The TOOL SHED

NUMBER 146 April 2007

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Wooden Miniature Planes
By John M. Ross

I was most interested in Greg Welsh's article on miniature planes in the *Tool Shed*, November 2006 issue, but as soon as he mentioned rosewood, he stopped! I would like to continue with a few comments on wooden miniatures illustrated from my own collection.

Wooden miniatures are frequently called "thumb" or "finger" planes. Many were used in confined spaces no thicker than ones thumb. Any plane up to five inches in length is generally called a miniature; those 3.5" to 5" long were often manufactured commercially. [see Fig.1] Those smaller and more attractive were more likely to be craftsman made, frequently to meet a special need.

Fig 1. Typical miniature bench planes

Named Miniatures

The most noticeable thing is that almost all the named makers are British. Many in my collection were acquired in the U.S., and presumably, the unsigned ones were made by American craftsmen, but only two have been identified as signed by an American maker. Both are by William Warner (New Hartford, CT - 1849-1851): a 2.5" beech compass radius smoother and a 1.75" ivory-soled, rosewood rabbet. It seems likely that the majority of thumb planes were made in the last half of the nineteenth century.

The small size was especially useful for trimming and cleaning work where the molding runs were too short or too sharply curved for the use of standard size planes as, for example, work produced by patternmakers, instrument makers, stairmakers, and for fancy paneling.

Most working miniatures were made of beech, but a larger percentage used boxwood than for regular

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April 1st- CRAFTS Meeting
Speaker: Anthony Guarino
Leather working and Jewelry making
HOST Masonic Lodge - Highbridge, NJ

CRAFTS Annual Auction - Saturday May 5th
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The TOOL SHED

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President's Corner

As I sit down to write this it is a balmy seventy–five degrees outside. Even though there is still eight inches of ice on the lake it feels like spring. I opened up the basement when I got home today and let it air out for a spell. It was great to work at the bench and have the fresh air fluttering thru the dungeon. It sure does get stale down there and my tool collection was appreciating the fresh air. I hope this is the end of the snow and cold and spring is here. Say what you may about living in New Jersey, but you have to admit we have been getting the best weather around. Up north they had snow blizzards, down south they had floods and out west was the tornados. Heck I had to plow the driveway only twice this winter. Global warming?

It has not been a slow winter as there has been plenty of opportunities to get involved with "tooling". Its amazing where the contacts appear that leads to a good tool tip. I was late for a lunch appointment with a friend and when I got there he teased me, complaining that I was probably working on some old tools in my collection. The guy at the table next to us heard that and leaned over and asked me did I collect old tools. When I responded that I did he took my card and gave it to a friend who was settling his stepfathers estate, and boy did he have some old tools in his basement. I arranged a visit and bought many tools and agreed to sell many more on eBay.

Another contact came in the form of an email from the Long Island Tool Collectors club. They were having an auction and wanted to know if I was interested in coming by. It was a great chance to purchase some good tools for eBay sales. It was amazing how fast these guys threw together their auction. Their members brought the tools to the meeting at six o'clock and by seven o'clock the auction started. There were many good box lots and fine user tools mixed in with a couple of real good ones.

Well now that spring is in the air tooling is really going to heat up. Still being actively employed I am not sure I can participate in all the tooling activities, but I am sure going to give it a try. Getting some good tools is the name of the game but the bonus is all the comradeship that happens along the way. Heck you never know who will give you a tip on something special that has not caught the eyes of the general collectors just yet. It's a fine time to swap some stories, drink some beers, and enjoy the company of other people with this crazy interest in old tools.

CRAFTS auction crew has been busy this winter preparing for the May 5th event. Greg and Steve do an amazing job that puts our club auction on par with the other commercial events. James Travis has all the pictures on the web site for your early planning and strategy pleasure. I have already seen a couple of choice tools I want to add to my collection. See you there.

(Continued from page 1)

planes; E. Preston and Sons specified all theirs were made of boxwood. Among smaller "thumbs" many were made of mahogany, satinwood, rosewood, ebony and a few from ivory or bone. Probably, quite a few of these were made for pleasure and the challenges of working with exotic materials.

Fig. 2 Variations including bullnose and a chariot

The majority of thumb planes are smoothers, rabbets, and hollows and rounds – as is the case with regular planes. Thumb smoothers generally follow the coffin-shape design. They are usually less than 1.5" wide, with up to a one inch single iron and many are compassed, radiused and round-both-ways. [Fig.2] The two smallest planes illustrated in the forefront are novelties: on the left a perfect 1 1/8" boxwood smoother by the contemporary English maker Bill Carter, and the 2" example to the right is a pencil sharpener advertising Berry &Co., nineteenth century London tool dealers.

