

# BLOWLAMP NEWS

November

1998

No 26

## Publicity

The hobby of collecting blowlamps is getting still more media coverage. In addition to John Tingle's T V programme we now have reached North America with a front page illustrated article in the Skagit Herald devoted to The American Blowtorch Collectors First Annual Convention on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and I am told that I missed a blowlamp dissertation on "Antiques Roadshow" recently. Unfortunately my informant couldn't say who it was on the programme. Additionally in 2000 I understand from Sheila Hawkins that the French Club will be celebrating the centenary of the founding of the "Express" factory which will be hosted by the son of its founder M Leon Guilbert. This should naturally attract great interest and media cover.

## Meetings

### **The American Blowtorch Collectors First Annual Convention.**

This was hosted by Jon and Judy Suta at their home in Mount Vernon Washington (State not DC). Some forty people attended including John Tingle and his wife and myself and Gina.

It was held in a very large workshop where the walls were hung with some of Jon's 300 lamps, innumerable Lunch boxes( which are very big with collectors in the U S A ) hurricane lamps, steel toy trucks etc etc. Judy's house was adorned with dozens of decorated plates on all the walls. Truly a collectors paradise!

Most of the collectors came from nearby, that is within about 100 miles, but one, Larry Field, came in from the east coast state of North Carolina. It was a most enjoyable day and many of the 800 lamps on show were indeed very ingenious in their design. Again they are plagued, as we are, by many unanswered questions but the amount of their remaining documentation is certainly greater than we have.

The format of blowlamp meetings appears to have stabilised itself on the original Herseau pattern which we ourselves copied at Bloxham and Great chart.

Meeting was early from 8-30 a.m.!! with coffee and donuts(!) displays, talk, swaps, talk, photographs, talk. Then lunch with enormous beef ribs, corn etc and a large cake decorated with a commemorative legend and blowtorch. It was great. Afternoon saw more talk, swaps and newspaper interviews and photographs. Unfortunately the newsprint pictures don't reproduce well on photocopy so I cannot show them to you at the moment. During lunch each exhibitor was presented by Ron Carr with a very nice blue glass mug inscribed with the date of the First Annual Blowtorch Convention. It is a most attractive present which I shall display at my shows next year so you can at least see that memento of a very notable event. Several new members were recruited and their addresses are noted. They'd all like to hear from any of you and are interested in transatlantic exchanges. If any of you should find yourselves anywhere near any of their members, as listed last year, they'd be pleased for you to call to talk and possibly swap blowtorches.

Now the French meeting was on the same day October 3<sup>rd</sup> but unfortunately we weren't able to get in touch because of the eight hour time difference otherwise a TV conference instantly comes to mind for the future. However Sheila Hawkins has kindly written the following account of this meeting

**The Annual Meeting of the Club des Amateurs d'outils Ancien a Flamme**, which was founded in 1901, was held at Villeneuve la Guyard some miles South East of Paris on Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup>. There were five visitors from England, John Byrne, Len Christian and Mick Marshal together with Keith and myself. John's party had travelled overnight the 500 kms from Calais while Keith and I stayed only some 3 kms away. Nevertheless John and the others were first on the scene even before the arrival of the remaining members from France, Belgium and Holland. So they had a distinct advantage with exchanges.

The meeting was most interesting as it was attended by the charming elderly son of M Leon Guilbert who founded the "Express" factory in Paris. This will be 100 years old in 2000 and as a commemoration it is planned to hold the Annual meeting at The Maison Express at the invitation of M Guilbert. It is intended to have on show the largest display of blowlamps ever which should attract much media attention.

As at most Annual General Meetings there were elections at which the Committee was duly returned to Office, after many felicitations, by a meeting obviously well satisfied with their work.

About 80 people sat down to a very convivial lunch, where the Cote du Rhone flowed freely, and afterwards the more serious business of admiring lamps, swapping and buying and selling of lamps took place.

The Club's Spring meeting will be held in Mouscron on March 13<sup>th</sup> next year but not, apparently, at the same venue as in previous years.

Altogether a most enjoyable outing and we congratulate our French colleagues once again for putting on such a good show.

Many thanks Sheila for that report. I shall certainly try to recruit you next year to write an exhibitor's report on the various shows which you and Keith attend during the year as I'm sure many members would like to hear your impressions.

