

My Favoured and Favourite Tools

This is to be one of two short articles about tools, why I appreciate them and some in particular. We use them in our workshops but often do not give a thought as to why we have them or from whence they came. I hope to nudge you to appreciate them for what they are and not merely for their utility.

We all have one or more tools in the workshop that we favour, often in preference to a similar item. Here are a few of mine – those that I favour in that they do a job well and those that are favourites of mine, usually with a back-story to them.



The oldest and newest tools herein. The Stanley screwdriver has been with me for over 50 years and on a model engineering course I saw this rule, a Starrett C604RE, Imperial units in different fractions and decimal, very, very useful.

This Rabone level (No. 1394) came with a little folded box for protection. I am fairly certain that this is an addition, it is much thicker than any ordinary tinplate that might have been used. I am sure that the original owner wanted to protect their investment, much like the combination square (below).



Laser alignment tool – invaluable on the milling machine, very quick and easy to use.

A calculator – invaluable again and in the big print edition! I do have a scientific calculator as well (and an old programmable HP 25C – vintage 1975 - that I am trying to get back to life!).



The tap holder is so easy to use, putting the stem into the vertical drill or mill – they should all have one! The jenny calipers I use frequently to get a centre line and the jewellers tweezers to pick up small items and remove metal splinters...!

Now we are entering the realm of the favourites...

These three tools – scribe, centre punch and square belonged to my paternal grandfather Alphonse Joseph, Belgian, a sniper in WW1 during the siege of Liege, one of the earliest speedway riders in the 1920s, a toolmaker and mechanic of racing Bentleys in the 30s.



The little 2" Starrett square was made from 1902 to 1952, a little gem! The punch leaves a very good dimple and I love the look of the scribe.



Another of my grandfather's tools, the vernier caliper is calibrated in mm and (look closely) *fractional* inches. I confess to be not too good at reading them!

Finally we come to something a little different...



A combination square set with a little something extra. It is marked H J Fox and made by LSS Co (i.e. Starrett).

The wooden box is very much an engineer's woodworking effort but is still effective.

I must have had this for 20+ years and only now have I discovered its extra secret, which, in the best tradition of cliffhanging episodes on TV etc. I shall reveal in the next article!

Mike Joseph