New Zealand Heritage London Made 1849 Pocket & 1851 Navy Colts

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Top: .36" caliber 6 chamber P1851/53 Colt Navy s/n 39211 single action percussion revolver, 7.5" hexagonal barrel, Steel back strap and trigger guard. Approximately 42,000 were manufactured at Colt's Pimlico Factory, Cockspur Street, London, between January 1853 and December 1856 when the factory was closed. Adopted by the Royal Navy in 1853 at a contract price of 50 shillings. They were all withdrawn by 1862 (being replaced with the double action .44" Cal. Beaumont Adams from 1856) and sold off as surplus for 30 - 40 shillings each, some going to America for use in the Civil War others going in 1862 to the New South Wales Mounted Police and in 1863 purchased by the New Zealand Colonial Government for use, first by the Otago and Canterbury Provincial Armed Police Forces especially the Goldfields Police and the New Zealand Colonial Defense Force especially the NZ Forest Rangers from 1863 and used by a few members of the New Zealand Armed Constabulary from 1867.

Lower: .31" caliber 5 chamber P1849/53 Colt Pocket percussion revolver s/n 7524, 4" hexagonal barrel, steel back strap and trigger guard. Approximately 11,000 were made at the London Pimlico Factory 1853-56, they became popular with New Zealand Settlers, Gold miners, Provincial Armed Police c1853-77 and as a backup arm with some members of the New Zealand Forest Rangers, Armed Constabulary and Militia. About 2860 London Pocket Colts were made with the 4" barrel.





In 1856 Captain John Montague Hayes of the Royal Navy patented (No 2059) a seamless pig gut outer cased cartridge known as a "Skin Cartridge". The skin membrane was tied off with thread at one end, filled with the required amount of black powder and tied to the conical lead bullet at the other end. This cartridge was not really successful until in 1863 Henry Gladstone patented (No 2840) a chemical treatment for the skin membrane to render it combustible, waterproof and brittle so that it would crush into the powder when loaded, leaving no residue when fired. The "skin" percussion revolver cartridge was adopted in the mid 1860's by the New Zealand Colonial Government for use in both Adams and Colt revolvers. The cost was 1 shilling (10 cents) for a box of 50 cartridges. Refer image above right. Many New Zealand Settlers, Gold miners etc, still preferred to buy bulk powder to fill and load from a powder flask, and to cast their own lead bullets. Refer image above left. Contents nipple wrench, bullet mould, 1849 London made .31" calibre 5 chamber Colt revolver, powder flask, oil can, Bell match box containing lead bullets, percussion caps, etc. Please note the wooden case and accessories are not contemporary with the Colt revolver, components represent a set of operational items and maintenance tools.

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