

BLOWLAMP

NEWS

No 39

DECEMBER

2001

Your newsletters normally start on a happy note but regretfully, this time, the circumstances are less joyful.

Sheila Cleaver

I am deeply saddened to report the death, a week or two ago, of Sheila Cleaver . We were aware for some long time that she had been seriously ill and she had indeed been battling bravely and making light of her troubles during the last few meetings we have held. Despite her problems she was always cheerful and optimistic and whenever she was able would offer her help. I have described her in the past as our champion "washer-up" - a title I gave her, with justification, after our first meeting at Bloxham. In fact our first meeting was largely due to Sheila's suggestion and arrangement - albeit conveniently sited *opposite* her house in Bloxham.

I am sure this idea kick-started our annual meetings and in no small way contributed to their continuing success. Even when she was not able to do the work herself ,as at our last Bletchingley reunion, she definitely organised her two deputies,husband Dick and Ray Everett to take her place !! She had a great interest in blowlamps, and a considerable knowledge, and her collection, which included some quite unusual specimens, was often used as a display in support of a number of local social and charitable functions. She also exhibited at the Great Dorset Steam Fair for several years, and it was there in September that I last saw her. She was then receiving frequent transfusions which were necessary to keep her going. Even so, she displayed her exhibit in a novel way - through the back window of her old caravan. A break with the tradition of the caravan awning as used by most exhibitors. There was no suggestion at that time that her end was imminent for, though obviously tired, she gamely talked about her display to the public and to members alike. I shall miss Sheila and so I am sure will many more who met her and shared her interest in blowlamps. Our condolences are to Dick and their family who have had the sad task of watching her through her long and difficult illness.

Missing Caravan

Ray Webb phoned me a day or so ago to report that his caravan had been stolen from a "secure" storage site! He had left it there for the winter but the site owner had not removed it from the front of the site and an employee apparently watched as a car drove in, hitched up and towed it away. There would appear to be some degree of negligence here and very little respect of a "duty of care"! He is obviously pursuing this legally but would like members to keep an eye open in case it should be used at rallies in the future. The van is a 1998, 20' 4 wheel, white, Lunar "Delta" of which Ray believes there was only a limited number made. Its caravan registration number - SGL TD 12 LUW FO 45716 - is etched on all windows. Ray would appreciate it if anyone finds any information, if they would let him know or Avon and Somerset Constabulary where the case number is- V200110522.

Meetings

Mouscron 2002

Again so far only the date of Saturday March 9th. In the past Alain Henri has notified all previous visitors when the details are available but if you have never been before contact me later in January when I should be able to let you know more. Also it may be possible to arrange car sharing at that time.

Bletchingley 2002

Andy has booked the village hall as before for Saturday May 25th and I hope to have further details for the next newsletter in the Spring. The meeting will take the same format but food will be a buffet. I assume times will be the same but I have no information on ticket price yet.

Primus Date marking system

Some new information via Andy Feast from the internet, where a website is dedicated to Bahco and the Primus company, contains up-to-date information of this dating system

I do not have space in this newsletter for the complete article but several people have asked about the dating system employed by the Primus company. The idea of the survey started in B/N 3 (March 1993 !) was to compare known dates with other features of both blowlamps and cookers including, most importantly, fixed items on the tank- namely inscriptions, trademarks, soldered handles etc., so that an attempt to date an article would be possible in the absence of the stamped date mark. The prime movers in this survey were Alan and Sylvia Black who have accumulated a large amount of this data.

