* Identify items by using your Driver's Licence Number preceded by a 'V' for Victoria. Sid suggests that the HTPAA should agree on standard marking locations so that we will all know where to look. It is important to note that ultra-violet marking has a limited life of five years. The recovery rate for stolen items is currently 68%, so numbering items does provide positive protection
* Make a list of your items and include photographs which incorporate an indication of scale alongside each tool
* Obtain professional valuations of your tools. Formal, signed valuation letters from the HTPAA could be useful
* Consider an alarm. When collections are really valuable a monitored alarm system costing up to $2000 is perhaps the best idea. However, keyed locks to all doors and windows as well as the manhole cover to the roof are recommended. Window grilles are considered to be really dangerous should there be a fire, and are not encouraged as a security precaution
* Make collections as difficult to remove as possible. Thieves are mainly opportunists unaware of the value of our collections
* Dogs can be useful but can be nobbled! (Goats are useful too, some think!!)
* Be persistent when making insurance claims. Do not be discouraged by initial rejections, and follow-up with a solicitor's letter
* Advise fellow club members to be on the lookout when items are lost

Whilst security and property protection are now a regular part of modern life, tool collecting should nevertheless continue to be fun. Sensible precautions together with common sense should allow us all to really enjoy our chosen hobby and the fellowship of other club members. However, do check your own precautions and remember that:

Collecting Means Protecting

Care plus caution equals Confidence

The Nature & Identification Of Timber

A Report Of a Talk Given By Dr Jugo Ilic
At Our 19th July Club Meeting
At The Box Hill Community Arts Centre

Written By Roy Fuller Melbourne. Victoria

r Jugo Ilic works in the CSIRO Division Of Forest Products, and began his talk by presenting several examples of Australian timbers. These illustrated a few of the many characteristics involved when identifying timbers and deciding upon their best applications. Looking at a series of slides we then saw items such as an Egyptian chair about 2000 years old which demonstrates that the arts of veneering and gilding are by no means new. Other slides showed:

* The parts and features of trees with a general explanation of their growth

* Classification of trees into 'softwoods' and 'hardwoods'. Hardwoods are generally regarded as being broadleafed, whilst softwoods are conifers. However, the display of a large piece of balsa wood (a not so well-known hardwood) and a description of cedars in both divisions soon made it apparent that identification of timbers, especially eucalypts, is often difficult and sometimes impossible even with modern equipment.

By this stage it was very clear that after 25 years in the business Dr Ilic knew his subject from A to Z, or even Z+! However, at least one member of the audience found it difficult to take notes and absorb the information at the same time. When I was a lad commencing joinery we identified timber by looking at it along the grain, against the grain, by tapping, sniffing, and even at times burning. However, we now need to magnify the cells to observe the

unique structure evident in every timber. This necessitates the use of microscopes, ultra-violet light, and consideration of fluorescence, colour and grain as well as mineral content such as silica. This is achieved using a computer aided wood identification program known as CSIROID.

Among several timbers discussed we looked at examples of Wattle, Blackbean, Purple-Heart, Walnut, Sandalwood and Amboyne. When identification is necessary, samples are compared with 'authentics' of which there are 47,000 on file. Even with this advantage, identification cannot be absolutely certain. Often the best which can be achieved is to suggest a 'relationship'. This system of identification as currently employed is thus considered as 'good' rather than 'perfect'.

Several interesting issues were raised during question time.:

* It was agreed that Queensland Blue-Gum (Spotted Gum?) was a satisfactory substitute for hickory axe handles. However, Horizontal wood (Tasmanian?) was felt to be no better than Pinus Radiata, and was not recommended.

* Northern hemisphere beech trees are all related, but not at all to those here in the southern hemisphere. New Zealand and Australian beech trees are quite different and distinct. The New Zealand variety is similar, actually, to the Myrtle Beech.

* Cyprus Pine is a very durable timber with a lovely grain, but is not especially strong.

* Pine will certainly twist, but can be restrained with weight.

* Removing moisture from timber is a difficult process. Half the mass is 'woodwater', whilst the last 30% brings about shrinkage and is known as 'bound water'.

* Kiln dried hardwood contains about 7% moisture, whilst air-dried hardwood (most timber is air-dried), is about 14%. We were reminded that "Timber is always on the move".

This was an excellent presentation thoroughly enjoyed by the many members present.

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One Man's Chest

Part of the Story Of A Working Man's Tool Chest

Nigel Lampert & Ted Manning

Melbourne & Geelong, Victoria

he sight of well-polished Australian cedar is exciting to behold even though some may still cling to the idea that European timbers are somehow better. This cedar is old and firm: recycled from early convict era building materials we were told. The grain is exuberant and exciting though the chest itself is plain and restrained. It gleamed in the relative darkness of the tin shed in a little country town, literally a treasure which had lain undisturbed for many years. The close mitres of the lid showed the workmanship in exactly the way they must have done over seventy-five years ago. "My father made this about 1916. It was part of his apprenticeship as a railway carriage builder at Sydney's Eveleigh Railway Workshops between 1916 and 1922", said our proud host Bryan Egan.

