

The DeVry Challenger 16mm portable sound movie projector

by Jürgen Kellermann, Adelaide

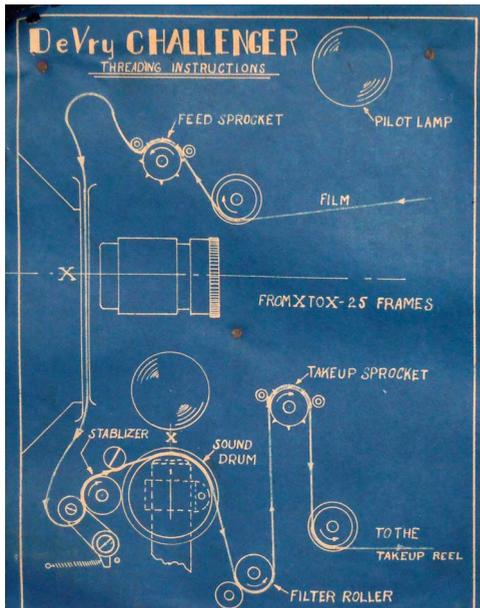
Email: juergen.kellermann@sa.gov.au

The DeVry Corporation was one of America's leading suppliers of 35mm and 16mm projectors and cameras, as well as educational equipment. It was instrumental in promoting audiovisual teaching aids. An article by David Donaldson about the company appeared in recent issues of *Reel Deals* (Mar. 2012 & Sep. 2012) and prompted me to write this article.

The DeVry Challenger is a portable 16mm projector that comes in two heavy cases: one containing the projector (20 kg), the other the amplifier and the speaker (20 kg), which is built into the amplifier's lid. The projector sits on top of the amplifier; see the advertisement on the next page. The projector described here has serial no. 1077.

This projector model was first announced in the American periodical *The Educational Screen* in Oct. 1936. According to the announcement, the Challenger was the second sub-standard sound projector that the company produced. While its first 16mm sound projector featured a sprocket intermittent movement, the Challenger employed a double claw to transport the film, and so had a somewhat lower price. It is interesting that it uses a cylindrical rotating shutter. There is a centralised oiling point that supplies all bearings with lubricant. The Challenger has dual exciter lamps that can easily be swapped. If switched to sound mode, the projector runs at 24 fps, but the speed is variable in silent mode from about 16 fps to 24 fps. Threading is relatively easy and a pilot light helps the process. The projector can play reels up to 1600 ft. The 140 W amplifier (Type K, serial no. 674) features six valves and inputs for microphone and phonograph, with separate level adjustments for microphone and the photoelectric cell of the projector. As it is produced in the U.S., the equipment runs on 110 V and requires a heavy transformer (in my case 18 kg). The machine is still running well, albeit a bit noisily, both in silent and sound mode; the amplifier is working, too.

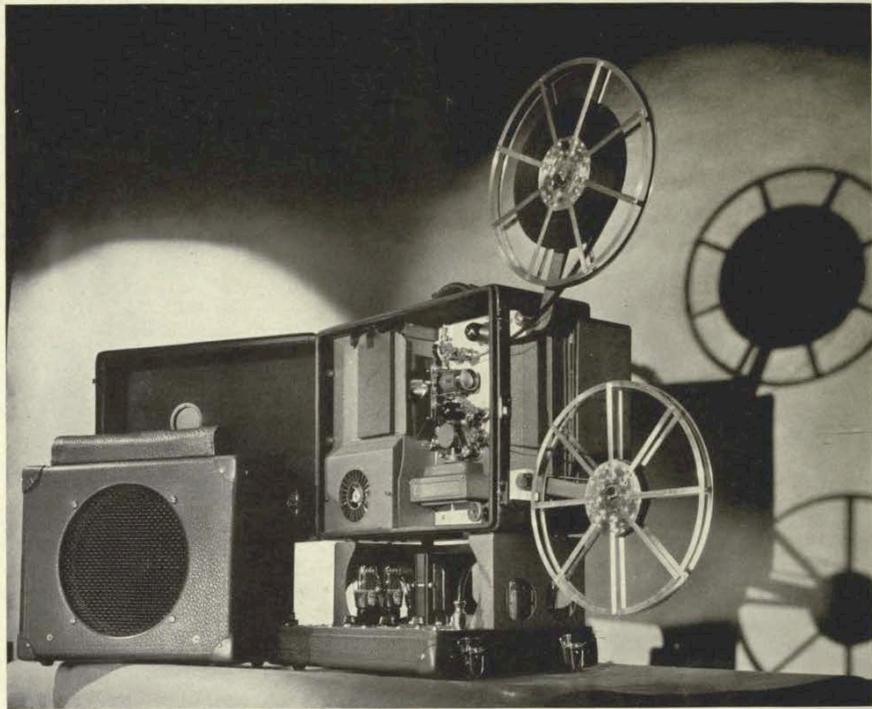
Browsing through *The Educational Screen* on the internet, it seems that the last advertisement featuring the projector that I could find was from 1939. After that year, different 16mm projector models seem to have taken over. We can assume that this projector was manufactured between 1937 and 1940. The projector also bears the label of the Australian distributor: Herschells Pty Ltd., East Melbourne.



DeVry Challenger threading diagram.
Close-up of projector inside.



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