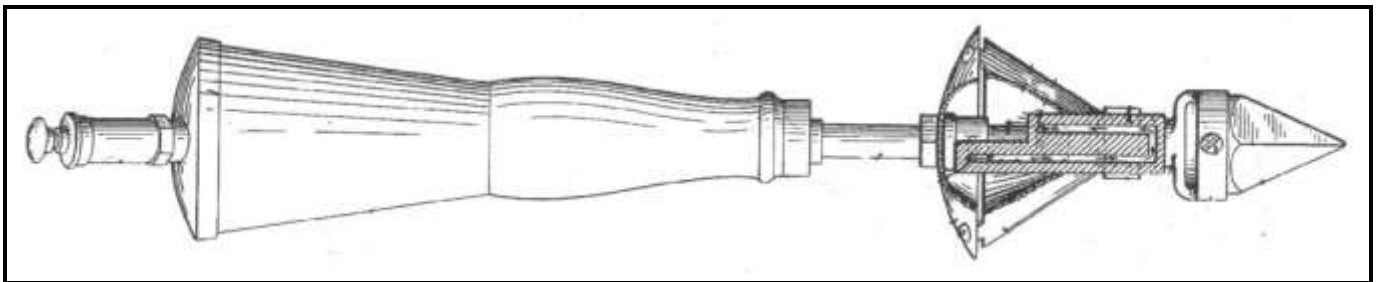


THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION
Issue #33 December 2005



The cartoon advertises a French PYTHAGORE branding lamp and the caption reads: "BREWERS!!!! Save time to mark your barrels with"...and the arrow is pointing to a PYTHAGORE lamp. The cartoon was supplied by Michel Duval. See page 13 for the PYTHAGORE article.



A patent illustration for a DOBBINS MFG. COMPANY Combined Soldering Iron and Blow Torch, circa 1912. See page 14 for article on Dobbins and Bartholow.

NEW MEMBERS

Rudy Abild, Sun Lakes, Arizona just started his torch collection in 2005.

Ron Anderson, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota is relatively new to blow torch collecting, and actually got started after he viewed Lloyd Weber's collection. Lloyd not only is Ron's friend...but is also his dentist. The pleasure of friendship...the pain of dentistry.

Janette Dell, Armidale NSW Australia, is a 2-year collector with over 110 pieces in her collection. She saw a small lamp collection at the Macksville Machinery Show...her husband said he had a lamp in the shed...they went home...she polished it...and has been hooked ever since. Almost all of Janette's collection is polished and proudly displayed in their home. She also collects soldering irons, oil cans, and Primus stoves.

Bill Goetzinger, Council Bluffs, Iowa is a 1-year collector that got the "Blow Torch Fever" after seeing Dave Weaver's collection.

Metro Roark, Valparaiso, Indiana, is a 20-year collector that remembers using blow torches on the farm when he was a young boy. Metro certainly understands the application of blow torches since he is a union pipe fitter. He also collects soldering irons and fire pots.

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS!



NOTES FROM ALL OVER

We always look forward to the photos and information sent in by **Mel Olson**. Among his recent acquisitions included a somewhat rare Lenk model no. 600 alcohol torch. What's so unusual about the torch is the air pump...something not usually found on such a small torch. Lenk is the only manufacturer known to adapt an air pump to this style of alcohol or gasoline torch. (The Lenk model 601 is the gasoline version) Mel has been looking for this torch for quite some time, and he finally hit pay dirt.



Mel Olson's Lenk #600 Alcohol Blow Torch

Kelly Weaver must be on the torch collecting fast track...he went from 15 to 115 torches since last year!

Paul Whiddett acquired two relatively rare US torches in England...a Baum & Bender and a Murray-Black. We find it somewhat amazing that many rare US torches are in Europe and in some cases the prices do not reflect their true value. Paul also has a Garrett and Paquelin for sale or trade...see *CLASSIFIED ADS* section.

One of our new members, **Janette Dell**, sent in a photo of her blow lamp display at a local rally. The photo represents just a few lamps from her collection.



Janette Dell's blow lamp display at a local rally

Marnik Van Insberghe swapped a Max Sievert Model "U" for a very rare Ransom & Randolph blow torch. At the time of the swap, Marnik did not know the value of the Ransom torch, but he said that "it looked like a good one", so he did the trade. A good choice on his part of the deal since Ransom torches are rare, even in the US!



Marnik's Ransom & Randolph blow torch

Leroy Goodwin and his wife Nancy just returned from Lake Charles, Louisiana where they volunteered their chainsaw sharpening services for hurricane Rita victims. They brought their infamous "Blow Torch Trailer" (see the cover of issue #20 for photo) to Louisiana and it was a conversation piece everywhere. Grateful recipients of their sharpening services actually gave them blow torches as gifts.

