A

lison Scott of New Orleans proposes a typewriter enthusiast get-together, November 6-9, 2008. The weekend will include a party at her typewriter gallery in Algiers Point, a quiet Victorian village just across the Mississippi from downtown New Orleans; a lecture and open discussion; a riverboat cruise; dinner at a fine restaurant; and more. Proposed fee: $250. For more information, e-mail Alison at uniiivers_al@yahoo.com or call 504-398-0521.

How the mighty have fallen: from $125 in 1874 to $1.25 in 2008. That’s what I paid for a new, Chinese Generation 3000 manual portable on eBay. The plastic is unimpressive and the design isn’t the most brilliant, but it is an honest-to-goodness manual typewriter, surely one of the last. An interesting detail: it includes the ₹ (rupee) sign. For more on this model, see Will Davis’s “Portables, ETCetera” column in our issue 74.

Another recent bargain was a circa 1970 Smith-Corona Super Sterling for $5 at a thrift store. I usually ignore objects from that era, but when I took a second and third look, I decided I admired the Space Age styling and its shade of blue. It’s also interesting to see how Smith-Corona continued to use the original early-’30s mechanism for some 40 years, with minor refinements along the way.

I couldn’t stay away from the thrift store, where I picked up another $5 machine, a turquoise plastic-bodied Grants 737 Deluxe made by Nakajima, also around 1970. Light, quiet, and of decent quality.

You won’t find those three machines in “New on the Shelf,” because they’re no longer with me. I enjoyed inspecting, cleaning, and fixing them as needed. Then I had the pleasure of giving them to three kids I know from my daughter’s dance school who’d been wishing for typewriters.

Speaking of value, for years the price of a standard typewriter was $100—comparable to a personal computer today. But how long would that typewriter last? It was made to endure decades with only minimal cleaning and lubrication and an occasional trip to the shop. Compare that to the constant flux in the computer world, where a machine is obsolete, perhaps inoperable, in five years...

The largest collection of Marchant calculators in the world will be on display at The Historical Museum at St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho. In attendance will be Robert Avery, son of Harold Avery, inventor of the Marchant. Contact Ernie Jorgenson, 1740 Birch Ave., Lewiston, ID 83501, 208-746-8325, rbc@cableone.net.

Ed Neuert submits a small correction to his article in our last issue: the Noiseless no. 4 does not have a right-hand Figures key.
Reduced for the Pocket: One-Handed Devices
by Jos Legrand

Reduced for the Pocket: One-Handed Devices
by Jos Legrand

The recently recovered machine from Benjamin Livermore (ETCetera #81) is very inspiring and leads to contemplation about a lot of things, such as Livermore's wish to make a machine reduced to minimal measures, because he wanted to write in his pocket. “This curious little piece of Yankee mechanism is... sufficiently small to be carried and operated in the pocket with ease,” the Phrenological Journal wrote. Maybe it sounds odd, writing within the pocket, but the machine was meant as a real "Pocket Writing Machine," or "Pocket Printing Machine," as it was named by the inventor himself. Literally a machine for writing in the pocket. This is Livermore's first sentence in his circular: “I take this method to bring to your notice a new mode of writing ... which enables one to write or note his thoughts in places and under circumstances where the present mode is impracticable”—such as riding in cars, walking in the park, in a crowd, or in the dark night in bed. (“In his bed, at the dead of night, a man may record his waking thoughts,” like a preacher “lightly to make a dot and under a heavier pressure to make a dash”). But we have no sign of the “complete code” for the dots and dashes, so we do not know what kind of combinations should have been used for a single character.

