



THE CANNON ASSOCIATION OF SA

11 Seaton Road, Parklands, 7441, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel/Fax: 021-557-1299

email: noongun@mweb.co.za



NEWSLETTER No. 17 - April 2006

A service to the muzzle loading cannon enthusiast

ANOTHER CHANGE TO THE FIREARMS ACT

There is a proposed amendment to the Firearms Act which will bring certain muzzle loading firearms back into the fold of licensed weapons. Although apparently of little consequence to the owners of cannon, certain aspects of this proposal are being welcomed by firearm collectors and other clauses are being vigorously opposed by some organisations. I have seen fit to propose that the definition of cannon be split between antique muzzle loading guns and more modern artillery which fires explosive ammunition.

I have also proposed definitions of replica and model cannons which have never been catered for in any act or procedure. I doubt that my proposals will be accepted in their present form, but it will provide food for thought. The gist of my proposals is available if anybody would like an e-mail copy.

ROTTERDAM GUNS (858 & 859)

We have recorded two salvaged Dutch bronze guns on private property in Port Alfred. The guns show the VOC mark with the "R" for Rotterdam above. The guns are inscribed " - - - FECIT OUDEROGGE - - ", the remainder of the inscription and the dimensions have yet to be supplied to us.

Arent Jansz. Van der Putten, from Deventer, was appointed as master founder when the Rotterdam foundry was initiated in 1609. He was succeeded by Jan Cornelis Ouderogge, a bellfounder from Amsterdam in 1617 or 1618 and he served the foundry until his death in 1625. Jan was succeeded by his sons, Cornelis Jansz Ouderogge and his brother Dirk who ran the Rotterdam foundry from C.1642 until Dirk died in 1649. Cornelis then ran the foundry until his death in 1672.

At this stage we know that one of the Ouderogge family cast the guns, but until we have the entire inscription, or the date, we do not know which of the family was the founder.

FINAUGHTY'S GUNS

(Being an hypothesis which, based on shaky legend, aligns in the mind of the reader several possibilities which, when mangled by mathematics, and added to a sprinkling of facts, leads to a remote probability)

In 1873 William Finaughty bought three cannons in Port Elizabeth and carted them inland with the intention of trading with African Chiefs for merchandise which was more valuable in western eyes. It is generally accepted that he carried all three cannon as far as Kimberley where he off loaded two and continued with one gun in the direction of the Northern Transvaal in order to trade for diamonds with Chief Sekukuni.

On the way he was stopped "near Rustenburg" by a Field Cornet who had been informed that Finaughty was trading weapons with the natives. Finaughty, reportedly by means of plying the official with alcohol, managed, with the assistance of his colleagues, to remove the gun from its concealment in the false bed of his wagon and hide it in a hole. Finaughty appeared before a magistrate on a charge of gun running, but was acquitted for lack of evidence. Finaughty, in his memoirs, states that he never recovered the cannon, but "heard" years later that it was used during the Siege of Mafeking.

Where Finaughty refers to concealing the gun "near Rustenburg" we must remember that the term "near" is relatively vague and open to interpretation. If one lives in Cape Town today the term "near Rustenburg" could mean within 100 km of that town. In the mid 1800s, where travel was slow and laborious he possibly meant within 10 km of the town.

In mid 1876 Finaughty left Kimberley with the remaining two guns for Bechuanaland (now Botswana) where he traded with Lobengula, via a local trader thought to be Alexander Deane, for £190 worth of ivory. The guns ended up in Bulawayo, Lobengula's first kraal where they were buried when Lobengula fled the area. The guns were unearthed in C.1911 and placed at the Bulawayo Museum where they have remained. The present Bulawayo is on the site of Lobengula's second kraal.

IDENTIFICATION OF FINAUGHTY'S GUNS

In a letter to Mr JG Orford dated 3 January 1974 the Keeper of Antiquities at the Bulawayo Museum, Mr CK Cook provided photographs and some details of the two iron guns in Bulawayo.

"The first is a civil gun marked BP & Co. and a crown with a bore of 85mm and an overall length of 1,130mm and dated either 1782 or 1802, the numbers are damaged and have been partially obliterated". In a second letter he adds, "It is marked 3 - 4 - 3 and 4 P".

"The second is a carronade also marked BP & Co. dated 1808 with a bore diameter of 110mm and an overall length of 1,013mm and is capable of firing a ball of 3kg". In the second letter he adds, "It is marked with a 23 and 6.P.8".

Gun 1.

BP & Co. is the mark of Bailey Pegg and Company of Brierley Hill in England. As far as can be established BP & Co. existed only between C.1818 and C.1900. The double digit change in the observed date above leaves us with many possible combinations.

The numbers 3 - 4 - 3 are the weight in Hundredweight (1cwt = 112lbs) quarters of cwt (28 lbs) and lbs. The second digit cannot be a 4 as this would constitute a whole cwt and must have been a 1. This would give a weight of 367 lbs or 166,5 kg.

The 4 P would signify a 4 pounder gun.

Gun 2.

Also cast by Bailey Pegg & Co. but is more than likely a gunade as opposed to a carronade. The 23 could be a serial number and the 6.P. indicates a 6 pounder. The meaning of the 8 on the end is odd and may have been a misreading of "p" or "dr" for 6 pounder.

