

URBANUS SARTORIS

Born Geneva, French name Urbain. Associate of Samuel Pauly (1803). Paris address Rue d'Artois No. 11, in at least 1816-1817. London address 31 Winchester Street, 1813-1825, listed as "merchant". Bankrupt 1826. Died 1832.

British patents March 11, 1817 (#4107) and January 23, 1819 (#4336),
"Barrels of Breech-loading Fire-arms".

These two patents are the first to describe a gas seal for pivoting-chamber breechloading firearms using a rotating and sliding barrel with an intermittent screw (a.k.a. intermittent thread) attachment to the breech. Four earlier breechloading guns are known with an intermittent thread, c.1655-1660. A French version of these patents is known from May of 1817, with essentially the same set of drawings as #4107.

British patent July 22, 1818, #4281, "Improvement in the Method of Producing Ignition in Fire Arms by the Condensation of Atmospheric Air."

A plan for ignition by fire-piston, presumably inspired by or stolen from Samuel Pauly. No patent specification was submitted.

French patent #1766, 4th Register, June 3, 1816 covered in detail a system for ignition by fire piston ("Pneumatic Syringe", "Communicating fire to gunpowder in the barrel by means of the rapid compression of air").

ANTHONY FARINDON BIVEN

16 Regent Street, Waterloo Place, London, 1822-1825. Made all the serial-numbered firearms based on the Sartoris patent. Maker's mark A.F.B
Bankrupt 1826.

Mentioned in Lt.-Col. Peter Hawker's INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUNG SPORTSMEN, 1825 edition, but not in the 1833 edition.

SARTORIS PATENT FIREARMS

- #3 Royal Armouries XII.5705. Flintlock military carbine. Underside of Breech A.F.B and London view mark. 3 on top of breech and “below breech on the strip lining the receiver.” .67 cal; barrel 21.65”; overall 36.9”
- #4 Private collection (M.C.). Flintlock military carbine. 4, A.F.B, and London view mark under breech. Brass furniture (triggerguard; grip in front of trigger guard; side plate; butt plate.)
- #5 Holts June 21, 2007 lot 635. Flintlock gun; A.F.B inside lock and on underside of the breech. London view mark underside of breech; London proof and view marks on barrel. Odd “self-priming device” as part of the lock.
Also sold Bonhams, November 27, 2013, lot 327.
See “Breechloading Flintlock Guns”, by Major Neal Corry.
- #9 Onlinehuntingauctions.com May 1, 2021, lot 174. Flintlock military carbine, 18” barrel. Saddle ring bar on left. 9, A.F.B, and London view mark underside of the breech.
- #11 Private Collection (T.O.). Flintlock military carbine. 11, A.F.B, and London view mark underside of breach. 11 and A.F.B inside of lock. 11 on strap under barrel near breech.
- #15 Wallis & Wallis June 9, 2015, lot 338; now private collection. Flintlock military carbine, .65 cal., 21 ½” barrel. 15, A.F.B, London view mark underside of breech; 15 on frame under breech. 12 on butt. Saddle ring bar on left.
- #38 Royal Armouries XII.1051. Flintlock rifled carbine. On underside of barrel: 38; AFB; London proof mark; FULLER LONDON (almost certainly the barrel-maker William Fuller). Inside lockplate: 38; A.F.B; .62 cal; barrel 24”; overall 42.4”.

- #41 HBSA-UK (Historical Breechloading Smallarms Association) (hbsa-uk.isonlinehere.com). A.F.B; Flintlock rifle, drum and nipple conversion to copper cap. Cal .596
- #45 Royal Armouries XII.11761. Flintlock rifle, cased. On underside of breech: 45; A.F.B; London view mark. .75 cal.
- #54 Private collection. Percussion (pill ignition) gun. A.F.B, 54, and London view mark on underside of breech. 47" overall; 27½" barrel; 4 ¼" breech, . 69cal. A trap in the butt, released by a button at the butt/butt tang junction. An extra hammer nose and nipple for copper cap use. [Destroyed in the Palisades fire January 2025.]
- #129 Bonhams 5/11/16 lot 222. Copper cap civilian rifled carbine. 25 bore. Biven's name and address on lockplate. "Patent London" in gold poincon at breech. A.F.B, 129, "London proof marks".
- #133 Christies October 26, 1994, lot 189 (2530 pounds) AND West Street Antiques 2013 (asking 6495 pounds). Also sold at auction by Anthony Cribb Ltd (UK) April 2018, with claimed military trials provenance. Flintlock military carbine. A.F.B, 133, and London view mark on the underside of the breech. "28 bore". Barrel 16.5". (See note to Royal Armouries XII.5707, #152, on the Royal Armouries web site.)
- #145 Bonhams April 1, 2004 lot 131. Copper cap target rifle, Biven's name and address on lockplate.
- #152 Royal Armouries XII.5707. Percussion rifle. On underside of breech: 152; London view mark. (No A.F.B). .59 cal.
- #154 Noted in Nigel Brown's BRITISH GUNMAKERS, Volume 3, Part II, page 50. No other information.

