

The Real Story of the Brosette Typewriter

And its successor the Jaykay Portable...©Jan. 2018 (revised)

By Michael A. Brown (I welcome any updates or corrections at: typex1@aol.com)



Above: 11 assorted Brosettes from the author's collection. Below: Later-style Brosette typewriter ad.

Next page: German ad for the earlier-style Brosette typewriter.

Brosette die elegante Kofferschreibmaschine für jedermann

... im Arbeitszimmer
immer willkommen für jeden Beruf

... auf der Reise
elegant und handlich

... im Büro
eine unverzichtliche
Hilfe, die leicht und
doch so leistungsfähig

... zu Hause
von der ganzen
Familie gern
benutzt

- Formschön
- Blendfreie elfenbein oder grüne Tastatur
- Leichter Anschlag
- Klare Schrift
- Saubere, tadellose Durchschläge
- Wagenbreite 24 cm, daher ausreichend für jede Korrespondenz

Die „Brosette“ ist mit Anschlagregler ausgestattet. Sie wird in den Schriftarten Pica und Perl hergestellt, aus hochwertigem Stahl gefertigt, ist stabil und doch so leicht!

Jeder Fachhändler wird Ihnen gerne die „Brosette“ vorführen. Sie ist übrigens auch bei günstiger Ratenzahlung zu erwerben.

Fabrikation:

Metallwerk Max Brose & Co.
Werk 2
Coburg / Bayern

NORMAL-AUSFÜHRUNG:
Die „Brosette“ wird in Glanzlack — grün oder silbergrau — mit grünen oder elfenbeinfarbenen Tasten hergestellt. Sperrholzkoffer — elegant und form schön — mit grünem oder gelbem Kunstlederbezug.

SPEZIAL-AUSFÜHRUNG:
die gleiche Maschine, aber Plastik-Lederersatz-Koffer m. Innentasche.

LUXUS-AUSFÜHRUNG:
auch hier die gleiche Maschine, aber eleganter Vollleder-Koffer mit Innentasche.

Die Maschine wiegt mit Koffer 3,4 kg. — Der Koffer ist 15 cm hoch, er stellt 33 x 33 cm.



Brosette
die ideale Kleinschreibmaschine für Jedermann

- Federnder und leichter Anschlag
- Sauberes Schriftbild
- Hohe Leistung
- Größte Stabilität
- Lange Lebensdauer
- Nach deutschen Normen
- Herausnehmbare Schreibwalze
- Maschine abnehmbar vom Bodenbrett
- Konstruktion durch Patente geschützt

„Brosette“ ist im wahren Sinne des Wortes die ideale Kleinschreibmaschine für Jedermann.

... dass Max Brose in den 50er Jahren auch eine Schreibmaschine konstruierte und vertrieb? 1959 verkaufte er das Geschäftsfeld jedoch, um sich auf das Kerngeschäft, die Automobilindustrie, zu konzentrieren.

As many already know, during WWII much of Germany's infrastructure was destroyed. This would have included typewriters. Apparently, by the late 40s and early 50s, businessman and metal factory owner Max Brose, saw the need for new typewriters and was convinced he could help fill it. Enter the Brosette, a fairly lightweight, low profile, well built, and reasonably priced portable typewriter for the masses.

But this story and research really begins with collectors who have come before me. Among them are Georg Sommerregger, Will Davis, Richard Polt, and Robert Messenger, to name a few. Special thanks to long-time German collectors **Norbert Schwarz, Thomas Fürtig** and **a key source who wants to be unnamed**.

Their help and information proved to be important.

Noted collector Robert Messenger described his Brosette this way:

`"At first glance, the Brosette is yet another of what appears to be extremely well-designed, well-built post-World War II German portable typewriters. And in this case appearances do not deceive, as the Brosette is not just a beautiful looking little typewriter, but a delight to use as well."`

From Switzerland, another collector, Adowa Bagilini commented about her

Brosette: `"This is an odd bird, the Brosette. I had heard of its extremely rare, almost-mythical nature, and so when one popped up on eBay, I leapt in and bid at the last moment and won the auction. It arrived in functioning, but grimy condition, and I scrutinized it carefully to see what was so special about it. One thing is certain - this all-metal typewriter from the mid-50s is built like a tank.`

`There are some quirks to it: the margin settings are reversed, for example, so the right margin stop controls the left side of the paper. You quickly get used to it, like riding backwards in the train. Because of this, the bell is also on the left.....and also note that the numbers increase from left to right, exactly the reverse from every other typewriter I've used."`

Collector, Fernandez Boan, from South America described his this way:

`"Brosettes are not that common. The typewriter is as solid as German typewriters used to be. Beautiful lines, and complete."`

Now back to the early researchers: Through their early efforts some information has been gleaned about these previously little known machines and I would like to acknowledge and thank them, and anyone else who worked to bring this story to light.

