

THE LITTLE DIGGER

Copied from Edition 6 of the Australian Lock Stock & Barrel Magazine

This Article was first printed in LS&B Edition 2, Nov/Dec 1981but seems particularly relevant today. We have reprinted it due to popular request , considering there has been a marked interest in " Gardening recently "!

TREASURE: My Collins dictionary describes this as 'accumulated wealth, hoard of valuables, that which has great worth' -seems to cover firearms quite nicely.

Numerous books have I seen on the subject of finding treasure and/or how to dig it up, but these days there seems to be a need for one on how to bury it.

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN CLUBS

SPRINGING UP LIKE WILDFLOWERS

This article was prompted by a whisper on my grapevine (a flourishing grapevine it is too) that innumerable persons in Victoria were taking a sudden interest in gardening, or at least digging and planting, but without too much interest in having the planted item come up - in the immediate future that is. All this seems to stem from Mr Cain taking over leadership of the Victorian ALP Mr Cain being an advocate and co-compiler of item 151 on firearm control (see Lock Stock & Barrel, Edition 1. Page 53). (as per the note at the start of this article, it appears to be even more relevant throughout Australia today!)

No doubt many readers at one time or another have been faced with the

situation of having to hide something in a hurry (the in-laws may be coming to stay and their kids are holy terrors who get into everything). You slink around the house putting your "treasure" first here and then there, but as soon as it's hidden, you get the feeling that where you have put it, is probably an obvious place for someone to look. So you move it again and again, and the in-laws will be here in half an hour, panic sets in, sweat forms on the brow and the tongue goes dry.

BE PREPARED

Lesson number 1 - Arrange your hiding place long before it is required - unless you are a 007 type, you'll never find one when you're in a hurry. Whereas most houses these days are without wood panelling, revolving bookcases and the like, it is not practical to hide treasures in your home building. Up in the ceiling or below the flooring are definite no-no's.

It has to be hidden amongst that which there is plenty of, and that which is not subject to movement or rearrangement. Pirates of old figured a hole dug in the ground to be just the ticket and there seems to be no better place even today, in spite of modern day grand scale earthworks. Just be very careful where you dig your hole.

Depending on the treasure you want to hide, there are varying degrees of care in the packaging required to afford protection to the item. If it is a gold bar, virtually no protection is required at all, just fling it into the bottom of the hole and fill the hole in again. When, years later, you dig it up again, it will be just as good as the day you buried it.

YOUR FAVOURITE THINGS

But let's take another example, something awkward, something perishable....um...let me think...ah...how about a rifle!!?

The two greatest enemies during long term storage of a rifle, are oxygen and moisture. Yes I know that moisture is 33% oxygen but in this exercise, in practical terms, getting rid of one doesn't assuredly get rid of the other. First thing to obtain is a container which can be assembled at home, is waterproof, acid proof, everlasting, and economical. A tall order? No, not really.

Initially you will need to know what size you require. This can be determined by laying your rifle (with scope removed) flat on the floor, with the toe of the butt and the muzzle against the wall. Then measure from the wall to that part of the rifle which is furthest from the wall.

The measurement plus 10mm will give you the diameter of the tube which the rifle will fit into. Measure also the length of the rifle as this will give you the length of the tube required. Most rifles will require a 150mm diameter tube. The barrel and action on it's own would fit into a much smaller tube, but the stock wouldn't, what then would you do with the stock?

WHAT MATERIAL?

Stainless steel may be classed as the best material but it cannot be rapidly sealed off by the average handyman at home, nor would it comply with the economy requirement. The next best is - believe it or not - PVC sewerage pipe.

Do I detect gasps of dismay at placing your valued rifle in a sewerage pipe? Well, I don't mean that you should use a used one. Buy a new piece of course, and rest assured that if it was designed to keep sewerage in, then when sealed, it must surely keep it out. So off to your plumber where, unless he has a really big plumbing business, you will be told that they don't stock 150mm sewerage pipe

but only get it in for special jobs. You may be lucky enough to find an off-cut or you may be forced to buy a full length - about 6 metres, which will cost you about \$40 but at least you will have enough for about eight rifles.

