HERITAGE ARMS SOCIETY. INC.

BARRELS & BLADES

June 2018

Index

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Membership Applications

Nominee: Adrian Pearce
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Interests: Swords, Uniforms, Medals, Old Documents & Books

Nominee: Norman Tyrell
Interest: Australian Colonial Military Longarms, Swords etc State NSW

Any member having objection to membership being granted to the above applicants should give reasons in writing, in confidence and without prejudice, to the Secretary, c/- 32 Teakle Street Exeter, within 21 days of this meeting. Members are reminded that you should not sponsor someone for membership unless they are known to you personally. You should also know a reasonable amount of the applicant's background. In the case of an applicant not having two sponsors, written references can be substituted.

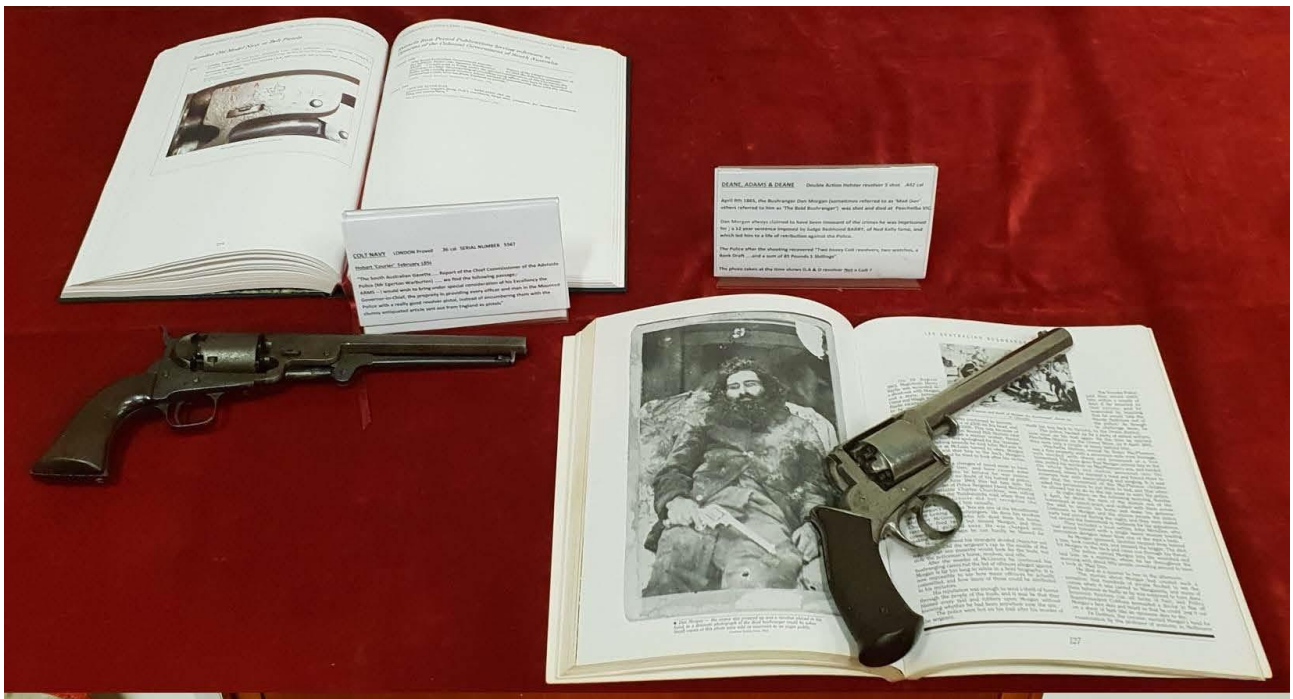
Up and Coming Events

2018	
16-17 Jun Gympie Arms & Collectables Fair,	16-17 Jun Gympie Arms & Collectables Fair, The Pavilion, Gympie Showgrounds Gordon MacRae 0428 865 205 or Brett Whiting 0467 332 303
7-8th July 2018	Melbourne Arms & Militaria Fair, Westgate Sports & Leisure Complex, Altona North Jeff Pannan 0412 561 243 blackjck@bigpond.net.au
14-15th Jul 2018	**Eureka Arms & Militaria Fair** Wendouree Sports & Events Centre, Norman St., Wendouree, Ballarat. Our 30th Anniversary Fair - Don't miss it. 160+ trading tables. Many displays, Antique and modern arms, Medals, Knives, Swords, Badges, Uniforms, Hunting & Shooting supplies and clothing, Collectable ammo, Security Equipment, Accessories and Optics, Books, Bayonets, Living History Groups, Related Memorabilia and more. **www.ballaratarms.com.au (03) 5342 4433**
28-29 July 2018	Brisbane Gun Show, Ipswich Showgrounds, cnr. Warwick & Salisbury Rds. Paul Brush 0412 562 252
11-12th August 2018	Penrith Greengrass Antique & Modern Arms, Penrith Panthers, Mulgoa Rd., Penrith, NSW Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018events@razorbackguns.com
25-26th August 2018	BENDIGO 34TH ARMS & COLLECTABLES SHOW, Bendigo Multi Sports Complex 1-3 Waterson Crt Golden Square Bendigo
8 -9th September 2018	QLD Arms and Militaria Fair, at the Toowoomba showgrounds ,Founders pavilion (5000 sqm) on Glenvale Road Toowoomba 4350
15-16 September 2018	W.A. Annual Fair, Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds, Perth Geoff Smith 0419 955 284
22-23 September 2018	Hunter Valley Arms Fair, Basketball Stadium, Maitland Federation Centre Ross Wood 02 4938 5849 www.huntervalleyarmsfair.com.au
14th October 2018	**Australian Arms Auctions** Venue: Hungarian Community Centre Location: 760 Boronia Road Wantirna 3152
20 -21st October 2018	Melbourne Arms & Militaria Fair, Westgate Sports & Leisure Complex, Altona North Jeff Pannan 0412 561 243 blackjck@bigpond.net.au
27th – 28thth October 2018	**Adelaide Arms and Militaria Fair** Greyhound Race Track, Angle Road, ANGLE PARK SA
7-18 November 2018	Brisbane Gun Show, Ipswich Showgrounds, cnr. Warwick & Salisbury Rds. Paul Brush 0412 562 252
10-11th November 2018	Penrith Greengrass Antique & Modern Arms, Penrith Panthers, Mulgoa Rd., Penrith, NSW Lachlan Matthews 0414 928 018events@razorbackguns.com