Sadly, some of the early information has been stated incorrectly, other facts have been slightly twisted. The good news is that some of this early research turned up some good facts and interesting speculation.

After studying Brosettes (and acquiring 12 machines) for over two years and contacting many of the current owners of these semi-scarce Germany anomalies, I have been able to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding these coveted portables. However, I must confess, there are still some illusive aspects to this line of machines yet to be solved. For instance, very little is known of its successor, the Jaykay typewriter. (More about that later.) **Update: Jaykay info has been found!**

One of the best ways to gather facts about this typewriter is to examine (close up) as many machines in the run as possible. So I set out to do just that! Since beginning this project I have managed to acquire a number of different examples. Most coming from Europe, and a couple from the USA.

So what is the Brosette story? Well here is the Wikipedia version about the beginning of the **Metallwerk Max Brose GmbH**, of Coburg, in northern Bavaria, West Germany up to the beginning of their typewriter involvement.



Above: Max Brose (owner) & Ernst Jühling (partner)

1908–1955

***Brose Fahrzeugteile GmbH & Co. KG** is an automotive supplier. The family-owned company has its headquarters in Coburg, Germany.*

Max Brose opened a trading company for automobile accessories in Berlin on March 4, 1908, while also working as general agent for his father's car body manufacturing company in Wuppertal.

After the First World War, Max Brose and Ernst Jühling, who grew up in Coburg, founded Metallwerk Max Brose & Co. in Coburg on June 14, 1919.^[1] Operating as a general partnership, the company manufactured and sold metal goods, tools, devices and materials especially for vehicles and airplanes. For this purpose, they took over the staff, buildings and machines from "Metallwaren Haußknecht & Co." located in the Ketschendorfer Straße.

The company initially used the trade name of "Atlas" for the accessory and supply segment, producing vehicle lights, signaling equipment, fuel and oil canisters, jacks and air pumps. In October 1926, the company patented its crank drive for lowerable windows. After buying the rights to use the patent for the wrap sling brake from the American company Ternstedt, series production of mechanical window regulators started in 1928. Commonly referred to as a window crank apparatus, this device was also manufactured for buses, trains and streetcars. Windshields and ventilation systems expanded the range of products in the years following.

Production switched to the 20-liter standard canister for the German Wehrmacht (armed forces) in 1936 and to contact fuses and impact grenades during World War II. At the time, nearly 900 employees worked for Brose and towards the end of the war some 200 Soviet prisoners of war, who lived next to the plant in a camp run by the German Wehrmacht.

In 1945, the company was placed under trusteeship for three years by the American military government and produced household devices such as ovens and irons with fewer than 100 employees. Production expanded into a new segment beyond automotive accessories with the manufacture of a portable typewriter called "Brosette" in 1953.

That brings us up to the Brosette Typewriter which was patented in 1949, but it has been reported that its inventor Fritz Kunze, of Coburg began developing it in 1948. In 1953 the first machines rolled off the production line and it is said that the machine was made up of 500 parts and in that year about 60% of the workforce were women. In the past it has been said that Brose took a curious side-trip from the car parts business to create the Brosette. But I see it differently. I believe he was a visionary and knew that after the war the market in Europe was strong for typewriters. He got into producing them at just the right time, and even more impressive, he got out of the typewriter business at precisely the right time. He saw the popularity of the electric typewriter, and knew it was time to end the Brosette. Or possibly perceived that the auto parts business as more profitable. By 1959 car parts were in even bigger demand, and he already had mastered that business.

Interesting that contained in factory records it explains how this machine got its name. The factory owner **Brose** combined with his partner's daughter's name who was Charlot**tte** merged to become **Brosette**.

(Partial) PATENT SAMPLE on next page:

Erteilt auf Grund des Ersten Überleitungsgesetzes vom 8. Juli 1949
(RGBl. S. 173)

BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND



AUSGEGEBEN AM
11. JUNI 1953

DEUTSCHES PATENTAMT
PATENTSCHRIFT

Nr. 879 248
KLASSE 15g GRUPPE 40a
H 493a Kl. 1/55

Fritz Kunze, Coburg
ist als Erfinder genannt worden

Fritz Kunze, Coburg

Tastenhebelantrieb für Schreibmaschinen

Patentiert im Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 21. Juli 1950 an

