

The Traditional Tools Group



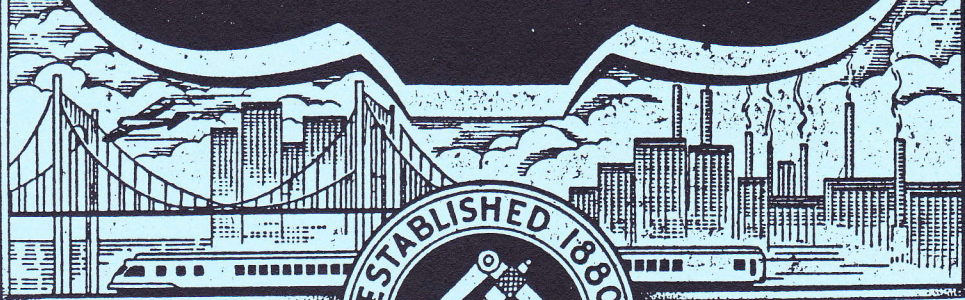
THE TRADITIONAL
TOOLS GROUP INC.



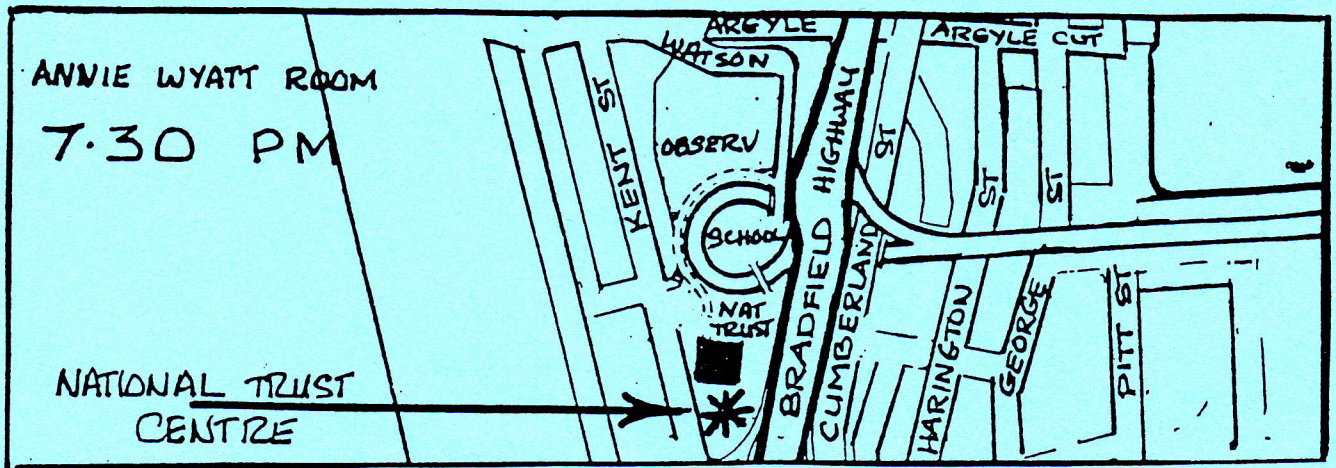
TTTG NEWSLETTER NO. 26
DECEMBER 1995

Starrett

PRECISION TOOLS, STEEL TAPES,
DIAL INDICATORS, HACK SAWS



The L. S. Starrett Company, Athol, Mass., U.S.A.



OUR NEW POSTAL ADDRESS

The Secretary
T.T.T.G. Inc.
P.O. Box 240
GROSVENOR PLACE
SYDNEY NSW 2000

NEXT MEETING-TUESDAY DECEMBER 12TH

AT THE ANNIE WYATT ROOM, NATIONAL TRUST CENTRE, OBSERVATORY HILL
COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM SHARP

PROGRAMME.

1. STAINED AND LEADLIGHT GLASS. KEV LITTLE IS A THIRD GENERATION CRAFTSMAN IN STAINED AND LEADLIGHT GLASS AND HAS BEEN A COLLEGE LECTURER ON THE SUBJECT. THE HISTORY OF WORKING IN THIS DIFFICULT AND BEAUTIFUL MEDIUM IS A FASCINATING ONE AND PROMISES TO BE A FITTING CULMINATION FOR OUR LAST MEETING FOR THE YEAR.
2. DRAWING OF THE DOOR PRIZE.
3. TOOL SWAP. ANY INTERESTING TOOLS FOR SALE OR SWAP?
4. FRED MURRELL'S "WOTSIT". THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO WIN THE PRIZE FOR THE BEST WOTSIT OF 1995.
5. SUPPER BY MARIO DATO.

