



THE TRADE TOOLS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO.8

November 1992

ANDREW FARQUHAR (Temporary Address end of Feb. 93)
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141

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'The History of Tools is the History of Man'

THE TRADE TOOLS GROUP

GREGORYS PG 6

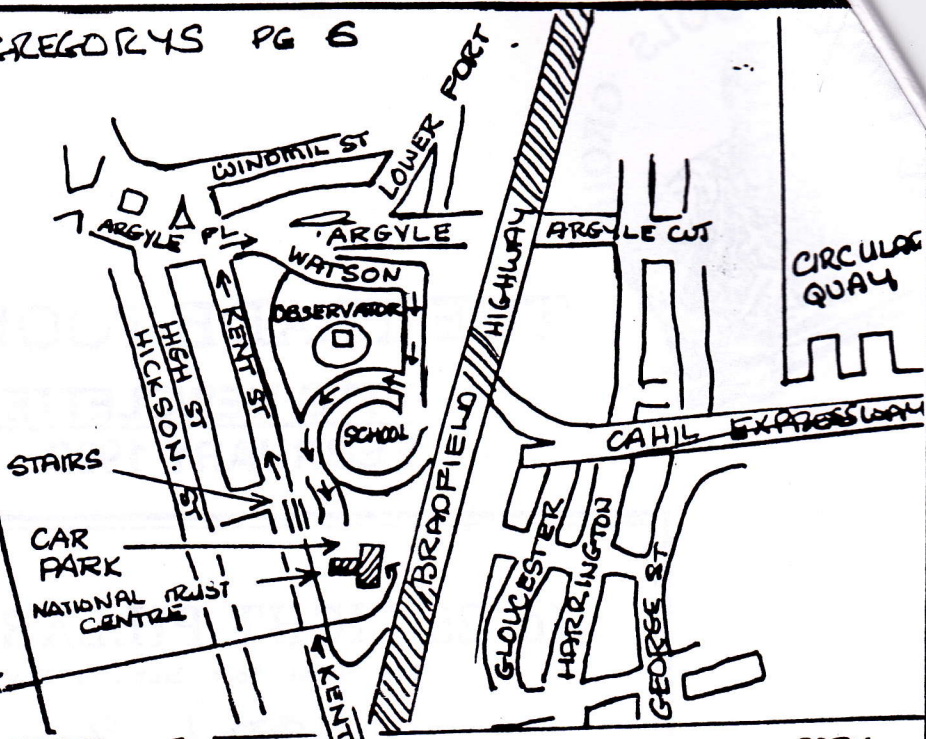
MEETINGS:

THE ANNIE WYATT ROOM
NATIONAL TRUST CENTRE
OBSERVATORY HILL

TIME:

COMMITTEE 7.00 PM
GENERAL 7.30 PM

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OR DRIVE UP GEORGE ST, ARGYLE CUT, WATSON ETC

CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence to any committee member of TTTG should be addressed to:-
The Secretary, TTTG
Mr Paul Gregson
17 Adamson Avenue, Dundas NSW 2117

Contributions for this newsletter or inquiries concerning advertising should be addressed as above and endorsed "Attention Editor".

Similarly inquiries about membership or remittances of accounts should be addressed as above and endorsed "Attention The Treasurer".

The committee has resolved to follow this one address policy. Co-operation in this matter will greatly facilitate the official obligations of TTTG. All correspondence will be attended to in a prompt manner.

PROGRAMME TTTG 1993

February 9	General Meeting Topic - Moulding Planes Speaker - Bob Crosbie
March 9	Committee Meeting
April 13	General Meeting Topic - Wheelwright's and Coach Makers' Tools Speaker - Michael Hendrikson

VENUE: Annie Wyatt Room
National Trust Centre

THE TRADE TOOLS GROUP (TTTG)

NEWSLETTER NO.8
November 1992

CONTENTS

Regular Items:

President's Report (Terry Butcher)
Editor's Report (Bob Crosbie)

Useful Information:

- Hand Tool Preservation Association of Australia Inc.
- Australian Association of Musical Instrument Makers

Correspondence:

Letters from Members
John Godschall Johnson

The Next Meeting:

Tuesday, 8th December 7.30pm
National Trust Centre

What is it?

Counter Check Plane
Bunions

Advertisements: Trade and Members

Special Features:

The Shouldering Plane
Hook Joint Plane for Casement Sashes
Planes for Airtight Showcases
Shop Front Lamb Tongue Planes
The Tothing Plane

Oral History:

William Price, convict carpenter, thefts from Government Stores. Sydney 1820

Next Newsletter:

All the regular features plus
Natural Adhesives by Paul Gregson
Sash Making Techniques by Bob Crosbie
Early Timber Getting by Ralph Hawkins

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well, our first meeting at our new venue went off very well, despite the fact that it was all locked up when we arrived and no-one there to expect us. We got off to a late start, some people found it a bit difficult to find without the map which is to be included in this issue of the Newsletter - I hope. So to those who got lost or found it too daunting, I do hope you will all come to the December meeting, and, of course, the Christmas do - more of that later.

The Committee decided a little liquid refreshment for the evening would help, so provided a variety of red and white wines and a carton of orange juice along with cheese and bickies etc. We also decided to ask for a \$2.00 donation to defray the cost and not be a burden on our finances. Thanks to everyone for their support.

It was good to see Mike Williams bring his Dad along - we hope Mr Williams enjoyed himself.

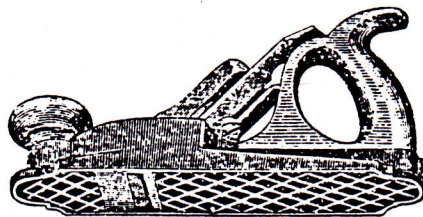
Almost the entire evening was taken up with our two presenters - Donna May Bolinger and Mario Dato who each presented a splendid show demonstrating all the amazing tools used in shoe-making and a detailed study of their manufacture by hand. A more detailed report follows, I was your court reporter due to the unfortunate bout of illness in our Hon. Secretary's family.

