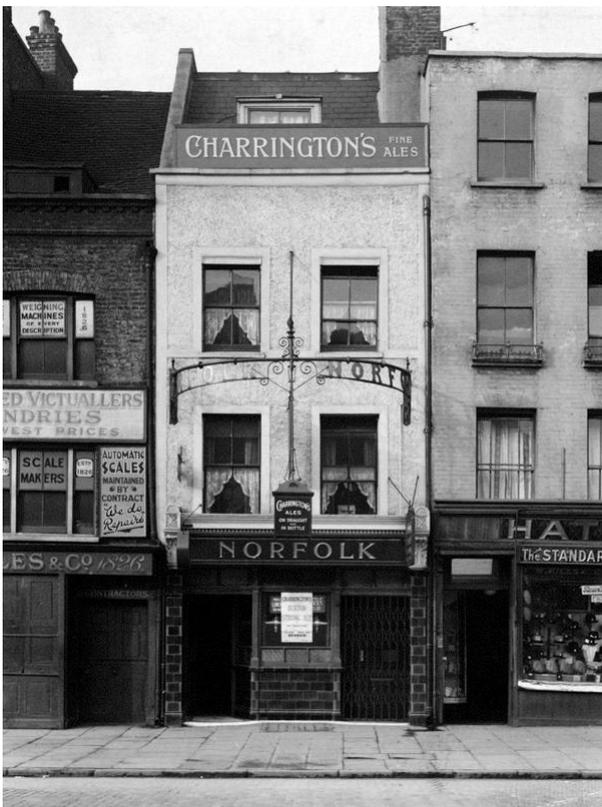


FULCRUM

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FULCRUM is the newsletter of ISASC(E), the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors (Europe). It is published in February, May, August and November. Contributions should be sent to the Editor, John Knights.



Miles' End

Some may recall the Old Street saga that has been ongoing in Fulcrum for some time. It began a few years ago when various scales appeared with the names and addresses of makers in or around Old Street in East London.

One of the most interesting firms was the business of Miles & Co. This name appeared on a somewhat elaborate High Pattern Deadweight that John Wintour had found and lodged amongst his vast collection (below).

The address cast into the iron of the scale is actually Old St. Road which was, as I later learned, the name given to that section of Old Street to the East of the City Road junction. I also learned, via the Scale



Makers' index, that Henry Miles also had premises at 200 Shoreditch High Street which is a major thoroughfare (now part of the A10) which joins Old Street (Old Street Road) at its Eastern extremity.

Matters took an interesting turn when I recently received a message from Richard Herbert who had been looking at web sites dealing with public houses (who knew?) and had hit upon a picture of The Norfolk pub in Shoreditch High Street, photographed in 1930 (above, top left). Nice as the pub was, the interesting part of the photograph was the premise to the left of the Norfolk (above, lower left). This was seen to be 'LES & Co 1826'. The first part of the name was cropped off but it was easy to infer that this was in fact the Shoreditch premise of

Henry Miles & Co, who was shown as 'Scale Makers'. He not only maintained Automatic Scales by contract but, believe it or not, did repairs. What a guy!

A photograph of the same site, taken some nine years later showed the Norfolk, much altered from its Victorian look. It had been 'Deccoed' up and somewhat increased in size. These modifications appeared to have had the effect of doing away with the Miles's premise.

The pub closed in the 1990's and the whole site was demolished in the 2000s, as part of a road widening scheme. The picture left shows it in its last days.

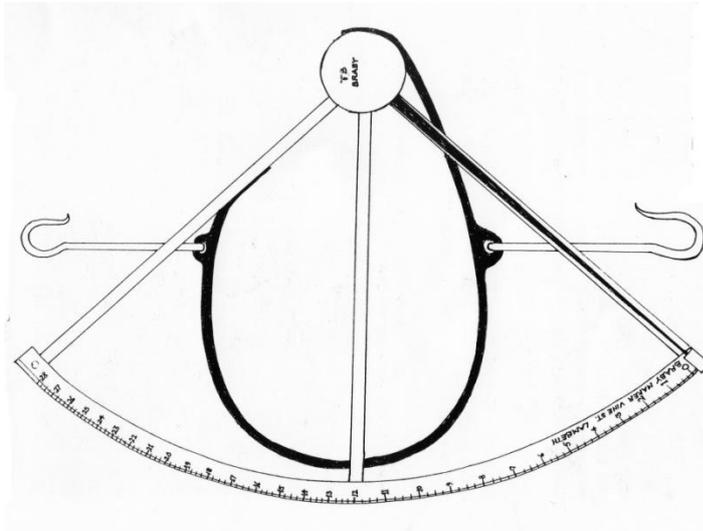


Braby Love

We are still receiving queries from the great British public! A gentleman from the English Midlands had acquired an interesting piece of ironmongery at a car boot sale and contacted us for further enlightenment. Unfortunately, I was

also somewhat unenlightened so had to refer to Diana who put me wise, or at least wiser. Back articles in Equilibrium advised that the device dated from the first half of the 19th century and was the work of one Thomas Braby of Lambeth in London.

