



Vol. 3 No. 1, March 20 2024

Welcome to 2024!

The new season starts here!

Well, actually, that would depend on who and where you are. Across the western scene, shows have been ongoing in the United States, groups in Europe have been getting together already and SoToW have got back into the swing of things with Country & Western and Fast Draw nights restarting in January. The vending and bartering have also begun with both 'The Original Reenactors Market' and the 'Artisans and Reenactors Market' having taken place this month and the regular military fairs (Chatham etc.) proceeding as usual.

However, the UK's 2024 Living History and Reenactment events have not begun yet so, if you have not already done so, this is the time to be checking your calendars and booking your dates away.

SoToW's upcoming events are listed on Page 5 and we would expect to see a big turnout at all of these. Your author will be attending Wagons Roll, Welshpool, Haxey and Driffield and will also be at various other events as an individual visitor, as a guest of Spearfish Creek and as a Victorian Stroller. These events include Avoncroft Museum's International Living History Festival (20th April), Fort Brockhurst's Victorian Manoeuvres Weekend (25th - 26th May), Milton Keynes Museum's Victorian Weekend (8th - 9th June), RAF Manston Museum's Reenactor and Military Vehicle Weekend (13th - 14th July), Military Odyssey (24th - 26th August) and The Goodwood Revival (7th - 8th September).

If any of our readers attend any events, shows or fairs etc. that may be of interest to others, please send in some prior notice if possible and, afterwards, a report and any relevant photographic representations, thank you.



[R.B., Ed.]

A Note from our Herpetologist

Dear Mr. Baker,

I hope all is well back in our small town.

Recently, I have found myself travelling South to Central America, using the rail services. I still have an aversion to horses!

There are so many new species I have found this time around. Of course, they have already been discovered but I am hoping to bring some specimens back for a town museum – a Museum of Natural History so to speak.

Even if it just teaches people what is out there, we have so many wonderful things around us.

We will see what I gather from my travels.

I look forward to the latest Citizen being printed so I have plenty to read upon my return.

Sincerely,

Miss Isobel Flemming

[Alice Weaver]



Striped Basilisk



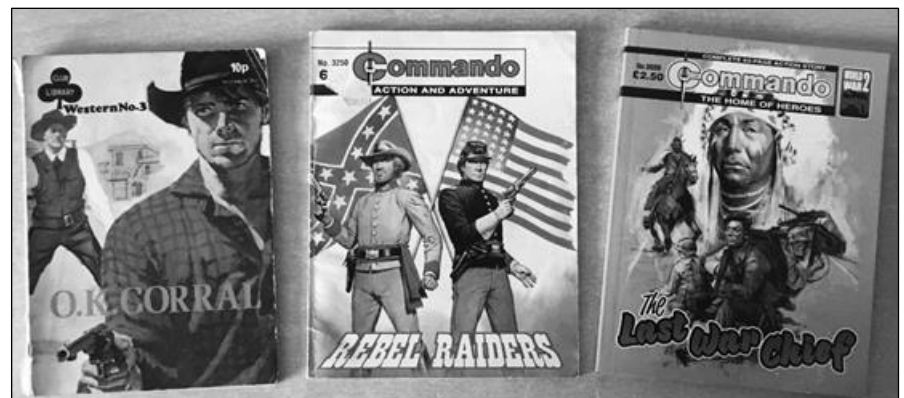
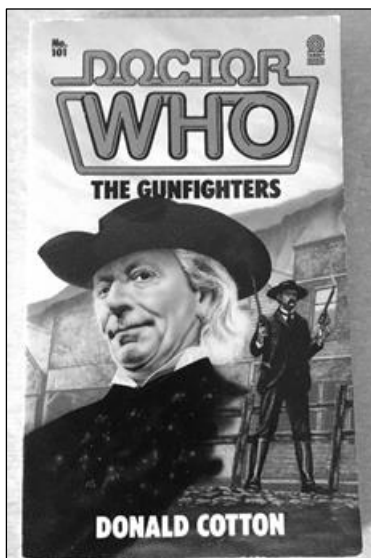
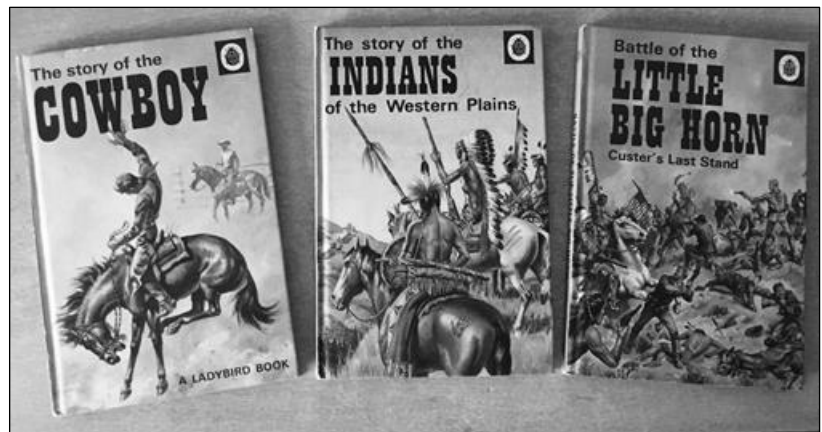
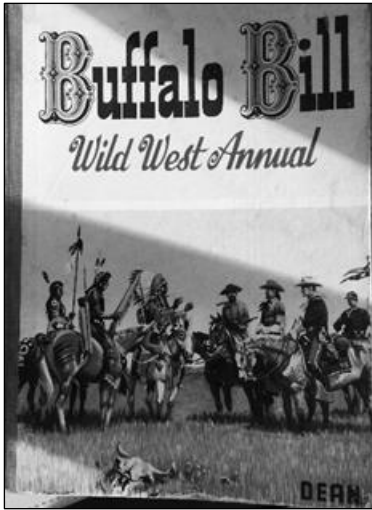
One of many types of Weevil



