

Rabone 6" Level Restoration

This 6" Rabone rosewood and brass spirit level looked, on superficial examination as though it only needed a little cleaning and polishing to bring it back into good condition.



Further investigation however revealed a few issues. The vial for vertical level had lost its fluid.



One of the screws retaining the top brass plate was oversized and not properly seated in the countersink.



The first job was to remove the top plate. You can clearly see the difference in the size of the screw heads.



The old vial was removed and the mounting hole cleaned out, removing all the old plaster of Paris that held it in place.



With the top plate removed the main vial could be cleaned, then the brass tips were removed from the base. This revealed why the screw on the top plate was the wrong size. A previous restorer had put one of those from the brass tips into the top plate and vice-versa.



The brass top plate and tips were polished with Brasso and the wooden body given a couple of coats of wax.



After cleaning up the screws on a brass wire wheel in the grinder, the brass tips were replaced using the correct (larger headed) screws.



Traditionally plaster of Paris or linseed oil putty would have been used to seat the new vial but I chose to use a modern two part silicone putty.



Here is the completed level. Just a little cleaning up of the silicone putty to do once it is fully set.

