

Blots Pen & Ink Supplies

AUTOMATIC PENS

Automatic pens were originally called BOXALL Pens after their manufacturer Mr FWG (Fred) Boxall who was certainly making the pens in the late 1920's. They were originally made in brass but as this became expensive it was changed to the nickel silver still used today. The name was changed in the mid 1950's to Automatic Lettering Pens. At that time most show cards and posters for shops were lettered using a brush and the new pens were designed to replace the brush for large lettering and 'automatically' do thick lines. The company was bought in the mid 1950's by a GERALD Dupont (no relation to Dupont pens) and at the time the pens were described as 'the Wizards of Lettercraft'. The range was more extensive than the current 13 and included an edging pen, a shading pen and a block letter pen. The prices ranged from one shilling to one shilling and three pence! (a shilling became 5 new pence). The last owner, Mr David Ford, a very amiable and likeable, gentleman, worked for the Parker Pen Company and he visited Mr Dupont who was by this time an elderly gentleman. Most of the workshop was inhabited by pigeons and the machinery was covered (in polite terms) by guano! He made his own penholders on a lathe and dipped them into highly inflammable paint and hung them to dry, used petrol to degrease the pens AND smoked almost constantly! After a heart attack he sold the company to David Ford in the mid 1980's but unfortunately died before he could hand over the manufacturing. The first 'Ford' Automatic pens were produced on a trial and error basis with many ending up in the recycling bin. The pens were manufactured in Sussex, on the south coast of England. All the tooling was updated (and the guano left on the garden !) but every pen was hand made, hand ground and hand finished. The penholder was updated to a single size ABS non slip plastic for easier grip, balance and weight, easier to keep clean and using fewer trees. In the new millennium the manufacturing moved to C. Roberson & Co in London who continue to produce quality pens.



them to dry, used petrol to degrease the pens AND smoked almost constantly! After a heart attack he sold the company to David Ford in the mid 1980's but unfortunately died before he could hand over the manufacturing. The first 'Ford' Automatic pens were produced on a trial and error basis with many ending up in the recycling bin. The pens were manufactured in Sussex, on the south coast of England. All the tooling was updated (and the guano left on the garden !) but every pen was hand made, hand ground and hand finished. The penholder was updated to a single size ABS non slip plastic for easier grip, balance and weight, easier to keep clean and using fewer trees. In the new millennium the manufacturing moved to C. Roberson & Co in London who continue to produce quality pens.

Useful tips - load the pen with a brush, separate brushes if you are using two colours, and stroke the brush across the side of the pen. You will be able to see how much ink is loaded and judge when to refill. If you are using the larger pens or two colours in the pen at the same time - place a small piece of sponge in the jaws and you will find the colour separation lasts much longer and in the larger pens the ink doesn't fall out (as easily). Washing usually keeps them clean but if all else fails just scrape out the debris with a sharp craft knife and use a very sharp blade to clean the small serrations on the top of the pen - it breathes through here.

There are currently 13 pens in the range and the full range of Automatic Pens can always be obtained by mail order from Blot's Pen & Ink Supplies www.blotspens.co.uk

This history was told to John Winstanley by David Ford in the 1990's - as he remembered it.