

Historical Roller Skating **OVERVIEW**

National Museum of Roller Skating
4730 South Street
P.O. Box 6579
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506-0579
Phone 402-483-7551

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Curator's Corner

Greetings from the National Museum of Roller Skating! Some exciting projects are in the works at the museum. The museum recently went on-line so that all of you with a computer and a modem can now e-mail the museum at rllrsktmus@aol.com.

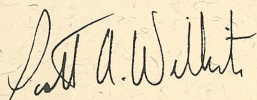
And, for all you World Wide Web surfers out there, here's something to look forward to. The museum will have its own homepage on the web in the next month or so. I should have an internet address for you in the next issue of the newsletter. Our plan is to have articles, graphics, and historical roller skating reference services available to you via the internet, making it easier than ever to learn about the history of roller skating. Also planned is an on-line exhibit! Since so many of you are spread throughout the country (and the world) it will make it much easier for you to "visit" the museum.

In other exciting news, with the help of the Roller Skating Associations' President Harry Walker, we are working towards creating a display at their home office in Indianapolis. The museum board (and many other individuals) feel it is important to establish the museum's presence there to show our appreciation for all of the support that the RSA has given us in our 15 year history. I'll keep you updated!

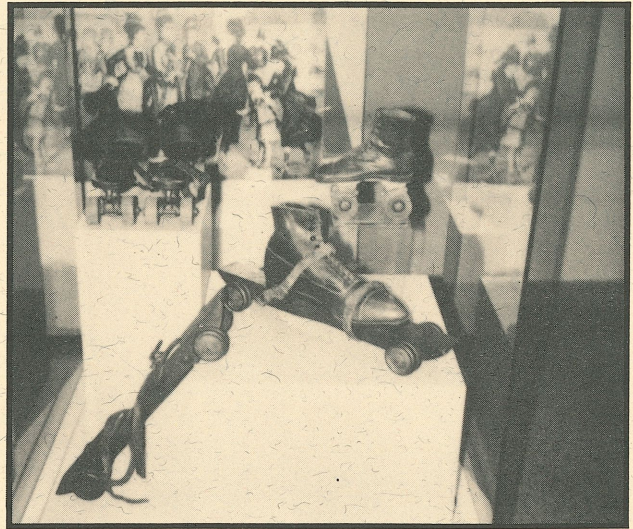
By the time you read this author Jim Turner will have chosen the photographs from the museum's archives to be used in the revised edition of *The History of Roller Skating*. The museum will be publishing the book early next year so be looking for it!

In other roller skating news, The Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto, recently held a mini-exhibition entitled, *On A Roll: Heels on Wheels from Roller Skates to In-line Blades* (see photo this page).

Enjoy this issue of the newsletter!



Scott A. Wilhite
Director & Curator



Display from the Bata Shoe Museum's exhibit!

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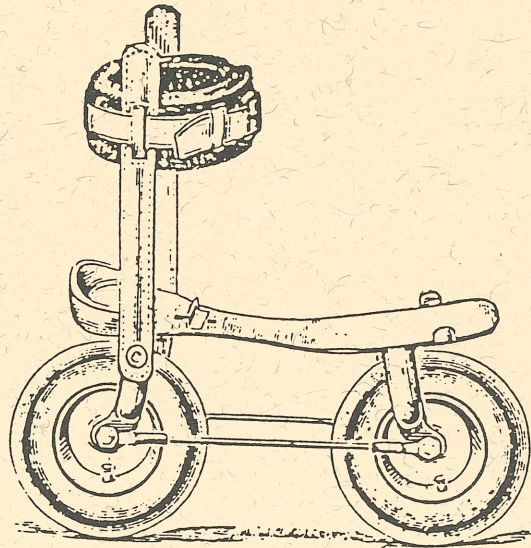
Historical Roller Skating Overview is the newsletter of the National Museum of Roller Skating. It is available only through honorary membership in the museum. Minimum annual contribution is \$15.00. All inquiries, comments should be sent to the Museum Director, 4730 South St., P.O. Box 6579, Lincoln, NE 68506.

P"NEW" Matic Wheels Not So New

By Stacey L. Stonum & Scott A. Wilhite

THE PNEUMATIC SKATE COMPANY, COPTHALL HOUSE, COPTHALL AVENUE, E.C.

Pneumatic Skates.



ROAD LOCOMOTION!

REVOLUTION IN

ANKLE SUPPORT AS IN USE.

The Hyper Corporation's introduction of the pneumatic inline wheel is proof of the old adage "everything old is new again." While the Hyper PSI wheel is the skating industry's first inline attempt to utilize the pneumatic wheel, the merging of bicycle technology with roller skates is not an entirely new idea.

Before considering the possible effects of the pneumatic wheel on the skating industry as well as skaters, it is important to understand both the technology behind a pneumatic wheel and its history. The pneumatic wheel is full of compressed air that can be released under different conditions. This inflatable nature allows for both less roller resistance and shock absorption. By acting as a shock absorber, the pneumatic wheel will allow skaters to traverse over rougher terrain without the fear of tripping over inconsistent surfaces.