Much praise was given to me by members over the quality of the last issue of the Newsletter. Thanks from everyone to Ian Goldsmith and Bob Crosbie. This issue is even better - don't you agree?

I would like to say to all our members at the end of this our first year "A very merry Christmas, a happy and prosperous New Year and a full TTTG programme for '93".

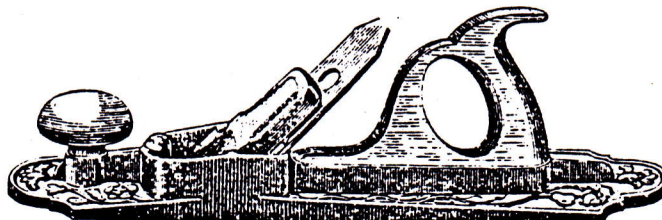
MORRIS' PATENT Diamond Metallic Bench Planes.

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in every respect. Price,

\$2 00



The Last Meeting - 6 October 1992

Topic: "Leather Working Tools"

Two talks were presented to the group. The speakers were Donna May Bolinger and Mario Dato. Accounts of their lively talks are to be found in the President's Report.

The transition to the new venue went very smoothly. Even though some people did have trouble finding the venue. This was due to the Editor omitting the map from the Newsletter. Sorry.

Approximately thirty members attended the meeting. The National Trust room seems ideal for our purpose. Entering through the 1815 entrance sets the tone for the evening and is a subtle reminder of the traditional knowledge we seek to preserve.

Our group is most appreciative of the generosity and support given to us by The National Trust.

TTTG Library Collection

Sid Bailey is the Librarian for our group. If TTTG is to build up a library for the benefit of members then donations need to be forthcoming. Some donations have already been made. Two book dealers, Ray Ingold and John McDonald have been generous in donating books.

If any members have surplus books they can be mailed to: The Librarian, TTTG, 56 Pitt Street, Redfern.

To be frank we are after anything to do with Trades and Tools. Old text books, old catalogues, even postcards or letterheads. If you think it is of possible interest we will take it. Even photocopies of materials you may wish to keep will be gratefully received.

Naturally our priority is for local material. To put you in the mood we reproduce a page from McPherson's Limited Centenary Catalogue 1960.

What about doing better, please send in material from old Australian catalogues, books, letters etc.

All donations will be acknowledged in this newsletter.

Australian Association of Musical Instrument Makers

The AAMIM sent the editor a pamphlet for their exhibition at the Uniting Church Complex, Chester Street, Epping on 24-25th October 1992.

Unfortunately this issue of TTTG Newsletter was scheduled after the exhibition.

Members should be aware of this group as many of its members are devoting their efforts to preserving traditional technology.

In further issues of this newsletter we hope to have material concerning traditional musical instrument.

John Godschall Johnson is a member of AAMIM as well as an honorary member of TTTG.

Information about AAMIM can be obtained from:

The Secretary
Australian Association of Musical Instrument Makers
PO Box 341, Epping NSW 2121

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY HTPA

Congratulation to the HTPA of Victoria, celebrating ten years as a tool group and to their incorporation. Many of our members belong to the HTPA, if anyone doesn't and would like to join their group, then write to

HAND TOOL PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION
 PO BOX 1163
 CARLTON VICTORIA 3053

and ask for a membership form.

They put out a very good newsletter, 'The Tool Chest', have a lot of meetings, tool swaps, etc.

Also if you happen to be going to Melbourne, let them know and, if there is a function on while you're there, I'm sure you will be made most welcome. This, of course, goes for any HTPA members coming to Sydney.



Letter from an Honorary Member

Members are no doubt aware that at the recent Working with Wood Show John Godschall Johnson was offered honorary membership of TTTG.

John accepted this offer and sent the following letter to our President. The letter is reproduced in full for the enjoyment of members.

24-8-92

JOHN GODSCHALL JOHNSON
MAKER OF
Violas, Violas, Cellos & Bows
2 Rivencok Avenue, Padstow 2211
02.7739563 Australia



Dear Terry,

I am a little slow at replying
Flat to the boards — and as usual, like the
cows tail, always behind.

I feel a little humble, thank
you for the honorary membership you have
given me.

Sorry I could not make it to the
meeting on Wed. 12th. Wood adhesives
(glue) are of interest here — the ones like
animal glue which are reversable especially.

The enclosed maybe of interest.

How often do you meet? May
be able to get along sometime if I'm
in Sydney

You and any others are always
welcome to come to the workshop
home. Just ring and make sure I'm

will get going, lol! lol!

All the best

Sincerely
John

THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 8th December 1992 at 7.30 p.m.

National Trust Centre,
Annie Wyatt Room, Observatory Hill

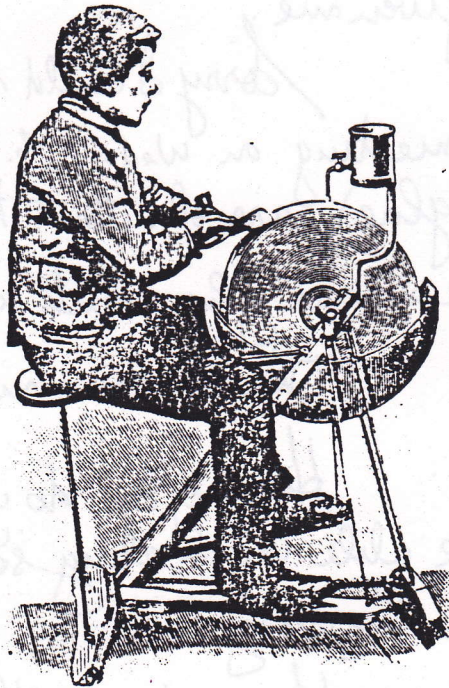
Topic: How to Finish Wooden Tools

This has been promoted as the Big Controversy. What do you do with that old tool? There is no one answer. The collector has one criteria, the user another and many tool owners are a combination of user and collector. To complicate matters old ideas conflict with current conservation practices. Users of wooden planes may still adhere to linseed oil while good conservators condemn its use. What of shellac? Should tools be French polished? Indeed should we even touch the finish on old tools - is it patina or just dirt?