Born in Lidcombe, New South Wales on 4th August, 1901, his father, Raymond Rockwell Egan, was one of eight children. His grandfather worked as an engineer in the New South Wales Fire Brigade. Prior to his apprenticeship with the railways Raymond Egan worked as a junior clerk with McDowell and Hughes in George Street, Sydney, whilst immediately afterwards he worked as a coachbuilder with the old coachbuilding firm of Smith and Waddington, once again in Sydney. Undoubtedly the tool chest was there with him in their workshop as he carried out his vehicle building tasks. He stayed there until 1932 when, despite the depression, for some reason since lost in time he was able to somehow gain employment with the Ford Motor Company far away in Geelong, Victoria. When he moved to Geelong around

this time, it is interesting to note that Raymond Egan lived at 106 Skene Street in Newtown where he rented a brand new though modest house for 15/- weekly. This house has since been replaced.

Although only on the production line at Ford's in Geelong, it was probably his skills in fine woodwork which won him the job. The tool chest of course went with him, and young Bryan Egan often accompanied his father to work. He fondly remembers the careful way in which the tool chest was treated. "I was never allowed to even look in it", he said. "The lid was only ever opened to take out a tool, and then it was very quickly locked again". Painted black on the outside and topped with lino, the tool chest has an impressive double-sided key similar to those used for roll top desks. It is still in first class condition, only the small dents of use and movement on the outside of the chest showing its age to observers.

Given his experience with carriage building and vehicle building, Raymond Egan was apparently regarded very well as a skilled tradesman. He became a Charge Hand on the production line and was involved in the building of the very first utility by Lew Bandt. "I imagine that with his woodworking skills he helped to make the production models", said Bryan. Raymond Egan rose to become an Assistant Production Manager at the start of the Second World War, and had to suffer the demands made by 24 hour production. Bryan fondly remembers that his father would often be called out at 3am or 4am to solve some problem or other on the production line. Ford at that time built forty foot long work boats for the Navy, the belly tanks of planes, and Bren Gun carriers amongst other things. Those familiar with Geelong will be interested to know that Western Beach where the Sea Cadets still meet was where metal boats were built in the open and then slid sideways into the water when launching them. Basic

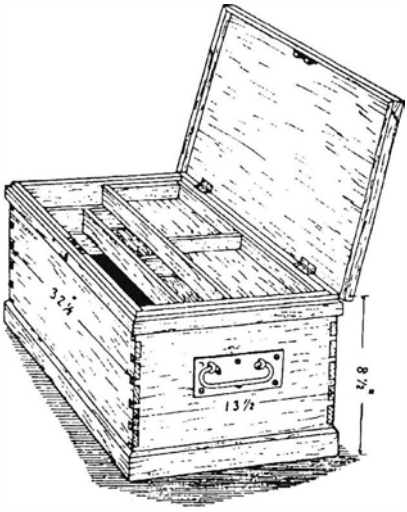
A High Quality Traditional Cabinetmaker's Chest With Drawers

but very skilful and resourceful, indeed! It is hoped that we never lose the ingenuity and problem-solving abilities of those days.

Following the war Raymond Egan was sent to England and Holland to study the production of the Consul and Zephyr cars of the 1950s. The tool chest again went back to Sydney when he became a Production Manager at the Ford plant there. Subsequently he became Production Manager of the Press Metal Corporation there and retired eventually in 1970.

Initially during his retirement he lived in Lane Cove in Sydney and apparently liked playing golf quite a bit. The tool chest did not stand still, however. It returned with him to Geelong, and then once again to Sydney where he had decided to see out his days. This was not to be the case, though, and he made a sudden and unexpected decision to settle in a small Victorian country town with his son. This was to be the last move for the travelled but still pristine chest. Although quite a few of its tools had by now been separated within the family, a good core of them still remained with the chest. Many were made by his father during his time with the railways. Bryan has carefully treasured them and only a very few favoured friends ever knew of this rather special tool box. Bryan has kept both the box and the tools in immaculate order, and there is little doubt that his father would have probably been able to simply reach in and still find many of his tools just as before.

The tool chest has now passed outside the family. Bryan felt it would be best with people who understand and still treasure the hand tools of a now pretty well forgotten era. It is to be hoped that it can continue to be used, and successively passed down to caring and understanding owners as time passes.

