

# We Get Questions!

**Q14:** In a minimal kind of way, I've been a collector of slide rules for about thirty years, though my collection amounts to only a dozen, most of which I bought new for personal use at various stages in my career. Though the largest is impressive: a yellow six foot Pickett demonstration slide rule which I saved from a dumpster at NC State University in 1994 and now have hanging in the studio.

I'd be interested in attending a meeting; could you let me know when the next Palo Alto (or close by) one is going to be held?

**A14:** We supplied information about our West Coast Meeting in June in Mountain View and invited him to join the Society and attend.

**Q15:** I am writing to find out if Mr. Wyman's slide rule collection might be available for purchase. I have no other contact information for him so I thought someone at the Society could pass this request on to him.

**A15:** Tom responded, saying that his collection was not for sale. (This question was prompted by the recent Wall Street Journal article on slide rules, in which Tom Wyman was interviewed.)

**Q16:** I am interested in obtaining one of the large slide rules that were used in high school classrooms. Could you put me in touch with a possible seller? I am also interested in finding out more about your group.

**A16:** We referred her to eBay, provided information about the Society, and invited her to join.

**Q17:** I have owned this slide rule since I purchased it new in the fall of 1956. I also have a hard-bound copy of Versalog Slide Rule Instructions, copyrighted by the Frederick Post Company in

1951. Can you give me any idea of its value and how I might find somebody who may have an interest in purchasing it?

**A17:** We explained that Versalogs are not particularly valuable, due to their current availability, and suggested that he use eBay if he wanted to sell it, and referred him to the Post Slide Rule Archive at <http://www.sphere.bc.ca/test/post.html>

**Q18:** Hi. I am writing from Dartmouth College, where we have a faculty member doing research on slide rules. He is interested in getting a copy of an article from an issue of your journal, "Journal of the Oughtred Society". We have been unable to locate any libraries that hold the issue in question. On your web site, you offer your issues for sale only to members. Is there any way for us to purchase an individual article from you? Here is the citation desired:

JOURNAL: Journal of the Oughtred Society, VOLUME: 6,  
ISSUE: 2, DATE: Fall 1997,  
TITLE: Joseph Halden & Co. Thank you for your assistance. I will await your reply.

**A18:** We sent a copy of the article.

**Q19:** Sirs, I write from the UK. I am puzzled by a small ruler I own. I have had a letter published in Mathematics Today asking if anyone knew what it was and what it was used for. Two responses suggested "something to do with navigation". I then approached the Institute of Navigation who suggested – and I agree with them – that it is "some sort of Gunter Scale". However, as you see from the attached picture it *is not* of the standard Gunter 'logarithm' form, but appears to hold trigonometric scales (and some others, like RHU, CHO, and LONG, that are a mystery to me).

I am particularly keen (as are the Inst of Maths. and RIN) to know what it is, and more specifically, how it was used.

I have attached to this email

- 1) a copy of my original letter to the Inst. of Maths and its Applications which is self-explanatory.
- 2) picture of the whole ruler with graphs of the lengths of scales, together with the areas of 'my' ruler (between the red lines) which correspond closely to parts of a picture on the HP website

<http://www.hpmuseum.org/sliderul.htm>.

Is it possible that you can shed any light on the topic?

**A19:** We referred this question to Otto van Poelje in The Netherlands, who supplied this very detailed answer : “I received your request for information via the Oughtred Society. Over the last 2 years I have studied the Gunter scale in all its appearances, and I am writing a series of articles on the subject in the Journal of the Oughtred Society. Your rule is a very interesting one because it deviates in a number of ways from the standard Gunter rule. In the first place it does not contain the logarithmic lines which are the hallmark of a Gunter rule. Therefore it is better to call it a "plain-scale". The scales on your rule are indeed comparable with the non-log section of a Gunter rule, with some differences: - the sine scale is missing, - the LONG scale is wrong (or so clever that I don't understand it). LONG normally relates to CHO, but not in this one. - the MER scale is incomplete: it misses the interesting latitudes above 40 degrees:could the rule have been sawed off at one time? The smallest Gunter I have ever seen is the 1-foot model. The other scales are the standard ones. You have taken a lot of effort to draw the functions. If you mirror the two axes you should recognize the usual goniometric functions, the L is the linear graph. More details can be found in my first article on Gunters. If you are interested, and if you can receive a 4 MB attachment, I will email to you an Acrobat PDF file with the article. Please let me know.”