To ginger up the discussion we reprint some old ideas. It should be a lively night.

Please bring along some old tools to illustrate your viewpoint.

Planes when out of use for more than a few hours should have the wedges released, as the continued tension is injurious to the plane. When temporarily out of use, bench planes should have their fronts resting on a thin slip of wood screwed on the bench top to keep the cutters free from damage. On no account should planes be laid upon their sides on the bench, as apart from the danger of running the hands against the cutters, if the soles are exposed for any length of time to the action of the sun, they will cast, and if at all unseasoned, split. Bench planes, when new, should have the aperture of the mouth stopped with putty, then the mouth filled up with clear raw linseed oil, which in about twenty-four hours will have soaked into the wood, filling up the pores, and thereafter preventing the absorption of moisture. Planes should not be French polished, as this surface scratches easily, and also makes the plane difficult to hold. An occasional rub with an oily rag dipped in finely powdered bath-brick will both clean the tool and produce a mellow polish that will not scratch.



MINUTES FOR OCTOBER MEETING

LEATHER WORKING TOOLS AND SHOEMAKING

Donna started first with two very well laid out display boards of tools, and went through the process of making a shoe with the tools that are generally used for hand made shoes. The heel shave provided us with some lively discussion as to its true use which is still not clear. However Donna showed her expertise in all the other interesting tools on display.

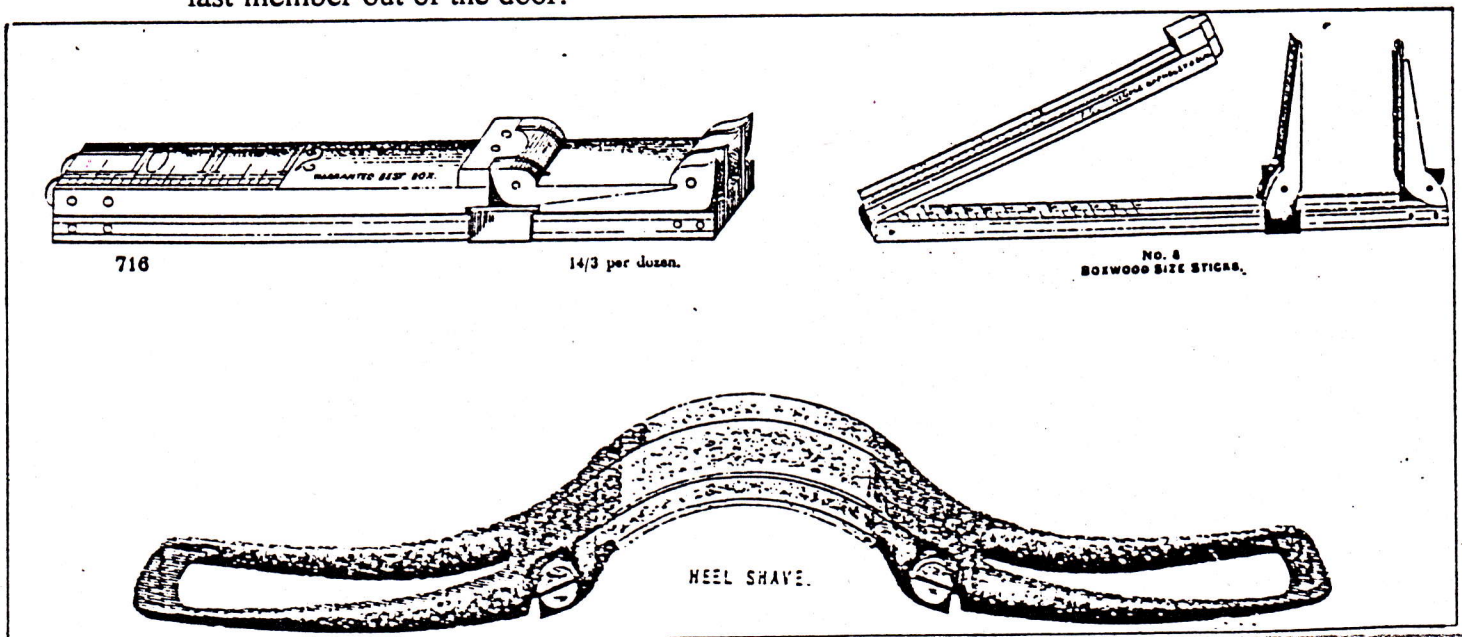
Some of these tools on display were: a variety of lasts, leather knives, marking-out knives, hammers, pliers for stretching the leather, and irons of various shapes for smoothing out wrinkles and heating the wax into the leather.

A question and answer period followed.

A short break then Mario took over - he had brought along a vast collection of wood and plaster casts and a lot of shoes in various stages of manufacture. He now demonstrated how a shoe is made up from a flat piece of leather and the inner sole with a metal support to keep its shape, wood and plastic lasts. Plastic lasts have self-sealing properties and do not show. Cutting forms for the inner sole, small sheet metal and large production cast steel dies. He showed us a large variety of tacks in metric sizes and he stores them in his mouth as we all believed they do and claims he hasn't swallowed one as yet! He also brought along a selection of tanned kid leather and showed the templates for cutting out the uppers, a set for a clicking knife and his strop, a square block of wood with a length of abrasive paper and a piece of leather. He showed a variety of heels and wedges, some made of polystyrene and of wood.