Royal Armouries PR.5187. Percussion rifle. No markings. .58 cal.

Royal Armouries XII.1970. Half-stocked Percussion rifle. The lockplate marked P. JOUHAUD JERSEY. The barrel top marked P. JOUHAUD, 12, PETER STREET, JERSEY.

.67 cal. Barrel 29"; overall 47.6". The breech springs up (rather than the usual manual pull-up) when the barrel is moved forward, using a long flat spring beneath. JOUHAUD in script on the underside of the breech, with a London view mark. Folding lever on top of barrel. Long folding sight on top of breech. IHLC stamped in the wood on the left side. See Holts, 9/2017, lot 576, a pistol-carbine by Jouhaud with the same decorative curl in front of the trigger guard.

CJAC Vol. 5 #1 (1967) p.29. Copper cap civilian carbine. .56 cal. 24" barrel 39" overall. Marked A.F. Biven Regent St. Waterloo Place.

Sotheby & Co. London, The Renwick Collection, European, Part VI, March 19, 1974, lot 5.

"Belgian" (Liege) percussion (tube lock) gun ("fowling piece") with a Sartoris-patent action, 1820s.

Christies October 25, 2001, lot 73 (Neal sale).

Flintlock gun with a Sartoris-patent action, signed A. SIEBE, 1820s. (Augustus Siebe, London).

Holts March 10, 2004, lot 276. A.F.B; Flintlock rifle.

Ward's Auctions May 21, 2021, lot 4326. Percussion (copper cap) longarm referred to both as a shotgun and a rifle. 8 bore (.845 cal.), 30 ½ " barrel. A cat on the lever; many dog and bird images on metal surfaces. A trap in the butt, released by a button at the butt/butt tang junction. SN and markings not described.

Howard Blackmore, GUNS & RIFLES OF THE WORLD.

Item 383 Flintlock double gun. .63 cal., 21 ½ “ barrel.

Royal Armoury, Turin, Italy.

Item 384 Sartoris flintlock action fitted to a Baker rifle.

Item 385 Flintlock military carbine.

Item 386 Serial number 5 (see above).

Item 430 Flintlock rifle converted to copper cap. Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, UK.

Item 431 Copper cap target rifle, Biven name and address on lock; .63 cal., 27 ½ “ barrel. A mobile leaf sight on the breech, and a sight behind the tang. An attached sling. Similar to but not # 145. Milwaukee Public Museum, N565.

Also shown in “European Sporting Arms from the collections of The Milwaukee Public Museum”, by Herbert G. Houze. Arms Gazette, August 1977, pages 26-28.

Private collection (JV). Flintlock double gun with the Sartoris patent system.

Looking exactly like Item 383 in Blackmore (see above), but slightly different: barrels 20 ½”, length 41 ½”, .64 caliber.

London proof and view marks and the WF mark (William Fullerd, barrel-maker). No A.F.B mark. The intermittent thread of the breech is female and of the barrels is male, the opposite of the usual.

Thanks to Lisa Traynor and Jonathan Ferguson of the Royal Armouries for information about and descriptions of the RA Sartoris-patent firearms. Thanks to Chris Smith for obtaining more information about RA XII.1970 (February 2022).

Matthew Schneiderman October 2025.

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REFERENCE: Matthew Schneiderman, “Urbanus Sartoris: One or Two?” JAAS Volume XXIV, No. 3, March 2023, pages 147-162.

OPENING THE SARTORIS PATENT GUN #54.

1. CAREFULLY PLACE THE HAMMER AT HALF-COCK.
(This may require a small push forward of the trigger.)
2. PUSH THE LEFT-SIDE LEVER DOWN 90 DEGREES.
3. ROTATE THE LEVER UPWARD. THIS ROTATES THE BARREL.
4. PUSH THE LEVER (AND THE BARREL) FORWARD.
This gives a view of the interrupted thread.
5. PULL UP THE BREECH.