

THE TORCH

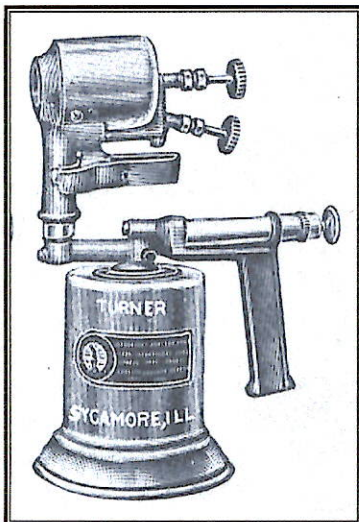
Newsletter of The Blow Torch Collectors Association

- Issue #23 -

- June 2002 -



Turner factory workers, circa 1940's, see page 6



A
Turner
Master
Line
torch

See
Page 3

Other features in this issue:

Revised Turner Blow Torch Index
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NEW MEMBERS

Ronald Bement, Coventry, Connecticut, just started collecting blow torches two months ago at the urging of a friend. And his one torch is beautifully polished and prominently displayed on his living room mantel.

Don Boyce, Bragg Creek, Alberta, Canada, has a modest collection of 30 torches. Don and Carol own and operate the Boyce Ranch, and board and train quarter horses.

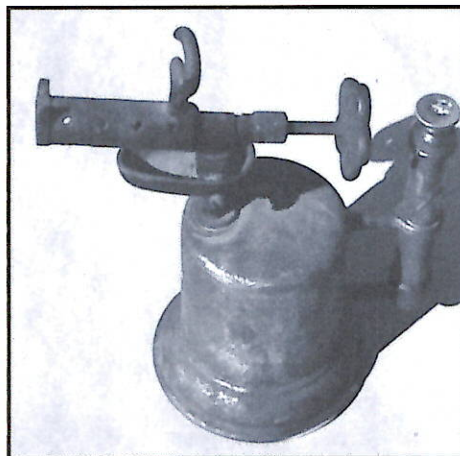
Ray Hyland, Suffolk, England, is a 12-year torch/lamp collector with over 350 pieces to date. Over 70% are cleaned and polished and prominently displayed at many steam rallies in England and on the European continent. Ray also has a small collection of soldering irons.

Curt Pederson, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, after reading about BTCA in Dick Sarpolus' Blow Torch book, decided to join. Curt has been a long-time antique tool collector and recently took interest in blow torches thanks to a good friend and BTCA member, Mel Olson. Curt sold a few torches to Mel, and then decided to start his own collection. He has over 100 in his collection and purchased many on ebay.

Kirk Randall, Brandy Station, Virginia, started his torch collection just 3 months ago and has already accumulated a sizable number. He started by renovating his late father's C&L firepot that hung in the barn for nearly 35 years. Kirk renovates almost all of his torches so that they are fully functional, and he enjoys using them in various soldering applications.

John Weaver, Bristol, England, is a 4-year collector with approximately 80 torches/lamps, and also found BTCA through the "Collectible Blow Torches" book. All of his collection is polished and displayed in his home in Bristol. John also collects Primus stoves.

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS!



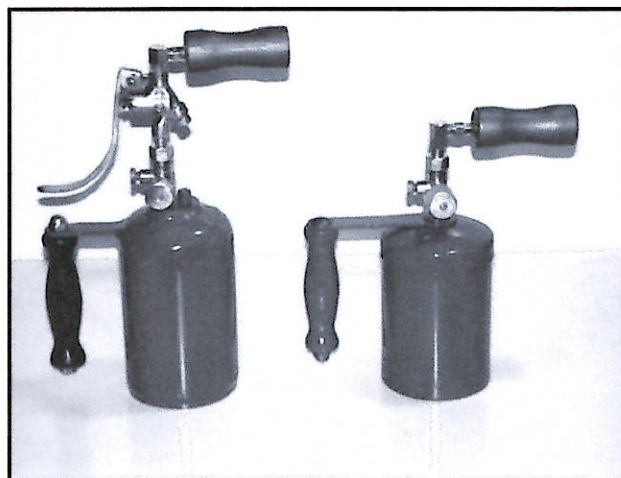
George Diener
TORRID
No. 8

Submitted by
Ashley
Kennedy

NOTES FROM ALL OVER

Ashley Kennedy attended a local Mid-West Tool Collector's meeting in Rockford, IL and found a George Diener one-pint TORRID No. 8 torch... for \$5! It has the typical Diener 5-lobe valve handle, and is in excellent condition. (See photo above.)

Dick Sarpolus, member and author of the *COLLECTIBLE BLOWTORCHES*, sent in photos of two early propane torches, and an unusual blow torch. The earliest produced propane torches were refillable, giving way to the disposable type that we see today. There's little doubt that propane torches pushed gasoline blow torches into extinction. As an update, Dick advised us that book sales for his *COLLECTIBLE BLOWTORCHES* are over 600 copies to date.

