

Joseph Manton single Flintlock shotgun

Barrel: 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long. Hexagonal for 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ " then 16 sided for 5 inches to a "Wedding ring", then 20 $\frac{11}{16}$ " round to muzzle.

Perfect browning & general condition excellent.

Lock: with Joe Mantons "breasted" cock, large waterproof pan has lost gold lining – This needs replacement. GR 20 Mar, 2005

Unusual feature is that this lock is fitted with Joe's patented gravitational safety: At bottom of cock. This feature alone makes this gun particularly valuable. 10 M

#41 stamped on back of lock under spring

Mahogany (original?) case with G & d W Hawksley/ Sheffield powder flask & American flask w& Cao Co, shot flask. I got this gun from Keith Neal. & I think I put these flasks in this case – needs English shot flask.

6 pounds overall weight.

47 $\frac{3}{4}$ " inches overall length (muzzle to tip of toe on butt).

Case needs a mahogany (maybe covered) section to hold the detached lock. In all these the side nail to hold the lock to the gun stock is placed in this compartment when in case. GR '05

Gun superior condition. Case not so good – possibly not original.

From W. Keith Neal

2 December, 1971

Mr. W. Keith Neal
Bishopstrow House
Warminster
Wiltshire
England.

Dear Keith Neal:

I have your letter of the 21st of November, 1971 concerning the single flint Joe Manton gun No. 1503 and hasten to make-up in part for the long delay.

You will note that I enclose a draft upon my bank in the amount of \$1,038.08 which is the exchange rate for £415 as of today and the additional fee for conversion, which I think is about \$2.00. At this rate I should have sent you the Thousand dollars you asked originally. Maybe you will have an old case in disrepair that you will ship the gun in and we can make amends for its cost.

Now as to shipping. The only thing that really worries me is getting it here in good condition! The last gun that I got from you, a percussion gun also from the Alston collection, came with rust on the barrels and they still show it. Give the barrels a good greasing (cosmoline if necessary) or put them in a plastic bag and seal it because the last package definitely got dropped in the drink somewhere along the line.

If, as suggested above, you have a case which will fit this gun that would be the best way to ship it. Even if the case gets broken frequently the gun stays intact. I got a gun from England this Fall which arrived with the case in splinters (top and both ends banged ~~not~~ but the gun was unharmed. You can use your own judgment as to putting the gun in two parcels. I do want it insured for \$1,000.00 so it may be best to put it in one good package and ship it on to me and I will take the consequences on this end. In the U. S. Air Mail is probably the safest in terms of lack of abuse and this may be the case from England to the U. S. but you know better about that. If there is additional money needed for a case from you or for shipping beyond what you had anticipated, just let me know and I will repay you.

I hope that this all makes sense to you and that you will have no trouble getting the gun off to me. I do wonder about its treatment during the Christmas rush. It might be better to wait until after Christmas to ship it, though you be the judge in this respect.

Hoping all is well with you and yours this season, and looking for this little gun to arrive here, I am, sincerely yours,

Warminster 23/12.

12th. Dec. 1971

Bishopstrow House.
Warminster,
Wiltshire.

Dear Ritter,

Many thanks for your letter and draft for the single Joe Manton gun which I appreciate. I would have acknowledged it before but I have been away all last week up in the north of England.

I will ship the gun to you by parcel post and insure and declare it for its full value, you need have no worry about the packing, I will if necessary make a light wood crate for it. I do think however it might be better to avoid the Xmas rush, and as it will have to go by Air Parcel it will of course be much more costly in postage than I anticipated so I may have to ask you to pay some of the cost as I only expected to have to send it surface mail.

I shall look through my spare cases and see what I can find which might be suitable, I take it you really want a good case to take the gun properly? If I can find you a really good one, I will do so, but would have to charge you for this as cases to buy now cost me a fair price. This gun is well worthy of a good case, so I will do my best. If I do not have one suitable I will pack it safely in a wooden box.

I will inform you as soon as the gun is shipped and will send you a copy of the invoice, date of posting etc. You may need this for clearance from Customs your end.

The Revd. Alston who owned this gun is now living in my flat here, he tells me this gun shoots very well and that he shot a woodcock with it in Ireland.

With all good wishes for Christmas,
Yours sincerely,

Keith Neal

Guy A. Ritter, Jr.
241 Craig Avenue
Salem, Virginia 24153

29 December, 1971

Dear Keith Neal:

I am sorry that I have not written you since I received your notice of receipt of my check for the Manton gun. Actually I had nothing to add except that if you incurred additional expenses that I would reimburse you for the amount. Also, when you mention looking for a case to ship this gun in I would ~~again~~ remind you that the case does not have to be very good as I can restore cases pretty well if they have not lost all their hardware. If the outside is sound, or near so, I can restore the interior with no difficulty at all. I have completely redone many of them across the years. So if you have one that will serve as a shipping case, the restoration of the interior to fit this gun will be no trouble to me at all.

