

THE PERUGINI & VISINI HVR AND BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT ON TEST

# SHOOTING

## GAZETTE

DRIVEN SHOOTING'S  
FINEST JOURNAL

FEBRUARY 2019

### KEEP RIGHT ON

Your pre-season  
practice starts now

**HOST WITH  
THE MOST**  
Making an  
impression on  
your first let day

**TOP-DRAW  
DRIVEN BIRDS**  
Shoot reports  
from Lees Court  
and Leighton Hall

#### PLUS

All the action  
from a thrilling  
2018 IGL Retriever  
Championship



www.shootinggazette.co.uk £4.80



JANUARY 24 - FEBRUARY 21

# Royal approval at Holts

*Donald Dallas examines intriguing lots from the auctioneer's December sale.*

**T**here is always a star lot in the Holts auction, one that stands out above all the rest. Last time it was Eric Clapton's pair of Purdeys that hushed the room as they went for £160,000.

In the December auction it was Lot 500. On its own, a little boy's single percussion gun in its velvet-lined case, it looked really appealing. But when you realised its provenance — wow, there was no doubt this was the star lot.

Lot 500 was a single 28 bore boy's percussion sporting gun by Westley Richards of diminutive proportions built as a gift from Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to their second son Prince Alfred. Prince Alfred was born on April 6, 1844, and this gun was made for him when he was about eight years old. He was second in line to the throne and from 1866 was known as the Duke of Edinburgh.

The barrel was 20in long and so tiny was the gun that it looked like a toy. But it certainly was not as Prince Albert intended to teach his son to shoot with it. It was in its original case and both case and gun carried escutcheons with a coronet of the British Blood Royal.

How do you value something this unique? The lot had an estimate of between £10,000 and £15,000 but amazingly didn't sell.

In the early 19th century the two brothers, John and Joseph Manton, were the most famous gunmakers in the world; both today are still held in high esteem. Consequently Mantons fetch high prices and Lot 454 was a very handsome flintlock duelling pistol by John Manton no. 2870 built in 1797. Sporting guns were the Mantons' main foray but they were also regarded for their duelling pistols and this one, estimated at between £1,500 and £2,500, made £1,900.

Thomas Boss percussion guns are all of stunning quality. There was a beauty in Lot 525, a 15 bore gun no. 1360, built in 1854. It was in lovely original condition but what made it especially interesting was that it



ANDREW ORR / HOLTS AUCTIONEERS

**The 28 bore boy's percussion sporting gun by Westley Richards, built for Prince Alfred. It sits behind an identical gun that is on permanent display at Sandringham.**

was a shot and ball gun, designed to be used as a shotgun and a rifle. In Boss's records it was described as a "heavy gun".

The barrels were 28in, their original length, fitted with a rear sight for 100 yards. The gun was built for the Hon. Ashley Ponsonby, the Grenadier Guards, and it was engraved as such on the under rib. I have never seen another Thomas Boss ball and shot gun. It was estimated at between £2,500 and £3,500 and made £3,000.

## Bygone era

Big game double rifles always make big money. They are redolent of a bygone era and conjure up images of expeditions to unknown territory fraught with danger. Lot 1201 was a magnificent .450 3¼in Nitro Express double underlever hammer rifle by John Rigby & Co., London. It was engraved on one barrel "Special .450 Big Game Rifle". Weighing 11lbs 1oz it was of magnificent quality. It was built for Captain the Hon. Alwyn Henry Fulke Greville, equerry to HM The King and achieved its lower estimate of £10,000.

From the sublime to the ridiculous. Lot 1502 was a tiny 28 bore top-lever hammer

gun no. 752 by F.E. Webb, Oxford. It was an appealing little gun and very usable. It had 26in nitro reproofed barrels and a 14¼in stock, perfect for a walked-up day. It weighed just 5lbs 3oz and, estimated at between £600 and £800, made £1,100.

Good-quality British side-by-side guns are such an excellent buy these days and Lot 1702 was a perfect example. This was a Webley & Scott Model 700 boxlock ejector in near new condition. Webleys are very well made and robust and this one was perfect for a main day, with 28in barrels and 2¾in chambers weighing 7lb. It went for £400, its lower estimate figure. What a bargain.

An absolutely stunning and special sidelock ejector was on offer in Lot 1411. This was a 12 bore W. & C. Scott & Son Premier Imperial pigeon gun with 30in Whitworth barrels. Top of the range, it was beautifully carved with bands of oak leaves and acorns interspersed with pheasant, duck and partridge.

It was built in 1894, weighed 8lbs 3oz and had a 14½in stock. How much would a gun like this cost today? It was estimated at between £3,000 and £5,000 but alas was withdrawn from sale. ■