get-together at Carol Head's home will appreciate that had only a couple more people turned up ofrthe available space been a little less, things would have been cramped rather than comfortable

Unfortunately my one-bedroomed flat is much smaller and from the interest shown in a London meeting, attendance would be high.

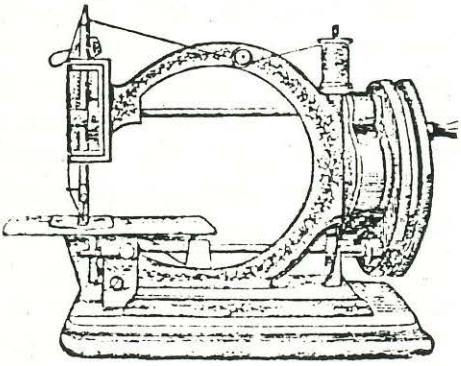
Therefore we are looking for a venue with at least a decent-sized living room -- somewhere 20-or-so souls can gather with a selection of machines.

If you live in the London or Home Counties area and will be willing to play host -- with a lot of help -- please let me know. I'd like to have a meeting near the Capital towards the end of May.

In the meantime, any member is more than welcome to call and see the part of my collection that I have on show. It's advisable to 'phone first to make sure that I will be at home. MS

Royal Update

BERNARD WILLIAMS' RECENT aquisition of a Royal SM Co chainstitch machine prompted me to dig into MS's collection store and take a closer look at her two varieties of the rare beast.



THE EUGENIE.

Superficially the two are identical and it is only when exploring beneath the stitch plate that the differences are apparant.

One machine, by far the better-condition example, has a combination of what I call the Weir/Raymond cotton hook and the sliding cloth-advance mechanism, adjusted by a cammed lever common to the more-usual Royal lock-stitch machines.

The other, lacking most of its gold decoration and the Eugenie name-plate on the head, uses the same Weir-Raymond hook but also the pivotting cloth feed used on all Weir machines and adjusted by a thumb screw from the front.

There is no clue to dates other than The Eugenie SM trademark registered by Royal IN 1873. One stitch-plate states The Royal Sewing Machine Co, Patentees and Manufacturers, the other the better-known Royal Sewing Machine Co, Small Heath, Birmingham -- although it might be reasonable to surmise that the Weir-type-feed machine was the earlier as the sliding system is vastly superior and was the standard for their later machines. (It is this latter model that Bernard found recently.)

The Royal Company's first sewing-machine products were versions of the well-proven Wheeler and Wilson design.

But they are still well-worth seeking out for the machines were, like later products, superbly finished and the hand versions were supplied in superb mahogany boxes featuring fine dovetailing of the joints and fittings,

The sewing machines are, obviously, of basic flat-top W&W design, highly decorated with "Royal" emblazoned in the centre of the base. Even the cabinets are named with an embossed RSM Co. stamp. GF

What's In a Name

PROBABLY THE most prolific of importers to sell machines under its own name was the London-based Leigh & Crawford concern who, in the early years of this century, almost certainly dominated the "cheap foreign" end of the market.

A range of no less than 10 different machines was distributed from premises at 32 and 33 Brooke Street near London's Holborn plus, of course, variations in cabinet style etc.

The go-ahead concern was very much into mail order, with a strong advertising campaign aimed at cutting out the middle man, and would-be customers were always invited to deal direct with the company

And it dealt in cash and cash only. In fact it claimed that dealers who were offering the then in-vogue hire purchase were charging 20 to 40 per-cent more for inferior machines.

What Messrs L&C were not making clear in their heavy advertising campaigns was the fact that they were merely importers and not manufacturers at all. Most, if not all, of their offerings came from the giant mass-production factories in Germany. And there's some evidence to suggest that they were not playing absolutely fairly with their customers.

The cheapest model in their range, the Rapid, was claimed by them to be a newly-invented "wonder of the age" and was also said to be recommended for family work and even dress-making But as CH revealed in issue 12 of the old Shuttle & Ribbon, the German manufacturers of the machine called it the Original Lilliput and stated specifically that it was the best *children's machine* of modern times.

This German manufacturer also produced at least one other model in the Leigh-and-Crawford range -- the A1 at £2-2s which, with one other, was the higest-priced, non-wooden-based machine available from Holborn.

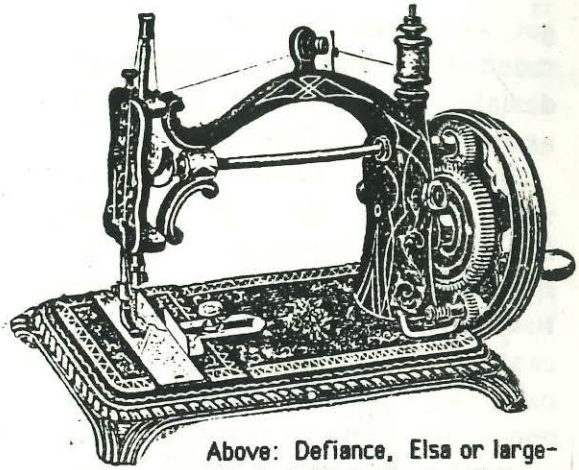
Whilst the Rapid sold for only 14s-6d (that's just over 72p for our younger members), the only other chain-stitch machine in the range at £1-1s was described as elegant, simple and durable but, presumably, unworthy of being given a name of its own. This shared many of the mechanical parts of the Rapid and, from a casting point, would appear to have been far cheaper to produce so just why there should be such

a price differential (other than as a marketing ploy) is unclear.

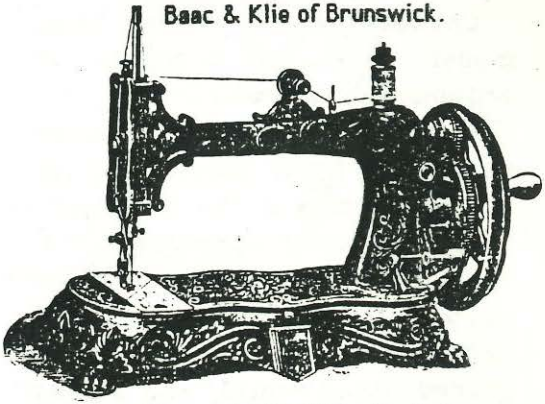
I'm sorry here to dispell MS's elation at having identified her Guhl and Herbeck machine (News 6) as a Sans Rivale offered by top-people's store Harrods. It could just as easily have been Leigh and Crawford's unnamed chain-stitch machine as they are identical. One slight mystery here. The Harrods version of 1895 cost 16s but L&C were offering the same thing, around 20 years later, at an understandably higher price but claiming it to be of the "newest construction".

