

Allen-Liversidge Carbide Cap Lamps

by Dave Johnson



"Little AL" and "Big AL"

In 1996, I described three known sizes of cast aluminum carbide lamps attributed to Allen-Liversidge: two sizes of hand lamp and a cap lamp *. Recently, I have discovered another Allen-Liversidge carbide cap lamp, this one is slightly smaller with some feature differences. The first lamp is 3 7/8" tall to the top of the water chamber and 4 5/8" tall to the top of the water knob. The second lamp is 3 5/8" tall to the top of water chamber and 4 3/8" tall to the top of the water knob. The water knobs differ in that the first lamp has a single slot across the center while the second lamp does not; both are held in place by a setscrew. The brass pieces below the water knobs differ in size and shape. Both lamps lack a water door and are filled through the center of the water knob.

The first lamp is 2 1/8" in diameter at the base and the second lamp is 2" in diameter. The hanging hook and bail are of identical configuration differing only slightly in size. The cast trunions that hold the bails are considerably taller and heavier than those on the second lamp. Both have the same A-L REGD. PATS cast into the top next the hook. Both lamps also have the same unusual brass hooks that screw into a threaded cast piece that rises behind the water knob. The threaded piece on the first lamp is heavier than the second but that of the second lamp is longer. The cap hooks are round and taper to a blunt point, being rather thick at their threaded end. Both lamps have the same simple brass flat-stock cap brace held in place by the cap hook. Although the cross piece on the second lamp is missing, you can see where it was soldered in place originally. The reflector on the first lamp is 2 3/16" in horizontal diameter and the second is 2" in diameter. Functionally the lamps have identical water feed systems with two brass chain links hanging from a conical brass hex-nut.

The Allen-Liversidge carbide lamp received Great Britain Patent 27,308 on November 27, 1912. The patent was granted to Thomas Gaskell Allen, Engineer and Allen-P.B. Liversidge Portable Acetylene Company Ltd., Manufacturers, of 106 Victoria Street, Westminster, London.

In my opinion, these are two of the most unusual and interesting carbide cap lamps I have seen. There are no American carbide cap lamps like them and I am not aware of any other European manufacturer who made a cap lamp of a similar configuration. The workmanship on these lamps is excellent.

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(left) Back view shows "Bull's Horn hook which screws into threaded casting.