

MINALITE

Dave Johnson

If you saw this lamp from a distance at a flea market, you probably wouldn't give this "AUTO LITE" a second look. A closer look would have shown this common "AUTO LITE" to be a MINALITE. Very much like an AUTO LITE on the surface, there are subtle differences. First, the vertical knurling around the base on the AUTO LITE is different than the cross-hatching around the base of the MINALITE's carbide chamber. Second, the knob on the end of the AUTO LITE's water lever is round while the MINALITE's is teardrop shaped. Third, overall the Autolite is 1/8" shorter than the MINALITE. Fourth, the opening on the MINALITE's base is 3/16" smaller in diameter than on the Autolite so the bases are not interchangeable. The overall diameter and height of the base is the same for the Autolite and the MINALITE. The overall 1/8" height difference is in the upper half of the lamp. This is a very well made lamp, not a cheap foreign knock-off of an Autolite like the newer Safesport Butterfly knock-off of the Guy's Dropper made in Hong Kong.



I have been unable to obtain any information on who manufactured the MINALITE. The only clue to its origin comes from the stamping on the water chamber and base which both say "BRITISH MADE". Mick Corbridge, a lamp collector from England, confirms that these lamps were used in the North East coal mines around Newcastle, although Darge Daylights, Droppers, and AUTO LITES were more common there. He only knows of two or three in British collections. Do any of our readers have any information on this lamp?