Also nameless was the cheapest lock-stitch machine offered at £1-12s, but the identical line drawing appeared in many English advertisements, including one in an 1885 "Mrs Leach's Practical Family Dressmaker" for W J Harris and Co (Manufacturers and Merchants) who called it a "Defiance" Lockstitch. However, C Lohmann of London (who imported the Nuremburg Princess) claimed to be sole *legitimate* agent for the United Kingdom and Colonies of the identical original "Elsa" which he said was manufactured by Baach and Klie of Brunswick.

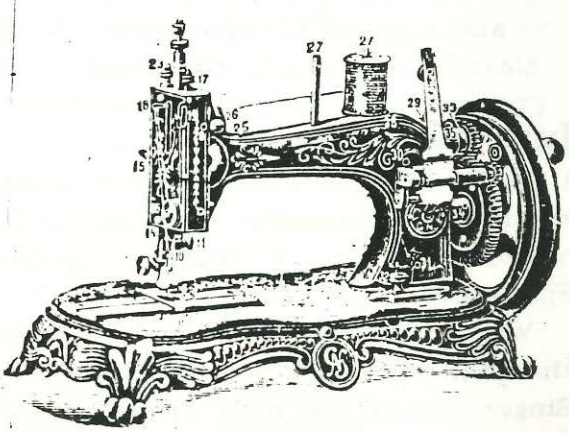
For an extra 3s the customer



Above: Defiance, Elsa or large-size lockstitch, they're all the same machine, reputedly made by Baac & Klie of Brunswick.



Above: L&C's 35/- Perfector.
Below: L&C's 42/- Corona Family.



got what looked like identical mechanics but in a cleaned-up design with enclosed top shaft and a name -- The Perfector.

Sharing a £2-2s price tag with the A1 was the Corona Family, a transverse - shuttle model which, from an advertisement, appears to have a cast-in GNS monogram in the base. So, presumably, at least one other factory was involved in the Leigh-and-Crawford offerings.

Cheapest of the wooden-based models was The Queen at £2 without cover and £2-15s with. This machine appears to carry an anchor trade mark painted onto the centre of the baseplate.

Moving more up-market was the Star which seems to differ very little from the Queen except for the addition of a geared hand wheel, and a price tag of £3-5s. A further 10s added mother-of-pearl decoration and a Patent Dial Regulator.

Flagship of the L&C fleet was yet another machine without a name. Presumably the company was content to tell the world that this machine, selling for a heady £4-10s, was the "talk and admiration of everyone". Apart from claiming that it could never be improved upon, more modest advertising lines included the facts that it had a vibrating and self-threading shuttle and a wheel-stitch regulator.

Various forms of treadle models, with heads drawn from the hand-machine range were also on offer with prices ranging from £4-10s to £6-6s.

Leigh and Crawford claimed that up to 8s (40p) in the pound went on a dealer's canvassing for hire-purchase and collecting payments without reckoning bad debts. Their motto was "Pay One Profit Only" -- and when we look at the number of machines that survive, it seems pretty obvious that many people did just that. GF

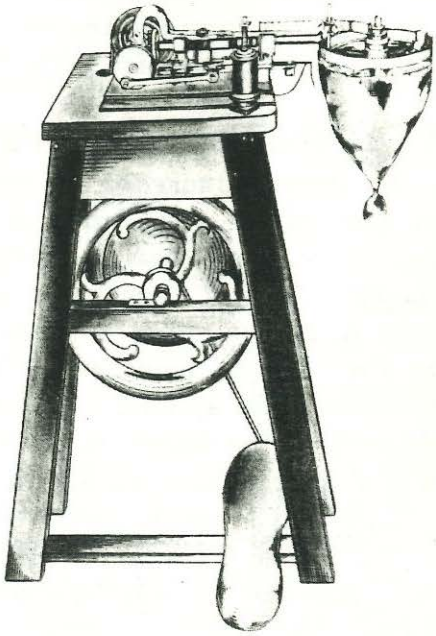
Just My Luck

I KNOW THAT IT PAYS to have patience when looking for old sewing machines but frankly I was getting a little bored at the conversation I was having in a modern sewing-machinery dealer's shop in Frankfurt.

We had just got to the bit where the guy has the oldest machine in the country and I was mentally translating this to be a fiddle-base Singer which has been handed down from his grandmother. Out o

politeness, and almost successfully stifling a yawn, I asked him to describe his antique.

Just 20 seconds later my apathy was set aside, and after 30 seconds, with my eyebrows at a new high, I started to treat him as a long-lost brother --for what he was describing was no turn-of-the-century Singer but the Balthaser Krems machine dating back to around 1810. If my new and valued friend was right, this was not only the oldest German machine extant but the earliest sewing machine of them all,



Now we hit the ticklish part. If I went in too eager with a bid to buy the whole deal could get fouled up, so I switched the conversation to the state of the tulip harvest in Holland and the age of windmills in Amsterdam.

Eventually he came up with what I was waiting for, an invitation to call on him to talk some more, and perhaps look at the old machine.

Three days later -- what a slow three days they were --I arrived at his home at the arranged time of noon and spent the next four hours with more talk of tulips and windmills until I thought that I would burst with impatience.

Just in time to stem the imminent nervous breakdown he casually asked whether I wanted to bother looking at the machine. We trooped upstairs and there it was, the Balthasar Krems. And the knowledge that historians state that only one was ever made got me even more excited

I looked at it, walked round it, lifted it, touched it and did everything else to delay asking the question that I was so worried over hearing the answer to. In the end I had to say it ....."will you sell it to me?"

He seemed to take an age to answer, looked thoughtfully at the floor and then replied, "why not?"