Livermore’s Permutation Typograph was the first pocket typewriter. It inspired at least one inventor, Eugene McLean Long of Washington. His machine (bottom left) was filed in April 1899 as a Pocket-Recorder. In the patent there is no reference to Livermore, but that was not customary in those days. Besides, it is a totally different system, although there is at least one striking similarity: “a pocket recording device in which are provided a series of keys which are adapted to be operated by the fingers of one hand of a person while held in the pocket.” Where Livermore’s final Typograph used six keys to compose one letter, McLean Long’s four keys produce dots and dashes. Read the patent: “From the foregoing it will be noted that by bringing into combination with the vertical dash either the dot in four positions or the dash in four positions relative to the vertical dash a complete code is produced, whereby any conversation may be taken down and numerals and other signs recorded, and I am able by this arrangement of keyboard not only to make letters as described, but also to make the letters of the Morse telegraph alphabet with a slight alteration in the position of the dots and the dashes.” The invention of McLean Long worked with differences in pressing the keys (“lightly to make a dot and under a heavier pressure to make a dash”). But we have no sign of the “complete code” for the dots and dashes, so we do not know what kind of combinations should have been used for a single character.

Half a year later McLean Long came with an improved specification. This time it concerned a Pocket Type-Writer. Generally the machine is the same, but the keys are not rounded off anymore, like Livermore’s keys, but rectangular, and there is an additional thumb-key (W in Fig. 1). And so the machine was capable of “short-hand work, as well as convenient for a long-hand system.” In the improved machine a vertical dash that functioned as a positional guide for the dots and dashes could be altered in three positions by means of the thumb-key. Therefore the inventor proudly wrote in his patent: “By this arrangement of type I am enabled to print three hundred and twenty-four different symbols, thus enabling me to provide a system whereby stenographic, as well as longhand systems, may be equally well recorded.” And that is a lot more than the sixty-three of Livermore’s system.

As with a lot of these inventions on paper, we hear nothing further of the Pocket Type-Writer. McLean Long was later active in the golf industry, but he also patented sprinkler heads and a keyholder.

Eugene McLean Long was one of Livermore’s followers; Peter Krumscheid was another. One testimonial for Livermore referred to the blind as the class of persons for which the machine would be “the greatest blessing.” The Boston Journal was euphoric: “What an inestimable blessing to the blind! In this way, they can write as legible and as fast as those who see. The deaf and dumb will also probably come in for their share of the common boon.” A lot of activities in that direction should have been expected since, but only one attempt is known to me, Krumscheid’s specification (above), which was applied for in March 1916. In two regards his invention relates to Livermore’s machine—its compactness and its use: “One object of this invention is to provide a writing machine... which may be conveniently carried and operated in the pocket.” But in contrast to Livermore, no arguments are given for writing “in the pocket,” nor an indication of how to operate seven keys with one hand. Krumscheid came from Roxbury, one of the oldest towns in Massachusetts. His machine made use of the Braille system, having six keys and a spacer key in the middle. The size and the height of Krumscheid’s Typewriter are comparable to that of Livermore’s Permutation Typograph.

Krumscheid’s invention got a sequel in Banks’ Pocket Braille Writer. Dr. Alfred E.
Banks from San Diego, California, was blinded in the First World War. He invented his pocket brailler in 1941 (the year 1928 also circulates). Three models were made before its production was taken up by IBM with the model 4, probably soon after World War II. Illustrated is their Banks Pocket Braille Writer No. 6, launched in October 1949. A No. 7 is also known.

Banks’ first model shows a bit of similarity to Krumscheid’s invention, with the keys protruding from the case. Note also its rounded keys. Banks gave away his invention to the Lions Club of San Diego on the condition that it was to be sold only by non-profit organizations. IBM donated it to veterans from the war and sold the machine to the public at cost. Originally the Banks machine was made of copper, brass and steel. It used a half-inch strip of paper and a Braille alphabet. It measured 4.5 x 7 x 1 inches. The production machine used synthetic material also and was a bit bigger in size: 4.5 x 7.5 x 1.25 inches. The machine was used as a two-handed machine, as can be seen on a picture from 1946. Probably the blind were trained to use both hands when writing, however small a machine may be.