One of the trains in Mexico.

Western Books

In common with most people involved in the Western scene, your Editor enjoys books related to the Old West. However, there is no rule that they must all be grown-up and serious. Here are a few.



[R.B., Ed.]

Old West Newspapering Depictions on Film and Television.

(Published: Frontier Citizen, Facebook, Jan. 5th 2023.)

This is the first of an occasional series of articles about newspapering characters depicted in the movies and/or on television shows. They may be owners, editors, printers, reporters or any combination of these.

This time: **W.W. Beauchamp** as played by Saul Rubinek in the 1992 Clint Eastwood film, *Unforgiven*.

Strictly speaking, W.W. Beauchamp is not a newspaper man; he is a dime novelist. However, he is the first character that comes to many people's minds when anyone mentions reporters in westerns so I will bend my own rules at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss him here.

Without going into *Unforgiven*'s plot in great detail, it involves bounty hunters and shootists travelling to Big Whiskey, Wyoming, to enact revenge on behalf of a young lady-of-ill-repute who has been assaulted.

One of the men to arrive is English Bob, a gunfighter with a great reputation played by Richard Harris. Bob brings his biographer with him – enter W.W. Beauchamp.

Beauchamp is a dime novelist. He travels around, making notes of anything or anyone that he can use to write accounts about in his cheap books, printed 'back east' and distributed around the States. He is not a devoted seeker of truth except where that truth can lead into a good story, largely of his own devising. Whilst basing his stories on real events, he exaggerates, sensationalises and bends what happened to write stories to capture the readers' imaginations and to earn him both a reputation as a popular writer and a lot of dollars.

At first sight, he appears timid, meek and mild but, without being a fighter (physically or with weapons), he is ambitious and capable of being ruthless for his own advantage.

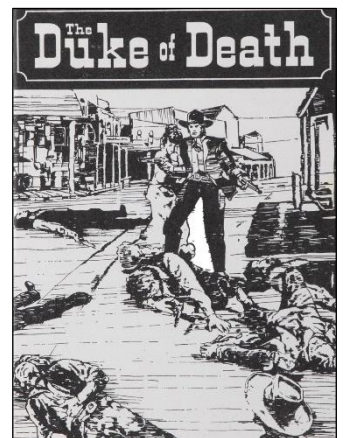
After the town's sheriff and all-round head honcho, 'Little' Bill Daggett, humiliates English Bob and sends him away, Beauchamp stays behind. He has decided not to follow the now degraded Bob but to stay in Big Whiskey to study Little Bill whom he is fascinated by and of whom he thinks he will be able to write more stories.

