

# THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

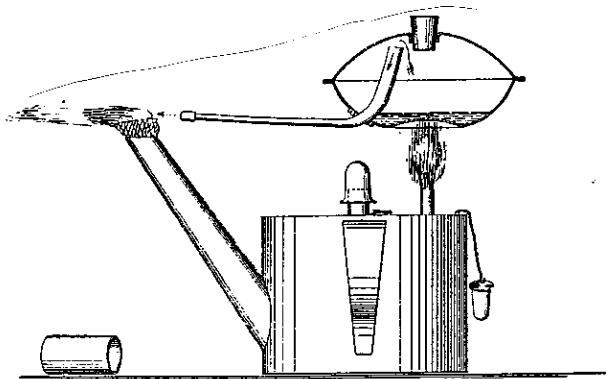
- FOURTH QUARTER 1997 -

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- THIS NEWSLETTER MAY BE REPRODUCED WITH CREDIT GIVEN TO THE SOURCE -

One can only guess that this will be known as the year of El Nino, particularly on the West Coast of the US where El Nino has had a dramatic affect on our weather patterns. I have been torch hunting lately with very little success, and now believe that El Nino has had something to do with my lack of success!!

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SELF-ACTING BLOW PIPE  
PATENT DATED AUGUST 3, 1875  
J.M. HANCOCK, INVENTOR

## NEW MEMBERS:

Welcome to the new members that have joined our group since the last newsletter, **Billy Barnwell**, Hialeah, Florida, **Bob Fitchhorn**, San Mateo, California, **Bill Hodgins**, Burwood, Victoria, Australia, with a collection of 200 torches, **Bill Holland**, Greensboro, North Carolina, a 30 year collector with 125+ premium torches, and **Maurice Jernstedt**, Hubbard, Oregon, a two year collector with approximately 150 torches. **WELCOME ABOARD!**

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## THE FRENCH CONNECTION STRIKES AGAIN!

I received a copy of a recent letter that **Gary Fye** - Austin, TX, sent to **Philippe Touillet**. They have exchanged torch photos and are in negotiations for a "torch deal". I am aware that Philippe has contacted many of you and that many torches have passed in the night across the Atlantic Ocean, myself included in that number of traders. Philippe and I did a torch trade not long ago and I believe that we were both very satisfied with the results. I can assure you that Philippe has a large collection of torches based on what I saw during my visit to France this past Spring. He has an interest in expanding his American manufactured torches, and would encourage future torch trades. Gary also sent me photos of his torch collection and a great looking Koi pond (Koi are Japanese carp). Some great torches and nice looking fish!

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## SURFERS

For those web surfing emailers, the following is a current member list of email addresses:

<b>Les Adams</b>	les_gina@msn.com
<b>Richard Brazil</b>	rbrazil@humboldt1.com
<b>Ron Carr</b>	swcv70e@prodigy.com
<b>Dennis Galaway</b>	dgalaway@gte.net
<b>Harry Goff</b>	colyton@iinet.com.au
<b>Mike Jones</b>	bordhead@micron.com
<b>Suezy Proctor</b>	proctor@narrows.com
<b>Graham Stubbs</b>	gstubbs222@aol.com
<b>John Suta</b>	jsuta@cnw.com

Please let me know if I have forgotten anyone's email address. I still plan to have a torch website in the near future, so stay tuned and have patience.

## SURFERS CONT.

Also, while surfing the web recently, I came across a home page for **OPTIMUS**. The home page indicated that Optimus stoves, lanterns, **BLOWTORCHES**, and parts are available in many countries, and then listed the location of all the world-wide distributors. I am aware that there are a few torch manufacturers in the world, however, I was not aware that Optimus is still manufacturing torches or torch replacement parts. Perhaps our European readers can qualify the Optimus blowtorch question?