Question time had Mario busy explaining the making of a toe cap and stretching the leather with a bunion iron for custom made shoes - he will make you any shoes for men or women. Here is his phone number - 666-4070. Also he would like you to visit and see his work in production.

I closed the meeting at 10.00 p.m. and it was just an hour later we got the last member out of the door.



WHAT IS IT?

The Countercheck Plane

John Marlin started a lively conversation at the last meeting when he produced a Mathieson Countercheck Plane. Everyone knew what it was but John took things a bit further with the challenging question: What was its practical use?

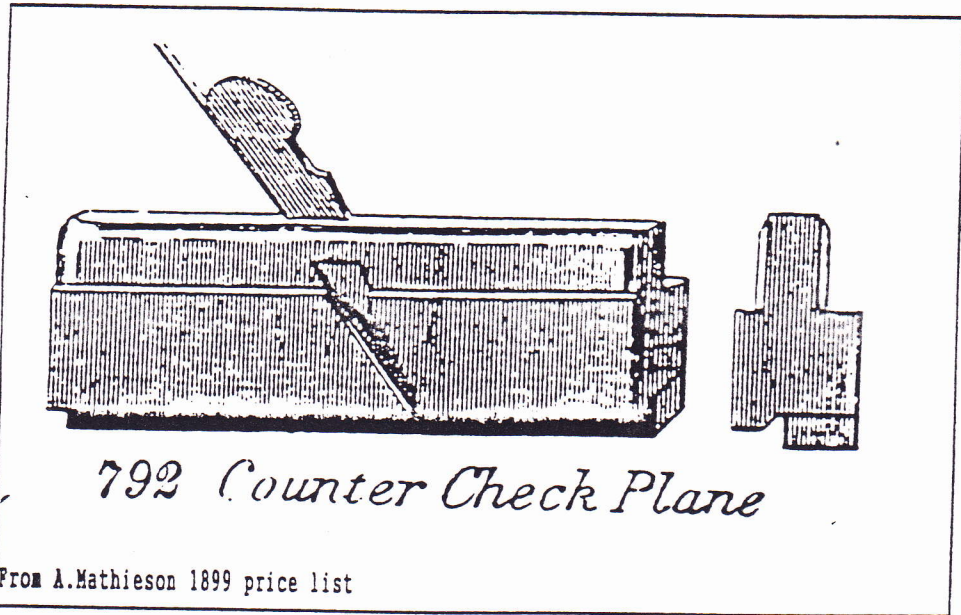
Many a theory followed but no-one really knew. Seems obvious but is it really so simple. Below is the illustration from Alex Mathieson's 1899 Catalogue.

Reference to R.A.Salaman's Dictionary of Woodworking Tools shed some light: " A Plane for shaping the meeting rails of sliding window sashes so that they partially interlock, and draw together, when the window is closed. This helps to prevent draughts and rattling."

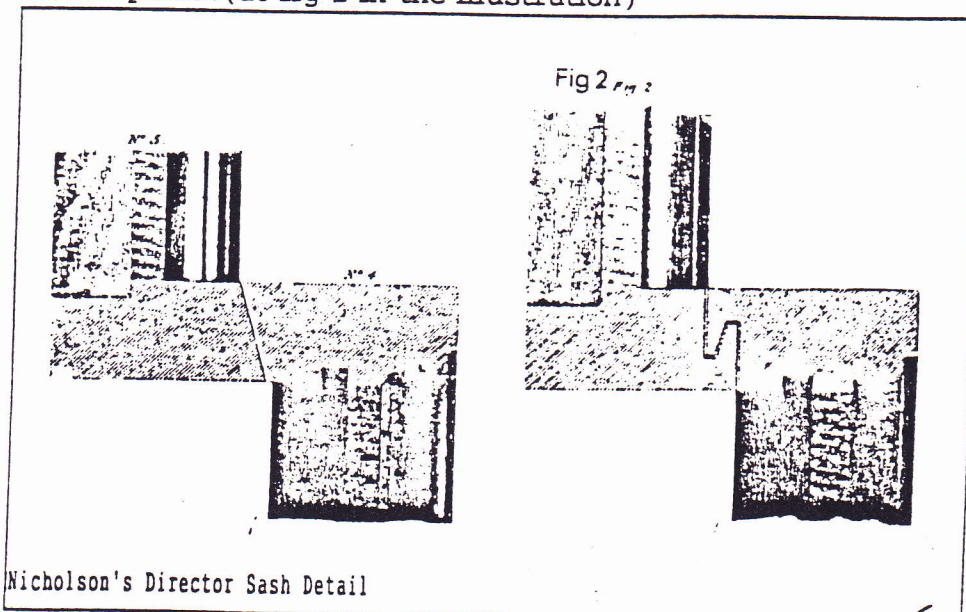
Perhaps its detailed use also eluded Salaman because he provides no pictures to illustrate the resultant moulding as he does with many of the other specialist planes which he lists.

This type of plane was still apparently used at the turn of the century as it appears in Alex.

Mathieson's price list of 1899. So now we have a description and a picture but I confess that I was still puzzled as to its exact use.



The problem was at last solved by an illustration from Peter Nicholson's Builder's and Workman's New Director of 1834 which shows both the more usual bevel joint of the meeting sashes together with the joint produced by the counter check plane. (at fig 2 in the illustration)



Mike Wilkins

WHAT IS IT?

How's the Bunion?

Terry Butcher brought a "what's it" to the last meeting. A fearful looking pair of tongs. They turned out to be a device for making a bunion pocket in a pair of commercial shoes. Mario Dato was scornful of the device and advised that anyone with problem feet should have shoes made to fit.

