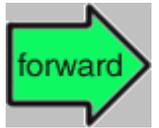# Early Pyrotechnology

If you can make, maintain and control a **fire**, chances are that you belong to the humanoid species on this planet. Maybe you are a Neanderthal but you are no longer an ape or a slimeworm. One wonders, of course, if bankers can make a fire?

Being a fire engineer may not have been the worlds very first profession, but it must have been far up there on the list, probably right after No 2 [1].

Being able to light a fire is a very useful skill. It keeps you warm, scares off predators, attracts the other sex, allows to cook or process food (including tobacco and grass) and it provides light. That much is obvious.

A bit less obvious is that *pyrotechnology*, to use a fancy word for making and controlling heat, allows processing of liquids, mud and stones to make a lot of useful things, including beer, whisky, bricks and pottery.

You also can use pyrotechnology to burn witches, Christians, heathens, and so on at the stake, do a spot of torturing, or for putting whole cities to the torch. You may also use it to run a lot of internal combustion engines of all kinds, inducing a climate change that finally will bring a bit of warmth to my area (always provided the gulf-stream doesn't stop; in this case we would be solidly frozen over). Pyrotechnology *always* produces CO_2, let's not forget that.

Eschewing the less savory uses, I will cover (ever so briefly):

- **1. Simple uses of fires.**
  Like heating, cooking, lighting, smoking fish, and so on.
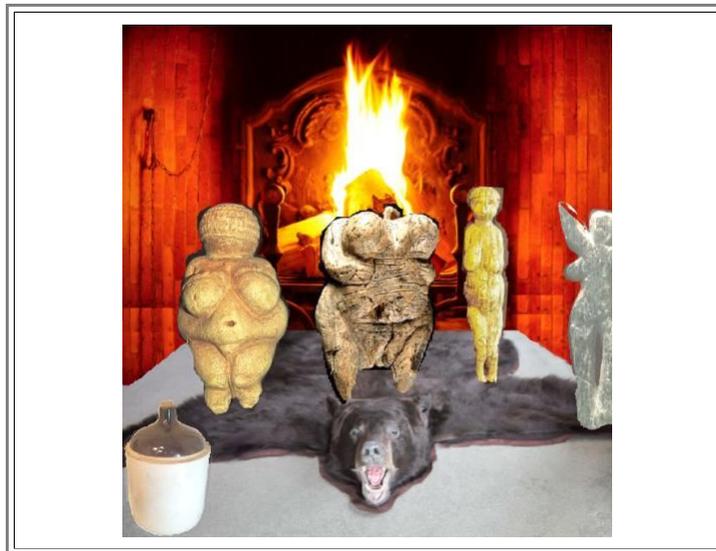
- **2. First Technical Uses**
  Topics covered are birch bark processing, stone processing, wood hardening, making simple ceramics and figurines, and the making of plaster and terrazzo floors.

- **3. Pottery and glass**

- **4. Smelting Metals**
  This topic will have modules all of its own and will not be covered here.

Hint: Best read in front of fireplace with pyrotechnologically processed beverage and contemporary beauties in attendance.

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[1] Here is the joke as to the world's very first profession (the one after that, No. 2, is usually associated with females): A doctor, an engineer, a rabbi and a lawyer were debating who was the world's first professional. The doctor said, "It must have been a doctor. Who else could have helped with the world's first surgery of taking a rib from Adam to create Eve, the first woman?" "No," said the rabbi. "It must have been a rabbi, since the Lord needed someone to help preach his message to Adam and the world." "Wait," said the engineer. "The world was created in 6 days from nothing. Do you know what a master engineering feat that must have been to create the whole world into an organized civilized place from utter chaos?" "And WHO created the chaos?" said the lawyer.