



Order of Edwardian Gunners Inc
Australian Chapter

HAMMERS BACK VINTAGERS NEWSLETTER Issue No. 2 - March 2001

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The Committee welcomes the members who have joined the Vintagers with great enthusiasm. As we mentioned in our previous issue we are gaining momentum and our membership is now 63 to date. The Members who have joined since our first issue are as follows: Patrik Mort and Brian Watson were both not mentioned in the previous newsletter (apologies from the Secretary), William Rutherford, Ross Waghorn, John Witney, Jeffrey Koch, Peter Watkin, Ross Jackson, Andrew Stevenson, Ivan Green, Peter Chadwick, Gary Atkinson, Phillip Spry, Tony Kelly, Tony Moodie, John Spark, Barry Batagol, Clive Whelan, Bob Seip, Darrell Douglas, Mike Gibbs, Neil Falconer, Charlie Strike, David Hawker, Mario Blasco, Peter Janson and Sean O'Brien.

***We welcome any feedback
whether it be critical or not.***

President's Report

Our Club is really gaining momentum as the news of our activities and interests spreads! At the time of compiling this report, we now have 44 financial members, and our target of 50 by 30th June looks to be well and truly broken **(PS. Since writing this, and following the success of the Keysborough Shoot of 19th February, we now have 63 members).**

The Cranbourne RSL Gun Club shoot on 9th December was an unquestionable success. Sam Biondo, the Cranbourne Gun Club President, provided the grounds for our exclusive use, with skeet, tower, and the ever popular 3 person flush in operation. Mark Brenton was the holder of the winning raffle ticket in the monster hamper.

The usual high standard lunch was served by Annette Pearson; and Judith Kent attended to all the necessary administrative and personnel functions that we all tend to take for granted, including being the official photographer. Luckily, Judith was able to delegate the selling of the final book of raffle tickets to those two charming daughters of Mark's, Molly and Shelby, who obviously enjoyed the challenge.

Incidentally, Cranbourne expressed sincere appreciation at the way we conducted ourselves, and the fact that we assisted with the mundane clean-up at the end of the day, and are only too happy to have us back.

The Keysborough shoot of 19th February was an even bigger success, with 40 shooters, total attendance 54, and the fact that 12 new members were signed up.

This time Judith won the raffle and selected the braces, Barry Batagol won the second and elected to take the Tico Tool, and Peter Burke took home the bottle of wine. At the risk of repeating myself, sincere thanks to Annette (in charge of the banquet lunch), Judith (nominations, squadding, and shoot marshal), Molly and Shelby (sale of raffle tickets), and Russell for the gazebo erection and some of the behind the scenes chores, to Mark and Phil for their tireless efforts and continued support. My humble apologies to anyone that I have not formally thanked, but as you would appreciate, it is not always possible to thank everyone.

Russell Pearson and Judith Kent have submitted a lengthy formal proposal to the Victorian Firearms Registry to have our Club recognised as "approved" in terms of the Firearms Act of 1996, and considerable personal time has been given by both to ensure that our application was professionally documented. Russell has since had some informal discussions with appropriate Registry key staff, and is confident that our proposal will be ratified. We will keep you advised as to our progress. **(PS. Since writing this, we have received the Certificate from the Victorian Police granting the Club interim approval as a recognised shooting club).**

Following a recommendation by Mark Brenton, Judith Kent has submitted a letter to both Graham Eames (of Feathers and Fur) and Rick Foster (Field and Game) for consideration that original black powder proofed sporting guns be exempt from using non-toxic shot for water fowl shooting, providing that the propellant is black powder (no mixtures). Again, we will keep you advised, but are led

to understand that a decision will not be made in this regard until later in the year.

For those of you who have not already read the article on page 48 of the current issue (number 25) of Feathers and Fur, you really should do so. Written by Russell Pearson, it provides a balanced review of what the Vintagers are achieving. Congratulations, Russell for your hidden literately talents. A sincere thanks to Graham Eames for publishing the article and thereby providing the Club with advertising, and a well done to Judith for the photography skills.