Patentanmeldung bekanntgemacht am 16. August 1951

Patentursprung bekanntgemacht am 23. April 1953

Zu der Patentschrift 879 248
Kl. 15g Gr. 40a

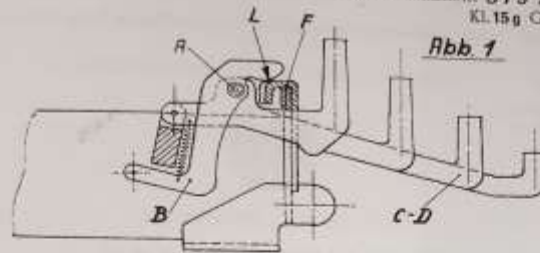


Abb. 1

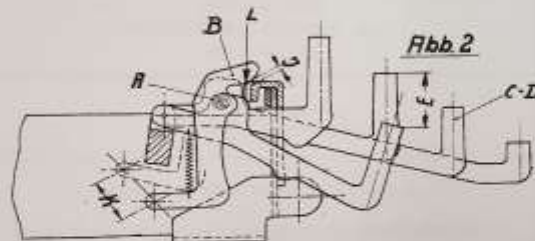


Abb. 2

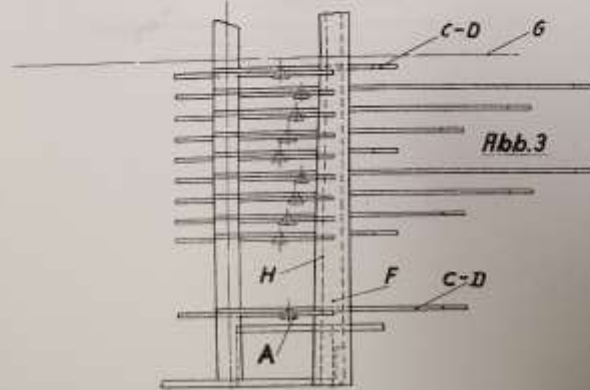


Abb. 3

It is almost certain that all the Brosettes were produced at the Coburg, Germany plant (located at Ketschendorferstr 44) between the years 1953-59.

Reportedly they were to be sold through mail-order as there was no organized distribution network. However in a book titled *Wirtschaft im Coburger Land*, by Walter Muth, we learn that a Dusseldorf company Schultz & Co. appear to be distributors of the Brosette. It states that “representatives often concluded partial payments with their customers, which they then forwarded to Brose.” It was also exported. This book also makes the claim that 50,000 Brosette’s were made.

Ed. Note: This could just be puffing and certainly seems possible but seems unlikely given the known serial number run of the Brosette.



Above: A factory employee checks the quality of the Brosette line shift lever.

Photo: Prof. Dr. Gregor Schöllgen

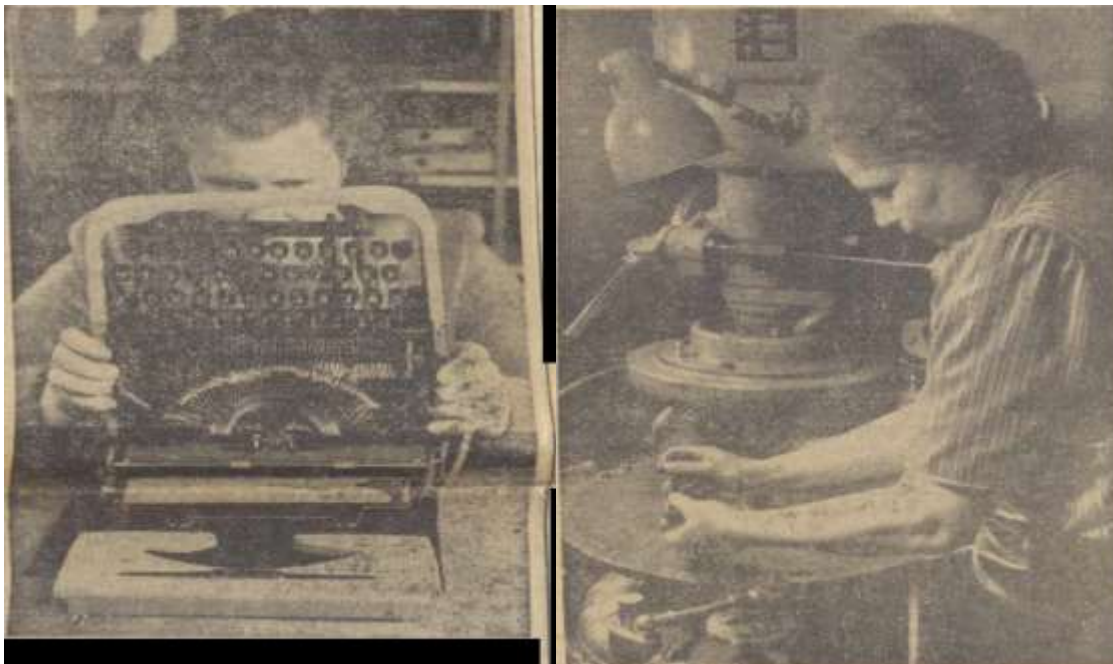
Near the end of the life-cycle of the Brosette, it appears that only about 150 units were produced in 1959, and none produced during that year have surfaced among collectors. General speculation by collectors worldwide is that the serial number sequence began at around 10,000 and if true that would mean only about 36,000 Brosettes were ever produced. This is a fairly low production for a portable typewriter manufactured in the 1950s. In contrast Underwood, Remington, and Royal Typewriter companies produced portables in the millions during this same period.



