Order of Edwardian Gunners Inc
Australian Chapter

HAMMERS BACK
VINTAGERS NEWSLETTER
Issue No. 3 – June 2001

Committee

President: Peter Smith
Contact No. 0428 332 781

Vice President: Mark Brenton
Contact No. 5995 3404

Treasurer: Judith Kent
Contact No. 0412 619 226

Secretary: Judith Kent
Contact No. 0412 619 226
Fax No. 9572 0069

Executive Committee:
Russell Pearson
Contact No. 0418 580 991

Phillip Taylor
Contact No. 0417 400 411

Public Relations Officer –
Interstate Branches:
Peter Burke
Contact No. 9882 8727

Club Email Address:
judithk@bigpond.com

The Committee welcomes the members who have joined the Vintagers with great enthusiasm. The Members who have joined since our last issue are as follows:

Geoff McDonald, Trevor Wilkinson, Mario Blasco, Andrew Tolley, David McDermott, Paul Holt, Lance Mason, Stephen Kairn, Rod Pratt, Sam Campbell, Peter Schwarz, Bob Schwarz, Kim Walters, Stanley Wade, Geoff Slee, Ed Chivers, Adrian Brown, Ray Aspinall, Gregory Osborne, Bob De Vries, Terry Hartmann, Brian Dudley, Douglas Ogden, John & Debbie Clune and family.

We welcome any feedback whether it is critical or otherwise.

President’s Report

The Club’s membership grows steadily as news of our interest, image and activity spreads. In this regard, we are deeply indebted to Graham and Julie Eames, the editors of “Feathers and Fur”, for printing the article written by Russell Pearson, which provided a well balanced review of what we, the Vintagers, are all about. (refer to issue number 25, page 48).

For the benefit of those who are interested in statistical growth patterns, we can advise:

- Club incorporated on 24th July 2000
- 13 members by August 2000
- (Flush shoot at Frankston August 2000)
- 20 members by September 2000
- 30 members by October 2000
- 34 by November 2000
- 38 by December 2000
- (Cranbourne shoot December 2000)
- 43 by January 2001
- 62 by February 2001
- (Keysborough Shoot February 2001)
- 71 by March 2001
- (Cranbourne shoot April 2001)
- 84 by April 2001
- 86 by May 2001
- (Frankston shoot 24/06/01)

A target of 100 members by 30th June does not seem out of the question.

With the increase in membership, and as one would hope, we are seeing a number of fine doubles being taken out of retirement and put back to work. For example, at the Cranbourne shoot on 8th April, I made a mental note of 3 x Purdey; 2 x Holland; 2 x Wm Evans; 4 x Greener; 2 x Westley Richards; 2 x Wm Powell; 1 x Dickson; 2 x Jeffery; various numbers of Cashmore, Bonehill, Bourne, and Hollis. In all, there were some 53 hammer and hammerless breech loaders, and 1 muzzle loader “in attendance”.

I found that the earliest hammer breech-loaders to make an appearance were a William Powell bar-in-wood of 1873, a Holland of 1875 (the original ownership history of this particular gun is recorded elsewhere in this newsletter), and a Rosier of circa. 1880

April was an extremely busy month, as Judith Kent, our Club Secretary/Treasurer, acted on a request from Holland and Holland to further advertise and introduce their annual week’s presence to Australia, at both the various shooting establishments, clubs and corporate levels, by orchestrating a week day luncheon at Lucattini’s restaurant in the city (48 attendees).

Russell Wilkin, the Technical Director of Holland & Holland Ltd., spoke at some length on international proof law and its requirements, and then answered several questions from the floor in relation to this generally misunderstood subject.

This was followed by our highly successful 8th April Cranbourne Shoot which, despite the unsettled weather conditions, attracted well over 65 members and guests.

It goes without saying that the Club’s activities would not create the interest they do without the dedication, hard work, and generous provision of free time given by the Committee. Also Annette Pearson (catering), Molly and Shelby Brenton (raffle ticket sales), and Charlie Grima.
Charlie elected not to shoot at our April Cranbourne shoot and unselfishly gave his shooting time to “push the button” on the Tower layout. Charlie did not desert his post despite not being properly dressed for the frequent heavy rain squalls that we experienced. Thank you, Charlie.

We don’t seem to have good response with members wearing period dress. To date, the noted leaders in the fashion stakes have been in a somewhat limited field with Graeme Forbes, Len Steel, Russell Pearson, Barrie Webley, Andrew Stevenson, and Shirley Beaumont being the only participants. Please remember that Gordon Byrne is donating a perpetual trophy for the best consistent period dresser over a 12 month period.

