



THE  
OUGHTRED  
SOCIETY

# Newsletter

July 1, 2014

## News of the Oughtred Society's 2014 Annual West Coast Meeting .....

Our Annual West Coast Meeting was held on June 21, 2014 at the Computer History Museum with 23 in attendance. As usual, the room was filled with many interesting displays of slide rules and calculating devices and numerous items were quickly earmarked for sale at the auction. Of particular historical interest, Bob Otnes displayed some very early tables of logarithms books dating to the 17th century alongside more recent related books and catalogs, including two splendid 19th century Keuffel and Esser catalogs. In addition, he displayed a late 19th century Arithmometer, signed Keuffel and Esser, likely made by Burkhardt, Glashutte, Saxony, Germany, that was found locally many years ago as part of a former calculator company's archives. His table honored 2014 as the 400th anniversary, the Quadricentenary, of John Napier's monumental work, 'Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio (A Description of the Wonderful Table of Logarithms)' (1614), which introduced the world to his invention of the natural logarithm.

Another fascinating display was Rodger Shepherd's two tables of slide rule pencil models by numerous makers, along with a huge collection of new- condition Devco slide rule pencils for auction. Rodger's display featured examples of the major types of slide rule pencils and his presentation later in the afternoon educated the audience on the history, different types of design and construction, and rarities of the various models and makers. In addition to a K&E Universal, K&E 4091-3 SPEC, and Small Calculator offered for sale by the OS for several members not present, several tables featured other uncommon and rare rules for display and auction, including a K&E Beatley IQ Rule, K&E Crane's Sewer Rule, several early 20" K&E slide rule examples, two examples of the Thornton F5100 Black Body Radiation Rule, a Stanley-Whythe Complex Number Calculator, serial 63-115 with instructions and original box, a Charpentier Calculimetre in original hinged case, a Pickett Model N17 Radiation rule, Pickett Model 8, Aristo 10174, numerous circular pocket watch type slide rules, and many other uncommon specialty rules.

Two speakers were featured in this meeting, Rodger Shepherd, who presented "*Pencil Slide Rules-- A Neglected Niche*", and Bob De Cesaris, presenting "*Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and the Eugene Dietzgen Company*." Rodger's presentation focused on various makers and models of pencil slide rules, covering their history, construction, characteristics, scales sets, and rarity. Bob's talk covered the early formation and early history of the Eugene Dietzgen Company, including the influence on Eugene of his father, Joseph Dietzgen, an influential 19th century socialist philosopher, who made important contributions to Marxism and whose writings later influenced Lenin. In addition, he covered the early partnership between Dietzgen and another German immigrant, Otto Luhring, and brought some early letters that outlined the formation of the early partnership and its transformation into Eugene Dietzgen Company.

After the noon lunch table discussions, the early afternoon agenda began with the Annual Meeting, followed by the much awaited slide rule auction. Directly after the business meeting, Dr. Debbie Douglas updated the gathering on the latest slide rule events at the MIT Museum, noting that the featured K&E slide rule cabinet display that had been initiated concurrent with IM2011 in Cambridge, MA, was coming to a close. The exhibit had been an outstanding success after running for 3 years and had attracted over 350,000 visitors! Some of the large posters that were used in the

display will be available to the public and Debbie encouraged interested parties to contact her at the museum for additional information.

Dinner was held after the meeting at The Old Spaghetti Factory in Redwood City, 10 miles north of the Museum off of US101, where more slide rule and other stories were swapped and shared.

### **Partial List of Key Slide Rules Auctioned at the June Meeting:**

Pickett N17 Radiation Slide Rule	\$650
Charpentier Calcumetre with original hinged case	\$550
K&E Beatley IQ Slide Rule	\$500
K&E Crane's Sewer Rule	\$500
Thornton F5100 Black Body Radiation Slide Rule	\$370
Full Set of 6 Devco Pencil Slide Rules	\$350
Full Set of 6 Devco Pencil Slide Rules (second set)	\$350
Moler Slide Rule with two slides	\$260
K&E Model 4051, early example	\$160
K&E Model 4091-3 SPEC with LC scale	\$150
Aristo Model 10174 Slide Rule	\$150
Contact Lens Slide Rule, w hinged case	\$100
Set of 3 Devco Pencil Slide Rules (5 sets sold)	\$65

*Reported by Bob DeCesaris*

### **News from the Dutch Kring .....**



International Meeting IM2014 – about 2 months from now!!!

