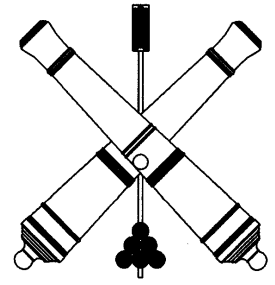


# THE CANNON ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

11 SEATON STREET, PARKLANDS, CAPE TOWN 7441  
TEL. / FAX ( 021 ) 557 1299 - CELL 082 416 9547  
E-MAIL [noongun@mweb.co.za](mailto:noongun@mweb.co.za)



---

## NEWSLETTER No. 26 - February 2008

A service to the muzzle loading cannon enthusiast

### THE DURR RECORD OF CANNON IN SA

The Durr Record is so named because the original sponsor of our endeavor was the then Director of Durr Estates, Len Schmidt. The record has become known internationally and we have remained loyal to the initial sponsor. This national record of muzzle loading cannons is apparently a world first in that it is a serious attempt to register, identify and research every old ML cannon in an entire country.

The record is in the form of 17 rather tatty volumes of plastic folders each containing the data on about 50 cannon, 923 guns thus far and growing steadily. Each record consists of at least one photo of the gun, it's basic dimensions, all known markings, present position and any history, if known.

The keeper of the record has already participated in three legal actions involving the identification of stolen cannons and all three were ultimately returned to their rightful owners. Much of what has been achieved with the record is due to public participation in bringing the existence and position of cannons to our notice.

The Durr Record of Cannons is now the property of CAOSA and improving and keeping the record up to date is one of the primary functions of CAOSA.

Cannons are fun when you fire them, but the satisfaction gained is directly proportional to one's understanding of the subject. The more you know, the better it gets!

### HAND or "POLE" CANNONS

One of our associate readers in Phoenix Arizona has a few 14 or 15<sup>th</sup> century hand cannons and is keen to obtain more information on these pieces.

Contrary to common belief, the cannon was invented before the hand held gun. The original hand held guns consisted of a short hollow tube closed and vented on one end and attached to a straight wooden handle. Essentially a mini cannon on a stick which was fired by application of a piece of slow match to the vent. Later, larger and more violent versions were fitted with an iron triangular hook which was integral with the barrel and could be hooked onto a tree or defensive barricade to absorb most of the recoil. These were known as the "Haakebus" or one of several similar spellings. The term meant "hook gun".

If any readers have information on the Haakebus or similar straight weapons, please contact the secretary.

### TIME GUNS – WORLDWIDE

The website [www.loclockgun.com](http://www.loclockgun.com) has some very interesting information on time guns used throughout the world.

## **FIRINGS AT THE CASTLE – CAPE TOWN**

A small “bronze” model cannon has been fired twice daily in the Castle courtyard for the past several months. The firings take place at 10h00 and 12h00. Members of CAOSA have suggested that the Castle obtain a ½ pounder for this purpose as it would be more dignified and realistic than the 20mm model of about 300mm length. Two such ½ pdrs were fired in the courtyard several times during the recent Tattoo to great effect.

In order for the Castle to look its best during the festive season, Ian van Oordt was invited to provide the daily spectacle at the Castle with his 2 pdr on authentic Gribeauval field carriage. Ian, always ready to oblige, stripped his carriage, carted it to the Castle and re-assembled it in the courtyard where it looked fantastic in that period setting.

The five pointed Castle has served the country’s leaders and the military since it was built in 1661. It has withstood invasions, the weather, time and ridiculous proposals to demolish that imposing historical structure. Ian, even with reduced charges, left the Castle shaken, but still standing. We think that our proposal of a ½ pdr will now be better understood and receive greater acceptance.

## **BATTLE OF BLOUBERG 2008**

Saturday 05 January saw 13 guns lined up on the lawn in Melkbosstrand at the exact place where the English landed in 1806. After having obtained permission for the firing from City Events Planning, the local Council, Explosives Department of the SAPS, local SAPS Office, Health Department and others, the firings started at 10h00 exactly with Mr. Mahomet Hartley dressed in the finery of the Javanese Artillery of 1806 firing the first shot.