Fig. 3 Thumb rabbets and a dado

Small planes with the iron close to the toe, are useful for close approach to a raised edge. On a full-scale these are rarely made of wood, as there is insufficient support in front of the iron; however, there are several variations with thumb planes where prolonged use is probably not great, and the use of boxwood, or a stop of brass or steel as support across the toe, can suffice. Fig.3 shows three 2 1/2 to 4" bull nose planes for close approach and in front is a solid boxwood chariot plane with a bulbous front grip, credited to Marples of Sheffield (1850 – 1950), although few were ever signed. Also included at the rear is a 3" chisel, or edge plane, where the iron projects directly at the front of the sole. Two additional variations on a smoother are also shown, a 3 7/8" Toothing plane with a sawtooth iron, and a 4" boxwood Badger plane with skewed iron extending to the left edge of the sole, useful for cleaning into right angles.

Fig. 4 Miniature hollow, round and roundover planes

Rabbets occur in large numbers, often compassed or radiused and frequently tailed. The latter give the impression of being miniature coach carriage makers' planes, though they were probably too small to be used effectively over large surface areas. Many of the bodies include steel, brass, or ivory sole. Compassed thumbs may have T-front adjusters and iron bedding angles which vary from 30 to 60 degrees. Fig.4 shows several styles including, at front center, a modern 2 5/8" tailed compass rabbet in ebony. Next to that is the rosewood and ivory rabbet by W. Warner. At the rear is a fairly good example of a 5" dado, with a full length brass depth –stop and rosewood wedges.

There are hollows and rounds galore! Both, regular, compassed and radiused; many of these are tailed. Obviously they were much needed for curved and complex moldings and are especially common in boxwood for greater durability. Many of these were used in large numbers by stairmakers and handrail makers. Fig. 4 shows compassed and tailed examples, including a 1 5/8" compassed round in ivory. To the rear are a couple of interesting rounding planes: a 4 1/2" walnut and brass corner rounder which forms a round edge instead of flat chamfers, and on the right, a 4" fully-boxed rounder was offered as an arrowmaker's plane, presumably with tongue-in-cheek, unless someone had access to a catalog by the maker, Coates of Manchester, U.K. (1858-1876).

Fig.5 illustrates various styles of violin makers' planes. The 2 1/2" beech round-both-ways with ebony wedge, is most likely the wooden version of the spoon plane. The author confesses he does have metal planes; seen here is a set of gun metal planes, three flat soled and

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three spoons, but they do have ebony wedges! There is also the violin maker's palm plane having a 1 3/8" brass body, with a maple handle at the end of the extension bar.

Fig. 5 Violinmakers thumb planes

Grooving planes seem to be fairly rare in miniature; a 5 1/2" brass faced plane with sole-fence seems right to be a drawer, [at the rear of Fig. 6]. Playing rather loosely with the definition of grooving, there are a pair of 4" compassed and tailed snipe bills; also a pair of 4 7/8" left and right side rabbets. Much more common are examples of OWT (Old Woman's Tooth) routers, the two shown, being in boxwood.

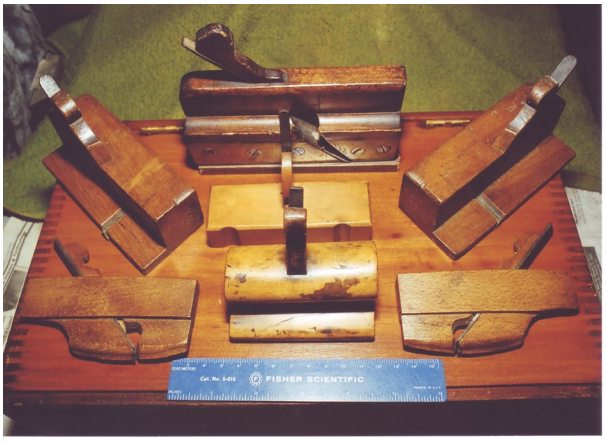


Fig. 6 Miniature drawer, side planes and routers

Including chamfer planes in this category may be questionable since most of them range in length from 4"-8," but a handsome Preston-style chamfer in ebony measures only 2", perhaps more of an art form rather than for use. Included here are two relatively rare side beads; E. Preston & Sons offered a 3" solid boxwood 1/8" side bead and an unusually early beech example by I. Roberts (London-1790-), just squeezes in at 5".

Finally, Greg Welsh referred to metal block planes being sought after by makers of bamboo fishing rods. Fig. 7 includes a 3" wooden smoother, with projecting steel sole, identified as a whip maker's plane for smoothing bamboo whip handles, which could equally serve the same purpose with bamboo fishing poles.

The author wishes to thank his son, Adrian Ross, for the accompanying photographs.

Fig. 7 Miniature chamfer, whip maker's and side beads

Letters/emails

January 29, 2007
Dear Editor,
The work that you and the writers do to put together the Tool Shed is greatly appreciated.
Please thank all of your staff for a job well done!
I'm sorry that I will not be able to attend any of your activities. However, I do look forward to getting my copy of the Tool Shed.
Again - Thanks,
Charles I. Levin
San Francisco, California

Email to: Jack Whelan, CRAFTS Treasurer
February 14, 2007

Thanks for enrolling me, and for the current and back issues of Tool Sheds (which are at least, and likely more so, as informative and well produced as the Grist Mill). I look forward to meeting you in person at a future meeting in High Bridge. Cheers, Eric

I'd like to take this opportunity to add my thanks to everyone who tirelessly works on the production of the Tool Shed. From the layout to the proofing, printing and mailing, many CRAFTS members are involved. Most of all, I'd like to thank the authors of all of the terrific articles that appear in each issue. Without you the Tool Shed could not be the publication it is today.