The Dutch KRING is now registering participants for the international conference IM2014 in Delft, September 5-6. For the latest information and for the registration form, please visit [www.rekenlinialen.org](http://www.rekenlinialen.org)

We hope you will send in your registration form soon, because we need to know the approximate number of participants for reservations at the locations we are going to use. The program of papers to be presented is now complete, and covers a very interesting and wide-ranging set of subjects. In our previous international meetings we have introduced the concept of presenting special calculating instruments, the so-called “One-Off’s”. We still have space for an extra 10 or so One-Off’s, to be described in the Proceedings and to be demonstrated at the meeting.

For more information and for the registration form, please visit: [www.rekenlinialen.org](http://www.rekenlinialen.org)

*Report from Otto van Poelje*

### **News on Logarithms from the German RST.....**



The 400th Anniversary of the publication of John Napier's Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio was held in Edinburgh as a Joint Meeting of the James Clerk Maxwell Society and the British Society for the History of Mathematics (as well as with the Edinburgh Mathematical Society, and the Glasgow Mathematical Society ) on Friday 4th April 2014 at Clerk Maxwell House, 14 India Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6EZ.

The program was focused on logarithms: new findings as well as historical topics, and the day was

concluded by two very interesting visits and exhibitions:

1. National Museum of Scotland;
2. The Napier Tower where the 45 attendees were given an introduction to John Napier's life. The introduction was by Sir Michael Atiyah, FRS, FRSE, Past President of the Royal Society and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Here is the program in detail:

1. Prof. Dr. Joachim Fischer (Germany): 'Napier revisited or A new look on the computation of Napier's logarithms'
2. Dr. Klaus Kühn (Germany): 'Logarithms – a Journey of their Tables to all over the World',\*
3. Professor Michael Williams (Canada): 'Napier's bones: their history and later developments'
4. Dr. Steve Russ (Warwick, UK): 'Napier's chessboard abacus'
5. Dr. Gerlinde Faustmann (Austria): 'Austrian Authors of Tables of Logarithms around 1800',
6. Prof. Martin Campbell-Kelly (Warwick, UK): 'Babbage's Table of Logarithms (1827)',
7. Dr. Ulf Hashagen (Germany): 'Realising Babbage's Dream – the 1910 computation of logarithms using a difference engine'
8. Prof. Alex Craik (St. Andrews, UK): 'Sang, Knott and Spence on logarithmic and other tables',
9. Dr. Tayce Phillipson (National Museum of Scotland): 'Introduction to the Napier Exhibition at National Museum of Scotland'
10. Charles Napier (descendant of John Napier): 'History of the actual person John Napier'

The very tight and intense program triggered a lot of vivid discussions and was very welcomed by all the attendees from several countries. Proceedings of the lectures are planned for autumn of this year 2014.

\*This article I dedicate to Thomas Wyman who served as the first Oughtred Society president from 1997 to 2007. Tom died March 17, 2014 at the age of 86 in Palo Alto, USA. He was one of the driving forces for spreading the idea of slide rule collecting from USA to all over the world. Tom published more than 80 papers on slide rules and logarithms.

*Report from Klaus Kühn*

### News from the UKSRC.....



Summer is the quiet time in the collecting world here in the UK, we have very few collecting opportunities other than "Boot Sales" the equivalent of the US Trash and Treasure flea markets, but unfortunately these tend to be occasions when one travels in hope rather than anticipation but nevertheless one can find real "treasures" albeit rarely. This means that the few genuine Antique Fairs become even more hopeful occasions than they truly warrant. The UKSRC's "Skid-Stick" newsletter summer edition was published and mailed to all subscribers. Thank goodness the response level from our readership is very high meaning we have no problems filling the 16 pages each edition.

