

# THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

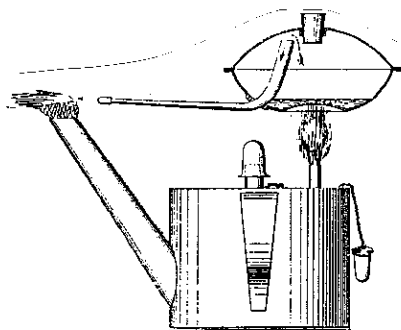
- FIRST QUARTER 1997 -

EDITOR - RON CARR 3328 258TH AVE. SE, ISSAQUAH, WA 98029-9173 PHONE 206-557-0634

THIS NEWSLETTER MAY BE REPRODUCED WITH CREDIT GIVEN TO THE SOURCE

We survived the winter of '96!!! The Seattle area experienced one of the worst winters in years with plenty of snow, rain, ice storms, hail, floods, mud slides, high winds, and low temperatures. About the only thing missing was the plague and locusts. I'm sure that many of you also experienced a difficult winter and in many cases, your winter has not even ended. Look at the positive side, more time for torch collecting.

J. M. HANCOCK BLOW-PIPE  
PATENTED AUGUST 3, 1875



## NEW MEMBERS:

The last few months produced 12 new members to our group, **ALVAN AUSTIN** of Puyallup, WA, **RICHARD BRAZIL** of Ferndale, CA, **JIM DRENTH** of Sheldon, IA, **GARY FYE** of Staten Island, NY, **JERRY GODIN** of East Windsor, CT, **NORMAN LARSON** of Anchorage, AK, **JIM MACLEAN** of Nova Scotia, Canada, **ROBERT MATHIAS** of Escalon, CA, **DR. RICHARD REISWIG** of Napa, CA, **SAMUEL SCROGGS** of Chambersburg, PA, **DR. CHARLES SMITH** of Northport, AL, and **R.L. WILDENRADT** of Sycamore, IL. **WELCOME ABOARD EVERYONE !!!** A special thanks goes out to **Gary Fye** for sending in approximately 75 torch related patents, and I was obviously very pleased to receive such a treasure.

## Blow Torch "OSCAR" Award !!!

Blow torches were honored again by the TV program *PERSONAL FX* that is featured on the FX channel. I was contacted by the *PERSONAL FX* producer in mid December and advised that my torch collection, which was featured on the FX program in June, was selected to receive the "WHO KNEW" Collector of The Year award. The award was one of five presented and the awards took place on January 1st, but was taped one week earlier. I was hooked into the program by phone and they "presented" the award. In late January I received the actual award in the form of a trophy with the FX logo on the top and a plate engraved with:

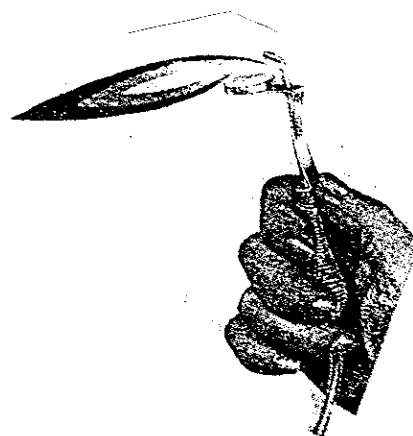
1996  
WHO KNEW ?  
COLLECTOR OF THE YEAR

A few members that had nothing better to do on New Year's Day, saw the program, and I did receive a few phone calls and letters regarding the award.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

**DAVE KOLB** submitted an article from a 1947 publication, "Scientific American" that describes, what I believe was, the smallest blow torch ever manufactured. The torch used a dry chemical fuel, in tablet form that eliminated the possibility of spilling, evaporation, or explosion. It could be ignited at a moments notice with no preheating required. The fuel tablet was placed in a small brass cup supported by a hollow air cooled handle. When in use, only gentle blowing on the air tube was required to produce a flame in excess of 2000 degrees F. The torch was called

the **SUPERJET BLOW TORCH** and was manufactured by the **Birk Mfg. Co.**



SUPERJET BLOW TORCH  
BIRK MFG. CO.  
CIRCA 1947

## WHAT'S IN A NAME, PART 2

In the first quarter '96 newsletter, I listed some of the numerous names assigned to blow torches by inventors and manufacturers. During my torch research, I continually find new reference names given to the lowly blow torch, and the following list are additional blow torch names for those of you that are also doing research:

