

# SPANNER & WRENCH COLLECTOR



HAND TOOL PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA  
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## Welcome to Edition 7, Issued in conjunction with the "Tool Chest" number 103.

If you require a copy of a back issue, contact the editor (see back page). Keep the contributions coming so that the editor does not hog all the space.

If you have an email address, and would like a colour copy of this newsletter in .pdf format, contact the editor.

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Fig. 1 John Piccoli with one of his spanner sculptures

### John Piccoli - Spanner Art

John Piccoli collects spanners for a different reason to most of us. Each spanner with its particular shape becomes a tiny building block in one of his many three dimensional sculptures.

His store of spanners is legendary, John has claimed he has had over 70 thousand spanners, and we may well believe it.

I often bump into John at one of the bigger swap meets and if he has not been able to buy 500 spanners, he is very disappointed.

John goes to swap meets in his ute, with his mobility scooter in back. John has been wheelchair bound since a childhood bout of polio.

John has a small trailer which he tows behind the mobility scooter, filling it with spanners, while other family members head out in different directions in an effort to cover as much ground as possible.

To make a work such as the one pictured, he has a chain winch in his shed and, as components are welded together, they are suspended and begin to form part of the whole.

I often take along a box of junk spanners to swap meets, or his place if I am passing by, to hand over for the sake of his art.

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## "Not Stupid, just Ignorant. A Confession"

by Maurice Stubbs (m)



Fig. 2 Speetog Plier Clamp



Fig. 3 Speetog patent detail - "UK PAT Nos 575442, 731736, 58 Foreign Patents"

sophisticated and costly, and very high quality. There are two patent numbers which indicate dates of 1946 - 1955, so not 100 years old, but 60 or so.

Soon after this acquisition, I came across another "Speetog" very similar with very minor design differences, for a much more realistic figure. While I now realised that the item was not particularly old, I was still intrigued by its design and operation. Both of these pliers I regard as very interesting and valued parts of my collection.

There is a bit of info on the Internet, including from a manufacturing jeweler who has high regard for the design.

I hope that this "Traps For Young Players" episode is of interest, and that the photos do the item justice. We all make mistakes, but as long as we learn something from them, all is not lost.

Starting out in a hobby, such as spanner collecting, one is somewhat green in many aspects of this endeavour. If something looks old and interesting, one must have it.

Many years ago at a swap meet, I was told of a bloke with some very old spanners just a few sites away. Approaching the table loaded with much nondescript rust encrusted metal, there was a small glass lidded display case containing such things as pocket knives, small spanners and model cars of the "matchbox" variety. One thing stood out and yelled at me, "YOU MUST HAVE ME".

It was a small over-centre plier clamp. I had never seen anything similar before. It was one of the most interesting 'wrenches' I had seen up 'til then, so I started to haggle.

The very high price was gradually reduced to just a high price, as I was intrigued by what I thought was a pretty unique item.

Smugly I secreted it about my person having acquired the "bargain of the year."

Then the research started. To my raw ideas it appeared to be something from the early 1900's, essentially very simple to adjust and operate without any springs or complications, just a simple nut adjusting parallel jaws. Everything about it seemed to shout "OLD". The shape of the handles and its simplicity led me astray.

Then facts started to cloud my smugness.

The item is a "SPEETOG" plier clamp, a high quality item (but a little worn and well used now) made mainly for the aeronautics industry. Apparently this company still produces such items in England, but now much more

# The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of Footprint

by Warren Hewertson (m)

## Introduction

Footprint Tools went into voluntary liquidation in 2009, some one hundred and thirty five years after the first "Footprint" brand plumber's pipe wrench was launched. They had just invested in a completely new works in Sheffield, and ordered a new German forging hammer. In 2008, the U.S. financial crisis reverberated around the world. The U.S. dollar and British pound fell, and the U.K. building trade hit the wall, so to speak. Footprint's order book had many blank pages. After considering various options, the company decided to close, pay its debts, and consider its future. Last year Footprint Sheffield was launched with a slimmed down range and a number of arrangements to supply some of the deleted products. The wrenches of interest to this magazine are back in full production; but related products such as spanners and shifters do not appear in the temporary catalogue.