Livermore’s machine and its descendants could be operated with one hand, because of the reduced number of keys and their compactness. To make a small machine that could be put into the pocket of a coat, one could enlarge the pocket or reduce the size of the machine. But even with reduced machines—as for instance, Kidder’s attempts in the beginnings of the twentieth century to develop a minimalized forward-thrust machine—one remains dependent on a keyboard and its ergonomics. Reduction of the number of keys is a solution, then. You could also reduce the size of the keys, but then there are the minimal dimensions of the fingers. Reducing the size of the fingers is no option.

Reduction of the number of keys has always been another option for the inventors. In alphabetic machines this meant: the fewer keys, the more shift functions. See the Helios from 1908 with 21 keys and three shift keys, or the Gardner from 1890. A developed but never produced machine was the Dactygam from 1920, a French invention by Georges Moulin from Morain. It had only five keys, but they activated a type cylinder that printed ninety real characters. There was also a normal platen for 18 cm paper, and ribbon-inking. Not for small pockets, of course. The Dactygam is the most reduced standard typewriter ever with its 7 x 8 x 20 cm dimensions, a mechanical miracle for those days. The Dactygram illustrated above is from 1922 when the machine got its line space lever and a changed position of the typewheel.

It had to do with a telegraph-transmitter and it was for the novice or student “who may thereby train his ear to the correct sounds of the different characters of the alphabet and other characters used in transmitting telegraphic messages.” But in essence it was the same thing: “a portable apparatus capable of transmitting electrical signals” and a minimalized keyboard.

The “miniaturized single-hand keyboard for computers or electronic word processing systems” from 1986 is a solution. Two to ten square inches is what we are talking about. “Nowhere in the prior art is there a suggestion to combine a complete miniaturized alpha-numerical keyboard with a keypointer that embodies a number of the necessary control keys to enable one-handed control of the keyboard,” wrote inventor S. Zia Rouhani in his patent. For the last fifteen years this has been called a palmtop or PDA, a personal digital assistant, but it is not a one-handed device, because a keypointer or stylus is needed, so you have to make use of both of your hands. And in contrast to Zia Rouhani’s statement, there actually was such a “suggestion” long before. In 1903 Charles Bourk from Lima, Ohio had the same idea.

New possibilities have been thought of ever since. Most inventors went electronic, but as
late as 1962 one inventor defied the zeitgeist and patented a mechanical handprinting device, with five keys also. This “typewriter comprising improved keyboard and associated printing means” was developed by Nino Zanaboni, an Italian from Milan. It is a real typewriter in the Livermore tradition, keys, paper, printing and all that. Thirty-two symbols could be written with it, carried on the disc that can be seen in the middle of the cutaway drawing (pg. 4, bottom right). For symbols one could substitute letters. In the American version of the patent this remark about the machine was made: “a light portable typewriter that does not require visual control and a typing system easy to learn which can be used in any condition whatsoever, as when a person is travelling in an air flight, in a train or car, when walking, reclining in an arm chair or lying in bed, etc. It can also be used in darkness.” It is as if you hear Benjamin Livermore speaking from his grave.

Another category is formed by the stenographic machines, where a very reduced keyboard has to produce all necessary characters. In that case a combination of keys that come to one impression, usually in the form of a chord strike as with Livermore’s machine, is almost inevitable. An example is the Stenographic Machine by John Galloway from 1882, where eight keys could form a combination of nine dots, which represented the different characters. In fact, most of the blind machines use that kind of printing. Chord strike will come at the cost of speed, so you must have a good argument, as Livermore had. But chording systems have been designed up to now. Composing characters without a chord strike, as with the present SMS (Short Message Service) on your telephone, costs even more time, as you can see around you every minute. That system is not new, of course. Such a one-hand keyboard was patented by Hilborn in 1974 and Knowlton two years later. Pictured above is Morley’s “hand-held interactive terminal” from 1975. Stone’s keyboard with color coding is another solution.

