

JAMES PURDEY AND SON

AUDLEY HOUSE, SOUTH AUDLEY STREET, W1Y 6ED



Coutts & Co

Mayfair Branch 10 Mount Street London W1Y 6DP

21-

Pay to O.V. Andrews Esq

Four Hundred and Thirty Five £ 43

Pounds 83 pence Only

For and on behalf of JAMES PURDEY AND SON

R. L. S.

Secretary

WEST LONDON SHOOTING GROUND

LIMITED

Northolt, Middlesex.

Telephone: 01-845 1377

Mr Oakley Andrews + 2

5th January

650 CARTRIDGES

650 CLAY BIRDS

Length 16" H 15 7/8" H 16 1/4" T

Bend 1 1/2" 2"

Cast off 3/16" 3/8" 3/8"

264 00

97 50

39 00

£ 400 50

Cash in
D.H. Cat

From **JAMES PURDEY & SONS LTD.**
AUDLEY HOUSE
57 & 58, SOUTH AUDLEY STREET, LONDON, W.1

O.V. ANDREWS
% W.L.S.S.

Guns 26584 in O/L/M & Overcase.
WITH CARE
Deliver before 11am 4-1-91
TO BE KEPT DRY



BY APPOINTMENT TO
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH
GUN MAKERS



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II
GUN AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS



BY APPOINTMENT TO
H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES
GUN AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS

DIRECTORS:

HON. RICHARD BEAUMONT
(CHAIRMAN)

LAWRENCE SALTER
(MANAGING DIRECTOR)

SIR ARTHUR COLLINS, K.C.V.O.

LORD TRYON

H. L. CARRON GREIG, C.V.O., C.B.E.

NIGEL BEAUMONT

JAMES PURDEY & SONS LTD.

(INCORPORATING JAMES WOODWARD & SONS)

GUN, RIFLE AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS

REGISTERED OFFICE:

**AUDLEY HOUSE, 57-58 SOUTH AUDLEY STREET,
LONDON W1Y 6ED**

TELEPHONE: 01-499 1801/2. 01-499 5292/3/4.
TELEGRAMS: PURDEY-LONDON. W.I.

SHOOTING SCHOOL

AT WEST LONDON SHOOTING
GROUNDS,
NORTHOLT, GREENFORD,
MIDDLESEX.

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND
COMPANY REG. NO. 208758

JTG.

August 29, 1989

Sherburne M. Becker Esq.,
620 Park Avenue,
New York,
N.Y. 10021,
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Becker,

We have pleasure in advising you that the pair of 12 bore guns of our make, Nos.26548/9, were completed in September 1955, with 2.3/4" chambers shot with 1.1/4oz of No.6. shot. The No.1. gun was bored Improved Cylinder and Modified Choke, and the No.2. gun was bored Modified and Full Choke. The length of the stocks was 15.1/2" at the middle, and the stocks were straight hand stocks with leather-covered heelpads. The guns were engraved with ornamental engraving and Oak Leaves. The guns were numbered 1 and 2.

Yours sincerely,

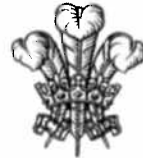
Richard Beaumont



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COMPANY REG. NO. 208758

January 22, 1991

ter,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 14th January, and for returning the VAT form duly stamped by Customs.

We have pleasure in enclosing herewith our cheque for £435.83 being the refund of the tax payment you kindly made.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Beaumont

INVOICE

**JAMES PURDEY & SONS LTD.**

(Incorporating JAMES WOODWARD & SONS)

**57-58 SOUTH AUDLEY STREET
LONDON W1Y 6ED****GUN, RIFLE AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS**TELEPHONE
071-499 1801 - 071-499 5292TELEGRAMS
PURDEY - LONDON W.1.
FAX 071-355 3297

VAT REGISTRATION No. 239 0610 76

TERMS - MONTHLY ACCOUNT. Interest will be charged on overdue accounts.