Now Sheila has some more words to add.

#### **The big Lille braderie** (have I got that right?)

This huge annual market was held on September 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> with some 9000 stalls covering 12 kms of pedestrianised central Lille

Tom Bartlett, Keith and I attended this year and found the fleamarket early on the Saturday afternoon whilst searching for our hotel. Regrettably on Sunday we lost our way (*obviously after a very convivial Saturday night ! - Les*) and did not find it again until late in the morning. We can, however, now give precise instructions to anyone wishing to risk the experience by going there next year.

Confusion is compounded by other streets having stalls which sell blowlamps. Altogether we found 36 lamps and bought 6 of them. The vendors were very amenable to bargaining and the prices were on the whole reasonable. The lamps were clean and not of the sort readily available in England being mostly French and German.

We travelled by car via Le Shuttle but there is a company called Limelight, based at Bradford-on-Avon, which organises visits either by coach or Eurostar, but they do get booked up a year ahead.

One mystery was solved on this visit. Tom bought a lamp almost identical to the one Keith asked about in B/N 25. It is a Belgian INOMETA.

Thanks for all that info Sheila, you now definitely installed as our roving reporter!

Interestingly Michel Duval identified Keith's lamp as Inometa. It is similar to the Universel and Michel tells me he has eight different Belgian makes of lamp but not including the Inometa.

#### **Swapshop and Wanted**

**John Tingle** now advertises in Blowlamp News!! He writes that he is interested in obtaining the following:- Sievert HSL 1-4, Sievert Vapouria 3049, 3070, 3071, 3098.

Optrimus 383-6, RM petrol. He would be prepared to buy whole collections if they contained these lamps.

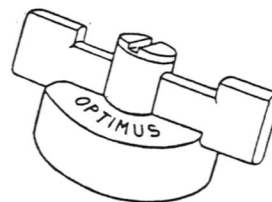
**Ted Hall** would also like to purchase duplicate lamps to increase his collection, so perhaps some of you with spares could give him a ring to see what he would like.

### B/N 25 drawings.

The Arabic inscription means "Made in Britain" this translation kindly supplied by Michel Duval who has a **Tunisian** as an **English** teacher. And he still speaks very good English !!

#### Filler Caps.

a) is from an Optimus 305 a half pint petrol model though I have seen different fillers of the same lamps but probably of different ages. Does anyone have any views on these variations?



b) is from my Smallwood "Premier" recently acquired from Dave Goodin at Great Chart. This was the

subject of a question in an earlier newsletter but produced no response. The lamp is a heavy half pint petrol model made in a dark brass and is a Reliance look-alike without the small horseshoe shaped metal air guard slot behind the burner tube. Anyone any further thoughts on Smallwood Bros of Manchester?

c) A little cheating here, since this was the filler from a Radius picnic cooker. It has the same basic shape as the Radius filler I illustrated earlier but bears two butterfly wings. Anyone seen this type on a Blowlamp?

#### Burner Tubes.

a) From an **M L Cannon 75 X**. I don't have a very good one with a deeply inscribed logo so perhaps someone could do me a rubbing which I can print next time. It's quite an attractive picture.

b) is from a **Surmelin**. The one with the number 5 was from a **Surmelin No "O"** while the plain one, but of identical pattern, is from a **Surmelin** with the traditional cylindrical tank

#### Blowlamps

a) is a rather elegant **Bladon** mouth blowlamp. It has no markings except the Bladon logo so I do not know if it bears a number. Anyone know it?

b) is a **Kitchencraft** propane lamp kindly sent me by Richard Plant current owner of Thomas Plant Ltd. of Birmingham. They were the people who marketed Plumbob lamps and cookers many years ago (B/N 6 & 7) Their activities now are limited to kitchen appliances and though this is a new import from the Far East it is used by Chefs for caramelising sugar - creme brulee etc. So Ron, here is another use for your blowtorch "uses" collection.

c) is the larger model of Garratt and Fowler's mouth blowlamps. Ted Rawson kindly sent me a photograph of the two versions which I shall add to the next newsletter I have a feeling that because there is a cut-off valve at the top of the air inlet the use of the larger one must have envisaged a continuous supply of air, either from a compressor cylinder or bellows. Otherwise there is a simpler way of switching off - stop blowing! The smaller version has its air inlet at right angles to the handle thus blowing the air straight into the wadding filled fuel tank from the back.