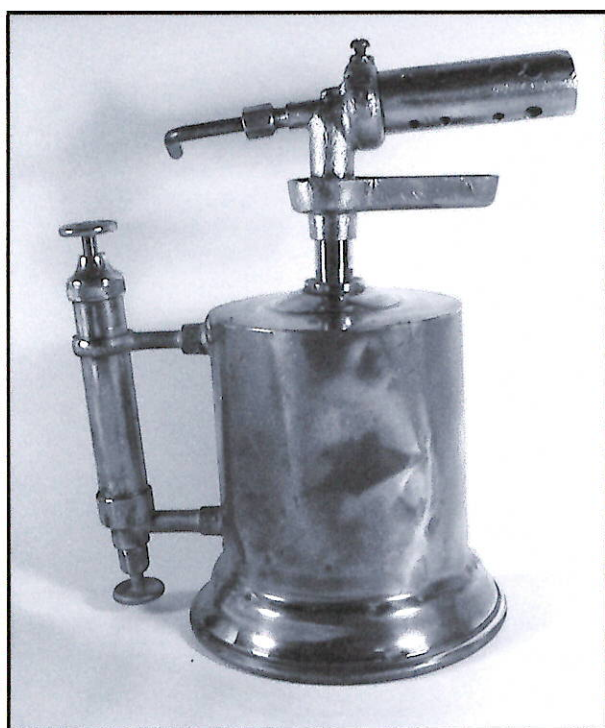


Propane Torches, early version
Submitted by **Dick Sarpolus**

Maurice Jernstedt submitted 7 operating instruction brochures that are new to our growing library. See the article in this issue regarding the new additions.

Don Steininger sent in operating instructions for a Turner No. 59 Gasoline Blow Torch. See the article in this issue for the new additions.

Bill Link sent in photos of a Hydro-Carbon Torch Company torch that his wife first discovered at a Springfield, Ohio flea market. See the article in this issue.



FLINT & LOMAX MFG. CO.
Denver, Colorado
Submitted by Ron Bunting

Ron Bunting has submitted photos of another unknown blow torch manufacturer, FLINT & LOMAX, Denver, Colorado. The entire torch is brass, including the drip cup and fuel feed tube. The only non-brass item is the valve handle with its missing wooden knob. The air valve shutoff and center fuel feed most likely dates this new addition to the turn of the 20th century. Ron also submitted a 1928 Hauck Manufacturing Company letter that included valuable Hauck torch information and will be utilized in the future Hauck index.

Curt Pederson sent in an instruction sheet for an ASL JET ROD Mk. 111, No. 592, made in Birmingham 7, England. We assume that the ASL company exported the JET ROD weed burner torch to the US since the instruction sheet references kerosene as the primary fuel...in England it would be paraffin. Perhaps our British mates across the pond could comment on this company and the weed burner?

Michel Duval submitted a photo of an Otto Bernz quart size blow torch with a steel fuel tank. What is so unusual about it is that the entire torch was copper plated except for the wood handle, brass burner, and brass air pump assembly. Someone went to an incredible amount of work and expense to plate what would be considered a very common torch!

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

TURNER

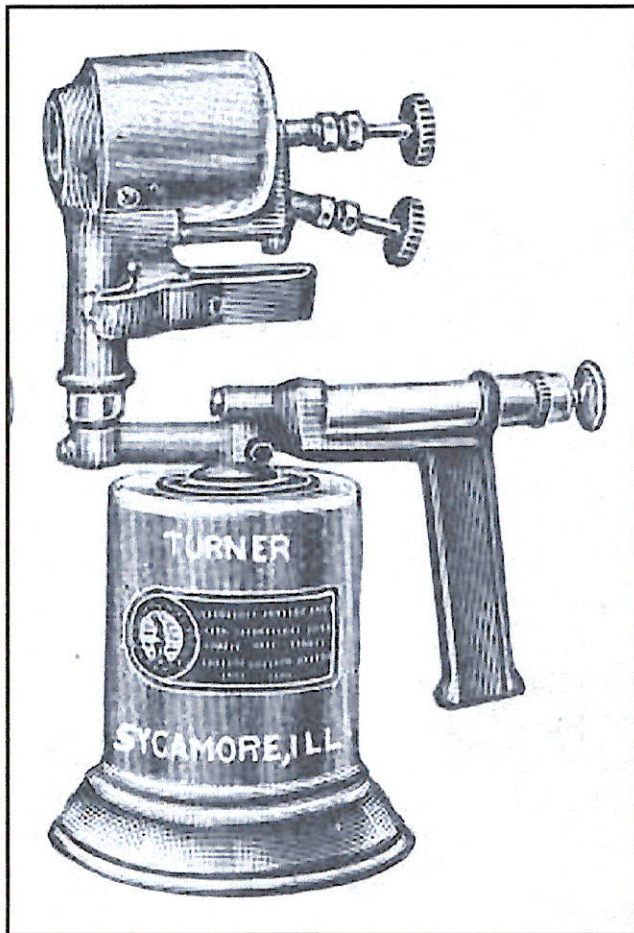
MASTER LINE

Our Contributing Editor, **Graham Stubbs**, has secured another great literature discovery for blow torches, the MASTER LINE blow torches from Turner Brass Works.