Incidentally, we would gladly accept articles for inclusion in the Newsletter. HINT ! HINT !

Hammers back until next time !

Annual “Vintage Cup Down-Under”.

During our shoots, scores are not kept, but an individual or group is free to do so should they wish. Competition is not stressed as our shoots are designed to be social functions. The emphasis is on fun targets, shooting classic side-by-sides, fine dining, making new friends, and dressing in period attire.

Having said that, we intend to follow the lead of our American counterparts and hold an annual competition, high gun event to be known as the “Vintage Cup Down-under”. The Cup will be a perpetual trophy. It is proposed that it will be held in late November when (hopefully) the weather is kinder. We are in the process of drawing up the Cup rules, and in this regard we would appreciate your input. Some of the questions that need to be addressed are:

- preferred shoot date
- number of targets
- target type/mix
- side-by-side eligibility (single trigger; screw in chokes, post 1940 build; etc.)
- shoot location
- max. shot weight allowed

The “Vintage Cup Down-Under” (high gun perpetual trophy) has been donated by Peter Smith and Judith Kent, and was originally awarded to Peter’s late father in 1938 when he played for the Tasmanian football league. The cup was never engraved and is made of electro-plated nickel silver.

We are also considering an additional trophy for the highest score with a hammer gun, so it could well be the case that the winner could take home two trophies. So here is your opportunity to have your say. We would prefer to have your written comments so that they can be collated and distributed to the Committee, but if you find it easier to speak directly to the Committee please do so.

What ever you decide, it’s over to you for your thoughts in the manner in which the “Vintage Cup Down-Under” should be contested

We eagerly await your thoughts and views.

STOP PRESS NO. 1

It has been unofficially brought to our attention that during the last shoot (April), there was an isolated instance of Alcohol being consumed. The consumption was, we believe, apparently due to some sort of misunderstanding.

Would you please observe that it is a contravention of both the Firearms Safety Code and our host club’s shoot and ground rules to consume alcohol whilst a shoot is in progress.

Please respect this rule unconditionally and do not partake in having any alcohol until all the shooting has been completed and the firearms are locked away (in your motor vehicle).

Please remember the Firearms Safety Code Rule No. 7. “No Alcohol or Drugs When Handling Firearms”. Observe this code: insist others do the same. (Our Club has been granted an interim approval by the Victorian Police as a recognised Shooting Club. Naturally, we all want to see the approval up-graded to absolute.)

Recipe for the Members
Compliments from Cobaw

Cobaw Roast Pheasant

One of the simplest ways to prepare a beautiful Cobaw Pheasant for the table is by using onion and apple in the cavity of the bird moisture is added while the bird is roasting.

Serves 4
Ingredients
1 large or 2 small pheasants
Salt and pepper
Enough roughly chopped onion to fill the cavity
Rashers of bacon
30g (1oz) butter, melted

Sauce
½ cup (4 fl oz) chicken stock
1 tablespoon redcurrant jelly

Season the pheasant with salt and pepper. Mix the onion and apple together and stuff the body with this mixture. Truss the bird. Wrap the bacon around, covering the breast well. Brush the pheasant with melted butter. Wrap in foil to completely enclose, and place in baking tin.

Cook in moderate oven, preheated to 180°C (350°F or gas No.4), for about 1 hour or until tender. Remove the foil and return the bird to the oven (breast side up) to brown slightly, basting several times. Don’t cook it longer than another 15 minutes – just enough to colour the bacon and the skin.

Remove the pheasant and empty out all the juices from inside the bird,
pouring them into the baking tin. Place the pheasant on a warm platter and cover with foil. Add the stock and redcurrant jelly to the baking tin, bring to the boil on the stove, stirring to get up any brown bits. Cook for a couple of minutes, season, and keep warm.

Cut the pheasant into halves or quarters and discard the onion and apple. Place a little of the sauce over the top, and serve the remainder separately in a jug.

Enjoy your Pheasant, …

Jon and Kate Thomas run a highly successful pheasant and partridge shoot at Cobaw in the Macedon Ranges, some 60 minutes from Melbourne’s Tullamarine Airport. For further information they can be contacted on 5423 7136

Books for Sale

10% discount for all Members. Fieldsport Books have offered members of the Vintagers books at a special rate. The idea is that you may purchase directly with Fieldsport Books, or alternatively you can order through the Club 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.

We are indeed fortunate enough to have several members who are licensed gun dealers and conduct business from retail outlets. These members (who are listed in alphabetical order), support our Club, and in turn we recommend that you support them.

