

# THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

- SECOND EDITION 1996 -

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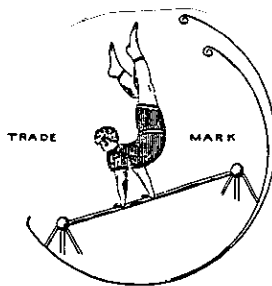
I trust everyone enjoyed the wonderful hot summer as I did. So many wonderful things to see and do and never enough time!

My summer was interrupted on June 28 when I was featured on a TV program, *PERSONAL FX*. It was quite an interesting experience that began one month prior when I received a phone call from the show's producer. He indicated that he was interested in featuring my blow torch collection on an antique and collectable show and after discussing terms and dates, I agreed to do the show. Part of the deal included allowing me to bring, on air, two friends or neighbors that would have one of their antiques appraised. If you've watched the program before, you'll know the routine of having appraisers, located in the New York studio and doing on-air appraisals as part of the program.

The show studio is located in New York City and is connected to the selected cities via satellite. The program is aired twice daily at 9 am and 12 noon and is not pre filmed, but aired live! The producer sets up various cities around the country, works with local antique dealers, antique directories, and general word-of-mouth to track down all types of collections. When a city and collectors are lined up, a New York City camera crew with producer are sent out on location. Arrangements are made to hire local satellite trucks and sound equipment.

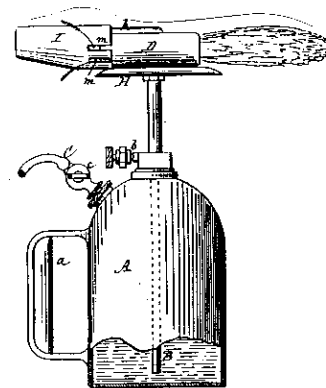
My program was scheduled for 12 noon EST or 9 am PST. The satellite truck was parked in front of my house at 6 am, and for the next 2 + hours crews set up their equipment throughout my house and yard. Everyone, including me and my 2 guests, were wired for sound such that with our single earphone we could hear the program hosts that were located in the NY City studio, and with our lapel mikes, they could hear us and obviously see us via the TV cameras and monitors. Those individuals in my home and off camera could not only watch the live action but also watch the program on my TV.

It was all very well organized and professionally executed. The program was one hour in duration and I would guess that my total on-camera time was approximately 5 minutes broken into 3 segments. On camera, I described briefly how one would light off a torch and I also featured and somewhat described 5 torches that were earlier selected by the producer. All in all, it was a most interesting and rewarding experience. I did hear from a few of you that saw the program as well as a couple of new torch collectors that contacted me through the studio. Considering the 23,000,000 viewing audience, I expected to hear from many more new torch collectors. ♦♦♦



Turner Brass Works trade-mark, April 12, 1910

Speaking of new members, eight have joined our torch group since the last newsletter. New members include: **Don DeMay** from New York, **Arnie DeYoung** from Washington (I met at Arnie at the Packwood, WA flea market. The sleepy little town of Packwood, with a population of ~500, grows to over 10,000 during the Labor Day weekend flea market), **Walter Gretkowski** from Pennsylvania, **Mike Jones** from Idaho, **Ralph Larson** from Pennsylvania, **Bill Link** from Indiana, **Norm Ricci** from Arizona, and **Dave Rees** from the United Kingdom. Dave is known as "Dave the Lamp" because the English refer to blow torches as blow lamps. He has been a collector for about 25 years and has approximately 900 torches, mostly European as you would have guessed. **Welcome aboard everyone!!!** ♦♦♦



J. Sherry torch, patented November 20, 1894

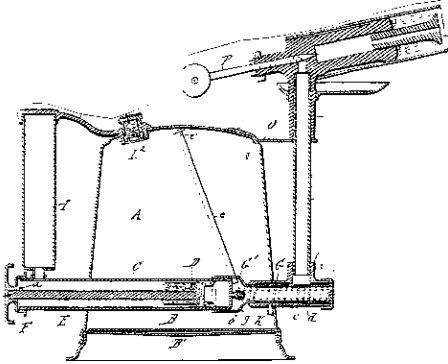
I always enjoy hearing from other torch collectors, especially when there is a unique torch involved. I recently heard from **Graham Stubbs** from California with the following information and enclosed sketch of a **Hoskins Blast Lamp** that he found in a Southern California antique shop:

"Regarding the **Hoskins Blast Lamp**, the only identification [on the lamp] are the words "Hoskins Blast Lamp" embossed on the cast bracket which holds the pump to the top of the fuel reservoir. The fact that "lamp" is used suggests to me an English origin (like English blow lamp). The fuel reservoir is 6½ inches high and 3 inches in diameter; it looks like a turned brass tube with a bronze casting at either end. The nozzle has a 90 degree turn at the very end; the flame could be directed sideways or upwards, something like a laboratory heat source. The appearance of the fittings and the unusually strong construction all suggest to me a very early dated torch."

