

Bronze Signalling or Saluting gun: Preliminary report (No. 82)
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This is a preliminary report on the small bronze cannon [QAR C25]. This report is not intended to be the last word but to highlight possible avenues of future research and help in identification in advance of conservation treatment.

From the x-rays and photograph we appear to have a small bronze saluting or signalling gun with a wrought-iron swivel. It probably fired a ½ shot and might be classed as a Robinet.

Comparative examples

Once the cannon has been cleaned we will be able to make better comparative examples but at present here are a few examples

Saluting batteries and guns include:

A battery of 7 small bronze guns at Temple Newsome, Leeds, acquired in 1699.

A battery of bronze saluting guns at Armourers Hall, City of London, c1700.

Small bronze guns recovered from wrecks include:

A Robinet dated 1605 recovered from the *HMS Association*, lost 1707 and now in the Scilly Museum. This example is not included in Browne's Survey of guns taken in 1699 - it is possible it was the personal property of admiral Shovel or, being regarded as a signal gun, was not officially included in its weapon strength. There is another small bronze signal gun at this museum which I

think was also recovered from the same wreck but cannot verify that at this stage.

Two small guns from the royal yacht, *Mary*, lost in 1675, now in Liverpool Maritime Museum. These were cast in the Netherlands c1660.

Two small bronze guns from an unidentified wreck c 1690-1710 discovered by Mike Wilson and Arthur C Clarke in the Great Basses.

Small bronze guns with wrought-iron swivels include the following examples:

Dutch VOC examples, one c1675, recovered from Australia, now in the Royal Armouries collection, and others recovered from VOC ship *Zuiddorp*, lost 1712 off Australia. These are all breechloaders.

Two English examples in the Royal Armouries Fort Nelson collection, one c1720, the other c1755. These are both muzzleloaders.

Conclusions

Such guns were too small to do any real damage, even on a personal scale and were more usually used for saluting or signalling purposes. They were often intended for personal yachts or official barges, or saluting batteries. This example is on the whole quite a bit shorter than many of the cannons I have mentioned here

At this period the founders were having problems casting reliable guns of such a small size, so that such small guns were either still made of wrought iron or bronze. Cast-iron half-pounder swivel guns only became common after c1720.

When the cannon has been cleaned we will be able to make more definite statements. The bad news is that most of the comparative cannons I have mentioned do not have maker's names or dates, although they do often have the coat of arms or monogram of the owner.

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