Above: From the German newspaper "Tageblatt" article date 29 May 1953.

A factory worker can be seen assembling new Brosette typewriters.

Below: From the same news article, two different woman inspecting new Brosette typewriters at the factory and making parts for same.



SERIAL NUMBER INFORMATION

A serial numbers list has been produced and shown below.

1953	10,000-----13,500
1954	13,501----- 21,181
1955	21,182-----27,087
1956	27,088-----34,962
1957	34,963-----41,751
1958	41,752-----46,089
1959	46,090 ----- 46,160

In addition to the “normal” serial number, it appears that Brosettes had another number stamped under the carriage. The very earliest have no carriage number. The first known carriage number begins at serial 12,122. After that the carriage number can be found under the right side of the carriage. Then at about serial number 27,515 and after the carriage number is located under the left side of the carriage. These carriage numbers generally run approximately 10,000 numbers behind the serial number.

CLEARING UP MISINFORMATION

Previously it has been reported that Brosettes were made in four different models. The Brosette, the Brosette Spezial, the Brosette Luxus, and the Brosette Export. This is most likely incorrect information. In truth, there are only two different models. **The Brosette** and the **Brosette Export**. And even this is misleading, because almost every

Brosette ever produced is very similar. There are a few minor variations which we will discuss a little later. The confusion seems to arise from a brochure that mentions these different names (see below), but after translating the information to English from German it seems obvious that these other names refer to the different carry cases that were offered.



Additionally, I believe I have seen enough of a cross-section of surviving machines to make this claim with reasonable confidence.

So the correct story is that the two model names are **Brosette & Brosette Export**.

Interesting to note here that it appears that the Brosette Export is quite scarce and this writer has only located five or six surviving examples. Further analysis appears to indicate that they were only produced between serial numbers at approximately 35,000-38,000. (This is just an educated guess on my part.)

See picture of Brosette Export logo below.



The three styles of carry cases offered were the “normal” cloth covered hard wood Brosette, the plastic covered cardboard soft case with a zipper called the “Spezial,” and the fancy leather case called the “Luxus.” The latter two contained small pouches to hold paper, etc.

MORE ABOUT CARRY CASES

From all I can glean the “normal” wooden cases came in three colors: Red (only one example known), Black (only one example known), Green, and Tan being the most common color.



The “Spezial” cases appear to be quite scarce and were only made in two colors, Blue and Tan.

The “Luxus” case is among the rarest with only one example known to this writer. That case is leather with “pockets” inside and is a Carmel color.



Additionally, the earliest known cases are noted for having a leather strap as the handle. This feature occurs up until about 20,000 and after that the handles are plastic.

EARLY BROSETTES

As an observation from a 40+ year repairman in my opinion these cases are nicely constructed, especially the wooden ones. The plastic ones do tend to fall apart, and the Luxus is well done.

Keys to open the lock for these cases all appear to be the same and are somewhat hard to find. (See below.)



Tip: To remove a Brosette from its base lift the machine straight up. It is held in place by two rubber grommets. (Exception is the Luxus case which is held by one screw in addition to the grommets, which can be seen on the bottom of the case. It is located dead center between two other screws.

BREAKING DOWN THE VARIOUS MODELS

The general school of thought is that Brosettes were made in two models (or levels), referred to as “early” and “late.” For my presentation I would like to divide Brosettes into three categories; Early, Middle, and Late.



These machines can be described as serial numbers 10,000 (This is the common school of thought where they began, but one source implies they began around 4,000) and run to about serial number 20,000.

They are most easily recognizable by the case having a leather handle, the carriage return lever being quite short, and a thick wire paper support.

But the easiest give-away is the long silver spear on which the logo is engraved measuring $7\frac{1}{4}$ " For my money this is one of the prettiest logos to ever be attached to a portable typewriter. See below.



