

Øst

Newsletter of DANE/Danish Archive North East, a cultural resource center

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No. 1 Winter 2008

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Time to discover a little-known Danish inventor



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*Three months of com-
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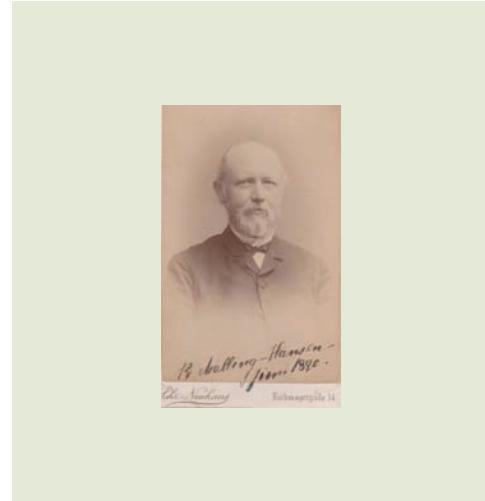
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Danish Inventor On The Ball

Scientist and Danish Inventor of the Writing Ball, known as the Father of Typewriter, Pastor Hans Johan Rasmus Malling-Hansen* had a talent for figuring out how things could be done in a simpler and better way.

Malling-Hansen wanted to be a minister, was apprenticed instead to a painter, graduated from a teacher training college and eventually prepared for theological studies with financial backing.

He didn't complete the theological training program — not a clerical error on his part— because his next choice led him to his true calling.



He became a teacher at the Institute for the Deaf-Mute in Copenhagen in 1859, where he inspired improved teaching methods as well as the conditions of the hearing impaired in Denmark and all Nordic countries. His work with the hearing challenged became the base for his later inventions and discoveries.

He didn't get there directly, criss-crossing to finish his theological studies, and in

1861 he left the Institute to devote himself entirely to religious studies.

But this was not to last very long, because already in 1862 he was offered a position at the Institute for the Deaf-Mute in Schleswig, which at the time was a part of Denmark. He accepted and was subsequently appointed principal of the institute in 1864.

But the war forced him back to Copenhagen, and in 1865 when Søren Heiberg re-



tired; Rasmus Malling-Hansen takes over the direction and keeps this position until

his death.

Now he starts working at the amazing invention — the Writing Ball.

He experimented by drawing letters on a porcelain sphere and with his brother-in-law Johan Alfred-Heberg as time-keeper figured out where to place the letters on the orb so as to speed up the process.

He observed that it was possible to achieve up to 12 signs per second using the hand alphabet which had a sign for each letter of the alphabet compared up to the four seconds of handwriting per second.

The idea of a machine that would use the fingers to write much faster than was possible with pen and ink began to grow. After experimenting the first model was probably ready for practical experiments in 1867. In 1870 Malling-Hansen received patent on his invention of the writing ball.

The writing ball received first prize medal at the Scandinavian industrial exposition in Copenhagen in 1872, "Vortschriffs medal" (Progress Medal) at the world exhibition in Vienna in 1873 and the gold medal at the world exhibition in Paris in 1878.

He continued to develop his inventions further, and in 1872 he launched the so-called tachygraph, a machine intended to be used for shorthand writing and which can manage up to 1200 keystrokes per minutes.

He also developed the first method in the world for dry copying – giving it the name xerography – and hence he is 66 years earlier than the Swedish-American Chester Carlson who in 1938 presented his copying machine, that later was named xerograph!

He was awarded the "Fortjenestemedalje i guld" (the Gold Medal for Meritorious Services) in Danmark, in 1873, the Austrian gold medal "Pro literis et artibus", in 1876 he was conferred the Knighthood of the Swedish Order of Vasa, and in 1880 he is made a Knight of Dannebrog in Denmark.

How It Works

From A Biography *Who is Rasmus-Malling-Hansen* by Sverre Avnskog

In contrast with the traditional qwerty-keyboard, the writing ball features letters placed in such a way that the est fingers most easily letters that also most quently and they also been in such a that one



Writing Ball 1878 Model

often, when typing on the writing ball, use a finger from the right and left hand, respectively, every second time. The vowels are placed to the left and the consonants to the right. With this system it is possible to achieve an extremely high typing speed, up to 800 strokes per minute, far exceeding the limits of the qwerty-keyboard.

On the writing ball the distance from key to letter is also very short, because the pistons penetrate directly through the hemisphere and straight onto the paper, while the competing machines had articulated pistons from the key to the letter – something that delayed the typing speed considerably. The competing machines also had the problem that the pistons got entangled into each other if the typing speed was too quick, and it was therefore necessary to place the letters in such a way that the speed was not too high. I have personally tried a writing ball, and it is a very different experience, compared to typing on the traditional typewriters. The keys are incredibly easy to handle, the move very quickly up and down, and in addition almost soundlessly. The mechanical parts have been

exquisitely refined, and also the design of the writing ball is industrial design at its very highest level!



