

Westley Richards Centre-Fire Monkey Tail Rifle



Calibre: .450" **Barrel length:** 33" **Serial no.:** 19 **Date:** 1867



This improved form of the capping Monkey Tail system has been adapted to fire a combustible cartridge containing its own central fire ignition cap. (cartridge patent no. 3,243 of 1866). The action employs a hinged breech lever which carries a sliding locking piece. A brass loading / sealing plunger is attached to the forward end of the breech piece, with the rear end formed as a locking lug. The breech lever also carries a side mounted striker arrangement with a firing pin which operates centrally through the brass loading / sealing plunger. The combustible paper cartridge incorporated a gas check wad at the rear which held the primer, and which was pushed forward on loading the next cartridge.

Arms of this type were submitted for the breechloading trials of 1867-68, and it is possible that this rifle may have been so used. The backsight has never been engraved, a suggestion of its possible use as a trials rifle. The barrel has hexagonal rifling with the barrel marked "WHITWORTH PATENT", and the lock plate is stamped "WESTLEY RICHARDS & CO 1867".