Reduced keyboards have been researched ever since, such as the reproduced Lapeyre invention from 1992: “Also surprisingly then this invention can replace a normal QWERTY typewriter keyboard with most of its functions by a set of only three, four, seven or nine keys.” A conventional keyboard could be replaced by three or four keys “operable by the fingers of a single hand.” All the inventors of such compressed keyboards think that speed will increase. Lapeyre: “It is therefore a primary object of this invention to produce rapid manual entry of input data and commands into a data processing computer system from a keyboard, capable of rapid touch typing and having the capability to process a greater proportion of the accessible computer functions with simple keystrokes.” According to Van Cott in his Human Engineering Guide to Equipment Design from 1972, the potential of chorded keyboard data entry was seen as very high, indicating entry rates of 150% of standard typing as being relatively easy to achieve.

One-handed systems have to do with ergonomics, such as in the typewriters adjusted for one-handed people after the wars. In fact, a lot of the early index machines are one-handed devices, like the Hammonia from 1882. In 1907 a corresponding construction made by John Porter was patented as “a machine that can be operated with one hand.” The idea of one-handed devices has not gone. Inventors are still working on Livermore’s starting-point, as put into words by Edmund Burke, late Commissioner of Patents, and stated in Livermore’s testimonial: “It is small and compact, and can be carried in the hand or pocket.” Such a typewriter was already invented by the Czech Vojtěch Ihriský in 1926. It had the same intention as Livermore had, to make a typewriter that can function where others cannot. Ihriský thought of “a pocket typewriter, with which journalists, reporters and the like, when journeying, at public meetings and the like may rapidly commit what they hear to paper, without being kept by the typewriter to one place.” A pity for my article, because “The only condition is that the person using the machine shall have both hands free.” But his system is essentially the same: a hand-held device. It was refined by Volniak in 1984.

The Microwriter was designed by Endfield Cie and later manufactured in England. The adventure lasted five years. Illustrated is another one, the Twiddler, made by the Handykey Corporation in Denver since 1992. Beginners could reach the speed of twenty-six words per minute. Production of new models is uncertain at the moment. Handykey is still in debt for developments costs for its first two models. EkaPad, the Writehander and the Data-Egg are also chording one-handed devices, the last one developed by Gary Frieman, resulting in the Matthews patent.

Maybe even more interesting are the inven-
tions where the hand is an essential part of the device. The following two illustrations are from one of the “stealthy keyboards” that McKown invented in 2000. It gives the impression that only keys are used.

When reading the patent it is as if we hear Livermore’s echo: the keyboard should embody “all the characteristics necessary to enable practical, discreet entry of general text by pedestrians in motion, namely: (a) the keyboard must be supported and operated by only one hand; (b) it must be discreetly and rapidly stowed and retrieved, preferably to and from a pocket of the user’s clothing and preferably using only the operating hand; (c) it must be small and stealthy in use and while stowed, i.e., it should not be immediately evident to a casual observer.” Listen to Livermore once again in his brochure recommending his method “at times and in places where it would be deemed uncivil, or excite suspicion.”

A last illustration is of the Septambic Keyer by Steve Mann. The machine is made to fit into your own hand. You can build it yourself. Livermore would have liked it. But compared to his machine from a hundred and fifty years ago, all these devices lack one thing: paper work. It is because all these machines, and the one handed keyboards also, are data input devices. Therefore such chording keyboards are very suitable for wearable computers. Pocket information output devices have also been made, such as one made by Hanakata for Canon (1978), but actually you have to think of simple label printers and the like. And that is not what Livermore had in mind. 

Thanks to Jaap Horstink.

