

THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

Issue #55

March 2013



ENORME CHALUMEAU, circa 2009, see story on page 4. From the collection of Mike Gratz.



Mike Gratz firing up ENORME CHALUMEAU. Note the orange fuel line feeding propane to the burner assembly.



Burner details for ENORME CHALUMEAU. Most all of the components are fabricated from raw stock or are spare parts.



BLOW TINGLER, from the collection of **Mike Gratz**.



Full-scale blow torch pencil sharpener. From the collection of **Mike Gratz**.



The Trio Replica
Torches:
No. 2 All Right
No. 4 Junior
No. 5 Twin
From the
Collection of
Mike Gratz.

NEW MEMBERS

Jean-Pierre Leymarie of Royan, France is a ten-year lamp collector with over 280 lamp-related items. He started collecting lamps for something to do during retirement. Jean-Pierre also has a modest collection of carbide lamps and press irons. You can check out the Internet website that he developed for the French collectors group: <http://lamptrophile.webnode.fr/>. You can submit photos to be included in their website by contacting Jean-Pierre.

Patrice Faye of Putot en Bessin, Basse-Normandie, France is a thirteen-year collector with over eight hundred blow lamps! He also purchases, restores, and resells many lamps on eBay-France under the pseudonym MISPIROU2010. Patrice is also an avid bicyclist and has been competing since 1978. He recently ran in a 21km marathon, and had his BTCA cloth patch sewn to his shirt.

Harold Grotts of Kingston, Oklahoma has a modest collection of torches that started a long time ago. "I saw a shiny object, I purchased the shiny object, and the slippery slope appeared & steepened." Hal appears to be an avid collector of just about everything; soldering irons, metal cutters, 1949 Chevy pickup parts, 1950's bicycles, porcelain traffic signs, old vehicle memorabilia (kerosene flares, etc).

Cliff Croucher of Atherton, Queensland, Australia is a seven-year collector with over two hundred lamps, all polished and displayed. He also collects soldering irons, sparkplugs, and other assorted items.

Eric Pinoy of Ponthierry, France.

Dave Schnelle of Springfield, Missouri.

Christian Reuchert of Vottem, Belgium began collecting blow lamps in 1990 and in 1995 discovered the "Club of Lovers of Old Flame Tools"...the French Blow Lamp club. He has over six hundred lamps and sells or exchanges lamps several times each year at meetings.

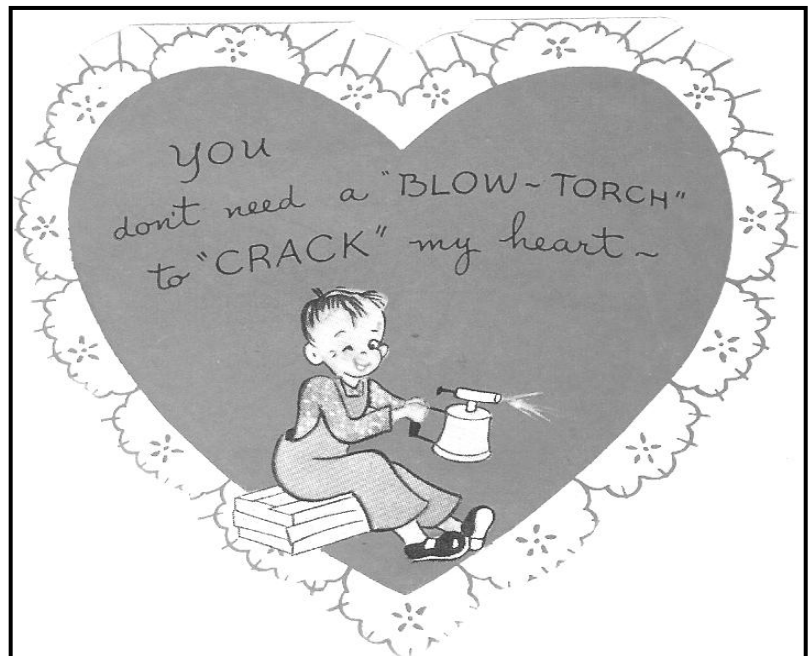
WELCOME ABOARD!