#### Handles

a) Is on the Surmelin "O" with the spherical tank and c) is from the Surmelin with the traditional cylindrical tank. The fixings at the bottom of the handle are different. Michel Duval feels that both handles were used on both types but of course they would need the appropriate shaped lower fixing point.

b) is a Sievert 207

Keith's lamp has already been identified but though it has been suggested that mine could be a Barthel my experience of Barthel is that they were meticulous in marking all their lamps -even the military ones I have seen. The lamp which "The Gazette" uses on its front cover in the bottom right corner is a Barthel Roarer 6B It is very similar but though the handle is identical the burner is much more complex. I have a Barthel Roarer 4B of which the handle is the same but both tank and burner are very different. Maybe sometime in the future we'll know.

### Two cooker questions

"**The Fury**" is a neat plated British camping cooker 140 mm high with a tank 82 mm diameter. The burner is a coiled tube as in the Herberg "Tiny"

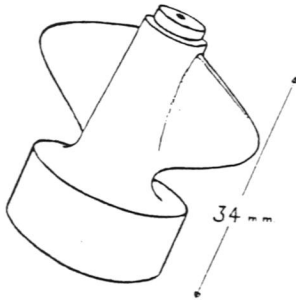
"**The Cobra**" another British boxed camping cooker where the pot stand and tank fold outwards when the lid is lifted and front folded out. The lettering on the box which looked new was rather crudely done as if sprayed through a stencil.

Any news on either?

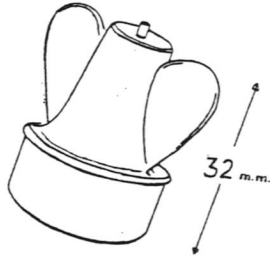
## B/N 26 drawings.

### Filler Caps

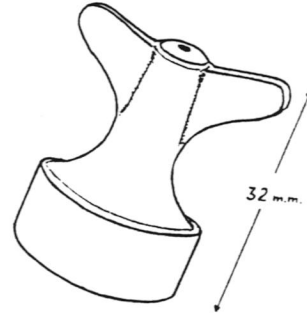
a)



b)



c)

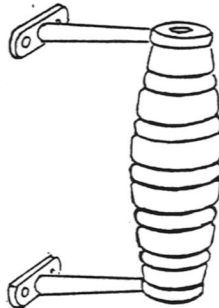


### Handles

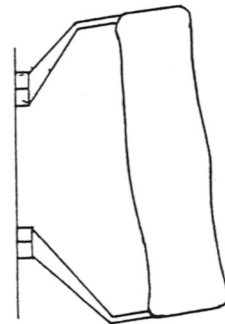
a)



b)



c)



### Welcome to new members.

**Phil Roach**, 419 Merrick Avenue, Sunnyside W.A. 98944 U.S.A.

509-837-0388 e-mail:- Jroach@televar.com

**Suezy Proctor** 2354 S. Hosmer St., TACOMA, W.A. 98405 U.S.A.

253-383-7740 e-mail:- proctor@narrows.com

**Mark Pedersen** 612 S.W.High, MILL CITY, O.R. 97360 U.S.A.

503-897-3101

**Larry Fields** 5303 Ventura Drive, GREENSBORO, N.C. 27406 U.S.A.

336-676-0005

**Rob Elsey** 27 Peebles Close, SINFIN, Derby, DE24 3DR. 01332-270952

**Steve Cuffley** 12 Oaktree Drive BARNSTAPLE, N.Devon EX32 0HE

01271 - 328786

**Jayne Johnson** 6 Petton Close, Winyates East REDDITCH Worcs. B98 0PA

01527 - 522368

**Ron Lamb** 14 Queens Terrace, Bristol Road, SHERBORNE, Dorset DT9 4ED

01935 - 814085

**Paul Maycock** 215 Hednesford Road Norton Canes CANNOCK, Staffs. WS11 3RU

01543 - 279555

### Amended address

**Dave Ockenden's** Post Code should be :- KT5 9NJ

## Some Questions.

Brian Grainger has a Barthel U.T. which bears a small swastika imprinted on the top of the air release. Anyone else seen one?