**Q20:** I teach algebra at a small continuation high school in Northern California. I'm interested in obtaining a class set of slide rules (15-20) for "hands-on" learning activities. I remember such things becoming obsolete just as I started my own high school classes (1973). Do you have any idea where a reasonably priced set might be acquired? I could spend a few hundred dollars. I think these devices could have real value. I of course use graphing calculators (Casio 9850), but the type of learning and problem solving done "the old way" cannot quite be duplicated. I realize these things are collectors' items nowadays, and hence probably too valuable to give to teenagers (especially my group of "reluctant" learners), but I am always looking for something new--even if it is old! Your website is intriguing--I had no idea the slide rule had such "legs." Any thoughts you have would be appreciated. Thanks very much for your time.

**A20:** We referred him to Society member Dr. Gary Flom, who arranged for the Slide Rules for Students project to supply 20 free slide rules.

**Q21:** I have two slide rules, they are: 1. A Dietzgen Maniphase Multiplex, Decimal Trig type, Log Log Rule; Cat. No.1732 with a manual. This slide rule is one that I used in engineering school. It is about 60 years old and in fairly good condition. 2. This one is a Pickett Microline 120 with a manual and is about 30 years old. It is in excellent condition. I am curious as to the worth of antique slide rules since seeing an advert calling for slide rules. If you could help me with this I would appreciate it.

**A21:** Thank you for contacting The Oughtred Society. Your Dietzgen 1732 is sold often on eBay auction on the Internet, where some 75 slide rules are sold every day by individuals around the world. See [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com) In the last 3 months, about a dozen 1732s were sold, and the average sale was about \$30. Your Pickett Microline 120 is worth about \$10. Your 2 rules, although being very good slide rules, were made in abundance and are readily available for purchase today, thus they do not bring a high price. Some rare slide rule models fetch much higher prices. We hope this information is helpful to you.

**Q22:** I'm working on a story about collections and would love to talk to someone from your group. Please call me at the # below or email me a # where I might reach you. Thanks! Name withheld, The Wall Street Journal, 500 Woodward Ave. Suite 1950, Detroit, Mich.

**A22:** This request was handled by Tom Wyman and resulted in his very good interview in the Wall Street Journal.

**Q23:** Have society members made any concerted effort to address the K&E Crumbling Cursor Syndrome? David Crate offers some beautiful replacements (<http://davidcrate.com/index.html>), but these are a bit too pricey except for prized rules. I'm only a novice collector, but already I have 4 K&E rules I would love to play with, except the cursors

crumble as I slide them. I don't need anything authentic (or authentic-seeming). I just need something that WORKS. Any advice, short of carving them out myself?

**A23:** We referred him to Paul Ross at The Slide Rule Trading Co., who supplies K&E cursors and parts.

**Q24:** I am interested in purchasing the Gerber Scale TP007100B and/or TP007200B. Would you know if there are any in existence that are for sale? We are looking to purchase this scale to actually do work with it. We are not collectors. We would even rent if there is one available for rent.

**A24:** We referred her to eBay.

**Q25:** have in my possession a ships brass roller rule engraved on the wood W HARLING, 117 Moorgate, London. The rule was recovered from the wreck of the SAMTAMPA which ran aground in 1947. The rule and box are in remarkably good condition but show sign of water damage. Do you have any info on this item i.e. when it would have been made and how many were made? Thanking you in anticipation.

**A25:** We referred this question to Society member Colin Barnes in the UK, who supplied this answer : This is a bit outside my knowledge but for what it's worth, Harling started in 1848. In 1914 they were at Finsbury Pavement, London, and I believe the Moorgate address was after this. By 1963 they had works at Clapton, East London. In 1964 the works closed and the company merged with Blundell Rules Ltd. to become Blundell Harling Ltd.