

Never-Been-Seen-Before Churchill's Guns go on Display

Winston Churchill's Woodward guns go on display in the newly-curated Churchill Exhibition at Blenheim Palace. The guns, never seen before, offer a look at Victorian Master Craftsmanship and an insight into young Churchill.

The pair of Woodward Under & Over guns are thought to be a 25th birthday present to Churchill from his Grandfather, the 10th Duke of Marlborough (ordered in 1899 and delivered three years later).

The guns, 5641 and 5642, were received in 1902 after Churchill had returned from the Boer War in the year that he first became a Member of Parliament. The oak and leather case that houses the guns are addressed to his rooms in Westminster.

They were designed by James Woodward, the youngest son of the much respected 'Woodward & Sons' company. James was known as the 'Innovator' of the business, as such the guns are extremely fine examples of early dynamism and fine engineering. The design for the Under & Over, created by James, was revolutionary in its day and has become the basis of every Under & Over gun produced today.

Woodward guns have long been associated with the highest levels of quality, and the two on display at Blenheim Palace are no exception. They have, however, proved a challenge for historians as Woodward were keen to protect their brand and therefore prevented the craftsmen who made up parts of the gun to initial their work.

Churchill's guns have several outstanding features.

- Both have single triggers, 'Woodwards Single Trigger' is engraved on the underside of each action. Though many people had tried to develop a single trigger, they all shared a single characteristic in common – they didn't work. Woodwards were pioneers in this technology.
- The barrels are 29 inches in length – prevalent in Woodward guns.
- A balanced gun feels lighter than it is – these are no exception due to the sufficient barrel length to combust the gun- powder.
- Originally all four barrels had 10,000th of choke this, along with the single trigger, indicates that the guns were specified by a very knowledgeable person.
- The hammerless guns would have been new for their time – they feature a cocking indicator which enables the loader to do his job quicker.
- The guns have stag horn butt plates, best known for not catching on clothing.
- The Prince of Wales (semi-pistol grip) is found on the pair. This keeps the wrist at a normal angle.
- The grip caps are horn and the trigger bows extend to the caps, which is a Woodward hallmark.
- The side locks and action are engraved in exquisite rose and scroll, as well as a Celtic pattern.



Visitors view the craftsmanship in the newly-curated Churchill Exhibition – entry to the exhibition is free with a Palace, Park & Gardens ticket.

www.blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events

WHAT: Winston Churchill's Guns go on Display in the Churchill Exhibition
WHY VISIT: Discover Master Craftsmanship on the never-been-seen-before guns
ADMISSION: Palace, Park & Gardens ticket required: Adult £23.00 / Child £12.50 (Age 5-16) /
Concession £18.30 / Family £60.00 (2 Adults & 2 Children)
WEBSITE: www.blenheimpalace.com for more information
INFO LINE: **0800 849 6500**

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Melodie Manners | melodie@flamingo-marketing.co.uk | 01209 822194 or 07815 709548

Notes to editors:

- Opening times and ticket pricing applies
- Blenheim Palace is a member of the Green Tourism Business Scheme.
- Blenheim Palace is a member of the Treasure Houses of England, 10 of the most magnificent palaces, stately homes and castles in England www.treasurehouses.co.uk

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