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WOOD MARK TURN UP

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Recently, for the purpose of study, research and to collect materials, I spent 5 weeks in the East.

On the way over, I had a lift with a young man, and he was making good time.

About 130 km out of Cocklebidy he came to an abrupt halt - a disintegrated front wheel bearing. Dismantling, using a cold chisel revealed a horrible mess. It was 1.00 am and the driver who had no mechanical knowledge proposed I go for help as he wouldn't leave his car and possessions.

Having broken down out here several times before I was sceptical of any help being available and suggested we sleep on it.

Morning came and I thought to make a replacement wheel bearing of wood. So, I selected a suitable sapling, cut Vs to bend it and wrapped it around and oiled and tightened it up (the disc brakes had to be removed because of wonky alignment) NO GOOD!

Five kilometres later at maximum of fifteen kilometres an hour - it had had it.

So, then I looked for something better and chose a stunted eucalypt. From this, I cut dry heart wood and not having a lathe with me I fashioned eight orange segment shaped pieces to be the bearing. After much time fitting and shaping and refitting these, I had a precise enough looking wooden bearing that would absorb oil and had more chance of supporting the cars weight.

After some re-adjusting we increased speed to forty km/ph and made the remaining fifty-five kms into Madura. I left him there hoping to find a friendly truckie to carry his car to Adelaide. And so, on a trip partly intended to research Aussie timbers, I learned something about wood without even leaving the state.

Notwithstanding the shaky beginning, the trip was all in all a great success.