A price was suggested, and after a few seconds dramatic pause I agreed, loaded it into my car and headed home.

On close inspection it's obvious that the machine has had quite a bit of use and an iron plate on the table has the number 18 incsribed upon it. If this is the serial number, there could be at least another 17 laying around somewhere.

It all goes to prove the two rules for collecting ---- talk to everyone and try not to look too bored. Eric de Vlieger

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In at the Beginning/Part 6 of James Bolton's Singer Story

In order to increase the family trade, I found that the attachments of the Singer were inferior, the hemmer, especially, being of no account. The Wheeler & Wilson had a hemmer that would make a narrow hem, a wide hem, and a fell, and that hemmer and fell was used in all the shirt factories thoughout the country, and was known as the "Chapin hemmer". So I got up a modification of the Chapin hemmer, and applied it to the Letter A machine, and it worked fully as well on the Singer as the Wheeler & Wilson, and that same hemmer is still in use today on all the Family machines.

Later on I visited New York and Mr Hopper, at this time President of the Singer Manufacturing Company, showed me the Fuller-patented tuck marker. He said the Wheeler & Wilson, the Grover & Baker, and Singer had bought a shop's rights of Fuller, but none of them could sew anything with them, so he gave me one of the tuckers that Fuller had supplied them with and I brought it on to Chicago and found it was not practical from the fact that every different-sized tuck made the notch and point, had to be adjusted and unless they were adjusted exactly, they would cut the goods.

So I went to work and got up what is known as the self-adjustment of the notch and point. This was the first practical tuck-marker that was ever made for family use. I had it patented and commenced selling them, and advertised that the Singer machine was the only machine that had a tuck-marker. Of course, I had sent on a sample of what I had for the Company to make them, but they did not seem to take any notice of it, so I went to work and made them, and sold them, and made a market for them.

The Company was finally obliged to make them because the agencies all around Chicago wanted these tuck-markers, and they were finally

adopted by the Company. The other sewing-machine companies were hot after a tuck-marker to compete with ours. There was a man named H C Goodrich who got up a tuck-marker, and he got a good trade from all the balance of the sewing-machine companies. I went to see Mr Goodrich and told him he was infringing on my patent. I showed him my claims, and he admitted it, and said he was willing to pay a royalty.

Mr Proctor was in the office at the time that Mr Goodrich was willing to make arrangements to pay the royalty. Proctor said as soon as he got back to New York, he would take up the matter for a decision as to the amount of royalty they would allow Mr Goodrich to manufacture the tuckers for the various machines under the Bolton patents, but nothing further was done by the company and this Mr Goodrich was allowed for years to go on and supply the various companies at the rate of $3 each or $36 a dozen, and Mr Goodrich succeeded in making not less than $500,000. Now this same self-adjustment of the notch and point is today in use on all tuck-markers of the Family machines.

In my efforts to increase the trade in Family machines, I found that we were badly handicapped in cabinet work. The Letter A machine had an iron table and the machine head stood about two inches above the iron table, so that in order to do away with that to some extent, I got up an extension table which buttoned on to the iron stand, making it flush with the head of the machine. That took very well, but in order to place the wooden cover on, we had to take off the extension table, and while we sold a goodly number of them, they were very unsightly and very inferior in appearance, as compared with the Wheeler & Wilson and Grover & Baker on account of our inferior cabinet work.

On one of my visits to New York, I was telling Mr Clark that we never could expect to get much better trade than we had against the Wheeler & Wilson and Grover & Baker on account of our inferior cabinet work, and told him we had too many wires on top of the machine that made them liable to get bent and out of order, and very unsightly as compared with the Wheeler & Wilson and Grover & Baker and Wilcox & Gibbs machines.

"Well", he said, "do you think you can make abetter one?" I replied: "I would like to have an opportunity", and upon this, he gave

me authority to go ahead and make a machine, and on the strength of this I went to work and made here in Chicago what is known as the New Family Sewing Machine. When I had the machine all completed, Mr Elliot came on from Cincinnati. I showed it to him, and he seemed pleased with it. I told him I thought it would be better for him to take it to New York and show it up than for me, and he consented to do so.

Mr Elliot took the machine over to the factory. Some little time before that Mr Singer had returned to New York from abroad and he met Mr Elliot at the factory while he was showing up the machine. He asked Mr Elliot what he had there. He said "a new machine" so Mr Singer looked it over. He said, "Elliot, do you know what would improve that machine?" He said, "No I do not" and Mr Singer replied "Take a sledge hammer and knock the damn thing in the head, that is what would improve it." This is the conversation as Mr Elliot reported it to me.

So after Mr Elliot left, they had a meeting of the experts and they decided that the machine, while there might be some little merit in it, it was not broad enough or good enough for them to abandon what they had and make the tools for a new machine; therefore, the machine was returned to me at Chicago. Mr Clark wrote me that the experts found that the improvement was not sufficient to warrant them in accepting the machine, and amongst other things, he said "You must bear in mind that those who are identified with any improvements are blind to their faults."

I thought that was a sad ending to my endeavour to produce a new machine. One day I had a call from a Mr Bryan, the agent of the A B Howe Sewing Machine Company, their offices being located next door to our offices. He wished me to tell him what had become of the machine I had made. I told him the machine had been judged a failure and was then upon the shelf.

He expressed the opinion that the machine would be a good seller; by some chance, he had seen it sew without my being aware of it. He proposed that I should take the machine to Elias Howe with a view that he manufacture it, for the reason that Elias and his brother, A B, were quarrelling.

