



Threads of Conservation

Social fabric • Fabric and place • Conserving fabric

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Chris was in private practice from 1976 until 2004 in Warrnambool. He has had a variety of experience in investigation and design for bridges, below ground structures, and wide-span buildings in steel, timber and reinforced concrete in Europe, Australasia and the Pacific. He gained his Master's degree at the Weald & Downland Museum of Buildings, Singleton, in 2006, after retirement. He is the author of several international papers and articles and has contributed to various works on conservation for English Heritage, Donhead, Elsevier, and Global Books (New York). His recent work on French Fixings is currently with the editors of Lost Arts Press in Kentucky.

He has assisted in the Longford Academy APT conservation courses, Tasmania, between 2011 and 2015, and in the Principles of Conservation MA course at Melbourne University. He is a registered mentor for Australia ICOMOS.

Revisiting the Ewbank nail as an aid to dating construction elements

Paper Abstract

Recent experience has shown that the potential of the Ewbank nail, in its various wrought and cut forms, is still being under-utilised by heritage practitioners both here and in New Zealand. The Ewbank is by far the most common nail type found in Australasia for buildings between 1838 and 1870. This paper identifies critical morphological features for each type to address the problems of identification in the light of further recent finds from the Cordes and Co range. It presents a time-line for each type of nail and a short list of identification features of the various nails.

The paper examines the look-alikes produced by Cordes' competitors, many of which show up regularly in Australia, and it presents some tentative dates for these discoveries. The post 1870 changes in usage favouring the American cut nail, and the earlier adoption of the British cut clasp nail, will be clarified and their characteristic features explained.

The paper should be of practical use to all professions involved in heritage work and should extend the current database of nail types by demonstrating some of the yet unidentified types, which can be expected to be found in Australasia.