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# Classic Gear: The Triple E Pin Hinge

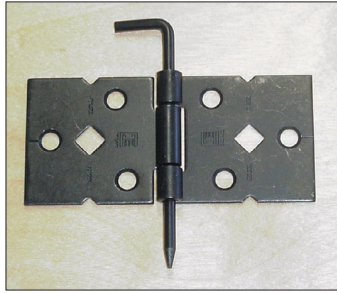
Rob Halliday takes a nostalgic but instructive look back at the tools that have shaped the industry . . .

Theatre is essentially a transient industry. Even the most epic, stunning-looking scenery will at some point be in pieces, whether to fit on the truck, get through the dock door, be hidden in the wings after a scene change or stored longer term by a rep theatre. And it will have to be put together with as little fuss - and as quickly - as possible.

Stage carpenters have many techniques for allowing scenery to be joined and pulled apart quickly. Throwing a cleat allows flats to be tied together quickly. Where a little more time is available, a pin hinge provides a more solid join. It's one of those ideas that's been around forever: take a hinge, pull out the pin, attach one of the hinge plates to each piece of scenery. Push the pin slots together, insert a pin. Job done.

For years, theatres made their own pin hinges, buying standard back flap hinges then making two saw cuts to remove the fixed pin and create some clearance. A replacement pin, with a top loop for easy handling, would be fashioned using coat hangers or purchased from suppliers such as Hall Stage. It worked - but it wasn't ideal, giving a less than perfect join and involving a lot of effort all round.

But everyone just lived with it - until 1984. David Edelstein had been working as technical director at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre. In the early morning hours of a big fit-up, the theatre ran out of pin hinges; everything came to a stop while someone hacked apart a batch of hinges. While waiting, Edelstein came to wonder if every theatre in the country was doing the same thing and, if so, whether there might be a market for a purpose-made version . . .



Left: The triple E Pin Hinge.

The result was the Edelstein Engineering Pin Hinge. Edelstein improved just about everything: he added a centre line notch for positioning the hinges to pencil marks; alignment marks for bending the flaps in half or cutting them down; a central square bolt hole in addition to the screw holes - these offset to avoid splitting the timber; a black finish; high quality engineering giving a precise alignment between the flaps - and a thick

steel pin with a sharpened end for easy fitting, a right-angled top and - as he puts it - "enough strength that you can belt it with a hammer to bring two pieces of warped scenery together."

The new Pin Hinge was named Product of the Year on launch at ABTT 1984. The US market demanded a brand name: the hinge's marking, two Es for 'Edelstein Engineering' with 'England' stamped underneath gave 'TripleE', and so the company gained the name that continues to this day.

Wood is no longer the material of choice for all scenic construction, and Edelstein notes that the use of steel and other materials means that the Pin Hinge is not used as extensively as it was a decade ago. Nonetheless, the company still sells around 50,000 a year around the world. It's a relatively small part of TripleE's business - but it's the product that started the company, and they have no plans to stop making it any time soon.

>>> [www.3-eee.com/pin\\_hinge.htm](http://www.3-eee.com/pin_hinge.htm)

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