MASTER LINE blow torches were produced from the early 1920's into the 1940's, and were marketed as the safest blow torch on the market. They advertised the torches with the logo of "SAFETY ALWAYS", which seemed to conflict with their regular line of blow torches.

Turner produced six MASTER LINE models, numbers 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, and 49. While the model numbers were repeated in follow-on models, Turner drastically changed the configuration and eliminated the trademarked cast brass handle.

MASTER LINE torches had a number of unique features compared to the more common torches being marketed during that period. And because of the many unique features, Turner priced the MASTER LINE above the standard line.

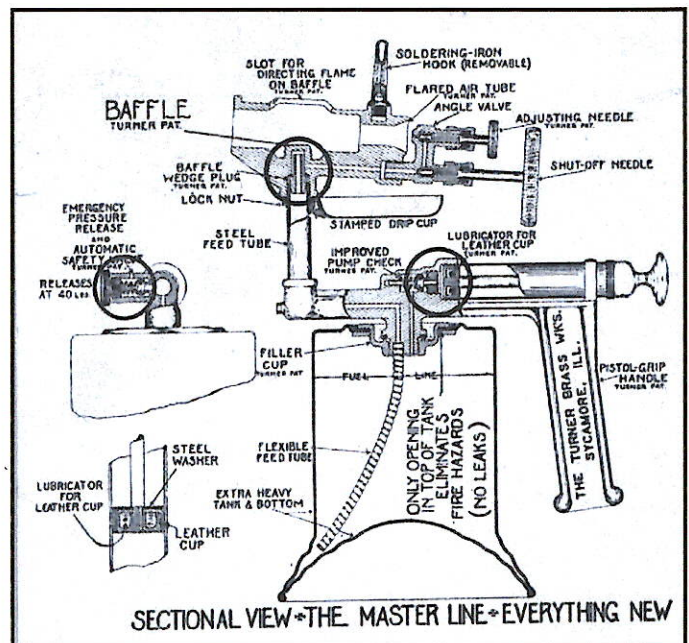


TURNER MASTER LINE, Model #49
Data submitted by Graham Stubbs

- ◆ Burning either gasoline or kerosene without changing orifices.
- ◆ Producing a hotter flame (+400 F) than most other torches.
- ◆ A single top opening with built-in funnel for fuel entry and exit that significantly reduced fire hazards by eliminating fuel leaks.
- ◆ A removable soldering iron hook.
- ◆ An emergency pressure release and automatic safety valve that vented when the fuel tank pressure exceeded 40 lbs. The operator could also use the release mechanism to vent fuel tank air pressure after turning off the torch.
- ◆ A lubricator cup located within the air pump that stored the lubrication (Vaseline) and applied it as the pump was operated.
- ◆ A burner assembly that included a flared air tube entrance for fuel vapor entry, and a baffle feature that created an obstruction to the flame that would insure complete fuel vaporization. A slot in the top of the burner assembly would draw air into the burner chamber and force the flame down on to the baffle. The slotted burner and baffle assembly was advertised as reducing fuel consumption.
- ◆ A flexible copper tube inside the fuel tank to reach the extremes of the tank and a screen to prevent clogging.
- ◆ A dual-needle valve assembly, with a small adjusting valve that makes it more difficult to use sufficient leverage to enlarge the orifice.

Features included:

- ◆ A cast brass pistol grip style handle, with ample room that would not interfere with a gloved hand. The flat grooved design provided a more comfortable fit and nearly eliminated any twisting or turning of the torch during use. The early MASTER LINE torches all boasted a cast brass handle, but when observing the construction, one can easily see why Turner quickly changed the configuration. The cast brass handle assembly included two cast areas for the air pump, the pressure relief valve assembly, the top threaded fuel stopper, and the fuel feed extension. Any significant damage to the rear air pump support would render the handle assembly useless. Later models drastically changed the design to nearly eliminate the possibility of damage.



In summary, should you find a Turner Master Line blow torch in your torch hunting travels, and it has the distinctive cast brass handle, purchase it without question! You will have added a very unique and rare torch to your collection.

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OPERATING INSTRUCTION BOOKS

Thanks to **Maurice Jernstedt** for submitting seven operating instruction brochures and **Don Steininger** for submitting one brochure to our growing library.

The new additions to our list include:

Lenk Blotorch, gasoline, a 1-page instruction sheet on operating a Lenk pump-style gasoline blow torch.

Champion Gasoline Blow Torch, circa 1950 is listed as Turner & Cleanweld, a 3-page manual on care and operation.

Otto Bernz model #30, Self-Blowing Alcohol Torch. A one-page instruction sheet that describes operation and care.

Primus No. 801 Ski-waxing Lamp, 1-page operating instructions printed in English, French, German, and Swedish.

