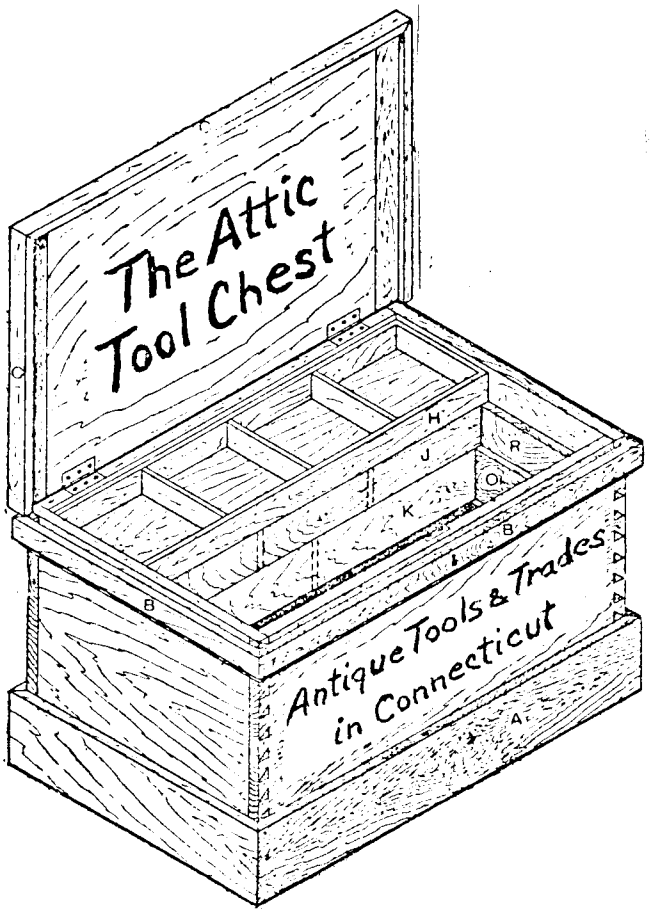

ISSUE 13 DECEMBER 1977

ATTIC DUST

October Meeting at Kent

In preparation for our visit to the Sloan-Stanley Museum, Frank Bawden, who made all the arrangements, had purchased 100 tickets. At the end of the meeting we had three tickets left over, but three pecple had not required tickets. That means that 100 people braved the excellent weather, the beautiful Fall foliage, and the mild temperatures to journey to Kent for our meeting. However, the weatherman was correct; during lunch on the grass, at least 4 or 5 drops of rain fell, while the sun shone on undiscouraged.

During the business part of the meeting, we were faced with electing officers and directors for the next two year term. Frank Bawden retired as Treasurer, which meant a double loss since we lost Elsie too. We thank them both for a very successful 6-year effort to keep our finances and memberships in proper order. We also lost from the Governing Board of Directors: Dave Huntington, Stan Leavitt, and Joe Link; who were automatically retired after two terms. Bob Carlson's 2-year term as Honorary Director also expired. Pete Coope's nominating committee's recommended replacements were duly elected. Consequently, we have: Bill Downes, President; Harvey Jeacock, Vice-President; Pete Coope, Secretary; Dwight Burritt, Treasurer; and Frank Dorion, Jack Gorlin, and Doug Hayes, new Directors, with George Campbell, Ginnie Coope and Tom Elliott the continuing Directors.

After the election we tried to determine who among us were anxious to participate as panel members in future meetings. Nobody was anxious. In fact there was a marked reluctance to pose as knowledgeable in wood identification, tool cleaning, or the use of coachmaker's tools. Nevertheless, we ended up with a good list of people to involve in panels. Perhaps we should strike a distinctive ATTIC medal for bravery, to be awarded to those who survive the gruelling test of participation in a panel.

Tom Elliott has been forced to retire as Program Committee Chairman by his success as an architect. It seems that his workload has become uncomfortably large. We are certainly sorry to lose his energetic contributions to our meeting arrangements; however, he remains a Director.

The biggest unknown in planning our Kent meeting was not knowing how many of us would bring things for the Flea Market. Some of us, no doubt, had little to bring; and others didn't have time to look in all their boxes and decide what they were willing to part with. Despite these obstacles, all our 12 or so cafeteria-size tables were loaded shortly after 1:30, on schedule. As planned, wives manned the barricades; husbands deserted, and were not seen again until they ran out of money. The bitterest lesson learned was that while you brought in your tools and loaded the table, who knows what gems were being acquired by those with no such chores. What can we do about that? Perhaps we should line everybody up and blow a whistle.