Brazing Lamp  
Breamer  
Lineman's Soldering Device  
Paint Breamer  
Paint Burning Torch  
Plumber's Blowpipe  
Self Heating Soldering Iron  
Soldering Device  
Soldering Iron Heater  
Soldering Tool  
Vapor Blowpipe

## WE'RE NOT ALONE.....

I was recently contacted by Ted Rawson, a torch collector from Great Britain. Ted belongs to a torch collecting group that came together in late 1992, and they have approximately 170 members to date. They also have a newsletter, *BLOWLAMP NEWS*, that is published 3-5 times per year. I have not had a chance to read all of the copies that Ted sent me, but those that I have read have a lot of interesting material, mostly European, but they do discuss US manufactured torches. The group is planning their first group gathering scheduled for April '97. Anyone interested in obtaining copies of their newsletters or finding out more about their group can write to :

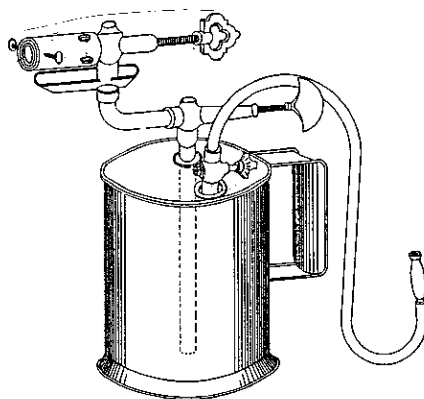
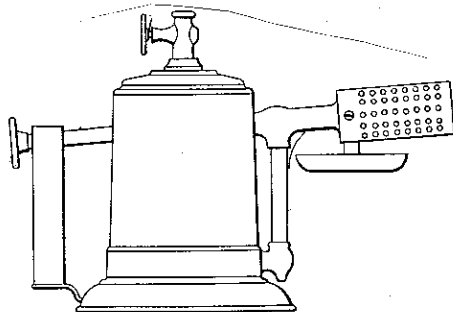
Les Adams  
Stacombe Farm,  
Doccombe,  
Moretonhampstead,  
Devon, TQ13 8SS  
Great Britain

There is no doubt that many US manufacturers "borrowed" ideas and designs from the Europeans, particularly designs from the mid 1800's where the similarities are very common and a period when the patent laws were a bit lax. In some cases, US inventors gave credit to a European design as reference in a US patent, or the European inventors would establish a US patent to protect their idea or design.

There appears to be ample supplies of circa 1940-45 US manufactured torches in Europe as a result of W.W. II. It was obviously less expensive to leave low value items, such as blow torches, in Europe rather than ship everything back to the US and Canada. I would have to guess that there are very few pre 1900 torches since the US did very little exporting due to the large numbers of European torches being manufactured.

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### H. WELLINGTON TORCH PATENTED APRIL 23 1889



### CS TALLMADGE PAINTER'S BURNING LAMP PATENTED DECEMBER 20 1881

Thank you, again, **GARY FYE** for submitting the "Ode to the Blowtorch", written by LeRoy Owens, also a torch collector, although his current location is unknown. I would like to present the ode on behalf of Gary and LeRoy:

#### ODE TO THE BLOWTORCH

Tools are extensions of the human mind,  
And in the hand of a craftsman, turn  
ideas into miracles.

The blowtorch, a symbol of creative genius,  
Can help to translate a dream into  
warm reality.

The blowtorch helps the workman combine the  
power of heat, fuel, and oxygen.

By itself, this tool is nothing, and does nothing.  
But in the hand of a creator, it can  
make hard metal bend, frozen pipes  
open, or melt the tin to make a child's  
toy.

Each of us needs a blowtorch, to remind us of our  
importance in the scheme of things.

For we can take the stuff around us, and make  
something beautiful,  
And like this wonderful  
invention, we can combine the  
elements of mind, heart, and hands

To make a better world for ourselves - or we can  
let our tools stand idle, and in the face of great  
need, do nothing.

Making choices exercises our humanity, using our  
tools to create expresses our potential for  
godliness.