TTTG Inc.

THE TRADITIONAL TOOLS GROUP

TTTG NEWSLETTER NO.26
DECEMBER 1995

CONTENTS

REGULAR FEATURES:

Editor's Notes Bob Crosbie

Patents: American Machinists Tools
LS Starrett

Previous Meeting (Combined Meeting at Lidcombe TAFE)

ARTICLES:

French Polishing Part 3 Fred Murrell

- The First TTTG Newsletter

Next Meeting
- Australia Day 1996. Hyde Park Barracks Museum

Cover: from Makers of American Machinists Tools

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Any opinions expressed are those of the contributor.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Members will have noticed a slight change in the cover of this newsletter. The caption "The History of Tools is the History of Man" has been removed. It was pointed out to me that this is the motto of TATHS (Tools and Trades History Society, United Kingdom).

I became editor with newsletter No.7. The motto appeared in Newsletter No.8. So it is my responsibility that the motto was misappropriated by TTTG. Members will understand why I am having the motto removed.

The Committee observed at the last committee meeting that Newsletter No.25 was something of a milestone. This issue No.26 will be my eighteenth newsletter. I suppose it is natural for me to look back on these previous twenty five newsletters.

First however, I would like to look forward to an improving quality of newsletter. Readers should realise that the newsletter is a team effort. The newsletter committee comprises me as editor, Mike Williams as sub editor and layouts, Ralph Hawkins as researcher and most importantly Henry Black and his helpers as the people who put it in envelopes and mail it to you.

My job is made so much easier by the efforts of the regular contributors, notably Fred Murrell, Mike Williams and Henry Black. Even so we could do with a few more contributors.

To return to TTTG's past. In this issue I am reprinting Newsletter No.1. What a comparison? I remember that those of us at the first meeting were really groping in the dark. By Newsletter No.8 the Group had found a name and had a growing membership and a healthy bank balance.

The beginning and sudden growth of TTTG was entirely due to Henry Black's initiative. Several people have claimed to have formed TTTG. The credit however belongs solely to Henry.

In this issue Henry has contributed the material on LS Starrett.

There is no "letters" page in this issue; the letters just did not come rolling in.

AUSTRALIA DAY 1996 Hyde Park Barracks Museum Macquarie Street, Sydney (Queen's Square)

The Hyde Park Barracks Museum will be open to the public on Australia Day 1996, Friday 26 January. The grounds will host a colonial fair featuring traditional trades. TTTG will be represented at the festivities.

To promote the Australia Day event a small exhibition of early building tradesmen's tools will be presented in the Hyde Park Barracks Museum Bookshop (opening 15 Dec 1995).

This exhibition has been arranged by the TTTG Committee. The exhibition will be the focal point of a Saturday workshop on the Macquarie period buildings in Macquarie Street. This workshop will be chaired by Bob Crosbie, and Ralph Hawkins will be the co-chairperson.

Volunteers are needed to assist TTTG on Australia Day. See Bob Crosbie or Fred Murrell or Mike Williams at the next general meeting or ring Bob on 869 8292 (bh).

For details of the exhibition and 20 January workshop phone Gary Crockett at the HPB Museum 223 8922.

THE PATENTS OF L.S.STARRETT CO.

Those members of TTTG who managed to get along on Nov. 1st to hear Roger Smith speak about patented U.S. planes will remember his accolade for L.S.Starrett Co. in terms of the quality of design and manufacture this family company has represented for over a century. Roger's talk was specifically about planes but in terms of Rules and Measures, Starrett's story is no less interesting and represents a microcosm of the industrial invention and patent activity which characterised 19th century American industry.

Laroy S. Starrett was born in China, Maine, April 25th, 1836. He moved to Newburyport, Massachusetts in 1853 and by 1863 was renting a 600 acre farm. Shortly after, Starrett's inventive streak began to reveal itself for on May 23 1865 he was granted a patent for a meat chopper which he began to produce and sell.

Later, in 1868, Starrett moved to Athol, MA, where the Athol Machine Company was to take over the production and sales of his meat chopper. The Athol Machine Co. was formed on June 3rd 1868 for the "special purpose of making Starrett's food chopper and other articles of Mr. Starrett's invention". The company was capitalised at \$25,000 and Starrett was one of the directors but interestingly he was not an officer of the company.



