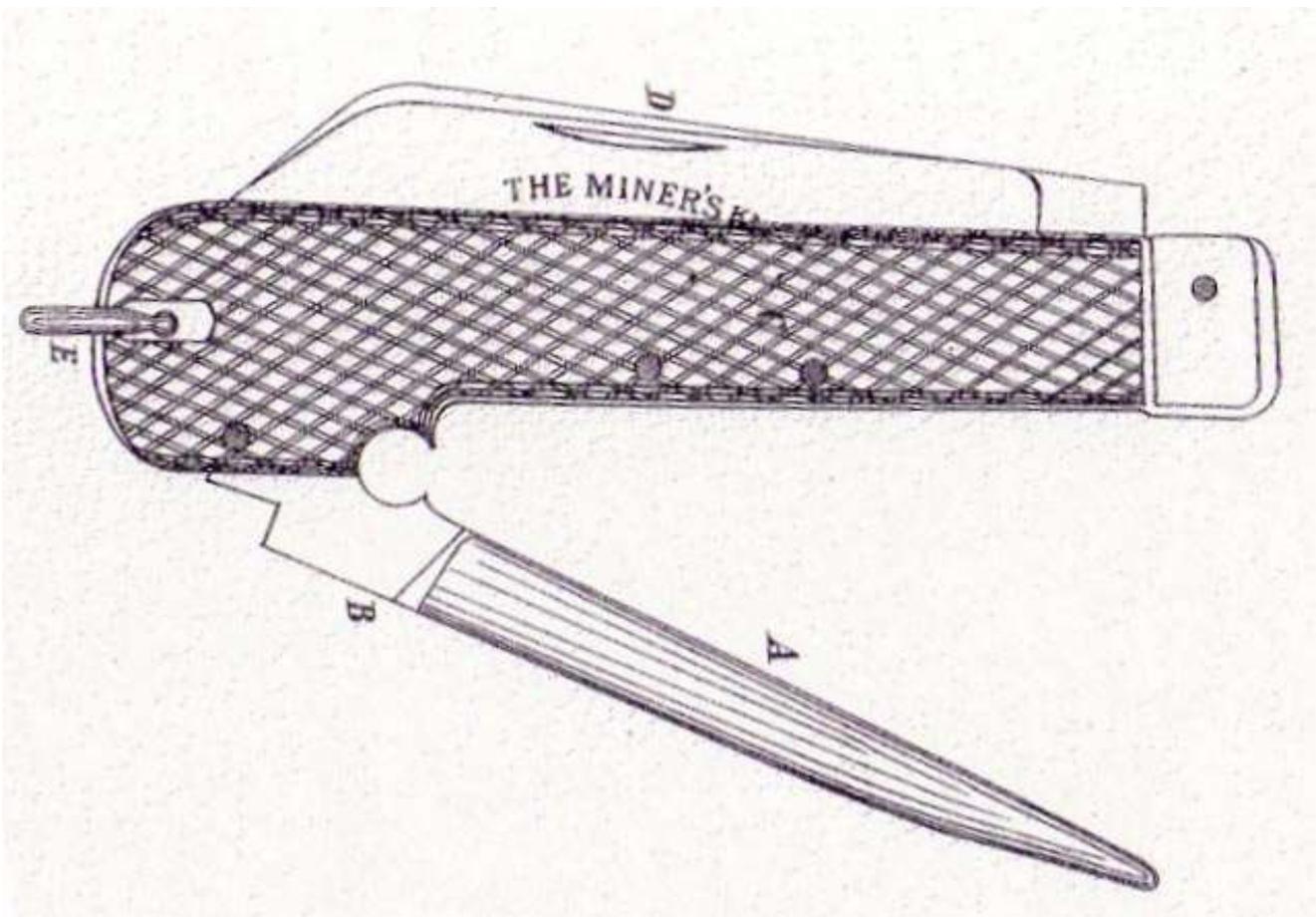


Hickie Miner's Knife

by Stephen J. McCabe

As a lamp collector and researcher my interests have evolved and expanded over the years into explosive and blasting items. The many articles of choice collectibles featured in the MAC and Eureka magazines over a long period have fueled this.

