

Flint & Cap

Newsletter of The New Zealand Antique and Historical Arms Association
Wellington Branch Inc.
P.O. Box 14-029
Kilbirnie, Wellington.
www.nzaawgtn.org.nz

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Antique Arms Annual General Meeting

This will take place on Sunday 1st of March. We have the hall booked from 10:30am and will be running a buy, sell and swap day instead of our mickey mouse auction. There will be table space for people who wish to sell their preloved collectables.

The AGM will start at 2:00pm sharp with a presidents report. We are seeking a few active motivated people to come forward and help with running the club. A few of our current committee members have been involved with running the club for many years and would like a break. If you have skills or the passion to help with these tasks contact Alwyn.



January Meeting 2009

January Meeting Displays

Volkswagon, it was left in the carpark.

Wonderful collection of western style air pistols by Sears, Roebuck and Crossman with a selection of holsters and information.

Wooden shotshell reloading tools various types and gauges

W. Jones a pepperbox pistol with information

Western Colt 1873 single action revolver with holster

Wells Fargo a badge located in the family home, stored since the 1930s.

Venezuela a selection of bayonets and scabbards

Vickers a .303 cal light machine gun with a selection of accessories and information.

Winchester P14 rifle with matching bayonet and information.

War medals a selection of medals with the information on the recipients.

Westley Richards .310 cal rifle with accessories and a Webley Mk2 service air pistol.

Westley Richards a .22Hornet sporting rifle, set on a wooden plaque.

WONDERFUL WIFE, What my dear wife got for me at Christmas. A Browning Mod 81 lever action .30-06 cal sporting rifle and a cased Browning A5 semi auto shotgun.

WW1 lemon squeezers and a selection of badges.

Victory for the allies a selection of framed prints with information on British naval ships.

Wilkinson Webley target grade revolver

Smith & Wesson a lovely cased revolver

Walther and webley a selection of air pistols

Venezuela a SA49 7x57 cal semi auto rifle



Lemon squeezer hats and badges



Western cartridge salesman display case



A very extensive collection of bb pistols



Walther and Webley air pistols



A fine Vickers collection



Pepperbox pistol by W. Jones

British shipwreck holds £2.6 billion treasure, explorers claim

Salvagers announced 24 January 2009 in the London telegraph, that they claim to have found the world's richest wreck – a British ship sunk by a Nazi submarine while laden with a £2.6 billion cargo that included gold, platinum and diamonds. In a project shrouded in secrecy, work is due to start on recovering the cargo, which was being transported to the United States to help pay for the Allied effort in the Second World War. The scale of the treasure trove is likely to unleash a series of competing claims from interested parties. Salvage laws are notoriously complex and experts say there could be many years of legal wrangling ahead. In order to protect its find until the cargo is brought to the surface, the company that located the wreck has not released the name of the vessel or its exact location, but has given the ship the code name “*Blue Baron*”.

It says the merchant ship, which had a predominantly British crew, had left a European port, laden with goods for the US Treasury under the Lend-Lease scheme, whereby the American government gave material support to the Allied war effort in exchange for payments. The *Blue Baron* first sailed to a port in South America, where it unloaded some general cargo, before continuing north in a convoy, heading for New York. However, the company claim it was intercepted by German U-boat U87 and sent to the bottom by two torpedoes in June 1942, with the loss of three crew members. Their nationalities are not known.

Sub Sea Research, a US-based marine research and recovery firm, claims it has now located the wreck under 800ft of water about 40 miles off Guyana. Greg Brooks, the company's founder and co-manager, said: “This British freighter had an extremely valuable cargo and we decided there wasn't a lot of point in leaving it at the bottom of the sea. This will definitely be the richest wreck ever.” Until now, historians have not credited U87 with sinking any vessels in that area in June 1942 and it was thought to have been operating further north in the Atlantic. However, Sub Sea Research claims to have located the submarine's log book which prove it did sink the “*Blue Baron*”, as well as documents from the port of origin, the US Treasury and the Lend-Lease programme giving clues as to what was on board.



A picture believed to be the *Blue Baron* shows it is a tramp steamer

A picture of the *Blue Baron* supplied to *The Sunday Telegraph* by the company shows it is a tramp steamer and her funnel appears to resemble those of the shipping line Hogarth and Co, of Glasgow, whose ships were known as Hungry Hogarths. Tantalisingly, the names of its ships all began with the word *Baron* – indicating that the *Blue Baron* could be one of them. However, none of the fleet's 17 ships lost in the war appear to have been sunk in this area in June 1942.