## **THE SA NAVY FESTIVAL – MARCH 2008**

The Association has again been invited to participate in the Naval Festival on 14, 15 and 16 March 2008, this time not as a side-show, but as one of the main attractions. The positioning of the guns and the signposting will be much improved on what was experienced in the past. The event, apart from making a lot of noise and smoke, leads to meeting new friends and networking with like minded people.

The expendable black stuff will be provided in sufficient quantity to leave participants suffering from shell shock. Members interested in participating should contact the writer.

## **RML AMMUNITION WANTED**

One of our members gives regular formal lectures on arms and ammunition, this includes aspects of cannons and rifled muzzle loaders in particular. He is looking for a small RML shell for his collection of lecture and training aids.

The RML shell is recognizable by its conical, pointed shape and the six elongated studs which project from the side of the shell.

If any reader has access to, or knows where such a shell might be available, please contact the writer. The ideal size would be a small shell for a 2 ½ inch “screw” gun or a 7 or 9 pdr RML which can be easily transported and displayed.

The member was offered a 9 inch RML shell, but was afraid that his wife would throw the 236kg shell at him if he brought it home.

## **OPENING OF CHAVONNE'S BATTERY**

Chavonne's Battery is in the Clock Tower precinct of the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town. This battery was discovered during demolitions in order to build the new BoE building. The building plans were, at great cost, modified to save the ruins of the battery. The building was also modified, again at great cost, in order to encapsulate the battery in the basement of the new building.

Partly due to badgering and hounding by this writer, but mainly due to the bulldog-like tenacity of Willem Steenkamp, Nedbank has agreed to the opening of the battery to the public.

The Cannon Association will be contributing to the opening ceremony on Saturday 16

February at or about 09h30 with our traditional flame, smoke and noise followed by a smell that appeals only to the most dedicated gunners.

What ever else you were planning to do on that day can wait !

## **CAOSA MEMBER PROFILE**

CAOSA member number 9 (out of 77 members) and also a Committee member is Jurg Zimmerman, grey bearded and of Swiss origin, with the accent to prove it, Jurg is the senior gunner for the 6 pdr Finbanker on top of Tygerberg Reserve. He is also a leading element in "The Friends of Tygerberg" organization where he takes members and visitors on informative hikes and then twists their arms to help him hack out a few acres of alien bush. He also publishes the organization's newsletter.

Jurg participated in the 2006 and 2008 Battle of Blouberg re-enactments, two of the Naval Festivals, the Freedom Day firings, the Military Tattoo at the Castle and the salute fired with the seven 18 pdrs in Hout Bay among several other events. He and Neville Potgieter fire the Tygerberg gun about four or five times per year on Youth Day, Heritage Day and on occasions that are important to the reserve, thereby bringing about a marked increase in the number of visitors to the reserve.

Having fired guns of almost every calibre between ¼ pdr and 18 pdr, Jurg is one of our most experienced gunners.

## **CAOSA FUNCTIONS**

It is probable that a reader of our newsletters would come to the conclusion that the firing of cannons is the core business of CAOSA. Unfortunately the firings are viewed as the most exciting, most visible and audible activity of the association, but other more serious and important activities go on quietly behind the scenes.

Many of our members are not gunners, nor do they ever intend to fire a cannon. Some are model makers, some are historians and some are merely interested in preserving our heritage. At last count or membership included two Professors, three Doctors, two Engineers, a policeman, two naval Warrant Officers one vagrant (my eldest son), two wine farmers and the wild man of Grahamstown. CAOSA is constantly updating the growing record of the cannons in SA, some members assist in the recovery and replacement of cannons at historic sites, others are pretty handy with a scraper, sandpaper and paint. If we don't do it, nobody will, least of all any formal state sponsored organization !

Gerry de Vries : Secretary to CAOSA