I am glad that you have waited until the Christmas rush was over to ship as our mail service is not so good at this time of the year! The Post Office seems simply swamped with packages. It is hard to imagine how many thousands of packages this little Post office in Salem handles.

Again, whatever additional expenses you incur, let me know and I will make amends. I do hope that this gun reaches me in good condition since I have had several disappointments in the last years in guns being damaged in transit.

I thought that I had found a supply of stop hinges recently, but when they arrived they were rather poorly done. They were about the right size but they were made of flat strap doubled that does stop but they are so thin that they will not take much weight. So I think that they were designed for jewelry boxes or something much less straining than a gun case lid. I will keep looking though and when I find a supply I will notify you. I am told that they would be almost prohibitive in price if they were case and machined as the old ones were. I am tempted to do it myself anyway. I have made a few with a file but this takes hours of work.

Well, here's hoping 1972 will be your best year ever and that I will have a chance to see you maybe in this year. Be sure to let me know if you are coming to America this year.

Sincerely yours,

Guy A. Ritter, Jr.

22 June, 1971

Dear Aelto Neal,

Many thanks for your letter of the 23rd of May, 1971. I had just apped that you had an offer of that single flint Joe Manton gun you had mentioned earlier. Let me know when you have the occasion as I am interested if the price is not too high.

It is interesting to follow you in your finding of the examination of the double Jean Manton case and its gun. I have never had any such luck. I did buy myself another John Manton & Son percussion gun recently for which I did have a John Manton case (32 inch barrels). This gun won the Minnesota trap event for muzzle loaders last year. It is a conversion from flint with the locks bearing the signs of a feather spring and the serial number 9773 but the barrel is numbered 11160. I presume that the barrel was replaced at conversion. It is a good shooting 16 gauge and though dirty when I got it, cleaned and neatly in a case again.

The most interesting thing I have come upon is a double flint Joe Manton gun, 20 ga. no 4975. The serial number is on both barrels with the proof marks and on the end of the breech blocks as well as on the inside of the lock plates above the bend of the mainspring and all stamped with the same set of dies. HOWEVER, nothing else about the gun matches that date for the serial no. This gun has solid, full-round, patent breeches (not cut away or relieved to receive the locking). This is the only Manton (sorry, only Joe Manton) gun that I have ever seen that did not have cut away breeches. It has his stamps in gold on the top of each breech pin (abused but still legible) though the touch holes are of platinum and are flush; not countersunk). The barrels are 31 1/2 inches long and have (in block roman letters of perfect engraving) JOSEPH MANTON, D-VIDE STREET, BARKLEY SQUARE, LONDON. The top rib is sunken (not his patent elevation as one would expect with this serial number). The proof marks (London) are the small sunken marks of circa 1800. (You know, I never have had the proof marks of London clearly in mind. I do not know just when they changed nor the variety of marks. Someday I must check this.) There is no barrel makers mark on the barrels. The locks have apparently been reworked at least once since it has Joe's breasted cocks (i.e. pretty good style - engraving on one is not quite perfect so I suspect it is a replacement at a still later date) and the numbers are of the style and decoration of the earliest one illustrated in your book with a single line of engraving around the spring and a small 'heart' at the top lip (No name nor Patent on them). They are a bit shorter in the arc from pin cover to hinge pin than those of 1809-10 though not curved on the end so much as on the very early ones. The stock and its fittings is the most interesting making me think that this gun is an early Joe Manton which has been given its serial number at a later date, probably having no number originally or simply made to someone's specifications who did not appreciate Joe's 'improvements'. The shape of the stock is like a pre-1800 gun. It is very straight and it has a cheek-piece in good style on the left. It is fitted with a trigger guard that does not screw into the trigger plate but is one piece from pineapple finial to rear strap. Still, this rear strap is straight and not curved to form a grip as in earlier guns. The trigger plate is just that, a simple plate with two slots to accept the triggers. The triggers are very wide like older ones were and they are hinged on a pin driven through the wood of the stock as on earlier guns. The bow of the guard is very large and the front trigger is not short or stubby but about the same length as the rear one. The serial no. 4975 is engraved on the rear strip of the guard in handsome, bold figures. There is no doubt about the number it is clear in every instance. It just doesn't match the rest of the gun from any way of thinking. The engraving on the locks is in good Manton style and quite clear (it is not worn or rusted out anywhere on the gun). Let the name, Joseph Manton, in script, on both locks is a bit imperfect, while the 1800's on the second line in block letters is good and correct. I have seen other Joe Manton guns in which the script name was less than perfect while the block letters were always good in style and execution. The engraving on the standing breech is solid, deep and undoubtedly in Joe's style. The engraving on the bow of the guard is the best I have seen for Joe Manton. It is the solid

Warminster 23/2.

