

LINEX balls solves mystery

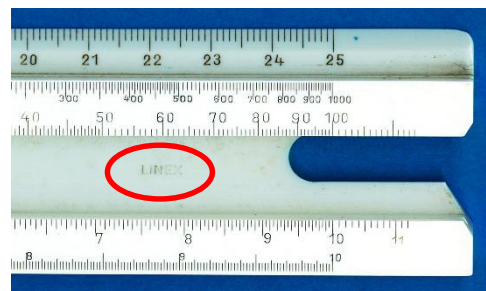
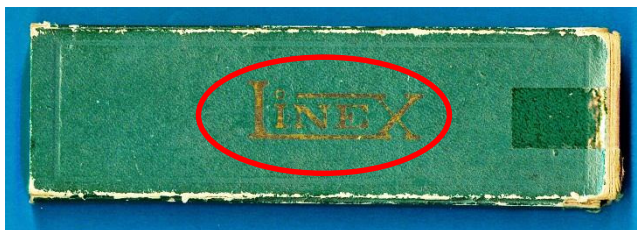
David Rance

It happens a lot – well, it happens a lot to me. I see an intriguing slide rule or something a bit different and think I am sure I have seen something like that before. But have I and if so, where and when?



This is very much what happened when I heard about Otto van Poelje's latest mystery slide rule (see above MIR item: "*Mystery Slide Rule-with-Balls*"). This time I was in luck. Last year, while researching an article on renowned instrument maker *J.H. Steward* [1], I struggled to identify what I believed was an OEM-made slide rule Steward only sold. In such cases I remember Jim Bready's wise words from a decade ago [2] and look for clues in my own collection. In this case there were no similarities to any rules from the big-name maker's. So I turned to my "Scandinavian draw" and found the telling identification traits I needed to identify the maker.

Seemingly this bit of detective work left a lasting memory as when I read about Otto's mystery rule the "milky white" colour and the layout rang a bell. So once again, out came the Scandinavian draw and to my surprise one of only two slide rules I have from Danish manufacturer **LINEX** [3] was a dead ringer – including the cursor and glued body. Like Otto's mystery example, apart from having a Rietz layout, I can find no model number or type accreditation anywhere on my Linex. But I did have two advantages over Otto: (i) a maker's name on the accompanying box and (ii) a faint but detectable "LINEX" blind-stamped into the well of the rule.



Give-away signs of the LINEX provenance highlighted

A quick check with "*the bible*" [4] and an e-mail reply from Peter Hopp confirmed the mystery was solved and that Peter had the 3rd known Linex Rietz slide rule with balls.

But even more surprising to me than solving the mystery, I had never spotted the really unusual metal balls for tensioning the slide in the top side of the well of my Linex. Such an oversight naturally got me searching through my "Graphoplex drawer" – again, another surprise. Unknown to me, for years a Graphoplex Rietz with adjustable metal balls has languished undetected in my collection.

So the moral of this story must be: "*you never can be sure what you have until you have a really good look!*"

References:

1. **Rance, D.:** "*J. H. Steward: A Family Dynasty*", UKSRC Slide Rule Gazette ISSN 1472-0000, Issue 12, Autumn 2011.
2. **Bready, J.:** "*Mystery Slide Rules*", Proceedings of the 8th International Meeting of Slide Rule Collectors, October, 2002, Pg. 97.
3. **Kvint, J.:** "*History of UTO and other Danish Slide Rule Firms*", Proceedings of the 9th International Meeting of Slide Rule Collectors, September, 2003, Pg. 26.
4. **Hopp, P.:** "*Slide Rules - Their History, Models, and Makers*", Mendham, U.S.A., Astragal Press, 1999, Pg. 197.