I agree with Graham on the European origin. Perhaps our distinguished English collector, Dave the Lamp, could enlighten us on the subject?

Graham also has in his collection, the actual model of a **Wellington Torch** that was submitted with patent #343,682, dated June 15, 1886, (see enclosed). To my

knowledge, the Wellington model was the only torch model ever submitted to the Washington Patent office. Prior to ~ 1904, models were accepted and sometimes required with patent submittal. Graham submitted the following information regarding the Wellington model:



H. Wellington torch, patented June 15, 1886

"I was fortunate enough to acquire the original US Patent Office model of the Wellington patent at the Brimfield, MA antique show a couple of years ago. The patent office stored the models for years and then recently disposed of them by auction and sale. There was a tag attached to the model with a ribbon, and on the tag was glued a copy of the patent. The model is full size and some of the brass parts appear to be hand made. Of particular interest may be the reference to an earlier Wellington patent, with the date of September 4, 1883 stamped on the filler cover and on the strut holding the handle. The term "paint breamers" is penciled on the card."

Graham, for your info, **Richard Duling** from Ohio has, in his collection, a **Doane & Wellington** torch that bears the same patent date of Sept. 4, 1883, and from the appearance of the photo, it looks very much like the patent sketch. ♦♦♦

I really enjoy reading all of the correspondence sent in by collectors. I would like to share with you a few excerpts from Dave the Lamp, our English connection:

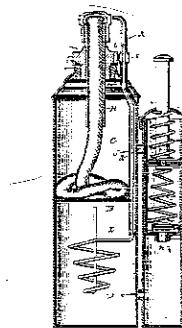
"How did I get started collecting lamps? Well in 1970 I built a stone fireplace in our lounge, they were all the rage in those days. I had left little niches in the stonework so that my wife, Joan, could place ornaments for display. Most of these were brass from my Grandfather's house. One niche remained with no ornament to fill, so after a month I decided to clean Granddad's lamp that turned out to be a petrol Max Sievert made in Sweden. Bearing in mind that all the other ornaments had been polished by my grandmother and then my mother, for over 65 years, you can imagine my wife's reaction to this. "How dare you bring that filthy thing into our lounge" was a

mild translation of her comment. Nevertheless, after weeks of polishing the lamp, it won a place of honor in our fireplace.

Uncovering writing and trade marks on the lamp, which had been hidden under grime and soot for about 60 years gave me a thrill. Also, similar to you, I could appreciate the skill, ingenuity, quality of materials, and the production that existed so many years ago. From then on I was "hooked". When I display my lamps, my response to the public's amazement upon seeing such a variety of shapes, sizes, and uses is to reply, "I just sit here and watch all of the eccentrics walking by who do not collect blowlamps."

I would imagine that I have about 200 doubles in the garage with no room for the car! They are fairly common to the UK, but most of the blow lamp members have probably never heard of them. Sometimes I have to buy up to 20 lamps just to acquire the 2 or 3 that I do not have. Still, as my Grandfather once said, "Buy all you can son, they're not making them anymore." He was talking about land. I couldn't afford the land, but I could afford blowlamps!!!"

Dave also submitted a copy of an 1895 tools and supplies catalog from the **Chas. A. Strelinger & Co.** of Detroit, MI and is enclosed for your reading pleasure. Page 403 has one of the earliest looking torches I have ever seen. The crude design looks like something from the mid 1800's with the decorative top piece. ♦♦♦



E.G. Brandt torch, patented February 28, 1911

My research continues on early torch patents with the help from a number of collector members. I am finding that I almost enjoy the research as much as I do the torch collecting. To date, the earliest torch related patent known to me is the enclosed patent #265,253 dated October 3, 1882 and is described by the inventor as a paint burner with new and useful improvements. There appears to be no reference to a manufacturer and no model was submitted. It's difficult to determine the size of the paint burner since no dimensions are listed, however, considering the handle configuration, I would guess it to be a quart capacity. Also,

considering the application as a paint burner, the user would have been inconvenienced fueling it up frequently if the size were a pint or less. As you read the inventors description, you will find a most unusual configuration in as much as there are two air pumps. One is described as being operated by one's thumb of the same hand that holds the burner. The Operator would merely push the pump plunger down repeatedly with the thumb for increased pressure. The inventor also included a valve in the top of the fuel tank that has a mouth piece! The operator would, with mouth piece in mouth, press down slightly to open the valve and then blow air into the tank. Incredible or what? It's difficult to understand why the inventor went to the trouble to provide the mouthpiece pump and then state that this method is not as convenient as the thumb pump. Can you imagine trying to use the mouthpiece that would be fairly hot, and covered with corrosion, dirt, and burnt paint? Not to mention that dirt, paint dust, etc. would enter the mouthpiece hole and probably clog it up, or the debris would enter the fuel, settle to the bottom and end up clogging the needle valve in the burner head. Could it be for that reason that we do not see that feature on any production torches? If the inventor ever had the paint burner manufactured, it would be a real collectors dream. I would be interested in hearing from anyone that has a style similar to this patent in their collection.

