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George Bernard Shaw's typewriter is up for sale

September 28, 2008

GEORGE Bernard Shaw's typewriter is up for grabs at [AbeBooks.com](#) -- it could be yours for roughly \$8,600.

Shaw's most lasting work, the play "Pygmalion" (which inspired "My Fair Lady"), was not written on this typewriter. Because he wrote "Pygmalion" in 1913 and didn't acquire this one until 1935.

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Shaw did use this typewriter but for other writing. The seller says that "numerous of his books and articles are likely to have been typed on it," including "William Morris as I Knew Him" and "The Millionairess."

Typewriters owned by famed authors aren't easy to come by. In 2005, Christie's in Kensington, England, auctioned a typewriter that had been signed by author Douglas Adams ("Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy") to benefit Rhino Recovery, a nonprofit. It sold for 2,000 British pounds.

Last year, a typewriter that had been owned by Ernest Hemingway came up for auction in Atlanta. It had wound up in the hands of George T. Northen, a buddy of Hemingway's and the grandson of a one-time governor of Georgia. "The aforementioned items were given to me while in Cuba fishing with my dear friend Ernest Hemingway and were items from Lookout Farm [Hemingway's Cuban residence]," Northen wrote in his will. None of the other items -- a pipe, a cigar lighter and someone else's fishing trophy -- took in as much as the typewriter, which sold for \$2,750.

There is something aesthetically pleasing about typewriters. Even sitting unused, they're lovely to look at. I wonder whether, come 2040, authors' discarded laptops will have the same appeal?

--

Carolyn Kellogg



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