☰ ■ NOTES FROM ALL OVER ■ ☰

Charles Smith sent in a photo of a Valentine's Day card with the following comments: *"I know Valentine's Day will occur prior to our next newsletter issue, but I thought you might find a spot for this anyway. The card is undated. On the back are the words "To: Peter Walter" in very faint pencil script. It was signed: from "Gordon S.". The blowtorch on the front remains unidentified."*

Don Boyce gave us a heads up on a recent purchase, an Everhot Branding Iron with a large "B" on the branding end of the torch. It is similar to the ones shown in VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES on pages 181-182. Now Don can brand all of his belongs with the letter "B"!



Ted Maire sent in this article regarding his grandson **Ned Maire**: "Before Ned turned four years old in March 2012 he learned the concept of alphabetical order from the two BTCA reference books. We both looked at all the manufacturers for the different letters of the alphabet. In 2012 Ned started collecting torches. He enjoys small torches because as he says: "They are just my size". Until today he has had a collection of three torches. As fate would have it, he has the ABCs of blowtorches."



"The picture shows Ned with four torches. From left to right they are: "A" is for an Ashton one-pint model #11, "B" is for a Bridgeport Brass Vulcan, and "C" is for a Clayton & Lambert model #8. When I pointed out to him that his torches are now in alphabetical order he responded: "Let's look for a D". I gave him my copy of "Vintage Blowtorches" book and he turned to the "D" section. He saw **Graham Stubbs'** Detroit model #42 auto torch on page 159 and said "That's the one I would like. Luckily, I had several for him to select from, and he selected a wire control knob version. Now: "D" is for his Detroit model #42 Auto torch. His favorites are still the C&L #8 and the Bridgeport Vulcan because he can attach the wood handle to the back or the side of the fuel tank...and they are smaller than the others. I'm grateful that he didn't select "D" is for Doane & Wellington!"



A MAN AND HIS SCULPTURES

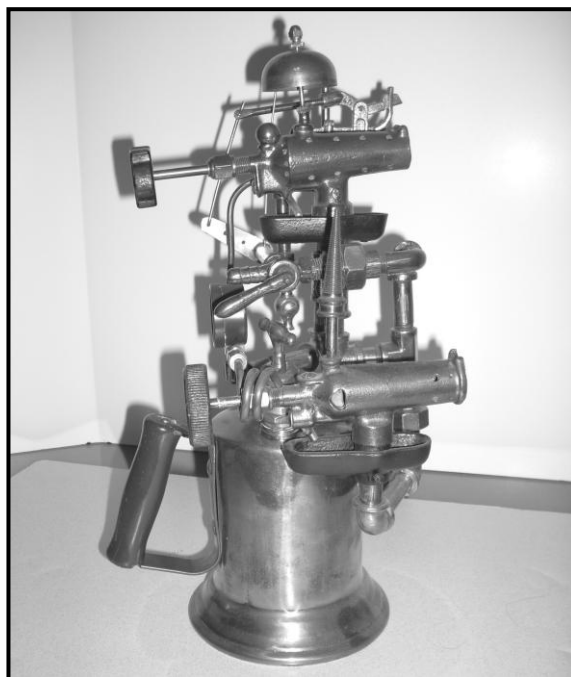
By **Mike Gratz**

(Editor's note: the photos on the front and second page all relate to this article. We thought that color photos would show the true beauty of each creation.)

Thirty years ago I had a large collection of blow torch parts that started "talking" to me. I listened, and the result was a torch that I constructed from many of those parts...I call it the BLOW TINGLER. →→→

BLOW TINGLER was constructed with twin burners, a pressure gauge, a petcock that actuates a bronze toilet valve, a bell, a threaded cone, and numerous other odd parts. It is not a functional blow torch, but it certainly catches your attention!"

