

IN THE FIELD

NOVEMBER 2025

By Sir Johnny Scott Bt.

LOT 1300 PROVENANCE

Lot 1300 in Holts November auction of Fine Modern and Antique Guns is a pair of Henry Atkin 12-bore self-opening sidelock ejectors, with Atkin 'Spring-opening' actions based on the Beesley/Purdey patent with the Hodges 1909 improved ejector mechanisms, considered by Gough Thomas Garwood, the leading authority on guns and shooting, to be the best of the spring-openers. These 'Best London' guns, with their fine acanthus scroll and floral bouquet engraving, were made in 1913 for Sir Cecil Boyd-Rochfort KCVO, the famous racehorse trainer, who in a long career was British Flat Champion five times. The Guns are now offered for sale by his son, Arthur.

Cecil Charles Boyd-Rochfort was born in 1887, the younger son of Major Hamilton Boyd-Rochfort, of Middleton Park, Westmeath. He, and his brothers Harold and Arthur, were educated at Eton and in 1906, he was taken on as assistant trainer by the great Atty Persse, at his Park Gate yard and from there he went as assistant to Colonel Robert Dewhurst's Bedford Lodge in Newmarket and then as racing manager for Sir Ernest Cassel at Moulton Paddocks. During WW1 he joined his older brother, Arthur, in the Scots Guards, retiring from the army in 1918 with the rank of Captain and the Croix de Guerre. All three brothers were decorated for bravery; Arthur won the Victoria Cross and Harold, the Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross.

Returning to Moulton Paddocks, he found Sir Ernest in poor health and the stables run down, but he was approached by the American millionaire, Marshall Field III, who was looking for a trainer and with Sir Ernest's permission joined him as well. One of the first horses he bought and trained for Field was the outstanding filly, Golden Corn, who won the Champagne Stakes at Doncaster and the Middle Park Stakes at Newmarket, as a two-year old in 1921. Two years later, 'The Captain', as he was now known, took out his trainer's licence and bought Freemason Lodge in Newmarket, winning nineteen races in his first season. Among the owners who came to him, were his brother, Arthur, who was now breeding thoroughbreds at Middleton Park, Sir Humphrey de Trafford, Lady Zia Werner and Lord Derby. Through his association with Marshall Field, he soon attracted some of the immensely rich American owners - William Woodward, Joe Widener, Jock Whitney, Harry Guggenheim and Elizabeth Arden, of the cosmetic empire. In 1943, he began his long association with the Royal Family, training firstly for King George VI in 1943 and after his death, for Queen Elizabeth II, over many successful years he produced fifty-seven winners for the King, a hundred and thirty-six for the Queen and three for the Queen Mother.

In 1944, he married Elizabeth Rohays Mary, only daughter of Major General Sir James Lauderdale Gilbert Burnett of the Leys and widow of Lt the Hon



Sir (Walter) John Scott, Bt. MFH

Sir Johnny (as he is better known) is an author, natural historian, broadcaster, columnist, countryside campaigner, artisan snuff manufacturer and retired hill farmer.

He wrote and co-presented the BBC2 series *Clarissa and the Countryman* with Clarissa Dickson Wright. He writes for a variety of magazines and periodicals on field sports, food, farming, travel, history and rural affairs.

A lifetime devotee of the countryside and its sports, he is currently:

- Joint Master, The North Pennine Hunt
- Regional Director, Vote OK.
- President, The Gamekeepers Welfare Trust.
- President, The Tay Valley Wildfowlers Association.
- President, The Newcastle Wildfowlers Association.
- President, The Association of Working Lurchers / Longdogs.
- Centenary Patron and Honorary Life Member, British Association for Shooting and Conservation.
- Patron, The Sporting Lucas Terrier Association.
- Patron, The Wildlife Ark Trust.
- Patron, The National Organisation of Beaters and Pickers Up.
- Board member, The European Squirrel Initiative.

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Henry Auchtmuty Cecil, acquiring four stepsons, one of whom, Henry, was to become equally famous as a trainer. His son Arthur was born in 1945 and during his career in the racing world produced champion racehorses, first at his Tally Ho Stud near Mullingar in Ireland and then at the stud he bought at Chevening in Suffolk. During a brilliant career, The Captain achieved 1,169 wins and 13 Classic successes. He was leading trainer five times (1937, 1938, 1954, 1955, 1958). He was appointed a Companion of the Royal Victorian Order in 1952 and knighted in 1968, the year he retired from racing, as a personal honour from the Queen. He handed Freemantle Lodge over to his stepson Henry, who had been his assistant for the previous four years and who was to achieve equal fame as a trainer of Classic winners.

The Captain was well known for being a first rate shot and would have been a guest on many of the great shooting estates in Ireland, Scotland - where Crathes Castle, in Aberdeenshire, was the family home of his wife - and in England. Athur Boyd-Rochfort has a photograph of the Captain shooting with his pair of Atkins at Six Mile Bottom on September 25th, 1930, when the bag was 1418 partridges. He passed the guns on to his son in the late 60's when he retired to live in Ireland and Arthur had many happy years shooting with them, before deciding the time had come to give someone else the opportunity to enjoy them.



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