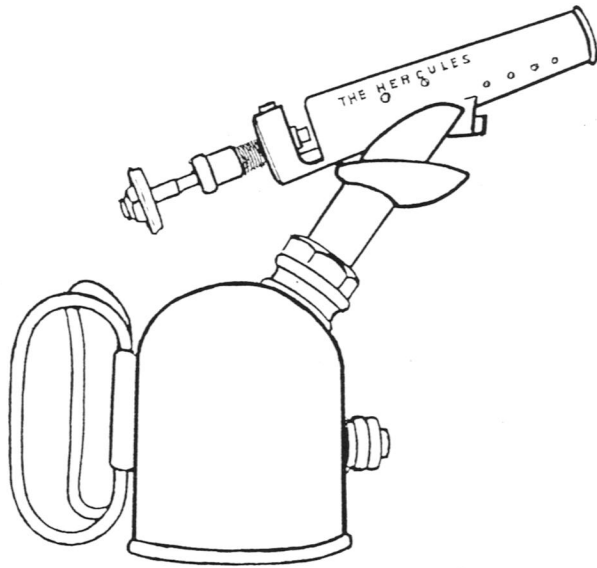
The survey was not as well supported as I had hoped and since Primus apparatus must be one of the largest components in most people's collections there should be no shortage of material. I used to pick up all Primus items at any sale and make a brief note of the details required in the survey booklet which I had sent to each member, even if I had no intention of buying the item. If half our members had done the same the database would have been enormous. Dave Nichols has been waiting several years to process the material when there is enough. Perhaps I'll make a New Year resolution and reprint the Survey booklet to try to galvanise some response!

Briefly the Primus Company used a letter date marking system where letters represented the year of manufacture. The original belief was that it started with the letter "A" in 1911 progressing with one letter per year until 1935 but omitting "I" and thereafter the sequence "AA" "AB" etc for each year. These letters are to be found on blowlamps on the side of the tank about 1/2 inch above the base and contained within a 3/8 inch circle. The significance of the number within the circle is not known. On some very early paraffin lamps there is an circular inscription in the centre of the base which includes the name B A Hjorth and "Made in Sweden". In this instance the year letter is stamped within this inscription but there is no accompanying number. So far I have not seen this method used beyond letter "J" and I have not seen the side of tank position used earlier than "J". In cookers the date circle is in the centre of the base of the tank but probably because I have not examined enough I have not seen any other method of display.

This latest Internet extract quotes an earlier start of 1909 for this system but still finishing in 1934 and including "I". The double letter sequence following this is the same until "AT" (1954) After this time a dual system seems to occur with the introduction of a 6 digit number system. This apparently comprised four digits, followed by the two year digits of manufacture e.g. **** 55 onwards until this too ceased in 1963. It is thought there were no later "letter" dates than 1956 but the authors (who include our own Arne Aasgaard) have said they would welcome further evidence if anyone has a later "letter" date than "AV"

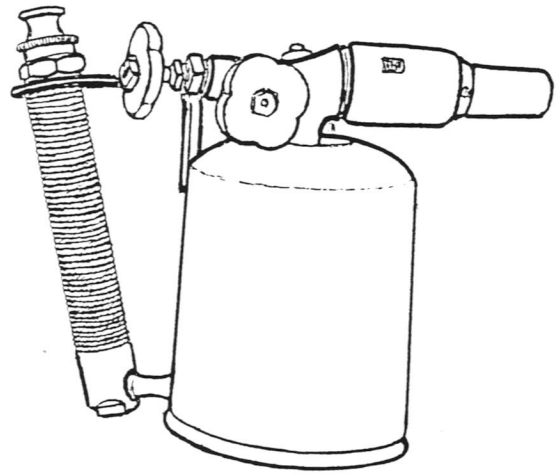
I am convinced I have seen an "AU" but only having viewed *NOT* purchased it, but I have never seen a letter "I" nor a "number" date as described above. Anyone any further ideas or information?

For those on-line the web address is :- www.spiritburner.net/hjorth_page.htm

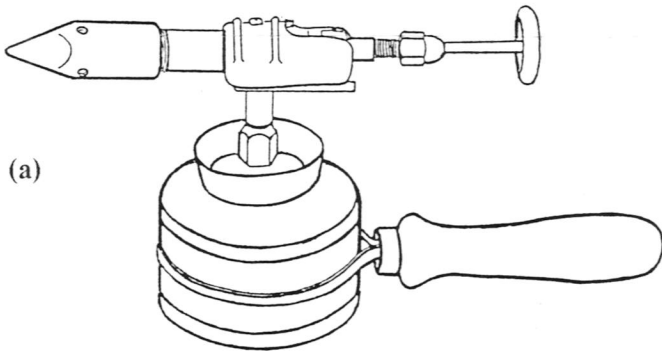


John Tingle's "Hercules"

