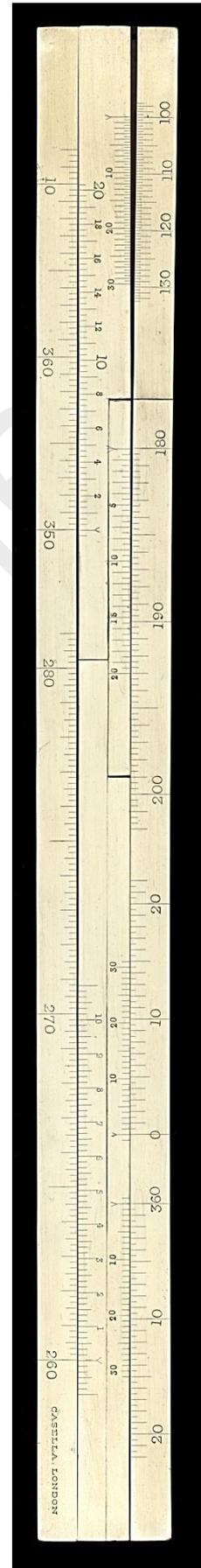
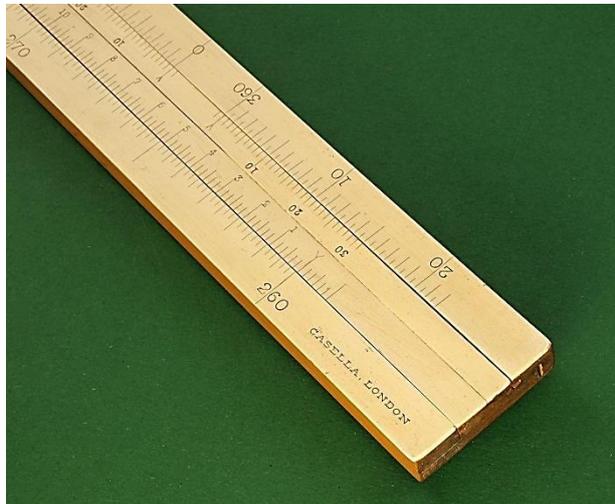
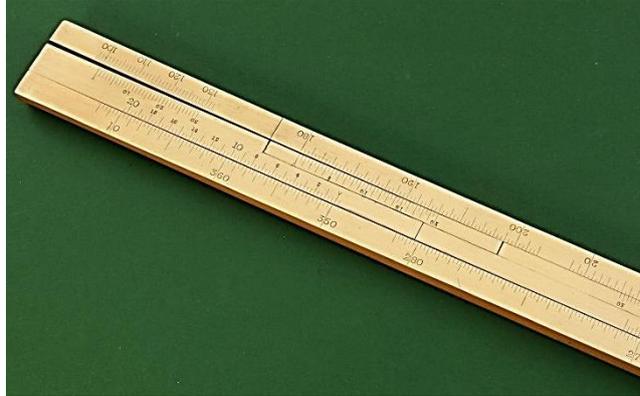


## Nr. xx. Mystery Desktop No. 2

Owner: David Rance

Pictures<sup>1</sup>:



### Purpose of the slide rule:

The purpose of this desktop 20 inch/50 cm model is a mystery. Its desktop size accommodates various scales, many of which are expanded versions for extra accuracy. All the scales appear non-standard.

### Dimensions:

- **Overall (LxWxD):** 44.4 cm x 3.9 cm x 1 cm.
- **Slide (L):** 44.4 cm
- **Length of scales:** various: longest 21 cm (upper) and shortest 5 cm (slide)

### Material:

- **Base & slide:** boxwood or pearwood base with glued celluloid facings and stamped scales coloured black
- **Cursor:** none – not needed (also no channels for a cursor)
- **Case:** heavy-duty stitched reinforced brown leather pouch + flap with a leather strap & a metal buckle (unbranded apart from 1<sup>st</sup> owners name/address)

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of the Otto van Poelje "photo lab".

**Layout and scales:**

- **Closed frame with: 1000/1000000/10000**
  - the upper part of the stock is removable (tongue-and-grooved with a horizontal celluloid strip underneath)
  - the four scales on the upper stock (22 to 360, 0 to 22, 220 to 180 and 130 to 100) are upside down
  - to run in the stock, the slide has a conventional tongue-and-groove construction BUT strangely the horizontal tongues are made of celluloid and rebated into the side edges of the slide
  - the upper row of the scales on the slide (31 to 0, 0 to 31, 20 to 0 and 30 to 0) are upside down and all include a “V” gauge mark that maybe a line-up point
  - the lower row of scales on the slide (21 to 0.3, 12 to -1) both have a “v” gauge mark that may be a line-up point
  - the two scales on the upper stock (370 to 350, 282 to 260) are both inverted  
n.b.: the scale annotation for the value “370” is inexplicably stamped as “10”

**Designer & Manufacturer:**

It is branded *CASELLA, LONDON* in the bottom right-hand corner of the stock. But most Casella catalogues just list slide rules from well-known makers - suggesting they were chiefly a retailer.

The unique nature of this construction cannot be attributed to a known maker. However, the way in which numbers like “2” are stamped, has a strong resemblance to known slide rules made by UK maker **W.H. Harling** (almost all are 20 inch models) before the company was acquired by slide rule maker Blundell in 1964. Also Casella was a known reseller of slide rules made by Harling. So if this provenance is correct, this suggests it dates from the 1930s.

**Speculation:**

Having one row of upside-down scales on the slide may be a design feature (as there is no cursor) so that when the slide is put in upside down, the second band of scales (now the right way up) can be directly set against the respective sets of scales on the front face of the stock. The extra tongue-and-grooving could indicate that the upper part of the stock and the slide are in some way “interchangeable”.

The similarity between the various scales ranges and that many are inverted scales suggests that the slide rule was designed for a specific function, trade or purpose.

**Outstanding questions:**

The list is long:

- are there any similarities with any other (desktop) slide rules?
- why tongue-and-groove the removable upper part of the stock?
- why have celluloid tongues on the slide?
- why stamp some rows of scales upside down?
- what, if any, is the significance/meaning of the “v” gauge marks?
- is the out of sequence “10” on the bottom most left-hand scale just been “miss stamped” or does “10” rather than “370” have significance?
- why leave off a cursor or could it just be a construction try-out or prototype for a variety of different potential design elements?

**Can anyone help solve any part of the mystery?**