In alphabetical order, they are:

- Armoury & Ammunition (Len Steel)
- Aust & NZ Arms (David McDermott)
- Boronia Firearms (Patrik Mort)
- Bob DeVries – Gunsmith (Kudu Services)
- Forbes Wholesale (Graeme Forbes)
- Hedgely Trading (Tony Moodie)
- Mials Gun-shop (John Mials)
- PLS Firearms (Phil Spry)
- Schwarz Gunsmithing (Peter Schwarz)
- Geoff Slee (Stock Maker)
- Victorian Arms Supplies (Russell Pearson)
- Ross T Waghorn (Stock Maker)
- Whitehorse Arms (Phil Taylor)
- Woodleigh Bullets (Geoff McDonald)

(If we have left a dealer member off the above list please accept our apologies and advise asap)

Tracing a Holland

By Peter J Smith

Following Russell Wilkin (Holland & Holland) being the special guest at both our luncheon and shoot, it would be prudent to write about a Holland 12 bore central fire sporting gun delivered to a prominent Australian customer some 126 years ago.

The gun is a cased H. Holland serial number 3601, and was delivered to a certain Mr. E.C. Stirling of Mt Lofty, South Australia, on 2nd November 1875. (The firm of H. Holland was the predecessor of the firm of which became Holland & Holland Limited in 1876).

So who was this certain Mr E.C. Stirling?

Sir Edward Charles Stirling, (Knighted in 1817), surgeon, scientist, and politician, was born on 8th September 1848 at Strathalbyn, South Australia. His father, (also named Edward), owned substantial pastoral holdings in the Mt Lofty Ranges and Lake Alexandrina, and was a partner in Elder, Stirling & Co., who financed the Wallaroo and Moonta copper mines.

But back to Sir Edward, who was educated at the Collegiate School of St Peter, South Australia and then overseas at Trinity College, Cambridge, England (graduating B.A., 1870; M.A., 1873; M.B., 1874; M.D., 1880; Sc.D., 1910)

Sir Edward became a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1874 and was also a lecturer in physiology and assistant surgeon at St George’s (London) Hospital. He was later appointed as the surgeon at the Beigrave (London) Hospital for Children.

Returning to South Australia in 1875, Sir Edward married Jane Gilbert on 27th June 1877, and went on to be appointed in 1881 as the consulting surgeon to the Adelaide Hospital, lecturer and later the first professor of physiology at the University of Adelaide, and a member of the University Council.

Between 1884-1887 Sir Edward was a member for North Adelaide in the House of Assembly and in 1886 he introduced a bill to enfranchise women. However, the South Australian Museum became his major life’s work. Sir Edward was appointed its director from 1884-1912. Apart from this, Sir Edward was also actively associated with the Public Library, Art Gallery, Zoological Society, State...
Children’s Council, and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. Sir Edward died peacefully at his Mt Lofty home on 20th March 1919, leaving an estate sworn for probate at $131,400.

Despite leading an extremely busy working life, Sir Edward is recorded as having two distinct outside interests, horticulture and shooting.

The gun weighs in at 6¾ pounds, and is fitted with 30” three blade Damascus barrels both cylinder bored, 2½ chambers, back action locks with rebounding hammers, top lever opening, straight grip stock with a 14” length of pull to the steel butt plate, staple fore-end and is retained in its original leather case with the trade label, cleaning rod, oil bottle, and striker bottle containing spare strikers. Needless to say, both the action and the fences display extensive scroll engraving.

Interestingly, this gun was carried by Sir Edward during his 1881 expedition with the Earl of Kintore, when he crossed Australia from Darwin to Adelaide collecting zoological specimens for the South Australian museum.

Today, the H. Holland enjoys a more relaxed life style, only seeing use in the field or clays on those “special occasions”.

OVER THE TOP
With Mildew

Another hard day at the shooting ground, but then somebody has to do it!

It was Sunday 8th April, and the last organized shoot for the Vintagers conducted at the Cranbourne RSL Gun Club.

Although the weather was not particularly kind, a respectable gathering of over 65 members and guests participated on a day to remember, of flush and tower. It was encouraging to observe more and more people dressing appropriately for the occasion, and especially Barry (“Basil”) Batagol motoring to the venue in his 1930 Speed Six Bentley.

Our Club’s very special guest for the day was Russell Wilkin from Holland and Holland (London), who generously gave up his time to answer the many technical and practical questions fielded by those present about shotguns, shooting, and the like.

We were also indeed most fortunate to have had the use of Sammy Biondo’s marquee, which was put to good use especially when we experienced some light rain and wind squalls (not like we get in Rangoon!). Thank you Sammy for the use of your marquee, your assistance with setting the traps, and the use of your Club’s grounds. For those of you who are unaware, Sammy is the President of the Cranbourne RSL Gun Club.

