

Using the Army & Navy Co-Operative Society firearms records

Access and enquiries

There is no charge to visit our Thurso Street reading room to undertake research yourself - see [our website](#) for more information.

If you wish us to do the research for you, we will spend an initial half-an-hour on your enquiry free of charge. We will then let you know if we have found your gun in the records, and if so, who bought it, in what year, and for what price. If you would like a copy of the entry in the gun stock books we ask you to get back in touch.

If we cannot find any record of your gun within the half-an-hour we are able to spend free of charge, we will offer you the opportunity to purchase an additional hour's research from us (see the information about our Research Service on our website). We advise therefore that you take the time to provide as much of the following information as possible in your initial enquiry:

- Specify gun type with name of maker if known (Army & Navy finished and sold guns for other makers)
- Specify whether the gun is a shotgun, rifle, revolver, pistol etc as the same numbers were issued to the different types
- Quote the code/reference number which should be stamped somewhere on the gun
- Give the gun's date if known or at least an approximation

Company background

The Army and Navy Co-operative Society Ltd were formed in 1871 by a group of army and navy officers. It was their intention to supply "articles of domestic consumption and general use to its members at the lowest numerative rates". The first store opened on 15 February 1872 at Victoria Street, London. At the end of 1873 a gun department was established.

By the end of the century the Society was issuing an enormous annual illustrated price list, had introduced telephone ordering and had reduced mail order prices. In 1934 the company's official name became the Army and Navy Store Ltd and in 1973 Army and Navy Stores was taken over by House of Fraser.

(Taken from Michael Moss and Alison Turton, *A Legend of Retailing, House of Fraser*, London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1989).

Interpreting the records

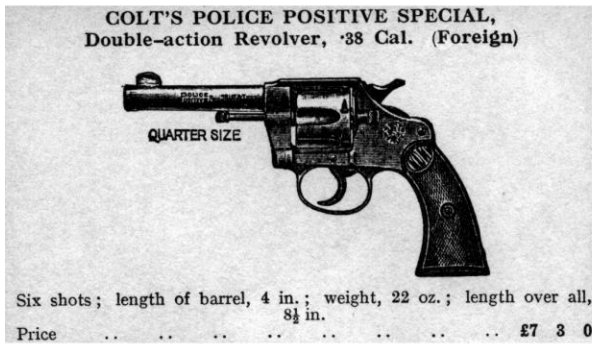
Sale catalogues

These were produced annually and list in detail all the products sold and manufactured by Army & Navy. Prices and specifications are given of shotguns, pistols and revolvers. Later price lists have line illustrations of particular makes. Because of the original nature of the store, a store for army, navy and colonial police officers, the pistols and revolvers are often intended for police or military use. Shotguns and rifles are for pest control/recreational purposes.

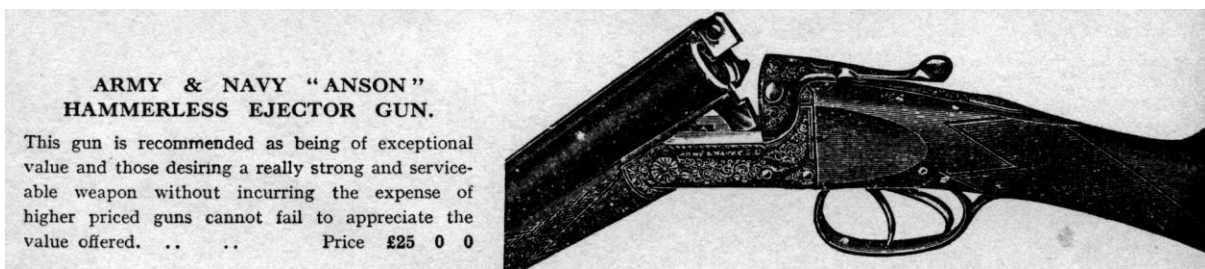
A full list of accessories was also sold from cartridges to gun cabinets and cases.

Date	Details
1872, 1875-79, 1882, 1886, 1894, 1908-40	Illustrated price lists (http://www.housefraserarchive.ac.uk/series/?id=fras-313)

Examples of gun types



Army & Navy catalogue 1925-26 (GUAS Ref: FRAS 313/18)



Army & Navy catalogue 1925-26 (GUAS Ref: FRAS 313/18)

Interpreting the records

Gun stock books

This series of records are the major source of information about individual guns. Army & Navy sold a range of their own makes of shotgun. Pistols and revolvers were mainly of British manufacture but some European and American pistols and revolvers were sold also. Many firearms were sold through their Indian depots.