While Beauchamp is in jail pending Bill's decision of what to do with him, Bill questions him at length about his previous work on English Bob – "The Duke of Death", or "Duck" as Bill first pronounces it. Bill corrects many of Beauchamp's points, showing that it was not only he who exaggerated for self-aggrandisement but also his source material, Bob himself. Beauchamp is clearly surprised at how much of Bob's story was untrue and he starts to realise what the west is really like – dirty and nasty. He decides to stay with Bill, to write about him but also to better understand the realities of frontier life. At the end, Beauchamp learns the realities of frontier death – men shooting each other and dying in blood and pain on the dirty floor of a seedy saloon.

There is an epilog that states what happens to the main characters but not Beauchamp. Therefore, what he does afterwards is not clear. One possibility is that he continues writing but in a more realistic, truthful way. This may not sell many dime novels but it could lead to newspaper articles and a better job as a reporter. The alternative, of course, is that he quickly forgets his new-found principles and goes back to doing the same old sensationalist comic-book fare.

Saul Rubinek plays Beauchamp with an excellent air of realism, in keeping with the rest of this Oscar-winning film. It is very easy to see what he is and to see his development as he has his previous notions demolished.

It has been suggested that W.W. Beauchamp was based on a real-life dime novelist and publicist, Ned Buntline. Buntline was a very interesting man and there are many tales about him (some true, some debateable) but that is a story for elsewhere (maybe another article at some point).



[R.B., Ed.]

Forthcoming SoToW Events

Country Music and Fast Draw Gigs, 2024

The Royal British Legion, 5 Windsor Road, Oldbury, B68 8NY:

6th April – Micky Page

11th May – R J Montana

1st June – Jeff Gallant

6th July – Cole Jackson

3rd August – Dave Montana

12th October – Adam Harding

7th December – Rootin' Tootin'

Special Events:

Penkridge Sports & Recreation Centre - Monckton, Pinfold Lane, Penkridge, ST19 5QP

Wagons Roll,

Fri. 3rd – Sun. 5th May.

End of the Trail,

Fri. 1st – Sat. 2nd November.

Camp Severn Kids festival

West Midlands Showground, Shrewsbury, SY1 2PF

A family fun weekend with lots for children to do, including our Living History and Reenactment. If you are not going to Wagons Roll, go to this instead or even do a bit of both.

Fri. 3rd – Mon. 6th May 2024

Welshpool Country Music Festival

Powis Castle Showfield, Welshpool, SY21 7NS

C&W and Living History and many stalls etc.

Sat. 20th – Sun. 21st July 2024

Haxey Feast

Willow Fields Campsite, Epworth Rd, Haxey, Doncaster DN9 2LH

A new event for SoToW incorporating both Fast Draw and Living History / Reenactment.

Sat. 27th – Sun 28th July 2024

Drifffield Steam Fair

East Yorkshire Showground, Drifffield, YO25 9DN. An established Living History event for us.

Sat. 10th – Sun. 11th August.

For more information:

email: events@sotow.co.uk; phone 07399 882242; follow Spirit of the Old West on Facebook; look out for the forthcoming website.

[Craig Evans]



Look out for other events to attend either as day visitors or as guests of other groups (ask them first!). Use any excuse to wear your period clothing and spread the old west word! I know I do!

[R.B., Ed.]

MEXICO'S CHUCK - WAGON RECIPES

Creamed Corn.

Creamed Corn Recipe

- 2 ears fresh corn, 1 (10-ounce) bag frozen corn kernels, or 1 (about 15-ounce) can corn kernels
- 1/2 small yellow onion
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh chives (optional)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup heavy cream or half-and-half

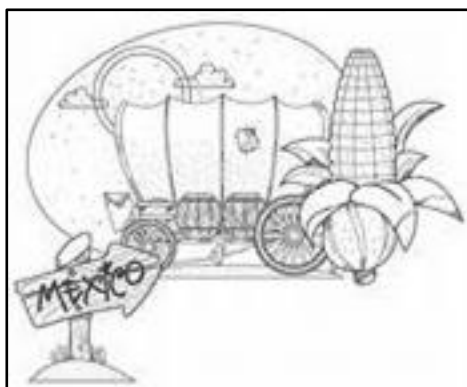
Prepare the corn: If using fresh corn, shuck and cut the kernels from 3 ears (about 1 1/2 cups) into a bowl. Then use the back of your knife to scrape against the cobs to release the moisture into the bowl (also known as “milk”). If using frozen corn, place 10 ounces frozen corn kernels in a shallow bowl and let sit at room temperature to thaw, about 45 minutes. If using canned corn, drain 1 (about 15-ounce) can corn kernels.