Longtime member **Mark Pedersen** traveled to Peru and Bolivia on vacation...and went looking for blow torches armed with torch photos to circumvent the language barrier. The locals knew about blow torches, but no luck in finding any.

One of our senior members, **Otto Mildner**, is doing well after a 5 hour operation on his heart ...he's 90 years old!

Suzey Proctor is campaigning for a Director position with Toastmaster's International. We're not sure which is her greater passion...public speaking or torch collecting. We suspect that it's the speaking side and we wish her success on the election.

Keith Hawkins recently purchased a Wellington torch in excellent condition, in England, for \$102....what a bargain!

John Lawler moved to Scotland 3 years ago on a 4 year assignment from the US, and has started to pick up a few European torches for his collection. Not knowing exactly what he has or what to look for....perhaps our collecting friends across the Big Pond could provide some assistance. John can be reached at NHOJRELWAL@yahoo.co.uk or at his mailing address in the enclosed membership list.

Another blow torch bargain story came from **Wendel Fritz**. He was at a steam rally in Kinser, PA and picked up two torches for \$50....and one of the torches was a Brookins! Now that was a real bargain!

Ashley Kennedy attended the Mid-West Tool Collectors national meeting in Decatur, Illinois and saw a great display for a band saw brazing device that was manufactured by the Ambler Saw Mfg. Co. We've seen ads for the Ambler brazing device that were provided by [Maurice Jernstedt](#) and [Graham Stubbs](#), and both members own band saw braziers.



Band saw brazier by the Ambler Saw Mfg. Co.

EOLIPHYLOGIST....that's the name that **Mal Mutimer** came up with to describe a blow torch/lamp collector. An EOLIPHYLOGIST is someone that collects devices based on the effect

of forces produced by a jet of gas, and the word is derived from the French word “eolipyle”. Mal thought that we needed a name to describe what we do, kind of like philatelists, or stamp collectors. If anyone can come up with a better name than EOLIPHYLOGIST, then Mal is willing to award that person with a restored Australian made Companion blow lamp. Put your thinking caps on, and if you think you have a winner, please contact Ron Carr or Mal directly.

Graham Stubbs always provides a multitude of photos and information for each of our newsletters, and as a Contributing Editor he also authors many articles. He offered a photo of a Stayhot, models A & B that were manufactured by the Thermo-Gas Products Co., Brooklyn, NY. Model B does seem to be more prevalent and Model A's are somewhat rare. If you have either model, you might not know this, but there's a cleanout wire wrapped around the inside of the wooden lid on the end of the handle of the torch. Check it out to see if you have a hidden cleanout wire.

model before, and it looks identical to a Lenk model #20. Even though the Bernz Company was one of the three largest blow torch manufacturers in the US during the turn of the 20th century, it's certainly possible that they sourced the #604 from Lenk rather than manufacturing it. Here's another blow torch mystery that we may never solve.



Otto Bernz Co.
No. 604
Alcohol torch



Stayhot Models A & B

Graham also provided a photo of one of his recent purchases, an Otto Bernz #604 alcohol torch. We've yet to see this particular

Michel Duval is forever growing his blow lamp collection, but what's so unusual about Michel's collection is that he has lamps from 411 different manufacturers! They come from all over the world...many are from the obvious countries like the US, England, and France, but also included are lamps from Russia, Bulgaria, India, Poland, Austria, Brazil, and numerous other countries.

A few members have written in asking for a blow torch buyer's guide on prices. As much as we would like to establish torch prices, that would be a very formidable task. And, if we ever did publish a price guide, the first thing antique stores would do is raise their prices to reflect what we believe are market prices. We would prefer that the antique stores and malls continue to guess at values so we can, on occasion, find a bargain. Also, in some instances eBay bidding appears to be way above what we believe are market prices, so prices are determined by market demand and not by what one would read in a price guide.



5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The following members are celebrating their 5th anniversary as members of BTCA. Congratulations on your first five years and thank you for your continued support of BTCA!

S. B. Brilla	Joseph Burns
Eugene Clark	Philip Eng
Michael Hanson	Bobby Hartness
John Harvey	Keith Hawkins
Boyce A. Hoyle Sr.	Richard Hunter
Gregorio Lopez Benito	Bob Mitchell
Mal Mutimer	Gene Strate
Robert Turner	Lloyd Weber
Robert Whitaker	Tom Wilfong

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

A special thank you goes out to the following 18 members that joined BTCA during its first year of existence. Many thanks for staying with us for 10 years!