Anyone who was at all chilly got warmed up at the Bull's Bridge Glass

Works, while watching molten glass being blown and decorated. By then it was cloudy and time to head home, which we did.

Directors Meeting of 11 December

Jack and Harriet Gorlin were hosts to the officers and directors at their home in Upper Stepney, officially Easton, but Monroe for mail. The very cold day was at least sunny, and the fire in the living room fireplace kept things cosy. The main topic for discussion was the program and place for our Spring meeting. Until various matters are looked into, it's not possible to be definite about plans, but at this time it looks like the meeting will be at South Glastonbury on Saturday April 29. We are considering showing two movies on coopering and displaying member's coopering tools, plus a What'sit session, and a demonstration of tool cleaning techniques.

One conclusion reached was that we'd have a biennial auction next Fall, probably at Chester; and a biennial flea market the following Fall.

Tentativey we are thinking of a well prepared session on wood identification and uses as the theme of a joint meeting with Active and TNT, the Spring of 1979, possibly at Wethersfield.

Publications

The economics of publishing material such as reprints of tool catalogs were discussed at the Directors Meeting. Ken Roberts and Tom Elliott are helping in the matter. However, as Harvey Jeacock has pointed out, catalogs are not the only things we can reprint. He suggests that when you read something that would be interesting to the rest of us, you send it, or a copy, to him or to Bill Downes for consideration as something for the Attic Tool Chest, or a separate publication. In this regard, Ginnie Coope mentioned that the Mystic Seaport does not worry about copying copyrighted material that's over 50 years old.

Dues

For most of us 1978 dues are now due. Surprisingly, some of us are already paid up for 1978. Dues of $5.00 should be sent to Dwight Burritt, 229 Olde Stage Road, Glastonbury, Ct. 06033

New Members

Welcome to seven new members, bringing the total to 126.

Frank B. Bushey, 36 Banbury Lane, Bloomfield, Ct.06002
Alvin Hill, Box 14, Ashford, Ct.06278
Robert M. and Anne Soule, 39 Marion St., W.Haven, Ct.06516
Harry and Jeanette Holmes, Cornwall Bridge, Ct.06754
Charles and Eleanor Schultz, 40 Drake Rd., Scarsdale, N.Y.10583
John D. Mulford, 165 Center Rd., Easton, Ct.06612
Frank and Terry Hunter, 23 Timberlane Drive, Shelton, Ct.06484

Editor's Note

Some of you may remember that I have used colored burlap on pegboard or plywood as a background for displaying tools. To my surprise, I discovered last summer that where iron tools touched the burlap they had rusted. This suggests that the burlap absorbed the summer moisture and kept the iron damp to the point of rusting. I am trying out a patch of transparent plastic tape as a protective measure behind such tools

45th Anniversary Meeting of E.A.I.A.

On May 25,26, and 27, at Albany, there will be a much different type of E.A.I.A. meeting than usual. There will be seminars, exhibitions of members' collections, demonstrations of tools, and a swap session. ATTIC members Bob Sutter and Bill Downes are acting as managers for the demonstrations and exhibitions, respectively. Active E.A.I.A. members should give some thought to what they might do for this 45th anniversary meeting. Potentially, it could be a great show

THE SCYTHE RIFLE

From Material Supplied by Dr.Robert Craig

Cheshire, Conn.

The Christian Science Monitor of January 26, 1959 contained an article from which the following material was obtained. The author, a Philip Brady, depended heavily on excerpts from various sources, as you will see. He explained that while researching something at the the Essex Institute at Salem, Mass. he ran into this: "Every few rods the mowers would stop to put a better edge on their scythes, which is called 'whetting', and is done by means of a sanded stick, called a rifle. In olden days, every farmer made his own rifles. He would whittle a stick into the shape he wished, then rub tallow on it, and then sprinkle over it a fine sand. When this wore off, all that was needed was more grease and sand. Today (1911) these rifles are made of emery and are sold for a small sum at the general stores. Nearly all the old grocery stores sold rifle sand." This whetted Brady's curiosity and the rest of the article is an account of his search for more information on rifles. In the Oxford Dictionary he found that in Old French "riffle is a stick, a billet of wood." However in the Norman dialect, rifle is used in the same sense as above.

From the Narragansett Historical Register for 1882 he found that "The day for getting rifle sand (better known as Beach Pond Day) was the last Saturday of June." (Beach Pond is on Route 165 at the border between Connecticut and Rhode Island.) Further, "The present generation of farmer-boys would hardly know how to use the rifle unless told. It had small grooves cut lengthwise, and these were filled with tallow, and when plunged into the sand quite a good rifle was made. The sand had to be renewed often however. We never heard whether the tallow from the rifle, which would be lodged on the edge of the scythe, made it slip through the grass easier."