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ORDER NUMBER	METHOD OF DELIVERY	DESPATCH DATE	INVOICE DATE		
	95606			21.8.90.		
CODE	DESCRIPTION					VALUE
	<u>12 bore Purdey Guns Nos.26548/9.</u>					
	Lengthen both stocks in wood.					384.00
	Do up both stocks, forends, and rechequer.					832.00
	Tighten the grips and sides on both guns.					128.00
	Polish both forend irons.					32.00
	Fit four guards screws.					128.00
	Set both stocks (twice) for Bend & Cast Off, and clean after setting.					256.00
	Reset the guards.					32.00
	Remove gold letters, fit new gold ovals & engrave O.V.A.					340.00
	Raise bruises in barrels.					64.00
	Strip and boil out actions, oil and test guns.					192.00
	Alter the chokes on the No.2. gun & regulate.					192.00
	Fit new handle and straps to gun case.					196.50
	A New Mail Canvas Overcase.					129.00
	AMOUNT DUE EXPORT.					£ 2905.50
	<u>VALUE ADDED TAX.</u>					
	Value Added Tax at 15% of the total cost is chargeable unless the items are exported within three months of the final invoice. Where there is a separate account for a gun case this would be from the date of the invoice for the gun case. Customers wishing to take delivery in London should do so under the Personal Export Scheme , and we would be pleased to give full details of this. Customers in the United States who wish to have their guns shipped to them should consult their local Federal Firearms Dealer who would be able to handle all the necessary documentation needed to import a new gun into the United States.					

OAKLEY V. ANDREWS

3200 NATIONAL CITY CENTER

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

January 14, 1991

AIR MAIL

I am enclosing herewith the Retail Export Scheme VAT Refund form relating to the VAT I recently paid with respect to the repair work you performed on my guns. I believe your receipt of this document will enable you to refund my VAT payment and I would be grateful if you would do so at your earliest convenience.

Please advise me if anything further is required in connection with this refund.

With thanks for your kind attention to this matter, I remain

Yours sincerely,



OVA/ck
Enclosure

OAKLEY V. ANDREWS

3200 NATIONAL CITY CENTER

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

September 19, 1989

Sons

et

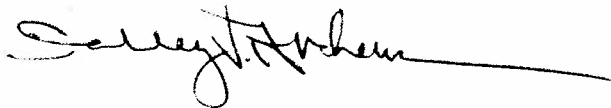
Gentlemen:

I recently acquired from my uncle, Sherburn M. Becker, the beautiful pair of 12-bore guns you made for him, Serial Nos. 26548 and 26549. I would like to arrange with you for a gun fitting so that, if alterations to the stocks of these guns are needed, you can perform the necessary work. I also would like to make arrangements to have the chokes of the No. 2 gun altered to match the No. 1 gun, inasmuch as I intend to use these guns exclusively for driven bird shooting.

Would you be kind enough to advise me concerning the procedure I should follow to arrange for a gun fitting. I plan to be in England in early January for a week of pheasant shooting. Hopefully, I could be fitted then and deliver the guns to you at that time. I would enjoy having an opportunity to visit your Audley Street premises and also, if possible, to visit your shop to see Purdey guns being made.

Looking forward to the favor of a prompt reply, I remain

Yours sincerely,



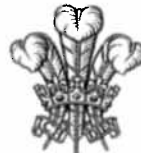
OVA/ck



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BY APPOINTMENT TO
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AT WEST LONDON SHOOTING
GROUNDS.
NORTHOLT, GREENFORD,
MIDDLESEX.

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND
COMPANY REG. NO. 208758

September 25, 1989

Thank you very much for your letter of the 19th September, regarding your pair of guns of our make, Nos.26548/9, which you wish to have altered to your own stock measurements.

We would be delighted to see you in January when you come to England, when we will be able to take your stock measurements with our "Try-Gun", and we can also at that time examine the barrels of the No.2. gun with a view to altering the choking to the same as the No.1. gun.

We do not know if you are aware of the new Firearms Law which comes into effect on the 1st October 1989, after which date you will need to possess a British Visitors Shotgun certificate. We enclose a leaflet explaining the new law, and would advise you to contact either a personal friend or the sponsor of your shoot immediately so that they can put in the necessary application for you.

Yours sincerely,

R.W. Confield

Secretary.