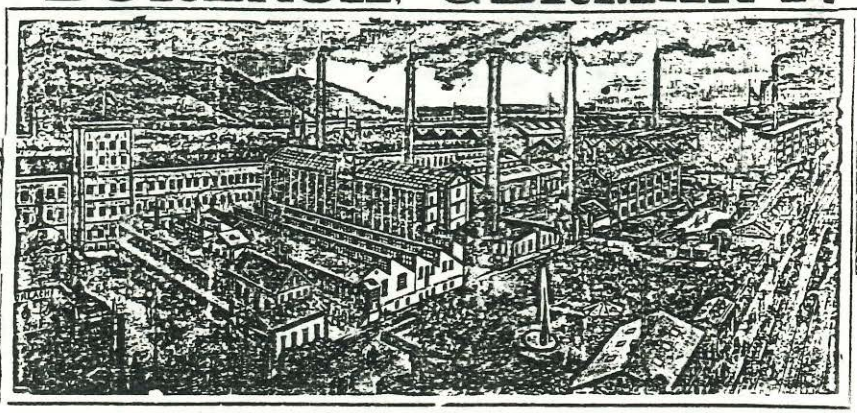
This did not strike me favourably, as I did not like to leave the Company after being in its employ for about 10 years, but upon

further consideration, any change I would make could not result in any loss to me, as I worked at New Haven four years at a salary of $15 per week, and followed this up with $20 per week for about six years at Chicago, which was barely sufficient to support myself and family, as I never received any additional compension at the end of the year, aside from $500 sent me one year for a Christmas present.

For these reasons, I felt it a duty to myself and family that I should embrace any opportunity that would present itself to better my condition, so with this view of the case, I agreed with Mr Bryan to go with him to Bridgeport to see Mr Elias Howe to ascertain what terms he would be willing to make. To be continued.....

THE GRITZNER MACHINE CO., LTD.

DURLACH, GERMANY. Nov. 1, 1898.

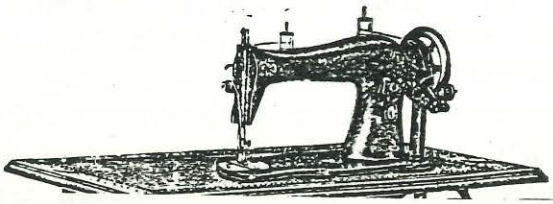


Annual Output, 80,000 Machines.

The Largest Factory of Sewing Machines on the Continent.

2,400 Work-People Employed.

GRITZNER
Family (LOW ARM)
Hand Machines
GRITZNER
Family (LOW ARM)
Treadle Machines
GRITZNER
(HIGH ARM)
Hand Machines



Cycle Factory.

THE HELIOS

Bruno Naumann -- a Portrait

KARL ROBERT BRUNO NAUMANN, was a typical representative of the early industrial age, when a number of imaginative, spirited and risk-taking middle classes pushed into the upper classes by economic success.



The Naumann family came from the Saxon town, Hartha, and can be traced back to 1621.

They were independent farmers, often mayors or councilors of their town. The grandfather of Bruno N, Karl Sigismund (1759 to 1821) became a hosier and settled in Limbach/Saxony,

His son, Maritz Ferdinand (1803 to 1882) called himself a stocking manufacturer and lived in solid prosperity. But shortly after his marriage with Juliane Christine Haustein in 1831 he left his wife and unborn child and went to North America. After many years he returned a wealthy man, but his wife divorced him.

Bruno Naumann was born 10 October 1844 in Dresden. . He took up an apprenticeship with Hugo Schuckert, a master in precision engineering and the director of the Dresden Office of Weights and Measures, where he stayed as journeyman up to 1862.

In 1868 he opened a workshop for engine fitting in Dresden and began to produce Wheeler & Wilson machines under licence. Soon he had more than enough orders.He had not enough capital, however,

and in 1869 the Dresden merchant Seidel came to the rescue with a cash injection.

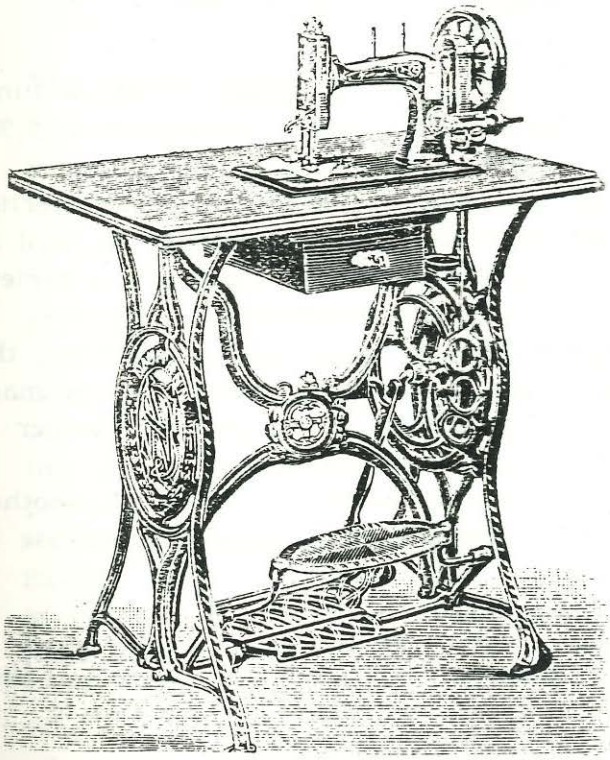
Although Seidel demanded his capital back in 1876, his name remained and the company became more and more successful after becoming the first in Germany to take up and later modify the high-armed Singer system.

In 1883 Bruno N built a large factory in Hamburg Street where his only son, Dr Robert Bruno Walther Naumann zu Konigsbruck (1874 to 1944) continued the family tradition.

In 1886 the firm was changed into a joint-stock corporation, Bruno N keeping the shares. The new building also offered space for other production, including the "Germania" bicycle, typewriters and speedometers for locomotives.

His life's work is still continuing, supplying jobs for about 3500 workers. Even famous trademarks such as Ideal, Erika and Naumann are still on the market.

Compiled from information from Leertaste magazine.



Carol Head reports that Seidel & Naumann introduced a footrest for use on treadle sewing mach-ines in January 1890. It had no springs or wearing parts and with the slightest touch could be lowered to act as a platform for the foot.

