

THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

- FIRST EDITION 1999 -

EDITOR • RON CARR 3328 258TH AVE. SE, ISSAQUAH, WA 98029-9173, 425-557-0634, email: roncarr@prodigy.net

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Welcome to 1999 and this years first issue of *THE TORCH*. Mother Nature is testing the limits of Pacific Northwest residents by providing one of the wettest winters on record. For the entire month of December, Seattle received 3 hours 17 minutes of sunshine, and 11 inches of rain! The only good thing about rain is that you don't have to shovel it. ☺

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Les Adams has done it again! The above was on the front of his 1998 Christmas card, and was created to connect with the 1st Annual Blow Torch Convention in the US. The Statue of Liberty stands some 300 feet tall and bears the largest "torch" in America at 21 feet high.

NEW MEMBERS

Gary Allen, Manitoba, Canada collects blow torches for an associate in France.

Wayne Belair, Lawrence, MA, with a modest collection, inherited his first few torches from his Dad. Many are polished and prominently displayed in his office.

Richard Busby, Aurora, CO, a long time collector and one-time user of a blow torch, has a 25 torch collection, with many new pieces complete with decals. Richard also collects and restores antique trucks.

Don Farwell, Sultan, WA is the 20th Washington State member, and a long time torch collector. Don discovered our organization on the Internet at www.collectors.org.

Roger Keller, Fergus Falls, MN is a relatively new collector with an all-polished 75 piece collection.

Buzz Kleemeyer, Vancouver, WA is the 21st Washington State member and a 15 year torch collector. Buzz has approximately 50 torches in his collection. He also collects Coke & Popeye memorabilia.

Tom Munroe, from the Big "D", Dallas, TX, received his first torch from his wife, Sara, a Turner #201. Tom has a growing collection that includes many Turners and C&L's.

Hans Thornblad, is originally from Sodertalje, Sweden, and is currently working in Salaam, Tanzania. He has amassed a torch collection in the past 4 years of 300+ pieces, mostly Swedish, with 100 restored. Those with email will certainly hear from Hans since his remoteness offers him little contact with torches and torch collectors.

Andy Stratton, Millington, MI, is a 15-year collector with over 150 torches, many polished and displayed. Andy also owns a few lead pots and numerous soldering irons.

Stefan Berg, while living and working in Singapore, is originally from Sweden, and has accumulated 150 torches over the past few years. He has quite an international collection with torches from 8+ countries including the US, and he also collects Primus stoves and other burning apparatus.

David Allie lives in Marquette, MI and commutes to Hillside, IL. David prefers to collect torches with the original boxes.

Phillip Anderson, Indianapolis, IN with over 40 torches amassed during his 7 short months as a torch collector. Phillip discovered our group from Jon Suta over the Internet, as have other new members. He also collects soldering irons, and old solder tins/paste cans. Phillip has a home page dedicated to torches, www.indy.net/~toper

It is interesting to note that the latest two new members from the State of Washington bring the total up to 21 Washington members, an unusually high number considering the entire state has only 5.5 million inhabitants. Is this phenomenon a result of blow torch collecting originating in WA? Do Washingtonians only collect artifacts that do not rust, (like brass blow torches)? Did the Washington Indians invent the blow torch as a portable means to cook their freshly caught salmon (I am stretching it on this one?)

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gold paint, but the steel tanks look great! **Chuck & JoAnn Tobin** wrote in regarding an addition to their torch collection, a rare Quick Meal blow torch. After reading "Disappointing Words to a Blow Torch Collector" in the last newsletter, they offered an addition: **"It's made of brass, that's why the price is so high!"**. I'm sure that many of you can relate to that statement. A note received some time ago from **Glenn Harrison** indicated that his collection just topped 1000 pieces. Way to go Glenn, and are they all polished and displayed? **Jerry Godin** was awarded the BEST EXHIBIT at the Scantic Valley Antique Engine Club meeting in Hampden, MA last year. Jerry displayed 120 highly polished torches, mostly brass, with a few painted steel pieces. Two torches really stood out since they were painted in very bright iridescent colors, and under a black light, glow to emphasize the colors. Congratulations Jerry! **Dave Kolb** submitted a newspaper photo of someone with a Clayton & Lambert trying to cook a large steak in jest. Perhaps the chef was looking for something different to enhance the flavor? (See inset)