## Some History

The forerunner to Footprint Tools, Thos. R. Ellin, was one of a plethora of toolmakers based in Sheffield in the second half of the 19th century. Like many Sheffield companies, its origin was in cutlery. Unlike most of their local competitors, they made a wide range of hand tools. However, they were always a much smaller company than Mathieson, Stanley (U.K.), Marples, or C. & J. Hampton (Record). Their hand tools were supplied mainly to the woodworking, plumbing, and other building trades.

This note concerns their Footprint range of pipe wrenches. The trademark "Footprint" and a footprint stamp is said to have been inspired by Daniel Defoe's (Robinson Crusoe) character, Man Friday leaving his imprint in the sand Fig. 4). The original 1875 right-angled plumber's wrench was the first multiple fulcrum tool using discrete sockets (Fig. 5). It is still in production, in little changed form, as the 698 series. The range used to extend to a 30" monster. For the last ten years, three models only have been available; the maximum size being 12".

It has been suggested that the Footprint is probably the only tool named after its registered trademark. Another example, peculiar to Australasia is the multigrip. There

Fig. 4 - two of the many Footprint Marks



THOS. R. ELLIN SHEFFIELD (Footprint Works) LTD. ENGLAND

**FOOTPRINT**

**No. 698 ALL STEEL ADJUSTABLE PIPE TONGS OR WRENCH**  
The genuine and original **FOOTPRINT** BRAND

No. 698

Length Closed ...	4"	5½"	7"	9"	12"	14"	16"	21"
Jaws Open to ...	½-1"	¾-1½"	1-1½"	1-2½"	1-3"	1-3"	1-3½"	1-4½"
Weight each ...	3 oz.	6 oz.	8 oz.	20 oz.	42 oz.	3 lb.	5 lb.	7 lb.

None is genuine unless stamped Footprint Brand

**No. 2142 ALL STEEL ADJUSTABLE PIPE WRENCH**  
(With Press Pin Adjustment)

No. 2142

Length Closed ...	5½"	7"	9"	12"	14"
Jaws Open ...	½-1½"	¾-1½"	1-2½"	1-3"	1-3½"
Weight each ...	6 oz.	8 oz.	1½ lb.	2½ lb.	3 lb.

Instantly adjustable to any size. When the pin is in alignment with the slot, press down button and slide frame into desired position. Release to lock.

**INSTANT ADJUSTMENT ACTION**

**SECTIONS**

A. On depression flat of pin "A" aligns with slot in frame "C".  
B. Coil spring provides return action fitting under head of pin "A".  
C. Wrench hook with holes and slot.  
D. Section of wrench frame across pin.

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Fig. 5 Extract from 1957 TR Ellin Catalogue

awkward. An early attempt (c. 1900) to simplify adjustment resulted in an improvement with sockets (four in a 9 inch wrench) cut in the back of the captive lever handle (Fig. 6)(1). This design was improved by Nicholson in Australia, using a rack on the top of the inner handle (Reg. Des. 22573/1945).

It is not known how long the restyled wrench was produced, but it is not common. In 1912, a slipjoint wrench, connecting the sockets with a slot, was patented (GB10,112). A sprung pin with differing cross-sections was depressed to allow movement to other sockets (Figs. 5 & 7). This model (series 2142) was in production for well over fifty years, both as a Footprint and a Domino brand tool. Later there were five sizes – up to 14 inches.(2)



Fig. 6 Ellin's modified Footprint with sockets in the back of the inside handle. The fulcrum is the pin connecting the sides of the "U" handle, c. 1900 (Ken Hawley)

are many imitators of the Footprint, mainly in continental Europe. A major feature being its simplicity in manufacture; thus it is inexpensive. It is a general-purpose wrench for a wide range of applications. From the outset, changing the fulcrum by unscrewing the pivot bolt, moving it to another socket, and re-screwing was



