

Gentleman's saws restoration

Wherever possible I prefer to restore or conserve old tools in the condition they would have been in if they had been used and maintained by a fastidious tradesman or craftsman rather than to shiny "as new" condition. This little article shows the restoration of two gent's saws and two slightly different approaches to restoring/conserving that I hope have achieved that aim.



Before restoration

The larger saw, by Thomas Ibbotson & Co. had been well maintained by previous owners one of whom had stamped his name on the brass back. It required only cleaning and polishing to remove the worst of the dirt whilst retaining the patina of use. There is little difference between the before and after photographs except perhaps that it looks a little cleaner.



The second, smaller saw by John Cockerill of Sheffield, had at some time in the past been subject to some overzealous cleaning of the blade and brass back which had left some fairly obvious scratches. The beech handle had flaking finish and traces of PVA adhesive which left it looking less well cared for. The brass back was sanded through the grits from 240 to 400 and then polished with Chestnut Products Nyweb pads to remove the scratches. The old finish was stripped from the handle with a Stanley knife blade and net abrasive, then refinished with Chestnut Satin Acrylic spray lacquer.



Both still cut fairly well but will be given a light sharpen before being brought back into use.

I cannot date the saws accurately, but Thomas Ibbotson & Co was established in 1833, bought out by William Marples in 1905 and ceased production under the Ibbotson name in 1909. So, the larger saw is at least 112 years old.

The John Cockerill brand was part of the Spear and Jackson company, and their products were cheaper versions of the main S&J ranges. The name was still in use up until the 1930s.

N.B. Dating information from "British saws and Saw Makers from c1660" by Simon Barley.