

Working with Wood Show, Exhibition Building

Following the initial show in October 1988, the promoters Interwood Holdings have already offered us free space at their next show, October 20th - 22nd 1989. Apparently 19,000 people attended their first event and those of us who helped man our display, think a good percentage of these, showed interest in our stand. Certainly we gained several new members and renewed contacts with friends in the wood working fraternity. On you behalf I have accepted their offer of space this year.

Newsletters from Woodworking Groups

Several of the wood working groups send us copies of their newsletters including the Victorian Woodworking Association and the Yarra Turners. Now with our own letter, we can return the favour.

Carpenters Tool Box - Robert Ritchie

Recently I received the following letter from Mrs. Kathleen Sharpe.

26th December, 1988

Hand Tool Preservation Association,
C/- Mr. F. Ham,

Dear Mr. Ham,

After I saw your stand at the Working with Wood Show it occurred to me that a member of this association might know something of a carpenter's box brought from Scotland by my great grandfather in 1852.

His name was Robert Ritchie, and after a time at Snake Valley he selected land at Yeungroon, near Charlton. When the contents of the family home were sold in the late 1970's the box went to an unknown dealer in Ballarat. A grandson describes it as follows:-

4 - 5 feet long x 3 - 4 feet high, with cubicles made to the shape of various tools. Five pull out or lift out drawers. Bottom section full of wood planes. Section for saws. Middle part for odds and ends. Metal tools were stamped R. Ritchie. The box was left out in the weather for some time and the joints were not all in top order.

If any member can help me to see the box and/or some contents so that I can photograph them for family records I would be most grateful. Please write to me at the above address or telephone.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Kathleen E. Sharpe.

If any member has knowledge of the tool box or any tools marked R. Ritchie, I am sure Mrs. Sharpe would be pleased to hear.

Display Cases

Bill Sidebottom of the Museum of Victoria kindly gave us four flat glass and wood show cases suitable for displaying tools. One or two of them need some repair - mainly replacement of glass. Can we find a volunteer to undertake the necessary repairs? Please contact the Secretary.

Future newsletters

Nigel Lampert as Editor will be pleased to receive letters to be published - perhaps a problem of identification or a missing part wanted, ideas on repairing or restoring tools etc. Please don't be shy - everyone should be able to contribute something at least once a year.

As we start a new year may I thank everyone who has contributed to our Association in 1988, particularly those members who have invited us to their homes for meetings and those who have helped with the displays at the Meat Market and the Exhibition Building. I would especially like to thank Kees Klep for always being willing to contribute his time and effort for the good of the H.T.P.A.

Recent New Members

Section of Australian Tools

The Turner Bench Plane - Courtesy G. Plaw

The Turner Carpenter's Plane was something of a new departure when introduced in 1960.

In line with Company policy to only make the best, Turner acquired the patterns and details of the POPE plane previously manufactured in South Australia by Pope Products Ltd., and re-designed the product including a break-through in design, making the handles from red cellulose acetate - this matching the Turner Screwdriver.

All other planes to this time were wood handles and suffered the defects previously experienced with wood handled screwdrivers - many split and had to be replaced regularly.

The Turner pattern plane range commenced in 1960 and was phased out in 1970 when the Stanley plane in Australia, and later overseas introduced a black cellulose acetate handle. During the time in production, many Turner planes were exported, particularly to Latin America where "grooved base" planes were used on the sap filled timbers very successfully.

Pope also produced the FALCON shortly after World War II for a short time - No.4 and 5 planes only.

Tool Collecting in San Francisco - Frank Ham

Towards the end of November last year, my wife, my son and I visited my daughter and her husband in San Francisco where they are stationed for 12 months. Although I had visited San Francisco on previous occasions, this was a rather unusual situation whereby we were living in an apartment in the city for three weeks.

Unfortunately there were no large tool collectors meetings on in Nov/Dec. but I did have the addresses of two tool dealers in and around San Francisco (The Bay Area). One Sunday morning, I called on John Wells an architect, who is a tool collector and tool dealer. he has an extensive stock of Stanley planes (and some other Stanley tools).

His stock includes many of the very unusual and rare planes but even with the exchange rate for Australian dollars being good at present, prices for the most desirable planes were high - many costing more than U.S. \$100 and \$200.

However I saw planes that have only been drawings in catalogues and books. John is very knowledgeable about Stanley planes and attends most of the large tool collectors meetings in U.S.A. and usually visits the United Kingdom each year also. He collects Transitional and Patented Planes (as illustrated in Roger Smith's book) and has some very early Bailey planes (before Bailey joined Stanley) as well as many others. Most of his collection is in his mezzanine study but he does have two large showcases for his most valuable ones in his bedroom.

The second dealer I visited was Dave Paling who has become a full time dealer in antique tools since a motor car accident some year ago. Dave has a large stock of tools especially Stanley planes, but perhaps does not have as many rare ones as John Wells. However he does have a good selection of transitional (wooden bottom) planes at reasonable prices. I also visited a trash and treasure market in Marin County just a few miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge. This market was large - probably two or three times as large as the average market in Melbourne. About 50% of the market was old (perhaps antique) and I found three stalls selling old tools (one of whom was Dave Paling). However by our standards prices were reasonably high but the tools offering were rare in Australia. e.g. Stanley rules.

I did in fact join the local tool society P.A.S.T. and have received a January newsletter already!



Bookcase Plane

The bookcase shelf plane is used to form the racks or saw-tooth ledges on which the shelves rest in 18th and 19th century bookcases. The plane is a bevelled rebate plane with a nicker iron on its lower edge and, above that, an adjustable depth-stop. On the opposite side is an adjustable fence which exactly duplicates the profile of the plane's body. The plane can be used for either of two methods. In the earlier method vertical racked strips oppose each other on the inner surface of each side of the case, and the shelf rests on bearers set between these strips. To make these strips a suitable board is worked with the plane in the following manner and subsequently ripped into a number of strips.

With the fence adjusted level with the bottom of the plane, and bearing against the left-hand edge of the board, the first rack is worked across the grain. The fence is then brought into the first rack and the second rack is formed, and so on until the end of the board is reached. In the second, and later, method the racks are worked across the bookcase side itself. As there are joints at each end of the side, and no need for the shelves to adjust to these extremities, the racks are only worked to within a certain distance from top and bottom. The two sides are fixed temporarily together, with their tops to the left, and a straight edge is clamped across them. The fence is removed from the plane and, bearing against the straight edge, the first rack is made. The fence is replaced, so that it runs in the first rack, and the racking continues as described above. The same plane may also have been used to form the racking on adjustable music stands, reading stands drawing desks, etc.