In 2008, while cleaning BLOWTINGLER for the BTCA convention (which I did not attend), I got the itch to create another blow torch sculpture. I was thinking about building a much larger sculpture when I found an old brass fire extinguisher tank at a flea market for three dollars. The die was cast! With the aid of years of flea market purchases, I constructed the ENORME CHALUMEAU, (translated from French, it means enormous blowtorch). It stands thirty seven inches tall and weighs in at just over forty pounds....and yes, it is a functional torch! Styling ideas were taken from Volcano, Williams, Sievert, and many other torch styles.



Construction features for ENORME CHALUMEAU→:

"The torch "feet" were made from bronze seat supports for a row boat. All of the round head rivets are flathead brass bolts with material puddled on to their heads. The large pump is a bilge pump reworked to look like an air pump. The refill pump is a Model T grease gun. Brass bells were used for the ignition drip pan and the fuel tank dome."

"The burner shell is a Perko marine fuel filter...a weld on steel pipe reducer was adapted inside the burner for the nozzle exit. The nozzle burner interior is quite functional. The air valve was fabricated from sheet steel and the windscreen was rolled from sheet brass."

"All of the valve wheels except two are from flea market purchases or old torches. Of the two odd valve wheels, one was fabricated from sheet brass and the one on top of the air pump was turned on a lathe to look like a Hauck wheel. The only functional part of the torch is the burner assembly. The torch burns propane fed through a flexible hose with an incredibly loud thirty-inch long flame. The propane is ignited with another small propane torch."



A full scale blow torch pencil sharpener:

"For many years I would do a double take every time I would see a blow torch pencil sharpener on eBay...always thinking that it was a real blow torch. I decided to construct my own large scale blow torch pencil sharpener."

"I found a Mysto Sprayer for sale on the British eBay site, and it had a tapered fuel tank and a similar air pump...just what I needed! I purchased the sprayer and started construction. A cushion band was added to the fuel tank. All of the other remaining parts were scaled to the original small sharpener and fabricated from raw stock. The torch is not functional."

(Editor's note: the only original parts you see in the photo above are the fuel tank, the drip cup, and parts of the air pump. Everything else was fabricated from various raw stock materials....that includes the burner assembly, all of the fuel lines, the fuel cap, windscreen, wood handle and support, the top piece on the air pump, and even the round knurled control knob! You can see the miniature pencil sharpener sitting inside the handle assembly that Mike used as his scale. Yes, to answer your question; Mike does have a complete workshop with almost every imaginable tool.)



A trio of replica blow torches:

“If you look in VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES on the bottom of page 112, you will see an illustration of three Clayton & Lambert torches, all lined up as you see them in this photo; a No. 2 All Right, a No. 4 Junior, and a No. 5 Twin. I decided to replicate all three torches to capture the illustration in real life. My other reason was that at the time there was no known No. 4 Junior torch.”

“The No. 2 All Right torch was made from an existing C&L torch but I fabricated the filler plug from brass stock and added it to the top of the fuel tank, and reconstructed the handle assembly. The top and bottom “acorns” on the handle were turned from brass stock. The original handle supports were partially cut off and round brass pieces were brazed to the stubs to accommodate the round brass handle that was made from round brass stock.”

“The No. 4 Junior torch was a real challenge and had to be made almost entirely from raw materials. The only original parts are the drip cup and fuel valve and air valve handles. The burner parts were separately machined from brass stock and threaded as required. The fuel tank was scaled to the size of the burner assembly. The fuel tank was constructed from sheet brass and rolled on a tapered wood mandrel. The bottom circle of the fuel tank was also cut from sheet brass, and all of the parts were brazed together. The air valve was also machined from brass stock. The design for the air valve was based on the illustration in VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES and another similar air valve on one of my C&L torches. I located the squeeze bulb and rubber hose on a medical supply website and it perfectly scales to the original torch in the illustration. The drip pan is from a Vesuvius torch and is a near perfect match to the illustration.”