Brady was informed by the curator of one museum of which he made inquiries that rifles are still being manufactured (as of 1959) by a New Hampshire company, for use mainly in New England. "The wood is covered with glue upon which an abrasive mixture is deposited. Various types of rifles are used in wood and metal working, and some farmers still use them for scythe sharpening."

In June of 1829 the Franklin Institute took note of a new patent: "For an improved rifle for sharpening scythes and other edges tools ... Emery of a suitable size is to be fixed upon properly shaped strips of wood, by means of a mixture of oil paint and varnish..." Brady says, "Meanwhile, if you locate a tapered piece of wood 'up attic' that's a foot or so long, probably having small grooves cut lengthwise, and with a handle shaped at one end, don't chuck it out. The chances are good that it's a hand-whittled scythe rifle." Bob Craig wonders whether or not anyone has a scythe rifle, or has ever seen one.

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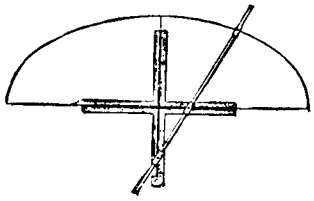
WHAT'S A TRAMMEL?

If you were asked, What's a trammel?, you'd probably explain that it's a bar of wood, or metal, with two gadgets that slide on the bar and have points at right angles to the bar. And then if the questioner still looked interested, which is doubtful, you'd explain that the thing was used like a compass to scribe circles. You'd be only partly right, because you'd have described a beam compass. However, you'd have some justification, because you could produce a number of catalogs that show "Trammel Points", obviously used as compass points.

over

The trammel as a word dates back to at least 1725, according to the Oxford Dictionary, and is defined as , "An instrument for describing ellipses, consisting of a cross with two grooves at right angles, in which slide pins carrying a beam or ruler with a pencil; also applied to the beam compass." Most of us have probably never seen a trammel, only the points.

We should remember that ellipses were used in construction jobs in various ways. For instance, we see houses with beautiful oval windows in the gable ends of the house. Also, the "Victorians" used the ellipse to make oval picture frames.



The figure shows the "cross with two grooves" mentioned above, and the pins that slide in the grooves, and that are adjustable along the bar. The pins are what we know as the trammel points. Note that there is a third point that holds a pencil. The ellipse is drawn by moving the bar while keeping two of the points in the grooves of the cross. In the figure, only half of the ellipse has been drawn, because only the lower T of the cross has been used.

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Tamil pearl driller.

Excerpts from MODERN PRACTICAL JOINERY by George Ellis; first edition 1902 - seventh edition 1928; Published by B. T. Batsford, London

Chisels.

The Paring Chisel, f. 1, p. 21, is the typical tool of the chisel class. It is used for shaping and preparing relatively long plane surfaces, more particularly in the direction of the grain of the wood, and as it is invariably manipulated by steady and sustained pressure, as distinguished from the intermittent force used with other chisels, its handle is shaped to enable the hand to exercise great control over its movements. The better forms have bevelled edges as shown, which reduces the friction when propelling the tool in a groove or trench. They are made from $\frac{1}{4}$ in. to 2 in. in width, advancing by $\frac{1}{8}$ in. to 1 in., thereafter by $\frac{1}{4}$ in.; length from 9 in. to 21 in. Sizes below $\frac{5}{8}$ in., only bevelled to order.

The Firmer Chisel, f. 2, is, as its name implies, a chisel of firmer or stiffer substance than the paring chisel. It is a general utility tool, being used indifferently for short paring work, or for light mortising, and it is handled in a manner to be suitable either for steady pressure, or for the percussions of the mallet. It may be had with several forms of handles, but the round-swell shape shown is the best. These chisels are made in the same widths as the paring length from 4 in. to 8 in. Fig. 3 is a socket firmer, for heavy work; the handle fits inside the steel socket instead of being secured by an iron tang driven into the handle as in other forms.

The Pocket Chisel, f. 4, is a wide, short, and very thin chisel made entirely of steel, used for cutting the ends of pocket pieces in pulley stiles of common sash frames. They advance in width by $\frac{1}{4}$ in. from $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. to $2\frac{1}{2}$ in.

