

# **BLOWLAMP NEWS**

**No 19  
March 1997**

Once again Blowlamp News members played an away match in Belgium. This time our party was 17 strong and no less envious of what we saw. Undoubtedly the highlight was Robert Langlois' collection only a small part of which occupied the whole of one side of the dining room of the Auberge. Not content with one, or maybe two, Surmelin lamps he had a range of 7 up to the size of the football as mentioned earlier. All his lamps were labelled with their country of origin and the labels colour coded with the national flags. A most impressive presentation for which congratulations are due to Robert. Hopefully at Bloxham I shall have some photographs to display, so all can see the wonders of Herseau. I think most people were satisfied with their swap transactions though I felt there were not so many lamps available as last year.

Let's see, now, what we can do in the way of a meeting, as a trial run to perhaps holding one later in Kent, to which we can invite our Continental hosts.

The format will be the same as in Belgium, starting at 10 o'clock, with coffee and biscuits. Afterwards there will be time to display your choice blowlamps, to exchange duplicates and generally meet, and have a natter, with the others. Lunch will be about 1 o'clock followed by a short discussion when it is hoped people will express their views on the future of the newsletters, any new ideas, and especially whether we should now form a real Club or Society. Further bargaining and chat will go on until we close at about 4 o'clock with tea and cake.

A number of members have expressed the view that, at least for this first meeting, we should limit transactions to exchanges and not buying or selling. They fear that this may lead to a sort of auction which could result in inflation of prices. I think this is a good start and we shall limit to *exchanges only* this time

The cost of **£6-50** includes all food and drink, hire of hall, kitchen facilities, heating, lighting, cooking etc. and I've enclosed a menu selection slip which will help with catering if you would kindly return it as soon as possible.

## **Recap on B/N 18.**

I've had some correspondence with Gardners reference John Wheeler's engine lamp. They were not apparently ever concerned with Ruston and Hornsby and did not work from Lincoln. A new firm in Manchester is now producing Gardner engines to the old specification. I have sent a drawing of John's lamp to an ex-employee who looks after the old archive material to see if he can throw light on it.

## **Filler Caps.**

a) Is seen on Bladon petrol lamps and bears the title "Bladon" "B'ham" cast into the top of the shoulders.

This shape of fin was the older version and was replaced by a triangular type. Date of this change is not known. Does anyone have any illustrations with dates that will give us some clues? It would appear to have changed some time after the handle pattern changed into the five-slotted tube shape after 1935. A similar shape was used by Burmos (made by Townson and Coxson) as was the later triangular fin. Here, though, the name was cast into the side of the fin. What is an interesting consideration is that the general shape and characteristics of Bladon and Burmos were so similar especially so far as their half pint petrol lamps are concerned. Both these lamps were used by the G.P.O. Telephones with duplicate warning inscriptions in the side of the tanks (which were probably stamped during the tank assembly) The safety valves appear to be identical but perhaps someone will dismantle two and do accurate measurements to confirm if this is so. The handle patterns are different, with different fixings. I wonder if they were developed in parallel as the result of a G.P.O. specification requirement. They were two distinct firms with Bladon the larger at least so far as the range of their products were concerned. It is probable also that Bladon was by far the older firm with evidence that their products and patents dated back before the first world War. We'll hope for more information in due course.

a) Is the filler cap on the little Herberg lamp which one cannot with any stretch of the imagination see a burly "plumbing type" using! The literature suggests benzoline as the fuel but mine still bears the unmistakable methylated spirit smell. Coupled with the sealing wax encrusted in all its grooves when first bought, it was probably used either in a pharmacy, or a lawyers office, for melting sealing wax. There were apparently two methods of fixing the burner tube over the spiral coil which is the preheat. This coil is in line with the long axis of the burner tube with a small hole in the front surface of the inner edge of the coil

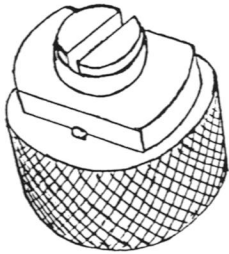
as the jet. The flame then plays on the two front coils of the tube to preheat the fuel. One method was the fixing by two small set screws into a ring soldered to the coils which was in turn supported by a small strut as in the drawing, and the other was by the burner tube being soldered directly on to the coil. The dates of the change are not known but the date of this catalogue item was 1908



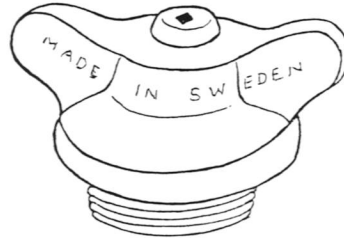
Now for some B/N 19 items.