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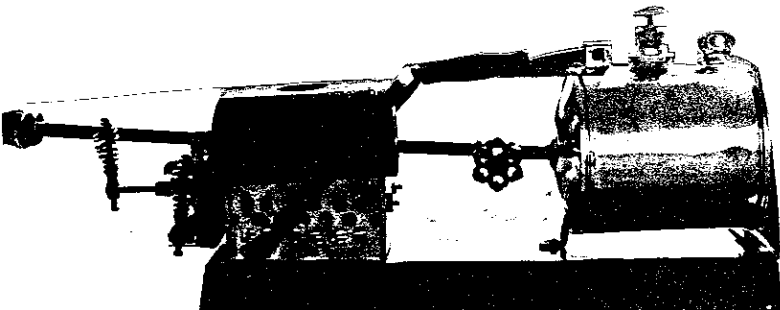
## NOTES FROM ALL OVER



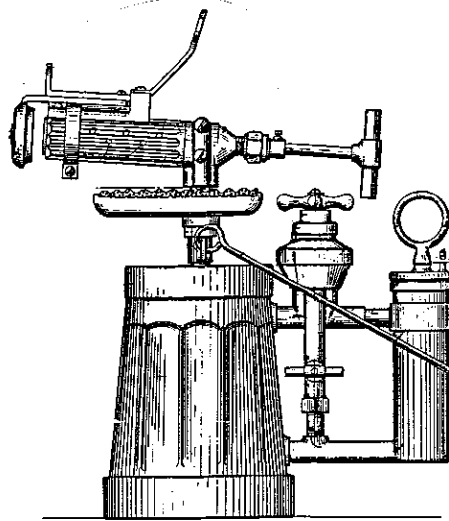
I received a letter not long ago from **JoAnn & Chuck Tobin**, Floyd, Iowa. They sent in photos of one of the most unusual soldering iron heaters, (see *inset photo below*).

They also came across the operating instructions for a No. 60 Turner alcohol torch. From the information, it appears that the operating directions date to the early 1950's, and nicely describe in great detail, the specific instructions. The directions also provide a clear photograph of a torch that would normally be unrecognizable without its decal for identification, (see *attached*).

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**SOLDERING IRON HEATER**  
TWO IRON CAPACITY  
MANUFACTURER UNKNOWN  
BASE MEASURES 7 X 21



**BLOW TORCH**  
PATENT DATED APRIL 16, 1929  
BRUNO MARTIN, INVENTOR

## ✚ A PIECE OF TIME DISCOVERED ✚

On a recent business trip to Cincinnati, I had the opportunity to spend a few hours in a local antique shop browsing for torches. For those of you that actively pursue torches know the feeling.....that feeling when you come across what my wife calls a "best-ever" torch, one that you will buy regardless of the price, well, almost regardless. Well, I came across one of those torches, and since the price was right, I purchased the prize and brought it home. When I finally did get a chance to closely examine the torch, I realized what an incredible find I had made. You'll need to know a bit of torch history to fully appreciate my "best-ever" find. One of you, not long ago, submitted a document, (actually it is a letter) from the White Manufacturing Co. addressed to the Turner Brass Works and dated June 1, 1904 (thank you to whoever submitted it, Gary Fye?). The letter is as follows:

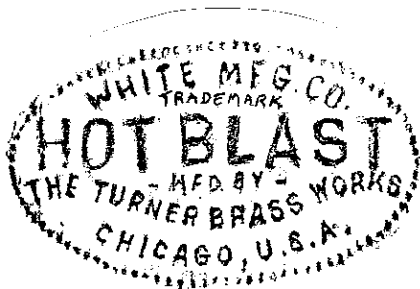
*Gentlemen;*

*We hereby confer upon you the right to advertise and have printed such literature as you may find necessary to promote your interests in the line of Blow Torches, Furnaces, Brazing Machines, Enameling Ovens, etc., upon which we use the trade mark "HOT BLAST" or otherwise, that you may deem necessary in the promotion of that branch of the business that you purchased from us.*