Starrett also obtained a patent for a washing machine on June 27, 1865 (No. 48458). This appears to be simply a variation of the food chopper. Most likely the washing machine was manufactured by the Athol Machine Company and a food press which Starrett patented on April 15 1873 was certainly made by the Athol Machine Co.

During the 1870s, Starrett's interests focussed on tools and his first tool patents were granted on May 8, 1877 (No. 190636), and February 25, 1879 (No. 212760), covering a quick adjusting wrench. No examples of this wrench are known although both the Athol Machine Co. and its subsidiary, the Standard Tool Co., made wrenches with a very similar design patented by S.M.Bellows on June 8, 1880 (No. 228437).

In 1876, Starrett invented the combination square, the form of which has remained to this day. Probably due to his unhappiness with the Athol Machine Co., where "business conditions were not to his liking" he began making squares on his own. The first squares were made for him at the Richardson Machine Shop in Athol, MA, beginning in 1877. Starrett who was forced out of the Athol Machine Co. in 1878, received his patent on May 6, 1879 (No.215024) (reissued October 19, 1880, No. 9419).

In 1880, his former associates at the Athol Machine Co. bought the rights to the Chaplin try and center square, patented May 8, 1866 (No. 54503), by Orril R. Chaplin. It persuaded the patent office to reissue the patent on May 4, 1880 (No. 9183), and then sued Starrett for patent infringement. Starrett wrote that Richardson "stopped work in spite of all I could say or do to assure them that the Athol Machine Co. was

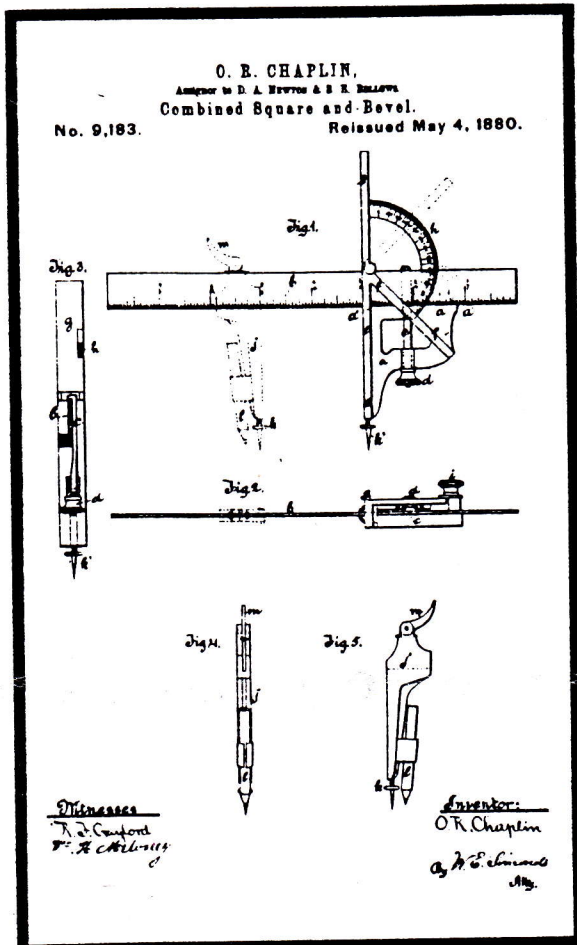
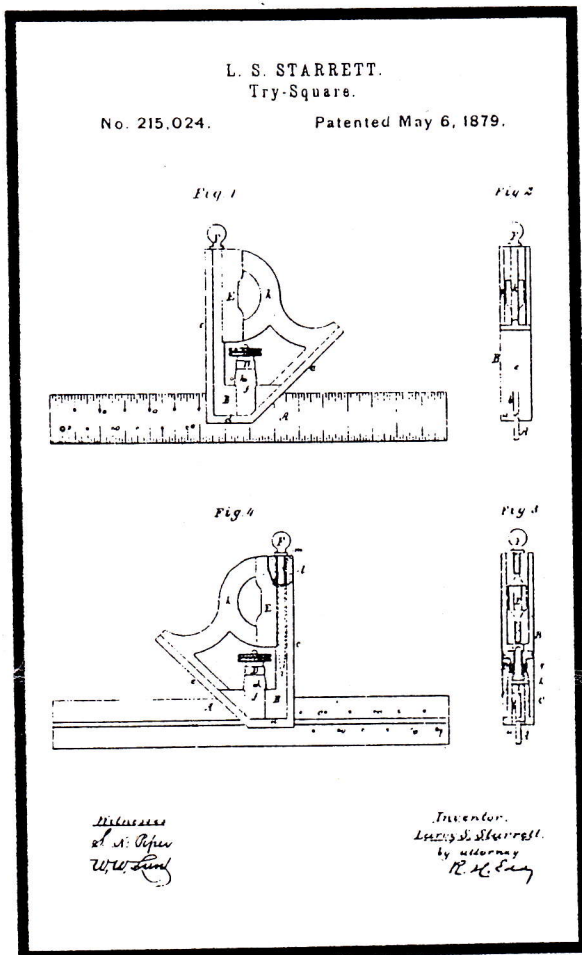
wrong and infringing my patent and I was able to protect them and myself. But they lacked the courage to go ahead." Starrett then offered to buy out the part of the business used to make the squares. Richardson accepted and L.S. Starrett was founded.