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NOTES FROM ALL OVER

I recently contacted **Tony Creech** through the Internet on a hunch that he was a torch collector. It turns out that, while he is sort of a blow torch collector, he is more of a chef. To impress his guests, he uses one of his numerous blow torches to melt and brown the sugar on top of his specialty desert....crème brulee. Just heard from **Phil Roach** and his recent purchase...a plastic sand blasting cabinet with super fine glass beads. Seems like Phil has taken the torch polishing process to a new level. He commented that brass comes out looking like dull

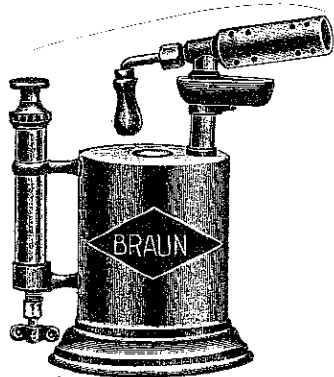
CONDITION CLASSIFICATION

This is a continuation to previous articles on torches, torch identification, and it is my attempt at a condition classification for blow torches. I utilized my own torch buying experiences, some common sense, and I also plagiarized some data from an antique tool-collecting group.

As we escalate our trading and selling activities, a classification system would facilitate a trade or sale and provide the buyer with an easier means to determine value. My goal was to develop an easy means to determine condition, and I

narrowed the classifications down to 5 categories: **NEW, FINE, GOOD, FAIR, and POOR.** Since most of the older torches fall into the GOOD category, I expanded it to include GOOD-PLUS, GOOD, and GOOD-MINUS. Since this is my first shot at a classification matrix, I would welcome any and all comments. (See attached matrix.)

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BRAUN MFG. CO

Gasoline Burner

Los Angeles, CA
Circa 1912

Quart size, brass tank

NEW MANUFACTURER ADDITIONS

Incredible coincidence when two collectors submitted information on a new US torch manufacturer, within one week of each other! **Don Gaffney**, Staten Island, NY, and **Dave Schulte**, Sperry, IA recently purchased **AMERICAN** torches, each is of a different style.

Dave's is a quart size, brass tank, pump in tank, wooden handle offset from fuel tank, fuel tube exits fuel tank from the center top of fuel tank. What's so unusual about Dave's torch is the necked down end of the burner nozzle, nothing like I have ever seen before.

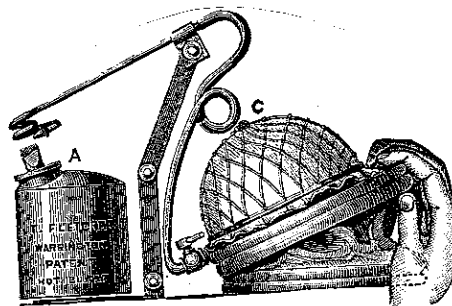
Don's torch appears to be a much earlier model, also a quart size, brass tank, pump in the handle, cast steel valve handle. Some unique features of Don's torch are the faceted pump handle supports, the unique cast steel valve handle design, a relatively short burner nozzle with an very unusual design, and a shrink fit piece of brass on the front of the burner nozzle used as the soldering iron support.

Unfortunately, there is no additional information on **AMERICAN**, other than the name stamped in the fuel tank, and up to now, I have not

encountered this manufacturer in any literature searches. If anyone has any information, or has an **AMERICAN** torch in their collection, please contact me.

At a used bookstore in Seattle, I recently purchased a circa 1912 scientific supplies catalog, Braun Knecht Heimann Co., San Francisco, CA. The catalog lists a large assortment of lab equipment, including blow torches, blow pipes, and burner heads. From the literature, it appears that **Braun** was the manufacturer of a line of torches (see inset) although, I suspect that another torch manufacturer, such as Turner, produced their line of equipment as a brand label arrangement. The Turner Brass Works torches were also featured, including a Turner #100 and #8. Barthel's alcohol burners were also featured.