“The No. 5 Twin torch was also made from an existing C&L torch but I fabricated the filler plug from brass stock and added it to the top of the fuel tank, and reconstructed the handle assembly. The top and bottom “acorns” on the handle were turned from brass stock. The original handle supports were partially cut off and round brass pieces were brazed to the stubs to accommodate the round brass handle that was made from round brass stock. The top burner parts were separately machined from brass stock and threaded as required. The fuel valve handles are all C&L original parts.”



SWIZZLE STICKS

By Charles Smith

(Editor's note: The dictionary defines a swizzle stick as a small thin rod for stirring mixed drinks, also used to agitate an effervescent drink to facilitate the escape of carbon dioxide. The photo you see on the right is of the top portion of two metal and glass swizzle sticks.)

"Those of us who collect old blowtorches recognize the city Ypsilanti, Michigan, as the birthplace of the Clayton & Lambert Mfg. Co. I have recently discovered yet another noteworthy aspect of Ypsilanti, and that is, it is the home of Haab's Restaurant. Located in downtown Ypsilanti at 18 West Michigan Street, Haab's has



occupied the same location since its opening in 1934. Although steaks and seafood are the signature courses on the menu, the prime London broil is Haab's most popular item. These are but a few of the choices enjoyed by the more than nine million diners since its opening."

"Since 1992, Haab's has annually commissioned the design and production of pewter and glass swizzle sticks in recognition of the annual meeting of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the US and Canada. This meeting attracts about 2,500 attendees, mostly union instructor and training personnel from cities throughout the US and Canada. Following these meetings, the trainers return to their local unions better prepared to train apprentices just entering the plumbing trade."

"Those instructors who choose to dine at Haab's are presented with a commemorative swizzle stick. Each swizzle stick depicts a different aspect of the plumbing industry, with each unique design representing a cherished memento of the annual meeting. Additionally, these Haab's "United Association" (UA) swizzle sticks have become collectible items. The sticks depict such items as pipe and crescent wrenches, sprinkler heads, pressure valves and regulators, and even hammers. To date, there have been twenty-two different pewter and glass swizzle sticks commissioned. In 1996, the Haab's commemorative swizzle stick had the design of a blow torch and in 2000 a pipe cutter, shown in the photo above. My blow torch swizzle stick is an interesting souvenir from the 1996 meeting and generates many comments whenever it is seen by visitors to my collection. Yes, Haab's does sell the blowtorch swizzle stick, as well as all of the previous sticks. If interested, go to www.haabsrestaurant.com/swizzle-sticks for more information. Swizzle sticks are available for purchase at ten dollars per stick plus four dollars shipping and handling. To order, please call 734-483-8200."



John & William Hoskins

In 1882 John Hoskins was awarded a patent for a Hydrocarbon Burner for Blast Furnaces, and in the same year an announcement appeared in THE METAL WORKER publication of a Hydrocarbon Blow-Pipe and Furnace available from William Hoskins...the son of John Hoskins. You can see the Hoskins blow torch related items in VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES, page 226, and MORE VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES, pages 138-140.

As Paul Harvey used to say, "Here's the rest of the story".

