

Oil Wick Lamps of Scotland

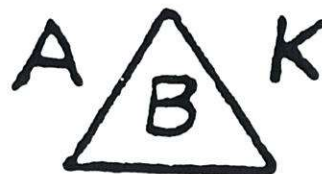
by Tony Moon

Early mining text books frequently mention the use of oil wick lamps in Great Britain and it is generally accepted that this type of lamp was brought to the United States by miners from England and Scotland. The areas most often cited for their use are Radstock, Ayrshire, and Fifeshire. Radstock is a coal mining area south of Bath in England. As yet I have been unable to examine any examples of oil wicks that can be identified as coming from Radstock, but I have been fortunate to find or examine several that are from Scotland.

The coal mining area of Scotland is mainly in the counties of Ayrshire, Fifeshire, Lanarkshire, and Midlothian. All the lamp markings that include town names come from towns within these counties. The markings illustrated included companies from Kilm (presumedly Kilmarnock) and Kilwinning in Ayrshire, Kirkcaldy in Fifeshire, and Dalkeith in Midlothian. If readers know of other markings on lamps from Scotland, and I am sure that there are others, I would be very interested in learning about them.

Some of the lamps have characteristics that set them apart from those made in the U.S. Two typical lamps are illustrated. The major characteristics are as follows.

1. Scottish lamps are generally smaller. I have yet to see a Scottish lamp as large as an American made "drivers" lamp. Scottish lamps are often only 45 to 50 mm high and small spout diameters of 7 to 9 mm are common. Both single and double spout lamps were made.



J. BICKET
KILM-

H. VERR

KILWINNING

BARNET & MORTON
KIRKCALDY

W. FALCONER & SON
DALKEITH

2. Although the more conventional wire hooks were used, flat hooks must have been popular, as they are found frequently. Hook widths vary between 10 and 13 mm and the turned over portion of the hooks comes quickly to a sharp point. Flat hooks are sometimes found on U.S. lamps (examples are known by Alex Hunt, Husson, and Trethaway), but are generally narrower at 7 to 10 mm and form a longer hook before being sharpened to a point.
3. Rings of brass to reinforce the base are found occasionally as shown in the illustrated lamp. I have not seen this feature on any lamp made in the U.S.
4. Air vent holes in the lamp lids are seldom present.



DL lamp, 55 mm high (measured from lid to bottom). Tin with brass reinforcing ring and flat steel hook.

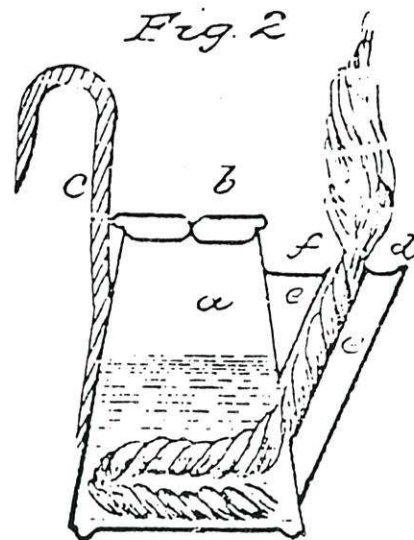
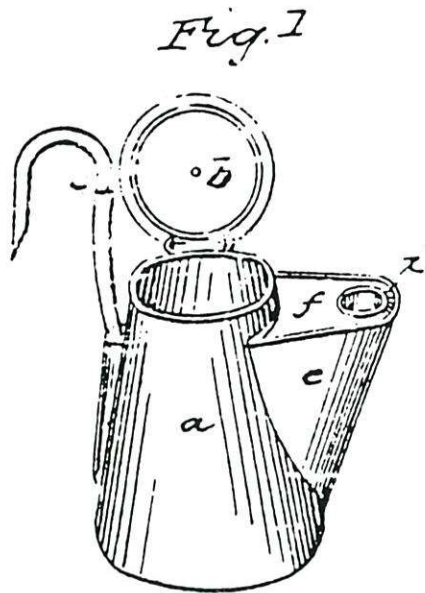


ABK lamp, 48 mm high. Brass with flat steel hook and 7 mm steel wick tube.

W. SEYBOLD.
Miner's Lamp.

No. 35,264.

Patented May 13, 1862.



Witnesses

W. H. Cushing
J. H. Shaw

Inventor

William Seybold

5. Scottish lamps were also made using a design that was patented in the U.S. by W. Seybold (patent 35,264 dated May 13, 1862). It is not known which came first, the U.S. patent or the use of this style lamp in Scotland. The ABK lamp illustrated is identical in design to the patent illustration which is also shown. These lamps were designed for use with tallow or other non-fluid grease instead of oil. All this long before Sunshine fuel had been invented by Standard Oil! Lamps similar to the ABK lamp were made by Lamb and Dunn (DL), and Falconer, both of Dalkeith.