Dave Nowicki, Editor

The Tool Wizard

Dear Mr. Wizard,

I know that you chaps over there use the term Framing chisel to mean a heavy Firmer that does some rather hard work. But where do you draw the line between the Framing chisel and the Firmer chisel? And just to keep the pot boiling, please give me your differences between the Paring chisel and the Firmer chisel.

Thank you sir. ------ Archibald Handridge, from the Midlands

Dear Mr. Handridge,

I had a very fast answer ready for you, but I decided to test it out with some of the existing literature, and also some of the pieces being sold on eBay and at the International Auctions. Did I get a surprise!!! What a mishmash. So this answer will be much lengthier than expected, but hopefully complete.

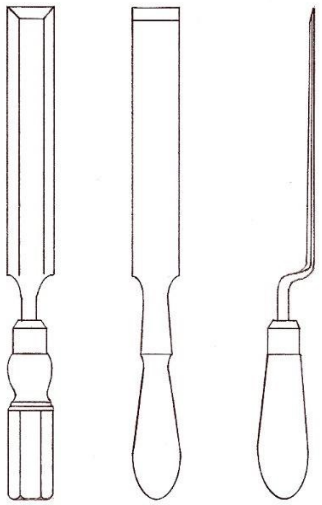
To start with, I now understand why Salaman described the Framing chisel (page 139 of his *Dictionary of Tools*) as "American". I guess many of you folks across the pond don't use this term. He further details it as "a long, strong, Firmer chisel --- used for heavy carpentry and other framing work --- with a socketed and hooped (pounding ring) handle". He also says that the cross-section of the blade can be "round backed" (convexed) or "canted backed" (bevels from each edge meeting at the center of the blade).

On the surface this should answer the first part of your inquiry, but here's the fly in the ointment: There are some chisels that have round backs or cant backs, and have metal rings at the handle end, that are listed in the manufacturer's catalogs as FIRMERS!!! In a recent catalog for high quality new chisels, the identical chisel is listed in one place as a framing chisel and elsewhere as a firmer chisel. Even the price and the model numbers of both are identical. No wonder there is confusion on this issue.

I like your definition of a framing chisel as "a heavy firmer". However, I would add to that: the fact that the blade is longer and thicker than the firmer, and it **always** has a substantial pounding ring at the end of the handle. Also, framing chisels usually have a simply-shaped handle, unlike most of the firmer chisels contoured handles.

And now to the last part of your inquiry. In researching the British maker's catalogs, all the paring chisels that I found were tanged, not socketed. They were either straight-edged or bevel-edged. To me (and Salaman) a paring chisel is one that is not hit with a mallet, but is just pushed along by hand, no matter what its width. They have thinner blades, as they don't need the strength. They are much longer, and mostly beveled at the edges. The beveling is not the critical difference, as many firmers are also beveled. Some firmers in auction catalogs are called out as paring, only because they are tanged or bevel-edged. Neither factor determines a paring chisel! It's the thinner blade in conjunction with the longer length that puts them in the paring category.

SKETCH NO. 1 PARING CHISELS



Bevel Edge Tanged Brass Ferrule	Straight Edge Socketed	Bevel Edge Tanged Brass Ferrule Bent Shank

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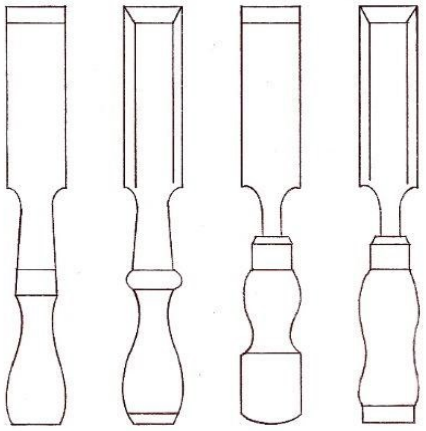
So, to wind it up:

1) **Paring chisels** have long, thin blades (7”-10”long and 3/32”-1/8” thick at the tip). The English ones are tanged, and the American ones are mostly tanged, but some socketed. The majority of all of them are bevel-edged. A few are even “trowel shanked” or “bent shanked”. All have solid wood handles **without** leather or metal top ends, but the tanged type have ferrules (usually brass) at the inner end of the handle. See Sketch No.1.

