

Restoring a Stanley No 25 C Screwdriver

By Walter Hall

In the early 1970s when I first became interested in woodworking, I bought a 14" Stanley cabinet screwdriver with the intention of buying others to match. It became one of my favourites, but the others never got bought and sometime, somehow over the last 50 years the original left my possession. Because I liked the balance of the tool and the shape of the handle I have, over the last couple of years been collecting and restoring screwdrivers of this type from sites such as eBay and of course NWA auctions to try to build up a set. A 14" version has evaded me for some time but finally I acquired this one in salvageable condition to complete my set.



As you can see from the photographs the blade was straight, but had a degree of surface rust, the handle was intact but had clearly suffered from abuse and a bit of hammer rash. The original black paint was also very badly crazed and chipped. I have never come across one of these Stanley screwdrivers that did not have crazed paintwork, even a new old stock tool I bought had the same problem. Whatever Stanley used in the '60s and '70s it didn't stand the test of time. Before dealing with the handle though, my first job was to clean up the metalwork. For heavily rusted parts I will use electrolysis or chemical rust removers such as phosphoric acid, but with relatively light "surface" rust such as this I find a 3M abrasive wheel, or a wire brush wheel to be highly effective. In this case I used a 3M wheel. When using one of these it is essential to wear respiratory PPE and use good extraction as lots of fine abrasive particles are released. Note the extractor hood.



This removed most of the paint and some of the dents and scrapes that it had acquired from many years of use.



Careful sanding by hand finishes the job and prepares the handle for a new coat of paint. Almost good enough for an oil or lacquer finish but not quite.



And here is the finished job, looking almost as good as new and ready to join its colleagues in my rack.