Another unusual item caught my eye, a **Fletcher's Blowpipe**, (see inset). The blowpipe could be used with the mouth, or with the small hand blower that was offered as a separate item. The blowpipe featured a patented jet coil that provided a large variety of flames when combined with the different blowpipe tips, also offered as separate items. **Does anyone own a Fletcher's Blowpipe?**



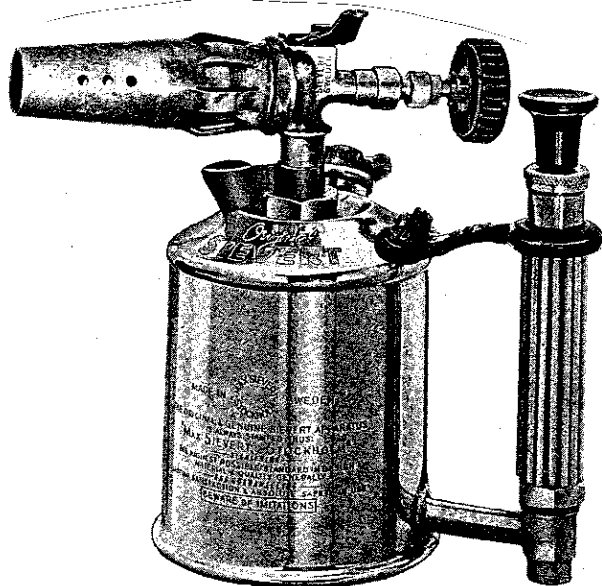
T. FLETCHER'S BLOWPIPE, WITH BLOWER
CIRCA 1912

Can be used with mouth pipe, or with small hand blower

Mel Olson, Fergus Falls, MN sent in photos of a **Mahr Mfg. Co.**, Minneapolis, MN torch. It appears to be a gallon + fuel tank and is of steel, brass pump in the fuel tank, large two-hand steel tube handle, fuel added through a top opening, and a sizable burner that can accommodate two soldering irons simultaneously. The nameplate contains a patent block, but no patent number was stamped. Let me hear from all of you Mahr torch owners.

Quite some time ago, **Allan Foster** submitted a 1916 Turner Brass Works catalog, and it

was included in the 1995 3rd issue of *THE TORCH*. I overlooked the alcohol blow pipe listed on page 17 until recently, when I uncovered an 1895 patent for the same alcohol blow pipe, (see inset). **Willson Mfg. Co.** is another addition to the manufacturer list. The blow pipe features an attached glass vial enclosed within a brass tube that contained acid used in cleaning surfaces before soldering, similar to soldering flux. The highly polished solid brass soldering torch featured a blow pipe that was adjustable for a variety of flames.



MAX SIEVERT MODEL 223
Stockholm, Sweden
Circa 1961

I received a note from a torch collector in England, **Tom Barlett**, regarding a **Phoenix No. 3** torch that he purchased in the US. The torch features a cast aluminum fuel tank with drip tray cast into the tank top, wooden handle, brass burner, fill plug in bottom, 7 inches high, 4 inches in diameter, and a cast iron valve handle. It is questionable if the valve handle is original. Does anyone own a Phoenix No.3, or have information, or able to verify its origin? Please contact me or write Tom Barlett, 62 Braybrook Road, Bracknell Berks, RG12 2HN England.

I just received a scanner for Christmas and, in future newsletters, I will have the capability of scanning in torch photos for publication. So, keep the photos coming!

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LITERATURE HUNTING

I have heard from a number of collectors wondering where to find torch literature. For those avid torch collectors that are looking for more torch information might consider searching for literature that may include torch-related data in any used bookstore or library. With a bit of time, and detective work, you can discover torch information in the least likely publications.

One of our members sent in an 1894 Plumbers Trade Journal, a Gas, Steam, and Hot Water Fitters' Review. The publication included an assortment of advertisements including a small ad for Clayton & Lambert Co.

Graham Stubbs submitted The American Artisan, a weekly publication "Representing Stove, Tin, Hardware, Heating, and Ventilating Interests." Clayton & Lambert, and Quick Meal ads were included among the multitude of product offerings.

I purchased The Carriage Builder and Blacksmith, a 1903 publication addressing the needs of blacksmiths, horseshoers, and carriage/wagon makers. Listed was a half page ad featuring a Turner Brass Works No. 4A double-jet torch (see inset). Another purchase included the same publication, dated 1901, and featured a full-page ad for Clayton & Lambert paint burner torches. While visiting a used tool shop in Los Angeles, I purchased a Geo. A. Rubelmann Hardware Co., Mechanics Tool Catalogue, dated 1923. The blow torch section included two pages of Turner Brass Works torches and soldering iron furnaces, a Lenk alcohol torch, and the IMP torch, a very small alcohol torch. Previously was mentioned the scientific catalog, Braun, Knecht, Heimann Co., San Francisco, also purchased in a used book store in Butte, Montana. The 1912 hardbound book includes a large assortment of torch related equipment, including two new manufacturers, Braun and Fletcher's.

