

Catalogue of the Slide Rule Collection



Title: Catalogue of the Slide Rule Collection.
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Date of material: 1915-2006
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Deposited in: University of Bath Library
Reference code: GB 1128 Slide Rule

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

PROVENANCE

The collection was donated to the Library by Mr Denis Ripley in March 2025. A small amount of additional material, comprising two instruction manuals, two linear slide rules and a 'spirule', was donated by the family of the late Dr John A. Jefferis (1935-2024) in July 2025.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF SLIDE RULES

Before the arrival of electronic calculators, hand-operated mechanical slide rules were indispensable to scientific and engineering computation. Based on the ground-breaking work of John Napier (1550-1617) in developing logarithms, English mathematician William Oughtred created the first slide rule around 1622. His basic design was improved and extended over many years before finally being popularised during the mid-1800s largely via the French army.

Making calculations quicker and more reliable, the slide rule was easy to operate, portable, inexpensive and readily available. Its use became widespread amongst engineers, surveyors, chemists, astronomers and scientists across Europe and, after World War I, was adopted in the USA where it was also known as a slipstick. Slide rules played a crucial part in the construction of iconic 20th century buildings, such as the Empire State Building, and the development of transistor radios, automobile transmissions and commercial jet airliners. Soviet engineers used a slide rule to design the Sputnik space vessel and slide rules accompanied NASA astronauts on several Apollo missions. By the 1960s instruction on using a slide rule was a key component of any engineering education.

With the introduction of inexpensive pocket calculators slide rules were overshadowed and from the mid-1970s became obsolete.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

The collection was assembled by electrical engineer Mr Denis Ripley. The slide rules in the collection cover the period from the early 1930s through to 1975. They vary in size and are made from a variety of materials. Some are accompanied by a case, holster or original packaging. The collection also contains a small amount of instructional documentation relating to the use of slide rules.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful to Mr Ripley and the Jefferis family for their generosity in making this material available.

L. Richmond, University of Bath, 2026

SECTION A SLIDE RULES early 1930s-c1975

This section contains slide rules collected by Denis Ripley. They cover the period from the early 1930s through to 1975 but mainly date from the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. The collection comprises linear slide rules but also contains an example of a cylindrical slide rule. The slide rules vary in size from 14cm to 36cm and are made from a variety of materials, including wood, plastic and aluminium. Some are accompanied by a case or holster, and some are still in their original packaging. The collection contains examples of slide rules manufactured in the UK, Europe, Japan and the USA.

For each slide rule the model, type (simplex or duplex), maker or marketing brand, size, material, and place and year of manufacture are given.

The original arrangement and numbering by Mr Ripley have been preserved.

A/1	2/82 Duplex (duplex), Faber-Castell, 33cm, plastic with plastic case, Germany, 1965.
A/2	111/54 Darmstadt (simplex), Fabel-Castell, 30cm, plastic with plastic case, Germany, 1966.
A/3	967U Darmstadt (simplex), Aristo, 31cm, plastic with plastic case, Germany, 1970.
A/4	Students DUPLO 52/82 (duplex), Faber-Castell, 32cm, plastic with plastic case and cardboard box, Switzerland, 1967.
A/5	Master Duplex A505 (duplex), WH Smith, 33cm, plastic with plastic case, UK, c1970.
A/6	Darmstadt 27403-III (simplex), Logarex, 14cm, plastic with leatherette case, Czechoslovakia, c1970.

A/7	Study 500 (simplex), Unique, 33cm, plastic with plastic case, UK, c1975.
A/8	AL6 (simplex), BRL, 29cm, plastic with hinged wooden case, UK, c1955.
A/9	Schul D-Stab 52/82 (duplex), Faber-Castell, 30cm, plastic with plastic case, Germany, late 1960s.
A/10	1/92 (simplex), Castell, 32cm, wood and celluloid with cardboard case, 1956.
A/11	H1 Log Log N500ES (duplex), Pickett, 30cm, aluminium with leather case and cardboard box, USA, 1962.
A/12	P241 Log Log (duplex), British Thornton, 36cm, plastic with plastic case, UK, 1967.
A/13	1091 (duplex), TS Emblem, 34cm, plastic with plastic case, UK, early 1970s.
A/14	Janus T50 (duplex), BRL, 33cm, plastic with hinged wooden case, UK, 1950s.
A/15	No 0330 Chemiker (simplex), Nestler, 29cm, plastic with cardboard case, Germany, 1964. Designed for use in making various chemical calculations, chemical symbols are used instead of number scales. See also A/16.
A/16	No 33 Chemiker (simplex), Nestler, 29cm, pearwood and celluloid with cardboard case, Germany, pre-1933. Designed for use in making various chemical calculations, chemical symbols are used instead of number scales. See also A/15.

