

NZAR ID A35 Revolvers used by Military & Police in NZ 1850s-1890s

by John Osborne AA DTT PhD FSG, 18 March 2012 - Request for information for the NZ Arms Register



London made 1853-55 .36" Colt W^D. London made 1856-67 .44" Beaumont Adams W^D. London made 1872 .450 Adams N^Z. Birmingham made 1878.450 Tranter N80Z

From c1840 most commissioned officers in New Zealand military and constabulary services were expected to purchase their own arms (handguns and swords), and all other NZ Colonial military and constabulary personal were invited and encouraged to buy their own handguns at a special government price (cost landed in NZ). Handguns were not normally issued to Non Commissioned Officers and other personal, only muskets, rifles or carbines with bayonets as appropriate. Military, constabulary and settlers normally procured military type handguns for which ammunition was available and issued. In the early days 1840s and 50s all types of single shot and early revolvers were in use including dueling pistols, With the establishment of the Provincial Governments in 1853 and their setting up of their own Armed Constabulary (foot and mounted) they purchased and issued their own arms. In 1858 the NZ Colonial Government passed the Militia Act and this brought uniformity to the types of arms and ammunition issued to NZ Colonial Militia but as NZ was a fledgling colony it purchased (were possible surplus / used / converted / best current model) military arms from the UK.

The revolvers shown above have a New Zealand provenance, I would appreciate information on other types / makes of revolvers used in NZ at this time.

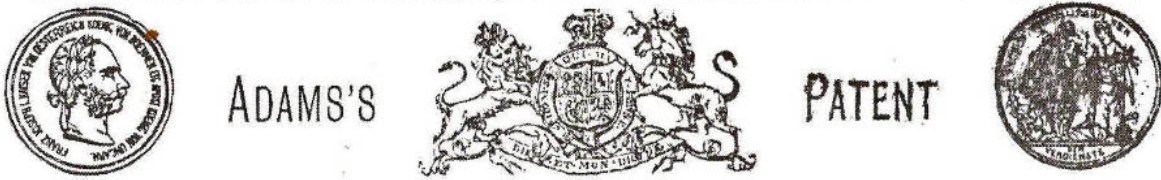
The handguns in the image above from lower left in a clockwise rotation

1. Adams P1851 54bore .44" 5 chamber 6.5" Brl SN 2037 London proofed private sale, used by some Colonial Militia and Provincial Constabulary
2. Webley-Bentley P1853/57 80bore .40" SB 6 chamber 5.75" Brl SN Nil Birmingham proofed private sale, used by some Provincial Constabulary
3. London Colt Navy P1853 90bore .36" 6 chamber 7.5" Brl SN 39211 London proofed W^D ordnance marked, used by some Provincial Constabulary
4. Beaumont Adams P1856 54bore .44" 5 chamber 5.5" Brl SN 15506 London proofed W^D ordnance marked, used by Militia & Provincial Constabulary, NZ Colonial Defence Force (including Forest Rangers from July 1863), NZ Armed Constabulary Force from Oct 1867 until replaced by the .450 Adams.
5. Remington-Beal P1861 54bore .44" 6 chamber 8" Brl SN 7925 private sale, probably Ex American Civil War traded by American Whalers, used by some Provincial Militia & Constabulary, other American made revolvers such as the 90bore .36" and 54bore .44" Colt range of revolvers also used in NZ .
6. Adams P1872 .450" 6 chamber 6" Brl SN 7153 London proofed N^Z marked, used by NZACF, Colonial & Provincial Militia, Constabulary, later NZ Police
7. Webley P1868 RIC No1 .450" 6 chamber 4.5" Brl SN 743 Birmingham proofed private sale, used by some Provincial Constabulary & later NZ Police
8. Tranter P1878 .450" 6 chamber 6" Brl SN 3468 Birmingham proofed N80Z marked, NZ Armed Constabulary and some NZ Colonial Government Forces.
9. Adams P1872/81 .455/476" 6 chamber 6" Brl SN 17045 London proofed used by NZACF, Colonial Militia, Volunteers, Constabulary, later NZ Police
10. T Bland P1868/83 .455/476" 6 chamber 4.25" Brl SN 75 Birmingham proofed private sale, used by some Colonial Volunteers, Constabulary.
11. Colt P1878 DA Army.455/476" 6 chamber 5.5" Brl SN 15448 made 1885 London proofed private sale, used by some Colonial Volunteers, Constabulary

I would appreciate images and details of any handguns used by New Zealand Military & Police during this period, for inclusion in the NZ Arms Register.

