

Basic Detail Report



00047895

Title

Lens cap for brass telescope manufactured by F Barker & Sons

Date

late 19th Century

Medium

Brass

Dimensions

Overall: 25 x 70 x 70 mm, 71 g

Name

Lens cap

History

This cap is from a brass telescope believed to have belonged to a Burns Philp Captain. The telescope has a cap, leather covering and is engraved 'Made by F. Barker & Co. London for Burns Auckland'. Francis Barker was widely known for his manufacture of compasses from the 1820s to the 1870s. The majority of his items were sold unsigned to other instrument shops, however he also sold other shops instruments which he did not manufacture, such as telescopes. Thus, this telescope may have been manufactured elsewhere and marked by Barker & Co. Francis Barker had worked for other instrument makers in London from the 1820s and in 1841 he established the company of F. Barker & Son. In the same year he established a partnership with Richard Groves as makers of sundials and maritime compasses. Francis Barker died in 1875 and his son, Francis Jnr., sold his share of the company to some of his brothers shortly afterwards and moved to Australia where he set up a bottle factory. Francis Jnr. died on 7 December 1887 and was buried at Broken Hill. F. Barker & Son continued to prosper under Barker's sons, nephews and grandsons well into the twentieth century. The company ran into financial problems during the Depression in 1932, and it was taken over and renamed F. Barker & Son (1932) Limited. This new company benefitted from the business created by the Second World War. F. Barker & Son (1932) Limited changed hands several times over the decades and the name continued to the present day in a prismatic compass company that still bears the Francis Barker name. The leather cases for Barker instruments were made by a family relative Thomas Weeks.