

Box Clever?

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A particular interest of mine is the development of the early mass-produced slide rules of A.W. Faber from their inception up to the First World War. These wooden slide rules and their cloth covered cardboard boxes (which are also an important part of the story) are now antiques, being around 100 to 125 years old. Unfortunately, while the slide rules generally survive the ravages of time in good condition, the boxes usually fair less well, becoming fragile and sustaining significant damage.

There have been many useful suggestions in the past for storing slide rules, but the delicate state of these items adds another dimension to the problem, particularly if they need to be easily and safely transported. I am loath to have mine knocking around even a sturdy box or crate where they can be jostled and damaged further, unless they are rather inconveniently protectively wrapped as well.

Fortunately I have found a practical solution that works well for me – foolscap box files. They are cheap, readily available and a perfect size (23.5 x 35.5 x 7cm internally) to store and transport a small number of up to 25cm scale length slide rules in their boxes, without becoming too cluttered, heavy or cumbersome. They can also be easily stacked, labelled and stored on shelves or in a cupboard. The only thing that needs doing is the removal of the internal sprung retainer.

However, for those extra special, fragile or highly prized items - add some stiff cardboard dividers, line with felt or similar, make some Velcro labels and throw in a packet of silica gel (from your last electrical purchase) to keep moisture at bay. You can snugly house eight 25cm rules lengthways or 12 shorter rules widthways for safe, convenient transport or storage - lovely!