*Report from Peter Hopp*

### Past Oughtred Society Journals Are Available on DVD .....



All past issues of the Journal of the Oughtred Society are now available in digital format on a DVD. The new DVD archive contains all Journal issues published since vol. 0, no. 0 in 1991. The DVD also includes three special publications: *The Slide Rule*, a reprint of the booklet published by Edwin Thacher; *Slide Rules in K&E Catalogs*, by Bruce Babcock; and *A Slide Rule Bibliography*, by Peter M. Hopp. Individual journals are presented as PDF files at high resolution. Price (including postage) for all OS members: \$95. Yearly updates for OS members will also be available for \$10. To order a DVD go to the OS website and click on the **Journal page** and

pay for the disk via PayPal.

*Information from the OS web site as edited by your OS Newsletter editor*

### New Oughtred Society Members in June are .....

Rob Carins, Toronto Canada

Felix Gross, Berlin Germany

**Welcome to the Oughtred Society!**

**Joining the OS is easy & rewarding. Just visit the [Oughtred Society](#) website and select Membership in the main menu.**

*Clark McCoy, Membership Secretary, reporting*

### Upcoming articles in the Fall 2014 (Vol 23.1) Journal .....

- *The Death of the Slide Rule* by Robert James
- *Charles Hoare Slide Rules* by Tom Wyman
- *System Gruter* by Richard Hughes
- *My Slide Rules* by Bill Wayne
- *Analon Slide Rule* by Cliff Frolich
- *Pencil Slide Rules* by Rodger Shepherd
- *Collectanea de Logarithmis* by Klaus Kühn
- *Golding's Horse Power Computer* by Stephan Weiss
- *Combined Slide Rules* by Panagiotis Venetsianos
- *Aspect Ratios of Pictures* by Otto van Poelje

*David Sweetman, Managing Editor, reporting*

### Famous Slide Rule Personalities .....



**Isaac Asimov - (1919-1992)** Author of Science fiction novels as well as math books including *An Easy Introduction to the Slide Rule* (1965). Slide rules were mentioned in many of his futuristic 'Robot' novels. Born in Russia, and immigrated to the United States at age 3. Asimov attended New York City Public Schools, including Boys' High School, in Brooklyn, New York. Graduated from Columbia University in 1939, returning to earn a Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1948. During World War II he worked for three years as a civilian at the Philadelphia Navy Yard's Naval Air Experimental Station. After completing his doctorate, Asimov joined the faculty of the Boston University School of Medicine, with which he remained associated thereafter.

One must wonder how this 'futurist' could have made the following statement in his slide rule instruction book while musing on the new electronic computers: "*Electronic computers are bulky, expensive, complicated, and can be handled only by people with special training. . Besides, electronic computers aren't at their best when used for everyday problems. That would be like trying to shoot a fly with naval artillery. For a fly, an ordinary swatter is much better, and for ordinary mathematical problems, we could best use a really simple computer. There happens to be a simple computer, just suitable for everyday computations, that was invented about 350 years ago. It isn't electronic; there are no electric currents involved. In fact, it is no more than a piece of wood with some marks on it. It looks like a ruler except that it has a middle piece that can slide back and forth, so it is called a slide rule.*" (from Asimov, *An Easy Introduction to the Slide Rule*, published in 1965, Houghton Mifflin.)

*Thanks to Mike Konshak and his International Slide Rule Museum for the lead in to this piece.*

### Notable Slide Rule Sales in June .....

Slide rule sales on eBay are an indication of health of our collecting hobby. I have listed below all the eBay sales of \$100 or more in the month of June. I have broken down the sales into 3 groups; one each for US, European and Asian slide rules. Note that in May a total of 49 slide rules sold for \$100 or more, for a total of \$12,496. The numbers for June were 58 sold for a total of \$17,505, a significant increase over May sales figures. Some interesting scarce and rare items sold include:

- 1) a 20-inch K&E Cox duplex (1891 patent) slide rule for \$1,414
- 2) a rare 1897 Dietzgen catalog for \$382
- 3) a rare K&E 4070? Cox Duplex Slide Rule w/adjustable stator for just \$104
- 4) a RAAF Pilot Balloon Slide Rule No G268/480 in wood case for \$1,236
- 5) a Arici T3 Regolo calcolatore per strutture di cemento armato for \$1,086
- 6) a rare Règle à Calcul Courvoisier spiral circular slide rule for \$526
- 7) a rare Hemmi #200 precision slide rule with 16-in segmented scales for \$922
- 8) a rare Muto Giken Kooler Calculator cylindrical slide rule for \$700.
- 9) a rare Swedish "Universal" cylindrical (hockey puck) slide rule for \$350