The picture also resembles *Port Nicholson*, a steamer sunk by U87 in June 1942 but 2,000 miles north of Guyana off Cape Cod. Sub Sea Research insists that the *Port Nicholson* is not the *Blue Baron*. It claims that the *Blue Baron*'s cargo included at least ten tons of gold bullion, 70 tons of platinum, one and a half tons of industrial diamonds and 16 million carats of gem quality diamonds. In addition, there were several thousands tons of tin and a few thousand tons of copper ingots. Although the tin and copper may have lost some value after years on the sea bed, the precious metals and diamonds would not have done so. The haul's total worth is calculated at £2.6 billion at today's prices, according to the firm.

Captain Richard Woodman, author of *The Real Cruel Sea*, a history of the merchant navy in the Second World War, said: “A lot of merchant ships did have to carry valuable cargoes like this. Any heavy materials had to go by sea. It was the only way to get from A to B. There would have been an element of protection for them, but in the end it is just the coincidence of war that a ship happens to stop a torpedo.” A 220ft salvage vessel is currently being equipped to recover the cargo. It is due to sail next week from the US state of Louisiana to the wreck site, which lies in international waters. The company has refused to reveal which government sent the valuables to the US or which was the *Blue Baron*'s final port of call in Europe.

It is thought much of the treasure could be Russian, although part, including the diamonds, may have been British. Britain and Russia were the two main beneficiaries of the Lend-Lease scheme, under which the US provided \$50 billion of supplies - equivalent to \$700 billion (£510 billion) in today's money. Although explorers are permitted in law to stake claims on items they recover from the seabed, the original owners can make counter claims. Sub Sea Research was forced to go public with its discovery when it filed a claim on the treasure in a US federal admiralty court, to which no counter claims have been lodged so far. Mr Brooks said: “No one has stepped forward to make a claim yet, probably because the government that lost it does not realise. “We are trying to keep it as quiet as possible until we have it in our possession. We think the possessions on board may belong to more than one country. “I know for a fact that everyone possible will try to take it from us, but we are doing everything by the book. I think the worst case scenario, under salvage law, is that we would get 90 per cent of it. But we are trying to go for 100 per cent.” Mike Williams, an expert in salvage law at Wolverhampton University, said the Government which had owned the cargo would retain a strong claim on it. He said: “Both Britain and Russia transhipped large quantities of precious goods to the US to pay for their war effort. It would be unlikely the salvors would be able to keep it all. “The real winners will be the lawyers. There is a marine lawyers' saying that treasure is trouble.”

Ross T.

Two Mexican detectives were investigating the murder of Juan Gonzalez. ‘How was he killed?’ asked one detective. ‘With a golf gun,’ the other detective replied. ‘A golf gun? What is a golf gun?’ ‘I don't know. But it sure made a hole in Juan.’

Web sites of interest

Service records of the NZ armed forces
<http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/cenotaph/locations.aspx>
Old NZ newspapers
<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast>
Martini Henry site
<http://www.martinihenry.com>
Ian Skennerton
<http://www.skennerton.com>
NZ Cartridge collectors club
<http://www.nzccc.org.nz/>

Police checks

It has been mentioned again that police vetting officers around the region are visiting members and doing checks on security and possession of items. Please ensure you are security wise at all times and your gear is all in order. If you have been shooting or handling associated gear, please lock it or store it in a responsible manner.



Western colt and Wells Fargo badge



Venezuela, bayonets and scabbards

This paragraph was published in our newsletter many years ago. It is an oldie, but a goodie.

A flash in the pan.

We all know how graphic the English language is and how Will Shakespeare has added many memorable terms and sayings to our everyday speech, but have you ever stopped to think how many verbal titbits have been added as the result of the invention of our humble firearm.

We have all had to bite the bullet occasionally, just as we have jumped the gun and most of us have gone off half cocked at some time in our lives. It is nice to get a shot in the arm, particularly after giving a project your best shot, lock stock and barrel, to make the whole shooting box and dice worth while. Keeping your powder dry is not always easy and sometimes you just want to get shot of it!!!

And you have probably heard of the son of a gun who got a shot away, (a shot in the dark maybe) and ended up at a shotgun wedding.



Venezuela, a SA49 7x57 cal semi auto rifle

Remember to check your Firearms Licence expiry date

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