Bill Bennett	Dan Carter
Richard Duling	John Forhan
Leon Hall	Glenn Harrison
Louis Klein	David Kolb
Lewis Lupton	Larry Parker
Mark Pedersen	Dick Sarpolus
Bob Steinke	Gary Stelmach
Graham Stubbs	Jon Suta
Mike Thornhill	Chuck Tobin



8th Annual BTCA Convention

There's a saying in Las Vegas; "**WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS STAYS IN VEGAS**". So while we can't tell you everything that happened at the Friday night BBQ and at the 8th annual BTCA Saturday event, we can at least provide some of the highlights.

The Friday evening BBQ was hosted by **Ron & Janet Carr** at their home in NW Las Vegas. It was a wonderful time to socialize with everyone without all of the blow torch displays. The buffet dinner was followed by **Graham Stubbs** demonstrating how to light and operate a blow torch...fortunately it was an outside BBQ event.

The Saturday event was held at the Santa Fe Station Casino in the PECOS ROOM, and the casino provided a dedicated wait staff for our every needs. There were 8-foot tables positioned on the perimeter of the room where attending members arranged their blow torch displays. The buffet lunch was awesome with plenty of great food and beverages.

ATTENDEES

Ron & Janet Carr
Bo & Pauleen Escobar
Larry Fields & Pat Hauser
Michael Hill
Jim & Marlys Janke
Ron & Tracey Johnson
Linda Lopez
Charles & Shirley Monthy
Dr. Charles Smith
Graham & Stephanie Stubbs
Luciano Vasconcelos
Lloyd & Patti Weber

All member attendees had a blow torch display...all except **Ron Johnson**. Unfortunately Ron was stopped at the Syracuse, NY airport with his load of torches neatly packed in two suitcases. We sent Ron a request list of torches to bring because he has some very unusual and rare torches, and every one of the requested torches was in the suitcases. He spent hours trying to convince the airport officials that he should be allowed to check the bags, and unfortunately he lost the discussion and was forced to haul his bags of torches back to his vehicle. Needless to say...not only Ron was disappointed, but also all of the attending members at the event.

Charles Smith displayed an alcohol torch from a manufacturer not seen before; the Taylor Co., Philadelphia, PA and we have since added them to our manufacturing list. The Taylor torch is very similar to other alcohol torches; it's all brass with a screw cap to prevent evaporation and an adjustable blow pipe.



Charles Smith with a Taylor alcohol torch

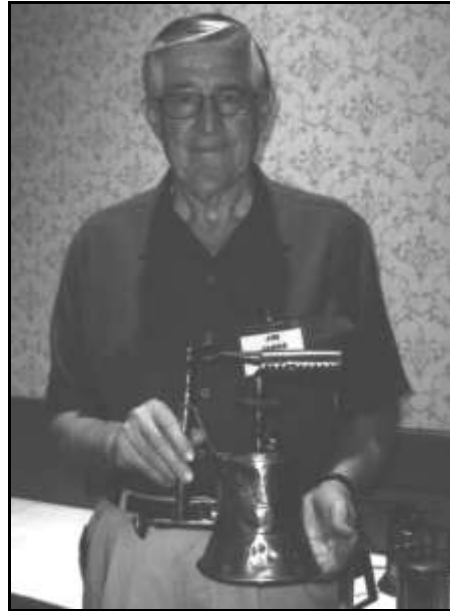
Charles also displayed four different Vulcan torches, 3 that were manufactured by the Bridgeport Brass Co., and one that was manufactured in Germany. All 3 of the Bridgeport Vulcan's were different in how they were marked with patent dates or manufacturers name. What's interesting about the German Vulcan is that it predates the Bridgeport Vulcan's, and because the designs are so close in appearance, we can only guess how Bridgeport arrived at their design.

Graham Stubbs' display has always been a showstopper, and in spite of losing his main source of transportation to a serious auto accident, he still managed to bring just about every torch. One of his rare torches made the trip from San Diego...a Volcano manufactured by the Volcano Torch Mfg. Co., Erie, PA. From the photo you can see the large steel fuel tank and the intricate burner assembly.



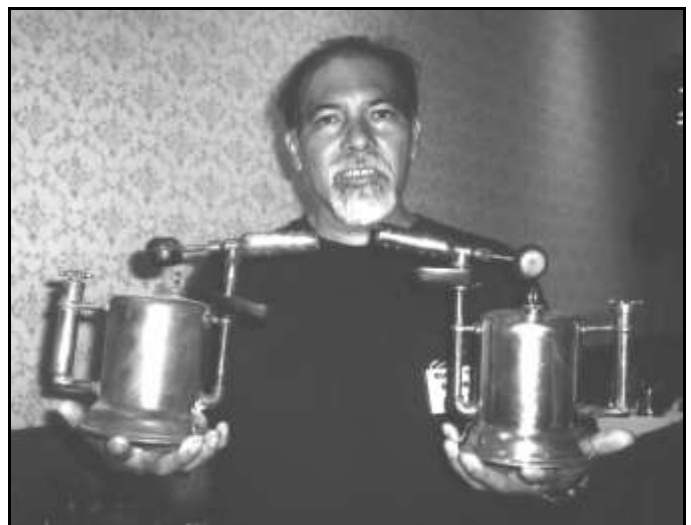
Graham Stubbs holding a Volcano Blow Torch

Jim Janke brought up a load of torches from Arizona, and one of his prized pieces is a very early Globe blow torch that was manufactured by the Globe Gas Light Co., Boston, MA. There are only three known Globe torches of this style...do you have one?



