Some Answers

Manfred Stutzer writes:

In the January 1998 issue is on page 11 a carbide hand lamp pictured with a soldered label "**Pioneer**". I am almost sure that this a German carbide lamp made by the lamp maker "Hesse/Nuernberg". I will try to figure out more about the label. It could be that this lamp was re-sold by an agent in USA? Originally, Hesse didn't sell lamps with such a brand name.

Mark Smith writes:

I can confirm that the Davy type gauze lamp illustrated in issue 25 of Eureka is British in origin.

It comes from Whitehaven in Cumbria. This coastal town was once the centre of the Cumberland Coalfield. Although this coalfield was one of the earliest in Britain to be commercially developed on a large scale (c.1660's) it was one of the first to enter major decline. The coalfield's last colliery, Haig Pit (named after Earl Douglas Haig, the famous First World War British General), struggled on until as late as 1985.

Charles Dickinson Gordon (i.e. Chas. D. Gordon) was once proprietor of a family run business located at 32 King Street, Whitehaven. The Gordon's business was established in 1799 and by 1846 the proprietors are named as John and Charles Gordon. The family's activities are variously listed as iron mongers, brass founders, tin plate manufacturers, nail merchants and interestingly enough ships' chandlers. The firm continued to trade in the name of Charles D. Gordon up until 1910, presumably well after Charles' death. There still exists a photograph, taken in the early 1900's, of the family's premises in King Street. In addition I know of one of their trade adverts which dates to 1893.

The lamp is a rarity and is probably the first recorded for this obscure provincial manufacturer. How the lamp found its way to the US is a mystery. If it wasn't part of a cross Atlantic lamp trade or antique deal it is just possible that the lamp left the UK with its original owner back in the late 1800's. This is very possible as many Cumberland miners emigrated to the States around the turn of the **century.**