

John Rigby
(Gunmakers), L

TELEGRAMS:
G. PICCY. LONDON."



JOINTMENT
MAJESTY THE QUEEN

RIFLE MAKERS

The .475 is so similar to Rigby's original .450 Nitro Express (shown here) that they are indistinguishable unless you put the two side by side. From a gunmaking point of view, the advantage of the .475 NE over larger-base cartridges like the .470 is that the rifle can be made on a slimmer frame, trimming one to two pounds from overall weight. The .475 may be the most under-rated of all the nitro-express cartridges.

The .475 Nitro Express:

A Mysterious and Under-Rated Orphan

Some cartridges are born to greatness (.577 Nitro Express); others have greatness thrust upon them (.470 NE); still others achieve their due after years of obscurity (.500 NE). And then there are those that deserve a measure of greatness and never receive it. To wit: the .475 Nitro Express.

If ever a cartridge was great on paper and just as good in the field, it is the .475, a straight-taper case similar in shape to the .450 NE and the .500 NE. Firing a 480-grain bullet at 2175 fps, and delivering 5040 ft.lbs. of energy at the muzzle, it is the ballistic twin (and predecessor) of the .470, the most popular nitro-express cartridge of all time.

Beyond that, very little is known of the .475 NE. It is believed it was introduced around 1900, well before the flowering of the .475-diameter cartridges at the time of the .450 ban

in India and the Sudan (1905-07). As to who designed and introduced it, no one knows. Certainly, no rifle maker adopted it and made it a standard chambering. Rifles chambered for the .475 are few and far between, and are generally lesser-known names such as Army & Navy and Manton of Calcutta.

A combination of companies going out of business, and records lost or destroyed during the blitz, make it very likely that the .475's origins will never be positively known.

For several reasons, the .475 has not shared in the last decade's renaissance of the nitro express. First, of course, is simple lack of demand – not many rifles were made, so demand for ammunition is small. The second, and more serious, problem is dimensional variation. Bullet diameter in rifles and cartridges varies between .474 and .483 inches, which is quite a wide

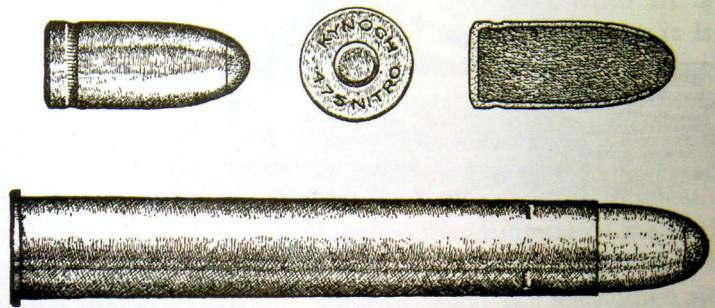
spread. Understandably, most ammunition companies prefer to make cartridges that are standardized, for safety and legal reasons.

This is not to say that, if offered a good .475 NE, one should walk away. It is an extremely fine cartridge whose design practically guarantees low pressures and no extraction problems. It is also easy to load. One should take the precaution, however, of slugging the bore to determine exactly what diameter bullet it takes, and ensure that these are available, along with suitable loading dies.

Handloading data for the cartridge is not readily available, and of course one immediately encounters the problem of barrel regulation. Leaving that aside for the moment, the most pressing requirement is a starting load from which to work either up or down. Because the case is virtually identical to the .450 Nitro



The original illustration of the .475 Nitro Express from John Taylor's classic 'African Rifles and Cartridges' (1948). As always, Taylor's assessment is on the money. Incidentally, Taylor's book is still the best available reference for anyone interested in the big nitro-express cartridges.



.475 NITRO EXPRESS.

Case 3¼"; Powder 75 grs. Smokeless; Bullet 480-gr. Metal-covered; Pressure 15 tons; M.V. 2,175 f.s.; M.E. 5,050 ft.lbs.

An excellent cartridge for general all-around work amongst heavy and dangerous game. It was one of those introduced when the .450 caliber was prohibited in India and the Sudan. There is nothing whatever to choose between any of the cartridges in this group from the point of view of killing power and effectiveness, whether the comparison is attempted on paper or in actual practice in the field. I speak from my own experience—at one time or another I think I have used each and every one of them. The bullet shown in this illustration is the plain soft-nose, plenty lead showing. It's my favorite for buffalo. For frontal shots at lion it is also entirely satisfactory but is all too liable to smash clean thru on a broadside shot, not meeting with sufficient resistance to stop it.

Manufacturer	Bullet Weight	Muzzle Velocity	Muzzle Energy
Original Kynoch	480 gr.	2175 fps	5040 ft.lbs.
Kynoch (Kynamco)	480	2175	5040
Westley Richards	500	2125	5030

Modern Kynoch ammunition is loaded with .476-inch Woodleigh solids and Weldcore soft points. Velocity is measured from a 28" barrel.
Westley Richards ammunition is loaded with .474-inch Woodleigh solids and Weldcore soft points. Velocity is measured from a 26" barrel.

Express, loads for that cartridge with the same weight bullet should deliver comparable performance in the .475 – possibly even delivering slightly greater velocity at slightly lower pressures because of the greater bore diameter.

Starting with a minimum load for the .450 NE, one can then increase the powder charge a grain or two at a time until the barrel groups come together.

Given these problems, and the variation in bore and bullet diameter, for the average hunter the best solution is to use factory ammunition, after first ensuring the bullets are the correct diameter. A-Square does not load the .475 NE, nor does it make brass (because of the standardization problem), but both Kynamco and Westley Richards offer loaded ammunition.

Kynamco ammunition is loaded with a .476-inch bullet. David Little of Kynamco is a great admirer of the .475 NE.

"This is a very under-rated cartridge and is actually ballistically better than the .470," he says. "It would be nice to see it promoted, as the (base) diameter is smaller than the .470, .465 and .475 No. 2, and this allows the gunmaker to keep the action size to that of a .450." ☺

Manufacturer	Bullet Weight	Muzzle Velocity	Muzzle Energy
.450 No. 2 Nitro Express (3_-inch)			
Original Eley-Kynoch	480 gr.	2175 fps	5050 ft.lbs
Kynoch (Kynamco)	480	2175	5050
A-Square	465	2190	4952
.475 No. 2 Nitro Express (3_-inch)			
Original Eley-Kynoch	480 gr.	2200	5170 ft.lbs.
Kynoch (Kynamco)	480	2200	5170
A-Square	480	2200	5170
.475 No. 2 Nitro Express (Jeffery)			
Original Eley-Kynoch	500 gr.	2150	5140 ft.lbs.
Kynoch (Kynamco)	500	2120	5000
A-Square	500	2200	5373

Modern Kynoch ammunition is loaded with Woodleigh solids and Weldcore soft points. Velocity is measured from a 28" barrel.

A-Square Ammunition is loaded in its Triad configuration (Dead Tough and Lion Load soft points, and Monolithic Solids), guaranteed to shoot to the same point of impact.

Superior Ammunition, of Sturgis, South Dakota, sells custom-loaded .475 No.2 and .475 No. 2 (Jeffery) ammunition loaded with Woodleigh softs and solids, and .450 No. 2 loaded with Woodleigh, Barnes, Swift, Speer, and Trophy Bonded bullets.