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GUN & RIFLE MAKERS

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Established 1872

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Per your request, I have researched your Westley Richards guns, serial number 01923, and have attained the following information.

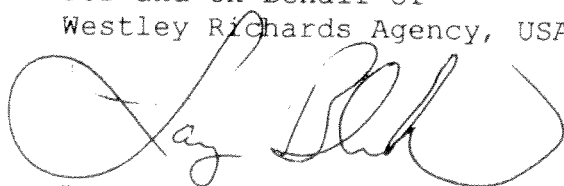
Gun number 01923 was made for Mr. W. Blaska in Seattle Washington in July 1933.

It is noted that the gun was made as an Anson & Deeley ejector action with detachable locks and hinged bottomplate in 20g. The gun had a Westley Richards patent one trigger. The gun was fitted with 28" Whitworth steel barrels with 2 3/4" chambers and proved for a 1oz load.

The stock was straight hand grip with a drop of 1 5/8" at the comb and 2 3/8" at the heel, with a pull of 14 1/2" to center. It is noted that the stock was made with a medium rounded comb, slight cast off, and a pitch "slightly less than normal". The forend had a rod release.

I trust this information is of interest to you.

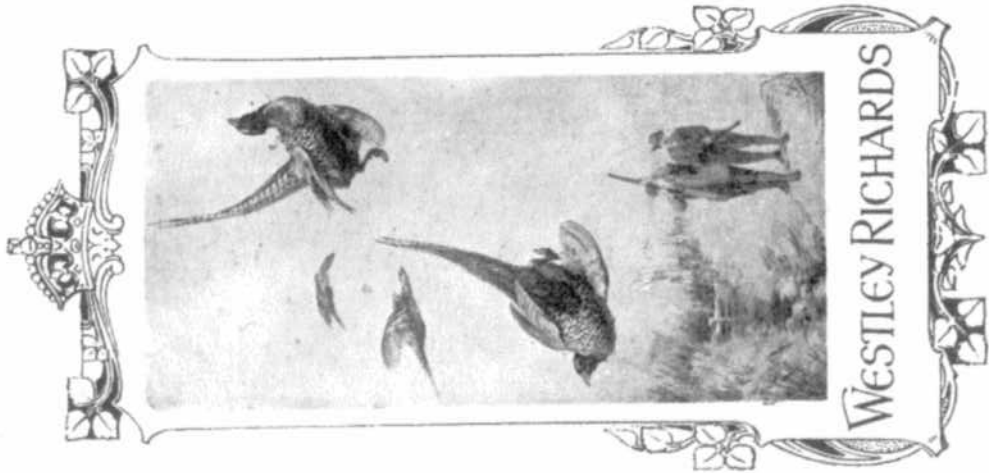
For and On Behalf of
Westley Richards Agency, USA



Larry A. Blunk, II
General Manager

WESTLEY RICHARDS AGENCY USA LLC

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WESTLEY RICHARDS
—SHOT GUNS—
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By the 1880s Tolley had moved again and acquired a retail outlet in London at 1 Conduit St, in the West End. In addition to their new "Perfection" hammerless gun Tolley also were able to supply wildfowl guns in all bores up to and including 4 and Express and Big-Game rifles up to and including double 4-bore.

Tolley were seen to advise their customers that they were "Makers by Special Appointment to the Persian Royal Family". The firm was also well known for its punt guns, specialising in Snider actions and a formidable weapon with a "screw-breech".

It is when we ask ourselves what is the exact category we would place the firm in that we come up against a problem. However, one patent appears against the names of J & W Tolley — that for a breech loading action which in 1879 was given only provisional protection. One of the mysteries is the relationship between J & W Tolley and Henry Tolley, also of Birmingham, who was by far the more prolific inventor. Henry Tolley was perhaps best known for his patent top extension. He worked in Weaman St, and appears to have ceased trading in 1892.