Jim Janke Displaying a very rare Globe blow torch

Bo Escobar had on display an Alex Rowland torch with a patent date of June 11, 1912. Since the patent is assigned to the Schaefer & Beyer Co., we elected to list the Rowland Co. as a Brand Labeled company. The second Rowland torch he's holding belonged to another member, Ron Carr.



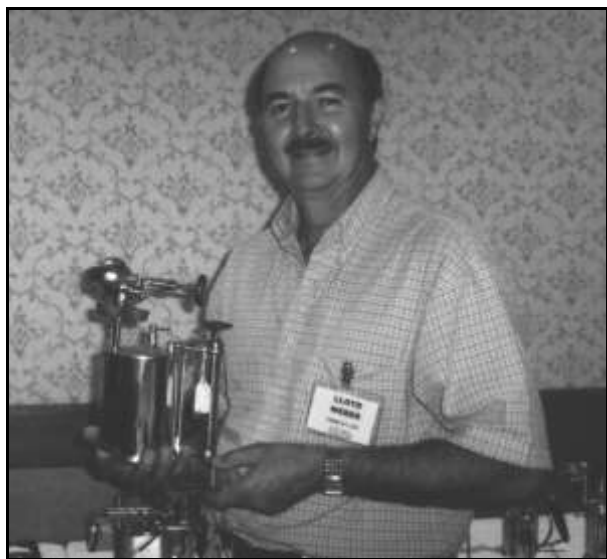
Bo Escobar with two Alex Rowland blow torches

Larry Fields was able to get by the airport security with a few of his favorite torches for his display. One of his pieces included a Union Heater Supply Co. torch in very good condition. There are only two other members that own Union torches.



Larry Fields holding a Union Heater Supply Co. blow torch

Lloyd Weber is smiling in his photograph since he's one of the few owners of an Invincible blow torch. Lloyd personally refinishes all of his torches, and he takes the restoration process to a very high level of perfection.



Lloyd Weber proudly displays his Invincible torch

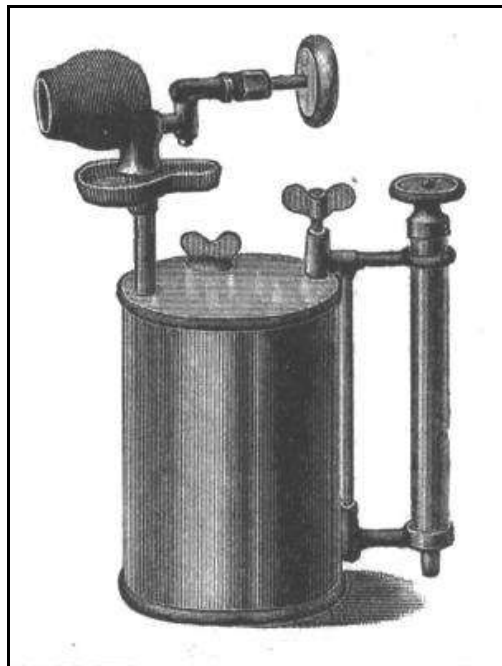
The chances are better than 50/50 that the 9th Annual BTCA Convention will be held in Tacoma, WA in 2006. We've been working with **Al & Elaine Austin** on location, timing, and other details. As always, we look to all members for suggestions and those willing to assist. Please contact Ron Carr or the Austin's.



THE INVINCIBLE

This has been one of the most elusive companies for information, and up until now, little was known about the Invincible torch or the manufacturer. Thanks to **Charles'** incredible research efforts, much information has been uncovered and is shared with you in this article.

We are aware that two of our members, **Mel Olson & Lloyd Weber**, and one ex-member are proud owners of Invincible torches (please contact us if you own one). The only literature that we ever saw was, ironically enough, a French undated advertisement for an Invincible torch sent in by **Michel Duval**.

