The Committee of Management welcomes our new Members who have recently joined the Vintagers. We sincerely wish Victoria Miles, Anthony Psaila, Victor Smith, Paul Barber, Paul Bannan and Jay Nehring a very warm welcome and enjoyment within the Club as a Member of the Vintagers.

President’s Report
We commenced our shoot calendar for the New Year with the “Treasurers Challenge” at the Frankston Australian Clay Target Club. The theme of the shoot was to decide on the respective merits of both nitro and black powders, and to establish what would be the winning combination on the day.

Those using black powder were faced with a couple of obstacles from the outset which surely tested their nerves. Would there be a total fire ban imposed on the day which would prohibit the use of black powder and so forfeit the challenge? Would the 12 noon time delay for the restriction for its use be unsettling?

The shoot was somewhat different to what is the normal theme of our Club in that the particular emphasis was on individual scoring in accordance with the Australian Clay Target Associations rulings, and in this regard each squad contained a referee (who also pushed the button) and a scorer. At this point, I should clarify to all that the big brush tail possum who is a long term squatter in the tower wasn’t responsible for throwing out the clays! It just goes to show the climbing ability of these animals considering that the supports are smooth steel.

The statistics and results, which have been subject to a careful audit so as eliminate any attempt for “insider trading”, are as follows.

- The shoot attracted 67 entries, of which 54 chose to shoot nitro, and 13 close to use black powder.
- There were some excellent overall scores of 40 and over recorded by the nitro lads. Wayne Robinson topped with a score of 46/50; Phillip Dalbrun with 42/50; Ray Aspinnall (who rarely shoots) with 42/50; John McCraith with 40/50; David Gudgin with 40/50.
- Black powder also produced some fine overall scores, with Grant Barber recording 40/50, and Rob Lansell 36/50 with his 8 bore hammered Charles Boswell which for the record was loaded with 145 grains of Fg grade black powder and 2 ounces of number 7 shot.
- There were some high individual event scores worth noting. For example, David Henderson (nitro) shot a 22/25 tower; Grant Barber (black) shot a 23/25 tower; Rob Lansell (black) shot a 20/25 tower; John McCraith (nitro) shot a 24/25 tower; Wayne Robinson (nitro) shot a 24/25 tower; Rod Pratt (nitro) shot a 21/25 tower; David Gudgin shot a 24/25 tower; Keith Caldecott (black) shot a 21/25 tower.
- Special mention must be made of Major Noel W. Hall OAM.ED, the Patron of the Antique and Historical Arms Collectors Guild of Victoria, who shot (nitro) a 14/25 tower. Now for those who are not aware, the Major is a sprightly 94 years of age. That’s right, 94! Incidentally, never underestimate the
marksmanship of those guild lads. The
Guild President, Ian Turner shot (nitro)
17/25 tower and Neil Speed, their
previous long term secretary of some 30+
years, shot (nitro) a 20/25 tower.

- The final result for the day was that Nitro
recorded an average score of 23.2/50,
and Black 25.46/50. **So Black Powder
proved to be the winning combination on this particular occasion.** In other
words the Nitro users “killed” an average
46.4% of the targets, whereas those using
the Black just “piped” them with and
“killed” an average of 50.92% of the
targets
Thank you to those Guild members who
attended, and also to the Seymour Black Powder
lads under the command (well, sort of) of Paul
Barber. Paul and his band of merry men scored
well in the black powder section and without their
display of marksmanship, especially Grant Barber
(Paul’s son), the nitro boys would have easily top
scored.
It also goes without saying that the day would
not have been as successful as it was without the
tireless hands on trapping, scoring, refereeing,
etc., from our committee of Mark, Greg, Max and
John, and to the lovely Sherrie Pingnam, who
orchestrated the raffle. We must also thank Greg
Wood, a Vintager, who is also the Secretary of
the Frankston Australian Clay Target Club, for his
help and assistance with the ground set up and
permitting us to use their facilities.
And finally, just a reminder in case you have
misplaced the flyer, our next shoot is scheduled
for the 20th April at Eagle Park. Now it NEVER
rains at Eagle Park, so we look forward to seeing
you all there. We have booked the grounds and
hired the comfort of the BGRC Clubrooms (just in
case of a small amount of precipitation).