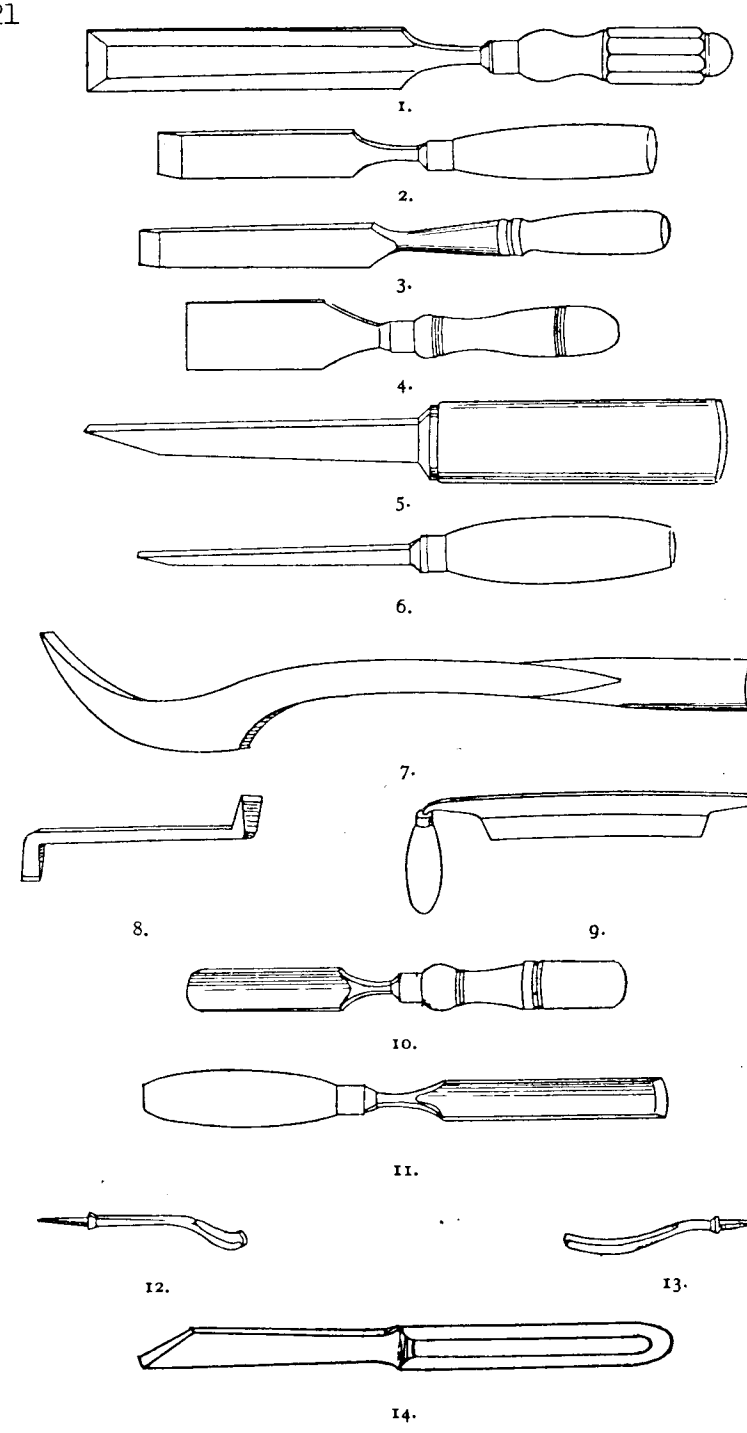
The Mortise Chisel, f. 5, is made abnormally thick to prevent bending when levering the core out of mortises. As its name implies, it is solely used for producing mortises. Widths from $\frac{1}{8}$ in. to $\frac{5}{8}$ in., advancing by $\frac{1}{8}$ in.

The Sash Chisel, f. 6, is a lighter form of the same with a nearly parallel stem, used chiefly for the narrow mortises required in sash bars.

The Swan's Neck, or lock-mortise chisel, f. 7, is used for cutting across the grain at the bottom of a deep mortise. It is only made in three sizes, *viz.*, $\frac{3}{8}$ in., $\frac{7}{16}$ in., and $\frac{5}{8}$ in., and is but little used now, such mortise being now made by means of twist bits. See p. 26.

The Drawer Lock Chisel, f. 8, is made entirely of steel. Its purpose is to cut mortises in confined spaces such as drawer openings. It has a cutting edge at each end, the edges lying in transverse directions.