The first use of the pneumatic wheel originated over 100 years ago in Ireland. John Boyd Dunlop, a veterinarian, noticed that his son was having trouble

cycling on the cobbles of Belfast. His ingenious idea, supposedly inspired by the intestines of animals, was to affix an inflatable tube around the rim of the wheel to give a smoother and safer ride.

Edward Michelin, a Frenchman, took the idea one step further with the invention of the "clinchier" tire which was detachable from the rim thus making flats much easier to fix. Both Dunlop and Michelin have since become known throughout the world for their tire companies. Interestingly, it is the Dunlop "tubular" design which is still favored among the elite professional bicycle racers of the world, for its superior ride.

Pneumatic wheels were first used with a road skate produced by the aptly titled Pneumatic Road Skate Company, Limited of London, England. This new invention was considered so remarkable that some in the industry believed that this skate would replace the bicycle both in terms of popularity and usefulness. An 1896 newspaper article from the *Buffalo County Beacon* of Gibbon, Nebraska stated that this new skate

"will indeed prove a very formidable competitor to all other forms of wheeling, since by its use one can combine all the pleasure of rapid traveling by means of one's own exertions." The pneumatic road skate was also admired for its compactability and ease in which they could be carried around when not in use. *Figure and Fancy Skating*, a 1895 book by George Meagher described these skates as being "equally serviceable for the road, the rink, the cinder path, pavements of wood and asphalte [sic] or garden walks." In addition, these skates allowed a skater to go from 15-20 miles per hour and climb hills.

Besides enabling a skater to travel over a diversity of conditions, the pneumatic skate was considered, for military purposes. An ad for the Pneumatic Road Skate claimed that "samples have been ordered by the governments of France, Russia, Italy, Sweden, and Japan" in the hope of modifying the skate for infantry troop movement. Pneumatic road skates would not only allow troops to cover more territory, but would also eliminate the need for horses and the expensive upkeep required for their care.

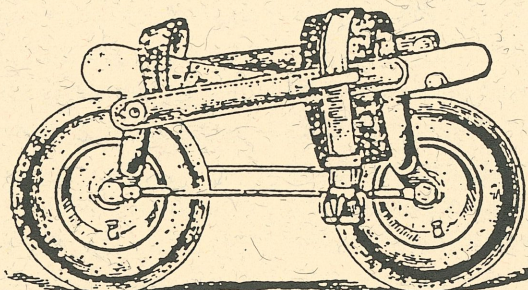
The pneumatic road skate was not without its detractors. In 1897, an ad campaign by the Road Skate Company of England promoting the Ritter Road Skate claimed that "pneumatic tyres [sic] are for various reasons of no use for road skates." A separate ad by

the same company described the pneumatic tire as "no advantage on skates and cause endless trouble and annoyance." Whether the Road Skate Company was

stating the truth or simply trying to discredit the competition cannot be determined.

While there has been an interest in road skating throughout the years, a resurgence has been seen with the development of the inline skate. Clever marketing combined with American's interest in physical fitness has also renewed interest in the development of all-terrain skates. In the late 1980s, Worlds of Wonder released the Axl Skatebike, a combination of one bicycle wheel and two roller skate wheels, with a bicycle saddle, and pedals. In 1991, Patrick Gates obtained a patent for his "Gate skate." This skate is an all-terrain skate with pneumatic wheels and hand held brakes. 7" air tires allow for traction on both uphill and downhill surfaces.

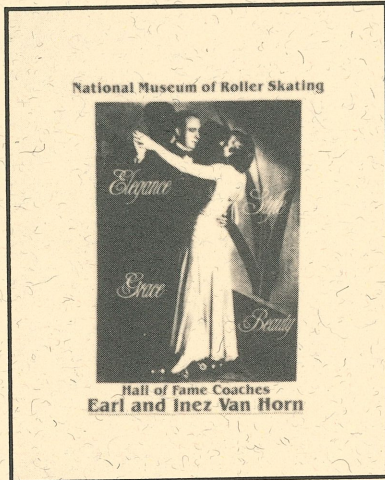
It is too soon to tell how skaters will react to the the Hyper PSI wheel. At the very least, those who are already using inline skates will be able to tackle more challenging road surfaces. Hopefully this new technology will further encourage a whole new generation of road skaters.



SUPPORT DOWN—FOR CARRYING.

THE PNEUMATIC ROAD SKATE CO., Limited,
Copthall House, Copthall Avenue, LONDON, E.C.