Craftsman Blowtorch No. 5529, operating instructions for the pistol-grip style blow torch from Sears & Roebuck Co.

Craftsman Gasoline Blow Torch No. 249, operating instructions and parts list for the pistol-grip style blow torch from Sears & Roebuck Co. Note: model number is stamped into burner assembly.

LaPine Scientific Co, operating instructions for the laboratory alcohol torch. This is the same model as supplied by Humboldt, Sargent, and Precision Scientific.

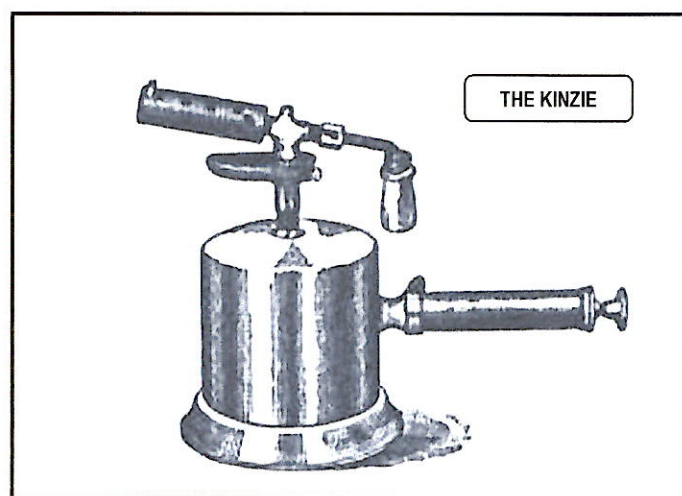
Turner No. 59 Gasoline Blow Torch, ½ pint Self-Pressure type. The two-page brochure provides service, safety, and operating suggestions.

ASL JET ROD MK 111, #593, by the ASL Company. A single page 8-step instruction sheet for a weed burner.

DUNLAP by Sears, Roebuck, Instructions on how to Prime and Operate A DUNLAP Self-Generating Alcohol Blow Torch.

As we mentioned in issue #22, anyone wishing copies can send a size 10 SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) to: BTCA, 3328 258th Avenue SE, Sammamish, WA 98075-9173. Be sure to mention the specific document, and for those of you living outside the US, please advise of your selection(s) and we'll advise postage costs. Also, if you have any operating instructions not listed, please send them in and we'll add them to our growing list.

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TURNER KINZIE

In 1902 the Turner Brass Works produced a small blow torch called the Kinzie Gasoline Blow Torch. It was described as "*of the same general construction as the Old Reliable Torch, and was adapted to the same kind of work, but was a smaller size.*" The burner and fuel tank (one pint) are smaller, however, the amount of heat generated was equal to an Old Reliable Torch. The torch was recommended for jewelers or light electrical wiring tasks.

It may be just a coincidence, but we assume that the Kinzie torch was named after Kinzie Street. The Turner Brass Works originated at 122 Kinzie Street in Chicago.

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HYDRO-CARBON BURNER COMPANY

Bill & Mary Link purchased the first known HYDRO-CARBON BURNER CO., New York, NY, blow torch at a flea market in Springfield, Ohio. And for some unknown reason, we never listed the company in our manufacturers list, even though we list a September 1887 patent under the Hydro-Burner Co.

Bill's Hydro-Carbon torch lists three patent dates; September 27, 1887, June 13, 1899, and March 12, 1901. The September patent describes a coal-fired plumber's soldering iron heater; the June patent is for a H. C. Roberts alcohol torch, and the March patent is still among the missing. It's unknown why the two patents we have copies of are listed for the Hydro-Carbon blow torch when neither patent has any known feature on the Hydro-Carbon blow torch.



HYDRO-CARBON BURNER CO.
Submitted by BILL & MARY LINK

From the photo, it is assumed that there is a burner enclosure missing, however, without closer examination, that cannot be confirmed. The general design and appearance has a European flavor, especially with the pressure relief wing nut on the fuel cap.

Can any of our European members identify this as being similar to any European models?

Mark Pedersen reminded us that he displayed a Hydro-Carbon Co. stove at the 2001 BTCA convention in Brooks, Oregon.

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TURNER BRASS WORKS, SYCAMORE, ILLINOIS