Apparently The Athol Machine Co. were copying Starrett's design under pretext of Chaplin's patent but reference to the diagrams will show that they are quite different concepts. Starrett was not a man to be intimidated and printed the following notice in his 1882 price list.

CAUTION

Since the success of my Patent Squares has become known, unprincipled parties have had the foolhardiness to make and put on the market a tool, under the Pretext of Chaplin's Patent, which not only infringes on mine, but is not accurate. Having commenced suit against said parties, I shall soon put a stop to their manufacture, and shall hold all persons, selling or using them responsible.

Respectfully
L.S. STARRETT



Starrett won the patent suit filed against him by the Athol Machine Co., but was not able to stop it from making the Chaplin square through its subsidiary, the Standard Tool Co.

The Worcester West Chronicle, February 1, 1883 reported: " Sometime since we noticed that the suit pending between Newton and Bellows of the Athol Machine Co. and L.S.Starrett had been decided in favour of the latter: now we learn that another suit, brought by Mr. Starrett against the said Newton and Bellows and the Athol Machine Co., for an infringement of his patent squares has also been decided in his favour by Judge Lowell, and an injunction ordered against the defendents. By this last decision we presume Mr. Starrett will be entitled to heavy damages, in addition to having his patent sustained, which must be very gratifying to himself and his friends."

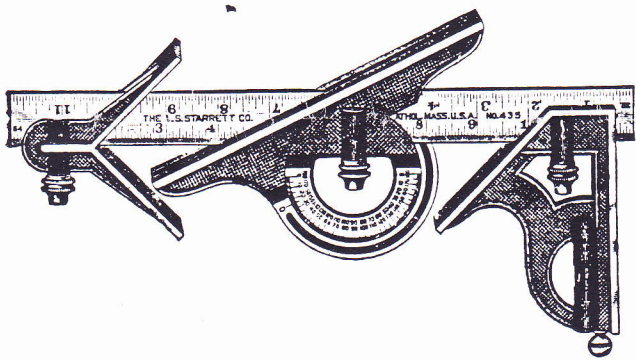
On June 29, 1880, Starrett patented a centre head for his combination square (No.229283), and on December 4, 1883, patented a protractor head for his combination square (No. 289463), thus completing the combination square set as we know it today.

Starrett went on to patent an inclinometer in 1883 and a universal bevel and screw thread gauge in 1885. He died at the age of 86 in 1922.

Reference: Makers of American Machinist's Tools. K.L.Cope. Astragal Press.

