

Number 15

March 1996

Greetings for 1996 and after the hard winter weather had temporarily subsided what a dramatic start to the year!

As I wrote in B/N 14, we had received an invitation to visit Belgium to attend a meeting of the French and Belgian Blowlamp Collectors Club "Les Lampterophiles".

Eventually 6 members made the journey in company with one wife, one son and a very pleasant but totally inexperienced navigator. After meeting at four a.m. to catch the six a.m. ferry we unintentionally circumnavigated most of the small villages of N.E. France before eventually arriving some 30 minutes late at the Hotel Epinette to a very warm welcome from our hosts. What confronted us there was sheer magic. It well deserved the use of that much overused and undervalued word "incredible"

Some 30 collectors from Belgium, Holland and France had brought about 1500 blowlamps, - some to display, others to exchange, and some to sell. The display was bewildering and a considerable number of the lamps we had never seen nor heard of before. I said when we were leaving that it was rather like letting a child loose in a toyshop at Christmas time and that was no exaggeration.

Several of our people had taken lamps to swap and came away well pleased with their deals.

We were also generously entertained to lunch and all in all we were left with the feeling that this first trans-channel meeting had been most enjoyable and highly successful.

This Club has been in existence for up to ten years and is highly organised with an administrative structure of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretaries. They have just produced their first newsletter called the "Gazette". I have a copy which they have generously said I could photocopy and send it to all our members and when I have had it translated I will do just that. It is 12 (TWELVE) pages long!!

It has been agreed that for future editions, since there is a vast disparity in our subscriptions (theirs is 1200 Belgian francs so work it out for yourselves at 45 Belgian francs to the pound!) we should each contribute an article to the other's newsletter each quarter and so keep in touch. We could also advertise duplicates for disposal as they are very keen on these swaps.

The thought now is how can we reciprocate?

There was talk of arranging a similar meeting based on a rally in Kent or Sussex where a number of our people would put on a large joint exhibition and invite our Belgian/French colleagues to come over for the day to exhibit/exchange/sell lamps and be entertained by us with possibly a barbeque or some other meal. It would need a lot of thought and planning and may not be feasible this Summer.

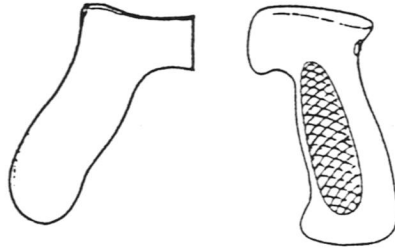
As a prelude to this it has also been discussed that we might well organise a similar meeting ourselves. This could be at a Hall or Hotel, centrally sited to be easily accessible for as many members as possible, where we could exhibit some of our lamps, exchange or sell others, and enjoy a days meeting with a lunch and tea. This would be completely different from a show or rally and I feel could be most entertaining. What are your views?

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Down to earth now and Recap on B/N 13.

The **Craftsman** handle has been plain, painted wood handle was thus was probably W.W.2. probably post war. and had the Both these handles are from others out there?

It has been suggested that measure of spirit for lighting the might be so I still don't think we've



seen in two other forms. The associated with a steel tank and The other was black plastic, different etched grip pattern. Tom Bartlett. Are there any

filler cap 13 (b) is the correct Sievert Type "A". While this got the real answer to its shape!

B/N 14 comments:- Not much feed-back here so far.

Handle (a) belongs to the Sievert "Rapid" and was originally cane wound. I've not seen a genuine original cane winding. They did seem to liable to overheat or burn back at the control spindle gland. Thus many handles have needed resoldering and some I have seen have been replaced upside down! This made them very unstable. They date from about 1890 and the early models were controlled by a lever which operated outside the jet. I've not seen a complete version of this as the lever was of steel and from over heating was more prone to rust away leaving only the two brass blades of the pivot support in place. The later needle valves were only varied by the pattern of the wooden control knob. The spirit cup was originally round, but later a kidney shape was used, which presumably brought the centre of the pre-heating further back, beneath the burner tube. Being spherical, the safety wire needed a depression in the tank side for it to be effective. These lamps still appear in catalogues of the early 1920s. That they were made for a variety of markets is shown by the different languages which can appear in the text engravings on the tanks.