Published in *THE TORCH*, 1998 2nd edition, was a 1915 Chicago Cycle Supply Co. catalog submitted by **Richard Gerjsee**. It was the most unlikely place to find two pages of torches, braziers, and other torch-related materials.

As you can see, torch literature is available and included in some of the most unlikely places, so during your travels, keep your eyes and minds open when visiting bookstores, libraries, and the like. Don't expect to find books on blow torches since, to my knowledge, none were ever printed except for the torch catalogs. And remember, if you do find something of interest, please share!

BLOW TORCH LAMPS

Hello, my name is Jim, and I collect blow torches. I have been doing this for about 5 years, and have about 20 in my collection to date. Unlike most of you, I started collecting them for the purpose of making lamps, and have converted 4 successfully. Now.... quit shuddering... all of you! I have learned from Ron that there are some that SHOULD NOT be made into lamps and I now only convert those torches that have little or no value as far as collecting goes. I have also developed a means to make a lamp, and not destroy the integrity of the torch.

After thorough cleaning and polishing, you have a truly beautiful example of one of the heights of the industrial revolution, and an example of the ingenuity of the human mind. From all over the world, the need for HEAT that can be useful in a concentrated form led to the development of the torch. And, why should it simply be something to be looked upon after its useful life has passed? We now have the propane torch, and it serves very well, and is considerably safer to use than the gasoline torch. So, in my opinion, why not transfer its beauty and complexity to something that is useful! Hence, the lamp!

At the top of the burner is the soldering iron hook or holder and it can be easily unscrewed from the burner. Once that is accomplished, that screw hole can be utilized to secure a bracket that holds the threaded hollow shaft we see in most lamps today. It also holds the bow, switch base, and allows the cord to be fed through. Large brass washers can be fitted at the top and bottom of this bracket, and utilizing a copper tube to cover the unsightly portion of the bracket and shaft, produces a compatible addition to the Torch. The lamp cord hangs down, but it really isn't a problem if you position it to the back of the lamp.

And so, now one has a useful addition to any decor and something that can last for years as illumination for your home or office. And, the usual comment is "Now where did you get THAT!!!!" If any of you are interested, I will put together a set of plans with a more detailed description of the process, and then you too, can have a BlowTorch-Lamp!

Jim

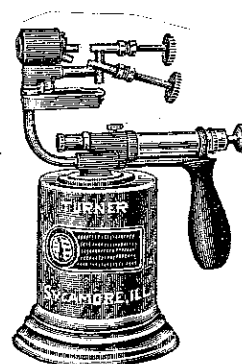
jmacsuga@earthlink.net

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2ND ANNUAL BLOW TORCH CONVENTION:

Plans are being formulated for the 2nd Annual Blow Torch Convention, tentatively scheduled for September 11, 1999 at Jon & Judy Suta's home in Mt. Vernon, WA. You will be hearing more details in the near future as plans are finalized. The format will be similar to last year's event, a one-day show with torch displays, trading & selling, and food provided by Chef Judy at a nominal cost. We are always interested in input for convention improvements, so please contact Jon Suta or me if you have any suggestions.

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TURNER BRASS WORKS
Sycamore, Illinois
Model 48, circa 1923

WEBPAGE IN THE MAKING!

Preliminary work is in process for a dedicated webpage for the Blow Torch Collectors Association to expand our advertising efforts. Our primary interest is promoting blow torches, however we may consider other devices that, while are not blow torches, fall into a gasoline/kerosene fueled device category. Items such as an illuminating torch, a cone-shaped fuel tank with a simple wick protruding from the top. There were also early flat irons that were fueled and ignited for operation. I would be interested in hearing from any member that has a collection of fueled devices, other than blow torches.

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Thanks to all of you that contributed to this issue.
Next issue published in June.