*Yours truly,  
White Mfg. Co.,  
W.H. Eastland, President*

*The letter is signed,*

Now .....back to the "best-ever" torch. When I examined the torch, I was, at first, puzzled since both the White Mfg. Co. and Turner Brass Works were listed on the brass nameplate. At that point, I realized the story behind my "best-ever" torch and what apparently took place shortly after June 1, 1904 at Turner. Based on the evidence, I can assume that the White Mfg. Co. must have transferred torch components to Turner Brass Works, components that were already pre-made for White torches, and Turner then assembled the torches. The torch has the distinct "W" cast into the top of the pump plunger, indicative of the White Mfg. Co., and includes some of the typical construction features found on White Mfg. Co. torches. Turner Brass Works had a special brass nameplate made for this hybrid torch, and a pencil rubbing of that nameplate is as follows:



**TURNER BRASS WORKS NAMEPLATE**  
(ACTUAL SIZE)  
CIRCA 1904

I would like to hear from anyone that has a torch with a similar White/Turner nameplate. One can only guess that White transferred their entire line of torches to Turner, which leads me to believe that there are others, like my "best-ever" torch out there. I assume that this was a limited situation involving only the White components that were on hand at the time of the transfer, so there could be very few available today. Another bit of history uncovered!

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## **BRITISH INVASION!!!!**

I had the opportunity, one Saturday in October, to entertain **Les Adams** from Devon, England. Les is not only an avid torch collector, but is also the editor of *BLOWLAMP NEWS*, a British blow torch newsletter that is circulated throughout Europe to a large number of members. We spent a few hours exchanging torch experiences, reviewed literature and examined my torch collection. We found that we both have the same philosophy on torch information, sharing as much information as possible to expand everyone's knowledge on torches. No one person has all of the information, literature, or all of the torches, but collectively, we encompass a large amount of data, and certainly, we possess an incredible number and variety of torches. It is with this agreement with Les that I offer the following information from his newsletter, *BLOWLAMP NEWS*, NO. 18, DECEMBER 1996:

### **HOW IT ALL STARTED** by Ray Hyland

For as long as I can remember, I have been attending steam rallies around the East Anglia area, and in the mid 1980's, I decided I would like to cross the fence from being a visitor to becoming an exhibitor. I had always had a particular interest in stationary engines, so one winter I made my purchase and spent the next few months preparing for the rally season.

During that first year, I was at the Henham steam rally where I saw, amongst the engine ranks, a display of about 50 blowlamps, all highly polished and making an interesting show. Unfortunately, there was no one near the exhibit, so I was unable to find out more about them. Not another thought was given to blowlamps until the same rally, the next year, where I again saw the same display. The only difference this year was that close by was a stall selling second-hand tools, and on the top shelf was a very attractive looking blowlamp, of a shape I had not seen before. The blowlamp was a *SURMELIN*, and on inquiring the price, was told that it was a very rare lamp and not for sale. Not being deterred by this, I decided to start collecting blowlamps, hoping that one day I would find a *SURMELIN* to add to the collection.

Well, it has now been about eight years since I started collecting, and although my collection is fairly modest, about 150 in number, I have now acquired sufficient interesting lamps to put on a display at local rallies.

I had almost given up the elusive *SURMELIN*, until an exchange of letters with Philippe Touillet with whom a suitable deal was struck, and I now have a *SURMELIN*, pride of place in the dining room (my wife is very tolerant).

Thinking back to that first display of blowlamps, I have always liked to see them polished,

and over the years have tried many methods of cleaning. All of them involve hard work, and a lot of elbow grease. The most successful method being the buffing wheel with polishing soap.

This involves completely dismantling the blowlamp and there are always awkward corners you can't get to, and for the badly tarnished blowlamps, you have to start with fine emery cloth.