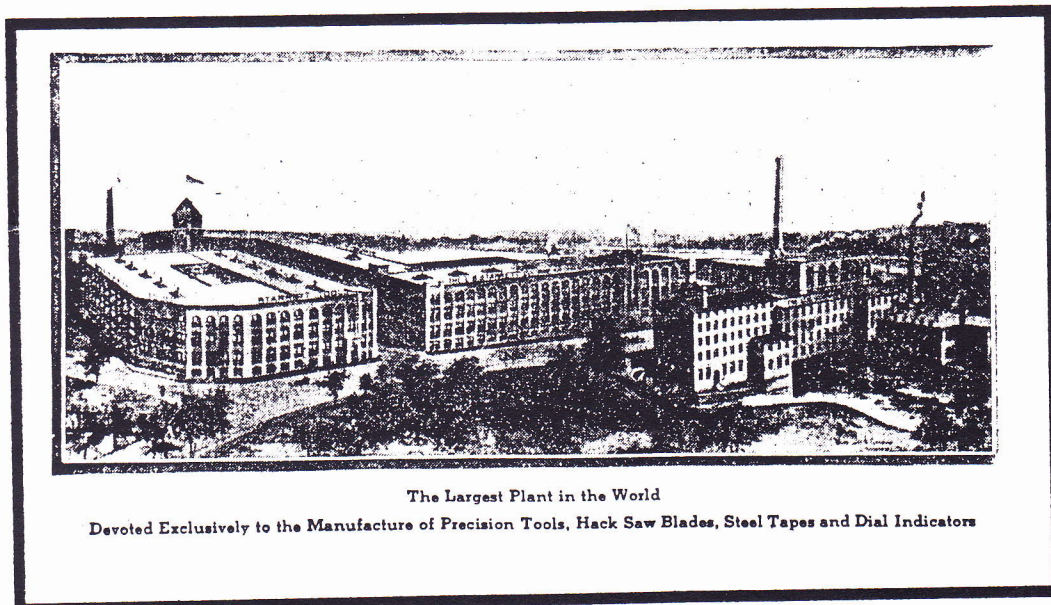
Combination Sets

No. 435



This set consists of our No. 11 Combination Square with hardened blade as shown on page 60 and our Reversible Protractor Head No. 491 as shown in cut. Furnished with No. 4 and No. 7 graduations. Sent with blades of No. 4 graduation unless otherwise ordered.

	PRICES
9 inch, set complete.....	\$7.20
12 " " "	7.80
18 " " "	8.70
24 " " "	9.60



FRENCH POLISHING - ARTICLE 3 - Fred Murrell

WOOD SURFACE PREPARATION

The surfaces of woodwork direct from the cabinet maker are rarely in a condition for accepting the french polish without undergoing some further treatment. If the surface is not perfect, the finished job cannot be perfect.

Blemishes on the surface which may consist of machine marks, bruises, blisters, cross sanding marks, glue residue, dirt and grease marks, water marks and pencil marks, all need to be removed. Many of these can be removed with the common cabinet scraper. Dents may sometimes be lifted with a hot iron placed over a damp cloth, or a few drops of methylated spirit on the damaged section and ignited, this, if repeated frequently, though not enough to char the timber, can produce a satisfactory result.

Blisters, as the name suggests, are bubbles under a veneered surface. These may be removed by making a small incision, with the grain and prising the slit open sufficiently to force some glue into it. A piece of plastic can then be placed on top of the bubble held down by a block of wood which is then cramped to flatten the glued surface. Any surplus hide glue may be sponged away later. Occasionally hot shellac is used to glue down a blister, but this is not recommended.

Blemishes which are too deep to remove must be stopped, i.e. filled. There are several preparations on the market which are suitable for the purpose. Early craftsmen invariably made their own filler from shellac, wax, water putty, lacquer putty or oil putty. Good results were achieved by stopping with hot shellac. The surplus was pared off with a chisel when the shellac had set. A common method today is to mix saw dust from a similar coloured timber with an adhesive such as plastibond, or even PVC glue.

The surface must then be fine sanded with paper no coarser than 240, but only with the grain, at all times. Always use a cork sanding block, to avoid producing an uneven surface. Edges should be sanded with a block no wider than the edge to be sanded. Note that it is essential that all scratches be removed or they will show in the finished job. The end grain must receive the same treatment. If it is left rough, it will absorb stain much more readily and have a tendency to be considerably darker than the surrounding timber. Steel wool may be used to smooth turned work which preferably will be done with the grain.

The job should be thoroughly dusted frequently during the sanding process. After sanding the french polisher may sponge the surface with a damp sponge. This raises the grain which is then sanded back when dry, for a smoother surface.

STAINING

The next part of the process is staining. I will not dwell on this aspect very much, except to say, that the decision to apply stain is generally a matter of choice. There are numerous stains available on the market today which can be blended to produce the desired shade.

There are water stains, pigment oil stains, volatile oil stains, bituminous oil stains, preservative oil stains, chemical stains and spirit stains. Remember not to rush the staining stage. Select a piece of the timber from which the object is made, if available, sand it to the same degree, and apply some stain and allow it to dry, as a test piece.

When the stain is dry, it should be fixed, by applying a half charged "soft" rubber to the surface. The soft rubber is a rubber of orthodox shape, made from previously well used cotton wool, and with a soft linen wrapping cover. Pumice is not used in the soft rubber, and although the use of a piece of knitwear over the rubber face is optional, it is recommended for the job in hand that knitwear should not be used.