P. 21



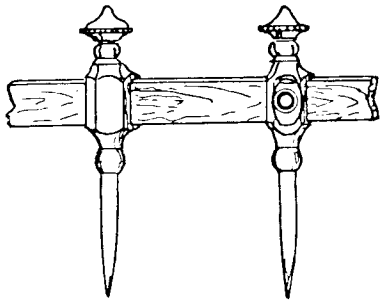
The Draw Knife, f. 9, p. 21, is a double-handed paring chisel of considerable width. They vary in width (or length) from 4 in. to 12 in. This tool was formerly much used for the rapid reduction of stuff to gauge, a labour that is now generally performed by sawing or planing machines.

Gouges.—These may be described as curved-faced chisels. They are used and made in similar sizes to firmer and paring chisels, the resulting face of the cut being circular instead of flat. Fig. 10 shows a firmer gouge, and f. 11 a paring or scribing gouge, so-called because it is used to scribe the moulded shoulder of framing, &c. When a gouge of either type is curved in its length with a short bend near the cutting end, as f. 12, it is termed a Bent Gouge, and if curved throughout its length, as f. 13, a Curved Gouge. These are chiefly used by joiners in cutting the moulded surfaces of shaped work, such as handrail wreaths and the like.

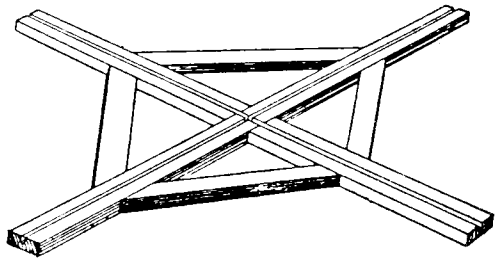
The Plugging Chisel, f. 14, is a bar of low-tempered steel forged into an octagon-shaped handle at one end, and drawn out to a flat obtuse-angled point at the other. This part should be parallel on the front edge and not more than $\frac{5}{16}$ in. thick, and be slightly thinner at the back. It should also be wider at the point than at the hilt. It is used for cutting mortises in the joints of brickwork to receive wood plugs.

The Beam Compasses, f. 1, p. 25, are a pair of steel pointers fixed into brass bushes or boxes, which have slots in them through which a slender bar of hard-wood is passed. The boxes have milled-edged set screws on the head, by means of which they can be secured at any part of the bar. They are used thus, as dividers, for spacing off distances too long for the spring dividers. One of the boxes has also a pencil socket at the side, and by means of this, circles can be described with the other pointer as a centre, of any radius within the length of the rod. Sometimes three legs are used on the bar in connection with the Trammel, f. 2, p. 25, by means of which elliptic curves can be drawn.

The Trammel, f. 2, is a light-braced frame with two arms at right angles to each other, containing shallow grooves in which two of the pointers move, whilst the third describes the curve. The points are usually driven into a soft slip of wood, easily fitting the grooves, but even with this assistance it is difficult to draw the line evenly, and it may be better accomplished by aid of the square shown at p. 82.



1. Beam Compasses.



2. Trammel Frame.

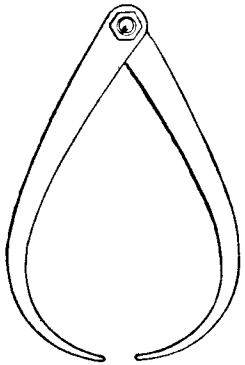
The Callipers, f. 2 below, are used for ascertaining the dimensions of curved solids that cannot easily be measured with the rule.

The Marking Knife and Point is used for setting out dimensions when greater accuracy is desirable than can be obtained with the lead pencil also for "cutting in," or "striking" shoulders. The severance of the fibres of the wood by the knife gives a cleaner shoulder than can be obtained from the saw alone. Care should be taken when sharpening, to treat it like a chisel with a basil on one side only, and that the right-hand side, when using.

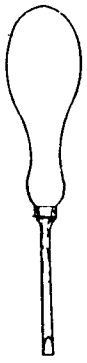
Marking Knife.

BORING TOOLS.

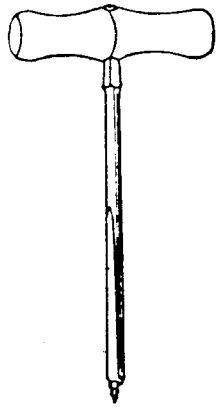
The Bradawl, f. 3, is the simplest of these, consisting of a steel bar



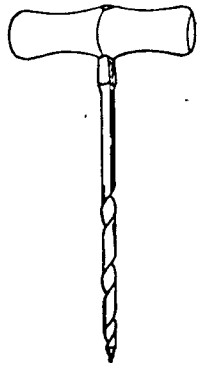
2. Callipers.