(Ed. Note: A little known fact is that on these early Brosettes the wire paper support activated the paper release mechanism by pushing the wire toward the rear of the machine.)

Additionally, the serial number location for this group can be found on the left side of the frame by viewing the machine from the bottom. The early ones have no bell, no touch control lever, and the paper bail does not have a number scale inscribed into them. (The first known one to have a bell and number scale on the bail is serial number 19,697.



These machines (to my knowledge) all have green keytops, and the bodies are found in either green or tan. There are three notable exceptions and that being the two oldest known surviving Brosettes which are black in color, with black key tops, and the other is red in color with black key tops.

THE MIDDLE BROSETTES



Short logo spear begins around serial # 22,000 in 1955 (see below). This spear measures 5 1/4"



Additionally, the paper support is now a long silver bar that folds forward toward the typebasket. (See next column.)



And the serial number appears at the bottom of the frame as seen from under the typewriter. See below.



The serial number location continues in this location throughout the rest of the production. At this same 25,000 serial number the carriage return lever is longer than the earlier production and it remains this way till the end of production.

THE LATE BROSETTES

These machines begin around serial number 31,000 and also have the short logo spear. They are distinguished by being silver colored with white keytops. In this final series the paper support is a silver bar that folds down sideways to “hide” behind the paper table. The highest known surviving serial number is 45,431 which was reportedly produced in 1958.



NOTE ON COLORS & KEYTOPS

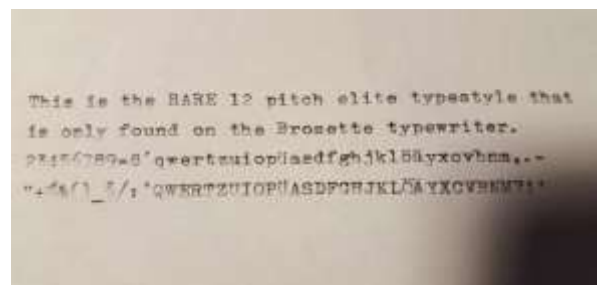
Noted collector Thomas Fürtig of Germany provided the following: “The first model is known in black crinkle, red crinkle, green crinkle, green, creme-olive (or Tan). The later models are known in green crinkle, green, and silver. In total 6 different colours are known, but maybe there are more?” He says: The earlier ones have semi-round flat key tops and the later ones have round high key tops.

MINOR VARIATIONS

The majority of known surviving Brosettes are all very similar with an occasional variation found from time-to-time.

To my knowledge they were only made in 10-pitch (80 on scale) or 12-pitch (90 on scale). The 12-pitch being the much rarer of the two. Nearly all are qwertz keyboards with a few known qwertys. There is at least one known with a Spanish, keyboard.

TYPESTYLES



A WORD ON PRICES

In 1955 the Brosette was listed for DM 320.

I have seen Brosettes sell in Europe in the range of 75-200 Euros and then add shipping to the US at another 65 Euros. (About \$160.-265. US) some of the rarer models can fetch up to 300 Euros plus shipping. Brosettes are not commonly found in the US but occasionally turn up overseas.

A BROSETTE ANOMALIE

The Ribbon Position Indicator;

2 Dimples vs. 3

An odd feature of the Brosette is that the ribbon position indicator located to the right of the keyboard can have either two dimples or three. During the production run it can change from machine to machine, which seems strange to me. The very earliest machines have no dimples of any kind and only print on the top half of the ribbon. On the rest of production ones with three dimples are colored: Blue, Silver, and Yellow. The Blue yields the top of the ribbon. The lever does not detent to the middle dimple, and the bottom (yellow) dimple is the stencil position.

On the two dimple models, the “dots” are blue which yields the top half of the ribbon, and yellow, which activates the stencil position. **For the most part the Brosette, it is designed to only strike the top part of the ribbon. The exceptions seem to be the Export Model and the Jaykays which are**

usually equipped with a bi-chrome mechanism.

Noted German collector Thomas Fürtig explains it this way: “(You must look very carefully on the frame markings for the ribbon selector. Not all machines with 3 markings have really all three positions, for example my own Spezial has three markings black, white and yellow, but only 2 positions, the upper one is black, the lower one is stencil. Standard and Export have three markings: blue, yellow and red, corresponding to the positions black, stencil and red).”

BROSETTE: THE “DARK SIDE”

This may be the most difficult part of this story to write. About half-way through my research into the great little machines I discovered that in May of 2015 a story reported in a Coburg newspaper that the descendants of Max Brose wanted to petition the town to have a street in front of the factory named after Max. Problem was it was brought to light that during the war, Max was a low-level member of the Nazi party. (See picture)



Eventually, the town council voted to approve the measure and today the street is named as seen in the picture below.