Also needed will be two end caps and a small tin each of PVC Priming fluid and PVC Cement. The regular glue-on end caps cost approximately \$5 each.

Hopefully, your plumber will cut your piece of tube off square, but if not, make sure you get a piece that will be long enough when you trim it off square. It can best be cut with a hacksaw.

The end of every full 6 metre length is expanded for about 100mm so that another length can be slipped into and easily joined (cemented) to it. This end, you do not want as an end cap will not fit over this enlarged section.

EVEN A BLONDE COULD DO IT!

Joining instructions should be on your PVC cement tin but basically the process is:

- 1) clean squared end of burrs.
- 2) clean both end cap and pipe with PVC solvent
- 3) apply PVC cement fairly liberally to both surfaces, firstly the end cap then the pipe end.
- 4) immediately assemble by pushing the pipe to the full depth of the end cap and hold there, without movement, for 30 seconds.

This results in one end being permanently and fully sealed. If a screw-on end is to be put on the other end, then screw cap coupling (the part the screw screws onto) can now be attached the same way.

Unfortunately, the screw-on cap has shown that after a 12 years trial, the rubber seal was unsatisfactory and it allowed water into the container, however for shorter terms, they may be adequate. Two cemented ends means the only way in is via a hacksaw.

How_To_Bury_Your_Valuables_2004.txt
MOISTURE EVACUATION NECESSARY

Now that you have your "time capsule", the next task is to ensure the evacuation of oxygen and moisture.

First, the moisture. It is not necessary to bake your rifle in an oven to dry it out, though if you live in a damp climate some preliminary drying would be helpful. The cheapest and easiest to obtain absorber of moisture is silica gel, available from your local chemist at a cost of about \$20 per 500 grams.

Depending on how long it has been in stock, it may be blue or pink in colour. It should be blue, but if it is pink, then it has absorbed all the moisture it can and will need to be dried. This can be easily done by spreading it thinly on a large plate or dish and baking it at 250 degrees in an oven. Leave the oven door slightly open to let the moisture escape.

The silica gel will turn blue around the edge at first and gradually all will turn light blue. Stirring seems to hasten the process but increasing the heat seems to make little difference. The whole pink to blue transformation can take about an hour.

Most turn blue in 10 minutes but the last 10% seems to take forever.

Once blue and cool, the silica gel can be stored in an airtight plastic bag where they will remain until needed.

Your 150mm capsule some 120cm long will actually hold two rifles placed top to tail comfortably, plus there will be room for ammunition and other odds and ends.

BE PREPARED - THAT'S THE BOY SCOUT MOTTO

It would be as well, if only for peace of mind, if the usual precautions for the long term storage of firearms were carried out first, ie thorough cleaning and light coating with protective oil to both inside and outside metal surfaces. Even Ron Owen's 'snake oil' preparation "gunshiner"

would be ideal for the job and you could coat the woodwork with it as well (As with any long term storage protection after you bury it, don't forget to thoroughly clean the internals before using the firearm).

Into the capsule with the oiled rifles etc. should go about 500grams of blue silica gel. These should be in a separate non air-tight package, preferably a plastic bag which has numerous tiny holes in it. A cheese cloth bag would do but take care the bag does not touch the metalwork, (It probably wouldn't harm the metalwork if it did, but I have this ingrained aversion to stored firearms touching cloth - rust is the result all too often but in the capsule in a no oxygen no moisture environment, rust should not be able to form).

Placing the capsule upright with the open end uppermost, the treasure and silica gel in place, the next task is to evacuate the oxygen. This can be done in a number of ways, depending on what is available in your area.