We are seeing a lot of fine sporting guns at our shoots, both vintage and relatively modern. The real draw card, however, seems to be those magnificent black powder and early nitro guns, many of which come with their original cases.

We have planned to conduct our **next shoot on Sunday 8th April 2001**, and combine this with the attendance of a visiting high profile celebrity guest, well known within the prestige firearm industry. Judith is currently attending to the arrangements. More about this later.

2001 Duck & Quail Seasons

Victoria

As most of you are aware Duck Opening is 17 March and the Victorian Conservation Minister has announced a modified Duck Season for this year. The bag limit will be 5 birds per hunter per day, the overall bag can include one Blue-winged Shoveler. Freckle duck is expected to be at significant levels and hunters need to be very careful not to shoot these protected species.

Lead shot cannot be used on any areas of public wetlands.

The duck season ends at sunset 11th June.

The quail season will commence 1 April to 30 June.

STOP PRESS NO. 1

Holland & Holland

Russell Wilkin, Technical Director Gunmaking and Chairman of the Proof Committee of the London Proof House, who was instrumental in introducing us to the Vintagers in April last year, will be visiting Melbourne in early April. It is anticipated that our next shoot will be held on Sunday 8 April at Cranbourne RSL Gun Club and Russell will be our guest of honour. A flyer will be mailed out to all members shortly. Please try and attend what should be a very exciting shoot.

Recipe for the Members

Braised Duckling with Olives (True Cordon Bleu Style)

1 duckling
1 oz butter
1 medium-size onion (sliced)
1 glass port
1 tspn paprika pepper
½ pint jellied stock
bouquet garni
salt and pepper
2 tomatoes (quartered and shredded)
12 large green olives, or olives stuffed with pimento
1 dessertspoon flour



Method

Brown the duck in the butter in a deep casserole; when evenly coloured, tip off the fat and add the onion; cover and cook slowly until the onion is soft.

Moisten bird with the port; allow liquid to reduce by half and then stir in the paprika and cook for 2-3 minutes. Pour on the stock, add the bouquet garni and season lightly. Cover casserole and cook very gently for about 45 minutes or until duckling is tender. This cooking can be done on top of the stove, or in the oven at 350°F or Mark 4.

Meanwhile skin and quarter the tomatoes, remove the seeds, then cut the flesh again into neat shreds. Set aside.

If using large olives, cut in strips off the stones; if using stuffed olives,

leave them whole, blanch in boiling water for 5 minutes, drain and leave to soak in cold water for 30 minutes, then drain again.

Remove the duckling from the casserole and keep hot; take out the bouquet garni. Skim the fat from the liquid in casserole. Mix the flour with 1 tablespoon of the liquid, return this to the casserole and stir until it boils. Cook liquid for 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and olives, reheat and taste for seasoning.

Divide the duckling into four portions, place them in a hot serving dish and spoon over the sauce. Serve with beans, peas and very fine roast potatoes.

Darwin Branch

Ray Poudrier, President of the Vintagers (worldwide) has given his seal of approval to have a branch in Darwin which is being headed up by Brian Dudley. This is exciting news and we will be liaising with Brian frequently.

Having said this we now intend to have a National Shoot which will be held later in the year and it will be the "Vintagers Cup Down Under". We hope to encourage some enthusiasts from the other side of the world to venture our shores. It certainly is exciting times for the Vintagers around the globe.

Books for Sale

10% discount for all Members.

Fieldsport Books have offered the Vintagers books at a special rate. The idea is that you may purchase direct with Fieldsport Books or you can order through the Secretary (Judith Kent). There will be catalogues at each shoot so that members can peruse these.

If you order direct with Fieldsport Books you must mention you are a Member of the Vintagers and quote your Membership No. to receive a 10% discount. How easy is that to get a good deal?