We have received numerous verbal and written compliments on the standard of our shoot program organization and the fine catering. It’s always a nice touch for the Committee to receive compliments such as these.

The raffle prize, the book titled “The Nature of Game with Holland and Holland” was generously donated by Fieldsport Books (Michael Oxbrough), and autographed by Russell Wilkin. This was eagerly sought after and won by John Whitney.

Congratulations, John, and thank you to Molly and Shelby Brenton, who worked tirelessly selling those raffle tickets. We must also thank Paul Holt, from Birko, for the loan of the food warmer.

Our next shoot, scheduled for Sunday 24th June at the grounds of the Frankston Australian Clay Target Club, my old friend, “Bertie” the Maharajah, has agreed to let us have the services of his head cook, who will no doubt weave the magic of his talented culinary experiences.

Quite understandably, this has upset the Memsahib who has been responsible for the mess facilities over the previous four shoots. It would seem that we may have to provide her with a bottle or two of trusty Gordons gin in order to calm her down.

Both the good lady Mrs. Major Mildew and myself, along with a couple of the good lads who are disciples of the side-by-side, have been kindly invited to be present at a pleasant driven pheasant shoot in Southern Tasmania the second week of July, and as you would expect, I will have much to say about the shoot and the degree of skill and the manner in which the plump pheasants are plucked by the pheasant pluckers present in my next column.

Before signing off, I should also tell you about the delightful firm trading as West End Tailors, of 354 Victoria Street, West Melbourne. (Situated directly opposite Victorian Arms Supply, who I consider to be purveyors of fine firearms, accoutrements, gentlemen’s toys and the like.) Mr. Armando, the resident tailor, is most obliging and relatively inexpensive in my opinion. I recently commissioned Mr. Armando to make me another pair of breecks as my previous pair, which I had tailored a short time ago in Bombay, are somehow ill fitting at the girth (must have shrunk in the colonial waters). So if any of you old chaps are considering a pair of breecks, I would thoroughly recommend West End. Their prices are around one third of the English prices. Incidentally, Mr. Armando has already gotten over the initial shock of making up this style of short trousers for rather large men.

Hope to see you tally-ho in the field with your hammers back.

A MILDEW [Major. retired]
Shoot Date Problem?

There has been some relatively isolated feedback in regard to our shoot dates clashing with those of other clubs, in particular those of the Seymour Black Powder Club, as well as the Big Game Rifle Club. Before selecting our proposed shoot dates we always refer to the various shoot calendars and make every endeavour to ensure that this will not occur.

To clarify (and hopefully satisfy) the situation, we can confirm:

1. We have never held a shoot on the same day as the Big Game Rifle Club. We have held them unintentionally on the same weekend, but not the same day. It is entirely up to each individual to choose where they shoot and when, either on the Saturday, or the Sunday, or both, and at which particular club of course.

2. Unfortunately, as Seymour generally caters for a two day weekend shoot program, there have been instances where the timing has regrettably clashed with either the Saturday or the Sunday. But you must bear in mind that as we do not own or control any grounds, we have to “fit in” with Keysborough, the A.C.T.A., or a selected Field and Game chapter in order to obtain the ground space.

3. The recent April Cranbourne shoot was one where we had a “problem”. Seymour shot on both the Saturday and the Sunday, whilst the BGRC shot on the Saturday only. We shot on the Sunday. As Russell Wilkin, was to be our guest of honour, and was departing Australia on the following Monday, the only practical date for our shoot was therefore (unfortunately for those who support both clubs), the Sunday.

As you must appreciate, it is simply quite impossible (and impractical) for us to satisfy all of the members, and alternative clubs in selecting a shoot date. We trust that this will in some way clarify the situation, and assure you that we do not purposely choose a shoot date to “clash” with other clubs.

(Thank you to the Seymour Black Powder Club for raising and addressing their concern in a responsible manner.)

Next Shoot

The next shoot will be held on 24th June at the Frankston Australian Clay Target complex, Rossiters Road, Carrum Downs, commencing at 10.30 AM.

PLEASE, if you are attending, notify any one on the Committee. We need to know numbers attending for catering purposes!

A detailed flyer outlining the events has already been sent to you.

Be there with your hammers back!

CLUB APPROVAL

Just a reminder to members that our Club is recognised by the Victorian Police (interim approval granted on 14th February 2001) as an approved shooting club.

Club membership can be used both for your initial or renewal of your shooters licence (Category A and B), or for your permit to acquire genuine need (Category B).

Until next time,

HAMMERS BACK AND GOOD SHOOTING!