The books are chronological, like daybooks or journals. Each entry is on two halves of the page and grouped by type of firearm e.g. 'Webley revolver'. Most volumes have indices grouped by type of gun. To access information about a particular firearm it is necessary to have the guard number; these run concurrently within each volume. Volumes are catalogued by date and guard number in most instances. However, very early volumes do not have concurrent guard numbers.

Army & Navy also sold second-hand firearms. Second hand firearm volumes make note of purchaser and from whom it was purchased.

Date	Details
1882-c1942	Gun stock books details type of gun, name of purchaser, cost, selling price. (GUAS Ref: FRAS 309/1-16: http://www.housefraserarchive.ac.uk/series/?id=fras-309)
1880-1965	Pistol and revolver stock books details type of pistol, cost, selling price, maker's name, name of purchaser and date of purchase. (GUAS Ref: FRAS 310/1-15: http://www.housefraserarchive.ac.uk/series/?id=fras-310)
1889-1960	Second-hand stock (GUAS Ref: FRAS 312/1-6: http://www.housefraserarchive.ac.uk/series/?id=fras-312)

Gun stock book entries

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Double bl Express Rifles

Guard No	Barrel or Maker's No.	DESCRIPTION.	Choked or Cylinder	Size of Bore.	Order No.	Date of Invoice.	Soft.	Finished.
47012	55395	12 BA Grip Rifle <i>Special sights, 590 yds, spring leave sights</i>		.500	312 671936	12.6.07		Osb
47013	5579	1 BA, top lever dbl Rifle <i>1735</i>		.500	014732	23.8.07		Osb

Army & Navy gun stock book 1905-09 (GUAS Ref: FRAS 309/11)

These 'notes' replicate the information in each entry

If the gun was 'customised' this is mentioned in the description

The name of the workman who 'finished' the gun is abbreviated

75

Cost.	Selling.	Name of Purchaser.	Ticket No.	Bill No. and how Sold.	Date when Sold.	REMARKS.
MR. X. -	Calcutta	Capt J. Stanford	-	Calcutta	12.6.20	9/8/07 9/10/07 9/19/07 7/10 2/11 2/13 2/15 2/18 2/20 2/22 2/24 2/26 2/28 2/30 3/1 3/3 3/5 3/7 3/9 3/11 3/13 3/15 3/17 3/19 3/21 3/23 3/25 3/27 3/29 3/31 4/1 4/3 4/5 4/7 4/9 4/11 4/13 4/15 4/17 4/19 4/21 4/23 4/25 4/27 4/29 4/31 5/1 5/3 5/5 5/7 5/9 5/11 5/13 5/15 5/17 5/19 5/21 5/23 5/25 5/27 5/29 5/31 6/1 6/3 6/5 6/7 6/9 6/11 6/13 6/15 6/17 6/19 6/21 6/23 6/25 6/27 6/29 6/31 7/1 7/3 7/5 7/7 7/9 7/11 7/13 7/15 7/17 7/19 7/21 7/23 7/25 7/27 7/29 7/31 8/1 8/3 8/5 8/7 8/9 8/11 8/13 8/15 8/17 8/19 8/21 8/23 8/25 8/27 8/29 8/31 9/1 9/3 9/5 9/7 9/9 9/11 9/13 9/15 9/17 9/19 9/21 9/23 9/25 9/27 9/29 9/31 10/1 10/3 10/5 10/7 10/9 10/11 10/13 10/15 10/17 10/19 10/21 10/23 10/25 10/27 10/29 10/31 11/1 11/3 11/5 11/7 11/9 11/11 11/13 11/15 11/17 11/19 11/21 11/23 11/25 11/27 11/29 11/31 12/1 12/3 12/5 12/7 12/9 12/11 12/13 12/15 12/17 12/19 12/21 12/23 12/25 12/27 12/29 12/31
MR. T. -	250.0	Bar J. A. Esq.	37318	Cal. 22026 29 507		Calcutta

For costs see 'Interpreting Costing Code'

Interpreting the costing code

Production costs, as rendered in the stock books, are in a coded form. [Retail prices of firearms can be found in the price lists]

Letter	M	A	K	E	P	R	O	F	I	T	S
No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Therefore a cost of MK P O equals £13 5s 7d. 'X' marks and dashes denote no value.

British currency pre-1971

Note that the costing system is of the old British currency system, abandoned in 1971. It was not a decimal system. These corresponded to the symbols l[pounds] s [shillings] and d[pence]. There were 12 pence in one shilling and 20 shillings in one pound, there were 240 pence in the pound.