

# More on Cast Aluminum Lamps

by Mick Corbridge

Reading various lamp collecting material, it is obvious that cast aluminium lamps are still very popular with collectors, and the information that comes to light on the design patterns of these lamps slowly grows.

One style of lamp of interest to me is that of the 'Thorn & Hoddle', which I have covered before in a previous issue of 'Eureka'. This design is almost identical to that produced by 'Ackroyd & Best' of Morley, and it is only by close examination of the two lamps, that the differences are realized. The 'Thorn & Hoddle' is always stamped with the manufacturers name on the bottom of the base, whereas the 'Ackroyd & Best' version was never stamped with any manufacturers information.

The picture shows one of each manufacture side by side, and even though the sizes and style are identical, the following differences can be noted:

1) - The water taps are different; the 'T&H' has a 'T'-bar multi-turn threaded needle valve, while the 'A&B' has a turn on-off valve.

2) - The water doors are different in that the 'T&H' has a knurled screw in water door, whilst the 'A&B' has a similar sized screw-in door which has a 'wing' grasp centrally mounted on the top.

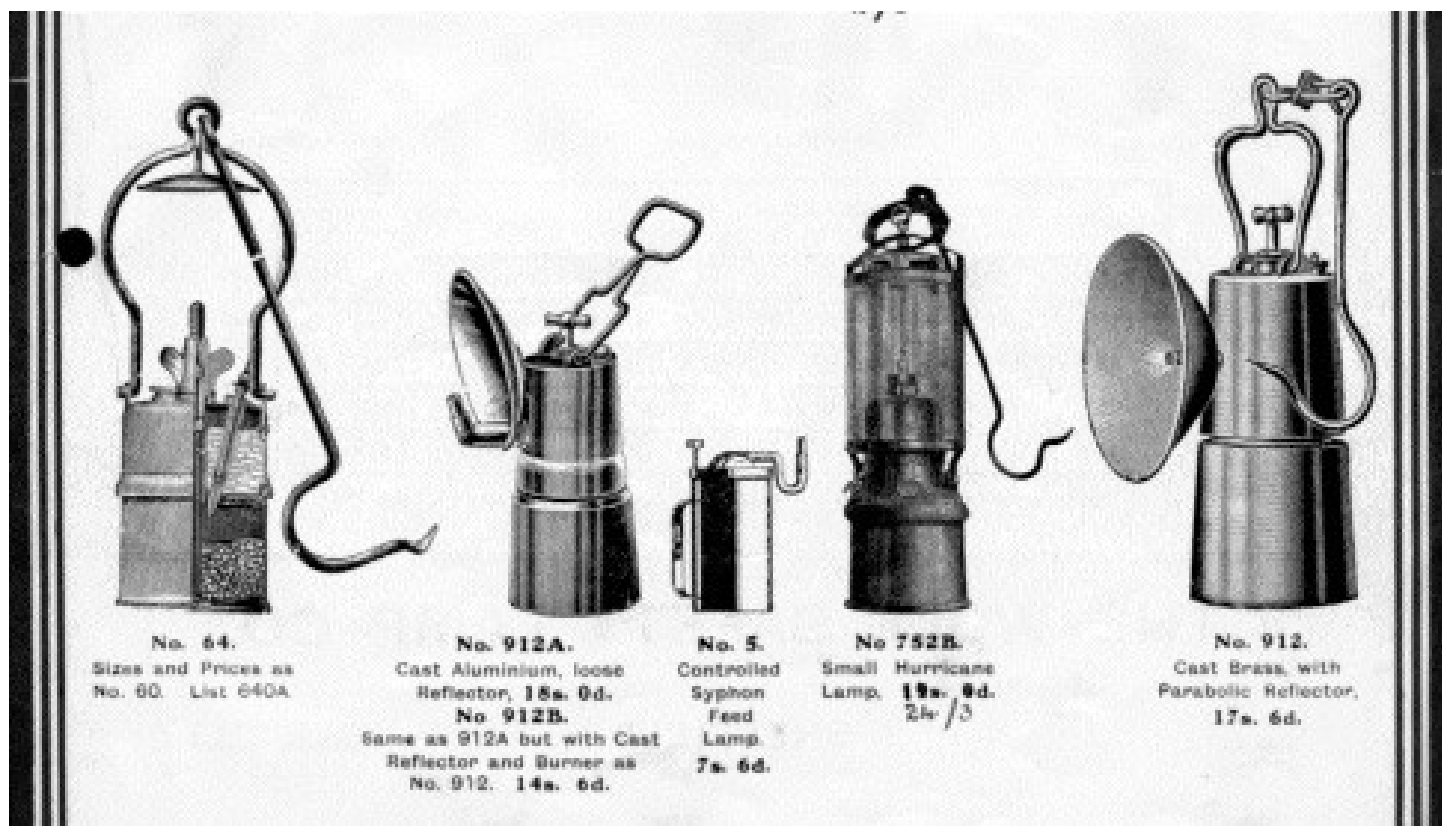
3) - Finally, it can be seen that the jet stems are of different lengths. This is because of the different design of front hood arrangements that could be purchased for these lamps if required; (examples of the manufacturers' different styles of hood can be seen in 'Eureka' issues 20 & 26).