2) **Firmer chisels** have thicker and shorter blades

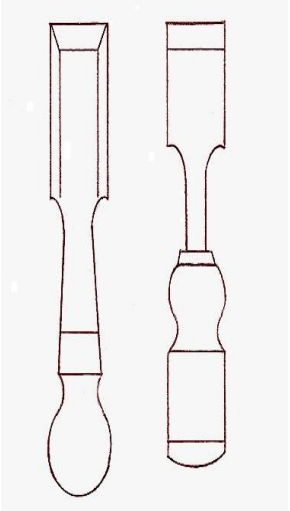
SKETCH NO. 2 FIRMER CHISELS



Straight edge Socketed	Bevel Edge Socketed Leather End	Straight Edge Tanged Cap Brass Ferrule	Bevel Edge Tanged Brass Ferrule Metal End Ring

(2-1/2”to 6-1/2” long and 1/8”- 3/16” thick at the tip, with blades 2-1/2” to 3 1/2” usually called butt chisels). Some are tanged, some socketed, some bevel-edged, and some straight-edged. Some have a leather cap at the end of the handle and some have just a solid wood handle. A few have metal rings at the end of the handle. See Sketches No. 2 and No. 3.

SKETCH NO. 3 BUTT CHISELS

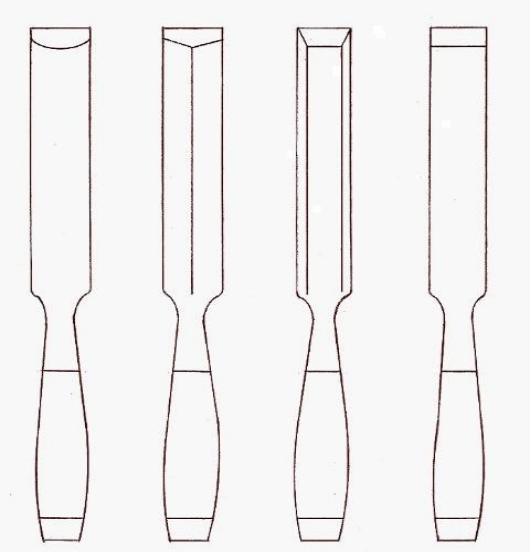


Bevel Edge Socketed	Straight Edge Tanged

3) **Framing chisels** have longer, even thicker blades (around 8” long and 1/4”- 5/16” thick at the tip) socketed only, with heavy pounding rings and usually simple uncontoured handles. See Sketch No. 4.

With all this categorizing, there are still are a few factors that might be misleading: 1) a badly worn-down blade will show a greater than original thickness at the tip (because chisel blades taper in thickness), and 2) a replacement handle may belong in a different category (some paring chisels have leather-capped firmer replacement handles) and 3) the wider the chisel gets, the closer the other dimensions get to the top of their range, and **maybe even above**. But after you see enough of them, you will be able to pick out the differences almost at first glance.

SKETCH NO. 4 FRAMING CHISELS



Round or Oval Back Socketed Iron Pounding Ring	Cant or Bevel Back Socketed Iron Pounding Ring	Bevel Edge Socketed Iron Pounding Ring	Straight Edge Socketed Iron Pounding Ring

Notes:

1)Length dimensions of the blades do not include the socket or tang portions.

2) The sketches show variations of handle types common to the blade type, but not necessarily **required** for that type.

3) 36 chisels, of all varieties and all makers, were measured closely for this article. Chisels from Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, England, and of course the USA, were used for this analysis.

The Tool Wizard.

Electrolytic Rust Removal

By John M. Whelan

An article in *TOOL SHED,* No.38, Feb.1987, described this method of rust removal (passing a direct electric current into the rusted object), and gave directions for building a simple power source for the procedure. I've been an exponent of de-rusting this way for twenty years, and offer this update. Today, on the internet, you can read reports of de-rusting everything from small tools to cannons and bigger, and many variations of procedure. Times have changed. There is no longer a need to make your own supply; there are now readily accessible alternatives.

First, let's consider the pros and cons. Rust can be removed by filing, scraping, sanding, or similar abrasive methods. In inexperienced hands, this leaves a scar as objectionable as the rust. Wire wheeling, if you learn how to do it well, provides an alternative to the electrolytic procedure. Herb Kean is the champion of this method. His objection to the current method is primarily a difference in the appearance created by the two methods.

Wire wheeling does not remove the black deposits from depressions on the surface, which are normally seen in old tools, not being abraded away by handling. Electrolytic cleaning does remove some of this: it gets at all surfaces. Thus, wire wheeling is more in keeping with the appearance of well-maintained tools.

If I wanted to remove oxidation stains from a valuable tool, I'd turn it over to Herb. (He could dust off a fly's wings with a brass wire brush and have it buzz off.)

For badly rusted items, I use electrolysis. This method doesn't work miracles. A heavily rusted object usually has deep pits under the rust, and these will remain. Don't expect a shiny new surface, even if the tool is not pitted. A well-maintained steel tool normally has a dull appearance due to surface oxidation with a black oxide, which serves to protect the surface from further rusting. Electro-cleaning preserves and augments this (Fig.5 shows an example of this).

