

# SPANNER & WRENCH COLLECTOR

HAND TOOL PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA  
Inc. Reg No A0025953J



Spanner Special Interest Group Newsletter

[www.htpaa.org.au](http://www.htpaa.org.au)

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**Welcome to Edition 24, Issued in conjunction with the "Tool Chest" number 120.**

If you require a copy of a back issue, contact the editor (see back page). Keep the contributions coming so that we can cover a broad range of topics.

An index of spanners covered so far is available from the Editor.

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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Then HTPAA Vice Preident Graeme Plaw visited Kangaroo Island in 2011. They have a history museum there where these pictures were taken. The curator obviously has good taste!



**Feedback** about the Sock-o-matic and Hex-a-matic covered in S & WC issue 23 page 7.

**Stanley Hex-a-Matic** note from G Plaw (m)

The Hex-a-matic was never in Australian Catalogues. It appeared in late 1960's US catalogues and was still in their catalogues in 1990.

I have included the 1971/2 catalogue page which shows the description of the product in use (see box at right).

There were also fixed nut drivers in individual and kit form at the same time.

Mention was made in last newsletter (#23) that a similar retracting tool had been seen using pins instead of hex tubes.

One of our members gave this to me at the March tool sale.

This socket is marked Gator Grip by Endeavor with sizes 1/4" - 3/4" or 7mm to 19mm.

The retractable spring loaded pins form a series of



hexagons when pushed onto hex nuts. Only those pins directly above the nut retract, so that the remaining ones form a solid surround around the nut, allowing it to be turned by a 1/2" drive bar. This particular example has two pins missing, but still functions.

The Endeavor Tool Company, 18 Worcester Street, West Boylston, MA 01583 make these sockets in three sizes and their promotional video shows them being used on all sorts of fasteners other than round: hooks, eye-bolts, hex and square nuts etc.

They make other products all geared to the late night TV audience it seems.

**Novelty Combination Spanner**

by G Radion

Another item delivered to me at the Tool Sale in March was this promotional adjustable spanner with ring end.

It has writing : CARLTON MID and was presumably a promotional give-a-way at some stage by CU Breweries.

Readers with a keen eye will note that the ring is about the right size to fit a screw top Crown seal.



The adjustable jaws are functional, but rather a loose fit, but the ring end is totally fit for purpose - I have tried it!

**SCREWDRIVERS**

**HEX-A-MATIC™.  
NUT DRIVER**



**No. 66-525 Automatically Adjusts to 15 Sizes**

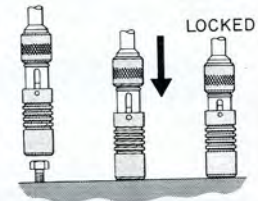
Exclusive chuck design fits hex nuts from 1/4" to 7/16" across the flats, hex head screws from No. 6 to 1/4". Locking mechanism allows nut to be turned with slight pressure. Versatile tool. Individually carded.

No.	EDP No.	O/A Length Inches	FLC No.
66-525C	61-525	7 1/16	2545

**HEX-A-MATIC is fast and easy to use**



Six hardened and tempered spring steel collet fingers automatically adjust in and out as slider is moved up and down. Fingers will remain engaged until slider is moved by user. Nuts and screws may be held in chuck for easy installation in hard to get at places.



Position chuck over nut. Push toward nut — collet fingers automatically engage flats. Turn to tighten or loosen nut. Revolving knurled chuck sleeve may be held to steady driver.



## I-Beam Spanner Handles

by Warren Hewertson (m)

It is no accident or fashion trend that the handles of some of the best spanners are I-beam in cross section. For a given mass of metal, an I-beam constitutes a much more rigid lever than either a rectangular or circular cross

section. For exactly the same reason structural steel is used in I-beam sections in bridges, steel frame buildings, and truck chassis. The simple reason for this is that the strength (or rigidity) of materials is proportional to the cube of the depth - it is only proportional to the width in a rectangular cross section (see box). Thus, floor joists are always used deep side upright. More efficient engineered joists are made with a top and bottom chord and a vertical sheet - e.g. plywood or, recently, corrugated iron (Fig. 1).