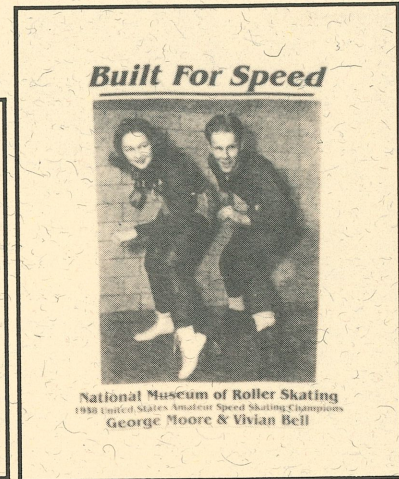
Special Museum T-Shirt Sale



**Hall of Fame Coaches
Earl and Inez Van Horn**



**15th Anniversary
Design**



**"BUILT FOR SPEED" - 1938
Speed Skating Champions
George Moore & Vivian Bell.**

Just \$10 per shirt (while supplies last)

QTY.

____ Earl & Inez Van Horn Shirt (Sizes Available XL,M,S - Sorry no Larges)

____ Built For Speed Shirt (XL,L,M,S - Available)

____ 15th Anniversary Shirt (XL,L,M - Available - Sorry no Smalls)

Other Special Items Available from the National Museum of Roller Skating

____ "The Evolution of the Roller Skate: 1820 - Present"
Features chapters covering The Early Roller Skates,
The Plimpton Era, The History of In-Line Skates,
The First Manufacturers, International Skates, The
20th Century, and more. The book is 150 pages
with photos taken by professional photographer,
Randall Harbuck. \$10 each.

____ Cheret Lithograph - From the 1870s created by
Jules Cheret, the "father of poster art." \$17 each.

____ Museum Mugs - Cobalt blue with the museum
logo emblazoned in gold. \$6 each.

____ Museum Patches & Pins - Great gifts for aspiring
and inspiring skaters. Specify patch or pin. \$5 each.

____ Other museum postcard sets. In full color, the
perfect gift for those of us with penpals.
20-card pack \$5 each.

Grand Total of Order \$ _____

Please print:
Name _____

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Mail to National Museum of Roller Skating, 4730 South St.,
Lincoln, NE 68506.

Museum Notes



Museum intern, Stacey Stonum, unpacks the revolving mirror ball that was recently donated to the collection by Gary & Susan Boyce. Other donations were made by Scott Sansby, Doug Breniser, National In-Line Hockey Association, Dorothy Schild, Jeannie Welton, James Turner, Leroy Walker, Louis J. Armbruster, Keith Rooksby, Charlotte Groves, Don Ritchie, Patricia Hanaway, James & Faye Shoemake, Arnold Kueker, Jerry Stein, Michael Zaidman, RSA, Gary Castro, Anne Pals, Scott Wilhite, Holly Trimper, Steve Joyner, Monica Catt, Connie Wahlig, Christophe Audoire, Caroline Mirelli, USAC/RS, Rose Martin, Gary Noto, George Petrone, Elvin Griffin, Andy Devito, Stanley & Magdalen Breckne, Harry Corson, Sr., Ed Morton, and Walter Frazier.

Museum Benefactors:

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Memorials

The Nazzaro Family made a memorial donation in honor of Robert Henderson of the Harlick Shoe Company, who recently passed away. Mr. Henderson ran Harlick from 1962 to 1984, with his brother Gilbert Henderson. Their custom, made-to-measure boots, were known far and wide for their high quality.

Rose Martin made a memorial donation to the museum in honor of Louise Moore, who recently passed away. Louise was a competitive skater who was many times an American Champion, most notably as a member of the first U.S. Fours team in Philadelphia in 1942. Her partners were Bill Martin, Alden Sibley, and Dorothy Law.

Patron Memorial Plaque

The number of individuals being added to the Patron Memorial Plaque continues to grow. Contact the museum director to have someone's name placed on this handsome oak plaque which celebrates individual contributions to roller skating history. This could include everyone from rink owners to athletes. A one-time fee of \$250 will place the person on the memorial which will be displayed permanently at the National Museum of Roller Skating.

Be a Part of History

The history of roller skating is fragile. Once it is lost, it may never be regained. Help the National Museum of Roller Skating preserve the rich history of our sport and industry by joining one of our special membership categories listed below. Future roller skaters will thank you.

Contributions of \$25 or more become a Honorary Members of the museum and a receive a copy of *The Evolution of the Roller Skate*, a subscription to the *Historical Roller Skating Overview*, and a museum membership card.

___ Check or money order enclosed payable to the National Museum of Roller Skating.

___ Paid by Visa/MasterCard.

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| ___ Individual/Family | \$25 |
| ___ Donor | \$50 |
| ___ Associate Patron | \$100 |
| ___ Patron | \$250 |
| ___ Benefactor | \$500 |

Card Number _____

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Mail to: National Museum of Roller Skating
P.O. Box 6579
Lincoln, NE 68506

Contributions are tax-deductible up to the amount permitted by law.



Front Cover:
Carol Walsh
executing a "sit-
down" spin.

Back Cover:
1938 Speed
Skating Cham-
pions, George
Moore & Vivian
Bell.

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