Bishopstrow House.
Warminster.
Wiltshire.

21.11.1921

Dear Aitler,

Thank you for your letter, it was delayed since we are due to our dreadful post-1 strike, so please excuse this long wait before I answer you. I do understand exactly about the gun in the quarry. I realised it was a high price when I wrote you, but these days such guns are almost impossible to find and I offered it to you as you had said you wanted a really good Joe and I am sorry but I can't accept your offer. Will you however accept the photographs which I sent you as a small gesture of goodwill.

I shall keep a lookout out for another Joe Martin for you and something else will turn up, such as for example the last mention in a good single flint Joe Martin with gravitating stone. I have one reserved to me and it should be here soon, I know the gun and it is a good one, it is one of the ones mentioned in our Martin book. When I have it here in front of me I will send you a full description and also if you are interested some photographs.

I am sorry to hear you hurt your back but I hope that this is quite well again now, these fellows can be bad I have had a good many.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

W Keith Neal

22 June, 1971

Dear Keith Seal,

Many thanks for your letter of the 23rd of May, 1971. I had just hoped that you had an offer of that single flint Joe Canton gun you had mentioned earlier. But we know when you have the occasion I am interested if the price is not too high.

It is interesting to follow you in your firing of the examination of the double barrel case and its parts. I have never had any such luck. I did buy myself another double barrel conversion gun recently for which I did have a Joe Canton case (1841). I was won the Minnesota trap event for muzzle loaders last year. It is a conversion from a flint to the loose spring, the signs of a feather spring and the serial number 3713 but the barrel is numbered 11100. I presume that the barrel was replaced at conversion. It is a good shot. 16 gauge and though dirty when I got it, cleaned and he try it a case again.

The most interesting thing I have come upon is a double flint Joe Canton gun, 22 g. & 16 g. The serial number is on both barrels with the proof marks and on the end of the breech, which is set in on the inside of the lock. It is above the bend of the mainspring and all stamped in the set of dies. However, nothing else about the gun matches that date for the serial number. This gun has solid, full-round, patent breeches (not cut away or relieved to receive the lock). This is the only Canton (sorry, only Joe Canton) gun that I have ever seen that did not have cut away breeches. It has his stamps in gold on the top of each breech and (though not visible) though the touch holes are of platinum and are flared; not countersunk. The gun is in 21.5 inches long and have (in block roman letters of perfect engraving) 'JOHN J. CANTON' on the top of the stock, 'MADE IN U.S.A. 1841'. The top rib is sunken (not his patent elevation) and is stamped with this serial number. The proof marks (London) are the small squares and the circles (you know I never have had the proof marks of London clearly in mind. I do not know when they change nor the variety of marks. So today I must check this.) There is a barrel makers mark on the barrels. The locks have apparently been reworked at least once since it has Joe's breasted cocks (in pretty good style - engraving on one is not quite perfect) and a great it is a replacement at a still later date, and the numbers are of the style and they are of the earliest one and the other in your book with a single line of engraving which the other is a small 'heart' at the top lip (no name nor patent on them). They are a bit shorter in length than the other to make pin than those of 1841-1842 though not curved at the end so much as the very early ones. The stock and its fittings is the most interesting thing. I think that this gun is an early Joe Canton which has been given its serial number at a later date, perhaps having no number originally or simply made to someone's specifications who did not appreciate Joe's 'improvements'. The shape of the stock is like a pre-1840 gun. It is very straight and it has a cheek-piece in good style on the left. It is fitted with a trigger guard that does not screw into the trigger plate but is one piece from pinetop finial to rear strap. Still, this rear strap is straight and not curved to form a grip as in earlier guns. The trigger plate is a flat, a simple plate with two slots to accept the trigger. The trigger is not like other ones were not they are angled on a pin driven through the back of the trigger plate. The bow of the guard is very large and the front trigger is not curved at all but about the same length as the rear one. The serial no. 1373 is engraved on the rear part of the guard in handsome, gold figures. There is no doubt about the gun as it is clearly in the distance. It just doesn't match the rest of the gun from any of the thinking. The engraving on the lock is in good Canton style and quite clear (it is not worn or rather not damaged) and the gun, at the end, Joseph Canton, in script, on both locks is a bit in effect. The line in block letters is good and correct. I have seen other Joe Canton guns in which the script name was less than perfect while the block letters were always good in execution. The engraving on the standing breech is gold, deep and undoubtedly in Joe's style. The engraving on the box of the guard is the best I have seen for Joe Canton. It is a small

10-30-68 Green Coast Motor Co. Ch. 19. 1 1 11, 1970 - 100.00 100.00 100.00

I enough for now. Thanks for your continued correspondence and information.

include that, I do hope you see Tony around, as he stated once that he was coming to
to the funeral.

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