Fig. 7 - View of a sprung Footprint Wrench

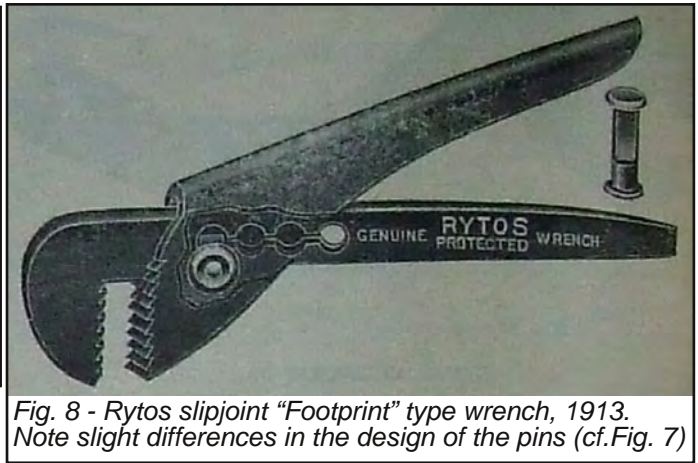


Fig. 8 - Rytos slipjoint "Footprint" type wrench, 1913. Note slight differences in the design of the pins (cf. Fig. 7)

An interesting find in Australia is a catalogue listing of a virtually identical wrench on the market in 1913 (Fig. 8). It is marked "Rytos". It was available in six sizes up to 16 inches(3). Rytos does not appear to be an Ellin brand from sighted Ellin catalogues. The timing, twelve months after the press-pin patent, suggests that either Rytos obtained a licence from Ellin, or vice versa (no assignments were disclosed) or, again that the new wrench was produced outside countries covered by the 1912 Ellin patent. No other information on Rytos has been sighted, nor have examples of a Rytos wrench been found by the author.

Whereas the original Footprint has been in production for over 135 years, the slipjoint range was replaced by the continuously adjustable "Thumbturn", or roll nut, wrench. Probably after 1965 (Fig. 9). It is known that the press pin, and not the Thumbturn, was in production in 1957.2 This is easier to adjust than its forbears. In this case, it appears that Footprint Tools benefited from competitors' development of its slipjoint Footprint. Bleckmann(4) and Blosta(5) both of Germany, had versions of these roll nut adjustments in the early 1950s.

Occasionally, variants of the original Footprint turn up.



Fig. 9. Thumbturn Footprint with knurled nut and saddle adjustment.



Fig. 10. The Yank Footprint – for the North American market? Probably early 20th century.

Laurie Lewis(6) reported the "Yank". This may be described as an inverted wrench. The long lower arm is the u-shaped lever. The short multi-socketed arm is the captive forged lever (Fig. 10).

#### The Relunched Footprint Sheffield, Ltd.

After an analysis of the business during 2009, the company has restructured in its new premises, Admiral Works, Hillsborough, Sheffield. It has concentrated its efforts, in the area of interest to us, on "Footprints". Various lines are being handled by other manufacturers, e.g. wad punches are marketed by Priory of Birmingham. It still has a focus on tools for the building trade. It has installed a fully automated grinding line for edge tools, and has gone ahead with the purchase of a new forging hammer from Germany, and other modern equipment. The old Hollis Croft Works is presumably good real estate near Sheffield's centre. The name change to Footprint Sheffield Ltd. is claimed to reflect its association with the University of Sheffield on (unspecified) advanced manufacturing projects. The new venture began in April last year and catalogues are being placed on line, field by field. Footprint Sheffield Ltd. is now one of very few independent toolmakers still operating in Sheffield.

#### References.

Items below in parentheses are HTPAA library reference numbers

1. Ken Hawley's Notes, [www.shef.ac.uk/hawley/collection/notes/pliers-intro/pliers2.html](http://www.shef.ac.uk/hawley/collection/notes/pliers-intro/pliers2.html)
2. T.R. Ellin, *Catalogue*, 1957, p.6. (C.276)
3. McPherson's, *Catalogue for the Farm & Home Workshop*, 1915, p.220.
4. J.E. Bleckman, *Catalogue*, 1950, p.77. (In English). (C.121)
5. Blosta, *Katalog*, No.1200, early 1950s, p.24. (C.113)
6. L. Lewis, *The Tool Chest*, 2010, 97, p.27.