REQUIREMENTS:

POWER SUPPLIES. Most of us have in a closet somewhere a collection of transformers which are plugged into a wall to recharge the batteries of cordless appliances. (They're called "wall warts.") Find one with a label stating an output of six (or higher) volts DC (don't try one which says AC). This will work just fine for small jobs; big ones, too, if you are patient enough. (One is seen in Fig.1, which outputs 7.5 v at 115 ma.) You will have to find a way to access the plus and minus leads (it seems everybody uses a different plug). You can always cut the plug off and then determine the polarity of the two leads (a cheap multimeter works).

Figure 1

If you have an auto battery charger, this is even better. One which can select a six volt output (rather than 12), is preferred; the higher voltage should be used with dilute electrolyte to avoid power supply overload with large tools. The red lead is positive, the black negative. Don't use a charger which has a safety feature, preventing output into a completely dead battery- it will shut down unless it sees more than a volt or so on hookup. If you can't find either type of supply, surplus outfits (such as American Science and Surplus), list lots of cheap alternatives. A charged automotive battery may be used as a temporary source; (hazard: don't short it!!). A set of short leads with alligator clips on each end greatly simplifies setting up the treatment bath.

ELECTROLYTE: The bath is water with something added to improve the conduction of electricity. The earliest references call for caustic soda (sodium hydroxide). This has little advantage over the milder washing soda (sodium carbonate) which is safer and easier to work with (although still a bit rough on your hands). A supermarket may have it as Arm and Hammer "Super Washing Soda," or you can get it at a swimming pool supply store. Use enough to get a slow stream of tiny bubbles from the tool while you have the power on; a teaspoon per pint should be enough (less, for a 12 volt supply). More bubbles do not mean faster de-rusting - it's just electrolyzing water to hydrogen and oxygen. Electrolyte doesn't

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get used up, and can be used until you are unhappy with the brown color. Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) from the kitchen cabinet will work after a fashion, but it is much less effective.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

CONTAINER: A stainless steel container simplifies the setup by providing a means of connecting to the power supply. An old stainless kitchen pot will do. Fig.1 shows a stainless tank of the type used by hospitals, available from surplus. A molding plane iron is being treated with a "wall wart" power supply. Fig.2 shows the iron before, Fig.3 after four hours of treatment.

Larger tools call for ingenuity in finding a tank. One made of wood and lined with a polyethylene sheet is seen in Fig.4. A non-metallic container needs an electrically conductive anode to get the current into the bath. In this case a sheet of stainless steel is used as the anode. This setup is being used to treat a hopelessly rusted saw blade (the worst I could find, to show limits of what may be expected). The treated saw blade is seen in Fig.5, showing a coating of the protective "black rust."

A plastic garbage container fitted with a large stainless sheet serves for bulky objects; one which is kept set up outdoors is seen in Fig.6. It is protected from freezing in winter, and is fed by an oversized power supply.

ANODE: Stainless steel is my preference. Iron or steel works, but is corroded rapidly: the current is trying to electroplate iron onto the tool and succeeds only in dropping it into the bath as a brown gunk. It has been used and reported to be effective (the internet describes a huge object being de-rusted, using a swimming pool as a container). Stainless will corrode slowly, especially in areas too close to the tool being treated - but the tank of Fig.1 has been in use for over a decade and shows no sign of deterioration. It is reported that some toxic chromium can be introduced into the electrolyte, which suggests that it should be disposed of in a safe manner. Graphite has been suggested and works, but poses other problems.

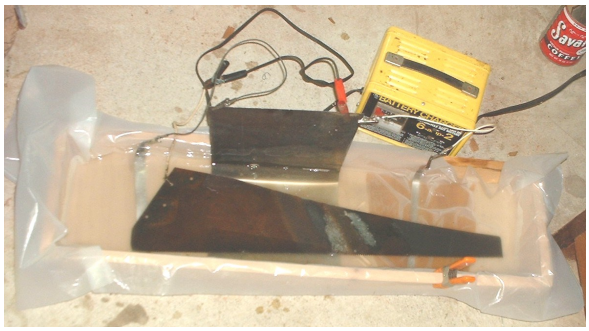

Figure 4.

Figure 5.

PROCEDURE: The tool or part is freed of loose rust and dirt, and it helps to de-grease it with a solvent or soap and water. If the container is non-metallic, a sheet of stainless steel (preferably of an area greater than or equal to the tool area) is also positioned in the container. To avoid a short circuit, there must be no contact of the tool with the stainless while power is on. If the tank is stainless, support the tool by suspending it or by resting it on a plastic grid or equivalent insulator with minimum coverage of the tool surface.

Parts of the tool which are farthest from the anode are de-rusted more slowly: the current prefers the shortest path to the tool. Positioning is not critical, but good placement saves treatment time. In setups like Fig.1, time is saved by turning the tool over once during treatment. If one part of the tool is too close to the anode, the stainless tends to erode at that point.