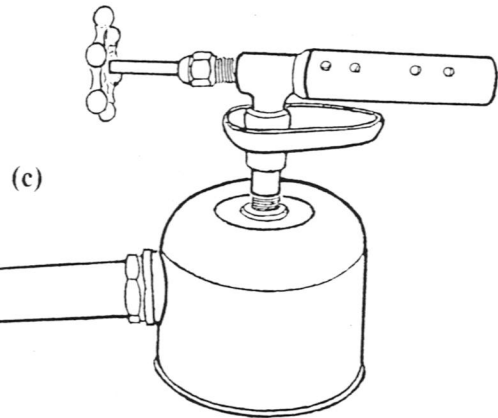
1 pint Burrige



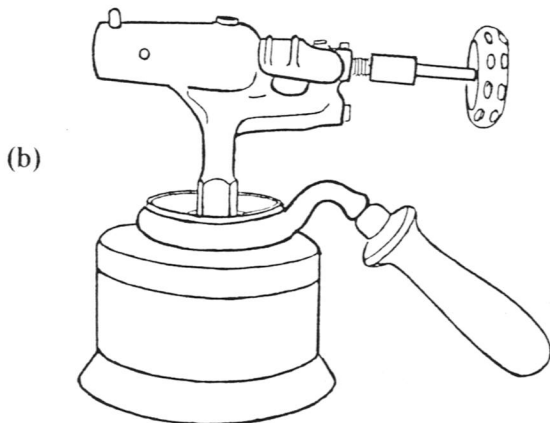
B/N 39 Drawings



(a)



(c)



(b)

B/N 38 illustrations

- (a) a cast iron tank Otto Bernz, about 1/2 pint capacity- I suspect that the spirit tray is missing. No markings but the patent date is 1910
- (b) a laboratory lamp called an "Alcoburner" by The Precision Scientific Co of Chicago U S A. The control knob appears to operate only on the burner tube and presumably helps with air regulation
- (c) a small capacity lamp (? 1/2 pint), a Clayton and Lambert No 8, the wooden handle of which has two screw fixing positions at right angles. The oval embossed plaque of the logo of the Frasse Company is soldered on its side.

The diamond shaped logo is of the Shapleigh Hardware Company about which I have so far no information.

Tangye/Bladon

I omitted to mention in B/N 38 that my Bladon vertical engine lamp has the Double Diamond plaque (see B/N 7) soldered on to its side, the steel tank having no other markings. I am in touch with the person who holds the Tangye engine register so hopefully there will be more information in due course.

Snippets

Tom Bartlett kindly sent two information leaflets. The Suzhou Tieta Blowlamp Company Ltd of Jiangsu China and the Rolex Impex Co of India.- two more names for your lists. There are no details of the Chinese products but Rolex apparently make 1 pint and 2 pint paraffin models which seem to be of the traditional pattern.

Badges

Henk Kroon tells me he still has some badges for sale at £4-00 inclusive of postage. Now what about a belated Christmas stocking filler ? These badges are very good - exactly what I had in mind from the very beginning. Some people phoned to say they couldn't find Henk in the members' list, but they were looking in a 1995 version !!

Membership details

Enclosed is the subscription form for 2002 the sub remains at £3-50 for U K and \$10-00 for U S A. For Euro-zone countries I have stated their subscriptions in Euros which taking into account the increased postage there I hope I have not taken too much advantage of their new rates of exchange after January 1st.

Enclosed also is the latest membership list which I hope does not contain too many errors. If you find one please let me know and I'll try to correct it in B/N 40. Please use only this list as I have had one or two problems where people have tried using the old lists and have found that details have been changed

Some members have not included their Post Codes and one or two phone numbers are missing- even allowing for those who do not wish some of their postal details to be published. Please let me have these details to update.

Phone number correction

Stan Callendar's number has now been corrected

E-mail

Only a few e-mail addresses so far. I'm sure there are more. I promise not to pass on too many of my junk mail addresses of U S teenage nymphomaniacs !!

That's all for 2001 so all the very best to you for Christmas and good luck in 2002

