

Hale's Patent Shotgun

by David Minshall and Mike Mott



This fascinating 10 bore shotgun bears in gold lettering the inscription "Hale's Patent", there are however no further identifying gunmakers marks. With regards to the patentee, a John Hale registered Patent Number 10,849 on 2 October 1845. The published abridgement of the Patent Specification reads:

HALE, John. – "Improvements in guns." Safety lock. Self-priming apparatus, &c.

These relate, first, to a construction of safety lock wherein a bolt secures the cock until it is released by the hand grasping the stock. The rib has a convex form given to it, and the hammers are placed below the rib.

The primers, or patches, or caps are moved forward and placed upon the nipple by self acting apparatus. A second sight is added at a distance from the breech of about one-third of the barrel.

The under part of the stock, beneath the breech, is made of metal instead of wood.

The gun features all the details described in the abridgement. There is a safety lock behind the trigger guard which is released by the hand grasping the stock. In addition a second safety is incorporated into a ball like fixture in front of the trigger guard; this second safety being released by either grasping the 'ball' on aim, or more likely depressing the lever with the heel of the hand while grasping the forend. The hammer acts perpendicular to the barrel and is cocked by depressing a lever at its base. The self priming mechanism is present, as is the additional sight on the barrel and the metal stock beneath the breech. The gun is finely engraved with scrollwork and wildfowl scenes.

Little is known of Hale at present other than the fact that the full patent identifies him as being of Leicester Square, in the county of Middlesex. His patent number and date is listed in Nigel Brown's 'British Gunmakers: Volume 1 – London' (2004: Quiller Press: ISBN1-904057-47-0), the list including only those patents emanating from "London gunmakers or gun trade."

Much research remains to be undertaken into both Hale and this fine gun, including identifying the gun maker, and indeed if another such gun exists. If any readers are able to offer further information then please contact the Editor (*details on inside front cover. Ed.*)

Note the second sight on the barrel