Personally, as a writer and collector of these machines, none of this matters to me. I see these as typewriters, and stories in our history. I try to stay out of the political arena, and just learn from history and the machines themselves.

I'm certain some will be offended at learning this information, but I am merely trying to relate the facts here.

FACTOID

According to Wikipedia: In 2011 Brose is the world's fifth-largest family-owned automotive supplier based on turnover.

DESIGNER & ENGINEER OF THE BROSETTE

It started making typewriters in 1953, with **Berthold Baumann** as head of the typewriter section and **Fritz Kunze**, who had trained as a letterpress printer and worked pre-war for the German Government, the chief engineer and designer of the **Brosette portable**. FROM ROBERT MESSENGER

Feb, 27, **1935**, Berthold Baumann applied for a US patent, assigned to **Triumph**, for a silent carriage return device which "diminished" the "disadvantage of an irregular [left-hand] margin

FROM THE BROSE COMPANY RECORDS;

THE BROSETTE POEM (Translated to English by google)

The Brosettist's Lamentation!
Well five years have passed since that time, when our chief declared himself ready. Typewriters to build cute, small and beautiful.
He has often seen her in a dream and thought to himself, as the custom, what the others can do, I can do that too.

A few men then joined together and the moaning and groaning began:

Ah Brosette, yes, ah Brosette,
why are you causing me so much pain?

Ah Brosette, yes, ah Brosette,
my heart is already slowly breaking.
Too bad you do not feel,
as you play with the nerves,
where I for the little money,
so must fight in this world.
Do not be angry when before
to dump on the table, because the
nerves tore me,
I have so hurt you.
Ah Brosette, yes, ah Brosette,
after that I regretted it.

If you also torment us with grief and sorrow, we are proud that you are liked all over the world.

You are now traveling to Belgium,
France, Portugal,
Holland, Sweden, Hong Kong and
God knows wherever.

But one has not been installed,
the nerves that you have stolen from us.

But we all love you dearly,
even if early around seven o'clock
some moans loudly in the enterprise
Ah, Brosette, yes, ah, Brosette.

REPAIR ISSUES

Typical issues on both Brosettes and Jaykays are a platen detent roller and flat spring that are broken and/or missing. Also many times the small plastic “caps” that cover the various levers like ribbon position lever, the paper release lever (on later models), and carriage release levers, are either cracked or missing.



Jaykey photos on this page credits: Richard Polt collection.
Serial Number: 64,857

JAYKEYS

The plot thickens



Above: Trademark from the Internet

Application filed: 7 February 1963



Of the several known surviving Jaykeys, they are likely seen with QWERTY keyboards.



Above: On Instagram "the Good for Nothing" posted this JayKay with the left side of his logo broken and partly missing. Serial Number unknown.



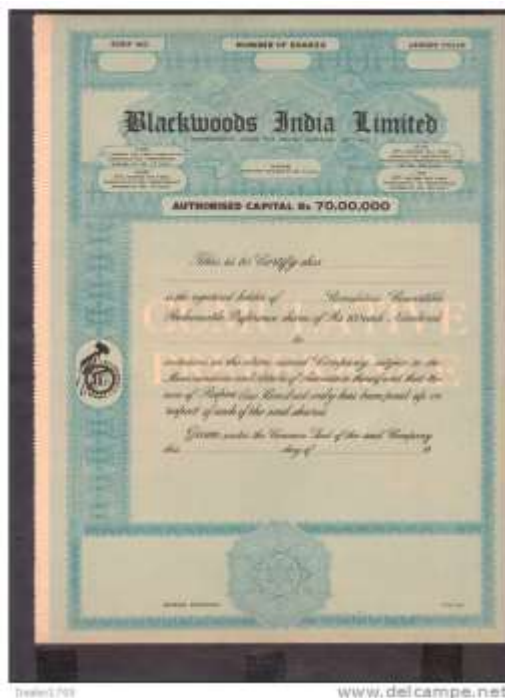
Above: Jaykay Serial Number: 85,256 with spear logo. This machine is an anomaly and does not fit into my serial number theory. Maybe the serial number was listed incorrectly.



JAYKAYS ORIGINS

For those who may not know Jaykay was the successor to the Brosette. At the start of this research very little was known about this machine by collectors and to this writer only one extant example was known to US collectors. That is the machine in the stable of fellow-collector, Richard Polt when he was lucky enough (with help) to find it in the UK.