Carol wonders at the advertised statement that "it's simplicity of usefulness is beyond question". It cost only a shilling or two to the trade

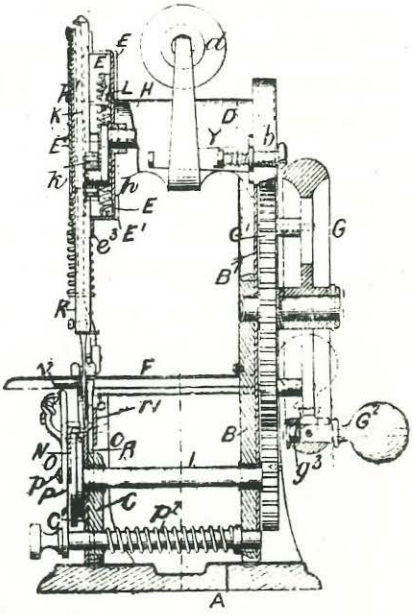
1890 Seidall & Naumann treadle machine with footrest

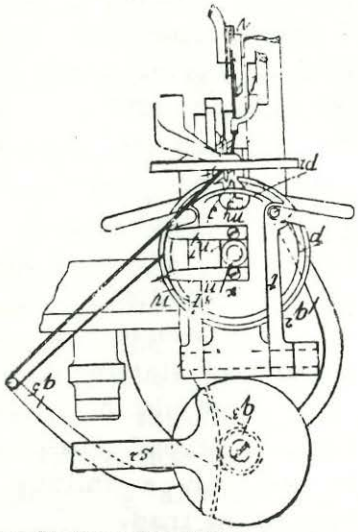
Another Dorman Model Turns Up

I RECENTLY picked up a Dorman which, apart from being in very good condition, had something about it that I couldn't quite put my finger on, and only when I compared it with another in the MS collection did the penny drop.

Every Dorman I had seen had the cotton reel held between two spring-steel fingers and laying horizontally above the machine. But this new model had a more usual steel pin to mount the reel in the same place, but vertically.

What's more the machine was certainly designed like this -- not modified following a breakage of the fingers. There are some considerable differences, too, in the gold decoration.





The finger model is, from the serial number, the earlier at 3529 compared with 10,985 for the pin version.

Interestingly the inscription on the earlier machine boasts offices in London as well as Northampton, whereas the later variety only mentions Northampton.

Apart from the wheel the construction, the Dorman is unusual in that that it is made from primed steel sheets welded together to give a very sturdy machine,

I can't, immediately, think of another quality machine that eschewed the use of cast iron.

Graham Forsdyke

Top Picture: The Dorman was patented in October 1877 (No. 14,075) by a Mr A F Wileman. It featured the more usual spring-loaded bobbin hollder -- different to the one mentioned here. Lower picture: A second patent appeared a year later under Dorman's own name. It was for leather sewing and boot-sole stitching.

Do-It-Yourself

THOSE OF OUR members who delight in getting their old machines to sew should keep an eye open in secondhand bookshops for a slim volume published in 1905 called Sewing Machines, Their Construction, Adjustment and Repair.

It was published by Cassell as an off-shoot to the weekly magazine "Work" in which the author promised to publish the answers to any questions arising from the book.

After a brief history of the SM, the book goes into the range of existing machines and deals with common complaints. In the preface the author states that his tome is aimed at the inexperienced reader but later in the valume suggests the use of bearing scrapers to erase the fit of tight shafts -- surely a job for a super-skilled fitter.

But small niggles apart, the book makes interesting and informative reading -- do you know the most common cause of a Weir producing too large a loop under the cloth table?

The book was re-printed many times right up until the First World War and o copy shouldn't be too hard to find

The answer to the Weir problem is that the slightest roughness on the hook, caused perhaps by a thin film of surface rust, will drag at the thread and cause an "over-loop". *GF*

Wanzer Lamp

GO-WITH FANS and those interested in alternative products of SM manufacturers should keep a lookout for Wanzer safety lamps when browzing around antique shops and markets.

It would seem that at least during one stage of the firm's London operation, SMs were certainly a side line to the main business of producing Davey-type lamps for the mines.

In around 1890 when the London depot, then being managed by one Henry Fricker, moved from Great Portland Street just round the corner to Market Place it was noted in a newspaper of the time that the lamps were given pride of place among the company's many products.

The firm, at the time, was called The Wanzer Sewing Machine and Safety Lamp Company, and althouth I've had a good few miners' lamps through my hands I've never yet seen the Canadian firm's name on one.

The shop which Fricker left was taken over by a Mr Mackenzie who sold perambulators in "art colours" and mail carts. GF

The Best Collection

DURING ONE of the lulls in organised activity during the German collectors' meeting in October, a group of us were talking and the subject got around to who had the world's best collection. As this discussion was obviously getting nowhere I steered it round to the point of just what makes a great collection.

The following points were put forward:

1) A large number of machines
2) The quality of machines regardless of their number
3) That the machines are well displayed
4) That the collector can talk authoratively about the machines
5) The value of the machines
6) The technical merit of the machines
7) Almost any combination of any of the above

Let's look at some examples.

In America there ia a collector who has a large number of machines, including some very early rarities, but they are almost universally in poor condition and deteriorating under their present ownership The collector has little knowlege of them other that what they cost him and what they will be worth in five year's time.

Is this, then, a great collection ?

In Germany there is a collector who boasts of over 750 machines -- some as early as 1900. He appears to know every detail of their construction and the history of each factory involved. He has nothing earlier because the factories were merely experimenting then until perfecting designs at the turn of the century.

Is this then a great collection?

In England our own Maggie Snell tries to concentrate on pre-1880 models and has a rare knowledge or early history. But she all but ignores later machines, and because of her small appartment, is only able to display a small part of what she has acquired.

Is this then a great collection?

I draw no conclusions. It's simplier just to pose the questions in the hope that others who have beeen promising to put pen to paper will be tempted to define what makes that elusive great collection. GF

Shiver Me Castings/continued from News 8, page 10

WHEN THE patent commissioners met in 1860 to consider the extension that William Thomas held for Howe -- giving the pair a

virtual stranglehold on machine manufacture in this country -- they presumably looked only at the letter of the law and had to ignore the pleas of those who hoped to set up in business here.

For the commissioners decided to uphold the application giving Thomas another seven year's monopoly before the infamous patent was to expire.

The decision pleased few, except Howe and Thomas of course, and the pirates who had hoped to haul down their flags and go into legitimate business, had to give up or continue with a clandestine operation.

Among those most voluable in their displeasure was the editor of the influential Mechanics magazine who, by a series of involved arithmetic equations, set out to prove that the country had already lost £10,000,000 because of the patent and was now going to lose a lot more.