**Shoot Calendar 2008.**

**20th April 2008 – Rifle Shoot at Little River,**
confirmed. Confirmed. Refer enclosed flyer.

**15th June 2008 – Greenvale, Confirmed**

August?? – to be decided

19th October 2008 – Geelong, to be confirmed

**30th November 2008 – Melbourne Gun Club,**
Confirmed.

**Members, changed your mailing address?**
Have you changed your address lately? If so,
please advise the Secretary as soon as possible
so that you won’t be disappointed in missing out
on receiving the next issue of the newsletter and
forthcoming shooting events.
In addition, membership renewals for the year to
30th June 2008 are now overdue and no further
newsletters are forwarded to unfinancial
members.

**Hunting Club Approval Further Update**
Just to refresh you, in our previous newsletters
we reported that we had written to the
Commissioner of Police seeking approval to be
recognized as an approved category A/B shooting
club for the purposes of demonstrating HUNTING
as a genuine reason for a firearms licence. This
would enable a financial member of the Vintagers
to demonstrate under section 10 (3) of the
Firearms Act 1996 that the licence is required for
hunting by providing evidence (that is, the
Vintager membership card), that they are a
member of an approved shooting club (that is, the
Vintagers).
The approval (number 581-742-70H) was
subsequently granted to us on 17th August 2007,
but was subject to six general conditions, most of
which are considered to be quite unrealistic.
Following recent representations made by the
Combined Firearms Council of Victoria (CFCV)
and the Firearms Consultative Committee (FCC),
we understand that 4 of the 6 general conditions
of the approval have been overturned and
unconditionally withdrawn.
One of the conditions remaining is that the
Vintagers must provide written advice to the
Chief Commissioner (of Police) if the Vintagers
believe that a person who is a club member is not
a fit and proper person to possess, carry, or use
a long-arm.
The other is that the Vintagers must provide written advice to the Chief Commissioner on persons who resign, are suspended, or expelled from the Club within 7 days. Formal notification of the revised condition of approval is not yet to hand and is eagerly awaited.

Shooting rabbits with a Hare

By Robert Geddes

EJ Hare, 26 Whittall St, Birmingham. Who? I am yet to hear from anyone who has ever heard of Hare, let alone seen other examples by the maker, but we can at least be certain that 26 Whittall Street was in the heart of the Birmingham gun quarter when Birmingham was centre of the gun world. This gun is serial numbered in the 500 range, so either Hare made* few guns, or this is quite an early one. But it came to me in a bit of a state... Broken toplever-crossbolt linkage, messy screw slots and stripped screw threads, broken tang screw, caked with rust, dirt, and dried grease inside and out, pitted bores, perished rubber residue on the butt from an old slip-on pad and a cracked and chipped horn plate underneath, welded on left hammer nose (which was a replacement hammer anyway), scratched, chipped and dented buttstock... Nor had it ever been much more than just a gun – while the fit is generally fairly good, the wood is plain, and the engraving sparse and plain too. But even without the Greener crossbolt working, it locked up firmly and surely, and the stock was still functionally sound. Its barrels still rang like a bell, and that its not-too-heavy-or-light 7 pounds came up to the right spot on my shoulder, and under my eye, was enough to forgive a multitude of sins. Best of all, it cost nothing – and the cousin who had given it to me had even paid the dealer’s transfer fee! It needed some treatment. The doctor prescribed fine steel wool and 2-stroke mower fuel on the metal, and fine sandpaper, fine steel wool and a beeswax-linseed-turpentine polish on the butt. That it was a mess, that parts of it were buggered, and that it owed me nothing, gave me the confidence to scrub quite aggressively and have a go at filing up one or two replacement pins. The steel wool worked a treat. It was nice to see some case colour remaining hidden in a very few protected spots while I stripped and cleaned and scrubbed. I enjoy pulling guns apart and marvelling at the ingenuity and craftsmanship – even in low grade guns – which makes them work so well, and this was the first hammered breech loader I had detail-striped.

