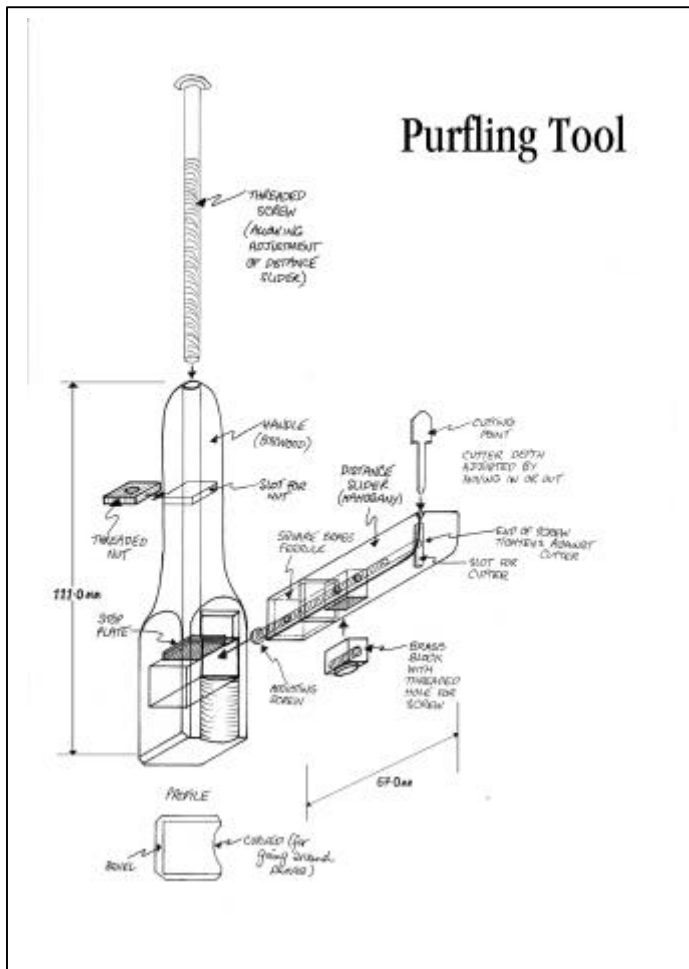


A simple purfling tool.

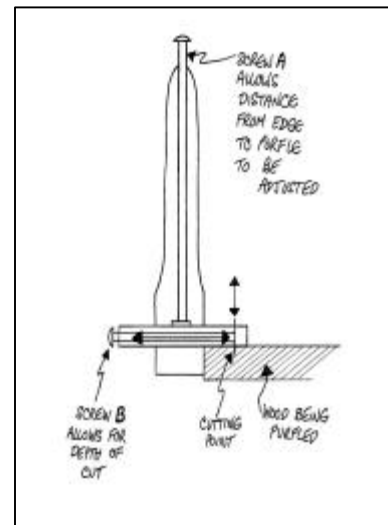
Wilbert Garvin

To purfle is to decorate the border or edge of, for example, a table, violin etc. Purfling is normally used to refer to the decorative strip of inlay on the upper surface or belly of a violin.

The old pipe-makers often used purfling on the bellows, its function being to cover the stitching on the outside of the clappers with a decorative inlay. This is clearly demonstrated in the bellows of the pastoral pipes described in 2.05 – see picture r37 etc. Here the inlay is double, consisting of a strip of boxwood and a strip of ebony.



Some years ago, a fiddle-maker called David (Davy) Mawhinney from Dunadry outside Antrim town and well known to Ken and myself (we visited him regularly), made me a couple of purfling tools for decorating bellows. I had given him some boxwood and he used some of it to make the tools. Unfortunately Davy passed away a few years ago.



I show here the details of the structure of the purfling tool as Davy constructed it. It is relatively straightforward to make.

It is designed so that the distance between the edge of the work and the purfle, and the depth of cut can be adjusted. The two screws hold the distance slider and the cutting point firmly in place when the tool is in use. One track is cut carefully and then the second track. The wood between the tracks is then carefully removed using a fine chisel. See attached photograph 'Purfling tool assembled.jpg.'