3. Bradawl.



4. Shell Gimlet.



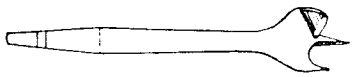
5. Twist Gimlet.

tanged at one end to fix in the handle, and ground to a double-wedge edge at the other. It should taper slightly from the cutting edge to the haft; if the taper is reversed the wood will split in boring. It can be driven either by the hammer, or by hand pressure accompanied by a twisting motion.

GIMLETS are small boring tools driven by a revolving hand pressure. The **Shell Gimlet**, f. 4, p. 25, has a stem ground out in part of its length to form two cutting edges at the sides, and the point is threaded to assist the tool into the wood; this is the most serviceable form, for notwithstanding that the **Twist Gimlet**, f. 5, p. 25, bores quicker, it more readily splits the wood, as it is almost invariably tapered from the handle to the point, whilst the shell is tapered in the reverse direction.

1. Russell-Jennings Screw Bit.

2. Whitehouse Unbreakable Screw Bit.

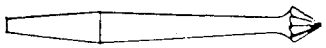


3. Centre Bit.

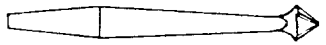
4. Nose Bit.

5. Spoon Bit.

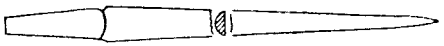
6. Iron Countersink.



7. Brass Countersink.

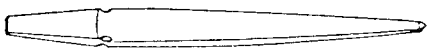


8. Wood Countersink.

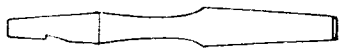


9. Brass Rimer.

10. Wood Rimer.



11. Steel Rimer.

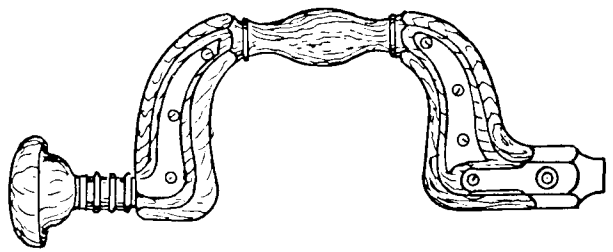


12. Screw-driver Bit.

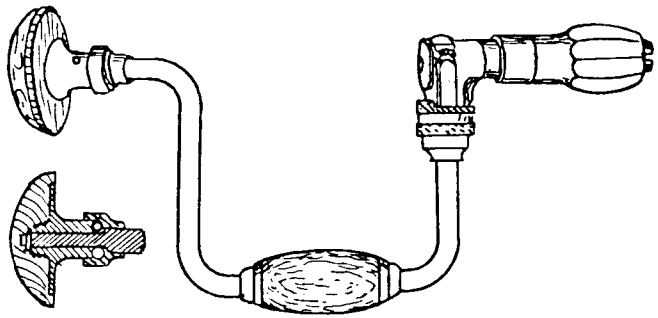
13. Forstener-Auger Bit.

Brace and Bits.—The Brace, f. 1 & 2, p. 27, is merely the handle or stock for various "bits" or cutters, &c., which are placed in it, and revolved continuously, and with high speed; at the same time great pressure can be brought on them by resting the head of the brace against the breast. Fig. 1 shows the English type, a wood stock strengthened with brass plates. Fig. 2 shows the American type with steel stock, wood head-piece revolving on ball-bearings, as shown in the section, and having a ratchet arrangement to change the continuous, to an intermittent motion—useful at times when boring in confined positions. Figs. 1 & 2, p. 26, are twist gimlet bits, f. 1 being most suitable for boring in the direction of the grain and f. 2 for boring *across* it. These are made in sets from $\frac{1}{4}$ in. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, and of various lengths from the 4-in. dowel bit, to the 21-in. sash bit.

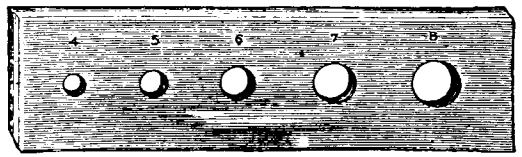
The Centre Bit, f. 3, is used for boring across grain; sizes from $\frac{1}{8}$ in. to 2 in. **The Nose Bit**, f. 4, for boring across or along the grain. **The Spoon or Shell Bit**, f. 5, for boring across grain only, is made for producing holes from $\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter up to $\frac{1}{2}$ in. **The Counter Sinks**, f. 6, 7, & 8, are for dishing holes in iron, brass, and wood respectively; they are made from $\frac{3}{8}$ in. to $\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter.



