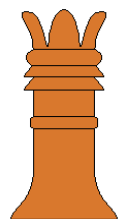
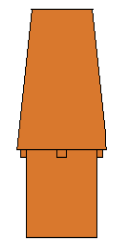


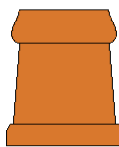
Bishop



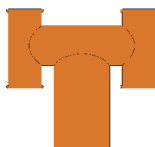
Bradford
Wind Guard



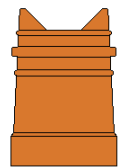
Marcone



Dublin Cap



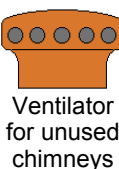
H-Pot



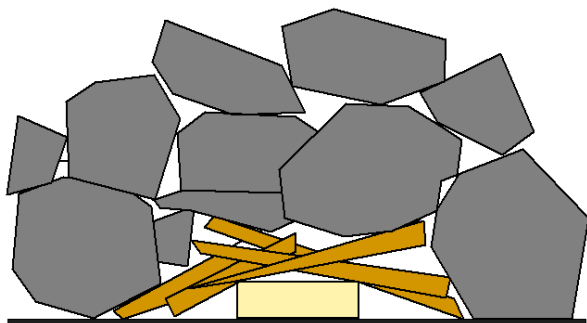
Federal
Spiked or
Rook



Gas Fire
Vent



Ventilator
for unused
chimneys



LIGHTING THE FIRE - is an art more than a science. With practice you'll have a roaring fire in an instant, but no-one, just no one, gets it right every time, so don't be ashamed if, occasionally, you just have to start again from scratch. The very best method is to clear the firebed of ash in the centre - it doesn't matter if ash is left around the edges, in fact, with wood this is highly beneficial. Check that the ashpan isn't so full that it might obstruct free entry of air, and empty it if need be. Place one or two firelighters (or a couple of balls of very dry, very tightly screwed-up paper) *together* in the centre and small dry sticks of kindling wood over the top of them. Light the firelighters, wait half-a-minute or so for them to become well alight, and gently tip *plenty* of dry, dust-free, medium-sized fuel over them and the sticks, so as to completely cover the whole firebed. Set all the air controls to 'full'. Close the door (if there is one) and you should have even the hardest fuel blazing away in minutes. The trick is to create a *single concentrated* heat source in the middle and make sure that all the air has to go through that. Putting lots of fuel on will ignite quicker as the initial flames are slowed-down by the fuel above them. It is important to try and cover the whole firebed as, otherwise, air might just be sucked through gaps rather than go through the burning material. If all else fails, there are such things as electric firelighters.

Anyone new to solid fuel heating soon discovers that **PAPER**, in large quantities, is extraordinarily difficult to burn. This is because the substances which hold wood, or wood-based, materials together burn quickly and easily, allowing the white powdery cellulose to fall away. Cellulose *can* burn if it is kept hot enough for long enough, which is why wood burns best when the 'ash' is kept close to glowing logs, but paper just doesn't have any big mass of stuff to keep it going. To make matters worse, glossy magazine paper is frequently coated with titanium dioxide - one of the most fire-resistant materials known. Better to send paper for recycling than try to burn it.

It is said that the 19th Century Coal-Owner, **LORD CRAWFORD OF BALCARRES** had dinner services made from the unusually hard and clean 'cannel' coal found in his Wigan seams. He would amaze his guests by ceremonially burning their plates on an open fire after the meal.

In Chinese mythology **ZAO JUN** (灶君), or The Stove Master, is the most important of domestic gods. It is said that on the twenty-third day of the twelfth lunar month, just before Chinese New Year, he travels to Heaven to report the activities of every household over the past year to Yu Huang, the Jade Emperor. In country homes to this day a print of the Stove Master is dutifully taken down each year to be burned so that its spirit may fly to the Celestial Court.

The Latin word for fireplace is **FOCUS**- still the word we use to mean the centre of attention.

The 17th Century French philosopher **RENÉ DESCARTES** said that he got all his inspiration sitting *inside* a stove. This has puzzled many a modern thinker, who has assumed that he must have meant 'by a stove' or 'looking into a stove'. Not a bit of it, 'stove', strictly, means a single heated space, and in Descartes day that meant a heated room.

Russian brick **PETCHE** stoves are famously efficient, and can store heat for days. In villages of northern Siberia many older houses still have the family bed built onto the top of the stove.

American author **MARK TWAIN** in *Europe and Elsewhere*, loved the German Kachelofen stoves "To the uninstructed stranger it promises nothing; but he will soon find that it is a masterly performer... Small-sized fuel is used, and marvelously little of that. The door opens into a tiny cavern which would not hold more fuel than a baby could fetch in its arms. [Yet] all day long and until past midnight all parts of the room will be delightfully warm and comfortable." On the other hand, he wasn't too impressed by the stoves back home at that time: "The American wood stove, of whatsoever breed, it is a terror. There can be no tranquility of mind where it is. It requires more attention than a baby. It has to be fed every little while... and when your wood bill comes in you think you have been supporting a volcano."

Traditionally, **SOAP** is made from wood ash and fat. Wood ash was soaked in water for several days and the acrid 'lye water' drained off, to be boiled down until so concentrated that an egg will float in it, then stewed with clarified animal fat.

The **ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** tell us that "Ash from untreated wood has a slight liming action and can be used to raise soil pH. Where ash contains larger particles, its incorporation also helps to improve soil structure. Ash produced from young sappy prunings contains a useful proportion of potassium and traces of other nutrients while older wood tends to contain lower concentrations of nutrients. If the ash is collected fresh, it will supply these in a soluble form. The actual nutrient content of ash varies so precise application is difficult. An alternative to soil application is to apply it in thin layers to the compost heap where it blends readily with other materials. Coal ash is best avoided because it has a negligible nutrient content and its fine particle size means it is of little benefit to soil structure."



Zao Jun 灶君