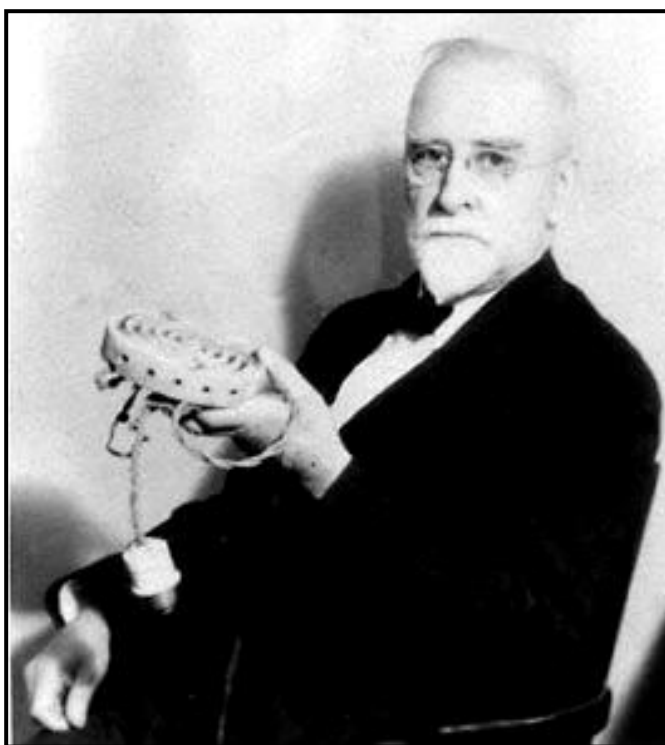
On a summer morning in the year 1870, a man and a boy slipped away from shore in a rowboat, their eyes glued earnestly to a small object that rose and fell a few yards ahead of them on the inshore waves of the Ohio River. This object moved steadily, though slowly, away from the bank, across the current, and, as it went, emitted a tiny cloud of white smoke which drifted back over the water.

They continued to watch with fascinated interest, dipping their oars occasionally to keep close. These two were John Hoskins, a house painter by trade, and his son William, aged eight. The object in the water was a miniature model of a steamship, which, with lashed rudder, was heading straight across the river, propelled by a tiny steam engine which the father had made with his own hands as a plaything for his son. Indeed, he had made the whole boat, from keel to rigging, as a boy's plaything. The little boat chugged along valiantly, not once losing headway until it reached the far shore.

In a certain sense, this little summer-morning incident forms one event in a curious and fascinating sequence. Of itself, it was nothing. Taken with what went before and with what came after, it may be reckoned to have had some effect on the everyday lives of nearly every one of us.

William Hoskins, the boy in the boat, enjoyed a career as a consulting and research chemist, covering nearly fifty years, a half-century during which more discoveries and faster strides were made in the science of chemistry than during all previous centuries in the history of the race.

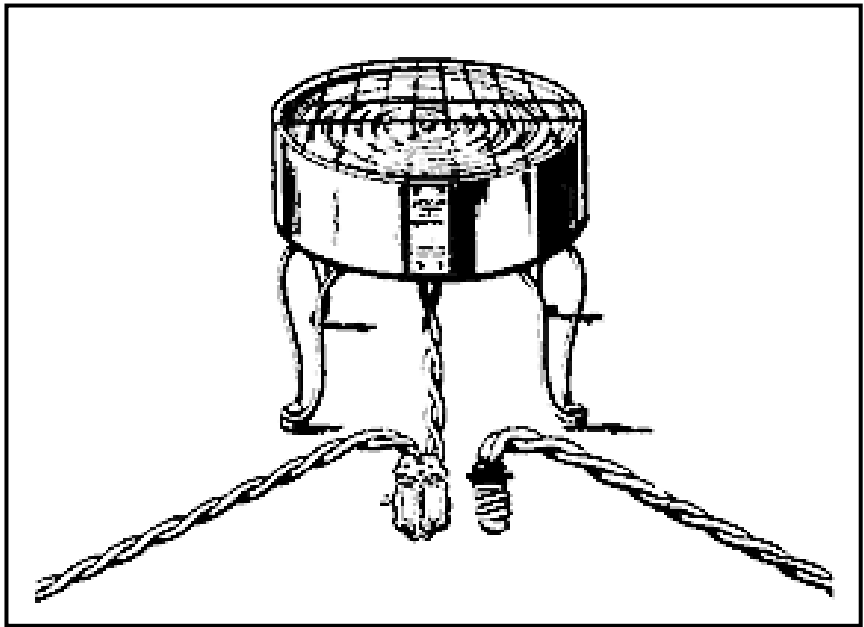
William performed hundreds of experiments never before undertaken by any man and obtained more than one hundred patents. Occasionally, usually as a side issue, he engaged in manufacturing. His assay furnace, invented when he was little more than a boy, for years remained standard apparatus in the industrial world. The chalk he developed is universally used on billiard cues. As a consultant, thousands of clients had consulted with him on problems as diverse as constructing a race track to insure speedy races, and devising secret ways, through the chemistry of paper, to prevent fraud in the use of street car transfers and bank checks.