Please note that this is for Members of the Vintagers only.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS!

100 years ago in the western world:

The average life expectancy was 47.

Only around 12% of homes had a bathtub.



The maximum speed limit in most cities around the world was 15 km/h.

Most women only washed their hair once a month and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

But at least drugs...?

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at corner stores in the US.

According to one pharmacist, 'Heroin is a perfect guardian of health.'



And Coca-Cola contained cocaine instead of caffeine.

until now Russell Pearson, Graeme Forbes and Barry Webley have been pioneers in this field, with meticulous attention to detail. Now there must be an Op Shop or similar in your area or even some ancestral clothes in your wardrobe that would fit the bill. Don't be shy!! Please don't rely on Russell, Graeme or Barry to be the only living national treasures within the Club. Be one yourself and this also includes the ladies.

Tracing An Automatic

By Peter J Smith

Long before the amalgamation and continual correction of the various mechanical difficulties crystallised into the development of the modern game gun, with its Purdey underbolt, Scott spindle and top lever, etc., some excellent actions were available. Sadly, many are no longer being produced. One of these was the James Woodward and Sons "Automatic".

James (the younger) along with a certain Thomas Southgate patented the "Automatic" in 1876. This is the same Thomas Southgate who later developed the famous Southgate ejectors found on best London guns.

The "Automatic" first appeared as a self cocking hammer gun. It was a push forward lever snap action gun which had the advantage in that the underlever did not have to be manually closed, as did the Jones underlever.

Around 1880, the hammer gun, which had by now been developed and recognised to its highest form, was regarded by many to be something of a dinosaur well on a path of extinction. Both Woodward and Southgate were perceptive of this and developed a sidelock hammerless version of the "Automatic" which was first

marketed in 1881. Incidentally, the "Automatic" hammerless continued to be offered as late as 1923.

In an age when every quality maker produced distinctive guns, Woodward could only be regarded as singular. The protruding tumbler pivots, shrouded actions, and arcaded fences were a Woodward signature, and whereas Purdey, Holland's, for instance, made guns in a variety of grades. Woodward made only one, *the very best*.

In use, the hammerless "Automatic" is a remarkably easy gun to operate. Even when both barrels have been fired, the lock-work cocks with scarcely any noticeable effort, and the thrust of the underlever causes the action to spring open as if it were some sort of self opener.

My much loved hammerless ejector "Automatic" game gun, serial number 3801, was completed on 6th August 1881, as the no. 1 of a pair, and was separately cased to its matched No. 2. It has 30" Sir Joseph Whitworth Fluid Pressed Steel barrels, bored right, improved cylinder, and left, half choke. The gun also retains its original stock dimensions of length 14.25", drop 2.125'1(heel) 1.5" (comb), cast of 3/8", ad weight of 6 lbs. 14oz. It cost 70 pounds (Stirling) at the point of original sale and this was exclusive of the cost of the case and accessories.

The initials both on the case, and the silver escutcheon, are V.C.V., but regrettably, Purdey will not divulge the name of the original owner as per their long standing policy.

This is, of course, most disappointing, as I therefore have no way of tracing or establishing the original owner.

Still, my "Automatic" sees the occasional outing on both clay targets, and in the field, but

ADVERTISING

If you wish to advertise your business in our Newsletter please contact Judith Kent and she will organise it for you. Costs are: \$5.00 for quarter page, \$10.00 half page and \$20.00 for full page. The Committee believe these costs would help cover the postage and printing of the Newsletter.

Stop Press No. 2

In order to promote more period dress (Edwardian) we intend to offer a prize for the "best dressed" at future shoots. Up

having a strong regard for its 119 + years of age, is only loaded lightly with 75 grains of Ffg black powder and 7/8 ounces of shot.

OVER THE TOP

With Mildew

Another fine day was had shooting clays on 9th December 2000 when the Vintagers had their second and last shoot for 2000. It took place at the Cranbourne RSL Clay Target Club.