J & W Tolley continued in business with premises at 10 Vesey St, and their catalogue shows that they were "Late of 59 New Bond St". My records indicate that the firm was taken over by Holloway & Naughton, but when this was is at present unknown to me.

Tolley made some very interesting and unusual guns in their time. They also exported guns all over the world, and, although I don't think that they could be classed as "great" gunmakers, they certainly deserve to have something placed on the historical record for posterity.

WESTLEY RICHARDS

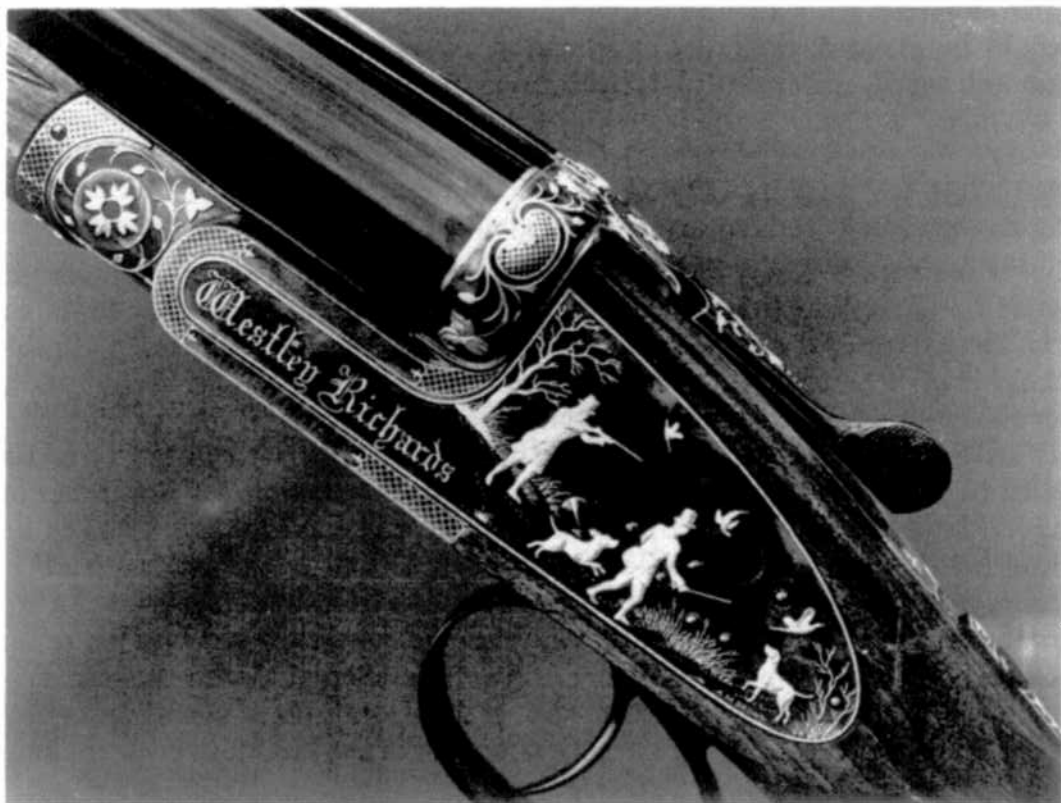
The firm of Westley Richards was established in 1812 and in June of that year the Americans declared war on Britain. Westley Richards supplied double-barrelled muzzle-loading pistols to cavalry officers who fought in the American War of 1812 and they also supplied weapons to Wellington's armies in the wars against Napoleon which ended in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. William Westley Richards, the founder, was born in 1788 and he died in 1865. During his working life he was responsible for a number of inventions connected with the muzzle-loader; one was highly praised by no less an authority than Colonel Peter Hawker. Although founded in Birmingham, the firm was not typical of the Birmingham trade and its premises were in the old High Street quite some way from the gun quarter. A London retail outlet was established in 1815 at 170 New Bond Street, under the management of William Bishop, who was known to generations of shooting men as "The Bishop of Bond Street". The London end of the business grew in fame and fortune.