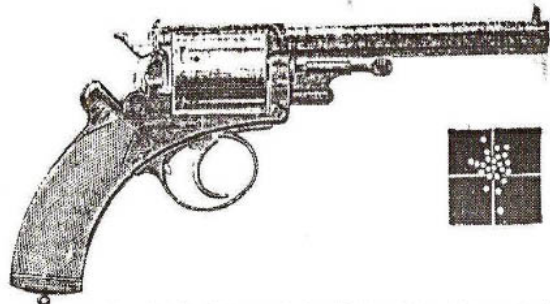
Please send any information or comments to josborne@xtra.co.nz or post to PO Box 52, Kaitaia, 0441, New Zealand. Many thanks, John Osborne

Medal of Merit awarded at the Vienna, Universal Exhibition, 1873. Class X.VI. Art of War.



ADAMS'S PATENT

DOUBLE-ACTION CENTRAL-FIRE BREECH-LOADING REVOLVER



Exclusively adopted by H.M. War Department, also by the Home Government, for the Metropolitan Police Forces, &c., &c., &c.

Exclusively adopted by the New Zealand Government, also by the Corporation of the City of London for the City Police Forces and City Prisons, &c., &c.

This Revolver has Six Chambers. It can be cocked for deliberate aim, or discharged in rapid succession by merely pulling the trigger.

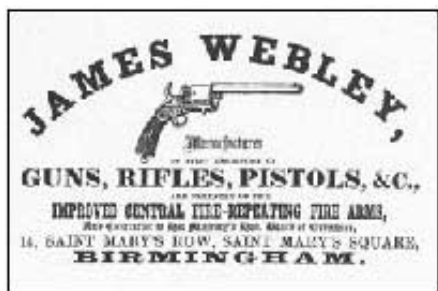
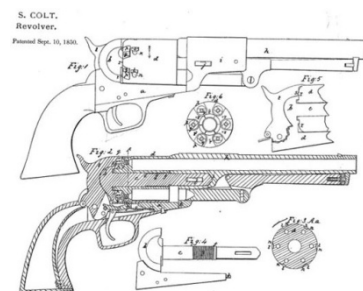
INSTRUCTIONS.

- TO LOAD.**—Half cock the Revolver, hold it by the Stock in the left hand, raise the shield which partially covers the Chambers at the rear end of the Cylinder, and insert the Cartridges into the Chambers.
- TO UNLOAD.**—Half cock the Revolver, raise the shield, turn the Muzzle upwards rotate the Cylinder slowly, and the Cartridges will drop out. If they stick, push them out with the Ejector.
- TO EJECT THE CARTRIDGE CASES.**—Withdraw the Ejector, which partially lies in the Cylinder Rod, then the Ejector Carrier outwards until it reaches the Stop; the Ejector can then be pushed into the Chamber.
- TO RELEASE THE CYLINDER.**—With the Ejector and Ejector Carrier turned outwards push in with the thumb of the right hand the projecting bolt, which is in the upper side of the Pistol, and close to the head of the Cylinder Rod; then with the forefinger withdraw the Cylinder Rod; the Cylinder can now be taken out.

Well oil the Revolver after use, and always clean it with oil.

SOLE MANUFACTURERS BY SPECIAL STEAM MACHINERY.
ADAMS'S PATENT SMALL ARMS MANUFACTURING CO., LIMITED,
 391, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.
 JOHN ADAMS, MANAGING DIRECTOR.
 CONTRACTORS TO H.M. WAR DEPARTMENT.

Above: John Adams was proud of his achievements advising that his P1872 .450 revolver had been exclusively adopted by the NZ Government

Left: Joseph Bentley P1852/57 trigger cocking revolver was made by several Birmingham Gunmakers including James Webley hence it is commonly called a Webley Bentley Revolver, over 70,000 are said to have been made in 80-bore .40" caliber many smooth bored.

Right: Colts Patent Drawing of September 10, 1850 which was used in the US made P1851 and London made P1853 Navy revolver.

Acknowledgements and special thanks to; Grant Sherriff, Phil Cregeen, Osborne Arms Museum armsmuseum@xtra.co.nz www.webleyandscott.com Auckland Museum, www.aucklandmuseum.com National Army Museum, www.armymuseum.co.nz