

It is with sadness that we inform you that Eric Rawlings passed away on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and we say farewell to a fine craftsman and tool collector, who made many friends both in this country and abroad, whilst following his passion for tool collecting.

As a boy, he was gifted with a number of artistic talents and at school, he was approached by the headmaster advising him to apply for a place at art-college but he never got that opportunity, despite his ability to be able to sketch anything, without copying and from memory.

He loved music and always wanted to learn to play the piano but the outbreak of the second world-war put paid to any such ambition, as did the cost of the tuition, so he decided to take lessons in the trumpet at an early age and by the time he was 11, he was playing lead trumpet in dance bands locally in the Wellingborough District, appearing in the paper and on the advertisement bills. He continued to receive lessons and later, played through the dance band era regularly playing with some of the leading dance bands of the day on lead trumpet. As the years passed, he could sometimes be found practicing his lip pressures on his mouthpiece in his workshop - "just keeping my hand in boy" he would say. Apparently, spit is the best lubrication for the valves, I understand.

He married his wife Audrey in 1949 and they shared 67 happy years together.

He always wanted to be a cabinet maker too but in those days, one had to pay for an apprenticeship and the cost just could not be afforded after the war so instead, he became an apprentice painter and decorator with Beeby & Cox Ltd., after which, he joined the local firm, Arthur Saunders Ltd.

During his early working life, he used his lunchtimes and two pencils, to sketch the gardens and large houses in which he worked.

Later on, he set up his own business as Eric Rawlings Decorators and was involved in a large variety of commercial and domestic contracts, building up a wide client base across the county. His small business went on to become widely known for a variety of specialist finishes such as gilding, marbling, graining, rag rolling and decorative finishes to the highest standard. Doing this kind of work, involved special tools and techniques, which led his interests into traditional methods and tools. His desire to be a cabinet maker was still there and in his spare time, he would repair and refinish antique furniture for some clients, to give them the highest level of finish to their antique and would receive telephone calls from previous customers when he was well into his eighties, to polish something, or to repair a piece of marquetry or writing box.

He attended evening college to study graining and marbling technique and showed each technique in a number of test pieces that he perfected.

Over the years, he has collected, sold, restored and used, some of the finest tools of the carpentry and allied trades and his collection is complemented by being stored in beautiful chests.

His love of the various woods, led him to become a fine restorer and collector of period tools, wooden chests and antique furniture.

One thing sticks in my mind. He helped me polish a little jewellery box that I made in his workshop and today, it sits proudly on our dressing table, curved edges, boxwood inlay, small biscuit joints, ebony stringing and polished, book matched, burr walnut veneer for the outer lid and sides. Pleasure indeed, to watch the inner tray sink slowly into place, as the air inside passes the tray. My father was a very skilled and clever man.

As many of you may remember, he could always be found at the café, or just chatting to his friends in the hall at the David Stanley auctions, or maybe doing a deal somewhere!

A musician, a pencil artist, decorating specialist and fine craftsman.

**Eric Rawlings**, born 4<sup>th</sup> June 1929, died 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016, leaves his wife Audrey, son Stuart and his wife, two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.