TURNER HISTORY

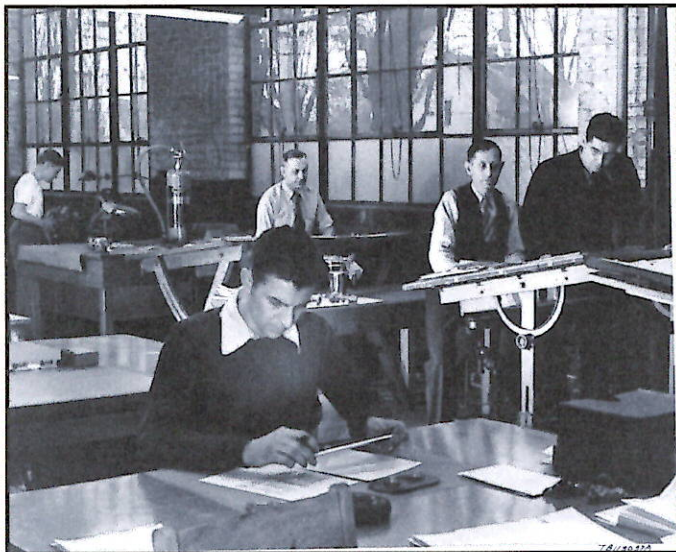
The photograph on page one and the photo on this page are circa late 1940's and depict the interior of the Turner Brass Works factory in Sycamore, Illinois. Jim Niewold, the grandson of Harry A. Mitchell (in the cover photo, the gentleman in the center of the photo with his shirt sleeves rolled up past his elbow), supplied the photos and data.

Jim Niewold is a resident of Sycamore, Illinois and is assembling an historical Turner Brass Works display in the Sycamore Public Museum. According to Jim, his grandfather was born in 1886 in the Chicago area, and when Harry's mother passed away when he was 2 years old, he moved in with relatives in Macon, Missouri. Harry's father passed away some time around 1899, and it was during this time that he returned to Chicago. At about that time, when Harry was in his late teens, he started working at the Turner Brass Works facility in Chicago.

HISTORY CON'T.

It is unknown what type of work Harry performed during his early years with Turner, but we do know that Harry was not educated above high school, and during his later years at Turner, he was a draftsman. He was such a dedicated draftsman that he had a large drafting table set up in his basement at home and had many home projects.

When the Turner Brass Works relocated to Sycamore, Illinois in 1907, Harry and a large number of other employees also relocated to the new facility. It was in Sycamore that Harry met and married a native Sycamore woman. Harry continued to work for Turner into his late 70's, and in his later years worked just a few days each week. He passed away in 1964, while still employed at Turner.



TURNER BRASS WORKS, SYCAMORE ILLINOIS
Note blow torch in center of photo

According to Harry's wife, and Jim's grandmother, Harry and another unknown draftsman were instrumental in the development of the Turner propane torch line that, as we all know, was the demise of gasoline blow torches. We would like to thank Jim Niewold for his grandfathers' information, and give posthumous credit to Harry A. Mitchell for his contributions to the blow torch industry.

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THE FIVE FOOTER

During the early 1900's, the Turner Brass Works produced a five-foot long blow torch! It was made of heavy gauge brass tubing 2 inches in diameter and about 5 feet long. There was a large burner assembly at one end, and a pressure pump and gasoline valve at the opposite end. The torch produced a large hot blast flame and because of the size of the fuel tank, burned for a long duration.



TURNER FIVE FOOTER

The appliance could be operated in any direction or angle, and was suitable for drying or baking sand molds, brazing, pre-heating surfaces, and other specialized applications. It was also popular with farmers and fruit growers where the torch would destroy insect pests and unwanted growing vegetation. It is believed that this is the longest torch ever produced by any manufacturer.

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MAGIC FLUID **REVISITED**

The article printed in issue #22 for the Magic Fluid prompted some members to try out Dr. George's potion to clean blow torches. **Dave Schulte** and **John Hoffman** encountered difficulties obtaining the oleic acid that is listed as one of the ingredients. After some investigating, John located the acid at Lab Pro (www.lab-proinc.com) and at the Fisher Scientific Company (www.fishersci.com).

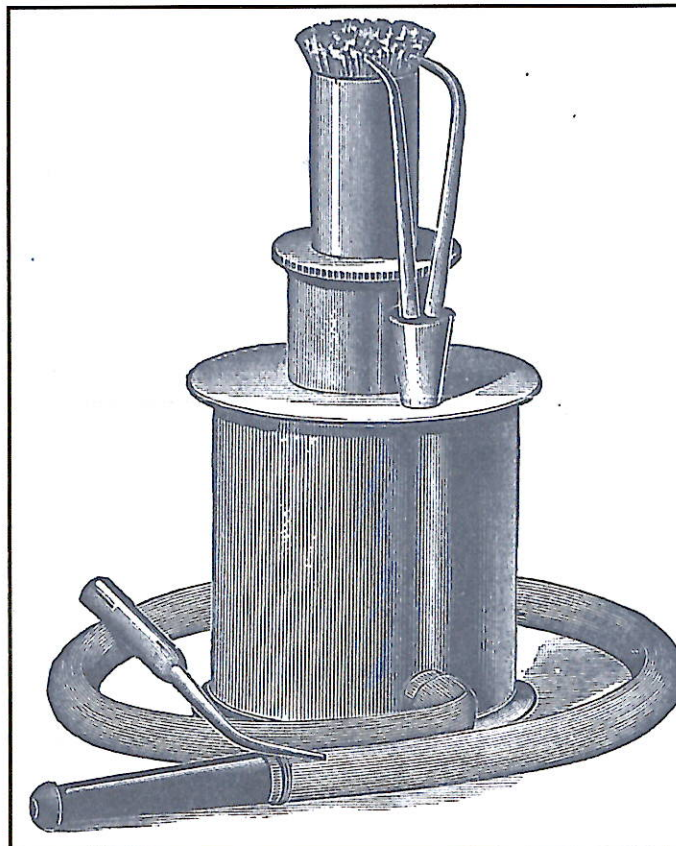
John Hoffman offered the following comments: *"This stuff really works! However, make a double batch of the solution. I have the solution in a large mouth 3 gallon bucket with a sealing lid. I wanted enough room inside the bucket to work with my hands scrubbing off the residue. The plastic scrubber pads work great. The problem was that only 2/3 of a 1-quart blow torch would be covered. The 2/3 that was covered came out sparkling clean after a couple of hours, but the non-immersed 1/3 would get an emerald green coating on it (some type of oxidation?) that would not scrub off. So, I turned the torch over to get the 1/3 part cleaned, but now the exposed 1/3 part that was cleaned oxidized to the emerald green color."*