Finely chop 1/2 small yellow onion (about 1/2 cup). Finely chop fresh chives until you have 2 teaspoons, if using.

Melt 2 tablespoons unsalted butter in an 8-inch cast-iron or other medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. Cook until light golden brown, about 2 minutes.

Add the corn kernels (and “milk”) and 1/2 cup heavy cream or half-and-half. Simmer until the corn is tender and the cream has reduced slightly, 2 to 4 minutes.

Taste and season with more kosher salt as needed. Top with the chives.



[Richard Day]

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FAIRGROUND &
AMUSEMENTS

TRACTOR
PULLING

HISTORICAL
REENACTMENTS



Guest Writer

Your Editor has been requesting input from our readership, whether they be members of Spirit of the Old West or not. The first person to submit anything from outside of SoToW is **Josh Baker Esq.** (no relation).

Josh is a member of two groups in Southern Pennsylvania:

Old Bedford Village Wild West Group
&
Outlaws and Peacemakers.

He is also active on the Facebook group page:
Old West Reenactor/Performer Association

It should be remembered that Josh is writing from an American point of view. The gun laws are different in the UK.



Josh writes:

I myself have not been reenacting old west long. Mostly American Civil War and, given my background in that era of reenacting, I found myself fortunate to have come into the old west era with quite a few black powder firearms.

In my opinion, for someone getting into this era, I believe a black powder revolver can make entering the hobby a lot easier. They are relatively cheap, can be converted to fire cartridges and are easy to disassemble and maintain.

My personal firearms that I use are an 1858 Remington, an 1847 Colt Walker, a Spiller and Burr and a Lemat revolver.

The 1858 to me is my most suggested black powder. It is to me the easiest to reload and requires no tools to disassemble. I have never had an issue with the Remingtons and I highly recommend the 1858 as a first revolver for anyone entering the hobby.

The Colt Walker, while a good firearm, is bulky, heavy and requires a fairly big holster to carry. Still relatively easy to disassemble and clean. The size may be off for some. I would recommend maybe a Navy or something of that size over a Walker.

Now my Spiller and Burr is limited. Its brass frame makes it stuck to firing percussion. A fine revolver though if you are coming from ACW and prefer to load black powder over cartridge.

Lastly is the Lemat. I do not recommend this revolver unless you are into oddities like it. Like the Spiller and Burr, you are stuck with black powder. For me, I require a rubber mallet to disassemble it. The loading lever is not the strongest and it is prone to misfiring. For anyone who is coming into the hobby I would suggest going to something more user friendly. Plus, the price (1300 USD) is too high for entry level impressions.

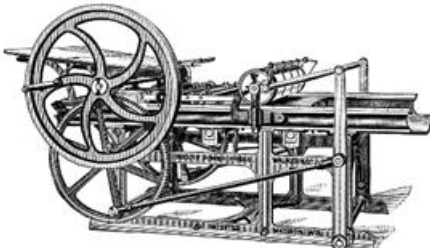


[Josh Baker]

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Suppliers

The occasional list of suppliers that readers may wish to investigate.

We hope that our readers will furnish us with details of suppliers that they believe to be worthy of patronage.

Suppliers listed in previous editions of this newspaper are:


- Civil War Sutler**, civilwarsutler.co.uk.
- River Junction Trade Co.**, riverjunction.com.
- Hats Period**, hatsperiod.co.uk and on Facebook.
- South Union Mills**, southunionmills.com.
- FLB Westernwear**, flbwesternwear.co.uk.
- 19th Century Tailoring (AKA Sutlers)**, 19th-century-tailoring.co.uk; sutlers.co.uk.
- Historical Emporium** www.historicalemporium.com.
- Sutler of Fort Scott**, sutleroffortscott.com.
- All That Glisters Coins**, allthatglisterscoins@gmail.com.

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[R.B., Ed.]

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