GET RID OF THE AIR

If you live in a country town where the local veterinarian engages in artificial insemination , then you may be able to buy some liquid nitrogen or some dry ice. The latter should be available if you live near the coast as fishing boats sometimes use it in deep freezers. Dry ice and liquid nitrogen are both extremely cold, 170 and 192 degrees below zero so don't touch either with your bare hands. They vaporise very quickly and can only be transported in highly insulated non-sealed container like Esky's - the polystyrene foam type will do. The attributes of great cold is not what we are after. however Each rapidly turns into gas at anything warmer than a typical winter day in outer space.

USING GAS

This gas, nitrogen from liquid nitrogen, and carbon dioxide from dry ice, is heavier than air and if either one of these substances is allowed to gasify in and near the top of your capsule then the gas released will fall to the bottom of it. As the gas fills it from the bottom, the regular air containing oxygen and moisture needed for rust formation, is forced out the top.

It is easy to see when your capsule is full of gas. The gas being so cold causes condensation where it contacts regular air - the moisture in the air freezes, the same moisture that causes rust - so when clouds spill from the top and flow down the outside of your capsule and you can see clear "air" inside it through the thin cloud on top, then it is full and the container of liquid nitrogen or dry ice should be removed - you don't need to freeze your treasure.

If you used liquid nitrogen your capsule would now be filled with nitrogen, if dry ice, then carbon dioxide. Sure, carbon dioxide is carbon and oxygen but carbon dioxide won't readily part with its oxygen to enable iron oxide, rust, to form.

About 2 dessert spoonfuls of either liquid nitrogen or dry ice is all that is needed to produce enough gas to fill the capsule but, if it takes an hour to get from supplier to you home, then you will need to buy about a litre to compensate for evaporation during transit. Be careful not to spill it especially in your lap, as very bad burns will result from its contact with skin.

Once the capsule is filled with nitrogen or carbon dioxide, keep it upright until the end cap is cemented on or until the screw cap is screwed firmly on, otherwise the gas will "pour out" the same way as would water, and be replaced with air.

The end cap is cemented on as previously described. This must be checked to ensure it is undamaged and clean.

Should liquid nitrogen or dry ice not be available, carbon monoxide from your cars exhaust could be directed into your capsule.

Nitrogen gas is available in gas bottles (as in oxy/acetylene bottles) and so too is carbon dioxide, but neither of these are too convenient to

obtain unless you work at a hospital.

OR LIGHT ME A CANDLE

Another trick is to burn a candle in the capsule during and after sealing. When all oxygen is burned up, the candle goes out. The candle would need to be suspended part way down the capsule, while still standing on its sealed end, so that the flame would not melt or burn the PVC. Only a small portion of a candle would be needed, half a birthday cake candle would be plenty.

Editors Note by Frugal Homepage Contributor:

I found a fatal error in the file "From the Australian Lock Stock and Barrel Magazine Entitled: How to Bury Your Treasure".

On the subject of metal preservation by eliminating water and oxygen from the cache tube the author recommends; along with the good ideas of dry nitrogen and carbon dioxide; "carbon monoxide from the exhaust of your car" or a burning candle.

Ye Gods!!! (All of them!)

The components of car exhaust are the result of burning a hydrocarbon fuel (gasoline) or a carbohydrate (alcohol) in air, consisting of about 20% oxygen and 80% nitrogen. This will indeed produce some carbon monoxide from incomplete combustion of an over-rich mixture. It will also produce a great deal more WATER from combustion of the hydrogen in the fuel!

$[C-8\ H-16] + 12[O-2] \rightarrow 8[C\ O-2] + 8[H-2\ O]$

We are therefor introducing nitrogen and carbon dioxide

(good preservatives) and a great deal of _STEAM_
(_NOT_ a good preservative!!!) along with some oxides of
nitrogen ([N Ox], or SMOG! This stuff not only attacks
steel, it also corrodes stone, see the Parthenon of
Athens!) into intimate contact - for a long period of
time - with our rifle. Oh, yes, there is also the
SULFURIC ACID from a catalytic converter if your car
has one!