♦♦♦

Various sources of information on patents list very little information on the particular patent, at times only the category, inventor, and/or item name. As I indicated in my last newsletter, blow torches were and are referred to by many names, i.e.: torches, blolamps, etc. Every so often I will take a chance on a name only, and order a patent from the Washington DC Patent Office, only to receive something other than blow torch related. The enclosed patent # 233,039 dated October 5, 1880 is one of those other-than-blow torch-related patents. I did not include the inventor's write-up and description as he rambles on for 3 full pages in describing his musket shaped **night procession torch**. It seems that there was a need for a musket shaped torch to provide adequate lighting while executing the military manual of arms. Obviously this has nothing to do with blow torches, but I thought you all would get a laugh from another sort of torch!

♦♦♦

Thanks again to all of you that have written with torch information. I continue to seek out the 1800's patents, so you can help by closely examining your earlier torches for patent dates. I would appreciate any information and I will certainly share it with everyone.

Take care and happy torch hunting. ☺

Ron

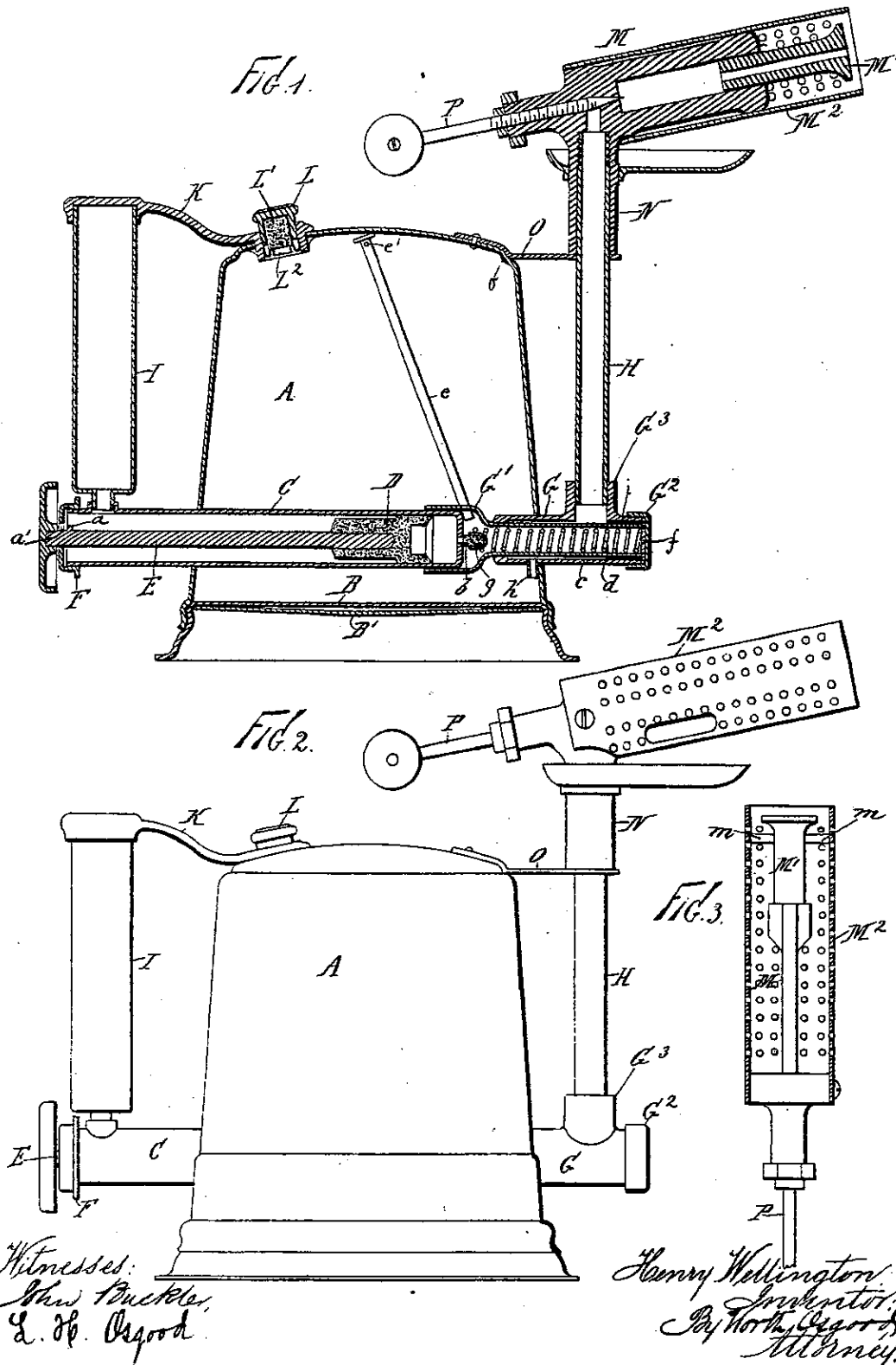
(Model.)

