

FIREARMS

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PART 6

THE WEBLEY .22 RF MARK VI 1918

In order to produce expenditure of expensive .455 ammunition, and also to encourage shooting on simple indoor ranges, a .22 version of the Mark VI was made for training only. The cylinder and barrel were changed, but the remainder of the revolver was a standard Mark VI, thereby giving a realistic feel to the shooter. The cylinder was much shorter than the standard one, and the barrel was brought back into the frame to meet it; this leaves a large gap in front of the cylinder, which immediately identifies the model. A round .22 barrel was fitted, and a raised foresight was needed to bring the blade into line with the backsight.

POLICE AND CIVILIAN MODELS OF THE GOVERNMENT REVOLVER

Throughout the manufacture of the government models, there was a parallel production of civilian and police versions, although in .38 calibre, and occasionally in .32. All of these revolvers followed the same pattern as the larger military models, and they also enjoyed the same high reputation for reliability and resistance to rough handling. The following detailed descriptions are intended to highlight the features of each model.

MARKS II AND III 1896-1897

The Mark II was described as a pocket revolver, though it would have needed a large pocket to take it. The barrel was 4 inches long and this combined with a six-chambered cylinder made a somewhat bulky handful. The butt was a shortened version of the rounded 'bird's head' with a hump behind the hammer to pro-

tect the web of the thumb at full cock. The cylinder released was the improved type introduced with the 1892 Model, as was the barrel latch, but the hammer spur had more of a curve to it than had the larger models. Some had lanyard loop, but this was not fitted to all, and it was omitted from the Mark III.

All Mark IIs and IIIs had the half-round cylinder flutes and chamfered ends to the cylinder, though there were no holster guides. Both versions were produced with conventional hammers and flat-faced hammers with strikers.

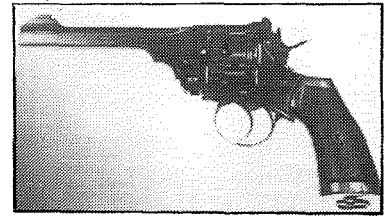
The Mark III abandoned the curved butt and had a short square-ended butt that possibly gave a better grip; in all other respects, it was unchanged from the Mark II, though some police models fitted a thumb safety catch on the right-hand side, which locked the hammer down.

W.S. ARMY AND BISLEY TARGET REVOLVERS, 1904

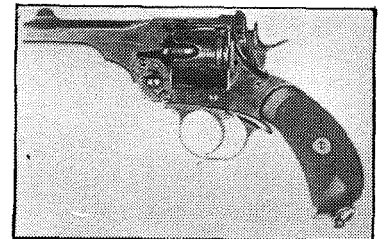
In 1904 Webley and Scott introduced another target revolver which was marked on the barrel extension either 'W.S. Army Model' or 'W.S. Target Model'. Both were the same weapon and are usually known under the collective title of 'Bisley Target Revolvers'. They were .455 calibre and very similar to the Government Mark VI, though they used parts from Mark IV, since the Mark VI was still some years away. Barrels were 4 inch, 6 inch or 7½ inch and the usual target sights were fitted.

MARK IV, 1929

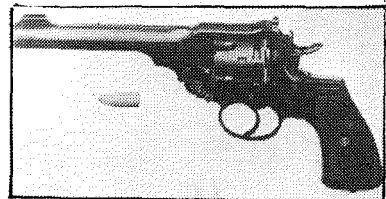
When the Government introduced the .38 Enfield in 1927, the connection with the firm of Webley & Scott ended. Webleys then went into production with their



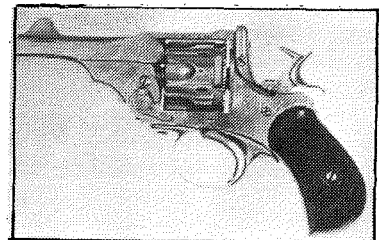
Webley .32 Mk. 4



Webley .455 Mk. 5



Webley .455 Mk. 6



Webley .38 Pocket Mk. 2

own version of the Mark IV .38, and it was on the market by 1929. This revolver was little different from the Enfield .38, which in any case, was no more than an adaptation of the original Webley, so the family likeness was inevitable. It was produced in two barrel lengths, 4 inch and 5 inch, and was widely adopted by police forces. When the Second World War broke out, the War Office placed large orders for the

FIREARMS

Webley, and it was issued alongside the Enfield, despite the fact that there were minor differences in dimensions which meant that not all spare parts were interchangeable.

MARK IV TARGET MODELS, 1929-1955

Target versions were made from the beginning of the series, the main differences being in the selection of the mechanism and the fitting of the sights. All target versions had a backsight with a later adjustment. Later, post-war, models have a 6 inch barrel.