Regards,
Ron

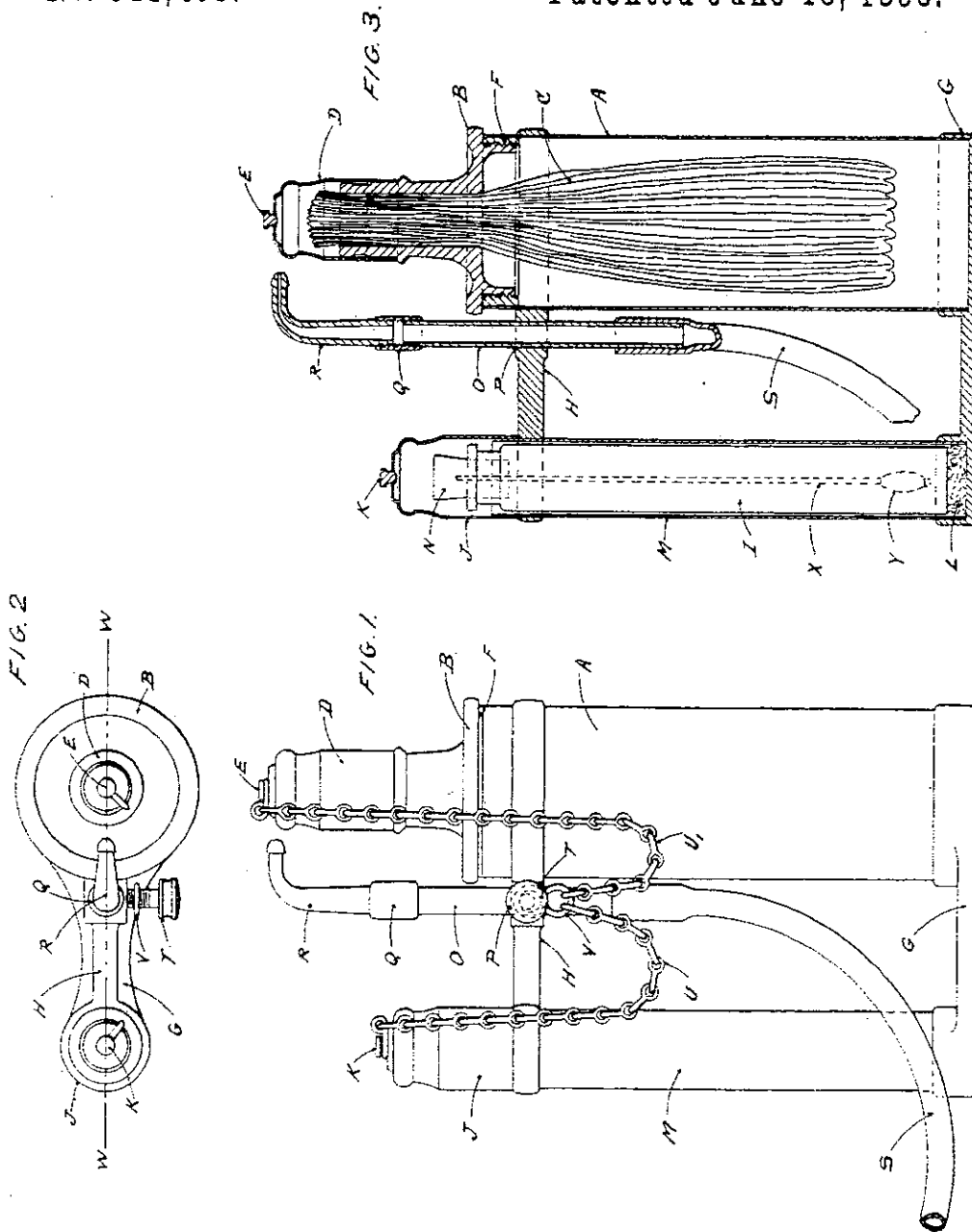
(No Model.)

R. A. WILLSON.

DEVICE FOR COMBINING SOLDERING TORCHES, ACID BOTTLES, AND BLOWPIPES.

No. 541,408.

Patented June 18, 1895.



WITNESSES

Wm. F. G. Lelark
Mary L. Raymond

Russell A. Willson.

INVENTOR

By Clark and Pearl

ATTORNEYS.