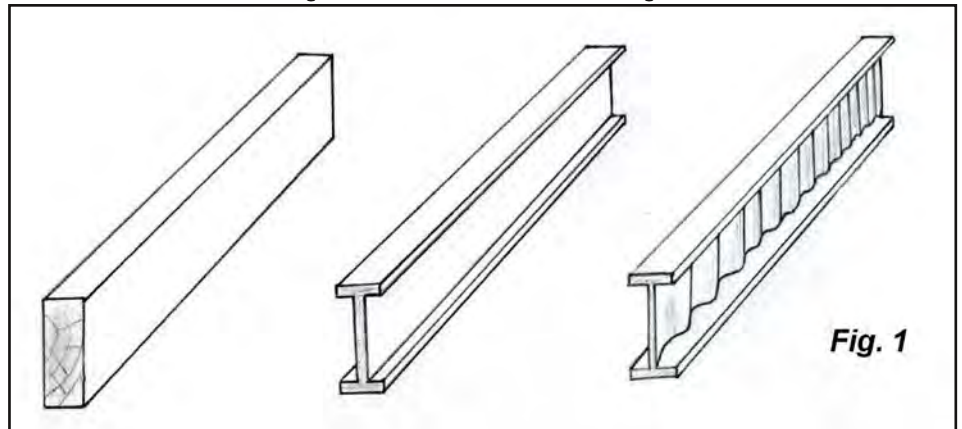


Fig. 1. Timber floor joist, steel I-beam, and corrugated steel/timber chord joist. (illustration by Graeme Plaw)

### STIFFNESS OF BEAMS

For a simple rectangular beam the stiffness can be shown to be

$$\frac{ka^3b}{l^3}$$

where  $k$  represents a constant for the material,  $a$  is the depth,  $b$  the width, and  $l$  the length. Thus, doubling the depth of a beam increases the rigidity 8 fold, whereas doubling its width simply doubles the rigidity.

For an I-beam, an optimum can be achieved to maximise the strength for a particular mass of, say, steel. The exact relationship for the stiffness of an I-beam is somewhat more complex of course, but the same considerations apply.

A good modern spanner example is the Japanese brand NETSUREN. These are beautifully designed open ended tools. They have the I-beam handle, embossed in the deep panels on both sides. They also feature a strengthened jaw, are well proportioned, and appear to have benefited from firm design principles (Fig. 2). The trademark resembles lightning in a roundel.



Fig. 2. 220mm O/E spanner embossed (-obverse panel) 23 NETSUREN (trademark) 23 H34174 21, and (inverse panel) JIS B 4630 21x23.

JIS B4630 is the Japanese standard for open ended spanners made to the relevant specification. All NETSUREN spanners sighted carry this mark.

## I-Beam Spanner Handles [Contd]

by Warren Hewertson (m)

Large spanners in the range have a belt and braces approach to size marking. Pre-metric British and Australian spanners tend to be marked with the size of the bolt thread e.g. Whitworth or BSF. American spanners, almost invariably, are marked with across flats, AF or SAE, sizes of the jaws. The large NETSURENS are marked with both metric thread and AF sizes eg Fig. 3.



**Fig. 3**

The word *netsuren* translates into English as “heat” – in the sense of heat treatment, or tempering. Its use dates from traditional Japanese sword making.

The Koyo Netsuren Corporation was formed in 1950 from the Sugimoto Ironworks of Kyoto. Initially it specialised in metal heat treatment. It has expanded into equipment for the automotive, construction, and aviation industries.

*Fig. 3. 275mm O/E spanner embossed (-obverse panel 32 NETSUREN (trademark) H 35160 30, and (-inverse panel) M22 JIS B 4630 30x32 M20.*

Of course the use of I-beam handles is well established in the production of other good quality spanners. American examples include the BULL-DOG alligator wrench by Whitman & Barnes. This also features the reinforced jaw (Fig. 4). The logo, in this instance, differs from the usual WB diamond (Cope, 1830-1915, pp. 267,8); it is simply W in a diamond.

[In 1920 the drop-forge and wrench operations of Whitman & Barnes were acquired by the J.H. Williams company, and the W&B president A.D. Armitage became a vice-president of J.H. Williams. Some of the W&B product lines (e.g. monkey wrenches and alligator wrenches) continued in production by Williams]. ref Alloy Artefacts.