Handle (b) This is on an EXPRESS No 43. The fixing is by a stud, through the top hole, into the shoulder of the tank, while the bottom stud also locks the upright, perforated strip and spaces it from the tank side. This offset will further insulate the handle from the tank.

Incidentally the control knob of this lamp is of red plastic and has the words EXPRESS and RAPIDE cast into it. Note the "E" as distinct from the Sievert "RAPID" without it.

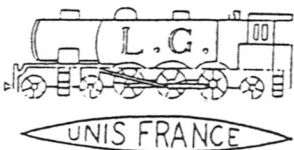
Filler cap (a) is from a Samuel Heath 1 pint paraffin lamp, though I also have it on an old Corona 107 1 pint paraffin lamp.(here it was probably not original.) The air release valve vents into the side hole.

There is also a small hole in the top which vents the spring valve set into the filler. Norman Penny has reported a similar variant of this which has parallel sides, a deeper top cap and a thinner, larger diameter knurled wheel on top of the air release Anyone any clues or ideas on the dates of these variants?

Filler cap (b) is from a 1 pint "Burmos" paraffin lamp. On the shoulder of the filler is stamped "T & C 1942" followed by the War Dept broad arrow. Townson and Coxson were the makers of "Burmos" brand lamps. The air release is captive and vents via a side hole. The hole in the top centre is for the spring valve built into the filler

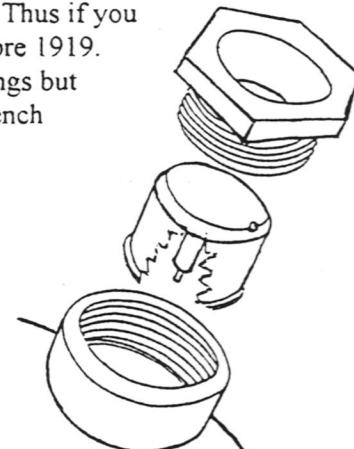
Logo.

EXPRESS



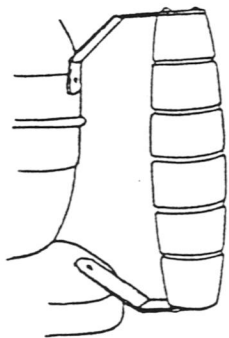
This appears in association with the "Express" locomotive and according to Philippe means "French First" or "Best" and was used in applications other than blowlamps from 1919 until 1945, as product protection from foreign competition. Vesta lamps did not use this logo and only Express continued to use it after 1945. Thus if you find an Express without this logo it is pre 1919. I have not seen it with any other markings but our knowledge of the total range of French lamps is only in its infancy!

While on the subject of "Express" here is an exploded view of the safety valve in B/N 12. The diaphragm in the base of the body of the device seems to be of thin sheet lead. Has anyone anything different? Later versions replaced the diaphragm by a spring valve. If someone has one which could be extracted and sent to me I will draw it later.

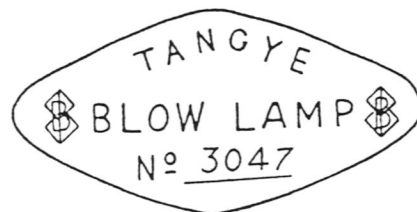


And now to B/N 15

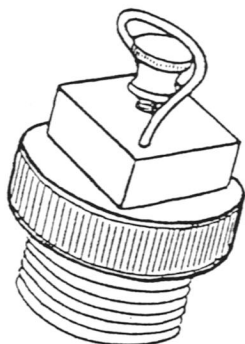
Handle:-



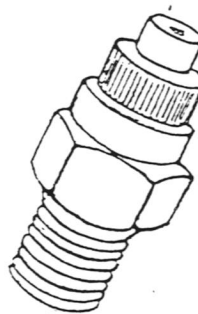
Logo:-



Filler cap.



Safety valve:-

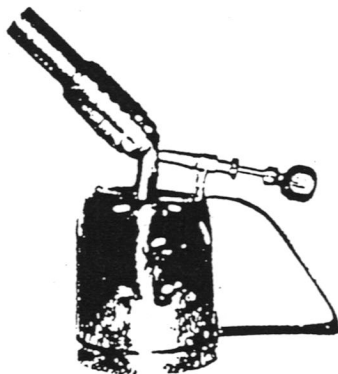


Who is it?

