

Beam Compass

A beam compass is an instrument used for drawing larger circles or curvatures larger than those possible with the small compass sets.

A scaled beam is required to carry the two trammels found inside the small casement. The beam can be of either wood or steel, depending on the workshop where the beam compass is being used.

To operate, the central trammel pivot pin is fastened to one end of the beam, with outer scribing trammel point connected where required along the beam to suit the desired radius being drawn. The trammels can be adjusted by sliding along the beam, making it simple to draw a whole series of different sized circles. The trammels are locked to the beam by side-mounted set screws, and it is important to ensure that the trammels are securely locked in order to prevent sliding while drawing the circles.

The beam compass was frequently used for drawing large diameter circles, While beam compasses are still available today, nowadays large circles are often created by computerized machinery or CAD software, especially in wood working and metal fabricating shops.

(Above information provided by Ernest Amor – see also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beam_compass).