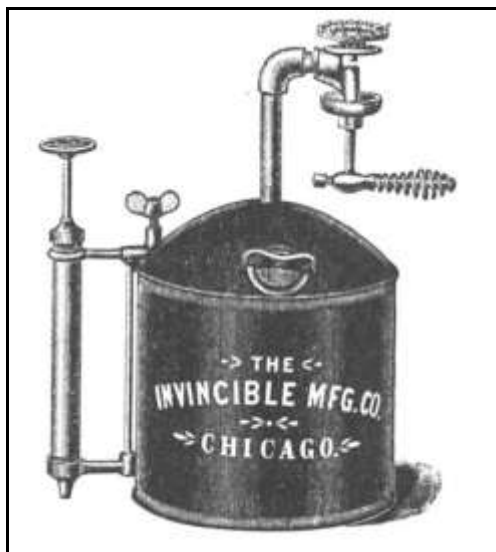


Invincible blow torch, circa 1897

The first known advertisements for the Invincible Mfg. Co. showed up in *THE METAL WORKER* in early 1896. The company was then located in Chicago, IL and were producing a wide range of products that included blow torches, bicycle brazing forges, lighting torches, soldering & melting furnaces, wall mounted illumination torches, and 2 & 3 burner cooking stoves. At some point in time the company moved its manufacturing operations to Wilmington, IL, located 50 miles southwest from Chicago.

The Invincible blow torch has one of the most unusual and distinct looking burner heads, and when seeing the burner head, one cannot help but readily identify it as an Invincible torch. Just about the entire torch was made from high quality brass, and in spite of its large burner size, the design allowed the user to adjust the flame down to needle size for small delicate work. The flame was also hot enough to fuse brass or copper.

In late 1896 the company introduced a gasoline torch designed for lighting purposes. The article provided little information on the lighting torch; however from the illustration one could assume that the fuel tank had at least a 2-3 quart capacity.

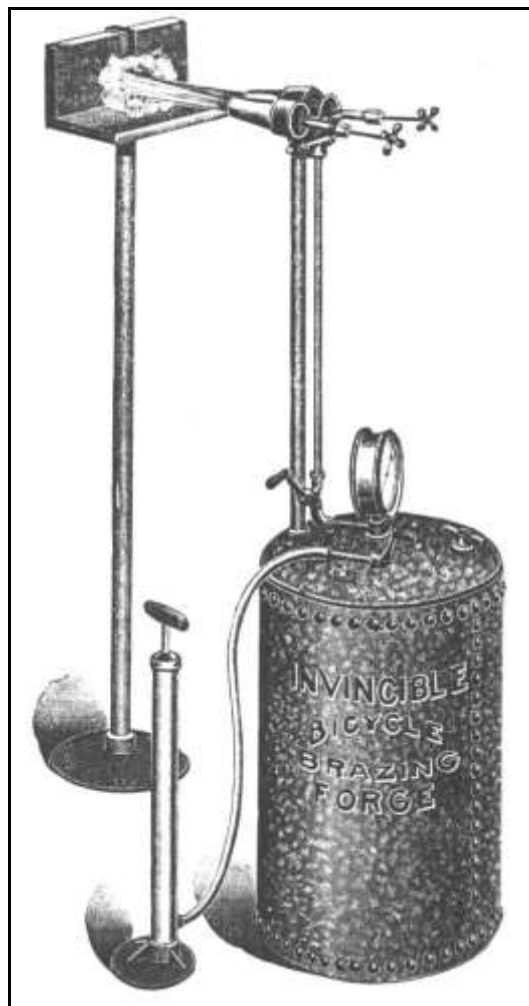


The Invincible Lighting Torch
Circa 1897

The article stated: *"It is pointed out that plumbers, furnace men, steam fitters, and street workers who are called upon to work in dark places will find this torch both light and convenient to handle and a very powerful illuminator."*

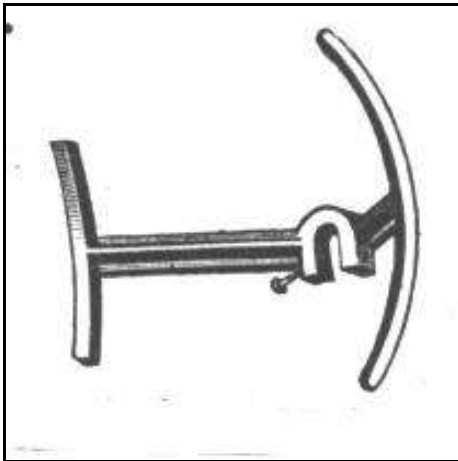
It is further pointed out that as a camp and fishing torch, it is possessed of features of great merit, as it is said to stand the strongest wind without being blown out, and to give a light scarcely inferior to an arc light in its power."

The Invincible Bicycle Brazing Forge appears to be a real behemoth of a device, and considering its size, it must have put out an incredible amount of heat. It was expressly designed for bicycle brazing and tool tempering, and was fitted with dual burner heads for maximum heat. The burner assembly did not come with any sort of drip cup for initial ignition, but the brazier was provided with a "device" with which to heat the burner generator. The fuel tank was tested to 200 PSI, and included was a separate bicycle style air pump along with a pressure gauge.