So, the moral is...make enough solution to immerse the entire torch and it will come out looking great! I haven't tried putting Bakelite or wooden parts in it yet, but if those parts are not affected, then you could come home with a newly purchased grimy torch...throw it in the solution, and in 2 hours you're done. Now what am I going to do with my 10 inch buffer? I wish I knew about this stuff 10 years ago!"

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VIBERT JOINS THE LIST

Another new manufacturer joins our ever-growing list of torch manufacturers. The C. W. Vibert Co., South Windsor, Connecticut, produced a Blowpipe Lamp/Torch most likely from brass, and included a blowpipe with dual air tubes.



C. W. VIBERT BLOWPIPE
Submitted by Graham Stubbs

There is very little information about the patented adjustable device, other than it was used to temper small tools, and accomplished all sorts of small soldering tasks normally done with blowpipes. The listed price of \$2.00, the type of construction, and the style of line drawing in the ad dates the torch to the mid/late 1800's. **Graham Stubbs** provided the information.

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BTCA SHIRTS

As a follow-up to the Official BTCA Tee Shirt article printed in issue #21, page 13...due to insufficient response, we will not be producing a BTCA shirt. It's probably the last shirt you would want to wear anyway when torch hunting. The torch seller would recognize you as a torch collector and be unwilling to negotiate on the price. So look at it in a positive way...we actually saved you lots of money by not producing the BTCA shirt!

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REVISED TURNER INDEX

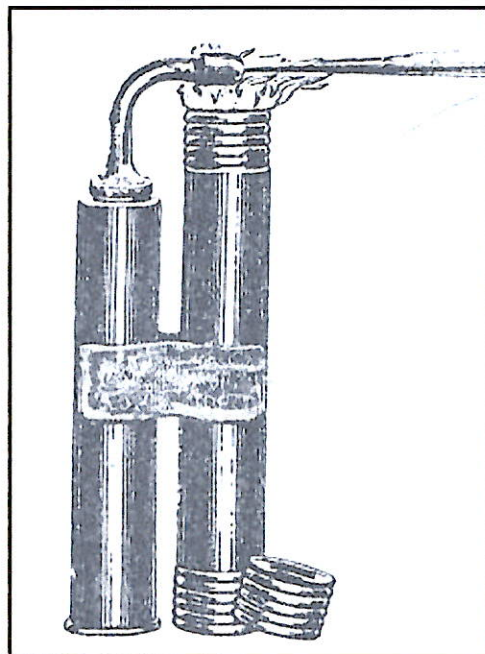
Thanks to the efforts of **Graham Stubbs**, we have reissued the enclosed Turner Index. There are numerous new entries, and Graham elected to split the index into two sections; one for Turner torches, and one for Turner/White torches. If you recall, the Turner Brass Works purchased the rights to the "HOT BLAST" torches circa 1905 from the White Manufacturing Co.

Some of the never-before-seen torches include the KINZIE, (see article in this issue), Turner alcohol torches – no.'s 99 and 801 that both look suspiciously like LENK alcohol torches, and many of the Turner/White torches with their unusual names i.e.: PONY, SAPPHIRE, NERO, METEOR, KING, FIRE FLY, and TEMPEST, just to name a few.



TURNER/WHITE SAPPHIRE NO. 13 BLOW TORCH

The Turner alcohol torches, no's 99 and 801, when compared to an early version of LENK's no. 108 alcohol torch are identical, and leads us to believe that Turner either copied LENK's design after the patent expired, or purchased the torches from LENK and relabeled them as Turner. The fact that they are identical leans us toward the latter assumption. So, if you discover an alcohol torch that looks like a LENK no. 108, but there are no LENK markings, it could be a Turner.



TURNER ALCOHOL TORCH
Model # 801

We hope you enjoy Graham's efforts and find the revised index useful in identifying Turner and Turner/White torches. Please contact us if you have any comments or additions/corrections to the index.