Recently I was talking to someone who collects oil lamps and he suggested soaking the brass overnight in a 10% ammonia solution and then after rinsing in water, all the dirt will rub off with fine wire wool. This method works very well and leaves the brass with a dull finish, which can soon be brought to a shine with a light buffing on the wheel, or a vigorous application of Brasso. I have now used this method on several blowlamps, and it certainly gives the best finish so far.

The only treatment my blowlamps get is on the steel straps which hold the burner in place and the handles when they have gone rusty. I have never liked the finish I get when repainting the steel work, as inevitably the rust has done some damage, and the finish is never very smooth. What I do is to polish the handles and straps using Zebo black grate polish which, when buffed with a soft cloth, gives a pewter-like finish which compliments the polished brass.

[Note: I also have a strong interest in owning a SURMELIN torch, and if any reader has a SURMELIN torch for trade or sale, please contact me, and we can discuss the arrangements. Ron Carr]

Les Adams had another member respond with information on cleaning torches, and since it is a topic that many are interested in, I have included the following article written by **Bob Bispham**, BLOWLAMP NEWS, NUMBER 15, MARCH 1996:

### CLEANING A BLOWLAMP

*In response to a plea by Les Adams in BLOWLAMP NEWS, NO. 12, I will attempt to enlighten those interested on how to clean a blowlamp to perfection. Some of you may be critical of some of my methods, but if any of you know of a better way, then hurry up and put pen to paper.*

*I start by stripping the lamp, retaining all bits and pieces in a box.*

*I usually start with the container [fuel tank]. I use a medium grade of wet'n'dry abrasive paper, with a container of water nearby. Having removed all the grime, including that in the methylated spirit recess, which I find is the hardest part to clean, I then set to work with the metal polish. A bench vice is always useful, it enables one to hold the container by the handle while working a cloth backwards and forwards. However, with some lamps, this is not always possible.*

*The vapouriser is next to be cleaned. I have a bench mounted rotary wire brush, and this will remove most of the grime. Where the brush will not reach, I use strips of fine and medium emery cloth with the vapouriser held in the vice, finally finishing with metal polish.*

*To clean the burner nozzle, if the inside is heavily encrusted with grime, I gently lower it into a container of phosphoric acid. When removed from the acid, after a few hours, the nozzle is washed in water. Next, the copper discolouration is removed with the rotary wire brush. The inside is cleaned with a brush mounted in a drill chuck. Any scratches are soon removed with emery cloth and metal polish.*

*Some handles, such as the Primus lamps, are not easy to clean, where the rust is inside the perforations. My way with these is to submerge the handle into phosphoric acid, leaving for a while, and then washing with water. When dry, the handle is dipped into the appropriate colour paint, taking care that no drips form when drying.*

*All other parts of the lamp are dealt with in the way I have already described.*

*When shined with metal polish, I usually give the lamp that extra bit of shine with a bench mounted buffing wheel, taking care not to bear too hard where any engraving is seen on the container. This could very well soon remove it.*

*A word of warning! When using a rotary wire or buffing wheel, always wear goggles or a face visor. Do the same when using phosphoric acid and be in a well ventilated area.*

*Cleaning a lamp is not an easy task, but how rewarding it is when the job is finally completed!*

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This is the last newsletter for the year. For the moment, my routine of three newsletters per year seems to be working, and I will try to maintain the same consistency provided I continue to hear from you folks from time to time. People like **Dick Sarpolus** know the trials and tribulations that are involved in publishing a newsletter without some input from its members. Dick, while an avid torch collector, also dabbles in radio controlled aircraft and has written newsletters on and off for over 25 years. As always, I welcome any torch information or comments from the members and will endeavor to answer any and all correspondence.

I have enclosed an updated membership list that reflects current mailing addresses.

Here's wishing you all the best for the holidays and I look forward to "seeing" you in '98!

**RON**

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April 16, 1929.