He decided that even this sum might be reckoned a fleabite compared with Disraelie's debt (he bought the Suez Canal with money borrowed on behalf of the British people from Lord Rothschild) but it did represent the sum of 6s-8d for every man, woman and child in the country.

"For years past we have had only Hobson's choice -- machines of a certain kind at a high price. Hence those foreign manufacturers and patentees have practically, though certainly not intentionally, (our Editor obviously had the libel laws in mind) carried into effect a conspiracy which keeps up the price of clothing in Britain higher than that in America.

"The sewing machine was first invented and patented in England by John Fisher. But the first importer, Elias Howe, supposing himself to be the first inventor in England claimed everything and the purchaser of his invention (Thomas), merely acting in his spirit attempted to make good the claim and to grasp the whole trade.

"The great mistake we have made is to allow foreigners to claim any invention they please and giving them liberty to enforce their claim without prior inquiry regarding the novelty of the invention or any stipulations regarding its manufacture in this country."

Having got that off his chest he summed up by stating that the hindering and retardation of the sewing-machine business in Britain may well have been as a result of a blunder. But, in this case, the blunder was worse than a crime. GF

Lost in Miller's Cave

THAT BANE OF ALL collectors hoping to find a cheap bargain -- Miller"s Guide -- now has its 1987 version in the bookshops. It's priced at £12.95, although I've seen it discounted at antique fairs as low as £8.

Promoted as the Professional's Handbook, it aims to give a price guide for a whole range of antiques based on results from various auctions.

Four sewing machines are featured, two each from Christie's and Phillips. It obviously behoves both the auction houses and the book's publisher to ignore the lower prices attained and to go for the sensational freak results. For antique-dealer readers will believe that by putting their machines into the sale they will realise a similar amount. The publisher is also interested in high prices for it gives his book more appeal as an instant passport to riches.

Whilst the vast majority of sewing machines sell in auction for less than £75, not one of the examples shown rates less than twice that amount.

The first example from Christie's was the turned-leg Grover and Baker which actually fetched a praiseworthy £1200 from a collector who did not inspect it beforehand and, once having inspected it after the sale, immediately offered it for re-sale. In Miller"s Guide the appraisal for this machIne is from £1,200 to £1,500. Christie's second machine is a Taylor Patent Friction with a price tag of £200 to £250.

Phillips provided details on the Avrial "La Populaire" which sold to a member of the Society for £1200. Here again an increase in value up to £1500 is forecast. The other offering from Phillips is a more mundane Challenge with a £150 to £200 price tag.

I'm not so upset about the prices quoted for they probably represent a fair indication of current trends. What annoys me is that thousands of antique dealers will buy this book and with some reason assume that all old sewing machines are worth between £200 and £1500.

To quote from the volume"The price ranges given reflect the average price a purchaser should pay for similar items". It also goes on to state that prices can be greatly affected by condition. Prices given are for goods of "good merchantable quality" unless otherwise stated. Exceptionally-fine or poor-condition may "reasonably be expected to be priced considerably higher or lower than the estimates given".

All very praiseworthy until we note that nowhere is there mention of the near-mint state of the "La Populair" or the fact the the Grover and Baker had been repainted and was incomplete. GF

Singer Give-Aways

TEN YEARS AGO, wandering around an American flea market, feeling more than a little conspicuous with my light-yellow jacket with "Wanted Old Sewing Machines" emblazoned in black on front and rear, I was approached by a New Hamposhire wheeler-dealer who told me that he had some "real neat old cards about sewing machines".

He was a postcard dealer and had bought the cards years before and had been unable to sell them. He obviously felt that he had found a patsy, but his price for the 36 cards was reasonable and we did a deal.

They lived in a drawer in what I call my office -- and less charitable friends refer to a my junk room -- for years, only coming



CHINA.

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SPAIN (VALENCIA)

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to light a few week ago whilst searching for something completely different.

Perhaps it's my new-found interest in sewing machines, but I now find the cards irresistable, and have done a little research on their origin.

It was in 1893 when the Columbian Exposition was to be held in Chicago that the Singer company, who were putting on a big display as befitted their number-one spot, thought hard over how they could get across the message that Singer was a world-wide exporter and had factories in many foreign lands.

One bright PR man came up with the idea that was to lead to the set of cards. Why not, he reasoned, commission photographers in as many countries as possible to take pictures of natives in traditional local dress using, of course, a Singer machine.

The idea was accepted straight away and all over the world photographers began setting up heavy wood and brass cameras to produce the glass negatives necessary.

These were shipped to New York to the workplace of J Ottmnann, the outstanding lithographer of the day who produced the cards measuring just over 3 x 5 inches

They were very low key advertising, the front of the card showing the picture with the name of the country printed beneath and the reverse carrying a description of the country with a descreet Singer Manufacturing Co added.

The cards were packaged in a lithographed box and handed out

freely to anyone who visited the Singer displays at the Exposition. How many sets remain is anyone's guess but 21 million people visited the fair, coming from over 80 countries so the cards could turn up almost anywhere.

And they are worth seeking out. Of the 36 cards, 34 feature domestic machines, only Norway and Japan showing industrial models. Only Manila featured a hand machine, the rest being treadles which certainly fit the post-card size format a lot better .

As a present-day geography lesson they leave a lot to be desired. For example, how many children today would know of Ceylon, the Crown Colony of Great Britain and how many adults, for that matter would recognise Christiania at the then capital of Norway?

Individual cards today command a price from £3 each in America. Complete sets are, surprisingly, cheaper, pro rata, but expect to pay over £50 for a set in its original box. GF



NORWAY?



JAPAN.

Standing Room Only

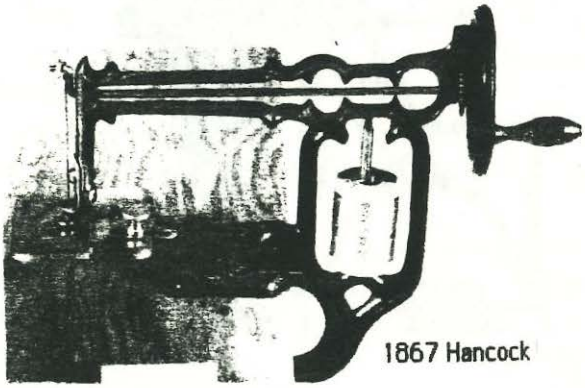
WHEN I FIRST suggested to Carol it would be nice to have a regional meeting at her new home near Salisbury and see her desirable collection in all its glory, she said: "You can't. I haven't enough chairs -- or cups."

