Skinner's Morse taper Brace No. 194 & chuck adapter.

Skinner is one of several brace manufacturers that produced a brace with a Morse taper chuck. This has been in my collection for some time as well as Skinner's Morse taper adapter.

Skinner Tool Manufacturing Company Ltd

First established in 1921 in New Street, this firm had moved by the end of the 1920's to *Carbrace Works*, Broad Lane (in premises opposite St Georges Church). As the name suggests, Skinner's specialisms were carpenters braces, wheel nut braces and motor car starting handles. The firms first incarnation was as Vickers, Skinner & Meldrum. Vickers is not identified with certainty in directories, but the other principals were Thornley (Thomas) Freston Skinner(1883-1949) and Thomas Meldrum (qv). Skinner was a motor engineer, who was the son of a surgeon.

The firm soon became known as Skinner & Meldrum. Percy John Kay was briefly a partner, but he left in 1929. Meldrum started his own firm in 1932.

Skinner Tool Manufacturing was registered as a limited company with £4,000 capital. The directors were Dr. E.F. Skinner, Dr. W.F. Skinner and T.F. Skinner. In 1935 Edward Douglas Domican (1895-1957) an experienced tool maker, became manager. By 1939 the works was reported to be working at full capacity (*quality*, March1939). Thomley F. Skinner died on 24th December 1949 leaving £10,539 net. William G. Ibberson (who married the nephew of Thornley Skinner and operated a well- known cutlery firm) was chairman of Skinner tool Manufacturing Company Ltd. Until 1972. Skinner was struck off the following year.

Acknowledgement: c/o Geoffrey Tweedale: Directory of Sheffield Tool Manufacturers.

Skinner No. 194

Skinner's 1951 advertisement shown below shows the three types of drill bit , a straight shank, a standard tang and the #1 Morse taper.

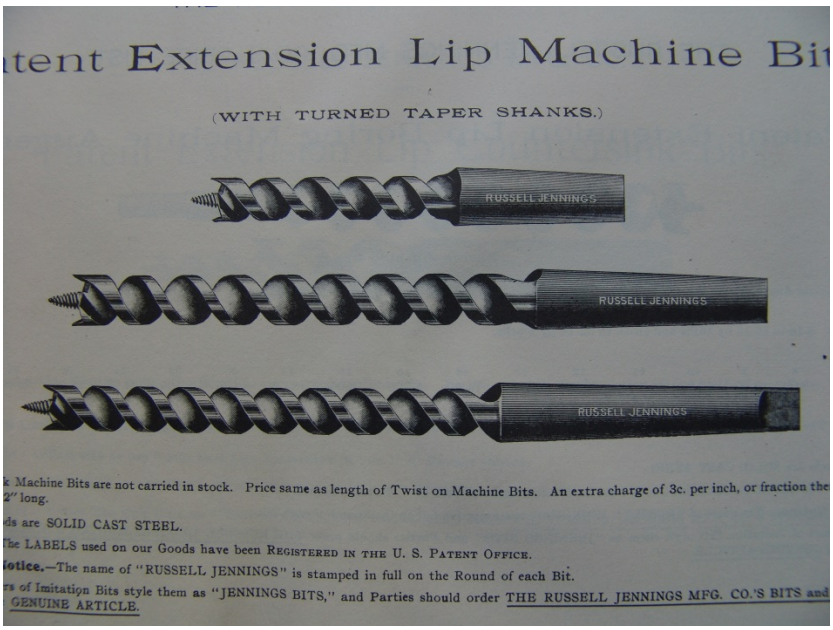
1951

The bit chuck adapter as shown in Skinners leaflet.

Skinner also produced a Morse taper adapter as shown, the chuck is classic Skinner in size and shape.
It could be argued that the adapter was made for a pedestal drill or lathe as who would want to drill a hole in steel with a brace. It does beg the question that why did Skinner even bother to produce this particular brace in the first place. These braces are not that common and this is probably because they were not a big seller.
My research only found Russell Jennings as a maker of wood bits with a Morse taper shank.

There are several different types or styles of tapers used on machine tools and Morse taper refers to a taper of 5/8ths of an inch per foot. Drills and lathes use taper shank drill bits and arbors. Taper shank drills and accessories come in a series of standard sizes and these are each given a number designation. For example one of the most common sizes of taper used on drill presses found in the home shop is the #2 MT or #2 Morse taper. The next most common size is the #3 MT found on larger drill presses and these are a larger size taper. And of course a #1 MT is smaller than #2, and a #4 is larger than #3 and so on.

This page of a 1960s/70s three page pamphlet issued by Skinner shows the No. 194 brace together with the morse taper adapter and states *" The No. 194 will take No.1 morse taper drills or bit chucks in the universal socket, has a bright steel finish and natural coloured wood handles"*



These Russell Jennings Morse taper bits were not kept in stock and only ordered when asked for.

Public records for the Skinner Tool Manufacturing Co. is very sparse. Very little is known about this company. The Sheffield Council library has " *there are four small sheets"* in its archives. The other pages show an example of plain or non-ratchet braces, interestingly an option to buy an alternative round chuck (I have never seen any of these) as Skinner is known for its tapered octagonal chuck. Also shown is best quality ratchet braces and the new "Amba" brace.
"Skinners new "Amba" brace has the cap and handle made from the well known yellow plastic (cellulose acetate). This material keeps its colour and has now been proved to be tough, virtually unbreakable and impervious to grease, oil and water."
It may be that the company did not produce any trade catalogues as other tool manufacturers did and just produced these pamphlets hence the scarcity of same.