Acknowledgement. I thank George Radion for helpful discussions.

## John Deere Cutout Wrenches

by George Radion

Joe Caruana has sent in this picture of a very collectable John Deere(JD) Cutout Wrench. For those who are not familiar with the term, "Cutout Wrench" it refers to the lettering which is skeletonized or cut out from the solid background. Cutout wrenches are highly regarded in the US and have a large collector base. On the other hand, John Deere collectable are also very desirable, so to have both of these qualities makes it rather special. But wait - there is more - this example is extremely rare as it has two hammers (the little buttons on the left).

A typical example of this wrench in the US has no hammers. It would seem that JD only made the hammered version for export (to Australia), as this is where the majority of them have been found.

US collectors have been known to pay ridiculous sums for this wrench at their regular wrench auctions, so you have a highly sought after wrench there Joe, thanks for sharing it with us.

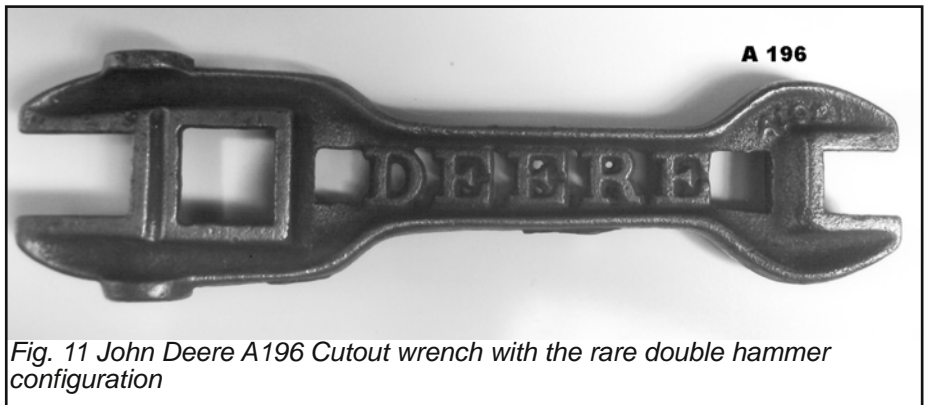


Fig. 11 John Deere A196 Cutout wrench with the rare double hammer configuration

Joe told me he had to pay quite bit for it at the time, but liked it so much he didn't mind parting with the \$15!

Wayne Dill, in the US, is an avid collector of all things John Deere. Pictured Fig. 12 is a range of his John Deere A196 Wrench variations.

Wayne maintains and publishes a list of John Deers wrenches and other collectables such as oilers, cast iron seats and tool boxes. Interested parties supply Wayne with details of any new finds and they go into the next year's list.

The list is available by subscription, and if anyone amongst our readership is an avid John Deere collector and would like to subscribe, get in touch with the editor and details will be supplied. The price is around \$20 USD.

The list covers John Deere items and those of any other companies which were acquired by the JD Company.

One company of particular interest to a sub-section of the John Deere collector base is spanners marked Lanz or Heinrich Lanz. JD took over Lanz in 1960 to gain a European manufacturing base.

Lanz spanners are also a highly sought after collectable in their own right worldwide. Lanz marked spanners are rare in Australia. Indeed the author is still waiting to find his first example.

If anyone of our readership has a JD cutout or a Lanz spanner, please send pictures to the editor for some followup.

Some of the better known companies acquired by JD are: Syracuse, Van Brunt, Waterloo, Dain, Marseilles, Lanz, Letz, Deere & Mansur Co, Moline and Kemp & Burpee Co.

Apologies for the quality of the picture Fig. 12

Fig. 12 at right - A selection of John Deere A196 wrench variations from the collection of Wayne Dill in the US. Note the bottom three are not cutouts, but solids.