Eddy Stapleton showed the members some very fine shoe maker's rules. Keep an eye on Eddy, he seems to have an inexhaustible supply of interesting items.

Several other "what's it" were shown. It is becoming a tradition for members to bring interesting items to our meetings. Don't be shy, bring something to the next gathering.

ADVERTISEMENTS:

WANTED: Thread box and tap for wood screw threads.
Useable condition. Complete or incomplete sets.
Contact: Ian Goldsmith (02) 713 7956

Stanley #55 blades, Nos. 32,34,36,38,45,53
Rear handle for Stanley #113 (Pre 1908)
Blades for Lewin combination plane
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Contact: Trevor Semmens, 19 Loinah Road, Montagu Bay
Tasmania 7018. Phone (002) 44 2586

- "Books and Catalogue Reprints". For the antique Tool Collector. Send for complete list.
Inglewood Tool Co., PO Box 224, Moorooka 4105 (Fax 07-397 5998)

- Woodies Books. Suppliers of the Finest Woodworking Books available. Send self-addressed stamped business size envelope for 1992 Catalogue. 21 Merrylands Road, Merrylands. 637 2932

- Tools of Trade. John McDonald. Reprint Tool Catalogues and Old Books.
Write to: 32 Rocklands Street, Duffy ACT 2611

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Write for a free booklist to:

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Tools of Trade
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Phone (06) 2886142

5% discount on books for TTTG members.

We currently have in stock several of Ken Roberts books, including:

Some 19th Century English Woodworking Tools	\$57.00
Scottish & English Metal Planes	\$19.95
Tools for The Trades & Crafts	\$34.20

(TTTG member prices, plus postage)

If you are in Canberra, please ring to arrange an after-business-hours visit to see our private collection, and the tools and books we have for sale. You and your family will be most welcome, John loves to talk about old tools, so allow plenty of time when you come!

WANTED TO BUY: interesting and well marked tools made by Alexander Mathieson, especially with trade labels intact, and any literature relating to this firm.

RESEARCH INTO AUSTRALIAN PLANES

Mr Trevor Semmens has written to the editor regarding research into Australian planes.

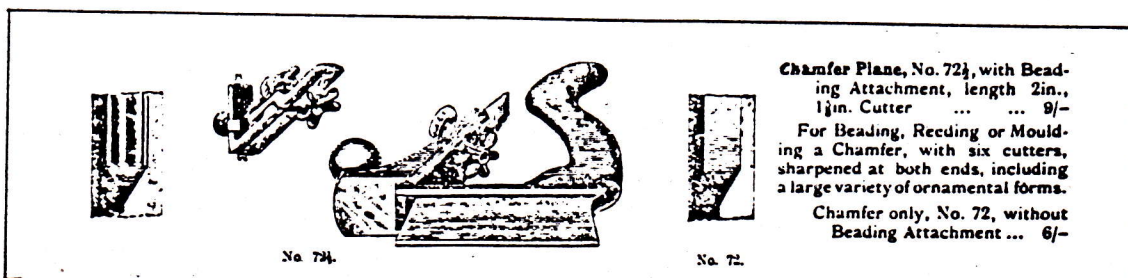
Trevor intends to publish a book about Australian plane makers. Extensive research has been undertaken and the book is well advanced.

Could any members who have information about the following please contact Trevor.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Alanware | 10. McConnell |
| 2. W H Blakeley & Co | 11. Pacific Mein Tools |
| 3. Bergs Aust Tools | 12. Plane works Fitzroy |
| 4. Carter | 13. Stanley (Aust) |
| 5. Durham | 14. Turner |
| 6. Pope/Falcon | 15. "Select" |
| 7. Davleco | 16. Surform Aerocessories P/L Ballarat |
| 8. Goodwood | 17. C. Wood, Sydney |
| 9. E. Kennedy | 18. Woodstock |
| | 19. John Shaws Pty Ltd
(blade manufacturer) |

Write to: Trevor Semmens, 19 Loinah Road, Montagu Bay, Tasmania 7018.

Rubbings (stock, blades, cap irons), company history, or any information about locally made planes is sought.





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Fine Woodworkers' Tools

... because in the long run all that counts is quality

Recognised, for more than 130 years, as Europe's leading manufacturer of ...

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MARPLES ULTIMATUM
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The Shoulder Plane and Sash Making

