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Tape (Chesterman)



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**Description:**

This brass and leather case of this steel tape is marked "CHESTERMAN'S PATENT / SHEFFIELD" and "100 Ft." The tape itself is graduated in 100ths of a foot on one side, and links and poles on the other. It has joints every 20 feet.

James Chesterman (1795–1867) was an English metal worker who, in 1821, received a British patent for a method of using a spring to rewind measuring tapes. In 1842 Chesterman and James Bottom patented a woven cloth tape that incorporated strands of wire. Chesterman's 1853 patented process for heat-treating long strips of steel led to the manufacture of steel tapes that remained virtually unchanged for over 50 years.

Scientific American called attention to Chesterman & Co. in 1869, noting that their patent steel tape "is about the most unique thing of the kind we have ever seen," and mentioning its portability, neatness, and exact measuring capability. W. & L. E. Gurley was offering Chesterman steel tapes by 1871, describing them as "made of a thin ribbon of steel, which is jointed at intervals, and wound up in a leathern case, having a folding handle." Gurley went on to say that these tapes were the best on the market, but at \$17, their "great cost" prevented their general use. Gurley also sold Chesterman tapes of cloth reinforced with wire; these cost just \$5.25.

Ref: "Steel Measuring Tapes," *Scientific American* 21 (1869): 216.

W. & L. E. Gurley, *Manual of the Principal Instruments Used in American Engineering and Surveying* (Troy, N.Y., 1871), p. 132, and price list.

James Chesterman & Co., *Chesterman's Patent Measures, Engineers' Tools, &c.* (Sheffield, n.d.), pp. 16–17.

Douglas J. Hallam, *The First 200 Years. A Short History of Rabone Chesterman Limited* (1984).

Location: Currently not on view

Object Name: Measuring Tape

Credit Line:

Estate of Mr. and Mrs. Roberdeau
Buchanan

Maker: James Chesterman & Co.

Place Made:

United Kingdom: England, Sheffield,
Sheffield

See more items in: Medicine and
Science: Physical Sciences, Surveying
and Geodesy, Measuring & Mapping

Exhibition:

Exhibition Location:

Related Publication: W. & L. E. Gurley.

Manual of the Principal Instruments
Used in American Engineering and
Surveying; 17th Edition, Scientific
American, James Chesterman & Co..

Chesterman's Patent Measures,
Engineers' Tools, &c., Hallam, Douglas J..
First 200 Years: A Short History of
Rabone Chesterman Limited

Measurements:

overall: 1 1/4 in x 4 1/2 in; 3.175 cm x 11.43
cm

tape: 3/8 in x 100 ft; .9525 cm x 30.48 m

overall: 1 1/2 in x 4 3/4 in x 4 1/2 in; 3.81
cm x 12.065 cm x 11.43 cm

Id Number: PH.328413

Catalog Number: 328413

Accession Number: 97135

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