LeRoy Owens

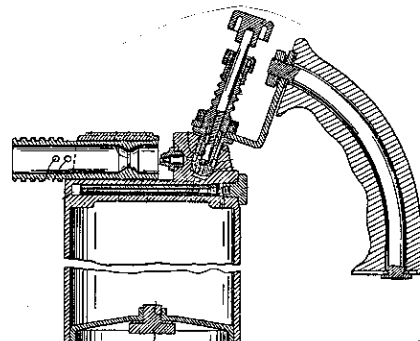
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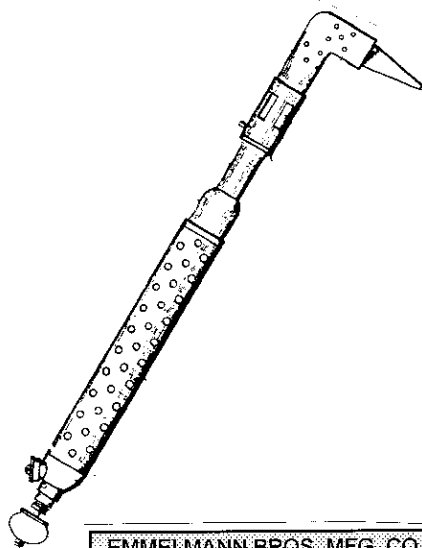
Because of the winter weather, I have had quite a few early Saturday mornings to spend at the University of Washington Technical Library doing torch research. I am currently perusing through each patent book and index looking for any torch related patent. As many of you are aware, there is a lot to learn about a torch, particular design, or manufacturer just from patent information. I have had quite a bit of success in matching torches in my collection to numerous patents.

As I mentioned earlier in this newsletter, various names were assigned to blow torches only to add to the confusion when doing research. I poured through much of the late 1800's, book by book, and index by index, only to find that I had overlooked most of the issued patents simply because I had overlooked all nomenclature possibilities. After realizing my mistake, I retraced my steps and uncovered a multitude of patents, mostly in the self-heating soldering iron or soldering iron category. It is incredible to see the many variations on a theme when it comes to the self-heating soldering iron. I doubt that very many of the self-heating soldering irons ever went into production, but I would guess that many of the ideas were adopted. Of the estimated 200 patent copies that I now have, there are as many self-heating soldering irons listed as there are blow torches. It's interesting to note the direct ratio and to realize that very few of the self-heating soldering irons were produced, relatively speaking.

Up until now, I have been referring to this torch category as "branding iron" torches since most of those that I own, do adapt to using some sort of a branding device. I have one self-heating soldering iron, manufactured by the EVERHOT MFG. Co., and it includes a branding iron with the name "Orla Lashbrook & Son" cast in solid brass.

### FL SCHWEITZER ALUMINUM TORCH PATENTED NOVEMBER 6 1956 Z & W MACHINE PRODUCTS INC.





EMMELMANN BROS. MFG. CO.  
GASOLINE SOLDERING IRON  
PATENTED SEPTEMBER 29, 1903

I also have two true self-heating soldering irons with copper soldering iron tips that are removable so that the device can also be used as a blow torch. One is manufactured by EMMELMANN BROS. MFG. CO. (see attached patent) that is all brass with a perforated steel sheet wrapped around the fuel tank that was insulated with asbestos. The pump handle end has a neatly designed wooden knob. The other model is manufactured by MAX SIEVERT of Stockholm, Sweden and, unfortunately is missing the drip pan and support leg. Does anyone have the missing parts that they would like to sell to me?

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

MAY 13, 1856

That is the date of one of the oldest US torch related patents and is a very crude blow pipe utilizing a two tank system. The patent was submitted by GARY FYE, and I have enclosed a copy for your reading pleasure.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

**JAMES MACLEAN**, our newest member from Canada was featured in a local Nova Scotia newspaper article. The abbreviated article follows:  
*Jim's father gave him an antique torch back in 1984 that sparked a serious interest in the unique antique.*

Today, Jim, a former advertising executive from Toronto, has 177 torches all polished and prominently displayed in

his home. There are a variety of torches from all over the world, with no duplicates. "There are no two alike" says Jim, who returned to his native Nova Scotia 7 years ago to start another business.