Many new members attended with their firearms. There were black powder hammer guns from the 1880s, more recent nitro proofed guns, underlevers, sidelevers, toplevers and bar-in-woods. All the good firearms covering 100 years of our best shooting history. Two early percussion muzzle loading guns were also in use, and managed to get as far as station 4 on the skeet layout before breaking for lunch.

From discussions I had with some of these new members, shotgun shooting was only a by-product of their other shooting and hunting pastimes.

Clive Haug for one, appeared to be delighted with his success on those high clays out of the tower and was most disappointed when the three person team flush event ended. Clive wanted more !!!

All the shooters regarded the flush the best event, and many soon realized why it is handy to have a leather hand guard or glove, as fast and furious shooting soon gets those barrels hot.

Some appeared in waistcoats and period attire and of course, the Bombay team in their Pith helmets appeared. Some members, regrettably, were unable to shoot because of health problems - Malaria, Elephantiasis and Alzheimer's - all the usual old soldier's ailments.

In February, our third and first shoot for this year was held at the Keysborough Gun Club, where

40 shooters attended. They shot at the Duck Brain course and the Deauville Doubles. Lunch, as always, was first class - almost good enough to make you want to leave home.

Again there were many more new members in attendance and again, a further increase on the number wearing period attire.

Barry Webley was carried from the ground shoulder high after a sterling exhibition on the down the line ground, to the loud applause of the crowd.

As an organization, we are learning and improving with each event that we hold. Bringing a folding chair to our shoots and the occasional card table among friends, lends a further civilised touch to future pleasant afternoons.

If you, as a member, feel you would like to bring your family or a guest, you are most welcome to do so. We ask only that your let us know for catering purposes.

Equally, if you are canceling, please advise us on a timely basis as the food costs the club money. We do not charge members or their guests for lunch. This is paid for out of the money specifically raised from the sale of raffle tickets on the day.

Our next shoot in April will be in slightly cooler weather, giving all you chaps who over the years have purchased a tweed hat or cap, breeks or plus fours, a chance to give them a good airing (if they still fit you).

Hoping that you are all on target for this year.

A. MILDEW [Major. BP (retired)]

The late RT. Hon. Earl of Lonsdale, K.G., G.C.V.O., D.L., co-editor of the book "Shooting by Moor, Field and Shore", published in 1929, wrote the following;

"...today the demand is for barrels not exceeding 28 inches, or for a short 25 inch barrel..."

"...for practical purposes the standard game gun of this

country and its Dominions, Commonwealths, and Colonies is definable as a double barrelled hammerless 12 bore. In Great Britain, it must of necessity be an ejector..."

"...guns with hammers are obsolete though still made for keepers and export..."

"...the 20 bore should be avoided, because the accidental confusion of a 20 bore case with a 12 bore case may lead to a dangerous burst..."

"...detachable locks are ingenious, but of doubtful utility..."

"...foreign loaded cartridges (other than American) are best avoided..."

"...The leather covered double gun case of the Edwardian era is a nice thing to be seen with when the 'Flying Scotsman' leaves on the eleventh of August...but these days the bulk of luggage has to be sternly kept down..."

"...not so many years ago, gun cleaning was a serious and intricate business. Today, you only need to push a well oiled patch through the barrels, and finish with an oil mop..."

"...the knickers should be loose, but without the exaggerated baggy shape of plus fours..."

"...stockings should be closely woven...woven garters are more desirable..."

"...wear a soft collar when shooting, as starched neckwear may prevent the head from going down comfortably to the gun..."

"...damp cartridges should be stood separately in a warm room—on a mantelpiece, if the latter is not very hot—until they are quite dry..."

"...the best remedy for gun headache is to hold a plain rubber band clenched in the teeth. This stresses the neck muscles, and reduces the concussion effect..."

(Please note, a full range of complimentary rubber bands will be available at our next shoot)

HAMMERS BACK AND GOOD SHOOTING!