In Birmingham, Westley Richards, the son of the founder, took over the

business from his father in 1840 and a further series of important inventions did much to influence the development of guns, rifles and revolvers. It has been said that the firm enjoyed the highest reputation of any Birmingham gunmaker and apart from the contribution made on the military side (the Westley Richards Monkey Tail carbine), sporting guns received attention; 1858, drop-down barrels; 1861, drop-down and slide forward barrels; 1862, the famous top-lever and “doll’s head” extension, and, in the same year, patent rifle-sights. In 1864 the top lever design was modified to improve the operation and in 1866 the Monkey Tail capping breechloader was further improved. The stream of inventions continued until Westley Richards retired in 1872 and that year saw bolt-action and sliding breech-block designs. In 1878 his last patent covered the locking system for the drop-down barrel gun.

This remarkable man died in 1897 having lived through the most exciting period in the development of the British shotgun and, as we have seen, having made a notable contribution to that development himself.

With the retirement of Westley Richards, the firm was fortunate enough to find another outstanding man, John Deeley, to take charge. Deeley had joined the firm in 1860 and, between 1873 and 1907 he was partly or wholly responsible for some 17 patents. Of these, there is no doubt that British Patent No 1756, taken out jointly with W. Anson in 1875 is not only the most



Westley Richards sidelock

important of the patents associated with the firm of Westley Richards, but it can be said with confidence that it is one of the most important of all the 19th-century patents, protecting as it did the world famous boxlock Anson & Deeley action.

This was the first practical shotgun to be cocked by the fall of the barrels, and it was also the first practical re-design of the action of a double-barrelled shotgun and one which reduced the number of components considerably. It would be impossible to guess at the number of A & D and A & D type shotguns which have been manufactured since 1875 and the fact that guns of this type, similar in concept and design to the original, are still being made is more than adequate testimony to the brilliance of these two men.

The A & D action sporting shotgun quickly became very popular, and Westley Richards licensed others to manufacture it. Numerous "improvements" also appeared. Of the improvements to the original, two ideas were of significance, both patented by John Deeley. The first was an intercepting safety and the second, hand-detachable locks.

It is fortunate that the firm has managed to retain in its possession the first Anson & Deeley gun made. The remarkable thing about this gun is that it could be taken to any shoot today and used without comment well over a century after it was built. Unlike so many prototypes the Anson & Deeley looks "right" from the start. Possibly the only features which might betray its age are the shallow fences.

In 1896 the firm finally outgrew the premises in the High Street and moved not to the gun quarter but (again keeping to themselves) out to a factory in Bournebrook, on the south side of the city. This is where you will find them today. Things have changed but, once again, A & D guns and rifles are being built. Some 75% of the capacity of the works is concerned with the manufacture of highly specialised tools and dies. Some of the "space age" machine tools which are used in this side of the business are also used in the manufacture of the Westley Richards guns and rifles of today. There is a happy blend of the best of the old and new and the techniques employed for gunmaking are those best adapted to the kind of work involved.

The Westley Richards factory as it is today still builds the finest boxlock guns, but it should be placed on record that a fixed-lock 12-bore has a delivery time of about a year. Price is about £2,500. A similar gun, with the famous "hand-detachable" locks has a delivery time of 18 months to two years and the price is in the order of £6,500. Prices vary since each gun is made to the customer's exact requirements and an interesting aspect of having your gun made by Westley Richards is that, when you place your order, you are given the serial number(s) of the gun or guns. You can then visit the factory at any time until your gun is completed to watch its progress and talk to the craftsmen involved.

Westley Richards is rightly proud of its long and distinguished history and it is very pleasant to record that the company is not resting on its laurels, considerable though these may be. The firm is fully engaged in building what will undoubtedly be the heirlooms of tomorrow.