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FREE US PATENTS

Copies of any US patent are now available, on line, at no charge from the US Patent and Trademark Office in Washington, DC. All that is required is a computer and online access to their website on the Internet. We have been using the service for some time with excellent results.

We also asked one of our members, **John Jaress**, to be a "guinea pig" and test our easy-to-use patent access instructions. John reported that the instructions were perfect!

PATENTS CONT.

- Go to the US Patent & Trademark Office at www.uspto.gov
- Click on **PATENTS** on the left side.
- Click on **Search Patents** on the left side, under "Services".
- Click on **Quick Search** on the left side, under "Patent Grants".
- In the "Term 1" data box, input your **patent number**.
- In the "Field 1" data box, scroll to and select "**Patent Number**".
- In the "Select Years" data box, scroll to and select "**All Years**".
- Click on **Search**.

The next screen should show the results of your search, and indicate "1 Hit" if the patent number was valid. Scroll down to the **blue highlighted patent number** and double click on it.

You should now be in the "Patent Full Text and Image Database". If your patent is an older patent, late 1800's or early 1900's, then you will see a message in red; "*Full text is not available for this patent*". Follow the instructions and click on "**Images**" to view the full patent. (Older patents were scanned into the patent system, so what you are viewing is a scanned version of the original documents.)

The next screen you should see is the selected patent in the center, with option icons on the left. The information in the yellow band at the top indicates the number of pages associated with the patent.

To access each page in succession, use the yellow circle arrows to the left. The arrows allow you to scroll forward or reverse one page at a time or multiple pages. To print the patent, you must access each page and print each page individually. Use the print icon in the upper left corner to print.

If you experience any difficulties, contact roncarr@prodigy.net, or John Jaress at jjjaress@inf.net. The Patent and Trademark office also has a help desk at 1-800-786-9199.

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5th Annual BTCA Convention

By now, all members should have received details for the 5th Annual BTCA Convention, being held in beautiful Brooks, Oregon. The all-day event is scheduled for Saturday September 14, 2002 at the Antique Powerland Museum. Our hosts from last year, **Mark & Arlene Pedersen** and **Maurice & Noma Jernstedt** have agreed to a repeat performance and will make all the necessary arrangements as they did last year.

Please join us if possible, and if you require any additional information, please contact Mark, Maurice, or Ron Carr. We are planning on some sort of educational fun presentations, and if anyone has additional suggestions, please contact us. We're looking forward to seeing you in September!



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WEB SURFERS

Due to mounting Website costs we elected to terminate our www.blowtorch.net Website. As an alternative, **Ron Bunting** has set up a community Website at MSN.COM and has agreed to maintain it as required.

The MSN site is free and allows everyone to communicate in their chat room as well as post photos and comments on individual sites. The best news is there is no cost to join, and we encourage all surfing members to visit us at <http://communities.msn.com/BlowTorchCollectorsAssociation>.

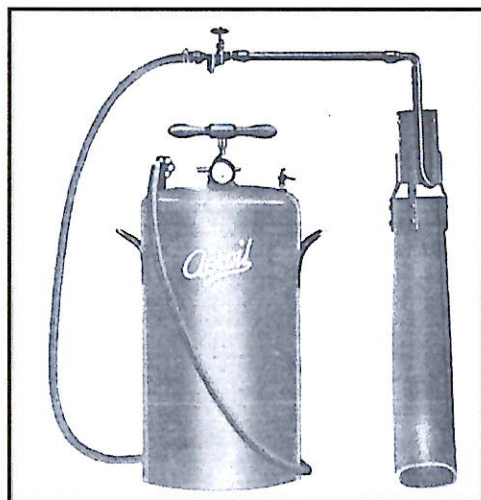
As of this printing there are 187 BTCA members and 110 have email and surf the web.

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AEROIL KEROSENE TORCHES

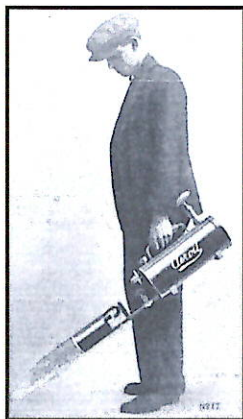
The Aeroil Company, Boston, Mass., produced a line of kerosene-fueled torches during the 1930's that were used primarily for heating concrete and for thawing.

The concrete heater allowed concrete to be prepared during zero degree weather as it heated the mixture to 90 degrees F during the mixing process. The heater attached to the mixer drum and directed a large hot flame onto the mixture. Concrete heated by the Aeroil method remained warm from 48 to 56 hours after it had been poured, and it would harden and set well before it had a chance to freeze.