He also seems to think that a candle does not contain
a hydrocarbon fuel. Parafin wax is just that, a
hydrocarbon, and will produce carbon dioxide , water
and carbon soot (which is hygroscopic, therefor
attracting water to the steel that it condenses on)
as it's exhaust products. May I suggest that we replace
the candle with a sheet of cheap paper, such as
newsprint, to oxidize slowly in the cache tube
like the sacrificial zink anode on a boat?

Perhaps when we dig up our "former weapon" we can pour
the resulting sludge over the head of a politician and
rust him to death. We can then use the plastic pipe to
beat the invading soldiers over the head and defeat them
as well as we defeated the corrosion of our rifle.

I know that you cannot proof all of your library files,
but this one is bad. May I suggest that you insert a
warning in it about the dangers of car exhaust and candles?

Best Wishes, Michael T. Bradshaw
http://www.cco.caltech.edu/~mtb/MTB_home.html
50 years of progress!
1943 to 1993

Warsaw to Waco.

(End of Editors Note)

REALLY MAKING SURE!

Admittedly, evacuating oxygen from the capsule and placing silica inside to absorb moisture seems to be doubling up but were I about to store a couple of thousand dollars worth of pride and joy, I would want to be doubly sure that 100% protection was being obtained. Also, even with oxygen removed, there must in time, be a release of moisture and/or oxygen from the woodwork which could react on the metalwork, hence I advocate both protective measures.

Now that your encapsulated treasure is sealed, where should you bury is so that it is safe from prying buzzers of metal detectors?

There are several choices:

- 1) where metal detectors cannot get near it and
- 2) where metal detectors will confuse it with something else, or
- 3) a combination of both.

No 1 is very difficult as detectors cant be turned slightly to one side to take readings other than directly below. Anywhere that a detector can't get near will also be very difficult place to situate the capsule.

No 2 is easier. If you have a large cast iron water pipe going through your back yard, bury your capsule about 20cm underneath this and lined up with it.

Any large concrete slab, a garage floor for example, with plenty of steel reinforcing in it would be a good place to dig down below and slightly under.

If none are available, I have had it suggested that you bury lengths of pipe, and other old iron in scattered pieces all over your backyard just to confuse the issue.

Another good idea is to bury the capsule on its end, this gives a smaller target for a metal detector to zero in on. The hole is a lot harder to dig of course but could be worth the effort. Even better is to dig out a fence post, deepen the posthole to take the capsule and put the post back, leaving 10cm os soil between the top of the capsule and the base of the post., this gives you an excellent disguised maker as well.

WHY THIS ARTICLE IS NECESSARY

this would have to be the most stupid article ever written. Here we have the decent honest people contemplating hiding their firearms so that the police won't find them. The police are supposed to be a friend and helper to the honest person, in times of need. Here we have unthinking and knowledgeable politicians alienating the two.

How are the police going to cope by being offside to the honest as well as the criminals?.

"But the honest should hand in their guns" says the anti-gun legislators, "and police-people relations won't be affected" bull..... if my friend the policeman comes and asks me to hand over 100's or even 1000's of dollars worth of property without compensation and for no other reason than some so' n' so politician changed a law, then not only will I not be too friendly towards that policeman, who is actually totally blameless for the problem, but I will tend to be downright unhelpful to all police from then on.

POLICE - NOT YOUR FAVOURITE PEOPLE

What about the police attitude? Talk about meat in the sandwich situation. They will be stuck with having to do what most of them don't want to do, plus the prospect of alienating themselves against at least 20% of the population.

Take a look at the Western Australian situation. Nowhere else in Australia can you find so much police arrogance, no doubt brought on by them trying to impose laws that a high proportion of average persons are not too happy about obeying, what kind of working relationship is that?

All this - and what good will it do?

Will it reduce armed holdups? Will it reduce murders ? will it stop pimples on the dicky? (how did that get in there ?!)

A definite no is the answer to the first two and whereas I haven't verified that last one, I am fairly sure that rates a 'no' also. In summing up, that is how to successfully build a capsule for the long term storage of your treasure.

But if everyone of you spent half the time required to build it, in talking to and making known your views to your local parliamentary representative, then you almost certainly wouldn't need to build one.

End.