Judi Dench & Ali Fazil

Victoria and Abdul

Last Month's Displays


COLT NAVY LONDON Proved 36 cal. SERIAL NUMBER 5567
DEANE, ADAMS & DEANE Double Action Hammer revolver 5 shot .442 Cal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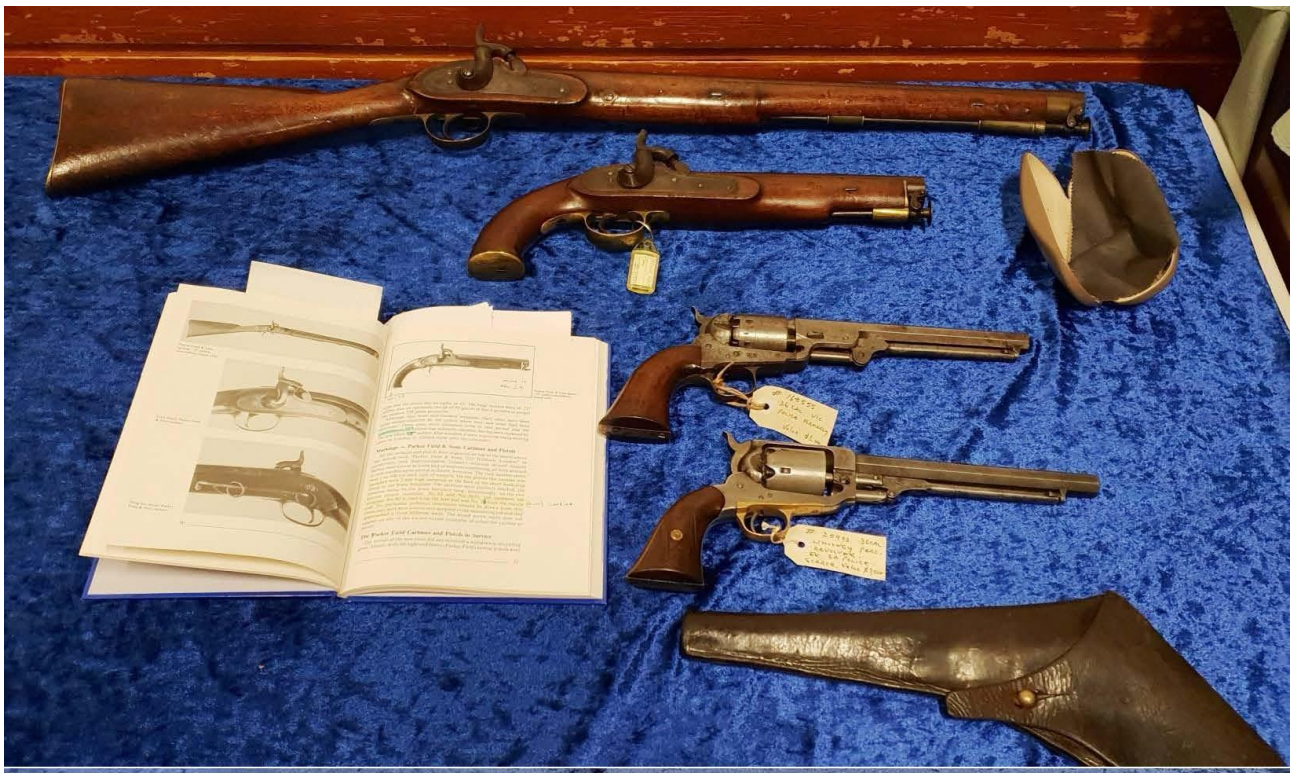
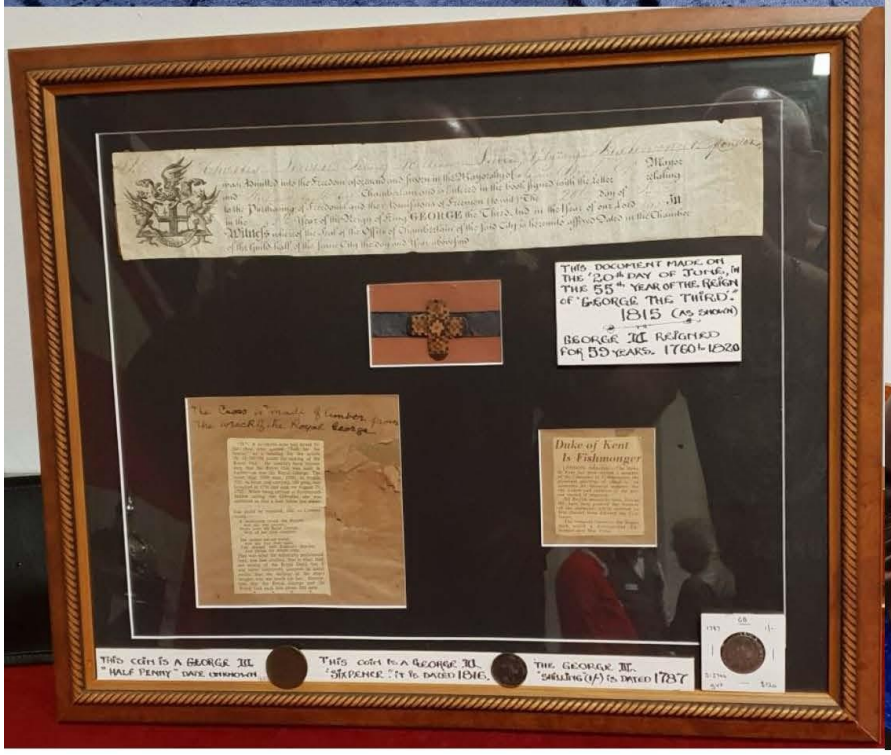



THIS DOCUMENT MADE ON THE 20th DAY OF JUNE, IN THE 55th YEAR OF THE REIGN OF GEORGE THE THIRD. 1815 (AS SHOWN)
GEORGE III REIGNED FOR 59 YEARS. 1760-1820
Duke of Kent Is Fishmonger
THIS COIN IS A GEORGE III "HALF PENNY" DATE UNKNOWN
THIS COIN IS A GEORGE III "FARDENER" IT IS DATED 1816.
THE GEORGE III "SHILLING (1/-)" IS DATED 1787

An Historical Review of Airguns – By Lee Blair-Jenke

Victorian Pepperbox Air Gun

Although of a unique and exacting design, the air gun has not enjoyed the popularity it deserves, both now and throughout history. In this historical review of the airgun, Lee Blair-Jenke of Regimentals Antiques in Adelaide researches both the positive and negative aspects of this largely overlooked weapon.

THE AIR GUN is only casually thought of by collectors and students of arms history. In fact it is considered by most people to be little more than a toy, a judgement being biased by the popular modern air rifle or gun.

Air guns have been with us in one form or another since the early days of firearms. Had Oliver Cromwell been assassinated by an air gun, so hopefully purchased for that purpose, or had the American Continental Army adopted it as was proposed at the time, and as Austria later did, and if Napoleon had not taken such violent exception to its use against his army by the Austrians, the subject would not have been as obscure as it is.

It is uncertain when the first airgun was made, but it appears to have been invented by a number of different people at different times and in different places. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) makes mention of the air gun quite casually as if a commonplace weapon.

The earliest known air gun is preserved in the Armoury of Schmetan in Germany and bears the date of 1474. Many references are to be found of air guns in use in Germany during the 1500's and it must be concluded that during this century they had been developed to a point where they were considered to be a serious and practical weapon.

The Air Gun as a Weapon.

The use of the air gun for hunting in the past was extensive although its military use was limited. In a hunting book published in 1779 it states that three hundred strokes of the pump were required to·fill the ball type reservoir with air. This was then sufficient for around 24 shots. The first 6 shots with a lead bullet were able to down a deer between 70 and 80 paces. Subsequent shots became weaker as pressure reduced in the reservoir. According to another old report, Louis VIII, Landgrave of Hessen (1691-1768)

preferred to use air guns rather than conventional firearms for big game hunting. Many great deer, including one weighing 480 pounds, and an un-numbered amount of wild boar are claimed to have fallen to his air gun.

Experiments with an old air gun in Germany showed that a 9.5mm round bullet could be targeted at a total shooting range of 500 metres. At a 35 metre distance a 3cm pine board was pierced. Flight speed amounted to about 200 metres per sec. The results of this investigation was that the penetrating power of the air gun in question was sufficient to kill big game at a distance of 100 paces.

The air gun is, from the standpoint of pressures used, decidedly more efficient than the conventional firearm. It appears that gas confined under pressure and then suddenly released has a relatively more powerful effect upon a projectile than has the gas generated by the burning or explosion of gunpowder.