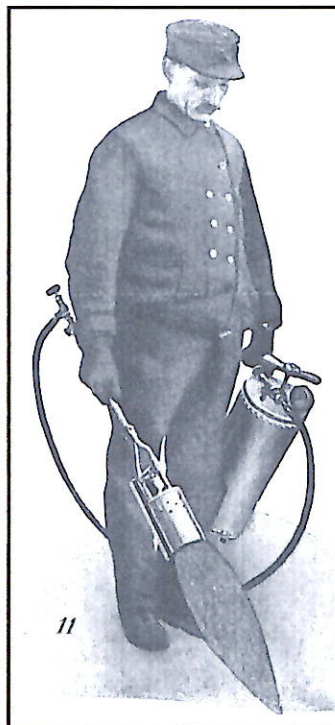
AEROIL CONCRETE HEATER

The Aeroil Company produced four thawing torches, two hand torches in the 1 and 1½ gallon size with the burner assembly integral to the fuel tank, and two larger torches in the 3 and 5 gallon size with the burner assembly separated by a fuel hose.



AEROIL THAWING TORCH
MODEL # 16

Capacity, 1 gallon
20-inch long flame



AEROIL
THAWING
TORCH

Model #10
Capacity, 5 gallons
30-inch flame
weight, 40 pounds

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THE TORCH

Official publication of the Blow Torch
Collectors Association is published
three times per year.

Editor
Contributing Editor

Ronald M. Carr
Graham Stubbs

THE PURPOSE of BTCA is to preserve the history of blow torches and related equipment, to encourage the identification, classification, and exhibiting of such equipment, also to promote the study and better understanding of operation, purpose, and application.

Membership in BTCA is open to any person sharing its interests and purposes. For membership information, write to: Ron Carr, 3328 258th Avenue SE, Sammamish, WA 98075-9173, email to: roncarr@prodigy.net, or by phone: (425) 557-0634.

THE TORCH encourages contributions from anyone interested in our purpose. Articles can be submitted in any format and should include supportive literature whenever possible. All submittals should be sent to Ron Carr at the above address.

**No part of THE TORCH may be copied or reproduced
without the written consent of BTCA.**

CLASSIFIED ADS

Wanted: John Jaress is looking for the complete air pump assembly for the Otto Bernz 75th Anniversary aluminum blow torch. This is the quart size torch with the tapered fuel tank and red handle, red pump knob and red fuel valve knob. John is also looking for the complete air pump assembly for a Bladon B54, ½ pint lamp. Contact John at 6420 Gardenview Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46809, or call 260-478-1113, or email to jjares@infi.net

Trades Wanted: John Weaver would like to trade torches for some of his "doubles". John would also like information on the perils of shipping across the big pond and customs issues. Any experienced traders/sellers can contact John at 15 Bushythorn Road, Chew Stoke, Bristol, BS40 8XP, England, or phone 01275 332972.

Trades Wanted: John Tingle is interested in trading for US manufactured blow torches. He has an abundance of blow lamps and can provide many different models from numerous countries. John is located at Prospect House, 47 Wrington Road, Congresbury, North Somerset, England BS49 5AS, or call 01934 832267, or email to emily@alice13.fsnet.co.uk.

Wanted: Charlie Smith would like to purchase Hercules, Fulton, Merit, Dunlap, or Craftsman torches. They must have readable decals in good condition. Please send or email photographs and asking price to Dr. Charles C. Smith, Geological Survey of Alabama, 420 Hackberry Lane, PO Box 869999, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35485, or phone 205-349-2852, or email to ccsmith@gsa.state.al.us.

Trades Wanted: Scottish collector has a few doubles, unpolished, and would like to trade for US torches. Contact **Michael Hanson**, School House, Sinclairston, Cumnock, Ayrshire, KA18 2RT, SCOTLAND, or phone 01292 590609, or email to mmjjhh@compuserve.com.

Wanted: I am an avid collector of rare engines manufactured by the Mietz & Weiss Co. of New York, and I would like to purchase a Hauck kerosene vertical burner torch. The Hauck vertical burner torch was used to pre-heat the M&W engines, and I would like to find an original Hauck torch to complete my collection. Please contact Dusty Erickson, at 7950 E. Redfield, Suite 160, Scottsdale, Arizona 85260, or phone 480-948-1644, or email to dusty@gameguns.com.

For Sale: A must item for all torch collectors! One of our members, **Mark Pedersen**, is selling replacement wooden handles with a brass collar for the older Turner, O. Bernz, and Clayton & Lambert torches. It is the small wooden handle with a small brass collar that slips onto the steel shaft for the fuel control valve. A majority of the original wooden handles are usually broken or missing which detracts from the beauty and value of the torch. You'll need to specify either a ¼ or 3/16th-hole size, and either black or natural finish. Price is \$2.50 each plus postage. Contact Mark Pedersen, 6112 SW High, Mill City, Oregon 97360, or call 503-897-3101.

The CLASSIFIED ADS is a supplement to *THE TORCH*, and is available for advertising to all members of the Blow Torch Collectors Association in good standing, at no charge. Advertising for all non-BTCA members is available on request. Contact Ron Carr, 3328 258th Ave. SE, Sammamish, WA 98075-9173, (425) 557-0634, or email at: roncarr@prodigy.net