1. English Brace.



2. American Brace.



3. Dowel Plate.

The Rimers, f. 9, 10, & 11, are for enlarging holes in similar substances.

The Screw-driver Bit, f. 12, is a common form, but Messrs. Melhuish supply a hand-forged bar steel screw-driver bit, 5 in. to 8. in. long, for use in the brace. These are much stronger than the common bits usually supplied with the stock. There are sundry other appliances used in connection with the brace, such as drills for boring holes in metal, collars or gauges for the bits (see p. 71), lengthening bars, and expansion bits, also the centerless bits shown on p. 26.

The Draw Knife, f. 9, p. 21, is a double-handed paring chisel of considerable width. They vary in width (or length) from 4 in. to 12 in. This tool was formerly much used for the rapid reduction of stuff to gauge, a labour that is now generally performed by sawing or planing machines.

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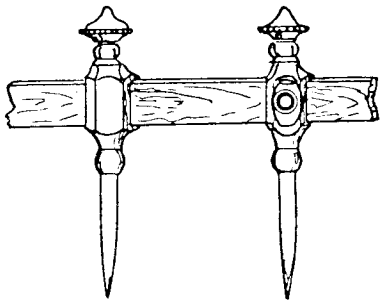
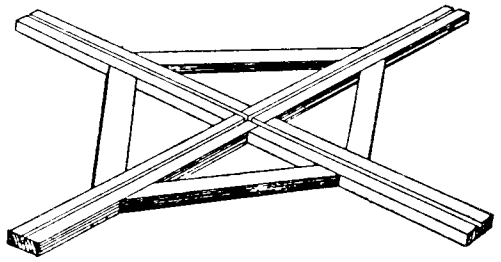


1. Beam Compasses.



2. Trammel Frame.

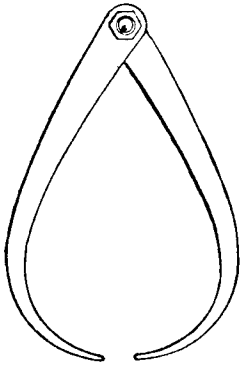
The Callipers, f. 2 below, are used for ascertaining the dimensions of curved solids that cannot easily be measured with the rule.

The Marking Knife and Point is used for setting out dimensions when greater accuracy is desirable than can be obtained with the lead pencil also for "cutting in," or "striking" shoulders. The severance of the fibres of the wood by the knife gives a cleaner shoulder than can be obtained from the saw alone. Care should be taken when sharpening, to treat it like a chisel with a basil on one side only, and that the right-hand side, when using.

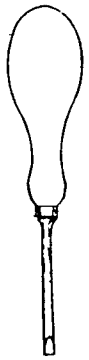
Marking Knife.

BORING TOOLS.

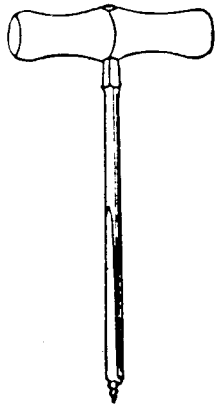
The Bradawl, f. 3, is the simplest of these, consisting of a steel bar



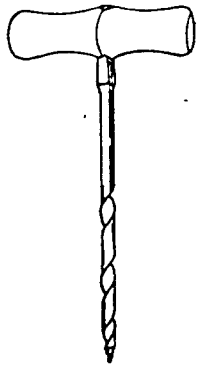
2. Callipers.



3. Bradawl.



4. Shell Gimlet.



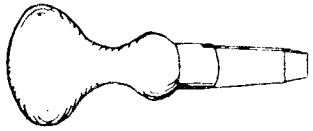
5. Twist Gimlet.

The Forstener-Auger Bit, f. 13, p. 26, differs from all other kinds of bit in that it is guided by its periphery instead of a central point. It can be made to bore any part of a circle in addition to the whole circle. It does not slip aside at knots, and finishes a hole with a clean flat bottom. Patterns, cusping and the like can be bored cleanly and a hole made at any angle with the surface. The bit can be used through a pattern block or simply guided to the work with the finger and thumb holding the shank close to the cutting flange. It must be entered slowly, but the cut once made the boring is continued much more quickly than with a centre bit.

