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BRITISH SERIES BOLT HEADMARKINGS

First off, let me say...there is a LOT on this topic that I still do not know. That being said, please feel free to email us at sales@britishfasteners.com at any time to add your 2 Cents.

This article was written in hopes that it will help people identify British Whitworth, British Fine, UNC and UNF hex bolts. Similarly to US bolts available across the country, the markings on British bolts and screws can give you more information than you think. Let's look at a few!



It is typical to find British series bolts with letters stamped on the head like the picture above. With this particular bolt, the letters "R S B" at the top of the bolt are short for "Regis Screw & Bolt" (A British manufacturer).

The letter "R" on the underside of the hex tells us about the thread type and grade too.

TENSILE GRADES & VALUES:

TENSILE GRADE		MIN - MAX UTS - N/mm ²		MIN - MAX Hardness Brinell	
	GRADE "Q"	625	775	179	229
BSF BSW UNC UNF	* GRADE "R"	700	850	201	255
	* GRADE "S"	775	925	223	277
	GRADE "T"	850	1000	248	302

Based on the Tensile grade and values chart above, you can see that Whitworth and British Standard Fine bolts were made with a letter "R" stamped on the hex. Therefore, if you have any British bolts that have a letter "R" stamped on them, you can count on the being a Whitworth or BSF thread.

Here is another example. The letters "R O" on the bolt below stand for "[Rubery Owen](#)". Again, the second, lower "R" tells us that the bolt falls into the BSW/BSF range of tensile strength and the thread is either a Whitworth or BSF size. The letter "R" is also compared to grade 8 steel.

Despite no *real* proof (other than my suppliers word) that ONLY BSW and BSF bolts come with the letter "R" and its associated values, I checked every single bolt and screw we had and concluded that every single one of them with a letter "R" was indeed a BSW or BSF thread. I have yet to see a **NON** BSW/BSF bolt with a letter "R"



Below is a picture of another popular bolt. First, you will notice the letters “R S B” which we previously discussed as “Regis Screw & Bolt”. You will also notice that the singular letter this time is a letter “S”.

Based on the chart above, you will see that bolts and screws stamped with the letter “S” are typically UNC or UNF threaded. I have also noticed that a vast majority of the hardware we have in house that is UNF threaded also has the indented circle in the middle of the hex.

The indented circle makes these types of bolts extremely popular with customers completing auto restorations. As is typical with US bolts, this kind of marking usually signifies some information regarding grade or tensile strength but if that is the case, I am unaware as to what the circle means. It could also be that the circle is simply there from the forging processes at the time the bolt was made. I also have reason to believe that the indented circle signified that the bolt was made from carbon steel but cannot verify that.



There is also the following information available for comparison.

TENSILE STRENGTH

Grade 'R' 45-50 Tons/Inch²

Grade 'S' 50-55 Tons/Inch²

Grade '8.8' 50-55 Tons/Inch²

Here is another clear example of a British bolt. The hex is clearly marked “UNF” and the letter “S” which suggests that the tensile strength is similar to the other UNF bolts I have. The other feature of this particular bolt is the three lines pointing towards the center of the hex. These lines also signify a grade 5 bolt, which is typical of UNF and UNC hardware.

You can also see the letters “FBL” which are the manufacturer markings. I am unsure as to what the real company name is for “FBL”



Here is another UNF, grade “S” bolt. Again, I am unsure what the markings “3 F” stand for. Does any one have any ideas?



Next we have more proof of the British lettering system. This bolt made by Richards and Allan UK is marked with the letter “R” and also the tensile strength range 45-55



Lastly, this bolt is the only one that I have that shows the actual term for its thread type. The photo is a little dark but the bolt in hand clearly reads

“BSF” and the grade “8.8”. This is odd as no other manufacturer that I have seen marks their bolts with a numerical grade such as an 8.8. Such a stamping should be a lot more recognizable to North Americans who use this type of numbering grade more frequently. It is for this reason that I assume the bolt is a lot more new than the others.