How often do you find a chromed spanner in reasonable condition, but the bend near the ring end has some tarnish or light rust? The spanner will invariably have the inside of the ring looking pretty dirty with either a build up of black greasy grot, or a film of rust. *How best to clean it up and make it presentable?*

Here are some instructions which should make life easier for you. First, let me declare that I did not invent the method, but got it from someone else who was happy to pass it on to me. I do not know if he invented it, but am grateful for the knowledge.

### First Step - Get your Supplies

A 300gm spray can of "LANOX", a battery terminal cleaning brush (Fig. 13), some green scouring pads and a half inch wire wheel brush with arbour (Fig. 14) attached for your drill.

**Second Step - Prepare your Supplies** – take the cover off the battery terminal tool and cut the pointed wire brush free with a thin disc in your angle grinder. Discard the rest and mount the brush in a drill chuck. Cut a scouring pad into strips about an inch wide ready for use.

### Procedure:

Don gloves and spray any rusted parts of the spanner with Lanox. Lanox creates a heavy mist, so try to do this outside, and in any case wear a face mask as it is not pleasant to breathe in. Make sure you spray the inside of ring ends.

After a five minute wait, attack the rusted ends with the green scourer pad, and wipe off with a rag.

Get your drill into action and run the pointed brush through the ring end of the spanner a few times back and forth, and around if it is a big ring. Clean up with a rag – pull it through a few times. If you are doing an open ended spanner, use the thin wire wheel brush in a drill to clean inside the jaws.

You will be amazed at how clean the result is.

Some notes – My source had said to get the Lanox from the chainstore "SUPACHEAP" - well I was not near one so I proceeded to "TOTAL TOOLS" - I nearly fell over when I had to pay \$22.50 for the can.

The battery brush tool was available at my nearby Rev Head store called East Coast Spares for around \$4. The wire wheel brush was available there also.

Later on, I was going past a Supacheap store, and they had Lanox for \$12 – I nearly swore out loud, but then realized that my source had given me the right info. Laziness on my part ensured I paid almost double.

I read the can, and active ingredients, apart from lanolin are not revealed. The smell of it when sprayed is like Phosphoric Acid, so that may be a clue. Manufacturer: Inox, has all sorts of claims for it's fabulous properties, for rust proofing boating and fishing gear, industrial & agricultural machinery etc. So a smear of it on a newly cleaned spanner sounds like a good idea also.



Fig. 13 - Lanox and battery terminal brush



Fig. 14 - Thin rotary wire brush with arbour attached

## More on Mystery Sidchrome Spanners

by George Radion

Last Issue of Spanner Newsletter (N/L6) I showed an "S" shaped Sidchrome spanner - no feedback on that one apart from comments that it had never been seen before.



Fig. 15 Marked: "11/16 SIDCHROME A-F"

Here is another mystery Sidchrome spanner - it is about 6.5 inches long, with a 1/2" square socket drive on one end and an 11/16 ring on the other. (Fig. 15). It has puzzled me for ages, and I only unearthed it again in my shed recently.

I have shown this around in the past, with little clue as to what it could be for.

Then it dawned on me - could it be an uncompleted head bolt wrench for Holden Grey Motors?

After digging one out for comparison, I am now convinced it is a crowfoot spanner for early Holden (and Ferguson petrol engines).

It must have come off the production line before the final bends were completed. Note that the rings protrude on one side and are flat on the other - compare it with the crowfoot below.



Fig. 16 - Mystery spanner beside a completed crowfoot spanner

The straight spanner has no marks to suggest it has been straightened, and it is unplated, further points in favour of my theory that it was interrupted in the production process.



Fig. 17 - "KEY No 124 Mk 1 FIXING OR REMOVING A/C Nos 8, 9, 19 & 20 BOMB PISTOLS" other side - "PM TD -20 . 10 . 41"

Maurice Stubbs has sent in this military ordnance spanner.

The inscription means nothing to me, and my reference "Weapons of the Tommy" by David B Gordon was no help.

Google returned a lot of crap such as the Columbine massacre and other useless info.