Air rifle Girardoni 1779 system Windbüchse Designed in 1779 by Austrian inventor Bartholomäus Girardoni

Advantages of Air Guns in Comparison to Firearms.
In considering the advantages of the airgun, it is also necessary to review the disadvantages of the firearm, particularly as they existed in the flintlock and earlier ignition systems. Whilst this may suggest it's superiority, the air gun nevertheless did have certain objectionable features that apparently prevented it from being adopted seriously by many nations

The most obvious disadvantage of the firearm was the uncertainty of ignition. The matchlock, wheel lock and flintlock were all plagued by this problem. The firearm could misfire for any of many reasons and probably the weather was the biggest cause. Powder falling out of the pan, a badly primed piece, poor quality powder, a blocked touch hole or a worn or faulty flint were all possible causes of misfire. In this respect the air gun had a distinct advantage. As far as certainty of ignition or discharge is concerned, the air gun never fails.

Firearms of this period were not only noisy but generated a lot of smoke from burning powder. In this respect the air gun was again superior in that it was noiseless, nor did it reveal the position of the shooter by clouds of smoke, and it was for this reason that it became so popular for game hunting and poaching. In guerrilla warfare the air gun was a priceless weapon. The Austrians found this feature to their advantage in the Tyrolean campaign against the French. As a result, Napoleon caused every Austrian captured carrying an air gun to be summarily shot or hanged. Another material advantage which the air gun possessed over the firearm was the fact that the former adapted itself to repeating mechanisms and rapid fire more readily than did firearms of the pre-cartridge era.

With the air gun an assortment of principles were available. They were:
Single pressure charge: single shot
Single pressure charge: multiple shot (with ball magazine).
Multiple pressure charge: single shot
Multiple pressure charge: multiple shot

Repeating mechanisms in firearms of the flintlock era were decidedly dangerous and many explosions are recorded with disastrous results to the shooter.

A very practical advantage that the air gun possessed over the firearm using black powder, was that the air gun required almost no cleaning. The firearm needed cleaning after every use and suffered badly from fouling during use, which affected accuracy. Because of the absence of fouling, the use of rifling in the air

gun presented less of a problem than it did in firearms. Much to the delight of collectors, most air guns, even very old ones, are invariably found with perfect bores.

Rapid fire did not pose any problems for the air gun but in a muzzle-loading rifle a serious danger was involved due to residual sparks in the chamber. Apart from fouling making rapid fire difficult for the firearm user, he had also to carry quantities of powder and primers, whereas the air gun only required the ball to be handled and the carrying of a pump. Rapid fire in a fire-arm caused it to overheat badly, but the air gun remained cool.

From the standpoint of efficiency it is acknowledged that the pressure in the reservoir of a pneumatic air gun was progressively lowered with each shot but experiments show that the strength between the first and tenth shots are practically the same. By comparison, gun-powder strength did vary enormously in the early days.

Another claimed advantage of the air gun was the amount of ammunition that could be carried. The soldier or sportsman could carry sufficient compressed air in the reservoir of his airgun for possibly 40 shots and could carry extra reservoirs if he wished. An Austrian soldier equipped with the air rifle went into battle carrying 24 filled flask reservoirs, each of which held a potential of upwards of 20 lethal shots. The soldier was therefore prepared to deliver 480 shots at ranges varying from 150-400 paces, meaning that one corps of 500 men could deliver 24,000 shots with normal field equipment. The rate of fire of the Austrian air rifle was 20 shots per minute. One reservoir would last at least a minute and on this basis a corps of 500 men had a potential fire powder of 10,000 shots per minute. This, in view of the little equipment involved and the then existing rate of fire for firearms, is absolutely incredible. It is no wonder that Napoleon ordered the death of all Austrian soldiers caught with air guns.

Disadvantages of Air Guns.

The primary disadvantage of the air gun was the cold hard matter of cost. The construction of the weapon required practically every element present in a firearm plus the addition of certain other parts. The first of these was the reservoir. This required the forming and welding of an air-tight container which had to be fitted with a screw joint. In addition to the reservoir a valve assembly was required, which had to be manufactured and fitted with sufficient precision to permit the retention of up to 750 pounds per square inch of air pressure. The fitting of these valves required a degree of precision in workmanship far above that needed for firearms. Even after these extra operations, there remained the making of a pump for charging the reservoir which at least equalled the task of making a barrel. The internal surface or bore of the pump required fitting of sufficient precision to allow a steel piston to slip fit within it, the pump chamber.

A great many air guns were breech loaders and this involved other operations in manufacture. At the very least it can be said that air guns required twice the time needed to produce a fire-arm of similar quality and workmanship. Another disadvantage of the air gun was the physical work required to charge the reservoir. Instructions on a pump accompanying an old air rifle state? '800 strokes to fill each globe with air'.

An additional drawback is the element of danger involved in having air under pressure. Several instances are recorded of air gun reservoirs having exploded either injuring or killing the user. Probably the most dangerous of reservoirs was the ball type. The early workers must have had a fear of ball reservoirs exploding as they are invariably made of copper. While copper, the softer metal, does not have the strength of steel or iron, it does have the advantage of opening when it gives way under pressure, and does not splinter or fracture like a grenade. These reservoirs filled with air were cold and unpleasant to handle in cold weather and for this reason the stocks were covered with leather or cloth. Ball reservoirs sometimes were fitted with a stocking cap arrangement.

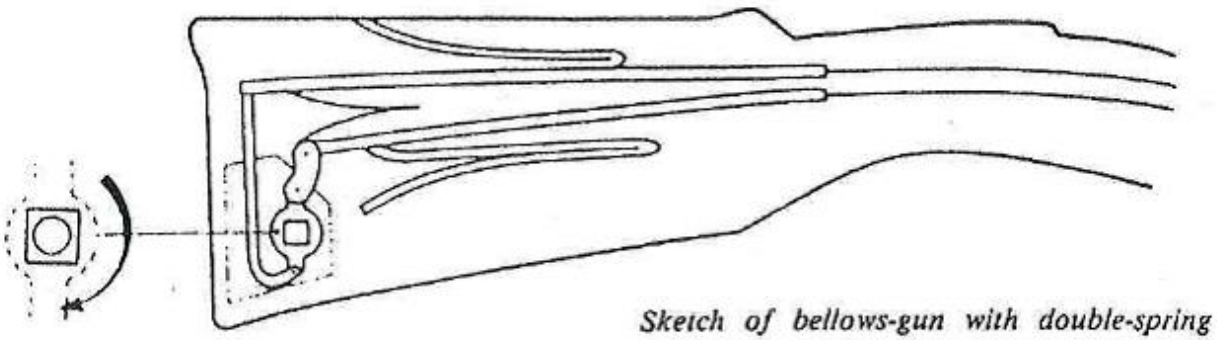
A reservoir filled to its maximum in a cold room would increase its pressure and possibly explode when brought out into the sun. Distribution of the air gun was limited by another factor related to earlier remarks. The skill required to maintain the valve and any other precision parts made it an impractical

weapon for use at any distance from a gun making centre. The air guns, upon which the Austrians put so much hope, were eventually abandoned because of the state of disrepair into which they had fallen.

TYPES OF AIR GUN

The Blowpipe.
The most primitive type of air gun is the Blowpipe; a long tube through which a projectile is driven out at great speed by the force of the human lungs. This surprisingly efficient and precise weapon has been used by many peoples all over the world .

Bellows Gun



Sketch of bellows-gun with double-spring system

The Bellows Gun is the earliest form of mechanical air gun. It is found in one inherent form which in its general appearance is reminiscent of the wheel lock. The Bellows air gun had a hollowed out butt stock in which the bellows and its accompanying mechanism are housed. The gun is operated by forcing the bellows open against the pressure of one or two V-springs, this being accomplished by means of a removable crank. The air compressed by the sudden closing of the bellows forces the projectile out through the barrel.