One of the most notable torches in his collection is an 1897 plumber's torch manufactured by the Ashton Mfg. Co. of New Jersey. Another is a Sundag torch made in Germany with an imprint of an Olympic Games symbol, signifying that it must have been made for or during the 1936 Olympics and Adolf Hitler's reign.

Jim, thanks for sharing the article with us.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

**S**peaking of sharing with others, **GRAHAM STUBBS** submitted an original publication from May 1, 1894 titled *THE PLUMBERS TRADE JOURNAL*, a Gas, Steam, and Hot Water Fitters' review. In addition to a number of interesting plumber/fitter related articles, there are many advertisements relating to plumber's fittings, boilers, bathtubs, toilets, gas lighting fixtures, etc. Surprisingly, there are only two torch related ads, one for a plumber's fire pot from Clayton & Lambert Mfg. Co. and the second from the E.P. Gleason Mfg. Co. Unfortunately, after seeing the EP Gleason ad, I have since removed them from my list of viable torch manufacturers, unless one of you actually has an E. P. Gleason torch?

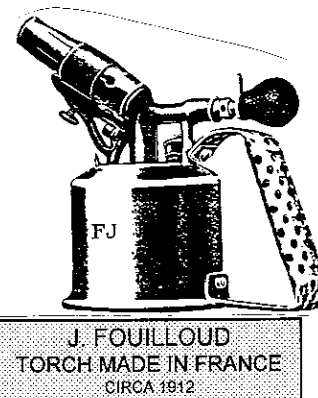
The C & L ad reads as follows:

#### PLUMBERS, NOTE THIS!

*Particular attention is called to the fact that with a No. 1 Fire Pot a kettle of solder or lead can be kept hot enough to wipe joints, and at the same time, without removing kettle from the fire, there is sufficient room and heat to keep soldering irons ready to use. In fact, the No. 1 Fire Pot will heat all the metal and soldering coppers two men can use at the same time. There is no other fire pot that can do this. Bear it in mind when purchasing a furnace. Price complete, \$6.00 net. Send for a catalogue. Order from your jobber or send direct to: Clayton & Lambert Mfg. Co. Washington Street Ypsilanti, Mich.*

Graham, thanks for your submittal!!

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦



J. FOUILLOUD  
TORCH MADE IN FRANCE  
CIRCA 1912

**G**RAHAM STUBBS mentioned in a recent letter, the problem with identifying torches. The same problem has been mentioned by me as well as other collectors in the past without any resolution. The problem is how to recognize torches that have lost their decal, paint, or label and do not have an embossed or stamped mark. Graham sees three ways to accomplish this:

**#1** Compare with other known torches in one's own collection for similar appearances, features, etc. Not very useful when several similar old torches are all missing the same label. Also, some torch parts could have been substituted making it a "bastard" torch.

**#2** Compare with illustrations in catalogs, *THE TORCH*, etc. This is also helpful in determining the approximate age since most of the torch catalogs are dated.

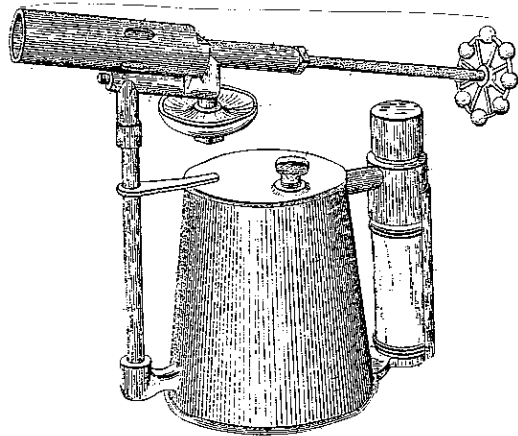
**#3** Compare with torches owned by other torch collectors. One collector could own a marked torch that others have unmarked. The problem is ..... how do we assemble such a detailed file and how would one access the file.