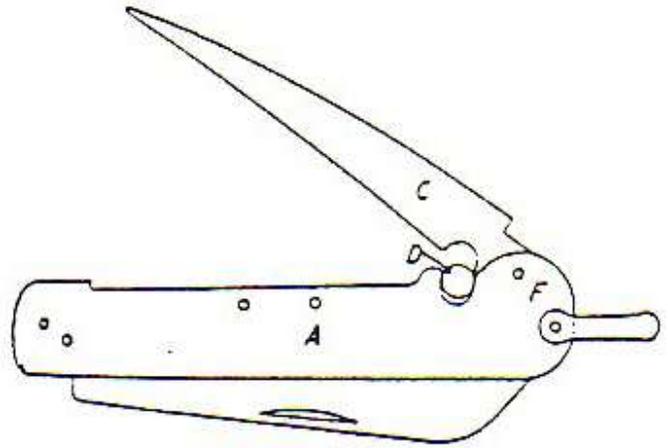
One such area is Blasting Crimpers those unique hand tools used in explosive laying. A small drawing submitted to The Underground LampPost (Mitchell 1990) caught my attention as soon as I read it. J. Roger Mitchell featured a patent drawing reproduced from the National Knife Magazine February 1990, page 27 for a rope knife modified to incorporate a blasting cap crimper for the use of miners.



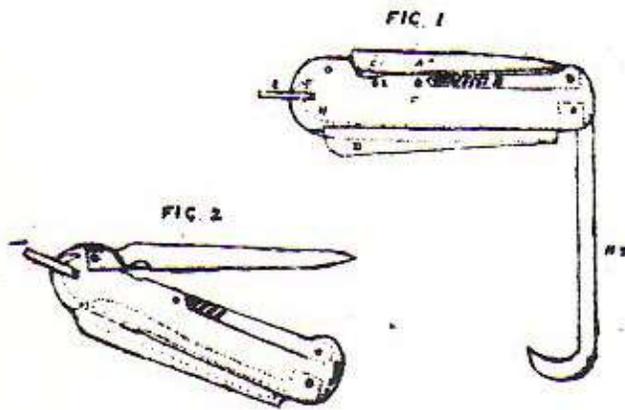
In an early issue of MAC magazine (Bohannon 1992) the drawing was again reproduced with a similar request for information. This knife was patented on June 20 1885 by Mr. D Hickie Patent Number 7538. As I recognized the drawing I never really took much notice of the patent number or date. As I knew that a Mr. Daniel Hickie, of London, England who had since moved to the Colony of Victoria as a mining engineer applied for a patent relating to " an improved squatter's and miner's knife " on 30 September 1887 Patent Number 5343.

Clearly this earlier reference is to his UK patent which was then patented in Victoria and perhaps improved. This combination pocket knife was not only useful to blasting but also had a hooked blade and implement for opening tins, cleaning horses' hoofs, boring holes in leather or wood as well as an ordinary knife blade (Anon 1887). Although not a single example of this tool is known to the author, according to documentation (Howitt1889) this tool was in use for some time prior to its reference in this annual report for the year of 1888, with a considerable number having been distributed through several mines in the Colony.

7538. Hickie. D. June 20.



No. 5343



Also this text states that the knife blade steel was of Sheffield manufacture indicating residual stock from his earlier attempts in the UK or some level of importing this component. It would certainly make a nice addition to any collection especially if the knife blade still had "The Miner's Knife" etching visible. Additionally Daniel Hickie made a Miner's Safety Can in three different sizes but that is another article.

References

(Mitchell 1990) The Underground Lamp Post Vol. V, No. 4 Spring 1990 page 5 by J. Roger Mitchell.

(Bohannan1992) Mining Artifact Collector Issue No. 13 Winter 1992 page 36 by Mark Bohannan.

(Anon1887) Chronological and Descriptive Index of Patents Applied for and Patents Granted in the Colony of Victoria dated 30 September 1887 Patent Number 5343

(Howitt1889) Annual Report of the Secretary for Mines to The Honorable Duncan Gillies, M.P., Minister of Mines for Victoria for the year 1888 by A. W. Howitt, Acting Secretary for Mines page 36 with full page drawing.