I was intrigued by the gun, and called my cousin Mike (more correctly, a cousin of Mum’s) to ask about its origins. The story got even better then: the gun originally belonged to a great grandfather on my maternal grandmother’s side, Michael Thomas McRae, born at Birregurra in 1881, married Adorative May Kelly (lots of Highland clearance and potato famine refugees in my family tree!) of Dunkeld in 1913 in Geelong, died at Ararat in 1953; this suggests its era as being perhaps the early 1900s if Michael bought the gun new as an adult. Given that its original owner was born in Australia, and likely never travelled overseas (unless on military service), we have to conclude that the gun was probably retailed in Australia too. Mike also told me that he had encountered much head scratching from Licensing Services when he had originally registered a gun by a maker unknown to them. “VB” on the forend retaining hook is the only clue about its manufacturing origins, apart from the barrel address and serial number. Even the locks remain un-signed inside or out. It has 30” barrels with 2 ¾”, 1 ¼ oz Birmingham Nitro Proof marks (which I’m yet to accurately date), choked about ½ and ¾ with a stippled flat rib. A rounded off Prince of Wales grip, horn buttplate, bar action hammered locks, Greener crossbolt and Purdey double grip, Scott spindle toplever, and snap-on splinter forend make up the lock and stock. It looked and felt like a typical very early 20th century toplever hammer gun made for ducks and other small game in the colonies. From Western Victoria, it probably was exactly that.

I was keen to take it afield again, but in deference to its age and rather pitted bores it would shoot black powder only now; 2 ¾ drams of 3F Wano, with thick card and greased felt wads, an ounce of #5 or #6 lead pellets and a rolled crimp. Besides, in a vintage hammer gun that looks like a real old gun, the cartridges had to look, sound and smell like real old cartridges too! A deep booming report, sparks, flame,
white smoke and the smell of brimstone is only right and proper!
Its first day afield in many years was with some mates in a lignum swamp where rabbits abound, in Western Victoria, during late summer. We worked our way through and soon got our eyes in as rabbits scurried between cover over the dry swamp bed. My step-son shot his first rabbit that morning, and my Hare killed rabbits (what an exquisite irony!)
Near the end of our drive a fox was spotted. A quick orders group was held, and in an attempt to outflank and drive the fox in to a killing zone (you’ll forgive the terminology; 3 of the 5 guns present were current or ex infantry!) I found myself stationary and loading, shooting and firing at flushed rabbits as they ran to me. In effect it was an impromptu shoot at driven ground game, and for a few moments it was some of the best shooting I have ever had. The Hare never found that fox though!

* In the loose sense of the word when we talk about British gunmakers “making” guns; this could have been made in house, merely finished in house, or bought finished from a factory or a series of backyard outworkers elsewhere.

Champion Live Bird Shooter
On page 7 of our December 2007 newsletter we reported on a certain W.R. Grant of Meredith achievements at live bird shooting with (what we believed to be) a William Cashmore Match Gun that he had purchased from Donald Mackintosh of 400 Bourke Street, Melbourne.
We were incorrect! It was, according to the advertisement reproduced hereunder, a W.W. Greener.
Our Club amateur historian managed to locate the great niece of W.R. Grant, who kindly provided him with some information and photographs.
William Richard Grant was born at The Leigh in 1873 (exact date not recorded) and died of heart failure on 15th March 1923, at Strezlecki, Gippsland. He is buried in Meredith.
Regrettably, the where-abouts of any trophies and the like is not known. The same applies (regrettably) to the cased Greener. Now assuming that Mr. Grant purchased a new Greener, and by taking into consideration that the first of the string of winnings occurred in 1910, the serial number of the Greener would possibly be in the 56000 to 57000 range.
So, lads, it’s to the gun cupboard and check for the possibility of the “Grant” name, or even the initials, on the escutcheon.
Now, not only was William a champion with the shot gun, he was also a proficient rifle shot.