The Dowel Plate, f. 3, p. 27, is a tempered steel plate with several holes drilled square through it, the exact size of corresponding twist bits, its object being to produce dowels of true cylindric shape filling the bit holes accurately. The plate is preferably mounted in a block of hardwood about 3 in. thick, with holes bored through it slightly larger than those in the plate. These act as guides to the pins, keeping them perpendicular to the plate. A slight burr, or projection should exist, at one side of each hole in the plate, to score a groove in the dowel, for the purpose of providing an escape for excess glue, which would otherwise burst the sides of the socket when the dowel was driven. Dowels should be cleft with the chisel, not sawn, to ensure perfectly straight grain, but they must be roughly rounded with the chisel before driving through the plate to finish.

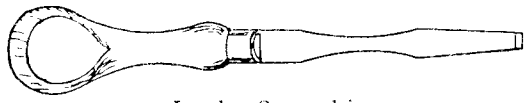
MISCELLANEOUS AND TESTING TOOLS.

Screw-drivers, f. 1, 2, & 3 hereunder, are of various shapes and sizes according to the work they are required to do. Fig. 1 shows a stumpy blade with a wide



1. Bench Screw-driver.

2. Cabinet Screw-driver.



3. London Screw-driver.

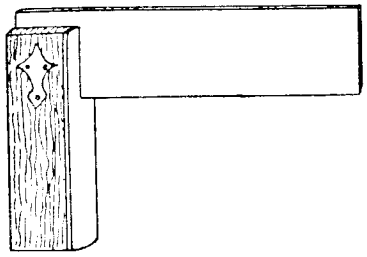
handle, the whole measuring about 5 in.; this is used for turning plane iron screws. Fig. 2 is an oval-handled spindle shank screw-driver for bench and other light work. These are called Cabinet screw-drivers by the tool dealers, and are made with blades from 3 in. to 12 in. long.

Fig. 3, the flat-handle or "London" screw-driver, is a tool suited for heavier work. The larger sizes have a hole drilled through the blade for the insertion of a steel bar to increase the leverage. They are made in length of blade from 4 in. to 22 in. A screw-driver should have a long drawn-out "point." A short bevel will cause the tool to slip out of the cut of a screw. To increase the "grip" file the sides of the bevel slightly hollow.

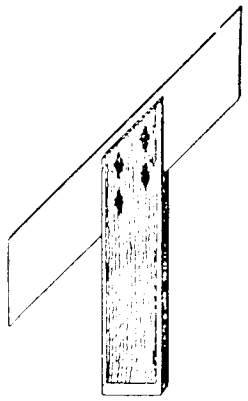
The Joiner's Square, f. 1, p. 29, is a tool used in the production of right angles, either in the drawing of lines or in the planing up of stuff; in the latter

SQUARES AND BEVELS.

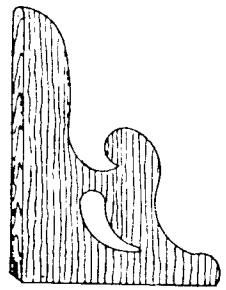
generation the smaller size squares are used, viz., 3, 4, or 6 in. These are termed "Trying Squares;" the larger ones with 9, 12, or 18 in. blades are simply "Squares." As the ultimate accuracy of the "setting out" of framing depends greatly on the truthfulness of the squared edges, care should be taken to select a square that is true, *i.e.*, whose blade is exactly at 90 deg. with its stock. The



1. Trying Square.



2. Mitre Square.

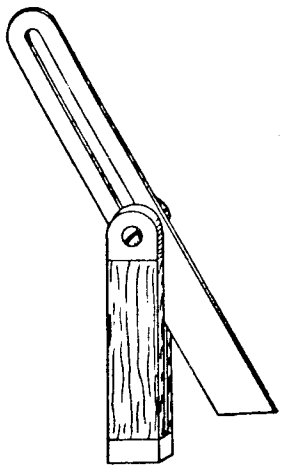


3. Set or Corner Square.

method of ascertaining this is to rest the stock against the straight edge of a piece of stuff, and make a fine mark at each end of the edge of the blade; then reverse the stock, and if the edge of the blade again coincides with the line, the square is true, if not, half the difference will be the amount of the error. *Note.*—Both edges should be tried, and if necessary corrected by filing.

The Mitre Square, f. 2, has its blade set at an angle of 45 deg. with the edge of the stock. It is used similarly to the try square, but for producing lines and edges at angles of 45 deg.

The Set Square, f. 3, has two of its edges at right angles with each other, and is used for ascertaining the "squareness" of internal angles, and in fitting work together. It should be made of a piece of dry mahogany or beech about ¼ in. thick; 14 in. high, and 8 in. wide, the grain running lengthwise, and the bottom edge tongued with an ebony slip.



Bevel.