FILLING

This is an important part of the process, and one, the inexperienced person may regard as being unnecessary as it is rarely used in the mass production furniture industry today. I note that fillers are still available in some hardware stores. They are of a mud like consistency, made principally from whiting and come in several colours. The purpose is to fill the pores in the timber to produce a flat surface to receive the polish. Selection of the colour is as important as selecting the stain. While the use of a stain is optional, the use of a filler is not.

The filler is applied with a piece of open weave scrim or a piece of clean soft hessian, in a circular motion to force the filler into the pores. The filler is applied generously and the piece of hessian is changed frequently as it tends to clog. As soon as the shine goes off the surface of the filler, and before it dries, when it will be very difficult to remove, it is wiped off, using a similar motion to its application, with clean hessian, finishing with a piece of softer material such as flannelette or cotton waste. As the filler is prepared with a chemical drier such as turps it should not raise the grain. If the surface is again sanded after the filler is applied, there is a risk that some filler will be removed from the surface. When the surface has been wiped clean, a small piece of timber shaped like a pencil, one end and a chisel the other is used to clean out corners and the like. Do not use a metal object, especially a nail.

Allow the filler ample time to dry, usually overnight. The job is then ready for the finishing to commence.

In the next article we will start polishing.

NEWSLETTER (Name ?)

MINUTES OF MEETING 27 -11 - 91

Held to discuss formation of a group similar to the Melbourne based Hand Tool Preservation Association

Henry Black opened the meeting at 7.30 in his workshop where he had on display part of his own extraordinary collection of tools. H.B. outlined the Melbourne group and that about 100 people had responded to his questionnaire about forming such a group at the last tool sale.

Items of General Business

1. Pattern Mill, This was donated to the group by Gabbett Machinery following the S.T.A. auction of the Randwick Tram Workshops. Jack Skinner an expert on Wadkin Machinery believes it to be one of the first such mills to come to Australia in about 1910. Henry Black informed us that this was the first range of machinery built by Wadkin when they started in 1898. Rumour has it that Mr. Wadkin and one of these pattern mills were on the Titanic when it sunk in 1912 !

H.B. has organised photos of the mill and these have been forwarded to Don Godden an industrial archaeologist who has offered to write an official letter supporting the preservation of the mill which N.M. will forward to Department of Defence as part of a proposal he is working on which will hopefully see part of Cockatoo Island developed as an artisans quarter and working museum. In the mean time we need to get the mill out of the old tram workshops and stored somewhere before the 20th Dec, any suggestions?

2. Newsletter, Nigel from the H.T.P.A. told H.B. that they would welcome any contributions from N.S.W. into their newsletter.

3. Membership, discussion took place regarding the relative merits of: joining the Vic group / forming a N.S.W. branch of the Vic group / forming a separate group altogether. Consensus was reached that a separate group but affiliated with the Victorians and Western Australians be formed.

4. Suggestions for a name were:
Hand Tool Preservation Association N.S.W.
Hand Tool & Machinery Conservation Assn.
Tool Museum Society.
Cockatoo Hand Tool & Machinery Museum

5. Meeting place, N.M. offered to speak to Leichhardt Council about using a room.

6. Australian National Maritime Museum, H.B. offered to contact Daina Fletcher and Mike Staples re joining / venue for meeting.

7. Sydney Maritime Museum, N.M. offered to contact about use of Kanangra

8. Letterhead, Simon Sadubin agreed to come up with some ideas.

9. Powerhouse Museum, Terry Butcher offered to contact them about their tool policy.

10. **NEXT MEETING: at H.B.'s**
Wednesday 18th December 1991.

11. **FUTURE MEETING: 1st Public Meeting to be Mon 16th March 1992**
Guest speaker: Ken Roberts U.S.A. book publisher and handtool
authority.

Topic: Hand Braces from around the world.

pto

12. Aims of the Victorian group to be considered for ammendment and or adoption:

Promote the preservation, documentation, study and understanding of hand tools and the skills employed in their usage.

Discover, identify, classify, document, preserve & exhibit these tools. In particular special efforts are to be made regarding the documentation & preservation Australian made tools and machines.

Share this knowledge & understanding with others including museums, pioneer villages, the National Trust and similar institutions.

Accomplish these aims in a spirit of fun and fellowship.

13. Attendance:

Henry Black Joiner, model & patternmaker.