Connect the positive lead from the power supply to the stainless steel. Do not make this contact under the electrolyte surface; it will be corroded. Connect the negative lead to the tool. The usual alligator clamp requires scraping a clean site on the tool. A sewing needle supported by a simple jig (as seen in Fig.1), is a convenient way to make the contact to a small tool such as a plane iron; it requires no tool scraping, and minimizes diversion of current.

When the setup is completed, add the electrolyte and turn on the power. Action is indicated by the appearance of tiny bubbles on the tool surface; if these are not seen, check the connections. These bubbles are oxygen on the stainless, hydrogen on the tool. It is not a good idea to cover the tank, as there would be a remote chance of a small explosion in a very long treatment.

Let the current continue for an hour or so, longer if you use a small power supply. Let it run as long as you like; there will be no adverse effects. Shut off

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power before moving the tool, remove it from the bath and scrub away the black residue with brass wool (or equivalent) and running water. If rust removal is not complete, return the tool to the bath, otherwise dry carefully (a heat gun is recommended), and oil it (a clean surface rusts fast).

Figure 6.

CAUTIONS: Paint is subject to removal if at all permeable; as bubbles formed beneath the surface peel it off. (See "Localized Treatment" below for coping with such tools.) Disassembly of tool parts and individual treatment is usually needed to ensure electrical continuity. The electrolyte used is not the kindest environment for wood parts, but is no worse than some commonly used bleaching methods. With suitable precautions, bare wood should not suffer, but it is preferable to remove it to ensure all metal areas are accessible.

LOCALIZED TREATMENT: This is useful to protect painted areas or to cope with unwieldy objects. Figure 7 shows a smooth plane with only the sole exposed to the current. The plane rests on a folded paper towel which lines a stainless tray, and kept saturated with electrolyte.

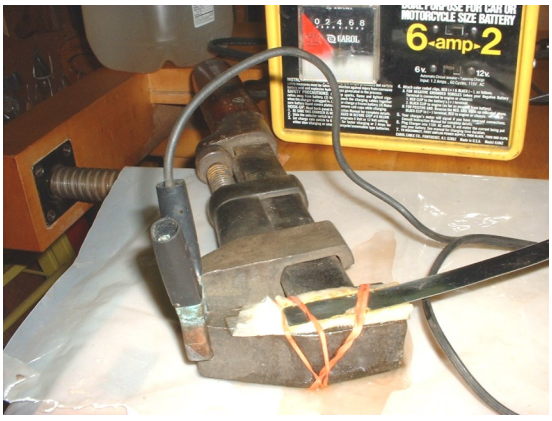


Figure 8.

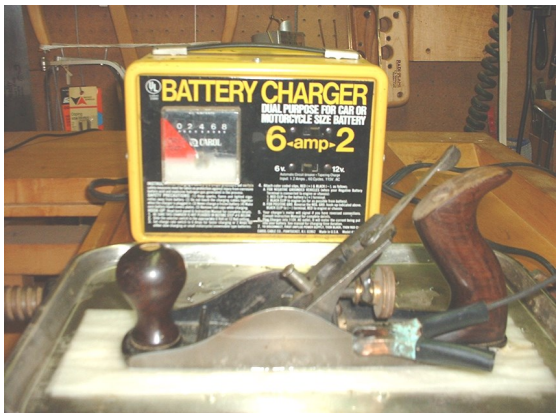


Figure 7.

Localized de-rusting of specific areas is practical, but needs periodic attention. Fig.8 shows a wrench being treated in the area around the maker's mark. A pad of paper toweling covers the desired area, and a stainless electrode is held above it. The pad should be kept saturated by frequent replenishment of the electrolyte. The result is seen in Fig.9. This technique would be useful in treating a rust spot on a machine tool surface too large for a bath, although I have found no need to try it out.

OTHER METALS

Brass does not respond well to this method of cleaning, although some users have reported satisfaction. It may be that some of the alloys behave better than others. I expect the electrolyte tries to remove zinc from the alloy. My results have usually been additional staining of the brass. Bronze responded well in one try.

HOW IT WORKS: Iron rusts, in the presence of moisture, by taking up oxygen from the air. The oxygen accepts electrons from the iron atoms, leaving them with a positive charge of plus three and forming red rust, iron oxide. In favorable conditions, the charge transfer is less, with formation of the black oxide, magnetite. This adheres to iron, replacing the original shiny surface with a darker color, and tends

Figure 9.

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)
to protect it from further rusting.

In the electrolyte bath, negative electrons fed into the tool from the power supply are accepted by positively charged iron in the red rust. Ideally, this stops with formation of magnetite (with an average iron charge of 8/3), as an adherent coating of black iron oxide. Complete charge transfer reduces the rust back to iron metal, but this seems not to stay with the tool, but forms part of the black material washed away after electrolysis.

The black oxide which forms naturally on well-maintained iron surfaces, resists combination with oxygen to form red rust; it's the "good" rust. It adheres well and is harder than iron. It is also more resistant to conversion to iron metal than is red rust, which explains why it remains after electrolytic cleaning.