I believe that the answer is..... THE INTERNET!!! A home page could be established and numerous torch photos could be attached to the home page and accessible by anyone. In the very near future, I plan to be on the net with a torch home page to try out the concept. I know there are few of you with email addresses, and when I get set up I will contact you via the web. Stay tuned all you web surfers. Also, if you have an email address, let me know and I will print it for the other surfers. Those that I know of are:

Harry Goff, Australia,  
colyton@inet.com.au

Richard Brazil, Ferndale, CA  
rbrazil@humboldt1.com

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦



M. L. HULL  
VAPOR PAINT BURNER  
PATENTED OCTOBER 23, 1885

#### A CALL FOR PAPERS.....

Actually, I'm looking for information on any antique publication that is printed locally for your area. You typically find them when visiting a local antique shop or mall and they are usually given away free, as advertisement for the antique establishments in the area. National publications include *ANTIQUÉ GAZETTE* and *TODAY'S COLLECTOR*, and Seattle area publications include *OLD STUFF* and *ANTIQUES PLUS*, just to mention a few examples. Most of the publications will print any information relating to antique or collectable clubs and organizations at no charge. Many have sections devoted to "Club News" and encourage information from the clubs.

I have been very successful in getting our group advertised recently in a number of national publications and each time an article is printed, the response is very positive. As new members join, they bring new information on our common interest, the blow torch, and that benefits all of us.

So, I am asking each of you to **please** send me the one page, from any or all of those local publications, that lists the editor's name, address, etc. The information is usually on the second or third page and gives the details of the publisher. Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

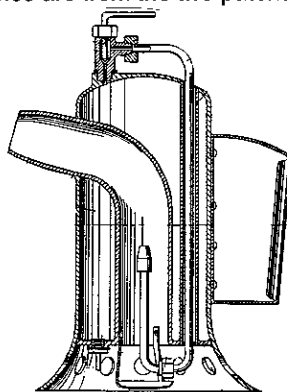


#### THE FRENCH CONNECTION....

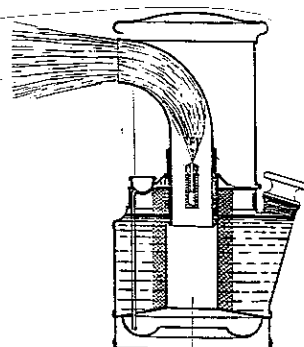
**P**hilippe Touillet, our French torch collector has provided me with a list of non US torch manufacturers at my request and at the suggestion of many of you. I'm sure that many of you have non US made torches and do not have a clue as to the country of origin. The list, when complete, should help in identification when a name is available. The current listing has approximately 50 manufacturers names each for Great Britain, France, Germany, and a least 100 manufacturers for the rest of the world, excluding the US. I hope to finish the project and submit it in the next newsletter sometime mid year.

I would also like to thank Philippe for all of the literature that he has submitted. Most of my non US literature has come from Philippe, including patents, catalog cuts, and instruction sheets. Philippe, Merci !!

One of the patents that Philippe submitted included a French patent dated May 19, 1886. The design looked familiar and upon further investigation, I came up with a another patent, a modern US version dated June 7, 1938 that was submitted by **GARY FYE**. The following sketches are from the two patents:



H. SCHRADER TORCH  
PATENTED JUNE 7, 1938



"PAQUELIN" TORCH  
FRENCH PATENT  
MARCH 19, 1886

#### \$\$ FOR SALE \$\$

**F**rom time to time, I receive information on torches for sale, anywhere from one up to entire collections. I thought I would try a for-sale column to see how it works out.

Brian Reynolds, PO Box 237, Akeley, MN 56433, has a total of 8 torches for sale. Seven are the conventional style quart size and one is a small LENK alcohol model. He is asking \$100 for the lot plus \$20 for shipping, within the US I would presume. Anyone interested should contact Brian by phone (218)-652-3889, mail, or write me and I will send you the photo of his collection.



Once you've located the car alarm, it's simply a matter of lighting your blow torch.

CARTOON SUBMITTED BY DAVE KOLB

Also for sale is a larger collection of approximately 200 torches that is owned by Vernon Rasmussen, 456 NW 15th, Camas, WA, 98607. It has been quite a few months since I last contacted Vernon, but if you are interested, it would be worth a call - (360)-834-7027, or drop him a note. If I recall, his asking price was very reasonable considering the large number of torches.



**T**hanks to all of you that have communicated with me these past few months and since the last newsletter. I appreciate your continued interest and support. Until the next newsletter.....take care and happy torch hunting to all!!! ©

Ron