



REFURBISHING A CLASSIC: THE BROWNING B25 B2G

IN OUR APRIL EDITION WE REPORTED THAT MICKEY DORE WAS TO AUCTION HIS LEGENDARY BROWNING B25, OVERHAULED TO TIP-TOP CONDITION BY TIM GREENWOOD, FOR CHARITY. THIS MONTH WE HAVE THE FULL STORY BEHIND THE RESTORATION OF A PIECE OF CLAY SHOOTING HISTORY

Thirty years ago, when I first started working in the gun trade, the Browning B25 was THE gun to own. Made in Belgium, with a high degree of hand finishing, it was well-made and well-balanced, a really beautiful gun to shoot. Although still shot extensively today, its high cost and waiting time for delivery make new ones a rare gun to be seen.

Fortunately, there are a lot of second-hand examples available in various degrees of condition and, therefore, of price, which brings me nicely to the subject of this month's article.

A few weeks ago Johnny Walker, chairman of the English Skeet Club, asked me to take on the project of restoring one of these venerable guns. The gun, a 1974 30" Trap gun, had been converted to a Skeet

gun some years ago. John actually owned the gun at one point in its history, shooting many 100 straights with it, before selling it to Michael Dore, once again of Skeet fame, who modestly says he has forgotten how many 100 straights he has shot with it – however, we all know how well he shot. In an outstandingly generous gesture, he offered the gun free to the English Skeet Club for auction at the Grand Eastern Skeet shoot, held at Dartford Shooting Ground in their excellent facilities on 2 May 2010. The proceeds are to be split between the Chris Strange and Tim Convoy memorial shoots to be held later in the year.

After nearly 40 years of hard use, the gun was in a bit of a state by the time it came to me prior to the auction. As you can see in the following pictures, the chequering

was worn smooth, the gold plate, added in the 1990s, was scratched and worn, the barrels had been polished silver, it was loose (off

‘Michael Dore, of Skeet fame, modestly says he has forgotten how many 100 straights he has shot with this classic gun’



THE GOLD PLATE WAS WORN AND SCRATCHED AND GENERALLY DIRTY



GETTING TECHNICAL

By Tim Greenwood



THE FORE END AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE CONDITION OF THE WOOD

‘The engraving had lost a lot of its definition through over polishing; overall the gun was generally looking a tired and very sorry sight’



A CLOSE-UP OF THE REMAINS OF THE CHEQUERING ON THE GRIP AFTER CLEANING OFF THE OLD OIL AND DIRT

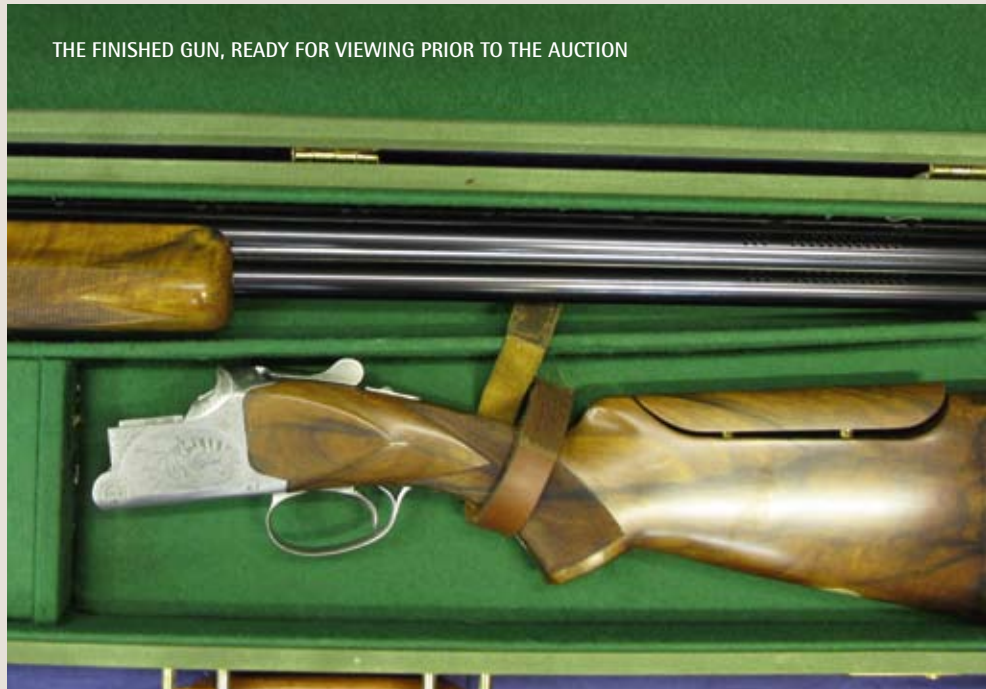
the face) and had been shortened to 13 ¼ inches. The engraving had lost a lot of its definition through over polishing; overall the gun was generally looking a tired and very sorry sight.

The first job was to send the barrels to our barrel-maker in Kent

to have them polished, struck and re-blued. While this was happening, it was time for me to start work on the woodwork, stripping years of old oil and dirt, fitting a new gold oval (the old one was too small for the recess in the stock) and re-lengthening the gun to a more standard size for the



THE NEW GOLD OVAL, PROPERLY RECESSED AND READY TO BE POLISHED DOWN TO THE STOCK



THE FINISHED GUN, READY FOR VIEWING PRIOR TO THE AUCTION



successful bidder at the auction. After a full service, I set about striking the action to its original brushed finish and in the process highlighting the engraving to improve the overall look, without going to the expense of having the engraving re-cut. I also felt it was important to 'burn off' the gold plating and bring the action back to as near original as possible.

So, with the return of the barrels from the barrel-maker and the woodwork completed, it was time to re-assemble the gun for the viewing before the auction. The final day of the Grand Eastern Shoot dawned wet and windy but with a great turn out, lots of humour and some tremendous scores

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THE ACTION WITH THE GOLD PLATE REMOVED, BRUSHED FINISH AND THE ENGRAVING HIGHLIGHTED



THE STOCK EXTENSION - NOTICE THE BASE COLOUR MATCH OF THE WOOD

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the day was soon over, with just the auction and prize giving to go before the very tired but much appreciated team behind the shoot could go home and warm up (full coverage of the event can be found on Paul Fallon's Skeet Scene pages: 104-105).

After some fierce bidding this historic gun was finally purchased by Paul George, a Kent shooter who has

bought the gun with the intention of using it in Skeet competitions.

This, to me, is a great end to my refurbishment of the gun – for it to be used once again in competitions and to go on and no doubt shoot many more 100 straights. Maybe in 20 years' time, I will get to refurbish it once again and write about this grand old lady in *Clay Shooting* magazine. You never know!



THE PROUD NEW OWNER OF THE B25, PAUL GEORGE, WHO MADE A VERY GENEROUS FINAL BID AT THE AUCTION TO SECURE THE GUN

Anyone wanting their own piece of shooting history should read Richard Rawlingson's feature on the legendary Browning B25 in his On the Gun Rack series, in last month's issue of *Clay Shooting* (June). Richard gives the full low-down on the gun's background, including how to understand the codes and dating, and a detailed buying check-list of what to look out for when buying a second-hand one and what to pay.



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