- A/17 Multilog 0970 (duplex), Aristo, 31cm, plastic with plastic case, Germany, 1964.
- A/18 Toison Dor 27602-II (duplex), Logarex, 30cm, plastic with leatherette case, Czechoslovakia, 1965.
- A/19 Exponent 27602-II (duplex), Logarex, 30cm, plastic with plastic case, Czechoslovakia, 1968.
- A/20 Log Log 57/89 (simplex), Faber-Castell, 30cm, plastic with plastic case and cardboard box, Austria, 1973.
- A/21 Log Log Trig 39265 (simplex), WH Smith, 29cm, plastic with plastic case, UK, early 1970s.
- A/22 Brighton (simplex), Unique, 30cm, wood and celluloid with cardboard box, UK, 1950s.
- A/23 57/89 (simplex), Faber-Castell, 30cm, plastic with plastic case and cardboard box, Austria, 1967.
- A/24 Log Log Duplex Decitrig 68-1210 (duplex), Keuffel & Esser, 32cm, plastic with leather holster and belt strap, USA, c1957.
- A/25 PIC F3654/PC8 (simplex), AG Thornton, 31cm, wood and celluloid with cardboard case, UK, 1950s.
- A/26 Simplex Trig N902-T (simplex), Pickett, 31cm, aluminium with cardboard box, USA, c1959.
- A/27 1/54 Darmstadt (simplex), Faber-Castell, 30cm, wood and celluloid with plastic case, Germany, 1966.

- A/28 Reitz 301 (simplex), Diwa, 29cm, wood and celluloid with leather case, Denmark, 1957.
- A/29 Unidentified model (simplex), unidentified manufacturer, 20cm, wood, USA, nd.
- A/30 Studio 0968 (duplex), Aristo, 34cm, plastic with cardboard case, Germany, 1961.
- A/31 Studio 0968 (duplex), Aristo, 34cm, plastic with cardboard box, Germany, 1958.
- A/32 Studio 0968 (duplex), Aristo, 34cm, plastic with plastic case and cardboard box, Germany, 1966.
- A/33 Model K (spiral), Otis King, 15cm, metal with cardboard box, UK, c1971.
Fully extended the helical scales measure 167cm facilitating a greater degree of accuracy.
- A/34 N300-T Log Log (duplex), Pickett, 15cm, aluminium with leather case, USA, c1968.
- A/35 867 (simplex), Aristo, 16cm, plastic with leather case, Germany, 1973.
- A/36 Simplified Rietz (simplex), WH Smith, 17cm, plastic with plastic case, UK, 1960s.
- A/37 4181-1 (duplex), Keuffel & Esser, 17cm, plastic with leather case, USA, 1958.
- A/38 Omega 602 Log Log (simplex), Blundell, 16cm, plastic with plastic case, UK, 1960s.

- A/39 S101 (simplex), Blundell, 16cm, plastic with leather case, UK, 1950s.
- A/40 Darmstadt 867U (simplex), Aristo, 15cm, plastic with leather case, Germany, 1958.
- A/41 4181-1 (duplex), Keuffel & Esser, 17cm, plastic with leather case, USA, 1957.
- A/42 1006-ES (duplex), Pickett, 15cm, aluminium with leather holster, USA, c1962.
This model was used by Buzz Aldrin on NASA's Apollo spaceflight programme.
- A/43 601 (simplex), Diwa, 16cm, plastic with leather case and cardboard box, Denmark, 1950s.
- A/44 P10 (simplex), Blundell, 16cm, plastic with leather case, UK, Blundell, early 1950s.
- A/45 200-ES Trig (simplex), Pickett, 15cm, aluminium with leather holster, USA, c1962.
- A/46 U02 (simplex), Helix, 16cm, plastic, Japan, ?1960s.
- A/47 Ringplan Precision Log Log (simplex), Boots, 15cm, plastic with plastic holster, Japan, c1970.
- A/48 Log Log (simplex), Unique, 16cm, wood and celluloid with a cardboard box, UK, early 1950s.
- A/49 300 (duplex), Pickett, 15cm, aluminium, USA, c1954.

- A/50 Unidentified model (simplex), Blundell, 15.5cm, celluloid, UK, nd.
- A/51 Unidentified model (simplex), Faber-Castell, 15.5cm, plastic, Germany, nd.
- A/52 Spirule (circular), Walter R. Evans, 30cm, plastic, USA, c1965.
Not strictly a slide rule, this specialised calculating instrument comprises a rotating ruler with attached circular disk and was invented to aid in creating root locus plots.
Includes instructions for use.

SECTION B INSTRUCTION MANUALS & DOCUMENTATION 1915-2006

This section contains instruction manuals and associated documentation relating to the operation and use of slide rules.

The presentation is chronological.

- B/1 'A Note on the Solution of Equations by Means of the Slide-Rule', E. W. Hollingworth, *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, **CCII(ii)**, 1915-1916.
- B/2 *The Slide Rule*, C. N. Pickworth, 1920.
- B/3 *Instructions for Use: Aristo Studio No. 869, No. 968*, c1953.
- B/4 *Book of Instructions for the Standard, Rietz and Engineers' Patterns with Log-Log Scales*, M. Walker and J. Harrison, 1954.
- B/5 *Slide Rule Manual: Aristo Multilog No. 970*, Charvoz Roos Corporation, c1954.
- B/6 *K & E Slide Rules: A Self-Instruction Manual*, Lyman M. Kells, Willis F. Kern and James R. Band, 1955.
- B/7 *How to Take Care of Your Slide Rule*, Keuffel & Esser Co, nd c1955.
- B/8 *British Thornton 10" Slide Rules: Instructions for Use*, nd late 1950s.

- B/9 *Instructions for the Use of Students Slide Rules*, Fabel-Castell, nd late 1950s.
- B/10 *Teach Yourself Books: The Slide Rule*, Burns Snodgrass, 1967.
- B/11 'When Side Rules Ruled', Cliff Stoll, *Scientific American*, May 2006.