

## Gin press

### **Tinderbox pipes**

Richard lees, pipe maker 3/10/2008 ©

[www.tinderbox.co.nz/clay\\_pipe\\_store.html](http://www.tinderbox.co.nz/clay_pipe_store.html)

What is a gin press? Before the invention of the gin press, it is thought that the first pipes were hand pressed into wooden moulds with a wooden plunger, this would probably account for the more slanted bowls on the early pipes as the easier alignment of bowl to stem would make hand pressing easier.

Then the gin press was invented. The word gin originates from the word engine: a device, an en-gine. The gin press is used from pressing clay into a pipe mould and so forming the clay pipe.



Here I sit at my gin press, which I built myself after careful research.

I am loading one side of my self- made wooden mould with clay, preparatory to putting the second half of the mould on the first and clamping the two halves together in a 'chest' which is a vice like contraption that is fixed to the bench under the arm of the gin press.



## Gin Press

(A) The lever, (B) the bench, (C) the stopper arm,  
(D) the stopper, (E) the 'Chest'. (F) the lever pivot point

The lever is pulled down and a plunger goes into the top of the mould forming the bowl of the pipe in the clay inside the mould. A rod is pushed through from the mouthpiece end of the mould into the now hollow bowl and when the rod is removed, the pipe has a hollow stem joined to a hollow bowl.

That is a very simple explanation of how a gin press works. Building a gin press is not difficult, learning the intricacies of clay management, operation of the gin press and the acquisition or manufacture of clay pipe making moulds, and firing a kiln are more difficult.