Literature

W. McLean Long, Pocket Type-Writer, USP 647853 (filed 9/10/1899, patented 1/4/1900)
C. Bourke, Telegraph-Transmitter, USP 717966 (filed 2/1/1901, patented 6/1/1903)
P. Krumscheid, Typewriter, USP 1371694 (filed 18/3/1916, patented 15/3/1921)
E. Martin, Die Schreibmaschine und ihre Entwicklungsgeschichte, 1949, pp. 289-291 (Dactygmam)
N. Zanaboni, Typewriter comprising improved Keyboard and associated Means, USP 3215246 (filed 1/12/1962, patented 2/11/1965)
Old Organizers, http://www.giford.co.uk/~coredump/org.htm
http://www.tifaq.org/keyboards/chording-keyboards.html

Further Reading

Martin Howard of Toronto shares this remarkable letter to an investor in the ill-fated Bennington, a typewriter with an extra row of keys that would print common short words at one stroke. According to the letter’s eBay seller, “I found the Bennington letterhead in a box of miscellaneous paperwork I bought at an auction in northern Kansas. The auction was at a blacksmith shop with living quarters overhead and the building had been closed up and abandoned for 30 years. I really bought some interesting items that day! The Bennington letterhead was the only item relating to typewriters.” The letter continues: “Should you wish to increase your holdings but have no ready money now, why! we would not hesitate—knowing you as we do—to grant you the time you might require in making the payment; the same applies to your brother, whose able article we read with great pleasure in the ‘Pathfinder’. The bills you refer to were found all right and no inconvenience was caused. When can you join us again? With kindest regards, also to C. A. Very sincerely, Carl Ludwig, Secty., The Bennington Typewriter Co.” Mr. Oliva’s investment was lost, for to the best of our knowledge, the Bennington was never manufactured. Also pictured is a somewhat different design for the Bennington from G. C. Mares’ 1909 History of the Typewriter.
Typewriter sales were the foundation for ultimate success of the machine. The salesmen and their hopes and aspirations made that happen, and one of them is my subject today. Through the medium of a March 16, 1903, letter from Ferd Seuss, a St. Louis, MO based traveling salesman for the Oliver Typewriter Co., to his “Friend,” we are privy to some details of Ferd’s life as an Oliver man and as a wooer of a possible wife. He writes to a Miss Cyrene Molyneaux, a resident of Ransomville, NY, the Niagara County area of his former home.

Ferd’s missive is hand-written on the stationery of the Belleville (IL) House Hotel, twenty miles and an hour by train from his office. And, yes, dear reader, even an enthusiastic typewriter salesman understood that a typewritten letter to a hoped-for inamorata was outside the pale of the rules for communicating messages of the heart—and the general rules of etiquette at the beginning of the new century, as well.

From the time of the introduction of its second model in 1896, the Oliver Co. recruited salesmen-agents with magazine ads that promised recruits careers that would provide them an income of between $125 and $500 per month. These promises were lofty in the context of an economy in which yearly per capita income was $241 or $20 per month, a monthly income of $50 was considered to be a very good non-farm one, and highly skilled telegraph operators earned $100. Our correspondent, in an attempt to establish his financial bona fides as a potential provider and husband, breaking mores that otherwise required that earnings not be discussed with those outside the family, cites income figures within the Oliver-advertised range: “I am still in the typewriter biz and am doing fine. I sold enough machines to net me over $250 [ca. $5000 today] and did not work very hard either...Have not earned less than $150 per month since my connection with Oliver Typewriter Co.” As impressive as Ferd’s claimed income is, it is important to realize how his profession was perceived at the time and how vital it was for Ferd to overcome that perception as a possible obstacle to his success as a seeker of a bride in Miss Molyneaux.