Terry Butcher Metal & furniture restorer.

Bob Crosbie Antq furn rstr, jnry, hstrc pianos. :

Ray Gurney Furniture restorer.

Robert Lee Retired auctioneer.

Nick Masterman Boat builder, alderman LMC.

Simon Sadubin Industrial design student.

Brian Segal Cabinetmaker, woodworker.

14.

Agenda next meeting:

Minutes, business arising,

Correspondence,

Reports,

General Business:

Name

Structure

Mill

Organisation for public meeting,

Other items.

P.S. Tell interested friends and invite them along.

THE FIRST TTTG NEWSLETTER

This is reproduced intact except for

No.10 Henry's address blocked out (for privacy)

No.13 These are the first eight prophets (!)
(addresses removed for privacy)

The editor welcomes your reactions.

Quiz: TTTG had a name by Newsletter No. ?
(Answer in Newsletter No.27)

THE ROGER SMITH LECTURE

Those of you who didn't come along on the 1st. November to hear Roger Smith's talk on patented American planes missed an excellent evening. After some initial projector problems, we were held enthralled by Roger's slides, his anecdotes of 19th. century American industry, his sources and methods of research and the difficulties of producing books on specialist subjects.

Of course a major part of his story dealt with the prominent part played by the Stanley Level and Rule Company and its interaction with Bailey both as inventor and manufacturer. We were very fortunate in that Henry Black brought along part of his extensive collection of early Stanley planes for us all to examine.

I think that Roger Smith was impressed by the diversity of Australian planes which we also had on display; from the more conventional Carter planes to several highly original local designs.

Roger and his wife were on the last leg of a package holiday tour of Australia, New Zealand and Pacific islands. We were fortunate to secure some of his time to address us. Those of us who either

possessed copies of his books or bought them on the night were able to have them signed by Roger on the spot.



THE JOINT MARQUETRY GUILD/T.T.T.G. MEETING

Our last meeting was held at Lidcombe TAFE and was a joint meeting with the Marquetry Guild. The evening was well attended by both groups and Chris Blimka gave us a very interesting talk on modern marquetry methods both saw cut and knife cut and we then watched a short video on traditional marking out and saw cutting techniques.

During our supper break (organised by Mario) we were able to inspect some of the work of the Guild members and it was impressive indeed. After supper Bob Crosbie and Mike Williams gave us a talk on favourite and craftsman-made traditional tools with an emphasis on application to marquetry.

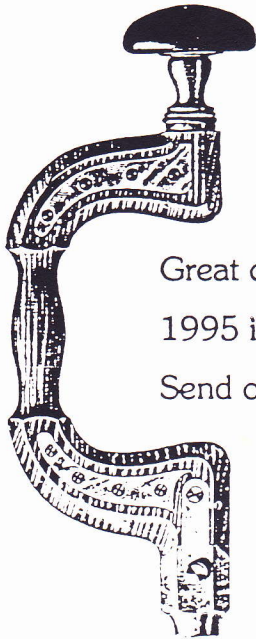
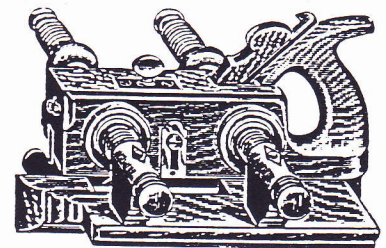
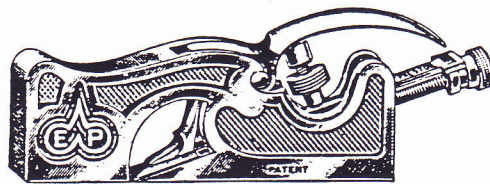
So engrossed did we all become in discussion on tools, techniques and marquetry that we ran out of time to inspect the TAFE workshops. This will have to be high on the agenda next time we repeat the exercise.

NEXT MEETING-12 DECEMBER 1995

Our speaker will be Kev Little. Kev's family has been in the stained glass and leadlight business for three generations. Kev has been a college lecturer with an in depth knowledge of the history of glass and how things are and were made of it, and I am sure that his presentation will be an excellent one and not to be missed.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions are now long overdue, so if you have not paid your sub. yet this is positively your last issue of the TTTG Newsletter.



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Great choice of antique and old woodworking tools.

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Please note the new 'phone number. We published the wrong number last issue.