The Invincible Bicycle Brazing Forge
Circa 1896

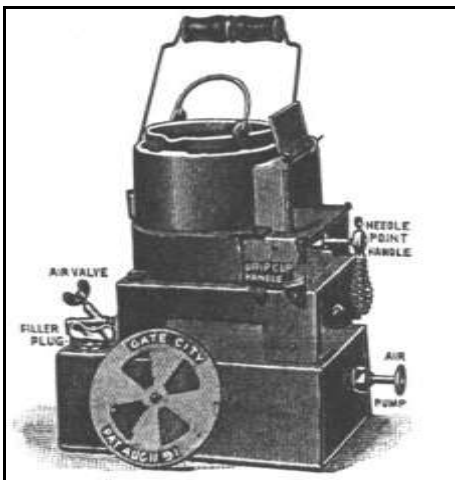
A soldering iron holder was available for the blow torch as an optional accessory that could hold up to two irons, and the holder was designed to be easily attached.



Invincible Soldering Iron Holder

We frequently find conflicts in the blow torch world on who manufactured what and for whom...and that's the case with the Invincible Gate City soldering & melting furnace. An early 1897 advertisement appeared in *THE METAL WORKER* for the Gate City furnace "manufactured" by the Invincible Mfg. Co., Wilmington, IL, with an August 11, 1891 patent date.

However, in August 11, 1891 a patent was issued to Wm. A. Nicholas for a furnace...and in 1897 we know that the Wm. A. Nicholas & Co. were selling the very same furnace advertised under the Invincible name.



Invincible Gate City Plumbers Furnace
Patent dated August 11, 1891

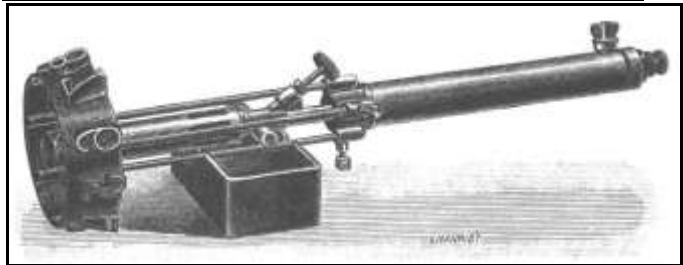
We may never know the relationship between Invincible & Nicholas Companies, or who manufactured what and where....another mystery yet to be solved. Please let us know if you have an Invincible or Nicholas torch or furnace.



PYTHAGORE

One of our US members acquired a Pythagore blow lamp and asked if we had any information or history regarding the lamp. Thanks to a quick email to **Ray Hyland**, who in turn emailed **Michel Duval**, we now have everything we will ever want to know about Pythagore blow lamps.

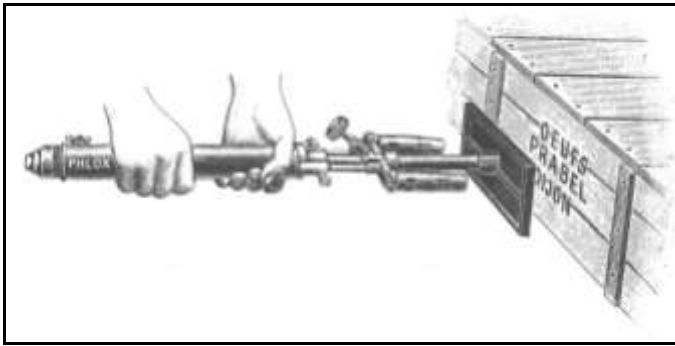
According to Michel, Pythagore is interpreted as a device for branding or marking under heat.



Pythagore Number Branding Lamp
Manufactured by Express
Circa 1924

There are actually two devices, a Pythagore and a Phlox...both were manufactured by the Express Company in France. Leon Guilbert (1870 – 1939) was the founder of Express and holds the patents for both devices. They were patented on November 19, 1920 in Paris, France, patent numbers 197,712 and 197,713. The Pythagore blow lamp is very rare, even in France.

The devices were gasoline fueled and operated on the same principal as the US manufactured Everhot Branding/Soldering Blow Torch with numbering disks or branding plates. Like the Everhot, Pythagore lamps were offered with different fuel tank sizes and different number sizes on the branding disks.



A Phlox Branding Lamp shown branding a wooden crate
Phlox branding lamps were available with single or dual burners
Circa 1924

Some time in the early 1930's, Express also developed an electric number branding device known as the Kausis. They were produced in numerous wattage sizes to accommodate the many numbering plates.