W.R. Grant of Meredith, Victoria Circa 1912.

Vale

Peter McCraith
It is with great sadness that the Committee of Management learnt that one of our colourful Vintager passed away on Tuesday 11 March. Our deepest sympathies go to Peter’s partner Beth and his family.
Peter’s stories about the early days of shooting rabbits and ducks will certainly be missed.
Australian Arms Auctions are proud to announce the forthcoming 2 day Auction on the 3rd and 4th May 2008.

Visit our website at: [www.australianarmsauctions.com](http://www.australianarmsauctions.com) for the online catalogue or download the catalogue subscription form for your hard copy catalogue (both available early April).

This is a larger than normal offering of some 1050 lots including a large and significant collection of swords and edged weapons as well as the usual offering of shotguns and rifles of interest to Vintagers members.

Game and Pigeon guns are represented by the following makers: Westley Richards; Powell; Dougal; Mortimer; T Woodward; WW Greener; Boswell; G&S Holloway; Vickers; BSA; Webley and Hollis.

In 20 gauge, a magnificent G&S Holloway sidelock; and two others by Hellis and Holloway and Naughton.

Hammerguns by Boswell; Tipping and Lawden; JW Rosier; Gibbs and Holland.

A few "not to be mentioned" U/O guns by Browning; Beretta; Stirling and Lamber.

Double rifles by Alex Henry (500 BPE); and Webley (360 No2).

Centre fire rifles by Holland and Holland; Weatherby; Remington; Winchester; Ruger; Mauser; Savage; an early Brno with original scope; in a range of calibres, and a magnificent Lee Speed by W Powell.

Rimfires by Walther; Mauser and Brno.

**AUSTRALIAN ARMS AUCTIONS Pty Ltd**

**30th COLLECTOR’S AUCTION**

on

**3rd and 4th May 2008**

Eley Park Community Centre

87 Eley Road, Blackburn South

Melways Ref. 61-H5

**Viewing:**

Saturday 9.00am to 1.00pm

Sunday 8.00am to 10.00am

**Auction:**

2.00pm to Lot 450

10.00am

Looking forward to seeing you there.
Flinders Island

By Greg Menzies

The Dornier banked over the sleepy coastal village, the Co pilot looked back at the dangerous cargo they were carrying knowing that soon it would be released to cause havoc.
The pilot scanned the sky looking for Hurricanes.............
STOP IT!!!!!!
Back to reality please.....
Ok
We had just flown from Victoria, departing Essendon Airport to Flinders island, the purpose was to do some shooting, our party consisted of seven shooters.
The game was Cape Baron Goose, the Tasmanian Governments controlled culling program for the above. We were met at the airport by Chris Rhodes, Rockjaw Tours 51 Golden Mile Road. We bundled our gear into a Toyota 12 seater bus (some of us got to know the bus very well by the end of the trip). A short tour of the island followed. We even stopped at the local for a few coldies we also purchased a few for later We arrived at camp and were soon packed away A spot of clays were on the menu, to get our eyes in and also for Chris to see want sort of duds he had picked up this time.
That night we went to Whitemark the local town and had a counter tea then back to the camp.
Next morning started at about 4.30 AM up dressed breakfasted and in the bus and the Landy that also towed a trailer with a 4*4 Quad bike. Chris then arranged the shooting locations for us and then in a cloud of dust was away, The birds started to fly over and some good shooting was enjoyed.
A point to note: Flinders Island has a lot of electric fencing, very good electric fencing.
The shooting continued in the same way for the rest of the weekend. We also did a bit of surf fishing and a beach BBQ All to quickly did it come to an end and climbed aboard the Dornier and flew back to Victoria The proceeds were distributed and everyone departed Would I go to Flinders Island again ?????
You bet I would.
Did I mention the Spitfire no
That’s another story.

Flinders Island

Someone special enjoying themselves on Flinders!!
The Combined Firearms Council of Victoria update.