B. MARTIN

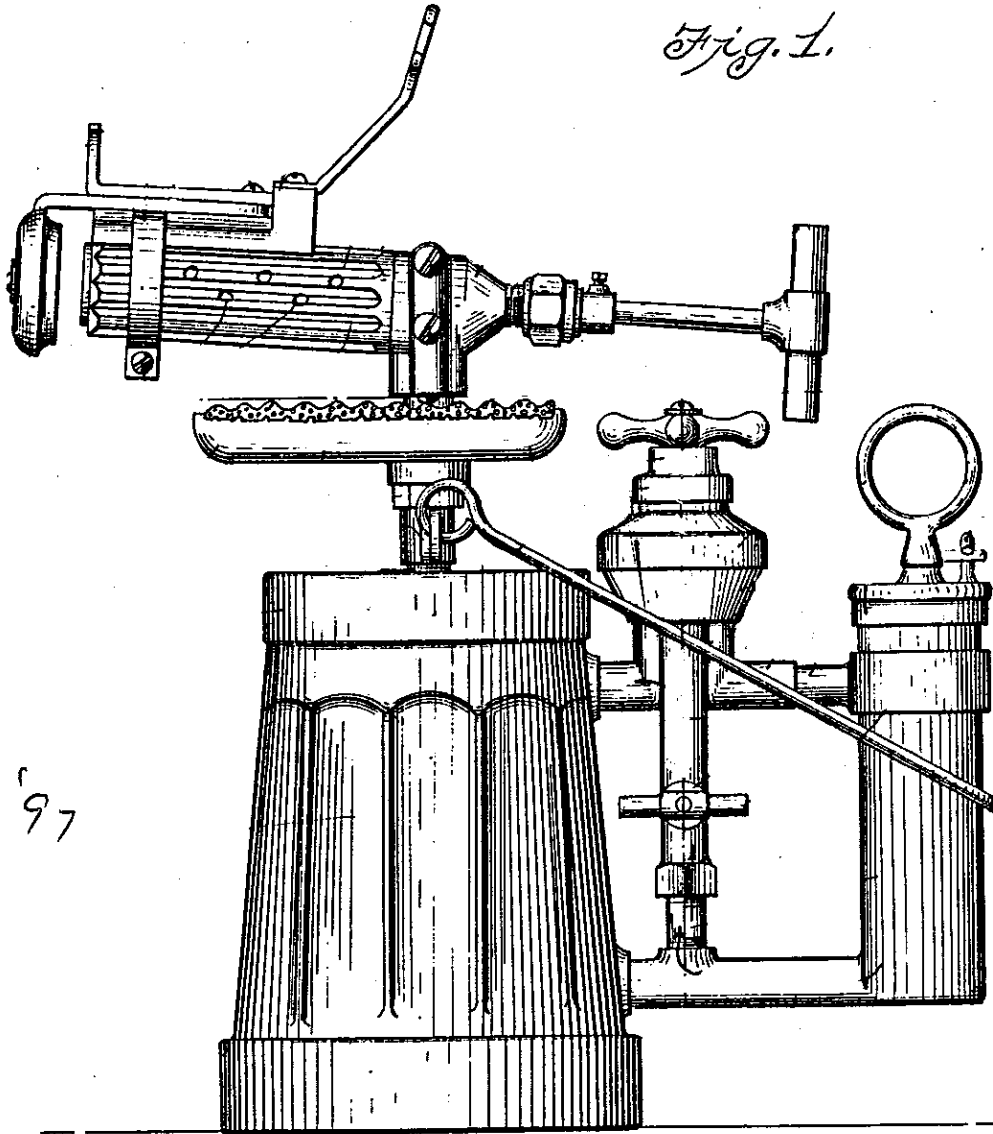
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BLOW TORCH

Filed Dec. 7, 1927

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1.

3<sup>rd</sup> QTR '97

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INVENTOR.

Bruno Martin

BY

E. A. Bond

ATTORNEY.