Kausis Electric Number Brander
Manufactured by Express
Circa 1933

Michel works at Express...and his boss is Didier Guilbert, the grandson of Leon Guilbert. Because of where he works, Michel was able to provide numerous pages of information with illustrations of Pythagore and Phlox blow lamps dating from 1924 to 1961, some of which are included in this article.

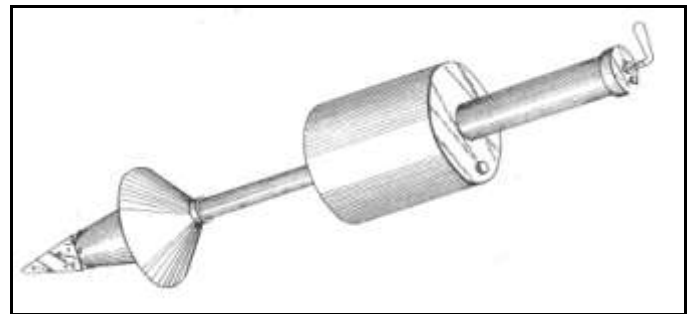


IN REMEMBRANCE:

One of our members, **Roger Keller** of Fergus Falls, Minnesota passed on as a result of a farming accident. Our condolences go out to his wife and family.

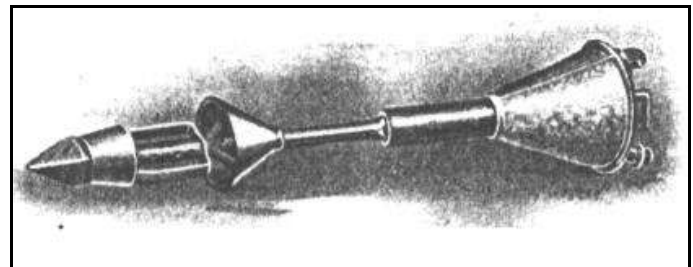
BARTHOLOW & DOBBINS

Thanks to **Charles Smith** and his research efforts...another new torch and manufacturer have surfaced. An article in *THE METAL WORKER* featured a Self Heating Soldering Iron that was manufactured by the W. P. Bartholow Mfg. Co., Webster City, Iowa. W. P. Bartholow was also the inventor, and was awarded a US patent, No. 763,243, that was issued four months after the dated article of February 1904.



Patent illustration for W.P. Bartholow Self Heating Soldering Iron
June 21, 1904

As is in many cases, the illustration in the patent differs from the actual product where the fuel tank was eventually located to the rear of the soldering iron. The fuel was fed down a 1/4 inch pipe from the fuel tank to the burner head or point. The pipe also acted as a stem for the copper point which was made hollow, and the blow torch behind it forced the flame down into it, thereby heating the point uniformly. The soldering iron included an air pump that was located at the rear of the fuel pump. The device could also be utilized as a blow torch by removing the copper point.



The only known illustration of a Bartholow Self Heating Soldering Iron
As found in *THE METAL WORKER*, 1904

Fast forward approximately 8 years, to 1912, and we find the inventor, W. P. Bartholow with another similar invention, but it's now assigned to another company...the Dobbins Mfg. Co., Minneapolis, MN. The 1912 patent, No. 1,024,170, references his earlier 1904 patent and the details indicate improvements in his previous patent design.

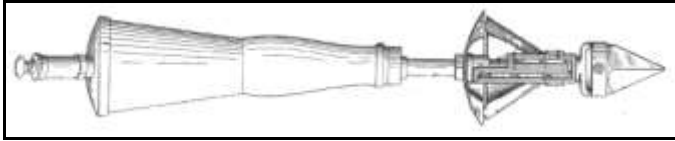


Illustration from a Bartholow patent, dated 1912
Assigned to the Dobbins Mfg. Co., Minneapolis, MN

From the patent illustration, one can see the newer design improved on the fuel tank shape and simplified the fuel feed system. Charles has not uncovered any information on the Dobbins Company to date, nor are we aware that any of our members own a Bartholow or Dobbins soldering iron torch. We're not even sure if the Dobbins Co. ever produced such a torch, so... if anyone is fortunate enough to have one of these rare beauties, please....let us know.