Writing Ball 1870 Model



Perth Amboy Neighborhoods: The Danish Cycle: 1860-1935 DVD ready for the road

The story of the Danish community in Perth Amboy, New Jersey is told using an imaginary 1914 bicycle to visit city scenes.

The connection between the clay industry is explored, Danish businesses are featured, the homes and neighborhoods where Danes lived in the six wards of the city are shown.

The resources of a 1914 ward map, city directories, newspaper clipping, old photographs are blended with new photographs, Danish folk music and a narrative.

The DVD was produced by Dane and funded in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, by Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the New Jersey Historical Commission /Department of State.

Copies have been sent to local and state libraries and other appropriate groups. The Danish Cycle is approximately 50 minutes long and is available. Contact DANE's office 732/287-6445 and leave a message.

* This is from Sverre Avnskog

PS! If you want to be 100% accurate about Malling-Hansen's name, he was actually baptised with the names in this order: Hans Rasmus Malling Johan Hansen. It was when he was grown up, around 1882/83 he started to use a hyphen and wrote his name Rasmus Malling-Hansen. DS



John Otto Prang Pedersen Exhibit

Pedersen Exhibit

Above from right to left, Mayor Joseph Vas, Agnes Jespersen-Hagmueller, Jack Kjersgaard, Joan Seguine-LeVine, Newton LeVine, Bob Thompson).

On January 13th, 2008 the work of Perth Amboy's Danish artist, John Otto Prang Pedersen's was honored.

The opening reception for "Eyes of the City" — curated by Olga M. Bautista was sponsored by Perth Amboy Gallery - Center for the Arts.

The exhibition was possible thanks to the support of Mayor Joseph Vas, the Urban Enterprise Zone and the Business Improvement District.

The exhibit was drawn from private collectors and DANE's archives.

Perth Amboy Gallery-Center for the Arts
211 Front Street
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861
732-826-8083

International Malling-Hansen Society

The Malling-Hansen Society was founded in May 6th, in Copenhagen 2006 with the conviction that Malling-Hansen and his inventions and his discoveries deserve to be known to a much larger worldwide audience. The organization's website — www.malling-hansen.org/

Fastelavn



DANE will celebrate Fastelavn on Sunday, February 17th. Fastelavn is an extremely old holiday kind of like Danish Halloween. We will wear costumes. We will slå katten af tønden ("hit the cat out of the barrel"). We will have Fastelavnsbolle, a round sweet roll usually covered with icing and filled with cream. In earlier times, it meant the beginning of fasting, preparing yourself for Lent. Fastelavn also meant having a lot of fun — which we shall do.

Holidays and



Feb 3 Carnival

Mar 20 Maundy Thursday

Mar 20 Vernal equinox

Mar 21 Good Friday

Mar 23 Easter Day

Mar 24 Easter Monday

Mar 30 Daylight Saving Time starts

Apr 18

Prayer Day

Observances



Fastelavn

Forårsjævndøgn

Skærtorsdag

Langfredag

Påskedag

2. påskedag

Sommertid starter

St. Bededag

Mange Tak

V.	Aagesen
K.	Andersen
G.	Aylesworth
J &	J Billich
H.	Bisgaard
R.	Borup
D.	Borup
M.	Clark
I.	Darroch
J.	Demgard
E.	Feltus
J.	Hines
M.	Jensen
H.	Kofod
M.	Krogh
V & O.	Little
M.	Meyer
M.	Mitrosky
E.	Nielsen
E.	Patterson
U.	Pedersen
C & J.	Pedersen
J.	Rodgaard
L.	Sorensen
C.	Sorensen
R.	Thompson
D.	Wilkison
and all those who donated to help fund our Julefest 2007	

The President's Letter

Hello!

We are all taking a breath after the busy Christmas holidays. The Christmas party was great with wonderful food and music. It was so good to see everyone and celebrate.

As we look toward Spring, we are all getting ready for our Fastelavn celebration on February 17. This will be my first celebration of Fastelavn and I am really looking forward to it! The children will be there and everyone has been asked to wear costumes. It should be great fun!

DANE is expanding our Board of Directors and in the next issue of Øst we will be introducing the new Board members. We are really looking forward to getting some new views on what DANE should be doing and where we should be going.

As always, we continue to hear from many people looking for their Danish ancestors. Our website recently passed the 10,000 visitor mark! The website has now been active for just over 5 years and it helps us make a lot of connections with people all over the world.

Wendy

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Edison, NJ 08817

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Calendar

Sunday Feb 17 Genealogy Meeting
2-5 PM Celebrating a childrens' Fastalavn

Sunday Mar 16 Genealogy Meeting
2-5PM The ships they came on

Sunday Apr 20 Genealogy Meeting
2-5PM To be announced

June 20-23 GCEL Convention

Sunday May 4 Memorial Service at the Danish Home
2:30 PM 855 New Durham Rd