B/N 19 Filler caps.

a)



b)



Remember the items in B/N 5/6/7/8/12 concerning folding handles? Here is an experiment with photocopying photographs of four more lamps with these handles.



a) PAQUELIN



b) ARDENTE



c) MARCO



d) ARDENTE

## An introduction to Blowlamp restoration

by Norman Penny

### 1 Pump Washers

Like many people I would like to see all my blowlamps restored to their former glory. This is very much wishful thinking on my part since most of my lamps fiercely defend their right to stay grimy! However when I do occasionally get around to cleaning one up, it is satisfying to know that it is not purely a cosmetic restoration and that it would function if required. Among the extra problems encountered when undertaking a restoration to working condition is the humble pump washer. Finding a suitable replacement for this simple device can be looked upon as more trouble than it is worth as it is difficult to purchase new replacements and though it is essential for full function, once installed it is seldom seen again. If you are one of the lucky ones with a stock, or source, of such items you may now retire to the pub for a drink. If not read on and try my method of DIY.

The first requirement is suitable leather. This may be bought at craft shops but there are many other sources, e.g. key fobs, book markers and possibly best of all the tongues of old boots. (*Willy Mouton uses an old school satchel - Les*) Once you have your material it needs to be cut into discs which is best achieved by using a wad punch. These are often seen in second-hand tool shops or at car boot sales but, as I do, can well be improvised as follows. Several lengths of steel tube of various diameters are needed, coming from, for example, an old cycle frame or garden chair, which you have not yet consigned to the tip. A cutting edge now needs to be created, usually by chamfering the outer edge. However two different diameters are possible if both the inner and outer edges of the same width of tube are bevelled.

The angle is best kept to 15° which is ideal for cutting the leather. Too sharp an angle will lead to the edge buckling with use while too blunt an angle is sometimes difficult to cut with. An internal bevel of this angle should not cause trouble with the wad sticking within the punch. The sharpening can be done by filing or grinding or, if you have that luxury, turned on a lathe. The leather should be cut against a piece of soft wood, like pine, to conserve the cutting edge although if you are using a proper tool, hard wood probably results in a cleaner cut. Here it is well to mention safety and the use of masks, goggles or safety glasses and to take care not to have loose clothing, ties, sleeves etc. when using power tools. By now you may well have a set of wad punches, a frameless bicycle, a pair of leaky shoes and a three legged pine kitchen table.

As a guide to the diameters needed take the bore of the pump e.g. 5/8 in. or 16 mm and add about 3/16 in. or 5 mm. to each side for the flange or skirt of the washer

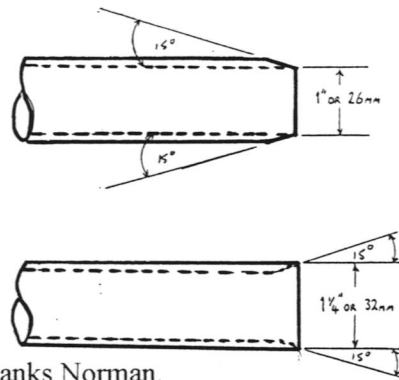
When punching the discs I find it more convenient to cut the centre hole *after* the disc has been cut.

The size of this will depend on the pump spindle. Fit the washer to the pump spindle assembly and allow the leather to soak in a little light oil. Since the originals were cup-shaped a little patience is required to persuade the washer to fit into the pump barrel.

A few strokes up and down will soon shape the washer. Having found the correct measurements several may be produced and left in oil until required.