The instrument is described in EQM issue 2 of 1995 when only two examples were recorded, with weighing capacities of 28lb and 42 lb respectively. The design of the balance seemed to have derived from the maker's original business in the area of horse drawn transport. Such vehicles incorporated suspension springs to ensure a less bumpy ride and it must have occurred to somebody that the flexure springs of suspension systems might also have a use as



a weighing resistant. The C spring, D spring and other alphabetically inspired flexures had already been adopted in the Continental Mancur, the Marriot Dial machine etc so the Braby Scale is seen as novel rather than revolutionary.

Flexure springs were inferior in accuracy and precision to the torsion spring in helical form which eventually became the standard resistant in spring devices.

The example described by our enquirer has a weighing capacity of 29lbs rather than 28lbs indicating perhaps, that the manufacture of each instrument was a bit on the empirical side of precision.

The Ho Ho Horror

The Christmas period has been and gone and as usual it had its highlights and lowlights. The festive season becomes more bizarre and devoid of significance every year. At our local garden centre, which seems to sell every type of tawdry tat rather than actual greenery, it was observed that visits to Santa were to be booked online if you know what's good for you. Failure to do this can result in a lack of opportunity to see the creepy old bloke. The thing that stood out for me was the use of the word 'volume' or even volumes in reference to people attending the Grotto.



It struck me as a peculiar, if not uncommon, descriptive to apply to people. I would have assumed that the term 'number' of people would be more appropriate as people are surely countable produce.

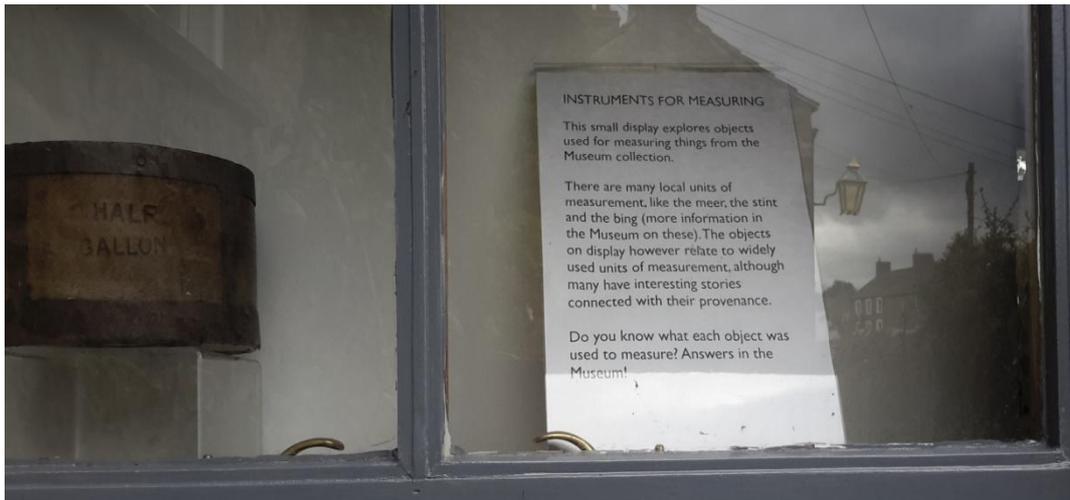
SUNWAC

The so called SUNWAC Rivers drain the upland area known as the Dales in the North Yorkshire area of England. The most northerly of these is the Swale and the valley or dale of this river is a scenic delight that attracts large numbers (not volumes) of visitors every year. Member Julie Davey was one such visitor, on a summer's day when she came upon the village of Reeth; just one of the attractive settlements in the area.

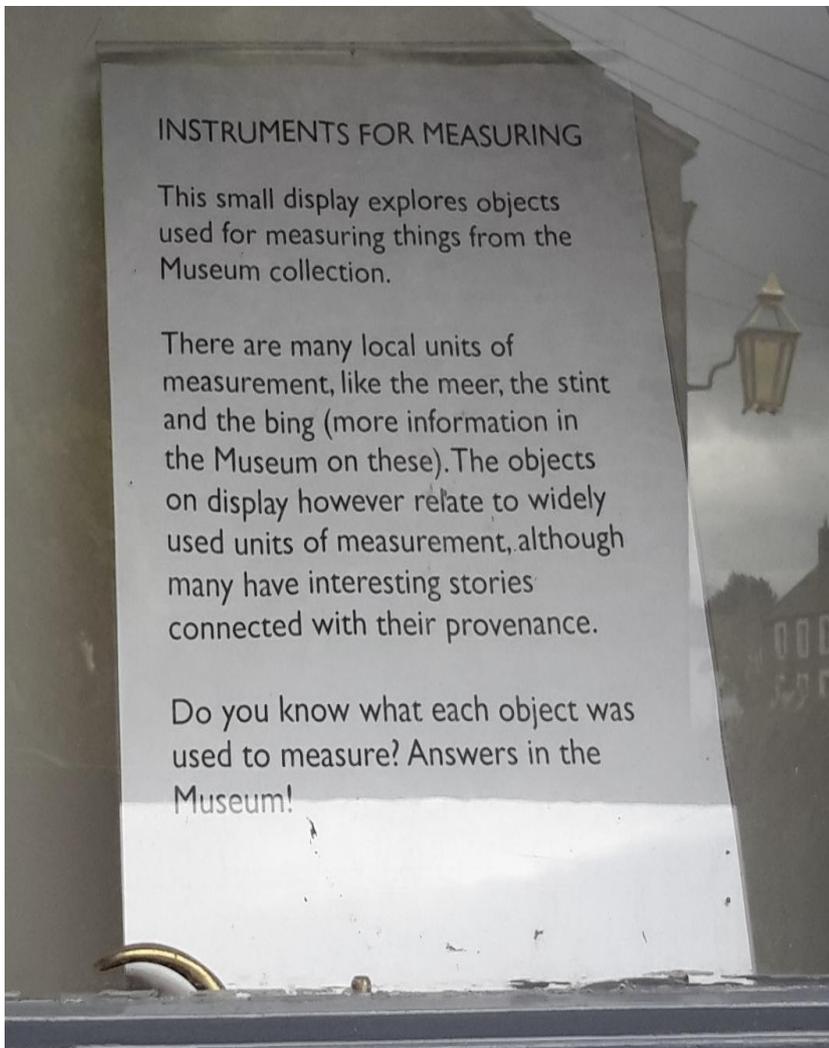
A feature of the village is the Swaledale Museum which is perhaps an unexpected establishment to find