CLASSIFIED ADS

For Sale: Turner Brass Works brass blow torch, quart size, red wooden handle, wind screen over burner, soldering iron hook intact, complete decal, circa mid to late 1940's, model 206A(?), (from the photos sent in by the seller, the torch appears to be in GOOD-MINUS with the Bakelite valve handle missing, but easily replaced.) Make best offers to: Chris Dine, 505 Yorkshire Blvd., Syracuse, NY 13219.

For Sale: Turner Brass Works torch, brass fuel tank-quart size, Bakelite pistol grip, Bakelite valve knob, wind shield over burner head, pump in fuel tank. Second torch with no identification, brass fuel tank – quart size, wood handle, soldering iron hook. If interested, make best offers to: Wallace Elkins, Wally's Junktique, PO Box 405, Fairfax, MO 64446

For Sale: Otto Bernz torch, brass fuel tank, air pump in fuel tank, wood handle with brass brackets, good condition, circa 1930's. Make best offers to: Paul Pinson, 19 Chime Bell Church Rd., Aiken, SC 29803, and (803) 648-5335

For Sale: Sears - Craftsman blow torch, quart size, brass tank, Bakelite pistol grip handle, soldering iron hook intact, complete with original box, make best offers to: Alfred Roberts, 4228 Sprague Ave., Hamburgh, NY 14075, or call (716) 648-6382.

Services offered: Peter Trofimchik is offering his blow torch buffing and repair services. His service includes a complete disassembly, cleaning, polishing, and a lacquer finish if requested. This could be the answer to the collectors that do not care to invest in buffing equipment, or would prefer to purchase the service. Peter can be reached at 14 Laura Lane, Wallingford, CT 06492, (203) 269-0249, or email at peter@megahits.com

The **CLASSIFIED ADS** is available at no charge to all members of the Blow Torch Collectors Association in good standing. Advertising for all non BTCA members is available on request. Contact Ron Carr, 3328 258th Ave. SE, Issaquah, WA 98029-9173. (425) 557-0634, or email at roncarr@prodigy.net

ANTIQUE BLOW TORCH CONDITION CLASSIFICATIONS

CONDITION	WEAR	REPAIR	MISCELLANEOUS
NEW	NONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never used. 	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May include original package, operating instructions and accessories.
FINE	MINIMAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor nicks and scratches. • Burner has no evidence of nozzle-end deterioration. • No fuel tank checking. • No missing, broken, or cracked parts. • All original parts. 	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General appearance indicates very little or no abusive usage. • May have been professionally refinished. • Original decal complete.
GOOD-PLUS	NORMAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor dents, nicks, scratches. • Burner has no evidence of nozzle-end deterioration. • No fuel tank checking. • No missing, broken, or cracked parts. • All original parts. 	Minor to None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was used frequently, but has aged well. • Moderate oxidation, with light carbon buildup. • Original decal intact, with some minor edge deterioration.
GOOD	NORMAL TO MODERATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dents, deep nicks, scratches. • Burner has some discoloration due to overuse. • Hairline checking in fuel tank. • Soldering iron hook broken or missing, but no other broken or missing parts. • All original parts. 	Minor and correctly done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well used, but still looks in good condition. • Heavy oxidation, lots of carbon buildup on burner. • Original decal intact, but showing signs of overall damage. • Minor solder repairs acceptable unless it conceals major damage.
GOOD-MINUS	MODERATE TO HEAVY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major dents, numerous nicks, scratches. • Burner has discoloration, with some slight signs of nozzle-end burning. • Moderate fuel tank checking. • Soldering iron hook broken or missing, wood or Bakelite valve handle broken or missing. • All original parts. 	Minor and correctly done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavily used, and showing its age. • Major oxidation, and accumulation of dirt and misc. coatings. • Minor solder repairs to fuel tank checking and/or around fuel feed pipe. • Cracked Bakelite handles, lightly burned wood handles. • Original decal with more than 50% missing.
FAIR	EXCESSIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous major dents, excessive nicks, scratches. • Burner has major damage. • Severe fuel tank checking. • Major parts broken or missing. • Parts substitution, but appearance looks OK. 	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably not suitable to add to a collection. • Could be a source of spare parts. • Decal missing.
POOR	EXTREME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major fuel tank checking and damage. • Major parts missing or broken. • Mismatched parts substitution. 	Major, and poorly done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only useful for parts or raw material for repairs.