Fine German Breech-Loading Crank-Wound Bellows Air Gun

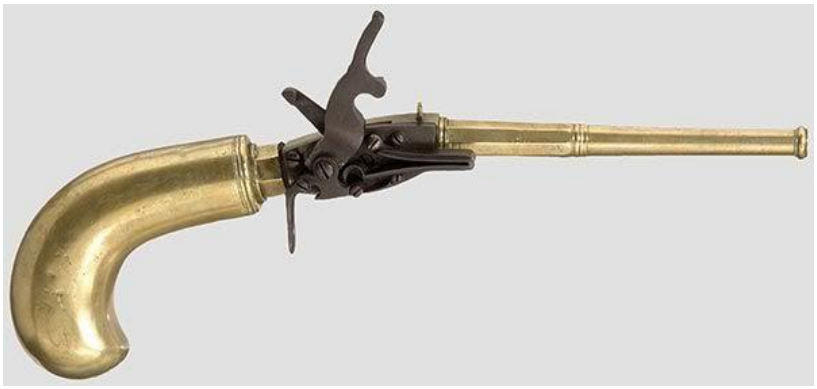
Strike Pump Guns (Gallery Guns)
Systematically different from the bellows gun is a type which is generally called a spring gun, where the momentary air pressure is created by a spring propelled piston rushing forward in a pump cylinder. Such air guns occur at about the same time as the bellows guns and its general external appearance is that of a conventional wheel Jock gun. A common feature of the later strike pump gun was the use of a new type of spring, the double volute spring. About the middle of the 19th century the strike pump gun became popular in Europe, but was far more widely used in the United States. The period represented by the strike pump or American Gallery gun appears to have begun shortly before the Civil War and continued for about a decade after.

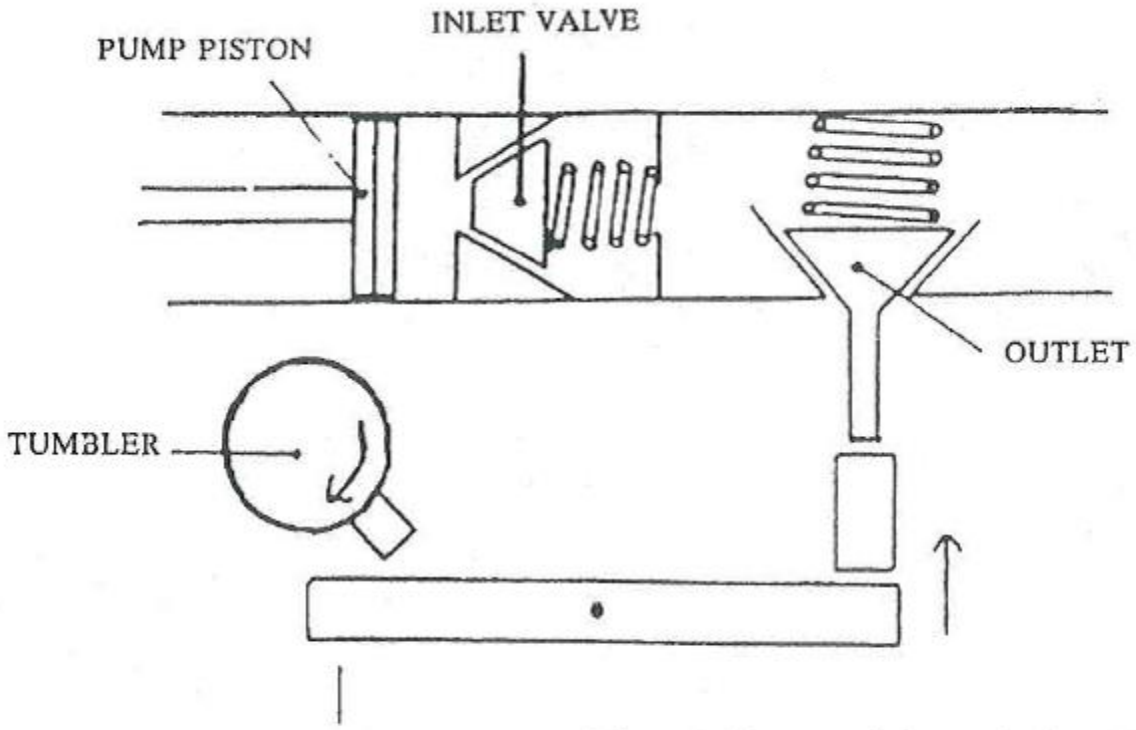
strike-pump Gallery gun, probably by Johann Peterlongo

With the interest in rifle shooting coming to the attention of urban dwellers as a result of the Civil War, there developed a desire to emulate the heroes of the War. A means of satisfying this desire was found in the gallery gun, and as the name indicates, was generally used in indoor ranges. These guns, whilst occurring in a variety of designs, have certain characteristics in common. They were highly stylized and were of European design. All are double volute spring piston guns. All are breech loaders, have smooth bores and were designed to use darts. A detachable crank which is inserted into an aperture in the side of the receiver operates a rack within, which compressed the spring. Other varieties are cranked by means of a combination trigger guard level. Makers, judging by names, were of Germanic origin.

Barrel Reservoir Air Guns

Among the earliest surviving pump-up air guns is the system of the air reservoir surrounding the barrel. The barrel consists of two tubes, the barrel proper and an outer tube that forms an air reservoir between the two. The barrel surrounding reservoir air gun is one that is deceptive at first glance. The impression normally conveyed is that of a heavy barrelled piece. In this type of arm there is a pump in the butt.



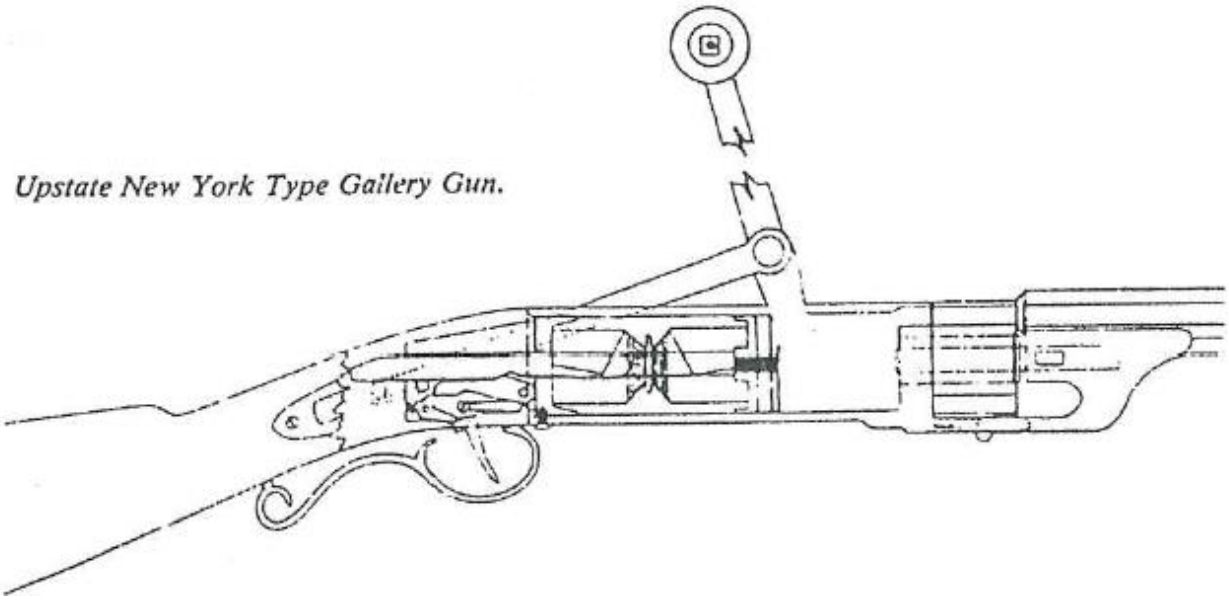


Schematic diagram of the mechanism of a barrel reservoir air pistol.