The American economy entered the new century as an expanding industrial one that involved some mobility, but still found most of the population residually rooted in rural towns and in cities. Those passing through as sellers of goods, salesmen or “drummers,” those without complete families and with whom you did not share longer-term commitments and risks, were perceived as inherently untrustworthy. In the United States, this was exemplified by traveling salesman jokes, and those jokes very often included the image of salesmen as highly sexualized Lotharios who abuse the trust of the innocent women of local families and then disappear into the night. The situation of the typewriter salesman was even worse, although we do not know if Miss Molyneaux knew this likely aspect of Ferd’s job. As Bliven notes (1954), a common sales tactic of typewriter drummers was to flirt with young stenographer-typists to persuade them to influence their boss’s choice of a typewriter. This behavior is frequently illustrated on “humor” postcards of the period. Susan Sellers (1994) poetically describes it all as “a love triangle between a man, a woman, and a machine.”

In the letter, Ferd tries to overcome these negative images of him as traveling salesman by emphasizing that he is a rooted man, one who returns home every night. “Am outside St. Louis all the time making small towns near St. Louis but return to St. Louis every night thus finding myself at home at night but traveling at the same time.” The assertion may not have had much verisimilitude for the reader because of Ferd’s choice of the hotel letterhead for writing his case.

Were Ferd’s loves labors lost on Miss Molyneaux? We will probably never know; but because of his attempt in this letter, he has provided us a window on Love in the Time of The Oliver.
Thanks to Norbert Schwarz for lending us volume 1 of *The Oliver Magazine* (June 1903-January 1905), edited by Maurice A. Cattermole, City Manager of the Oliver Typewriter Co. in London. Cattermole is an inspiration to editors; he put together a professional and lively publication for The Oliver Typewriter Club, which initially had only 80 members. It included “present and past employees of the Oliver Typewriter Company, Ltd., and ‘Oliver’ users [later extended to ‘operators of any Typewriter and their friends’]” at the discretion of the Executive Committee.” Dues were ten shillings per year, and the magazine sold for a penny.

The Oliver gang had a busy social life outside the office: their activities included teas, dinners, concerts, dances, picnics, cricket matches, and “rambles” around London and environs.

The magazine includes reports on club activities, humorous poems and stories, ads, advice on shorthand and typewriting, aphorisms, essays, puzzles, jokes, competitions, and photos from Oliver exhibits at trade shows.

A number of articles focus on women in the office. “Is the girl typist doomed?” What is appropriate office dress? “Are men jealous of the position held by women in business life?” Reports on Oliver sales bring encouraging stories from around the world. “Scholastic work in West Africa is making rapid progress ... it is expected that the subjects of Typewriting and Shorthand will very soon be added to the curriculum of the schools. ... The unparalleled success of the ‘Oliver’ ... will, we venture to assert, be emulated in West Africa.” A recurring topic in the Letters section is the British railways’ practice of charging a fee for carrying a typewriter, which was classed with items such as bicycles. This, of course, is denounced as a “gross imposition” by many writers, and G. C. Mares himself—well known to collectors today for his 1909 guide to typewriters—contributes an article on the issue.
Portables, ETCetera by Will Davis

Friends, we again have a number of developments and observations here each of which by itself is not enough for a whole article, but all of which we feel should be aired out; this means it’s time for another PORTABLE POTPOURRI.

TIMELINES. Our recent examination of early portable typewriters of the type-bar class has caused us to wonder whether or not some sort of timeline would be useful for new collectors. In many other studies, Man applies a framework for reference so that those who follow can begin with an understanding, and we see no reason why such a thing here could not be examined for utility. Perhaps the earliest era, which we know to be populated in its first half essentially by the Blickensderfer and in its latter half by the Corona, could be called the “Three Bank Era.” We could then find a relatively clean break or at least identify a short transitional period in the early 1920s, which would open up the “Four Bank Era.” After this, there isn’t a great deal for a whole article, but all of which we know to be populated in the extreme dedication of the manufacturer in using the best possible material at every point in the machine. While the machine is a bit old-fashioned in its methods of assembly, in the sense that all mechanical fasteners are used with almost no welding, it is an impressive piece of work. The handwork that went into the machine would have been immense, and the machine types wonderfully, cleanly and accurately. Once again we’re reminded of the sharp drop that quality often took in typewriters over time and are also again forced to admit that while brand-new, workable machines are available, they don’t match up to those made before the 1960s or earlier.