Aside from that, facts about Jaykays were awash in muddy water. Richard originally wondered if these Jaykays were actually manufactured in India, or merely assembled there using parts from Germany. I must say that I too was skeptical about India manufacturing claim. Fortunately for us we were able to gain access to Brose factory records and archives, and hope this information will help clear up this mystery. From these records we learn that the company behind the Jaykay typewriter initially was Blackwood's India Ltd. of Calcutta. They were formed in 1940 when they merged with Blackwood's Bryson & Co. Ltd. From 1946-57 they made noticeable progress in the office equipment business by marketing products from other major manufactures. For example, they sold Monroe Calculators, Paragon Continuous Stationery, machines from Underwood, I.B.M. and others as well.



Above: A Blackwood's Stock Certificate. Notice the JK logo in the middle left. In mid-1959 Blackwood's imported the machinery and left-over typewriter parts from Brose in Germany with intent to manufacture the small typewriter in India.

These items were sent to Calcutta via ship.

According to the book titled "India Since 1947: The Independent Years," in 1961 Blackwood's India Ltd. Of Calcutta was renamed JK Business Machines. It is unclear to this writer what the initials JK stand for, if anything.

In 1962 Blackwood's Bryson & Co. Ltd. Were listed as the London representatives.

Their address was given as 24 Eastcheap, London E.C.3

During 1963-64 it was reported the Jaykay exported 600 portable typewriters. My gut tells me that these may be the machines that were reportedly shipped to New Zealand and/or England.

In 1964 the Delhi Progressive Enterprises mentions on page 253 that partners Lila Ram, and Kishan Chand, of a company called Asian Typewriters Corporation located at 44/3 Regal Building above Standard Restaurant, New Delhi are authorized distributors for the Jaykay Portable Typewriter and are dealers in new and second hand machines.

In the West Bengal Labour Gazette dated Jan. 1966 on pgs. 94-100 I found reference to a labor dispute between JK and the workmen who were represented by Blackwoods Labours' Association.

In this agreement (effective Dec. 4, 1965) the company wanted a guaranteed production scheme by the workers. If met the workers would receive bonuses.

They proposed that 600 complete saleable machines by April, 1966, 650 by July, 1966, 700 by Oct. 1966, 750 by Feb. 1967, and 800 by June of 1967. One of the incentive clauses reads as follows:

"It is agreed that the workmen shall give the minimum production of 500 complete saleable typewriters per month. It is further agreed that if in any month the production goes down below 500 complete saleable typewriters, the difference between the actual production and the minimum level, i.e. 500, will be compensated by the workmen from the better production in the following month or months, as the case may be, and the production incentive bonus beyond 500 for the better month or months will be calculated only after such compensation has been provided for. It is further agreed that the workmen shall have no claim of any incentive whatsoever for the lower production month or months so compensated for. The workmen will, however not compensate for lower production during the Puja holidays month though they assure that there will not be any slow-down or with-holding of production...."

The company further stated: "The management pointed out to the workmen that the Company is suffering huge losses year after year and further pointed out that

with the existing low quantum of production it would be impossible for the Company to run the factory any longer unless the minimum guaranteed production of 600 complete saleable typewriters was given by the workman."

But in the publication "Capital: A Weekly Journal of Commerce, Industry, and Finance," a person named P.R. Singhevee was listed as Secretary & Chief Accountant. Apparently JK was still in business in 1979.

One of the most intriguing "snippets" I found mentions Jaykay portable with Hindi/English script (type?). Not sure if these were ever produced but something we could all be on the lookout for.

THE JAYKAY IS BORN

On June 1, 1960 the Blackwood's Co. earned an industry license for the production. Their factory was constructed in the shortest time possible (five months).

And on this date the Jaykay was born. The records state that the capacity of the factory was 12,000 machines per year. It also implies that there was a five year plan.

This would lead one to believe that 60,000 were going to be built. However, the only concrete evidence we have regarding production numbers are serial numbers for five surviving machines. Richard Polt's serial # 64,857 and another machine online gives its serial number as 85,889. This would lead us to speculate that we believe at least 30,000 were actually made, and possibly another 10,000, but it would be nice to have more hard data. We do not know the starting serial or ending serial numbers of the Jaykay. We do know that

the Brosette ended at about 46,000. Did the Jaykay start right after that? If so then to assume 40,000 were made in total. But the earliest known serial for a Jaykay is #51,288. It has been determined that Jaykay became the first portable to be manufactured in India.