She needn't have worried. Even though some of us sat on cushions on the floor, we had a great time. But such is the popularity of our little get-togethers that we are rapidly outgrowing the average living room.

When we first thought of periodic regional meetings we expected just the collectors in the immediate vicinity to turn up. But the idea caught on and we're pleased to see at least 20 enthusiasts and friends at each event, some travelling quite long distances like Allan Sheen and Brian Tilson from Cheshire and John Horton and Mary from Wakefield, Yorkshire.

Bernard and Sheila Williams hailed from the the Staffordhire borders, Vera and Leonard Hemming drove down from Birmingham, and Graham Forsdyke and I made the trip from London

More locally-based were our chairman Brian and Vera Matthews, Diana and Peter Herbert, and Kim Kelly and friend Bill from just up the road. It was nice to see, too, Vera and Warren Lane from Gloucester who joined the Society only this year and who we last met at the Ironbridge AGM. And Rita and William Heath managed the trip from Christchurch; they missed Ironbridge because their son was visiting them from his home in Switzerland.



1867 Hancock

Such was the friendly atmosphere at Carol's that people tended just to chat to each other as friends with similar interests tend to do -- catching up on the news, comparing machines and picking up new information about their own and other members' new acquisitions.

It wasn't until a day or two later that we realised there hadn't

been any real structure to the day (apart from a lengthy discussion lead by Bernard about a standardised glossary of technical terms he would like to see published in the magazine and put to general use). Some members of the committee later discussed amongst themselves whether we should incorporate some informal formality into future events, such as a talk or a conducted tour through our host's (or hostess's) collection. Perhaps you will let us know what you prefer?

Many of Carol's machines have been described in AGM reports. But it was nice to see them sparkling and shiny ranged on custom-built shelves along one wall -- with just a single machine featured here and there and, of course, the Alberta and Wight and Mann treadles

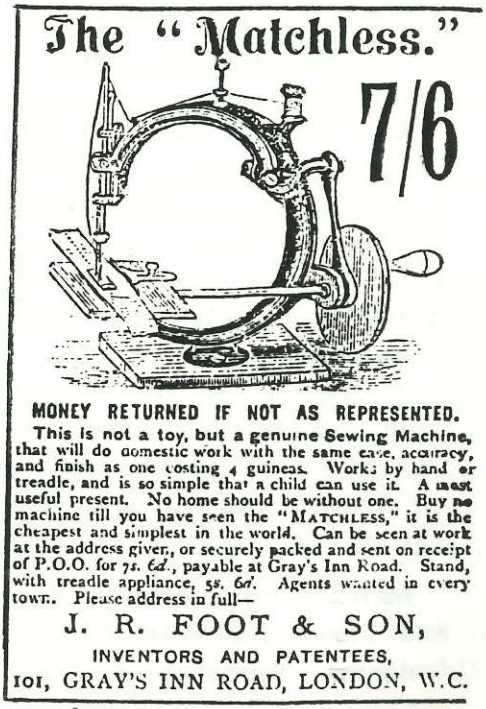
Great interest was also shown by in her research material. Over the years she has spent many hours in libraries and museums around the country looking through old magazines for advertisements and articles about old sewing machines, photocopied details of which are regularly reproduced in these pages.

The Hemmings again brought their two-reel lockstitch machine featured in News 7, and their latest find, a stubby little Doncaster-made Hopkinson, which is quite a rare bird.



Despite my crie de coeur in the last magazine about not finding machines, I was able to take some new models to the meeting, including an arm-and-a-leg model (that's not some new system -- just the price still hurting). But it's a pretty little 1867 Hancock, only about six inches wide, like the one pictured overleaf from Grace Cooper's book. I love the machine but, as Graham said before I took the plunge, you don't get much for your money.

In construction, size and method of working, it is very similar to another heart - shaped American clamp-type miniature I've had for some years, and the two together make an interesting non-matching pair.



Going from the sublime to the ridiculous, I also took a third little machine, which was bought from an antique market for just £4. That purchaser sold it to Graham, who spent many hours freeing it from rust, polishing out the pit marks and replacing important missing bits (like the rotary hook). It's now joined my miniatures collection and, as the Americans would say, it's a real neat machine.

The machine was christened the "Matchless" by way of a small gold medalion on the base and its origins would have remained a mystery had Carol not found the (undated) advertisement illustrated here. Despite the diminutive size, the advertiser insisted its "baby" was a genuine, working, sewing machine and not a toy, and included a money-back guarantee with the 7/6d price tag. Amazingly, for a total price of 13/-d (ie 5/6d extra) you could also buy a stand with treadle.

Bernard brought his American Willcox and Gibbs which he exchanged recently with an American collector for the English version. He also brought the fiddle-bed Howe hand machine, three different Moldacots and Moldacot-style Bonita and the rare Poyser miniature portable.

Rita Heath and he could be seen comparing their Leigh and Crawford-type cast-iron toys with arched frames -- Rita's version is the first I've seen with the name Stitch-All -- and also their Beckwiths.

But John Horton had got the best bargain -- a Moldacot which someone gave him as a gift. It needs a little work (the name plate had come away from the body of the machine, which meant that the shuttle and bobbin also went missing). But this is easily fixed, and we offered to supply a replica bobbin and shuttle made in the same pressed-out style of the original.

John's friend Mary, part of who's job it is to demonstrate the latest computer-controlled sewing machines at Pfaff Head Office in Leeds, has been doing a bit of moonlighting. John was wearing a tie bearing a logo of an old sewing machine and "ISMACS" that she had machine-embroidered on one of the company machines. They kindly gave me a pretty scarf, which was embroidered in the same way.