Globe or Ball Reservoir Air Gun

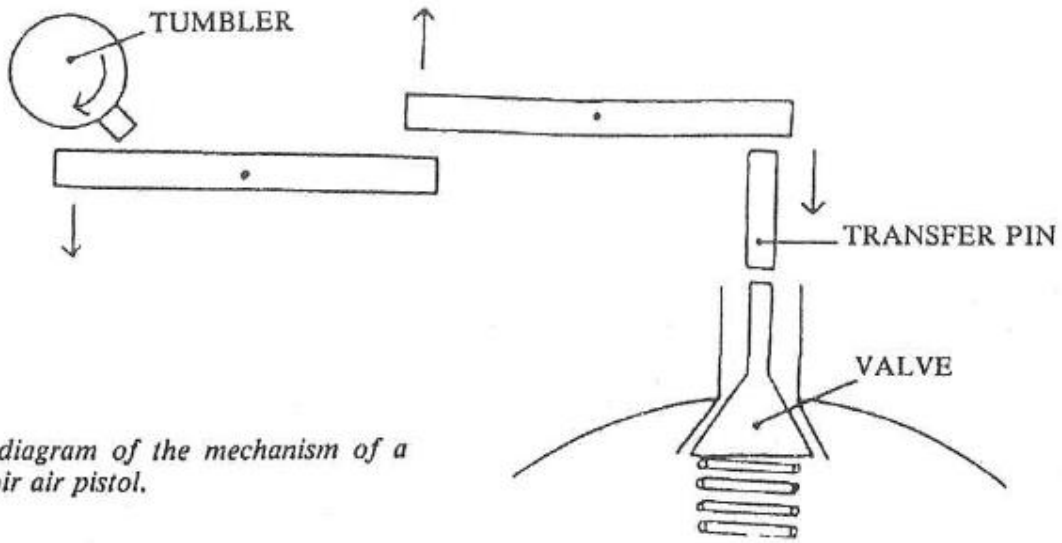
This variety is recognisable at a glance. The ball reservoir is usually constructed of copper, but steel and brass examples do exist. The advantage of the ball type reservoir was that only one valve was required. With a removable reservoir it was necessary to have an auxiliary pump instead of having one built in. The ball reservoir was attached to the gun in a variety of positions. The ball under the barrel was the most popular position, but a number of examples have the ball reservoir placed either on top or on the side of the barrel. Locks also are found in a variety of types from simple cocking levers to full mock flintlocks.

G W Bales ball reservoir rifle / shotgun - David Swan Collection

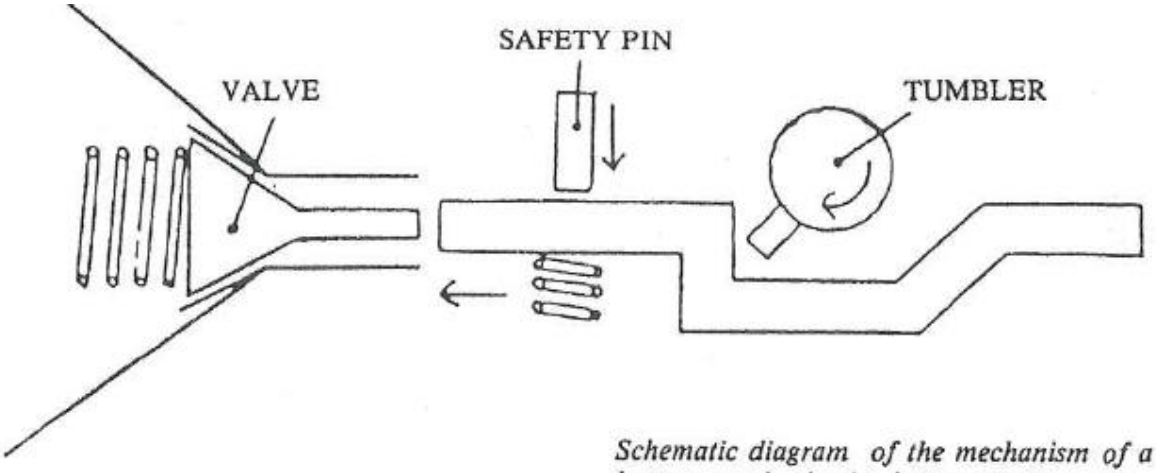


Butt Reservoir Air Gun

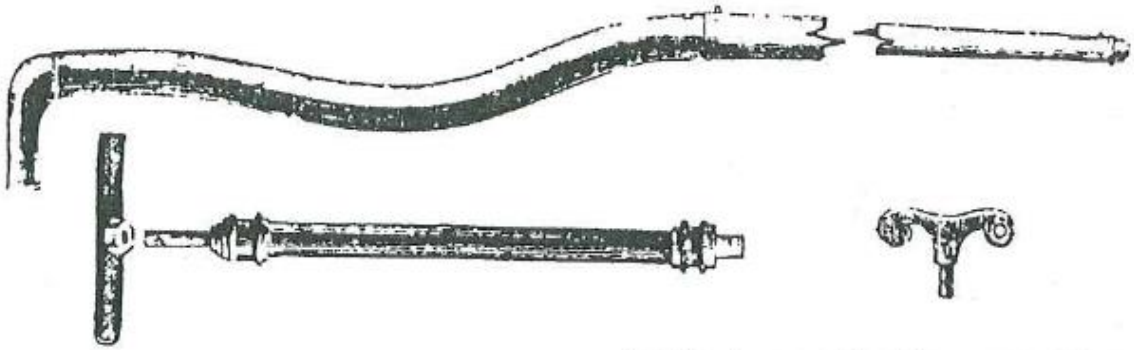
Air guns of this style fall into two categories, those with built in butt reservoirs and others with detachable butt reservoirs. While air guns with built in butt reservoirs and those with barrel reservoirs had to be equipped with two valves, the globe reservoir gun required only one valve. On the other hand, it had to be admitted that globe reservoir guns were less practically shaped for hunting than butt reservoir guns. A system that combined the advantages of both was the detachable butt reservoir which required a separate pump. The detachable butt reservoir was simply a metal container, but with the same outer shape as the normal butt which was covered with leather or fabric. The ultimate air gun in the form of the butt reservoir air gun was developed by the Austrian Girandoni in 1780. It was his system that was adopted by the Austrian Army with such success against Napoleon.



Schematic diagram of the mechanism of a ball reservoir air pistol.



Schematic diagram of the mechanism of a butt reservoir air pistol. Girandoni type.



British air-gun stick with pump and key. Giftard CO2 gas gun.

Air Canes

The air cane gun was developed to its ultimate form in England. The lock mechanism is hidden beneath a casing of painted metal. There is little variation in the essential form of the air cane. It is divided into two sections with the halves united by a screw joint. The front section contains the lock, barrel, breech, sights and combined ramrod and barrel cap. The pop out trigger is characteristic as is the cocking mechanism. The rear portion of the cane is the air reservoir. English air canes are commonly found with two barrels. In addition to the regular barrel a removable liner was provided. Generally the bore is smooth and the liner is rifled. Barrels and removable liners are usually made of brass and the rifling is poly-grooved. While most air canes are muzzle loading, certain specimens are equipped with a loading port at the breech, usable for ball.