H. WELLINGTON.

TORCH.

No. 343,682.

Patented June 15, 1886.

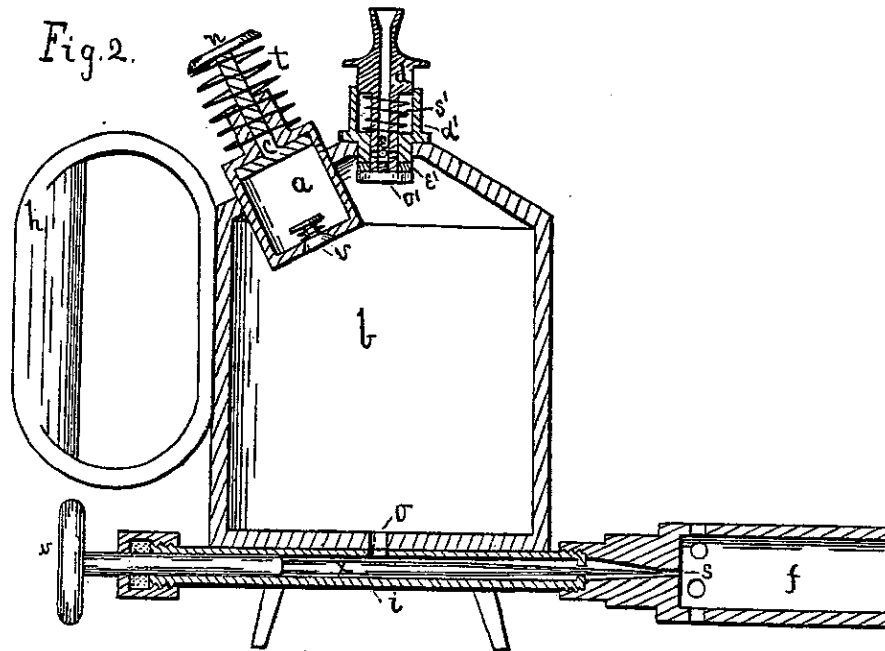
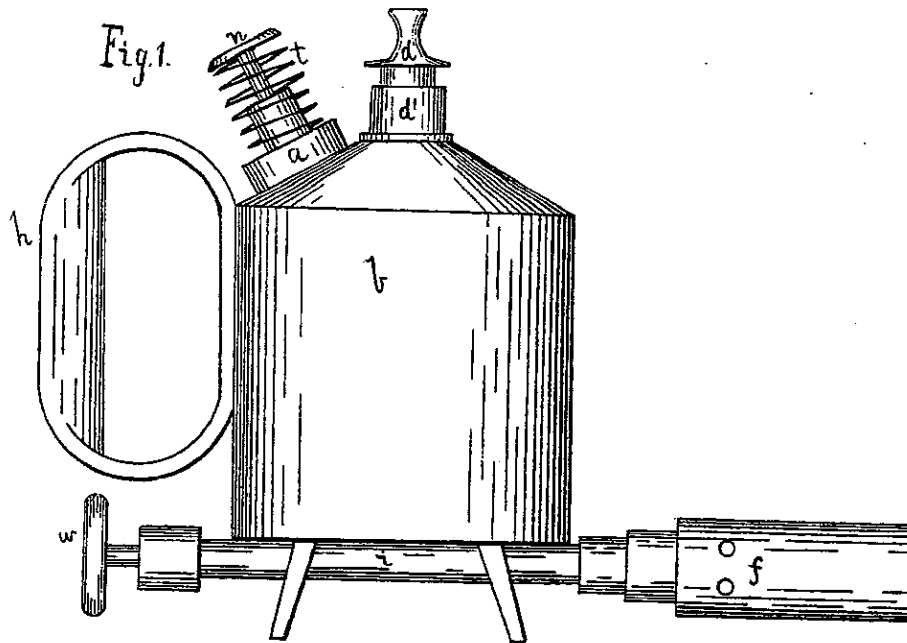


(No Model.)

J. A. FELT.  
PAINT BURNER.

No. 265,253.

Patented Oct. 3, 1882.



Witnesses  
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James W. H. H. H.

Inventor  
John A. Felt  
by Bradford Howland  
Attorney.