Mention must also be made of the real effort Carol, boyfriend Ted and Diana and Peter Herbert made in preparing and supplying the welcome refreshments -- lots of different sandwiches and home-made cakes.

MS

Membership News

SINCE ANNOUNCING the birth of Ian and Claire MacGillicuddy's son in the last issue, we have heard that Hillary and Richard Stephenson have also produced a son and heir during the summer. And new member Eric de Vlieger's told me in Germany that his wife is expecting their first child soon. Congratulations to all of you.

You will probably have already read in the report of Otto Langdraf's German meeting that we were able to welcome several new German and Dutch members. Their names and addresses are given below.

New English collectors include Mary Wink from Sevenoaks, who recently added an Agenoria and a Princess of Wales to her small collection. She is looking for photocopies of instruction books for these machines, together with those of a Bradbury Wellington and a Wilcox and Gibbs.

Ashley Hellier, a young man from Oxfordshire, is a relative newcomer and for the time being is concentrating on more common machines.

A warm welcome to Heinrich Heuer, our second Australian member. His nephew, who has just arrived in this country, phoned me to say Heinrich, who's in the trade, has the best collection in his part of the world. When I learn more I'll report back.

Giuseppe Muner, who works for a chain of tailors, is our first Italian member. I met him, as with many Continental collectors, on the Portobello Road in London.

Roanne and Richard Clayton, an American military service couple currently living in Suffolk, are returning to the United States and we wish them bon voyage and hope they will stay in touch. They have done some excellent original research into the Britannia Company which they passed on to me, and I will be glad to include this information on a supplement in the fullness of time. If any other member has information on this prolific 1860s manufacturer, we will glad to add it to the file. Members really shouldn't be shy. Send in anything from a paragraph to a few pages. Every little bit helps.

Jack Hampton who used to be joint-managing director with Pfaff in Leeds has changed companies and is now with the London and Cardiff-

based Bernina importer, Bogod Machine Company. Jack tells me that numerous modern sewing-machine dealers are becoming increasingly interested in old machines and their history -- so next time you pass your local shop, call in -- you may sign up a new member. MS

We Get Letters

From Peter Starling

Referring to the note by Carol Head on presser feet in News 8 my Prima Donna and anonymous German miniature, both have swivelling feet, the Prima Donna having a little lever instead of a knob at the top of the presser bar while the miniature is a primitive variation on the theme.

Not just the Little Wanzer but the Big Wanzer have swivelling feet; the foot operates by a lever which is pivoted at the base of the pressure bar on a push-down-and-swivel-out basis, the most elaborate system of those I have.

The Pitt Brothers' industrial machine on page 6 looks uncommonly like the Thomas-type Bradbury -- ISMACS special on Bradburys, page 4, except for the table.

All the best.

From Roanne and Richard Clayton

Now that we know you have a "file" we don't feet so silly about sending you dribs and drabs. That's why we've held off sending information on the Britannia company -- to avoid embarrassment at what little we've acquired from so much time spent researching. We aren't credit-seekers by any means, and we admire you for the wonderful job you've been doing. Every organization needs one or two key people to put it all together. We've certainly reaped the benefit of all your hard work ..... we're just sending you everything we find.

The Britannia information is brief and rather dry, but we're still doing research. When a final report is written, could you send a copy to the Colchester Library?

Unfortunately, as we are an American military family, we will be returning to the United States in December. We really had hoped to do some research on the Whight and Mann Company in Ipswich, but time is running out. We promise to do research for you when we settle into our new home.

New Members

HEINRICH HEUER, 24 Northey Court, Henley Beach, S Australia 5022 MD
JACOB BEKKER, Kelders 21A, 8911 JD, Leevwarden, Holland MD
A SCHELLEKENS, Noord Konninginnewal, 18, 5701 NK, Helmond, Holland
PETER SCHOUTEN, Raadhuisstraat 49, 1016 DD, Amsterdam, Holland
IRMGARD KROPPELT-NADERER, Hardenbergstr 50, D8800 Ansbach, W Germany
ERIC & FRANS de VLIEGER, IMCA, Essenlaan 58, Zwanenburg, Holland. MD
HANS de VRIES, Voorstreek 65, 8911 JK, Leevwarden, Holland
Brother AURIELIAN BINSWANGER, D-8917 St Ottilien, W Germany.
MARY WINK, Little Broom, Wood Drive, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2NL
ASHLEY HELLIER, Norman House, Norman Ave, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1HL
GIUSEPPE MUNER, Interpool SpA, via della Mecanica 21, 36016 Thiene (VI), Italy
IAN RUSHTON, 59 The Crescent, Belmont, Surrey. MD

Changes of Address

SNMG, 2 Rue Martel, 75010 Paris, France
(French SM Trade Association. Secretary Mr Simon Dargols)
BURGHARD SCHACK, Thomasberger Str 1, D5000 Koeln 41, W Germany

Advertisements

** **For Sale**: Bradbury Leather-stitcher (boot-making machine) £70. Kim Kelly, 1 Beech Cottages, Bradley Alresford, SO24 9RY. Telephone Preston Candover 559.

** **Sewing Machines bought and sold**: also typewriters and gramophones. The Talking Machine, 30 Watford Way, Hendon, London NW4. Telephone 01 202 3473. Open every day.

** **Starting a Collection**: Sewing machines for sale, also toy machines. Basement, 288 Westbourne Grove, Portobello Market. Saturdays only. Tel: 01 363 7494. 312 Carterhatch Lane, Enfield, Middx.

** **Wanted**: Photocopies of instruction books for Agenoria, Princess of Wales, Bradbury Wellington, Wilcox and Gibbs. Mary Wink, Little Broom, Wood Drive, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2NL

** **Maggie Snell offers**: The largest selection of sewing machines to collectors.

Always a good choice available for both beginning and long-time collector.

I'll also trade for old typewriters, gramophones, phonographs, telephones, scientific instruments, etc. Telephone: 01 488 0474.

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.

Can you Help?

We've received a query from a magazine asking for any information on a Meistergram M700 sewing machine as a reader wants to do machine embroidery. Is such a model being made today or is there a similar model that can do the same job. I've never heard of this machine, but come on you professionals -- get your thinking caps on.

Christmas & New Year

Greetings to you All

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