**Fig. 4a**

**Fig. 4b**

*Fig. 4a & 4b. both sides of a 9 inch alligator wrench (1 1/2 inch jaw (max.) embossed*

*(Top panel) WHITMAN & BARNES MFG. CO.*

*(Bottom panel) W (in a diamond) No.2 BULL-DOG MADE IN USA.*

A second U.S. example, from Indiana, is the little lathe key (Fig. 5). It has a relatively deep web. In use no great force is required; the design simply minimises the volume of metal and probably maintains a house style.



**Fig. 5**

*Fig. 5. 4 inch spanner with square O/E and socket embossed, (obverse) SOUTH BEND LATHE WORKS, and (inverse) No.253 and RI, in a roundel. - Rhode Island Tool Company according to Alloy Artefacts*



## I-Beam Spanner Handles [Contd]

by Warren Hewertson (m)

A particularly elegant German single O/E spanner is the Stahlwille with a relieved narrow jaw (Fig. 6).

A faint 28 is incised neatly above the concave relief of the jaw, to the right. In fact the width AF is 28mm. and there is evidence of filing on both sides of the jaw. Probably it is a user modified tool.

Stahlwille obviously favoured the concave, as opposed to the simple angular I-beam design; A ring spanner (Fig. 7) illustrates the point further.

A set of Elora Nutmaster ring spanners uses the I-beam handle construction, but the web is somewhat thicker than that of the above tools.

Most Australian and British examples tend to have indented recesses rather than definite I-beam construction. An exception is the Snail Brand range of small spanners (Fig. 8).

Many adjustable spanners, or shifters, employ the I-beam style of handle. This is particularly found on large, heavy, tools to minimise weight. The Cromna self-adjusting ratchet wrench featured this design of handle (The Tool Chest, 2015, 116, 5) (& Fig. 9)

Other tools that employ the I-beam for stability include levels and aluminium ladder stiles. An added advantage in extension ladders is the strength of the I-beam holding of the narrow section sliding in the wide section.

Rectangular box beams are also most efficient in optimising strength for a given weight of material, be it metal, fibreglass reinforced resin, or carbon fibre. In expensive bicycle construction the use of deep elliptical cross sections (rather than circular) is replacing the use of round tubing.

Acknowledgements. I thank George Radion for photographing the spanners and helpful discussions. The Alloy Artefacts website provided valuable information resolving some mysteries.



**Fig. 6**

Fig. 6. 235mm single O/E spanner with concave web embossed 27 STAHLWILLE STABIL (obverse) and MADE IN GERMANY – in small capitals (inverse).



**Fig. 7**

Fig. 7. 335mm. ring spanner obverse embossed STAHLWILLE STABIL 20 GERMANY and 1 (inch); inverse embossed ALLOY STEEL STRONGER THAN ANY BOLT and incised 1 (inch) LL, 15/16 (inch).



**Fig. 8**

Fig. 8. 6 inch O/E spanner embossed 1/4 W 5/16 BS SNAIL BRAND 3/8 W 7/16 BS, obverse, and MADE IN ENGLAND SR, inverse.



**Fig. 9**

Fig. 9 Cromna self-adjusting ratchet wrench. Refer Tool Chest, 2015, 116, 5)

## WHO MADE THIS SPANNER ?????? by Maurice Stubbs, (m)

I had obtained a hand forged spanner with "Murrumburrah" stamped into it some time ago. It has been forged from an old file and most likely by a blacksmith.

I got in touch with the Murrumburrah-Harden historical society who claimed to have no knowledge of who could have made it. They showed no interest at all.



In a recent conversation with a bowls club member who hails from Murrumburrah, he remembered a blacksmith called Henry Speer from when he was young and living there.

The net turned up the following when I entered "BLACKSMITH MURRUMBURRAH".

### From :- **A Thematic History of Harden Shire June 2009**

Edgar and David Reid set up a blacksmith business at Murrumburrah near the river (Murrumburrah crk?) about 1876 where the firm operated for many years.

David took over the business in 1884. The firm made all sort of wagons and vehicles as well. A two storey brick building for wagon construction and painting was erected.

The upper room was used for Masonic Lodge meetings. In 1916 the firm was registered as David Reid and sons. About this time it began to concentrate on motor cars and the blacksmithing business was sold to Harry Speer. In 1969 – 70 a service station replaced the former brick coach building.

### From :- **The young Witness, Thursday 15 June 1922**

Mr David Reid an old and respected resident of Murrumburrah passed away in the Young District Hospital on Monday morning. The late Mr Reid was was a native of Yass and came to Murrumburrah 46 years ago. He set up a business as blacksmith and coachbuilder, but retired from the business life about three years ago, and took up his residence in Sydney. Note:- He died after falling out of a sulky. [A bit ironic if it was one of his make].