there. The museum, allegedly, contains a plethora of folk and trade artefacts relevant to the

region's history and culture. Julie was unable to verify this allegation as the museum was closed at the time of her visit. She did, however, take the time to look in the window and gained some



insight into the contents within. She photographed an interesting notice in the window (left) which alludes to the metrology of the area. The people of Yorkshire are known to the rest of the English as a contrary bunch so it comes as no great surprise to learn they had their own units of measurement.



Australian Avery

Just when we got over the receipt of one query about a scale we received yet another! This time it came from a gent residing in the antipodes. He sent some photographs of a large platform machine that he had allegedly inherited from his grandmother (oh joy! some people just get houses, jewellery, money etc). He was interested to know something about his inheritance, particularly its vintage. It will be seen from the pictures, shown below, that the scale is a hefty piece of Avery

ironmongery as featured in their trade catalogues of the late 1800s.

These machines were widely used in the 'heavy' trades, warehousing, milling, steel stockholding and the like throughout the early 20th century.

Being pretty much bombproof they did actually hang around into the latter parts of the 20th century being only finally wiped out by load cell technology and metrication.

Because of this longevity they were machines that Inspectors of my vintage still encountered during their testing career.

The simplicity of design and the heftiness of construction meant that there was not a great deal that could go wrong. The loose poises could be adjusted occasionally to compensate for wear



and in extremis the knife edges could be replaced.

One area of weakness however was the relieving mechanism, designed to drop the bottomwork away from the platform so that the knife edges were not in contact with the

bearings when the machine was not in use, thus avoiding excessive wear to these vital components.

When these machines were encountered in the course of inspection they were usually in the darker recesses of a mill or warehouse, more likely than not, on an upper floor. Thus to gain access, the test weights had to be carried some distance and frequently up several flights of stairs. They were thus approached with a degree of grumpiness or downright animosity and tested in a fairly hostile manner.

Experience taught that these machines usually performed fairly well on initial trial. The steelyard, with its little minor poise usually managed to perform its acceleration with a degree of conviction when the weights were applied, even after three quarters of a century of use. Just when the smug swine thought it was getting away with it however the malevolent officer would exploit the one weakness of this type of scale and drop the bottom work. When the knife edges were re-attached it was quite normal to find that the calibration had been lost and the machine could be thus condemned.

A fascinating feature of this particular machine is the elaborate sack rail which sits on a locating strip cast into the load plate. This is a feature I have never seen before in such a machine. The normal back support on this type of scale is a much more prosaic affair consisting of a lattice fabricated from iron or steel bars.

The rail on the Australian scale, on the other hand is a great Baroque confection cast as a single iron panel. According to the owner it weighs some 30kg which is quite a lump of deadweight to inflict on the scale. The central cartouche of the panel contains a stylised coat of arms of Birmingham.

Other than the spectacular sack rail the scale is one of common form, probably from the late 19th century although manufacture of the pattern could have continued, largely unaltered, for some time, despite the parallel development of more inventive patterns.

Looking Ahead

2017 has barely stumbled over the threshold but we are already looking forward to the events of this year.

Last year's Autumn meeting was a special occasion as it celebrated the 40th anniversary of the society and the gathering was a successful event, even though by historic standards the numbers attending were somewhat reduced.

This being the case it has been decided to have another Autumn meeting this year at the same venue, which is a convenient location and a better fit for the size of meeting than some of the rather more grandiose premises used in days of yore.

The hotel at Kegworth has therefore been booked for Sunday 8th October 2017 so please make a note in your diary. **As ever we would like the meeting to reflect the wishes of the members so would be more than pleased to receive ideas for a theme.**

We do not know, at this time whether there will be any other gatherings arranged by members etc but we will advise as and when matters become clearer.