NEW, OLD MANUFACTURER DISCOVERED. It isn’t too often today that a manufacturer heretofore totally unknown is discovered, but this did happen late in 2007. A machine appeared on the internet labeled as having been made by Dong Ah Precision Co., in South Korea. An almost identical machine, carrying a different brand name, was acquired in February of this year by Robert Messenger (in Australia). This basic design of machine had been a known quantity prior, being seen in the United States most often as the “Royal Safari III,” although it is not a common machine. The design is that of the earlier, large Silver-Seiko (Japan) machine most often seen as the Silver-Reed 500 in original trim. The amount of time these Korean descendants were made is unknown, but we suspect that production began around 1978 or so along with that of K-Mek, also of South Korea, who placed the small design of Silver-Seiko machine in production. Our educated guess is that the tooling for these was sold by Silver-Seiko to these two different makers in South Korea at that time. The smaller machine lived on yet again, in Bulgaria (as the Maritsa 30 among others) but it appears that the larger one did not reappear anywhere else after Korean production terminated. Again, while the machines of the larger ilk were previously known, the actual manufacturer had never been positively identified until late 2007 and none carrying the identifying proof was in the hands of a collector until 2008. Discoveries still happen, even today!

DISASSEMBLY AND REPAIR are becoming very large topics among the very rapidly growing set of persons engaged in the use of mechanical typewriters for actual work. Unfortunately, the entire perception of what these machines actually are is increasingly distant from the set of those persons beginning to use the machines; the new authors are from the modern, “black box,” disposable (or trade-in) culture which does little to examine or investigate. The end result increasingly is that damaged machines become broken machines; one person recently disassembled the whole carriage of a folding Corona in order to get the platen out—which is not required at all. Although I’ve attempted a brief online reference, it appears not to be enough, and we are wondering if the actual publication of some sort of generic booklet concerning the machines (increasingly found without instructions) would not be helpful.

Please contact me at the above e-mail address if you have any ideas about such a project, whether in print or online.

NEXT TIME: REMINGTON JUNIOR investigated and tested in our time honored style.

Emblem of an Era?
From Our Members

Shimer no. 2 and no. 1
Courtesy of Tony Casillo

Salter Perfect (no. 6)
Courtesy of Thomas Kramer

Proteus (Albus)
Courtesy of Thomas Fürtig

New stamp commemorating the centennial of the first Olivetti factory
Courtesy of Silvano Donadoni

“And here is Štěpán with his wide-carriage Kanzler.
Congratulations!!

In our next issue: Štěpán’s article on Karel Matouš, with photos.

“I am sending a picture of my latest and most precious acquisition to my collection: Štěpán, type 2, production number 0001, production date 26. 2. 2008, 3,68 kg, 52 cm. On this photo with his dad and with Blickenderfer, type 7, production number 65446, produced in 1901, keyboard in Russian alphabet.” — Štěpán Kučera

Courtesy of Tony Casillo
Letters

I am appearing in a film for a competition called “Lights, Sound, Action.” There are 30-40 film crews entered. They have 10 days in which to make their films.

The first day of filming went off very successfully, according to producers/directors, cameramen, soundmen, scriptwriters, you name it. The house was full of ’em, and if they thought I was a bit uptight because I was nervous about acting, it wasn’t that at all. With precious typewriters positioned everywhere, to me it was like having a herd of bulls in a china shop.

The story is this: A cult of members addicted to typewriter collecting is called the “Qwerty Quorum” (I didn’t have any input into the script at all). I, as their “guru”/leader, have them brainwashed into collecting typewriters and giving them to me as offerings. Our cult is “exposed” by a TV current affairs show. The cult appears to be made up of one male (me) and several females. Apparently the females do typing-finger exercises and emit some sort of exultation about the sounds of typewriters. The next day of filming concerns a “QQ meeting” (think AA), where members confess to their addiction and there is a group hug (the one bit I’m looking forward to).