I am grateful to Ted Kinsey, who reported application of this method to tools (EAIA: *The Chronicle*, Vol.37, No.2: June, 1984).

An excellent review covering much of the above information (with minor differences of opinion), was published by Kevin Chamberlain in *Tool Chest*, No. 63: Feb. 2002 (the quarterly journal of the Hand Tool Preservation Association of Australia). It is available on the internet at *http://www.htpaa.org.au/*.

Coming Crafts Auction Sparklers

Top - Stanley 289 & unusual rule with brass calipers
Middle - Metallic Plane Co. bench plane & beech Ultimatum
Bottom - Goosewing with 17" blade & E.W. Carpenter crowm molder

Red Finger Blues

By Phil Lothrop

I almost always have one finger, maybe two, bandaged. We go through Band-Aids in this house like they came in a tin box that only cost thirty-nine cents.

The wire-wheel, mounted on a bench grinder, is a standard fixture in most tool collector's workshops. It can do several things for you: clean rust off metal, give you emphysema from the dust, put out your eye, and give you Red-Finger, the tool collector's badge of courage.

It's already too late to think about wearing gloves when you are in the midst of shoving your latest tool-find into the wheel. Let's hope you at least put on eye protection. Dust collection or a mask is a good idea, too.

At some point the wire wheel will grab the work and throw it at your big toe, and your finger will jam into the whirling wheel… uh-oh! Red-Finger!

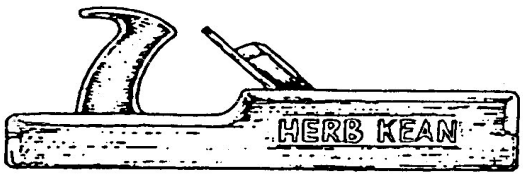
Another source of the Red-Finger is at the flea market where you found someone who is selling a lot of old tools. Usually there's a box full of the wings, guts, and feathers of someone's work-bench. You rush to this box and start to dig; you might find the missing fence from that #278 Stanley Rabbet plane.

Little do you suspect, that lurking just below the surface, is an old, fifth-grade pencil compass… the one with the Dixon Ticonderoga #2 pencil stub and the long, sharp, steel point: Shazzaam! You're harpooned! Another Red-Finger!

Then, there's this: you buy an old blacksmith's leg-vise weighing about sixty pounds, but you can handle it. On the long trek to the car you find other stuff too good to pass-up. Now, you're overloaded and trying to shift the weight. Should have closed that vise all the way; the jaw slides closed, oops!… you guessed it: Red-Finger!

Last week I went for an eye check-up. During the exam I noticed that the doctor had a band-aid on his right index finger. I said, "excuse me Doctor, are you an antique tool collector?"

Looking a little surprised, he said, "No, what gives you that idea…?"



Kean Kuttin's

WHEN IT RAINS IT POURS

I'm sure everyone has experienced a day like the title of this piece. I have tried to forget it over the years, but it pops up every now and then. It's getting so that memories of that day only bring laughs to Doris and me, so I guess it's time to tell about it.

It started off with a flat tire in the driveway. It must have happened overnight, because I didn't remember seeing it the day before. Unfortunately it was Sunday and most all the mechanic sections of the gas stations were closed. I had one of those mini tire spares that you can't travel fast on, and even then only for a short distance. But I figured I'd hit something open before the so-called mileage limit came for the spare.

You can't imagine how many gas stations I pulled into before we finally found one where the kid pumping agreed to plug the tire. I felt that my luck was now going to change. Doris worried a little that the pimply-faced kid didn't know what he was doing, but I reassured her that I supervised the whole thing. (That only made her worry a little more).

I am happy to say that the tire held up fine, but we hadn't gone 100 miles before the air conditioning stopped. It was probably the hottest day in the century. When I opened the hood I could tell that it was not a broken belt or anything visible, so we continued on and started looking for a station with a mechanic-- again. Doris was for taking a motel room with air conditioning and traveling the next day, when the stations were all open. That went against my grain so we just sweat it out, and I mean sweat.

As we were almost about to give up in the heat of the afternoon, a country station loomed up with 3 or 4 locals sitting around outside. Hallelujah, we could now come back into the land of the living. I got ready for the report that a new compressor was needed and they would have to order it in the morning. I envisioned all our spare cash going south. But no! It was only a fuse for $2.95 and "whatever else I felt like giving him". The shock was almost too much for me, and I felt that this was the turning point for nothing but good luck from here on. Again -- not so!

Back in those days I had pickers scattered around the countryside, and I would call first to be sure that they had something for me. This one had a rosewood plow plane that by his description made my mouth water. Pickers usually saved the really good stuff for me, because the locals would never pay up for anything good. So I had no fear that it wouldn't be there. Wrong again! Not only wasn't the picker there, but his wife told me that he had already sold the plane to another out-of-state dealer. I understood why he took a powder at the time we were to meet. I got a little more verbal than I should have. As his wife was not at fault, Doris brought me back to reality.