Needless to say, any info on this item would be welcomed by Maurice and the editor.



Fig. 18 - NA 279

Pictured Fig. 18 is a spanner marked NA 279, obviously in the same series as last issues NA series (Page 8) mystery items. This one is 16" long, about 2" larger than the NA 277 shown before. Still no feedback or confirmation as to whether these are for Horwood Bagshaw and Ford Ploughs. Editor.

## Feedback from previous.

N/L no 7 – Page 4 Socket set SWF – the DRP mark is a German Patent Mark.

Research on this mark and others that may be encountered provides the table below, and may be useful to others:

MARK	MEANING
Musterschutz.	(Trademark protection or Design Copyright.)
Gegen Nachbildung Geschützt	(Protected against copying)
Gesetzlich Geschützt	(Protected by Law, Copyrighted or Patented)
Geschützt	(Protected by law)
D.R.G.M. Deutsches Reich Gebrauchsmuster.	(German Reich Registered Design) - 1891 - 1945
D.B.G.M. Deutsches Bundes Gebrauchsmuster.	(German Federal Registered Design) - Post 1949
D.R.P. Deutsches Reichpatent.	(German Reich Patent) - 1877 – 1945
D.B.P. Deutsches Bundespatent.	(German Federal Patent) - Post 1949

N/L no 7 – Page 2 – Durafit Socket Set

1. Joe Caruana states that he has a set, and each socket is marked DURAFIT (in Steve Wareing's set, none of the sockets are marked). Joe thinks the logo / colour scheme are similar to Dufor products.

2. Alan Lymbery states that his father had one of these sets and that he is convinced they are by Dufor. Dufor was the trade name of Duly & Hansford, a Sydney maker of handtools and service tools for the motor trade.

## NEW FINDS / ORPHANS

### Hugh Lennon Cast Steel Spanner.

by George Radion and Steve Bower(m).

Pictured Fig. 19, bottom is a spanner I have had for some time. It has the "Cast Steel" writing over to the right side, as if some writing on the left had been omitted. Above that is a spanner recently seen on Ebay. It had the hammer broken off, but looked very similar to mine, except that it had writing on the left stating HUGH LENNON and SPOTTISWOODE on the back.

It turns out that Steve Bower purchased this spanner and has shared it with us. I have used his image to create a composite picture of both spanners. The jaws are the same sizes, and overall lengths are similar.

Hugh Lennon Co was taken over by Baltic Simplex around 1949, who were in turn taken over by Horwood Bagshaw in 1964.

I speculate that after Hugh Lennon Co was taken over, Baltic Simplex maintained some of the Lennon product line, but removed the Lennon name from the spanners at least and probably implements as well. If anyone comes across further information please advise.



### John Piccoli [contd from front]

I sometimes whince when I observe rare spanners welded into John's artwork, and other collectors have described it as vandalism.

John counters this criticism with the observation that he is not locking up his spanners in a shed, never to be seen by others, as collectors often do, but he puts them on display for everyone to see!

If you have junk spanners collecting rust and dust and would like to donate them to John's work, contact the editor and he will provide details or add them to his box of donations.

### Wanted to Buy, Sell or Swap Section

Wanted to buy or swap - Farm implement spanners - (named ones only please), double ended Crescent shifters, cast iron seats, machinery nameplates, parts lists and spanners for tractors, vintage motor vehicles and vintage motorbikes. Spanners marked "Ferguson, Barger, Gibbins, McKay, Buncle, Grant, Bolden, Wain & Hyland" etc, also Blacksmith made spanners with names on them. Also other interesting shifters and spanners & tool company catalogues. Tool kits and Parts Lists for vintage cars, bikes and trucks - ring George on 0406 687 980 or email [george@htpaa.org.au](mailto:george@htpaa.org.au)

Feedback from those who find this newsletter useful would be appreciated. **Continued contributions are required to keep it interesting.** Thanks to those who have sent content, your stuff will all be used eventually.

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Aims of the Spanner & Wrench SIG:  
Promote the conservation, identification and collection of spanners & wrenches and to share information with the group to that end.