I have acquired a ½ pint petrol John Shaw "Anglo Swedish" lamp, with a sloping turned wooden handle similar to type 8 in the Primus survey, which has a large stamped brass plaque soldered on its side. This occupies the whole of the side of the tank and bears the inscription of caution about use inside buildings as seen on G P O blowlamps. There are no other marks on the lamp to indicate that it was a G P O lamp but the inscription is identical. It obviously predates any of the usual G P O Bladon lamps. I add my question to Taff's on the Sievert Type "A" - has anyone seen any other G P O lamps?

"The Firefly" is a lamp which looks exactly like a Bladon B60 but has no Bladon or Diamond Brand markings. The side mounted pump is identical but there is no spring loaded valve at its base. The handle is wooden and pear shaped with the outwards curve on the bottom bracket as B/N 10 (a) while the control knob is the 1920-30 style Bladon octagonal wooden knob with hemispherical end also B/N 10. The only mark I have found is the name "The Firefly" with Wrights Lymm underneath it stamped into the shoulder of the tank.

The lamp could reasonably be dated as early to mid 1920 since the patented date of Bladon's spring valve on the pump was 1929. There is no evidence of the normal Bladon safety valve in the tank, nor a wire, though it is possible that the filler cap may not be the original which could well have had a valve in it. I don't believe valves were in common use at that time but it would be surprising if the G P O did not have a lamp with any safety devices, especially in view of the caution each lamp bore. Anyone anything to add?

Lymm is a Cheshire town near Warrington so I wonder if our two members near there could check with a local library or Chamber of Trade to find out anything about Wrights.

It does appear that Bladon made lamps which in the early days i.e. pre 1920 were mostly blanks with names soldered on, then in the 1920s most paraffin lamps were identified by the circular plaque as in B/N 7 while the petrol lamps bore the diamond brand stamped into the shoulder of the tank as in B/N 2. The handle pattern meantime had changed from the elaborate turning as in B/N 10 to the pear shaped wooden handle with the bowed lower bracket similar to the Sievert in B/N 10. 1929 saw the advent of the lever operated valve in the bottom of the pump and thereabouts the change in handle pattern to the tapered cylindrical steel which after 1935 bore five slots. The control knob also changed to one of bakelite with the name on the back rim.

This is a brief outline of the medium size Bladon Paraffin and petrol lamps. Can anyone fill in more details and especially observations on dates. What is the earliest date anyone has stamped into the bottom of their petrol lamps? I have a 1 pint paraffin steel tank bearing a soldered steel plaque with the name "T E Bladon Birmingham 1918"

When I have some more information I'll try to devise a more formal Bladon survey based on that already started by Sylvia and Alan Black.

Which brings to mind that many of you have not returned any Primus survey data. Please send in what you have and keep updating it.

## An answer or two ?

Michel Duval reports that there is a Dutch manufacturer called HORIS who made cookers and that Han Melise has told him that they also made blowlamps. Han over to you for more info.

And finally for those of you lucky enough to possess one here are the instructions for using the VALTOCK No 3. If you don't have one at least you'll know how to use it when you do get one.

## THE VALTOCK No. 3 BLOWLAMP

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE**

**Assembly.**

1. Fit handle to cup with the two screws provided.
2. Remove rubber protection from burner housing and screw in burner tube.  
Tighten with tool provided through air vents.  
Re-tighten when hot to make sure it is gas-tight.

**Start.**

Fill with Methylated Spirit through filler plug on shoulder of body to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch below filler plug.  
Tighten plug finger tight only.  
Fill cup with Methylated Spirit and light.  
The lamp should start to blow before the spirit in the cup is all consumed.  
It is not necessary to fill this cup again except when starting up afresh.

**Running.**

Adjust air sleeve to suit conditions.  
Open vents for inside use and close for use in draught; the flame will be bound to be almost transparent.  
This Lamp is designed to run with the body at such a temperature that it feels hot to the touch.  
To obtain best results no attempt should be made to cool this by placing on a very cold surface, etc.

**To extinguish.**

Unscrew filler cap one or two turns.

VALTOCK LIMITED, REGENCY HOUSE, 1-4 WARWICK STREET, LONDON. W.1  
Telephone : GERrard 1667.

Anyone have a spare one for me?  
Cheers and best wishes

*Les*