

From My Collection - Duelling Pistols

One of the exigencies of war was that they did not make toy guns. For the most, us Pommie kids had to make do with rusty relic real guns, picked up for a few bob in junk shops, to rush round pretend shooting those beastly Germans (not “Nazis” as per the current politically correct euphemism!).

Most of those old hand-me-downs were probably melted for scrap in a post war wave of swords-into-ploughshares optimism, but at least a couple survive to the present.



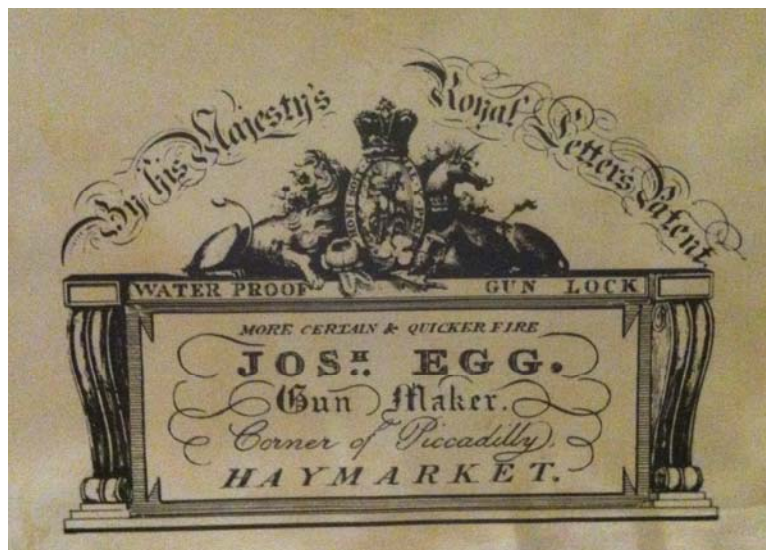
In this day and age it must seem somewhat improbable that, war over, a young teenage lad would be able to coolly make his way through Australian Customs, unchallenged, with a stack of antique pistols in his baggage - including a brace of quite nice Tatham & Egg duelling pistols.

In 1801 Durs Egg's nephew Joe went into business with an Irishman, Henry Tatham, to manufacture arms of the finest quality for the gentlemen of the day to blow each other's brains out at close range to settle (often trivial!) disputes of honour. Distinguished customers included the Prince of Wales, who survived

to become King George IV. The Tatham & Egg partnership was dissolved in 1814 and Joe Egg carried on business as a sole trader at No. 1 Piccadilly, near the Haymarket.



In the 1950's the great aspiration was to graduate to shooting full bore modern guns, and put aside the playthings of childhood. Nevertheless, after many decades the writer had the old flinters cleaned up and a suitable case made, fitted out with modern accessories. Whilst making no pretence to be authentic, it is a visually appealing set.





In excellent working order, the pistols are a pair of good old working guns, ready to settle any score at the drop of a gauntlet!

Registering one of the pair as a target pistol provoked quite a bit of head scratching at the New South Wales Firearms Registry - not having Tatham and Egg as a recognised maker on their computer system. Directing them to certain websites on the internet enabled the 200 year old shooter to enter the 21st century still firing away, as attested to by a bullseye at 25 metres!

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Fully stocked flintlock duelling pistols by Tatham & Egg

Barrel length: 8 inches, smooth bore

Length overall: 12 inches

Calibre: 16 bore

Charge: 20grains of FF black powder