I've had a request to identify an article in a Swedish Newspaper under the caption "In England it is normal to be crazy!" The text is in Swedish, so that is difficult! Perhaps a clue is in the picture which is of a display of blowlamps at a rally.

The exhibitor is sitting in a folding arm chair with his sleeves rolled up. His display is of about 70 lamps, furnaces etc. on tiers of 4-5 shelves surmounted by a title board. This is about 4ft. by 1ft 6 in with the words Blow Lamp Collection and a picture of two paraffin lamps with two soldering torches on the top. The display seems to be associated with a twin flywheel stationary engine belt driving what could be a chaff cutter. As the picture is a photocopy of a newspaper the quality is poor and thus indistinct so I've not tried to reproduce it. Part of the text refers to motor cycles, with one mention of Ariel 350 G3 and references also to Coventry, Nairn and Inverness. The date could be 1994. Any clues? If anyone has access to a Swedish interpreter I'll send them a photocopy.

What is it? A question from France.



The photocopy shown appears in the first copy of the French Collectors "Gazette" and asks if anyone can identify this lamp and could it be American? So I put the question to you all. The tank is of copper, about half pint capacity and the burner and air control sleeve nicely machined from cast brass. The handle is not so well made and is formed from thin strip steel with both edges folded in. The base is deeply concave and houses the filler, and it is only this feature which to my mind is remotely American. All else seems to be against it. Has anyone seen an American lamp which has an inclined burner of brass with an air control sleeve over it and with the spirit tray a depression in the top of the tank?

A request from Hywell Thomas (phone and address on members list) He wants an American or Canadian lamp. Anyone having one to spare please contact Hywell and talk business.

And now the first member's article, by Bob Bispham.

Cleaning a Blowlamp

In response to a plea by Les Adams in B/N 12 I will attempt to enlighten those interested on how to clean a blowlamp to perfection. Some of you may be critical of some of my methods but if any of you know of a better way then hurry up and put pen to paper.

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

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

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

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

Some handles, such as the Primus lamps, are not easy to clean, where the rust is inside the perforations.

My way with these is to submerge the handle into phosphoric acid, leaving for a while and then washing with water. When dry the handle is dipped into the appropriate colour paint taking care that no drips form when drying.

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

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

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

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

Well done Bob and thanks for starting the ball rolling.

Now let's hear from some others. Remember anything is considered which pertains to blowlamps.

Your recollections of some good shows or rallies, odd characters you may have met (but beware of legal implications!) or how you became interested in collecting blowlamps. For example I've had a long letter from one of our newest members (an Aussie but currently in Warsaw) who says his interest stems from a childhood recollection that most of the street holes he saw in Australia seemed to be occupied by men using blowlamps! I will try to twist his arm to expand on this theme for B/N in the future.

Some amendments to your membership lists:-

Telephone corrections.

Bob BISPHAM 01271 - 327921 Keith HAWKINS 01525 - 290122

Change of address:

Phill TAYLOR "Cariad" 74 Whitebridges, Honiton, Devon EX14 8RZ 01404 - 47130

Don RIXON 21 Uplands Avenue Hitchin Herts SG4 9NH 01462 - 437178

Welcome to new members.

Mike CLEMENT 39 North Lane Marks Tey Colchester Essex CO6 1EG 01206 - 210401

Jan JACOBS Weth u Beuningen Str. 14, Winssen Nederland 6645BL 0407522265

Willy MOUTON Nieupoortstraat 161 Lokeren Belgium 9166 00323550173

Michel DUVAL 12 Rue Gabriel Bertillon, Res Les Sources, 91160 Longjumeau France. 0033 1 69343509

Robert Ruffin LANGLOIS 09 Rue de Quatrefages 75 005 Paris France 0033 1 43364276

John TINGLE Prospect House Wrington Road Congresbury Avon BS19 5AS 01934 - 832267

Peter GOLD The Wood Wrington Road Congresbury Avon BS19 5AS 01934 -

Gary A'LEE Chy-an-Pyth 13 Newtown Fowey Cornwall PL23 1JY 01726 - 833077

If I've left anyone out or got it wrong please let me know.

Meantime my thanks to all who sent me cards at Christmas time and my apologies if I omit to thank you personally. Best wishes for the rest of 1996, happy and successful collecting and I look forward to meeting you somewhere later in the year.

Cheers,