Gas Gun

Closely related to the air gun is the gas gun, which uses a chemically produced gas as the propellant. Attempts to construct such a gun were made as early as the 1830's. The first gas gun to be actually produced was the 'Giffard' gas gun in 1872, which had an 'air cartridge' containing compressed air. It was obviously not a very long step from this to a cartridge of carbon dioxide gas. The presently produced C02 air guns are, of course, descendants of the earlier gas guns produced by Paul Giffard.

Quackenbush

In the late 1870's the solid but expensive handmade gallery gun was priced out of the market by a new factory made strike pump gun. Henry Marcus Quackenbush, with his No.l air gun, had an effective substitute for the expensive handmade gallery gun. His weapon had only 15 parts compared to 27 parts in a typical gallery gun and weighed considerably less. In place of the hand fitted leather covered piston, a precision machined steel piston was used to slip fit in a forged cylinder. Another improvement was a machine wound coil spring. Gallery guns were equipped with either a detachable crank or trigger guard lever for cocking. Quackenbush substituted the barrel itself for this purpose. The result of these improvements and simplification in design was that, while effective as the handmade gallery guns, it could be mass produced at a fraction of the cost. Under these circumstances the gallery gun gradually disappeared and was not advertised for sale after 1879. From that time on Quackenbush rapidly assumed the leading position in the air gun field in America.

Tinplate

It is evident that air gun makers had a lead over gunsmiths. Not only were the advances in lock mechanics, breech loading techniques, metallurgy and appreciation of pressures evident, but the radically new process of using folded metal was also adopted by air gun makers as early as 1890.

With the cheap tinplate air guns flooding the market, the air gun had now become little more than a toy, with nearly every boy owning one at some time or another.

Air pistol, percussion cap, ca. 1875

References:

'AIR GUNS' by E.G. Wolf
'AIR GUNS & OTHER PNEUMATIC ARMS' by A. Hoff
'GAS, AIR & SPRING GUNS OF THE WORLD' by W.H.B. Smith.

A blade inspired by a popular hero By Richard Dellar

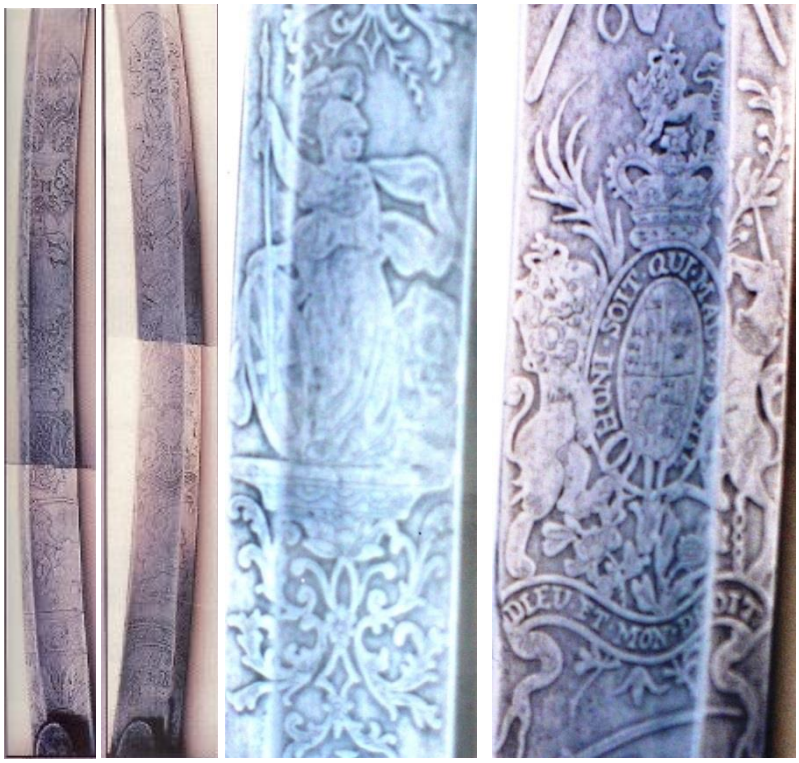
Commodore Sir William Sidney Smith at the siege of Acre in 1799

THE SWORD illustrated above is a standard 1796 pattern light cavalry officer's sabre, standard that is in all save one particular feature unique in my experience.

The sword was made by Henry Osborn of "Bordesley near Birmingham" around 1800 -1801. Osborn's name appears on the blade and the dating of manufacture is derived from the pre-1801 Royal Coat of Arms upon the blade and the Bordesley address of Osborn first listed in 1800. It is also to the blade that we must look for the unique feature. 1796 pattern cavalry officers' blades are generally found decorated in one of two styles: blued and gilt over engraved motifs or alternatively, acid etched with engraved detailing (although rarely a combination of the two styles is used on a single blade). In this instance, we have an acid etched blade, Osborn being one of the foremost proponents of this particular method of decoration. If not so instantly as visually dramatic as blued and gilt decoration, acid etched blades normally give us a far greater range of characters and motifs and by far a more sophisticated degree of artistic detailing. This blade is no exception and is decorated in standard Osborn style as follows:

Right (Obverse) side: Foliate sprays & patterns, Heralding Angel, Stand of arms including Tarleton helmet, shield, lances, drum and crossed cannon barrels. Pre-1801 Royal Coat of Arms, Mounted light dragoon charging with sword aloft, Manufacturer's name: H OSBORN Bordesley near BIRMINGHAM.

Left (Reverse) side : Classical urn amid foliage with lion mask Standing figure of Britannia with lance, Union shield and Lion at feet, Crown, GR Cypher, Figure of a soldier with sword raised aloft standing in the breech of a wall with dismounted cannon barrel at feet, Various patterns and friezes.



Most of the above designs are fairly standard and quite commonly found on good quality blades. The exception, and the unique feature of this particular blade, is the representation of the soldier standing in the breech of a ruined wall. I reproduce in large scale this representation below and I ask readers to forgive the poor quality of my jotting. This is indeed a completely non-standard design and, although the figure is undoubtedly meant to be a cavalryman (he is the twin of the mounted light dragoon on the other side of the blade), one would have thought a siege scene is hardly to be associated with the cavalry albeit artillery officers often carried cavalry swords at this time. Where then does one look for the inspiration behind such a design? The great sieges of Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajoz did not take place until 1812 and altogether the army was not much engaged around 1800 -1801.

Strangely, however, the answer neither may not lie with the army bur with the navy. Consider the painting reproduced at the begriming of this article*:* this Painting shows Commodore Sir William Sidney Smith at the siege of Acre in 1799 and the similarities with *figure on the sword blade* seem to me unmistakeable.

Although we have a cavalryman instead of a naval officer, the posture of the figure, contour of the broken wall, the representation of a cannon and other elements all provide common factors between the two. However, before we go any further, let us consider the historical background to the events at Acre which form one of the more colourful chapters in the careers of both Sir Sidney Smith and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon always considered England to be the key to the domination of Europe and following the end of the War of the First Coalition in 1797, his thoughts turned towards England and the possibility of invasion (the threat of which directly resulted in the raising of so many Yeomanry units in this country). Any plans for invasion of the English mainland, however were soon discounted in terms of being too risky and too expensive and never became a serious proposition at that time. The alternative was to strike a blow at England's commercial interests and, in particular, the lucrative trade with India. So it was with this purpose in mind, Napoleon invaded Egypt in the spring of 1798 at the head of an army of 30,000 men. Of course, Napoleon had other personal objectives as well for this oriental adventure: firstly, he had always had a fascination with the Orient and, seeing himself as a latter-day Alexander the Great, saw an opportunity for further military glory; secondly, the time was not yet ripe for a long considered move against the Directory (the Revolutionary government of France at that time) which would leave him as master of all France.