### From :- **Goulburn Evening Post Thursday 12th June 1947**

Mr. H.S.SPEER. The death occurred a Murrumburrah-Harden District Hospital on Monday May 26, of Mr Henry Spencer Speer, aged 71 years. Mr Speer was born at Bungendore in 1878. He married Miss Ada Johnson at Young in 1899, and went to Murrumburrah in 1901. He went to work for Mr David Reid, blacksmith and remained with him about 25 years.

After this he took over the blacksmithing business himself and remained in it until his death.

The above obituaries go on for quite a bit, but give some provenance to my spanner. There is also another obit for Henry Speer's father who died in Young in 1924.

This all leads me to believe that Henry Speer was the forger of the Murrumburrah spanner.

When next in Murrumburrah, I intend to take my spanner in as I am led to believe that they now have a small display of the blacksmith shop.

### Editor

This was a very welcomed history note from Maurice, as I have had a similarly shaped spanner marked "REID & Son" for some time with no idea who the "Reid and Son" were. There is no proof that this spanner was made by the David Reid in Maurice's history note, but I feel it is a good candidate all the same and I am happy to attribute it so.



On showing the picture of my reid spanner to Maurice he replied;

I presume that your Reid spanner was made by David Reid, as he operated the smithy prior to Henry Speer. It could also mean that David Reid was the maker of my Murrumburrah spanner, especially as they are very similar.

Editor - Readers - are there any other spanners by these makers in your collections? please share with us if so.



## J W Byrne of Neill St Harden *by G Radion*

By Co-incidence, I found a buggy axle nut spanner recently marked J W Byrne.

At the time of purchase, the name was illegible on the rusted handle, but I could see a faint outline of some letters.

That was enough for me to part with my \$5 and when cleaning up back home, the name was revealed. I thought it was another by the same maker of the large Byrne spanner of Joe Caruana's shown in newsletter no 23 - but no the initials differed.

Off the the National Library archive of digitised newspapers, where I found that there was a JW Byrne, advertising in the newspaper called "Murrumburrah signal and County of Harden Advocate" in 1911 as a Prized Sulkey Builder, blacksmith, wheelwright and farrier of 22 years experience.

The name Murrumburrah had popped up again and the Byrne namd had also - more co-incidences!

This spanner has had a hard life, almost broken due to twisting with more force than it could bear - this could be attributed to either: poor hardening procedure, or misuse: but as Byrne claims 22 years experience, let us assume that someone took a long pipe extension to the handle and overloaded it on a stubborn nut.



Further advertising entries were found in later editions of the same newspaper for 1912, 1913 and 1914, by which time experience had grown to 25 years, and I stopped looking.

### Murrumburrah - Harden

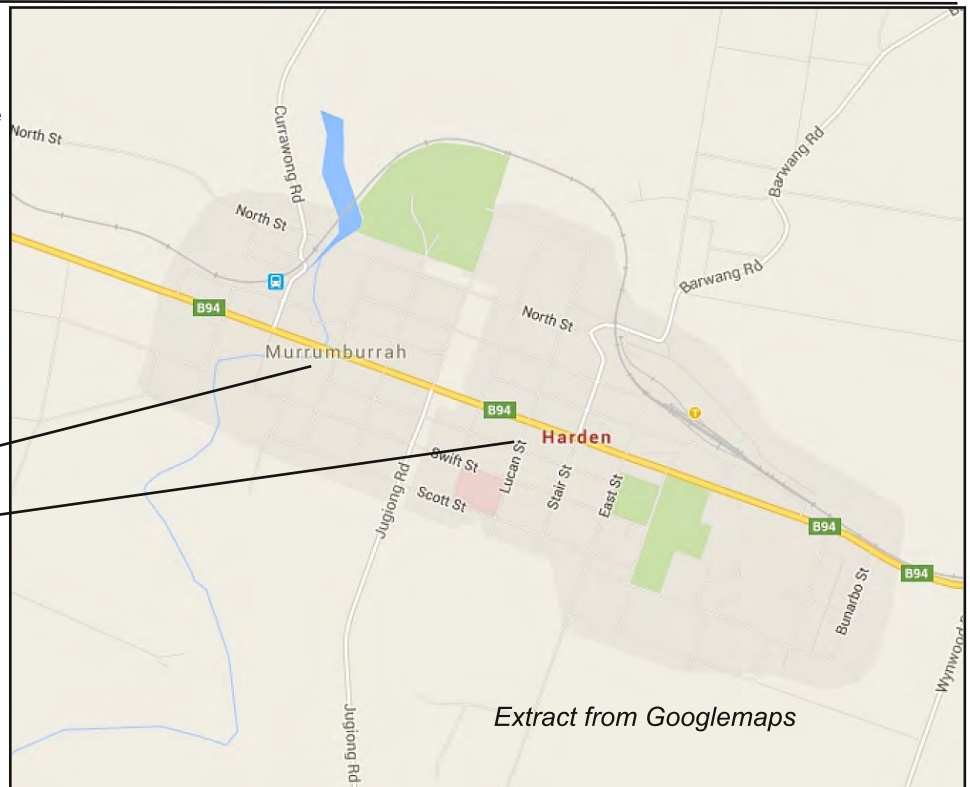
These two towns were only 1.2 Km apart, and nowadays they are one town.