REG EATON

Reg Eaton wishes to advise that he has the following tools for sale

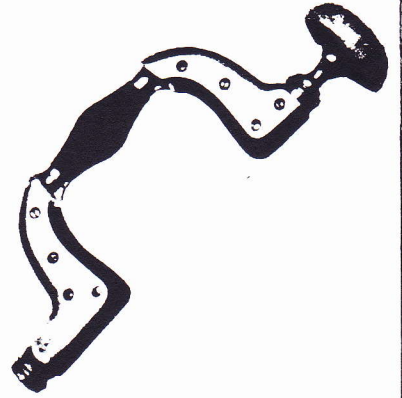
Stanley No. 1 planes \$1500 - \$1600

Stanley No. 2 planes \$375 - \$400

Ultimatum & other brass framed braces from \$600

Postage and packing included.

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Fax: 1485 571144



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P.O. Box 13 Duffy A.C.T. 2611 Telephone: 062-886142

Books and catalogue reprints about collecting and using old tools
- free list from John McDonald TOOLS OF TRADE, PO Box 13, Duffy ACT 2611
phone 06-2886142 5% discount to TTTG members.

Stocks of John Walter's "Antique and Collectible Stanley Tools" 2nd edition is due in soon. Let us know if you want to reserve a copy.

The First Australian Tool Collectors' Convention and Sale
will be held at Macquarie University Union North Ryde, Sydney
on Saturday 23rd March 1996

and on Sunday 24th March 1996 there will be a Public Sale
of Antique, Useable and Collectable Tools from 9am to 4pm.

For further information phone/fax 06-2886142 John & Priscilla McDonald

Garrett Wade



SYDNEY MELBOURNE

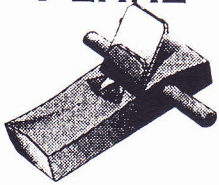
The best traditional tools and more for the collector & craftsman.

Books currently in stock include
"The Patternmakers Companion" Joshua Rose.
"Patented Transitional and Metallic Planes in America" Roger Smith.
"E. Preston" catalogue reprint
Please drop in to our Sydney or Melbourne shops to browse before you buy.

We offer 10% discount to TTTG members

An extensive range of select tools is available for your perusal in our "Old Tool Room". Current stock includes a Preston #16 bench plane G, a Starret imperial combination set G+ and a Stanley #46 plane with 3 cutters G+. Now available the new Australian made planes. Demos to try.

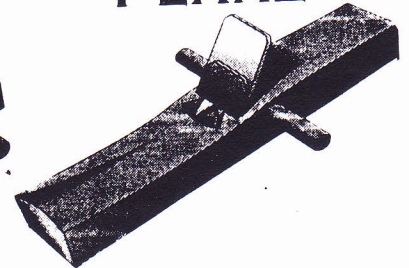
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SMOOTHING
PLANE**



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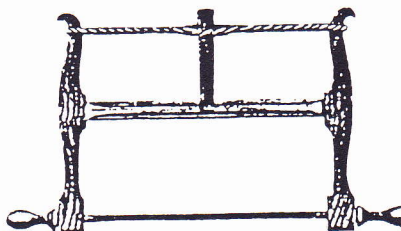
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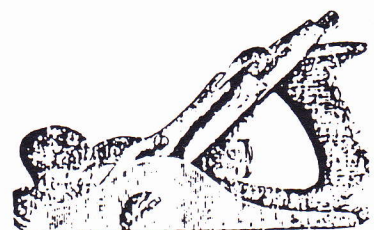
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SPIERS, NORRIS
STANLEY, RARITIES
MARPLES ULTIMATUM ETC.



SYDNEY TOOL SALE & SWAP

3rd March
1996
FIVE DOCK



SYDNEY

SUNDAY

3rd March

Queens Rd & William St.(upstairs)

FIVE DOCK

(Opposite the leisure centre)

DOORS OPEN 9 TO 12

Entry \$5

Celebrating 11 years of operation with a special

STANLEY SALE

extensive collection being offered for sale on the day.

Inspect at Garrett Wade Sydney

DOOR PRIZE

Inquiries 744-3458

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extensive collection being offered for sale on the day.

Inspect at Garrett Wade Sydney

DOOR PRIZE

Inquiries 744-3458

**SYDNEY
TOOL
SALE
1996**



SYDNEY

SUNDAY

3rd March

Queens Rd & William St.(upstairs)

FIVE DOCK

(Opposite the leisure centre)

DOORS OPEN 9 TO 12

Entry \$5

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