In 1798, Egypt was still a province of the huge Turkish (Ottoman) Empire but for some 500 years previous, it had been ruled by the Mamelukes, a ferocious warrior sect. The decisive moment of Napoleon's campaign came on 21st July 1798 at the Battle of the Pyramids when the French, urged on by Napoleon's famous exhortation "Soldiers, remember that 40 centuries of history look down upon you from yonder monuments" (the Pyramids of Giza which shimmered in the haze some 15 miles away) decisively defeated the medieval Mameluke hoard who had only three military tactics : form, charge and (if not successful) flee. Many of the Mamelukes, who carried all their worldly wealth about their person in battles, were drowned

attempting to escape by swimming across the Nile and afterwards, it is said that the French enjoyed much sport in fishing for dead Mamelukes with bent bayonets.

In the meantime, the Sultan of Turkey had, of course, declared war upon the French and proposed to send two armies against Napoleon. The army of Rhodes was to travel by sea to Alexandria and the army of Damascus was to travel overland by Palestine and thus trap Napoleon in a pincer movement.

Napoleon, however, was never one to sit idly by and let his enemies seize the initiative. He proposed to march into Syria, defeat the Turkish army of Damascus and then swiftly return to Egypt to deal with the army of Rhodes - at least that was the official line for Napoleon certainly had it in mind if the expedition into Syria was successful to proceed onwards to Constantinople, the heart of the Ottoman Empire. The key point of this Syrian expedition was the taking of the mighty fortress at Acre (the famed St-Jean d' Acre from the time of the Crusades) which at that time was held under the command of the elderly Turkish governor of Syria, Djezzar Pasha, who also regaled in the colourful and well-earned nickname of "The Butcher".

The French siege guns were despatched up the coast of Palestine by sea and the army set off overland. The expedition, however, did not go exactly to plan: firstly, the army was held up by unexpected resistance and an outbreak of plague, causing a delay which was later to prove critical; secondly half of the French siege guns were seized by a squadron of the Royal Navy under the command of Commodore Sir William Sidney Smith. Nevertheless, things may still have worked out for the French for "The Butcher" proved not quite worth his meat and proposed to abandon Acre to the oncoming French.

Enter once again Sir Sidney Smith, who, just three days before the arrival of the French, appeared off Acre with *HMS Tigre* and *HMS Theseus* and set about re-organising its defences and reinforcing the garrison with what naval guns and men could be spared from the ships. For sixty-three days the French laid Siege to Acre but were kept at bay by Sir Sidney and were unable to take the fortress.

Napoleon retreated back to Egypt with his disease ridden army and shortly after returned to France abandoning his men to another two years of misery in the desert. Sir William Sidney Smith was a colourful character and an adventurer in the old tradition, a vain, impetuous yet inspirational man who enjoyed a somewhat chequered career. He was born in 1764 and joined the Royal Navy as a Midshipman at the age of twelve. He saw action during the American War of Independence and later *he* served in the Swedish navy, also travelling widely in the Orient where he made many contacts that were later to prove useful at Acre. He was recalled by the Admiralty in 1794 saw service with the British forces occupying Toulon where he had his first encounter with the young Napoleon. He was captured and imprisoned by the French from

1796 to 1798 but following a daring rescue, joined the Mediterranean fleet under the command of Admiral Lord Nelson. The defence of Acre, however, was one of the highlights of Sir Sidney's career and it is said that, due to this setback to his plans, Napoleon forever regarded him with a personal hatred and, indeed, referred to him as a "madman" and "the man who stole my destiny", the latter perhaps a reference to his frustrated dreams of taking Constantinople.

There is also a story that, during the course of the siege, Sir Sidney challenged Napoleon to personal combat to which Napoleon is said to have replied that he would not come forth to duel unless the English could raise Marlborough from his grave but in the meantime any one of his grenadiers could give the challenger such satisfaction as he desired.

Sir Sidney Smith was always headline news bur the defence of Acre was one of the finest moments of this popular hero and no doubt the image at the beginning of this article was spread across the Georgian equivalent of the front page of *The Sun.* It made an inspiring scene: the heroic naval officer standing defiant upon the battered walls of Acre in the face of the "Ogre" and his demons and perhaps it motivated one young officer to have a similar image forever emblazoned upon his sword blade.

The linkage of the image on the sword blade with the exploits of Sir Sidney Smith is just one speculative theory but, of course, I am as likely to be as wrong as the next man. If readers have any other ideas, I should be only too pleased to hear from them. *My thanks to Derek Spalding of Peter Dale Limited who brought this sword to my attention.*

Footnote: Napoleon's Egyptian campaign of 1798-1799 and the resulting British campaign of 1800-01 to liberate Egypt from the French had, of course, another profound effect on the swords of both countries, that is the advent of the Mameluke style sabres that were thereafter carried by officers in both armies which, in this country, eventually became incorporated in official regulations.

British Presentation Mameluke to a Maharaja by C A Brimage

This sword is inscribed "Presented to Maharaja Dhiraj Bijay Chand Mahtab Bahadur of Burdwan on the Occasion of his Installation 1903". Collection of the author.

Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Sir Bijay Chand Mahtab succeeded in 1903 as the ruler of Burdwan Raj (in Bengal) having an area of 4143 square miles including Kujang (Orissa). On the occasion of his installation, he was presented with this Sword by the Lieutenant Governor Bordillian.

This sword manufactured by R. B Rhodda & Co Calcutta was originally purchased by Bill Johnson of Kent Antiques Malvern from the Maharajah's estate from Hamilton's Calcutta in the 1970's together with an ivory headed walking stick and ivory dagger also belonging to the Rajah. The sword was then sold to Victorian collector who sold the sword to us on the 8th October 2009. Pretty much my Birthday present that year.

One of the unusual features of this sword apart from the heavy gilt to both hilt and scabbard is the fact that the sling eye bands around the scabbard can be slid down towards the bottom of the scabbard so that cleaning around the bands becomes un-necessary, thus producing a perfectly clean scabbard; once the scabbard (and bands) have been cleaned, the bands can be moved lightly back in to position.

In 1908 the Honourable the Maharaja Dhirah Bijay Chand Mahtab Bahadur of Burdwan was appointed to the 3rd Class of the Order for an act of gallantry. His citation appears in the Gazette of India as follows:

"…for conspicuous courage displayed by him at Overtoun Hall on the 7th November 1908, in connection with the attempt upon the life of Sir Andrew Frazer, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. On Sir Andrew Frazer's entering the Hall a young Bengali stepped towards him and presenting a revolver at him pulled the trigger, but the weapon fortunately missed fire. The Maharaja Dhirah of Burdwan at once flung himself between Sir Andrew Frazer and the would be murderer. The latter was seized by MR B. R. Braber, the General Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association in Calcutta, but succeeded in again directing the revolver towards the Lieutenant-Governor and a second time fired the weapon without result. If it had not missed fire, the bullet would in all probability have struck the Maharaja who had courageously interposed himself between Sir Andrew Frazer and his assailant and was effectively shielding him from danger."

Sir Andrew Fraser

Maharaja Dhirah Bijay Chand Mahtab Bahadur of Burdwan

The Maharaja had an important political career in India. He was created K.C.I.E. in 1909, a K.C.S.I in 1911, and a G.C.S.I. in 1924. A small photograph of him wearing his orders and medals appears in the Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India 1911 (1914).