At anyone time, about 5,000 slide rules were listed on eBay in June. Of those listed, about 20%, or about 1,000 of the 5,000 slide rules posted, were sold in June. Just 6% of the slide rules sold in June received bids greater than \$100. Of the approximately 940 slide rules that sold for less than \$100, the average price was about \$20. Of the about 60 slide rules that sold for \$100 or more, the average price of was about \$300. The unsettling issue for sellers is that about 80% of slide rules posted did not sell. Most of the failed sales were the result of unreasonable minimum or reserve bids

The reader can get more details on these slide rules by using the "advanced search" feature on eBay, and search for the item in "closed auctions".

### *US Slide Rules (27 slide rules sold for \$100 or more in June for a total of \$6550)*

#### **\$1,414 K&E Cox duplex 20-in slide rule - 1891 patent**

- \$422 Pickett C-18 slide rule, Collins Radio Microwave
- \$394 K&E. model 4035 slide rule w/ magnifier cursor & case
- \$385 Picket Model 18-T Slide Rule
- \$382 Antique 1897 Dietzgen Drawing Materials & Surveying Instrument Catalog**
- \$375 K&E Analon #68 1400 slide rule
- \$294 Science Spectrum Hexadecimal / Decimal Circular Slide Rule
- \$229 K&E Deci-Lon #681100 SLIDE RULE. MIB
- \$215 K&E N4080-5 Log Log Duplex Trig 20" slide rule, MIB
- \$180 Dempster Rotarule (no magnifier or case)
- \$178 K&E 20 inch - 4087-T log log duplex trig slide rule
- \$175 K&E 4081-5 Log Log Duplex 20" Slide Rule
- \$152 Pickett N16-ES Slide Rule with leather case, box & instructions
- \$150 Pickett N16-ES Slide Rule with leather case
- \$148 Pickett Georgia Iron Works Co Hydraulic Slide Rule in Leather Case
- \$142 K&E Deci-Lon slide rule 68-1130, 5" pocket rule w/ leather case
- \$140 K&E Deci-Lon slide rule 68-1130, 5" pocket rule w/ leather case
- \$140 K&E Deci-Lon slide rule 68-1130, 5" pocket rule w/ leather case
- \$126 K&E Deci-Lon slide rule 68-1130, 5" pocket rule w/ leather case
- \$125 Forrest Towl Oil Flow Calculator, 40.5"; Rare 1889 Large Slide Rule
- \$124 K&E finely divided #4031pocket, 5-inch slide rule, magnifier & case
- \$115 Transmission Line Calculator, slide rule 7 inch diameter, in case
- \$114 K&E Deci-Lon slide rule 68-1130, 5" pocket rule w/ leather case

- \$112 Pickett N600-ES pocket Slide Rule with magnifying cursor & leather case
- \$111 Pickett 108ES slide rule, case & instructions
- \$104 K & E 4070? 10" Cox Duplex slide rule w/adjustable stator. Missing cursor! Rare example!**
- \$104 K&E N4081-5 Log Log Duplex Decitrig 20" slide rule with case

*European Slide Rules (27 slide rules sold for \$100 or more., for total of \$8565)*