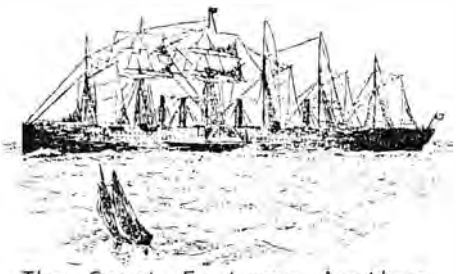


A Typical Woodworker's Tool Chest With Sliding Trays

THE TOOL TRAIL - PART 1

By Graham M. Thompson, Christchurch. New Zealand

There are a number of large railway stations in London from which excellent fast trains depart to widespread destinations both far and near. Having solved the mystery of which station to choose for the appropriate destination, I made my way to Paddington. There actually is a large figure of the travelling bear on the concourse, and, what is perhaps more interesting to collectors and those interested in industrial history, there is a very fine statue of the Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel. He, amongst other fine projects, designed the railway station which still serves British Rail as their Paddington terminus.



The Great Eastern: Another Engineering Feat Of Brunel

From the appropriate platform express trains run to the west as far as Exeter, but the first stop is Reading. The station is right in the town and only a few yards away is an information office in the town 'square'. Here I was directed to the Museum Of English Rural Life at Reading University.

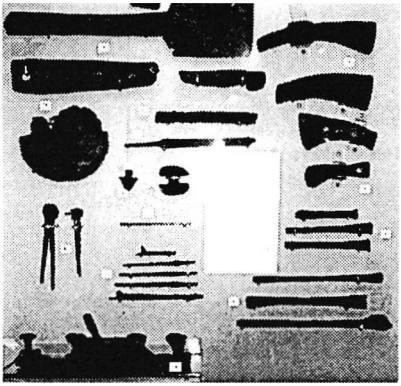
It was suggested that I take a bus but the further information that it was only half an hour's walk decided me to take some exercise. The town is of only medium size but gives the appearance of prosperity. During my stroll I enjoyed noting the style of house and some architectural points of the homes, many of which are set in pleasant gardens.

On arrival at the Museum, a small fee gained my admission

to a warm welcome by the curator. He outlined the layout of the museum and when I said my main interest was tools he pointed me to the first room, and I entered a 'magic cave' of tools. With the aid of a sketch map and an excellent coloured brochure I was easily able to explore the very large collection of tools. My particular attention was taken by the tools of the woodcraft industries which encompass wheelwrighting, thatching, basket-making, woodland crafts, turning, and the general wood trades. All exhibits are skilfully displayed and labelled, and frequently have further explanatory notes in the appropriate bay. Many items which to me had just been pictures or notes in reference books are on display. I found it most absorbing to see the real thing, in many cases set up as they would have been in the times when those trades were actually practised. I was given permission to take photographs and these are now a useful addition to my library.

Although I did not have time to investigate their library, I was told that the museum has the largest collection of manuscripts, books, plans and other documents of any similar institution in Britain. Much of it is being transferred to microfiche, and all is available to students for research.

In addition to the woodcraft tools there are displays of haymaking, ploughing and other rural activities, whilst in the other wing of the building much space has been given to farming machinery. For example, there are aged Ransomes mowers, Ferguson tractors, ploughs and so forth displayed. There is also a small upstairs gallery with various rooms from a farm homestead of earlier years. All this is equally meticulously labelled and described. From the machinery room a door opens into a partly covered courtyard, and a collection of some thirty vehicles. These are mainly examples of the various County wagons built in Britain. Members will probably be aware that according to the terrain of the county, and the wetness or otherwise of the ground, variations in horse-drawn wagons developed. This display makes it very easy to distinguish between them.



In between the hand tool section and the machinery division is the curator's desk and a sales area. The curator of the day was most willing to spend time talking collecting, tools and about rural crafts and history. There is an extensive selection of printed material ranging from government publications and reports through specialised books on tools and trades to posters and some really delightful post cards. I was about to depart rather reluctantly when the curator enquired if I had seen the Canal Museum in another part of the town. His directions were easily followed, and another pleasant walk took me to Blake's Lock Museum on the Kenet Canal.

This is more of a domestic history museum, but spills over into some exhibits of canals and narrow boats, a reconstruction of a Roman site nearby, and a wonderfully restored and painted traditional gypsy ledge wagon. The brilliant colour and ornamentation of this vehicle, as well as the hours of craftsmanship which must be required to build them almost defies description. In the Roman section is a selection of tools from that era excavated near Reading, and these I was also allowed to photograph. I have now actually seen the plane illustrated in Bill Goodman's book, The History Of Woodworking Tools!

To say that Reading is worth a visit is a large understatement for those interested in tools, trades and the history of crafts. I found the people I met to be most welcoming and informative. The Museum Of Rural Life is often quoted as an authority, and having been there I can fully understand the basis of that authority.