

## Euklisia Rug



The Euklisia rug, thought to be the world's first commercially produced sleeping bag, was patented by Newtown entrepreneur Pryce Jones in 1876. It is more of a folded rug than a bag, but it featured a sewn-in blow-up pillow lined with rubber, and was thick and warm, with fasteners to hold it together.



Pryce Jones received a contract to provide 60,000 of these rugs to the Russian Army, but in 1877 after the Siege of Plevna resulted in the Turkish Army being defeated, the order was cancelled as the Russians no longer needed them. This left Pryce Jones with a surplus of 17,000 which he tried to sell on both the local, and export market. Records have been located of the rug being used in the Congo and the Australian outback.



No examples of the rug appear to have survived but researchers on the BBC Wales Television series, *Wales and the History of the World*, decided to recreate it using the original patent so that they could feature it on their program. The replica was made by Jane Beck, an antique cloth specialist from Tregaron in Ceredigion. This reproduction rug is now in our Museum.

The rug was displayed at the Paris Exhibition in 1878. The British section of the exhibition catalogue included:

*Jones, Pryce: manufacturer and inventor. Newtown Montgomeryshire – Welsh flannel, shawls, tweeds, home-spuns, yarns. Maadr-up clothing for the poor and public institutions. Patent Euklisia blankets for army, camp and travelling purposes.*

A brief newspaper report of the Paris Exhibition recounted how the future King Edward VII was intrigued by the Euklisia rug.

*Mr. Pryce Jones, a North Wales manufacturer, diverted the Prince of Wales at the French Exhibition for some time by lying on the floor, wrapped up in his patent Euklisia travelling and war blanket. His Royal Highness was so taken up with this gentleman's rug – which by the way has a comfortable pillow only a few ounces in weight attached to it by means of an inflated bag betwixt the materials – that he examined minutely several other articles in the same case.<sup>1</sup>*

The Euklisia rug was just one of Pryce Jones' business innovations. He is probably best remembered as the father of mail order shopping, producing one of the world's first mail order catalogues in the 1860s.

For more on the history of sleeping bags.

<https://www.turas.tv/2019/01/the-history-of-sleeping-bags/>

A link to the BBC program:

[bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/3cdTqQBDBTGmTAMBWxITQA](http://bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/3cdTqQBDBTGmTAMBWxITQA)

Information on The Siege of Plevna (Plevna).

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Plevna>

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<sup>1</sup> Euklisia Rug; Peate, David.