The fact that there were two coach builders / smithies within such close proximity only highlights the reliance early settlers had on these industries before the advent and widespread adoption of the motor car.

Murrumburrah

Harden

Any further info about these makers would be appreciated.



**J. W. Byrne,**  
**Neill-street, Harden.**  
**22 Years Practical Experience.**

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**Prize Sulky Builder**

General Blacksmith, Wheelwright, and Farrier, Strippers.  
Harvesters Repaired.

---

Special Care and attention to Diseased and Contracted feet.  
Cast Iron bought in any quantity.

---

Vehicles of every description made and Repaired.  
Tyres Cut Daily.

---

**Trial Solicited and satisfaction guaranteed.**

## Orphan Spanner by (m) G Radion

This malleable cast iron spanner marked with initials SO&Co on a classic form of spanner, used by many local makers.

This form was also available in England from Marples in catalogues, marked WM&S.

It must have been available in Australia to order as examples from McKay, Buncle, N&M, Clyde and others can be found.



In this case I have not been able to think of a suitable candidate company / maker to fit the initials S O & Co. If anyone has a suggestion, we would be happy to investigate it.

The Bung wrench at right was photographed by Graeme Plaw while visiting the Kangaroo Island local museum in 2011

It is marked SHELL FW VM LANGFORD Agent.

It has a semi-circular protrusion below the round end for 44 gallon drum bungs.



It is the second petroleum marked agent wrench I have seen, the other being Harris of Parkes, which is a rather fancy multi function wrench, that I will cover at a later date due to insufficient space this time. Readers may know of others, if so - send them in.

**ATTENTION SPANNER COLLECTORS:** Missing one or two out of a set? Need auto or machinery toolkit replacements? Want a one-off from an obscure maker? I have many older, branded and unbranded spanners that I will sell individually. All have been cleaned up and rust treated. They will be modestly-priced, plus packing and postage. I'm not a dealer. (HTPAA member) Please email me Peter Wood at: [peter.wood@internode.on.net](mailto:peter.wood@internode.on.net) with your requirements.

New book: "**The Adjustable Spanner, History, Origins and Development to 1970**" by **Ron Geesin** ISBN 978-1-78500-035-5. this book deals solely with British adjustable spanners. The book was released in early March. It is a well researched and presented book, with historic information about major players in the spanner scene in the UK and many examples of their product covered.

**Wanted to buy or swap** - cast iron seats, agricultural machinery nameplates and parts lists and interesting spanners for agricultural equipment, vintage motor vehicles and vintage motorbikes.etc, also other interesting shifters and spanners & tool company catalogues such as Sidchrome, Britool, Bahco, Hazet, T Williams (UK & USA) etc. Contact G Radion

**Spanner & Wrench Collector back issues:** Issues 1-23 now available in a folder with clear pockets and provision for extra issues. \$25 plus P & P, or collect at a club event by arrangement. Postage will be calculated for a parcel over 500 grams - Call the editor.

*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.*

This Issue Edited by George Radion.  
Contact by snail mail: PO Box 4021, McKinnon, Vic 3204  
Contact by email: [george@htpaa.org.au](mailto:george@htpaa.org.au), phone 03 9557 1178, mob 0406 687 980

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.