His rule started in 1887 and lasted till his death in 1941. It was the longest in the Bardhaman Raj. In 1887, he was only six years old. Therefore, the Court of Wards along with the Diwani-i-Raj, Banbehari Kapoor, ruled up to 1902. During the later part of that rule, there were allegations of financial corruption. Coupled with mismanagement, the affairs of the Raj were in shambles. In 1893, the title of "Raja" was bestowed on Banbehari Kapoor. The government permitted the raj in 1897 to maintain an armed force of 600 people and 41 cannons. In 1899, Vijay Chand Mahtab passed the entrance examination of Calcutta University, and was the first in the Raj family to obtain a formal educational qualification.

In 1903, the title of "Rajadhiraj" was bestowed on Vijaychand Mahtab at the Delhi Durbar. A pompous coronation was organized in the palace at Bardhaman, where Lieutenant Governor Bordillian was present to bestow the honour. In 1908, as per a proclamation of Lord Minto, the title of "Maharajadhiraj" was bestowed on a hereditary basis.

The national movement had started picking up. Three branches of Bharat Sabha set up by **Surendranath Banerjee** were established at Bardhaman. Jatindranath Bandopadhyay of Channa within the area of the Raj, secured army training in Baroda and joined the Anushilan group. **Rashbehari Bose** of Khandaghosh in the Raj had already become a revolutionary leader. In such an environment, Vijaychand Mahtab invited the Governor General Lord Curzon to the Bardhaman palace and constructed the Curzon gate in Gothic style at the junction of Vijaychand Road and Grand Trunk Road.

In 1903, he saved the life of the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Andrew Fraser. In return for his loyalty to the British, he was honoured with the title of KCIE (Knight Commander of the Indian Empire) and Indian Order of Merit (class III). In 1906, he toured Europe.

It must be added that in spite of his loyalty towards the British, he provided warm hospitality to Mahatma Gandhi, when he visited Bardhaman in 1925 and welcomed cordially Subhas Chandra Bose when he visited Bardhaman in 1928 to campaign in the municipal elections.

He left behind two sons and two daughters, thereby ending the long succession of adoptions.

Portrait of Mahraja Bijoy Chand Mahtab of Burdwan riding in Burdwan 42.5 cm x 33 cm Oil on Canvas by Hugo Vilfred Pedersen (Danish) 1870 – 1959 In India c 1900 – 1909

The Wolseley Helmet In Pictures From Omdurman to El Alamein

The definitive book on this iconic helmet of the British Empire.

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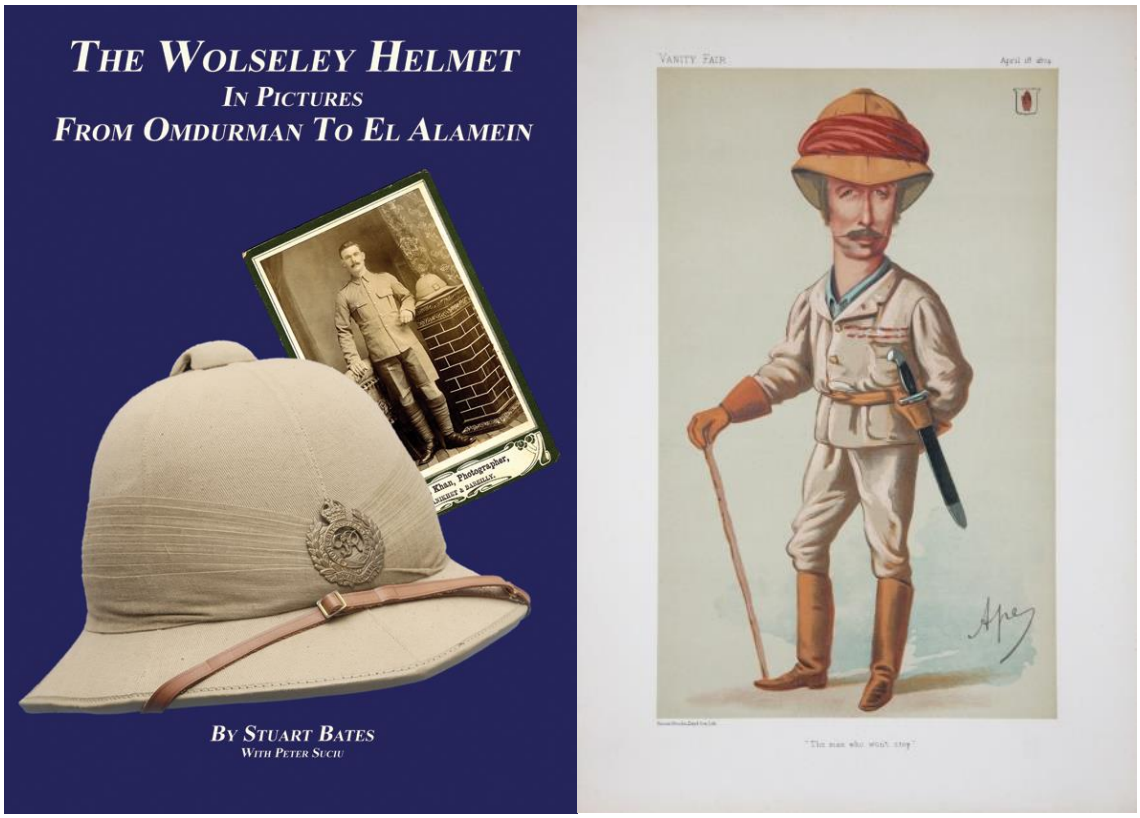

The British Wolseley helmet was introduced when the empire was essentially at its zenith, and while the Wolseley has a moniker that evokes an eminent Victorian general, it is in fact a helmet more accurately associated with the First and Second World Wars. The Wolseley pattern helmet was worn by the guardians of the empire, from the Battle of Omdurman to the Gallipoli campaign to the Battle of El Alamein.

The Wolseley Helmet In Pictures: From Omdurman to El Alamein

See http://www.militarysunhelmets.com/the-wolseley-helmet-in-pictures for reviews and sample pages.

PS: I can confirm that a number of our members have this book already and can't recommend it highly enough, at $20 it's a steal. Cathey Brimage

Meetings and Topics

Meetings commence at 7.30 pm and are held at Clayton Wesley Uniting Church 280 Portrush Rd Beulah Park (Top of Norwood Parade) All members are reminded and encouraged to bring along items for display. **Don't like the topic categories on the night, no problem, pick your own providing it is over 100 years old.**

* **Note**: All ammunition, loose or packeted / boxed, ***must*** be securely contained to prevent handling Newsletter contributions are welcomed, including items members wish to buy and/or sell. To submit material for Barrels & Blades please email heritage.arms.society@gmail.com

Calendar of Topics - *Display topics may change to accommodate member requests *

Next Meeting	**GENERAL** - *Broad field of arms.*	**SPECIALIST** - *Types of particular interest.*	**THEME** - *Periods, places or users.*	**General**
June	The Indian Raj	Items with provenance	Seen on screen i.e. items seen in film and or television.	**Anything in your collecting interest, over 100 years old.** **You Choose, Surprise us**
July	Hunting	Interesting markings, eg: patriotic, retailer slogans	Army	
August	Uniforms	Presentation / ceremonial/ decorated	Japan	
September	Pistols	Curiosa, Multi-purpose /Combination	Zulu Wars	
October	Canons, Ordinance and grenades	Antiquities Pre 500AD	American, Wild, Wild west	
November	Armour	Navy	United Kingdom	
December	Bayonets	Long arms	Boer War	
January	Headgear	Cavalry	European	
February	Powder Horns & Flasks	Daggers, Dirks & knives	Indian Mutiny	
March	Edged Weapons	Sport/recreation/target	American Civil War	
April	Medals and Badges	WW1	English Civil War	
May	Loading tools and Accessories	Police, prison or bushranger	Scottish