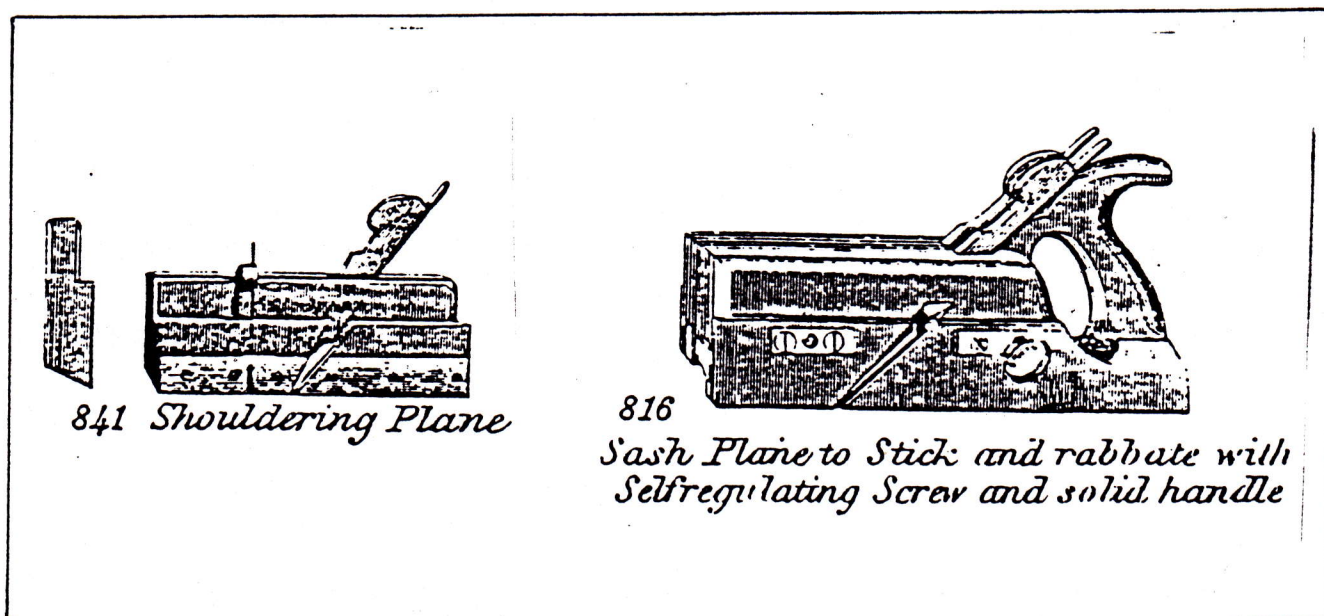
The exact purpose of this plane is unknown. It appears in the old catalogues with Sash Tools. A probable use was to cut the shoulders for tenons. Tenons on sash rails and bars may have been planed and then scribed with the scribing plane before moulding and rebating. This would have been possible if wide planks were planed up and then tenoned and scribed before ripping to width.

Perhaps the Sash Plane to Stick and Rebate was also used in this technique. My theory is that this may have been a Scot's technique not followed in the South of England. As the "texts" were written for the examining bodies in London such Northern methods were rarely discussed in detail.

A similar wide board planing technique was used to make piano actions. This technique was perfected by Scots piano makers in London.

As an aside I have repaired colonial French doors where the tenons and scibing have the appearance of being planed. Such doors predate the single ended tenoner which gives a similar finish.

Some old "texts" mention an alternative method of forming tenons on wide door rails. This involves cutting the shoulder with a trenching plane, jack planing the waste and planing to the gauge line. I have used this method and when carried out correctly it is a fast and precise technique. It is quicker than sawing tenons. Such a method of planing and scribing sash rails would save a great deal of time when making up a large number of sashes to one size, e.g. fitting out a house with double hung sashes.



Casement Sashes

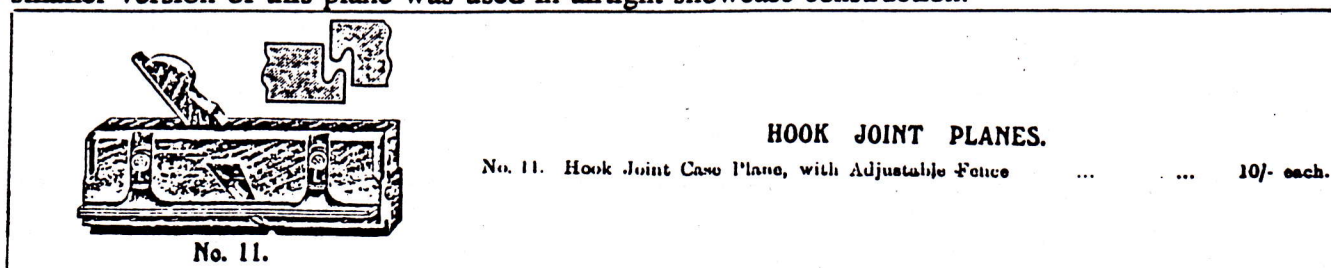
Special Plane for inward opening sashes.

The Hook Joint Plane

This plane was used to form the hook joint on the meeting stiles of inward opening casement sashes. This profile was used to prevent the entry of wind and water.

When sashes were hook jointed it was necessary to use double tenons on the meeting stiles. As the profile undercuts the centre of the stile a single tenon would in effect be shortened and hence the frame weakened. By using double tenons one tenon retains maximum length.

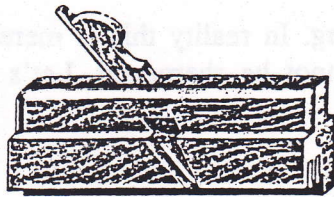
A smaller version of this plane was used in airtight showcase construction.



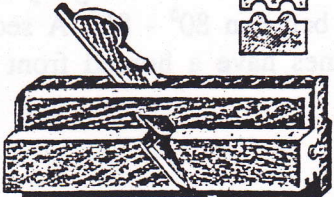
Airtight showcases were made with great precision by the late nineteenth century. They were the product of joiners who specialised in this case of work. Two types of special planes were necessary in this branch of joinery. These were the Hook Joint Plane and the Pair of Airtight Showcase Planes.

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PLANES.



No. 5.



No. 6.

AIR-TIGHT CASE MAKERS' PLANES.