I was so aggravated that my stomach acted up and I couldn't enjoy dinner. Nothing Doris said helped. In fact I even got angry with her for trying to explain what might have happened with the picker. We went to bed early that night in a crummy motel.

The next morning, I resolved to put everything behind me and start over, as it was a gorgeous day. There was no restaurant near the motel so we started off to have breakfast at the first place we saw. I'm guessing that no one "ate out" in that wilderness, as there were no restaurants for miles. Finally a general store, but no breakfast. Doris bought a loaf of bread, some cheese and some bologna and I pigged it down in the front seat of the car. Needless to say, my stomach problems resurfaced. Whoa unto me!

Finally, we arrived at one of the shops that I usually did quite well at. However, I wasn't in a very good mood, and I guess it showed. The dealer and I ended up in an argument and I went away empty handed. After going only a few miles down the road, I stopped, got out and blew off some steam. I got back in the car a new man, and Doris was proud. It was certainly going to get better now. How could it get any worse? --- Easy!!

As we pulled out from a restaurant in a resort town in Vermont, I heard a cop's siren. Hard to believe it was for me as I hadn't even got up to speed yet. Yep, it was for me for backing out into a highway. I never heard of such a law, but in Vermont who could say. Doris warned me not to let it out on the cop or we would be spending the night in jail. I followed her advice and was able to drive away with only a ticket, that I could pay for by mail.

(Continued on page 12)

Continued from page 11

About now, I realized that this day was either punishment for something in the past that I couldn't remember, or statistically the edge of the spectrum of badness. I suggested that we throw in the towel and go home. Doris had her share of all this unpleasantness and agreed. So we turned around, and decided to go back via a different route.

At this point of most stories, the good fairies come in and everything changes. And the way home turns out to be glorious. Well, not so again! But I think you have heard enough, so I will reserve the way home stories for another day.

You know, I thought I got over this whole mishmash, but my stomach is starting to bother me again just reliving it. Yes sir, when it rains it pours!

Herb Kean Named Museum of Early Trades & Crafts' 2007 Craftsman of the Year

Madison, NJ –The Board of Trustees of The Museum of Early Trades & Crafts has announced Herb Kean as Craftsman of the Year for 2007. Kean is the sixth New Jersey resident to be recognized by the Museum for this annual award since 2002.

Kean will be honored at a reception on **Sunday, May 20, from 3 PM to 5 PM** at the Museum in Madison. Kean has been a long time member, dedicated volunteer and knowledgeable curatorial consultant of the Museum. In addition to various public programs, lectures and classes, Kean led the Museum's Cub Scout program for three years.

Kean is recognized by numerous institutions as an authority on antique tool restoration. He is the author of four books and over one hundred and fifty published articles, including nine pages in the encyclopedia *World Book of Knowledge*. He has also made television appearances on *The History Channel* and *The Home & Garden Channel*.

The Craftsman of the Year award was established in 2002 as a means to honor New Jerseyans who have, in their own unique ways, significantly advanced the Museum's mission to encourage an understanding and appreciation of the influence of America's past on our current lives by presenting and interpreting the history, culture and lifeways of the ordinary people of New Jersey.

TOOL EVENTS

March 30 - 31 Tool Show and International Antique Tool Auction
Radisson Inn Camp Hill, PA
www.FineToolJ.com/Browns

April 1st - CRAFTS Meeting 1PM HOST Masonic Lodge
Highbridge, NJ

April 20 - 21 Martin Donnelly Antique Tool Auction
Holiday Inn Everett Tpke. Nashua, NH
www.mjdtools.com

CRAFTS 2007 Auction Date Change

New Date - Saturday, May 5th, 2007
Flemington Elks Club Rt. 31 Flemington, NJ
just north of the Flemington circle (intersection with Route 202).
Preview at 7:30 am , Auction begins at 9:30am
Tailgating begins when the first dealer arrives

May 9th - 12th EAIA National meeting
New Orleans, La

WANT ADS

Must sell my entire tool collection. Hundreds of tools in good clean condition. Call Art Gatti---973-374-0554---for appointment.

Wanted: Fence, arms, washers & nuts for a Union Factory plow, No. 244. Body holes for threads are 13/16 in. diameter; and 4 7/8 inches apart, center line to center line. Must be in G+ or better condition. Contact: JB Cox, 6802 Nesbitt Pl, McLean, VA 22101/ (703) 821-2931.
jay-bee-cox@verizon.net

Need help disposing of your tools or home items? Entire or partial house clean-outs available. Call Steve Zluky, (908)534-2710.

Seeking: McKinnon axe of Rockaway, NJ made between 1845 and 1905. Please call Stephen at (732) 682-8236.

Wanted: Foot powered band saw for collection and to demonstrate. Need not be complete. Have other foot powered machinery for possible trade. Ed Hobbs
(919) 828-2754, hobbsed@portbridge.com

Wanted: Napanoch Axes and other items from Napanoch, NY
Robert Arra (845) 647-1213, homefixer@hvc.rr.com