These washers, when flat, can also be used for filler caps but then are best used dry. No central hole is required for this use unless there is a safety valve incorporated

Wad cutters for 1" outside chamfer 1.25" with inside chamfer



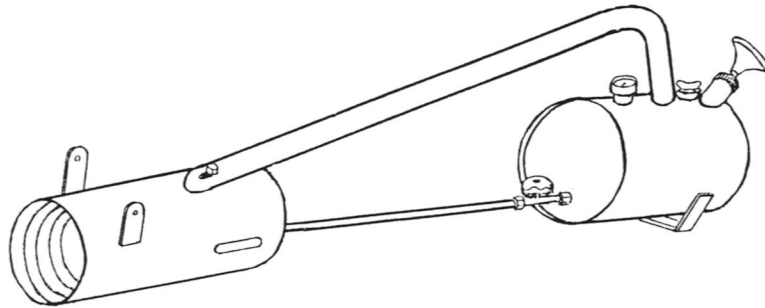
Many thanks Norman.

When we visited the Belgian meeting I was privileged to see Willy Mouton's excellent collection and the well equipped workshop he has where he restores his lamps. He too makes his own washers but has made jigs for shaping them. These consist of a tube of suitable diameter wherein a spindle with two different sized discs at the end will slide. These discs clamp the leather blank which has previously been soaked in water and when this structure is **drawn** into the tube it shapes the washer into a cup over the smaller of the two discs. This is then allowed to dry inside into its final shape. There have been other suggestions one of which involves shaving the edge of the washer blank into a thin margin which makes it easier to insert into the pump and more flexible to seal against the barrel sides when under pressure.

If one of your lamp washers is hard and dry soften it in oil for a few days before attempting to flatten it. If then if it doesn't work at least you have the size needed for that lamp pump.

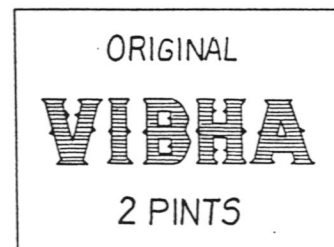
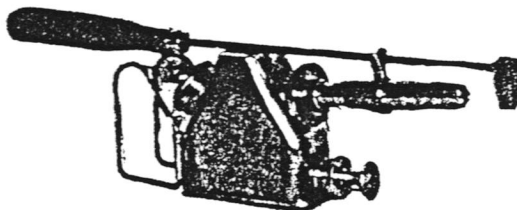
At Bloxham I hope to try some further experiments to check if photographs will reproduce well enough to use in future newsletters. The comparisons will be between black & white pictures and colour prints and whether these will reproduce better with photocopy or scanning. It does appear that those of you who polish your lamps, so you can shave in the reflections, don't help photographers because of the extreme highlights. So don't waste the Brasso.

Since some of our Continental colleagues are interested in them here is another **Flame-gun**.



### Gazette questions

Three questions were posed in the February edition of the *Gazette*, the newsletter of the French Club. Does anyone have information to help them with this logo and filler cap. Unfortunately there were no other clues as to their identities. The pocket Barthel has a pump in the front of its tank - was this original. At first sight it appears in a vulnerable situation beneath the burner. However, since the lamp would be started in the vertical position that would be a natural choice, apart from it being the only space available. *Ideas please.*



**Rallies** in 1997  
Not a lot here I'm afraid.

**Lee McGuckian** confirms the following:-  
Radstock, June 21/22 - Goatacre Rally June 28/29 - Downs Petersfield July 5/6  
Toghill Bristol vintage day July 13.

**Keith Hawkins** has not confirmed but usually goes to these:-  
Old Glory Tallington May, Nottingham June, Banbury June, Rempstone July  
Weeting July, Rushmoor July Lincoln August. Dates not known so contact Keith.

I hope to be able to attend the following:-  
Southern Counties Gatwick June 7/8 - Lingfield July 2/3 - downs Petersfield July 5/6  
St Agnes August 15/16/17 and (only possibly) Stourpaine

So let's see some of you at Bloxham. There's still time for the hesitant ones to make up their minds.

Good luck to you all for the coming season.