To his most important single scientific achievement, the development of the high-resistance wire which is the essential element in all electric heating appliances, we owe the comfort and convenience of electric toasters, heaters, irons, stoves, curling irons, and all such as we know them.

A sequence of events paved the way for the toaster. Young William Hoskins conceived the idea of a blow-torch assay furnace, after seeing an uncle burn off paint with an oil flame. He tried his furnace on his ruby making formula (raw alumina) but discovered it was not hot enough. So he turned to Thermit, a quick-burning metal compound which had appeared in Germany. Mr. Hoskins prepared and set off 200 pounds of it in a Chicago blacksmith shop, still on the trail of his synthetic rubies. The net result was to bring the fire department on the run, and force a black family upstairs to fly from all exits. Notoriety acquired from this put him in touch with a man named Albert Marsh, who was perfecting a thermopile, an electric device by which current is generated when heat is applied at a junction of different kinds of metal forged together. Mr. Hoskins discovered how to melt it, also how to get a pure carbon-free alloy which was ductile. Incidentally he found that the alloy which would turn heat into electricity would also turn electricity into heat.

The first practical application of the alloy Nichrome was in building an electric furnace for laboratories. One noon hour in 1907, while watching the heating element glow in a fire-clay unit, Mr. Hoskins conceived the idea of toasting a slice of bread on it. Thus an electrical appliance was born whose basic principle made feasible heating pads, flatirons, stoves and all heat producing appliances. Of course, many of these had existed since the 1880s by use of iron wire and German silver, but neither was practical. For years, until the patents expired, royalties were paid to the Hoskins Manufacturing Company.



Hoskins Toaststove





TED'S CORNER



We started TED'S CORNER in the June 2012 newsletter. We will continue to feature some of **Ted Maire's** restoration tips since so many members do restoration work on blow torches and other similar items. We always welcome feedback and would like to hear from members regarding these restoration tips....please let us know what you think.

Eliminating a rattle:

"Many times I have purchased torches that have something loose inside the tank that rattles around when I move the torch. I always found this very distracting. It could be a great looking torch but that rattle would be very annoying. In almost all cases it is a lump of solder. Sometimes it can be shaken out through the filler hole, but in many cases it is just too big to pass through the hole."

"In these cases, I have used aerosol spray insulation, the type of expanding insulation that can be purchased at most hardware stores. A medium amount of the insulation is injected through the filler hole into the tank. The torch is then shaken and the loose piece will attach to the sticky foam insulation, and the foam insulation will attach to an inner part of the fuel tank. The insulation will then harden with no more rattle. My torches are for display only, however, I would never do this if I ever intended to "Fire Up" the torch."

Disassembling External Air Pumps:

"When I disassemble a torch, my primary goal is to not do any damage. Some of the more difficult parts to remove unscathed are the external pump cylinders. A good example is the Detroit model #42 Auto torch pictured (page 159 of Vintage blowtorches). Burners that unscrew can also be difficult. I have found the best way to remove these parts is to use a "Worm Screw Hose Clamp" (see photo next page)."



“These clamps come in all sizes and can be used for burners that unscrew as well. They can be found in hardware stores, auto stores (heater hose clamps) and on the Internet.”

