



Army Museum of Tasmania

Anglesea Barracks
HOBART

Information Sheet No 23

SMOOTH BORE 6 POUNDER Cast Iron Cannon



HISTORY

This 6 pounder Smooth Bore cast iron cannon was donated to Anglesea Barracks by the late Dudley Ransom. The plaque which should be attached to this cannon is attached to a carronade at the other end of the building. Dudley Ransom was a well-known collector of arms and militaria ¹ and the plaque that should be attached to this gun is in fact on a gun at the other end of the Barracks building. This plaque indicates that the donation was to recognize the donor's prior service in the 12th Battalion AIF, the Royal Flying Corps and his long involvement with the Barracks.

The Cannon is marked with the name of the vessel from which it came.

¹ Shortly before Ransom died he tried to sell his collection to the State Government but the offer was rejected but the Launceston City Council purchased the collection and it is today housed in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery



The “Wynaud” was a yacht like barque of 520 tons built in 1854 for the opium trade although it was not used for this purpose but it did carry tea from China. Captain Finlay was in command on 14 February 1874 when it got into difficulties in Banks Strait in rough seas. Both anchors were dropped but the ropes broke and the vessel went ashore on a sandy beach half a mile south of Eddystone Point. Much of the cargo taken on at Launceston and some of the gear was salvaged.

Another cannon from the “Wynaud” is in the possession of Jim Butterworth of Bellerive.



The gun was cast in 1854 by Bailey, Pegg and Co. and is 9cwt. 1 qr. 12 pds. in weight. This firm began business in the late 18th century and later moved to Brierley Hill. A substantial contract for shot and shell in 1820 caused the partners Samuel Pegg and Crawshay Bailey to begin casting cannon. Their technique was to cast solid and bore out the barrel. Their guns were proved at Woolwich Arsenal (indicated by the crown over the letter P) and the partners boasted they never had a gun fail proof. They made guns from swivel and signal types up to 32 pounders. They also manufactured mortars. They sold guns to the British Government, commercial vessels and other countries.

Another two of Bailey, Pegg and Co. guns are to be found at the entrance to the Cascade Brewery.

The gun is a Blomefield Pattern cannon. Thomas Blomefield spent time in the Royal Navy before entering the Royal Military Academy at 14 years of age. He later served as a Artillery Officer before taking up a position of Inspector of Artillery in 1780.

He set about improving the production standards of military cannon however his naval experience led him to believe that naval guns due to the nature of their being mounted on a moving ship were inaccurate because of that motion and therefore did not require to be to the same standard of perfection as military cannon.

When the method of producing charcoal for gunpowder changed from kiln to cylinder or ovens charring around 1783 the discovery was made that breech pressures increased and as a consequence guns were failing at proof. Blomefield set about redesigning guns with the view to overcoming the number of failures at proof and also to standardize a design. To do this he struck up a relationship with Samuel Walker of Rotherham². After many trials (and failures at proof) he settled on a design that,

- provided greater strength behind the chamber
- included a breeching loop on the cascable
- redistributed weight along the barrel particularly around the breech
- made design changes at the muzzle and chase astragal
- bored guns from the solid



Guns with ornate cascable
Cascable



Blomefield

The above photographs depict one of the most obvious differences in a Blomefield gun. The ornate cascables introduced structural weaknesses into the castings when there were high chamber pressures.

² Note: There are Walker and Co. guns at Paterson Barracks and the Defence Nutrition Site.