Robert Messenger
Canberra

Long ago, in the mid 1960s, when I was in the army, we used the grey Royal typewriters for typing on 6-ply continuous fanfold paper with 5 layers of carbon therein. Because of the thickness of the forms, regular platens would not pull the paper through. The forms had small holes along both sides, and those holes aligned with the “spikes” of the platen. Thus the forms could easily be pulled through the machine. Because of this special adaptation, the machines were not called “typewriters.” The supply people and our supervisors were quite adamant that they be called by their proper name, “mills.” When we were finished typing the forms, we tore off the perforated side strips, tossed the carbon paper, and sent the forms on to NSA.

Richard Rye
Knoxville, Iowa

The current issue of ETCetera is wonderful! The production values are a delight for the eyes. I have had my “first read” twenty feet from where I opened the envelope and will read further in an armchair with a glass of port.

Martin Howard
Toronto

The latest ETCetera is really well done and quite informative. Thanks for doing such a great job and thanks to your contributors for some really terrific articles. I’m learning a lot—and enjoying all at the same time!

Mike Brown
Philadelphia

What terrific, meaty, fun pieces by Jos and Ed! You have done fantastically and I am really honored to be associated with so fine a journal. I liked the blurb in your editor’s notes on the Knickerbocker / Defiance. We have a stock certificate for the New Jersey company (Knickerbocker-

Peter Weil
Newark, Delaware

What a Vermont-filled issue! I learned so much about Mr. Livermore, and now I’ll always be looking for a Permutation Typograph in those boxes of odd stuff they sell at country auctions. I was just in Hartland a few weeks ago.

Ed Neuert
Richmond, Vermont

New on the Shelf

Lynda Becker: Portex

Lars Borrmann: Aspeed (Jap. L.C. Smith), Dankers, Remington Junior 3-bank, Royal flatbed assembled by Frister & Rossmann

Tim Champlin: Olivetti Lexikon 80, Orbis portable

Chuck Dilts and Rich Cincotta: decorated Sholes & Glidden

Nick Fisher: red Monarch Pioneer, Oliver 20, Remington 7 (script)

Thomas Fürtig: Fay Sholes 7, Jewett 1, Minerva 2, Pax 9 (Orga Privat), Proteus 1 (Albus), Sabb 5, Torpedo 18 brown woodgrain

Štěpán Kučera: Ideal A3, wide Kanzler 3 #825, Orel portable

Flavio Mantelli: Polygraph 1

Stellios Peios: Express, Williams 2, Yost 1

Richard Polt: Olympia SM5, Rapid 10 (Fox 23), Underwood (“Remington Noiseless Jr.”) #62256 (see ETCetera #66)

Marty Rice: Augusta (SIM), Hermes Ambassador

Joe Riedel: red & black 1930s Rheinmetall portable with Venezuelan keyboard

Sirvent brothers: Franklin type II #1251, Olympia Robust, Williams Academy (short carriage).

From OHA: blue Barr #2007, green Barr #2309, red Oliver portable #3100

Cor van Asch: Bar-Let 2, Corona 3 with light folding arms, Ideal A2, Mignon 4 aluminum, Williams 2

Wim Van Rompuy: American index, Carissima, Daugherty, Hammond 1, L.C. Smith brailler

Peter Weil: Bar-Lock 6 #35482

Marketplace

Wanted: pharmaceutical Blick typewheel; Commercial Visible in excellent condition. Wim Van Rompuy, wim@typewriter.be.
The mission of the Early Typewriter Collectors’ Association is to support communication and interaction within the community of typewriter lovers and collectors, and to encourage its growth. Our magazine, *ETCetera*, serves that mission by gathering and sharing knowledge about typewriter history with the community and beyond.

Learn more at etconline.org