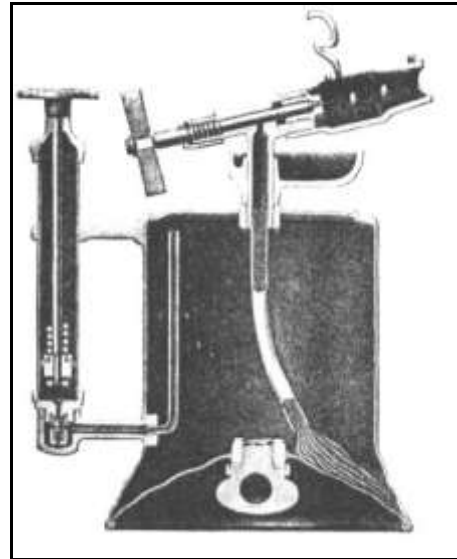


WESTINGHOUSE

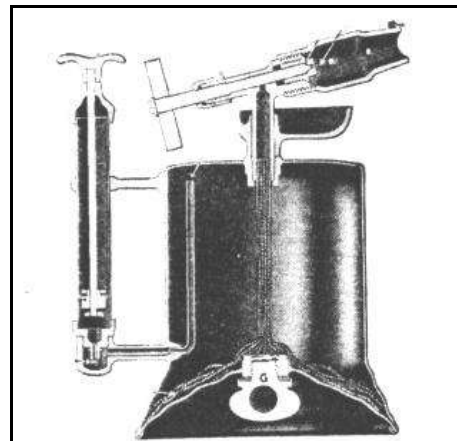
We made mention of a Westinghouse blow torch that one of our members, **Frank Eskra** had purchased back in 1999, (see issue #14, page 4), and now more information has been made available from **Charles Smith**. Two articles, one each in 1913 and 1914, appeared in *THE METAL WORKER* describing a Universal Blow Torch "manufactured" by the Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Co., East Pittsburgh, PA. The illustration provided in the article is identical to the photos that Frank submitted...except that Frank's torch is a pint size.

We're a bit stymied since the Westinghouse torches look very much like the torches produced by the Ridgely Trimmer Co., including the unique burner head shape, the up-angled burner assembly, and the large fiber valve handle.

You can see from the two illustrations, one from Westinghouse and one from Ridgely Trimmer that the two are nearly identical.



Westinghouse
Blow Torch
Circa 1912



Ridgely Trimmer
Blow Torch
Circa 1914

One feature not heard of in a Ridgely Trimmer torch, but featured in the Westinghouse torch was a unique fuel tank design. The tank was not only made of extra heavy brass, but it was reinforced by the insertion of an extra heavy corrugated brass disc.

There is no way to determine if Ridgely Trimmer produced the Westinghouse torch, but from the Westinghouse torch characteristics, it's a good bet that Ridgely Trimmer had something to do with it. We know of one other Westinghouse torch that was sold on eBay. It was a quart size, and according to Charles Smith, it looked just like Frank Eskra's torch. (Can you believe that Charles actually lost the bidding?)

Let's hear from any members that have a Westinghouse torch.

BLUE HIGHWAYS

The title refers to the blue highway color on Rand McNally maps, and is also the title of a book authored by William Least Heat-Moon.

The author took to the road after losing his wife, and journeyed 13,000 miles along the back roads of the US in search of the old and folksy. *Blue Highways* is the result of his road voyage and is an engaging portrait of back road America. Here is a quote from his book; page 309:

"Now kids don't know what a blow torch is, but they were beautiful things that built the country. Precision brass fittings machined to critical tolerances. Blew like thunder and ran like steam engines, and they lasted forever because they were designed and built...not just assembled. The throwaway propane bottle put us out of business. Those things are designed as junk and built accordingly. But the true blow torch! A son inherited his dad's torch. I loved the work because I knew somebody would keep what I made."



Classified Ads

George Murray is looking for a soldering tip for his Everhot soldering iron blow torch. He will purchase it, or he's willing to trade an Everhot branding iron tip for a soldering tip. You can contact George at 302-368-3336, email to george.w.murray-1@usa.dupont.com, or mail him at the address listed in the enclosed membership list.

Malcolm Forster is always interested in buying or trading for US manufactured blow torches. He'll even consider purchasing complete collections. You can call Malcolm at 01625 425693, or write to him at the address listed in the enclosed membership list.

Jeannot Strasser is interested in purchasing an ACME paint burner that was manufactured by the WP Pope Co. of Brooklyn, NY. He's willing to also trade for the ACME, and he may have a comparable blow lamp that equals the ACME value. Interested individuals that are fortunate enough to have two or more ACME's can reach Jean by email at janlamp@wanadoo.fr, or write to him at the address listed in the enclosed membership list.

Terry Foutch is selling his entire collection of over 550 pieces of blow torches, soldering irons, electric irons, and plumbers' furnaces. We're not sure if Terry will sell individual pieces, so you'll need to contact Terry for details at 360-874-9533 or write to him at the address listed in the enclosed membership list.

THE TORCH

Official publication of the Blow Torch Collectors Association and is published three times per year; March, June, & December

Editor
Contributing Editor
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Ronald M. Carr
Graham Stubbs
Dr. Charles Smith

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, 6908 April Wind Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89131-0119, email to: RMCarr1@cox.net, or by phone: (702) 395-3114.

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.

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