ABOUT GODREJ TYPEWRITER

Earlier in 1948 the Godrej Company pioneered the first Indian-made OFFICE-SIZED typewriters. However the idea was put on the "back-burner" so that they could manufacture ballot boxes for India's first general election which was held in 1951-52. Then Godrej started actually making typewriters in 1955. They stopped in 2009 and some of their remaining inventory was turned into a piece of "pop-art" by artist Jeremy Mayer of California. He used 60 typewriters to create a 13 ½ foot tall lotus and three mandalas, which opens and closes with a remote switch. (A *mandala is a geometric figure representing the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism*). These were on display in 2016 at the Godrej lab, in Mumbai, India. See photo below.



TWO DIFFERENT STYLES OF JAYKAY

What I can say is that from viewing the several photos of some of the surviving Jaykay machines it appears there are two versions.

The early version appears to have square-style key buttons and has the logo affixed to the center of the ribbon cover and embedded into a spear similar to that of the Brosette.

On the back panel is the imprint seen below:



The serial number of this one is #51,288 and this leads me to speculate that these early ones were made from left over parts and partially assembled machines that were sent from the Brose factory when the sold the rights to Blackwood's of India. Please note that the imprint says "product of" not "made or manufactured by" Blackwood's.

The later one has rounder key buttons very similar to that of the Brosette. And the logo is affixed to the left side of the ribbon cover (in script typeface style).

On the rear panel of those machines is the following imprint: Please note that this one by J. K. Business Machines LTD. Calcutta says "Made in India."



I believe this is the clue when the production actually began in India. This machine is serial # 69,344. I have seen another Jaykay with this imprint bearing the serial #85,899. It is my estimation that this is among the highest known serial number of a Jaykay, and this would lead me to further speculate that production probably starts around 50,000 and ends somewhere around 86,000. This would put my educated 'guesstimate' at around 36,000 units produced.

Other evidence is offered by my pen-pal friend, Rajesh Sharma, a fellow typewriter collector from Indore, India. When I asked his help to learn more about Jaykays in India he said, "Jaykay machines were very popular in the 60s, 70s and 80s in India." He also speculated that the machines were merely labeled "Jaykay," in India but were really made in Germany. However, given the factory records from Brosette, I believe this question has now been answered.

I believe that all of the Jaykays were built and/or assembled in India. Possibly only the very first batch were made from “left-over” parts and machines that were purchased from Brose.

Further evidence regarding Jaykays comes from Richard Polt’s blog where he posted the story of his Jaykay typewriter acquisition. After his story was posted a former employee of an office machine dealer (1964) named Murray Belk of New Zealand posted on Polt’s site that his company had imported Jaykays from India.

I did make an effort to glean information by contacting several folks in New Zealand and Australia, but did not receive any useful responses from that part of the world. Another guess on my part would say that Jaykays first came on the market in 1961 or 62 and seems likely to have ended around the early 70s. A trade journal shows them still in business in 1970.

A NOTE ABOUT JAYKAY BODY COLORS, KEYBUTTONS, TYPE PITCHES, AND CASES

Of the known Jaykay typewriters that I was able to see and examine (about eight in total) they all appear to have green key buttons. Additionally, I have noted that the survivors have only been found in two different colors. They are either light green or light gold. The pitches of Jaykays have appeared in both 10-pitch pica and 12-pitch elite. Carry cases for Jaykays are different than Brosettes and seem to be scarce. Two known case colors are two-tone grey over white, and blue over white. They are constructed from thin wood and

lined with a form of cardboard, and do not seem to be very sturdy. Richard Polt told me that he believes his case was made in England, based on an imprint on the latch mechanism.

INDIA IS RIGHTFULLY PROUD

From the Brosette factory records we learn the following: “The production of “Jaykay” writing machines was incorporated with Indian capital, Indian labor and under Indian administration, without any foreign technical, financial or other cooperation. Blackwood’s is therefore proud to be the first manufacture of small-scale (i.e. portable) writing machines in India and to have recorded this complicated and precise work within a record time. It goes in favor of the administration and the technicians who were in West Germany for only a short time. The Jaykay is made from 91% Indian parts, and only 9% foreign parts.”

AT THE JAYKAY FACTORY

In 1960 Blackwood’s was employing 450 people, and that was up from 200 in 1958. Their completely new plant had hopes to reach 500 employees. Capacity of the system had been fully achieved. The staff employed in the factory was usually made up of the educated, previously unemployed, middle-class. Well educated boys had been taken as apprentices and had been trained to carry out learned and semi-skilled work. They were hoping to have machines (Jaykays) on the market in 1961. *(Ed. Note: Some of these records regarding Brose and Jaykay have been translated via “google.” Some of this may have been slightly “twisted” in the translations, but I have done my absolute best to bring you the correct story. I apologize if I fell short in any of my assessments in this regard.)*