No. 5	Air-tight Case Planes, Double Round	7/9 each	} 15/ per pair.
" 6.	" " " " Hollow ...	...	...	7/8 "	
" 2.	" " " " Single Round ...	...	...	6/9 "	} 13/3 "
" 3.	" " " " Hollow ...	...	...	6/6 "	

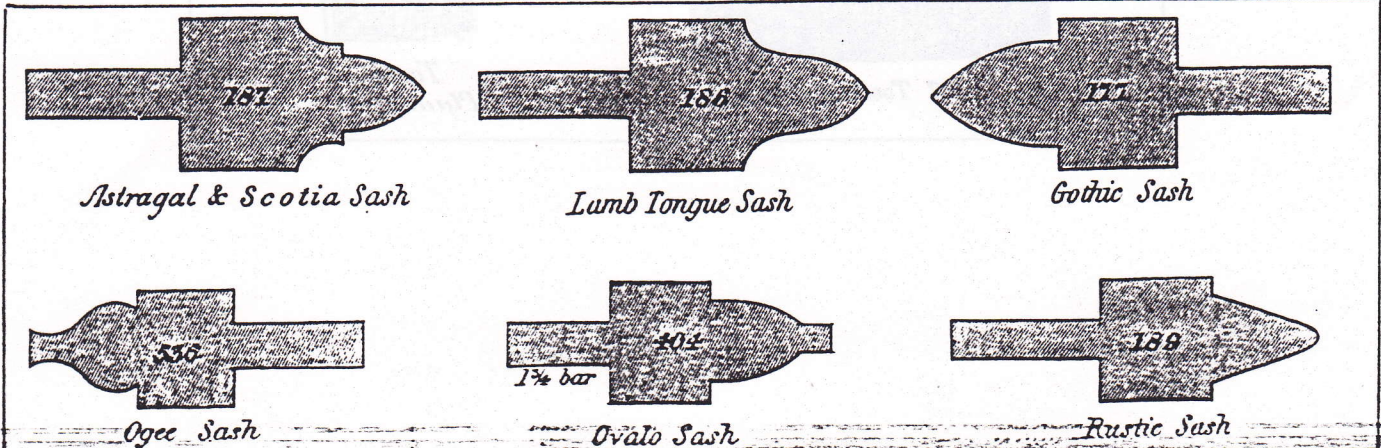
Shop Front Lambs Tongue Planes

Shop front sashes were constructed with similar joints to those used in window sashes. However there were essential differences. These were:

- a) the size of shop fronts necessitated the use of thicker frames;
- b) the objective of having a large expanse of glass precluded the use of sash bars;
- c) for security the glazing was effected inside the frame, that is the moulding faced the street. Also leather fillets cushioned the rebate when glazing to prevent glass breakage.

The moulding invariably used was the Lambs tongue. This was formed with a moulding plane, available in a range of standard sizes for the various thicknesses of frame. For curved sections corresponding right and left hand lambs tongue shaves were used. The rebate was formed with the Sash Fillister.

Shop Front practice differed from sash work in two details. The moulding was formed with one plane whereas sashes were moulded with pairs of planes. A scribing template was used for scribing as in sash making. The glazing was hard putty or screwed bead, always with a leather fillet.



The Tothing Plane

Of all traditional woodworking tools the tothing plane is one of the least understood. In the nineteenth century and earlier it was one of the indispensable tools of the cabinet maker and of the piano case maker. It had a range of uses and offered an efficiency which could not be matched by alternative methods.

Most people think its sole use is to prepare a surface for veneering. In reality this is merely one of its uses. A common prejudice also exists that the tothing plane cannot be sharpened. Let's examine the facts.

What is a Tothing Plane?

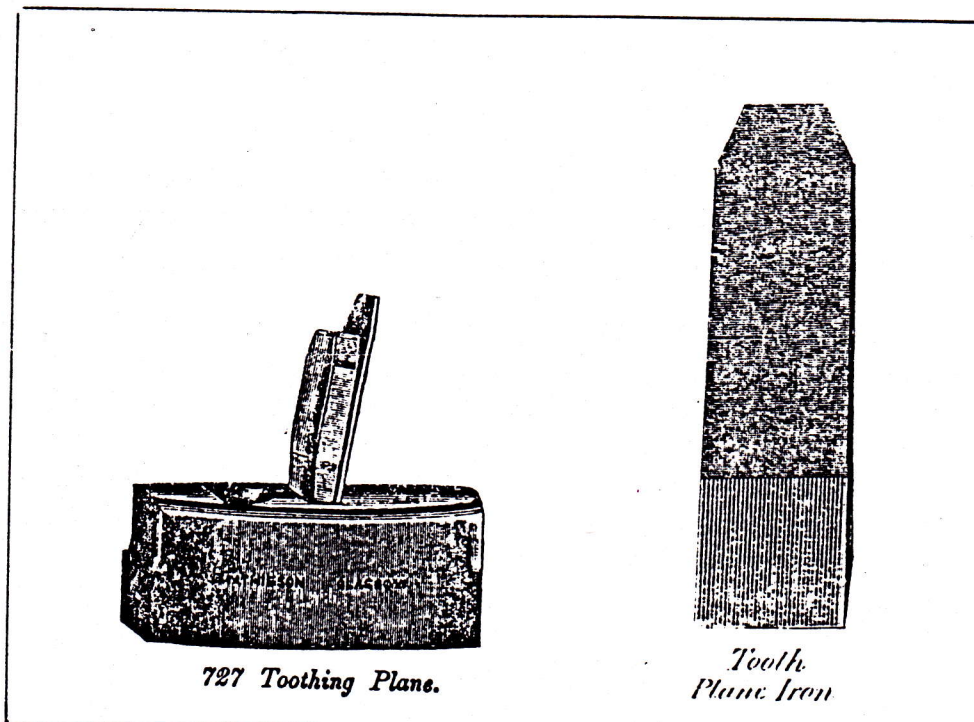
It is a single bladed plane with a high pitched serrated blade. The common form is slightly shorter than a wood smoothing plane, coffin shaped, with a blade set at a pitch between 80° - 85° . A second form is Jack size. These are the English pattern. French and German planes have a horned front handle. The blade, or iron, is the most important feature of this plane.

The Tothing Plane Iron

The blade size is in the approximate range of 2" - 2-1/4". The serration were available in three grades, fine - about 32 TPI, medium - about 28 TPI and coarse - about 22 TPI. The bulk of the iron was of wrought iron with the serrations cut into a strip of carbon steel (cast steel) fire welded to the back. The uses of the various grades will be described later.