Learn about the Victorian Department of Justice, RIS, calling for 600% fee increase. For further information of what the CFCV is all about you can access their website - www.cfcv.org.au

Guild Invitation – a Second Special Display Night

Following the highly successful display night we had last year from the invitation of the Antique and Historical Arms Collectors Guild of Victoria, we have now received an invitation for a follow up! The Guild has suggested that it takes place in November 2008 on the last Monday of the month so as to coincide with the established booking of the hall.

Now we need a theme and that’s where it’s over to you, the Members.

What would you consider appropriate and interesting for both the Guild and our Club?

Your suggestions and thoughts are eagerly sought. Please email the Secretary judithk@bigpond.com.

Reminder for other Club Side-by-Side Shoots

Other than the Vintagers, the Melbourne Gun Club and the Greenvale Field and Game will be hosting shoots for side-by-side guns only. These shoots will be open to all and will be scored “off the gun”. It will not be necessary to be a financial member of these clubs to enter the events.

As both clubs (and as are many of their respective members) have strong working relationships with the Vintagers and are always happy for us to use their grounds and facilities, we are hopeful that many of you turn up on these days to show your support.

Melbourne Gun Club
Victoria Road, Lilydale

50 Target 5 Stand Sporting commencing at 11.00am
1st Prize Sash + 2 boxes cartridges
2nd Prize Sash + 1 box cartridges

Saturday 29th March 2008

Saturday 31st May 2008
Saturday 30th August 2008
Saturday 29th November 2008

Greenvale Field and Game
345 Tantaraboo Road, Willowmavin
Melway Country map 60 reference F5-6

Saturday 31st May commencing at 12 noon
50 Target simulated graded side-by-side sporting

We are asking each of you to make every endeavor to attend the Melbourne and the Greenvale grounds as a show of solidarity and support.

Looking for a Gunsmith who has extensive experience with double guns and rifles, give Rolf a call.

Cobaw Sporting Clays
www.cobaw.com

In the magnificent Macedon Ranges, one hour from Melbourne Airport
Syndicate and private shooting available.
Try the Cobaw Flush – up to 200 birds over five drives. Great Fun!!
Design the shoot to suit your party.

Shoot@cobaw.com
(03) 5423 7146
**Patrik** would be well known to many of you. He is a foundation life member of our Club and an extremely generous supporter of our fund raising activities. Please support those who support us, and give Patrik a call if you are in the market for a new toy, ammunition, or accessories.

The Committee of Management is very grateful for the wonderful prizes Patrik donated to the Club throughout the past 7 years.

Thank you very much Patrik.

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**Wanted - articles are sought!**

We need articles for the Newsletter. You hear this from us all the time and will continue to do so.

Without your support in supplying or writing articles the Newsletter will sadly reduce in size or diminish.

Please forward your articles by fax or by email to the Editor/Secretary.

Please note: If you have already sent in articles please don’t be disappointed as it will be placed in the next issue.

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Members, if you wish to advertise your business, consultancy, practice, or events, please forward the advertising copies to the Secretary either by email or by fax. This will be at no cost to members.

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**Copies of Old Gun Catalogues**

We have taken upon ourselves to photocopy the following catalogues:

- **Donald Mackintosh** catalogue No. 4 of circa 1916 – 40 pages
- **Midland Gun Company** list No.2 41st Edition of 1924 – 44 pages

Each is on A4 paper in black and white with a top corner staple. They contain illustrations of a range of firearms, ammunition, accessories and the like, available at the time, and possibly more important, their price.

The cost incurred has been $11 per copy at “Officeworks”, and we propose selling them at a small profit for our Club for $15 per copy or $16 if posted.

Some of you have already expressed a keen interest in having a copy of the Midland catalogue, and accordingly we have recorded your names. Should others be interested then please advise by telephone (0408 619 226) or by email, (judithk@bigpond.com).

Depending on the level of demand, we can always arrange for additional copies.

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**DISCLAIMER**

The articles, opinions and sometimes unusual views expressed in Hammers Back are not necessarily those of the Editor, or the Vintagers (Order of Edwardian Gunners) Inc., and are not to be taken seriously.