A carronade is defined as having a bore length to calibre ratio of between 3 and 6 to 1. It has a powder chamber smaller than the bore and has an enlarged section of the bore at the muzzle which forms a funnel to facilitate rapid loading. Almost all true carronades have a mounting loop under the gun as opposed to trunnion axles. Carronades were cast in calibres between 9 and 68 pounds.

A gunade (sometimes cannonade) is defined as having a bore length to calibre ratio of between 7 and 13 to 1. Gunades do not have narrower chambers, very few have muzzle cups and all have trunnions as opposed to mounting loops. Gunades are normally of 2 to 6 pdr calibre.

Now to the third gun which Finaughty hid somewhere near Rustenburg. Is it possible to identify the gun today, or at least to logically determine a probability?

Gun 3.

Finaughty bought the three guns in Port Elizabeth. If he bought them all from the same source then this source may have been the captain of a ship or the salvor who was breaking up an old ship. The two known guns were apparently about 50 years old when he bought them. Both guns in Bulawayo are English and cast by Bailey Pegg & Co. Would the third gun, if it came from the same source, not have been of the same manufacture?

Finaughty bought two guns of different calibres, one 4 pdr and one 6 pdr. He thus made no attempt, or had no choice in the matter of standardising the calibre and ammunition. The 6 and the 4 pdr were the most common calibres used aboard trading ships. Would the third gun then not have been either a 4 or a 6 pdr also?

When Finaughty arrived in Kimberley with three cannon knowing that he was going to dispose of one nearby and travel much further with the remaining two, would he not have disposed of the heaviest gun first ?

What type of wagon Finaughty was travelling in we do not know. What we do know is that he mentions his travel "colleagues" and that a journey from Port Elizabeth to Kimberley involved carrying much baggage, food and equipment. He also expected to carry a large volume of ivory in the wagon on the return journey. He makes no mention of carrying powder and ammunition for the three cannon,

but without powder and shot he was going to have a difficult time trading off the guns. The two known guns weighed about 300kg together. If we include 100 kg for powder and shot, 150 kg for baggage, 100 kg for food and water, 100 kg for wagon equipment and 200 kg for the human cargo we arrive at a load weight of approximately 950 kg plus the third gun.

The load capacity of a medium to large wagon was in excess of 1,800 kg. This theoretically leaves a capacity of up to 800 kg for the third gun.

The gun registered as Durr 664, otherwise known as "Lord Nelson" of Mafeking fame is a 6 pdr cast by Bailey Pegg & Co. and weighs 436 kg. Rustenburg is only 160 km from Mafeking.

In spite of the first paragraph, you still read this article ! Well I never !!!

NAVY FESTIVAL, SIMON'S TOWN 2006

The Cannon Association again participated in the Navy Festival on 24,25 & 26 March with seven guns participating. Ian and Barbara fielded their 9 pdr Armstrong - Frederick and their 2 pdr on an authentic twin trail carriage. Martin dusted off his 7 pdr RML on naval carriage, Ryk brought his 6 pdr merchants gun, Peter his 4 pdr from Muizenberg. The 3 and 2 pdr guns belonging to the SAS UNITIE TRUST were served by Alf Parris, Jon Hall and Leon de Vries.

Ian van Oordt organised the shoot and persuaded the navy to provide the gunpowder. We fired two shots on the hour and a rolling volley of seven guns at 15h00 daily. 11,5 Kg of powder was consumed in a total of 50 shots over the three days. Everything worked smoothly, Ian even managed to organise better weather than we had for the Blouberg event. Well done Ian !

OUR OPEN LETTER TO ALL INVOLVED

CHAVONNE'S BATTERY - a tale of treachery, broken promises, abandonment and bravery.

Chavonne's Battery, an historic pearl situated in the Clocktower Precinct of the V&A Waterfront is in danger of being closed and lost to the public because it was abandoned by an overseas sponsor.

The present Curator, Cedric Galliet, a man with a sight disability, was left high and dry when the sponsor left under less-than-considerate circumstances. Mr Galliet has, mainly at his own expense, bravely soldiered on for two years, keeping this tourism asset open and serving the needs of the public in spite of minimal assistance from his landlord, BOE Bank and unkept promises and prohibition of vital signage from the V&A Waterfront.

The writer cannot understand the lack of support for this asset to the city by the many departments of tourism, the several historical institutions and organisations and those businesses which benefit from the many tourists who visit the Mother City.

Chavonne's Battery has tremendous potential, not only as a unique and important historical site and museum, but as a venue for conferences, exhibitions, fashion shows, functions and events limited only by one's lack of initiative. Popularity and growth of this multicultural facility has been hampered only by the lack of funded advertising and severe limitations placed on signage which would lead the public to the entrance. If the reader has not visited the battery, then it is because you did not know that it was there.

All that is required for this valuable facility to be lost, is for good people to do nothing !

FUTURE EVENT

The cannon Association is presently involved in a combined effort by the Simon's Town, Kalk Bay and Muizenberg historical communities to commemorate the first British occupation of the Cape on 07 August 1795. Several noisy events are being planned for Sunday 06 August all along the eastern shore of False Bay. Watch this space!

Gerry de Vries - April 2006