- \$1,236 RAAF Pilot Balloon Slide Rule No G268/480 in wood case**
- \$1,086 Arici T3 Regolo calcolatore per strutture di cemento armato. (concrete structures)**
- \$714 Optima Rechenmaschine calculator circular slide rule
- \$600 AML Position Line Slide Rule Mark IIA Dated 1920
- \$526 Règle à Calcul Courvoisier Long Scale circular slide rule**
- \$510 Charpentier Calculimetre, In Fitted Case
- \$392 Charpentier pocket circular slide rule 1881 + instructions
- \$350 Swedish "Universal" cylindrical (hockey puck) slide rule, with scales on rim surface**
- \$340 FERRERO H39 Regolo Cemento Armato Concrete Slide Rule
- \$300 Graphoplex Roplex circular slide rule by + important documentation
- \$260 Ewart's Cattle Gauge Boxwood Slide Rule
- \$241 Stanley Fuller Calculator, Bakelite, s/n 10633, 1952 (fair condition)
- \$225 Stephens Supremathic circular slide rule (French)
- \$173 ARISTO 10174 Strahlenschutz Rechenschieber
- \$169 Fowler's UNIVERSAL CALCULATOR (instructions & case)
- \$160 Faber Castell 62/82 Pocket Slide
- \$152 Fowler Magnum Long Scale Calculator in box with instructions
- \$144 BRL Radiac Nuclear Fallout Admiralty Slide Rule with box
- \$120 Albert Dargatz, Visco-Calculator, mit Holzkasten
- \$117 Joseph Long ivory Proof Rule
- \$117 Joseph Long ivory Proof Rule
- \$112 Faber-Castel 62/83N pocket slide rule, case & instructions
- \$110 Faber-Castell 62/82N Compact Slide Rule + Manual in Exc. Cond.
- \$104 Faber-Castel 2/83N
- \$104 Calculigraphe Model HC pocket watch slide rule
- \$103 Fowler long scale circular slide rule
- \$100 Faber-Castel 2/83N slide rule, case & instructions

*Asian Slide Rules (4 slide rules sold for \$100 or more, for a total of \$2390)*

- \$922 Sun Hemmi No. 200 16" Precision Duplex slide rule with leather case**
- \$700 Muto Giken Kooler Calculator cylindrical slide rule & case**
- \$643 Sun Hemmi No. 279 20" slide rule with cardboard case and box
- \$125 Hemmi Bamboo Slide Rule No.155 Electrical Engineer Occupied Japan

*Below Your Editor Features 5 Special Slide Rules Sold in June .....*



**Règle à Calcul Courvoisier spiral circular slide rule. Sold for \$526.** Made in France after WWII. It features an 8-m long spiral scale, and an interesting fixture to assist in calculations with the device. The spiral on this slide rule winds 20 times. I know of 3 examples of the Courvoisier, two in France, and one in my collection. *Photo by Otto van Poelje*

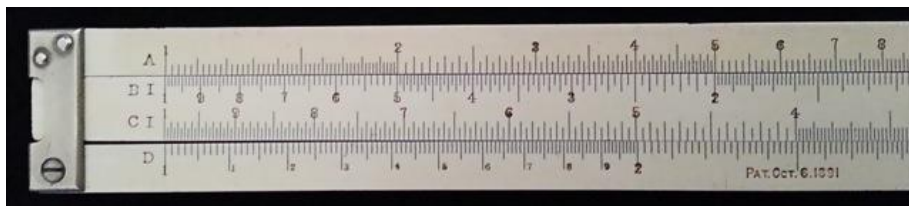


**Arici T3 Regolo calcolatore per strutture di cemento armato for \$1,086. Sold for \$1,086.** This is an Italian circular slide rule of substantial construction. It was made for designing reinforced concrete structures. *Photo from eBay*



**Swedish "Universal" cylindrical (hockey puck) slide rule. Sold for \$350** This is a circular slide rule with the calculating scales [A B] [C D] on its rim surface. Not known to your editor before the eBay posting. *Photo from eBay*

**K&E Duplex Slide Rule with 1891 Cox patent and 1909 adjustable stator. Sold for \$104.** This is listed in the 1909 catalog with a chisel or metal framed glass cursor, the 'I' shaped end posts, and an adjustable stator. This is the first example of the K&E Cox duplex slide rule that your editor has seen with the upper stator held in place with screws at both ends. All examples that of the Cox duplex slide rules that I have seen before had rivets fixing the end posts to the stators. They could not be adjustable. Note screw in lower left corner. *Photo from eBay*



**Muto Giken Kooler Calculator cylindrical slide rule. Sold for \$700.** This is a rare Japanese cylindrical slide rule with a 490 cm length scale in 50 sections. Made sometime after WWII. I have seen one other example of this slide rule. *Photo from eBay*



*Ed Chamberlain, your Newsletter editor, reporting*

On The Serious/Lighter Side .....



Death of the Slide Rule. Sculpture by Warner Rudowski. From a photo taken in Warner's and Inge's garden. Note the computer chip penetrating the slide.

*Ed Chamberlain, your Newsletter editor, reporting*

*..... Send Contributions to: [edwin\\_chamberlain@valley.net](mailto:edwin_chamberlain@valley.net) .....*