

they were most probably British made. However, it is all supposition; as these early wrenches were very seldom imprinted with a maker's name. They all appear to be of a similar design and blacksmith made judging from the rather rough construction. These early makers knew that this tool could, and would, double as a hammer, so made a hammer head on the back of the top jaw. The one deficiency of the design is that there is a weak point at the lower collar of the lower jaw, where it meets the handle. This is often found bent out of line, particularly if the common abuse of handle extension with a length of pipe has been applied. The following 'Double Bar' style is obviously more stable.



Fig.3. Fox Bros. Single Bar Wrench (jaws 'customised')

This design was continued by some factories in the early stages of mass production: I. Sorby brand, Timmins and others. One branded example known here is a well constructed 9-inch made by R. Timmins and Sons, and stamped with the company's motif, RTS in a heart.

A later development of the Single Bar was made Fox Brothers, Sheffield, patented by William Parker Fox and Thomas Fox, 18th September 1891, improved in their later patent of 21st September 1905. The bar was in fact a rod with one end riveted into the moveable jaw and the other riveted to the handle socket and, like the earlier Single Bar, had a hammer head on the upper part of the front jaw (Fig. 3).

c) Coach Wrench (Double Bar)

This style was also called 'French Pattern Wrench' in the Timmins Pattern Book of c.1845, indicating that there was already design exchange between France and England at the beginning of the 19th Century (Fig. 4). The Queensland Machinery Company's 1913 Catalogue calls it 'Double Pillar Iron Wrench', listing four sizes: 10-inch, costing five shillings; 12-inch, costing six shillings and six pence; 14-inch, eight shillings; 16-inch, 10 shillings and six pence.

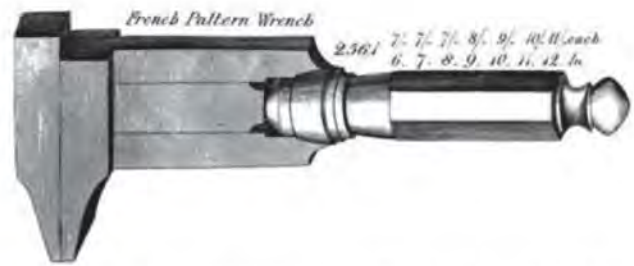


Fig.4. 'French Pattern Wrench' figured in the Timmins Pattern Book of 1845

Obviously, the 'Double Bar' refers to the two bars connecting and supporting the handle and lower jaw. As with the 'Single Bar', it was operated by turning the handle to open and close the jaws (Fig. 5a-d) but of much heavier construction, blacksmith made before 1800 and continued by some manufacturers after 1850 until the early 1900s. The most commonly found were branded: Palmer & Sons; Crampton Bros.; G & J Hall; Kimberley; Footprint; Ibbotson; I. Sorby; Merryweather. Palmer wrenches were very distinctive and distinguished by the upper and lower bars being bulged at the handle (Fig. 5d). All were stamped 'Palmer & Sons' and are most commonly found in the 12 and 14-inch sizes.



Fig. 5. French Pattern Coach Wrenches; (a) 20" I. Sorby, (b) 12 1/2" Crampton, Sheffield (c) 11" Thom Ibbotson, (d) 14" Palmer & Sons

The only example which most closely resembles the classic 'French Pattern' style drawing in Richard Timmins Book that has been found in Australia is the I. Sorby 'Punch' brand, which was used by an Australian government department (Fig. 5a). A variation was the highly distinctive 'THOS IBBOTSON & Co. MAKERS SHEFFIELD' (Fig. 5c). Also very common is the 'Cramptons Sheffield' inscribed wrench, which lacks the ornate moulded handle end (Fig.