Sharpening the Iron

There is a belief that the tothing blade cannot be sharpened. Provided it is sharpened correctly it will not tear out the grain. When grinding do not grind to a long level as this will cause the blade to vibrate when cutting and produce a poor surface. Grind at about 30° and hone at 35° . Hone the blade on a fine oilstone in the normal manner. However do not hone the back to remove the burr. The burr can be removed by drawing the edge across the axis of a softwood block. If a fire stone is used to hone the edge will be sharp.



Why Tothing Planes can tear the grain

The cause of this are as follows:

- a) long grinding level causing weak edge and vibration;
- b) incorrect lateral adjustment;
- c) iron set to coarse;
- d) iron blunt;
- e) back of iron defective.

Sometimes old tothing irons are found with stress fractures or concave backs caused during tempering. A concave back will of course cause the edge to be advanced ahead of the blade's centre. This will result in torn grain. Mildly concave irons can be honed convex but the real answer is to replace the blade. (Old damaged blades should be kept for their historical value, prefer to use a new blade in my old tothing planes so that the old blades survive for further generations.)

Uses of The Tothing Plane

1. Preparing "grounds" for veneering:
The surface to be veneered is prepared with a coarse or medium blade. The use of the plane is not so much to "key the glue" as to remove any irregularities. For large surfaces, e.g. low table tops, the jack size tothing plane is used. Correctly used a tothing plane will produce a truer surface than any other hand or machine method. Edges and end grain to be veneered are also toothed.
2. Preparing Saw Cut Veneer:
The back of saw cut veneer is dressed with a fine tothing plane. If the veneer has to be thinned down to follow a sharp sweep the thickening is done with the tothing plane.
3. Finishing Veneer:
The surface (or face) of saw cut veneer is finished after gluing done. This is done with a fine tothing plane followed by the scraper.
4. Finishing difficult grain or very hard woods:
This is finished the same as veneer using first the fine tothing plane and then the scraper.
5. Preparing large glue surface:
Large laminations are toothed similarly to veneer grounds.
6. Finishing Shaped Surfaces:
Large shaped surfaces can be toothed to remove plane or shave marks and then scraped.
7. Finishing Knots:
The grain around knots in spruce or fir is often observed to have been toothed. This removed the torn grain and gave a clean appearance. This is commonly seen on old piano cases.
8. Various uses:
Old piano's show the cabinet makers dependence on the efficiency of the tothing plane. Keys and ivories were toothed before gluing, wild grain braces are often toothed, no doubt to give a quick accurate surface, laminations are toothed, undersides of cases often show tooth marks. If the unseen surface of any quality plane made between 1830 and 1900 is examined, be it Cottage, Upright or Grand chances are virtually every surface will have seen the tothing plane.

Variations of the Tothing Plane

Compass sole tothing planes were used to prepare "sweeps" re shaped work for veneering. Badger type tothing planes may also have been made as "one offs" to tooth large rebates or tenons. The tothing iron was often used in the hand to prepare convex shapes prior to scraping.

ORAL HISTORY

I hope this will become a regular feature in our newsletter. Readers are encouraged to write down some of their life experiences and share them with fellow members.

To begin this oral history venture the following is an extract from a court case in Sydney's early days when tools and tradesmen were scarce and opportunities for personal initiative were numerous.

- Unsworn statement by William Price. Prisoner of The Crown. Carpenter. 24 May 1820. Before W. Minchin J.P. Sydney NSW.

extract: (Description of theft from Government Store Room)

...Mr McIntosh sent for me by Ryan, to do some Jobbing work, after I had been employed there a short time, an order came from the Lumber Yard for Tools, on which McIntosh took me with him into the room, we then opened the Boxes and examined their contents, which were Jointers and Tothing planes, afterwards we went upstairs, and McIntosh calling McKissock told him (giving him the key of the room we had been in, as though he had not been into it) to give me the tools I wanted, and a pair of trousers. I took by direction of McKissock, a pair of Trousers, a pair of Shoes, a pair of Stockings, and two Rolls of thread, a Dovetailed saw, a Tennant Saw, a Jointer, Two braces and Bits and two Veneering Planes, which I put into a Bag together...

For an idea of the tools available in Sydney in 1820 see the following:

Tools in Sydney 1820. Hand Tool Preservation Association. Vol.3 No.1 1991

PROPOSED SOCIAL EVENT

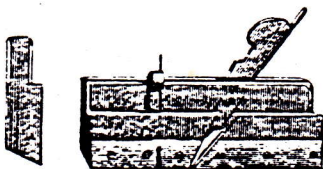
If members are interested the President intends to organise a visit to the Historic Railway Workshops at Redfern.

A blacksmith is in residence at the Workshops and is willing to show members the building and machinery. A blacksmithing demonstration may be possible.

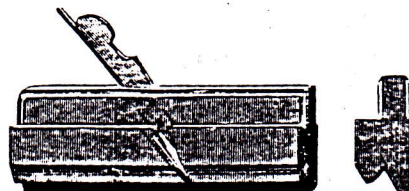
The visit would have to be during business hours. Cost would be by a nominal donation to our general funds, say five dollars.

If you can attend please give some idea of what day would suit you either by contacting the President or by discussion at the next meeting.

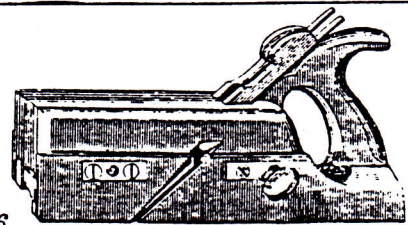
The workshops are well worth seeing.



841 *Shouldering Plane*



817 *Scribing Plane. Gothic*



816
*Sash Plane to Stick and rabbate with
Selfregulating Screw and solid handle*