As for the pair of examples shown without hoods in the picture above, the 'T&H', (shown on the left), is complete with its normally supplied handle and hood mounting screws, and its has highly polished aluminium which is not a standard finish on these lamps. The 'A&B', (shown on the right), has the hood mounting screw holes sealed, and a mining pattern hook & bail; the finish is the normally found 'dull' aluminium. The three mentioned difference points of water taps; water doors & jet stem lengths can all be clearly seen. In these models, an extra and larger reflector could also be fitted from the top mounting screws, and this swung down over the cast-in small reflector shown.



This brings up the question of who manufactured the castings of the lamp bodies? 'Ackroyd & Best' were the first company to supply this design of lamp, i.e. pre-1927 after which then the company name changed to 'Hailwood & Ackroyd'; all of the 'Thorn & Hoddle' lamps known, are from the mid-1930's and are stamped on the base with their date of manufacture. I am almost sure that neither of the companies would have had their own casting facilities required for the construction of such a style of lamp, and with both company lamp bodies being identical in size and shape, plus the fact that there is no known link between the two companies, it is presumable that the body castings were manufactured elsewhere.

A further British lamp of a similar design to the ones mentioned above, was model No. 912B that was produced by 'Wolf Safety Lamp Co.' of Sheffield. This model was from a different casting but had a similar tapered base section & a front cast-in reflector. Unfortunately I do not have any pictures of what this lamp actually looked like, but the following advert shows its sister lamps, the 912A & the 912, & the advert mentions the 912B.



I have never been able to acquire a 912B, but I have a 912A. This is an unfired example in excellent condition and having a highly polished aluminium body. It has a hook and bail instead of the wire handle that is shown in the advert, i.e. the hook and bail is similar to that shown in the 912 in the ad above.



The only other cast aluminium lamp that I know of that meets the basic description of the 912B, is the one which is covered in the 'Eureka' article – issue 18 page 36. This lamp is believed to be a 'Wolf of America' produced lamp, & is described in 'The American Carbide Handlamp Survey' as 'Wolf aluminium with tall narrow body'.

I have one such lamp, (see photo), and I know of 3 other identical lamps. It is interesting to note the 3 lamps that I know of in Britain, originally came from 'Wolf of Sheffield'. As a few other American 'Wolf' carbides have been known to have come from 'Wolf-Sheffield', It is still highly probable that these 3 cast aluminium lamps did originate from America, but I wonder if some were sold from Sheffield advertised as the 912B? I doubt it, as the design description is somewhat different, in shape and size as to that indicated in the previous advertisement.