MARK IV .22 TARGET MODEL, 1929-1955

A successful .22 version was produced, which had the same sized cylinder and barrel as the full-bore. This permitted realistic practice shooting without the expenditure of expensive ammunition and it was popular with police forces. The balance is very good and the accuracy excellent. The barrel is 6 inches long, and the cylinder is chambered for the .22 long rifle cartridge.

MARK IV .32 VERSIONS, 1929

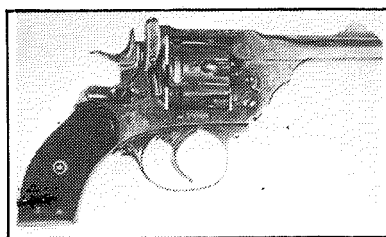
The standard Mark IV was also produced in .32 calibre, the outside dimensions of the weapon being unaltered.

MARK IV POCKET MODELS

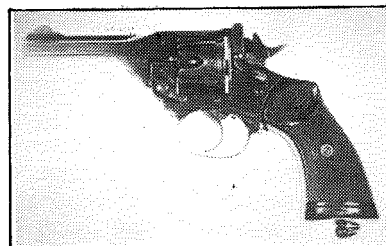
The Mark IV pocket models are little different from those of the Mark III, except that they have the slightly revised mechanism and a holster guide. This latter feature arises from the use of standard components, and it was obviously not worth the expense of removing it. All pocket models have 3 inch barrels and are chambered for .38 or .32. A small number have been made in .22. These pocket models have the same small butt as the Mark III, with the word 'WEBLEY' inset across the top.

THE WEBLEY-FOSBERY AUTOMATIC REVOLVERS

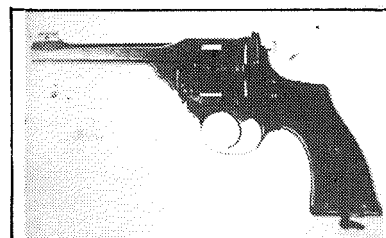
The introduction of the automatic pistol in the last years of



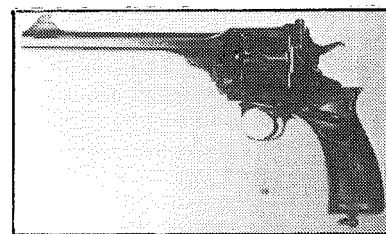
Webley .32 Pocket Mk. 3 with Safety Catch



Webley .455 W&S Army Model



Webley .22 with Stepped Cylinder



Webley-Fosbery .455 1901

the nineteenth century, caused considerable argument as to the relative merits of the revolver against the newcoming. Colonel Vincent Fosbery invented a type of automatic revolver which he claimed combined the virtues of both, and his idea was developed and marketed by the Webley & Scott Revolver & Arms Company Limited. The basis of Colonel Fosbery's invention was the use of the recoil and the cartridge to rotate the cylinder and re-cock the hammer. To do this, he divided the frame into two parts. The upper contained the barrel and cylinder, the lower, was the butt and trigger mechanism. The upper half recoil on a slide, on

the top of the lower, and the cylinder was rotated by means of zig-zag groove cut round its outer surface which engaged with a stud on the fixed lower half. The hammer was knocked back in the movement of the cylinder.

Inevitably, the division of the frame made for a much larger revolver, and the Fosbery's are by no means pocket sized. They are also slightly heavier by about 6 ounces than their contemporaries in the same calibre. However they are all very pleasant to shoot since the majority of the recoil force is absorbed by springs, and the shooter's hand receives a gentler and slower push than with a fixed frame. For this reason, the Fosbery was popular with target shooters and after the First World War, when it was no longer an army issue, it was usually excluded from military competitions on the grounds that it gave the firer an unfair advantage.

Despite the many virtues of the Fosbery, it was never made in quantity. It was more expensive to manufacture, and far less resistant to dirt and dust than the Marks IV, V and VI which were contemporary with it. Once the side jammed the weapon was useless. Manufacture died out with the start of wartime contracts in late 1914 and early 1915.

.455 MODEL, 1901

The first production model used as many parts from the Mark IV as possible, and these include the 6 inch barrel and the sights, the hammer, main spring, and cylinder axis pin. Remaining parts had to be specially made. A safety catch on the left side of the frame locked the two moving parts and held the hammer, whatever position it was in. This catch is a feature of all the Fosberys, and was a necessary safety with such a weapon. It was put to the 'ON' position by a push down with the right thumb. The first version was an ugly hooked shape, but this was changed during development of the first series, and a short flat catch with a checkered top was substituted.

A target model with a 7½ inch barrel was introduced at the same time, and it was fitted with the

•Continued on page 30