“The clamp can be unscrewed all the way, if necessary, and split to fit around parts where you cannot simply slip it over. The hose clamp puts equal pressure around the total circumference of the part you are trying to remove. It also gives you more leverage with the protruding screw. I put a thin piece of rubber between the clamp and the torch. You can use a piece of an old rubber glove or inner tube. Attach the clamp as close to the lower threads of the cylinder as possible. ALWAYS have the screw head facing the direction you need to turn it to loosen. There is a little flange on the inside of the clamp that might leave a mark if you turned it in the wrong direction. The screws can be tightened with either a screw driver or a small socket set.”

“If it does not work at first, do not apply a lot of pressure. Clean the connections with a small detailing wire brush and apply Liquid Wrench or any other type of penetrating oil and let it soak overnight. If it still does not work after a few days, apply heat to the bowl of the lower support. Before applying heat, move the clamp to the upper section of the pump cylinder so the rubber doesn't burn. I have always been able to remove pump cylinders using these techniques without adding tool marks.”



Removing Threaded Air Pump Supports:

“In the first method I use an appropriate size adjustable pliers with a piece of leather in the jaws (see picture). I do this even though there might be a nut cast into the support as you would find on some Bernz torches. The bronze is soft, and if you use a wrench with a lot of pressure, you may leave tool marks.”

“In the second method the pump cylinder becomes the tool and there is no need for pliers and leather. After unscrewing the pump cylinder from the lower support it can be used as a "T" handle to remove the upper support. This should only be done if the support can be removed with a minimal amount of pressure. If it cannot, return to the pliers, Liquid Wrench, and heat if necessary. Once the upper support

arm has been removed the pump cylinder can be screwed back into the lower support and used as a lever to remove the lower support (see picture).”

“Always remember: The goal is to leave NO tool marks, usually they have enough already! If you have to strain to remove a part, STOP. You run the risk of damaging the part. Go to the backup plans of Liquid Wrench and heat. When applying heat, make sure you keep it localized on the part you are working with. You do not want to melt the solder on other parts of the torch.”



BTCA PATCHES

We now have available revised BTCA cloth woven patches. There is a new stock of patches that were made a bit smaller and much thinner to provide a better fit for shirts and ball caps. The new size measures 3.25" (8.25cm) wide and 2.5" (6.35cm) tall. We are now accepting orders for the new patches at a cost of \$5.00 for all US and Canadian locations and \$7.00 for all other locations. The cost includes shipping and handling. You can mail your payment to: BTCA PATCHES, 6908 April Wind Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89131. You can also order your patches via PayPal to our account: BTCA@COX.NET, however, you will need to add \$1.00 to cover the PayPal fees. If you elect to pay via PayPal, please make a notation of "BTCA PATCH" with your payment. If you have any questions, you can always contact us at 702-449-8647, or via email at BTCA@COX.NET.



CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Al Austin is in the process of downsizing his huge torch collection. For those of you that remember past articles about Al, he has a torch display trailer, and that is also up for sale. You will see many of his torches being sold on eBay; however, interested individuals can contact Al directly for information on his trailer and torches. See your membership listing for Al's contact information.

FREE TORCH PARTS: Mike Gratz would like to help BTCA members with any required Hauck blow torch parts. He has made pump handles, filler caps, pressure relief valves and guards, drip pan filler tubes, repaired tanks, repaired burners, wind shields, and many other parts. He is willing to make parts for the cost of materials and postage. See your membership listing for Mike's contact information.

THE TORCH

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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: Blow Torch Collectors Association, 6908 April Wind Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89131, email to: BTCA@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 BTCA at the above address.

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Patrice Faye



German Herberg blow lamp, model No. 113, circa 1910.
From the collection of Patrice Faye.



The Shirley Bros. British Queen Blow Lamp. From the collection of Michel Cochard.



The Bridgeport Brass Co. Queen Blow Torch. From the collection of Guy Gerard.