OAKLEY V. ANDREWS

3200 NATIONAL CITY CENTER

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

October 4, 1989

AIR MAIL

Ltd.

Street

Thank you very much for your letter of September 25, 1989, in response to my earlier inquiry. I would like, if possible, to make specific arrangements with you for the work on my guns which I described in my earlier letter. My current travel plans have me arriving at Heathrow early in the morning on Friday, January 5, 1990. Barring unforeseen delays, I would expect to be able to leave the Airport by 10:00 a.m., and would propose to come from there directly to your shooting grounds for a gun fitting appointment at say 11:30 or 12:00. I also would like to arrange for an hour of instruction. Following that, I plan to come into London for the balance of the day, departing about 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. by train for Wales. During the afternoon, I would like to have the opportunity to visit your Audley Street premises.

From looking at a map, I have a general idea of the location of your shooting grounds; however, I would need to have more specific directions, as well as your suggestion of the best way to get there promptly from Heathrow. I also would appreciate your suggestion as to the timing of appointments so that I will not be unduly pressed but, hopefully, will be able to have some time available in London during the afternoon. I will, of course, plan to leave my guns with you to have the necessary work performed.

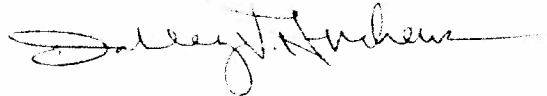
October 4, 1985
Page Two

Ltd.

Thank you for enclosing the leaflet regarding visitors' gun permits. I have been aware of the new requirements and am making arrangements with my host in Wales to have the necessary permits issued.

With thanks again for your prompt response and looking forward to hearing from you further, I remain

Yours sincerely,



OVA/ck

OAKLEY V. ANDREWS

3200 NATIONAL CITY CENTER

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

November 17, 1989

AIR MAIL

I apologize for my long delay in replying to your kind letter of October 10, 1989, regarding the gun fitting and shooting instruction, which you have provisionally arranged for me at the West London Shooting Grounds. I am now able to confirm that I will arrive at the West London Shooting Grounds on Friday, January 5, 1990, in time for a two-hour appointment, beginning at 11:00 a.m., which allows for gun fitting and approximately one hour of instruction. I will be accompanied by a fellow American, Mr. Richard Smith, for whom I would like to book a simultaneous appointment for two hours of shooting instruction. I would be very grateful if you could confirm these appointments and advise me if any deposit is required to secure them. I will, of course, forward any required deposit by return post.

Thank you for enclosing with your letter the two maps which are very helpful in giving proper directions to the West London Shooting Grounds. I have arranged for a car and driver to meet me at the Airport and so I do not anticipate any problem with ground transportation.

With thanks again for all your kind help,
I remain

Yours sincerely,



OVA/ck



BY APPOINTMENT TO
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH
GUN MAKERS



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II
GUN AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS



BY APPOINTMENT TO
H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES
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NIGEL BEAUMONT

LAWRENCE SALTER
(MANAGING DIRECTOR)

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LORD TRYON

H. L. CARRON GREIG, C.V.O., C.B.E.

TMC

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NORTHOLT, GREENFORD,
MIDDLESEX.

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND
COMPANY REG. NO. 208758

October 10, 1989

er,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 4th october, regarding your intended visit to London on Friday, 5th January 1990, to be fitted for your pair of guns of our make, Nos.26548/9, and we have booked you a provisional appointment at the West London Shooting Grounds at 11.00a.m., on that morning for two hours. This will allow you to have a one hour instruction after the fitting.

As we do not own these shooting grounds, we would be most grateful if you could confirm this appointment as soon as possible, as if they are not advised, you will be charged for the two hour appointment. Appointments are made on the hour for a one hour duration. We would suggest you take a Taxi from Heathrow Airport, the journey time should take approximately 20 minutes providing there is no heavy traffic, and we enclose two maps which might be helpful to you.

If you ask the grounds to book a minicab on your arrival for say 1.00p.m., to bring you to Purdey's, they would be pleased to do so.

We will await your confirmation concerning this appointment.

Yours sincerely,



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H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH
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NORTHOLT, GREENFORD,
MIDDLESEX.

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND
COMPANY REG. NO. 208758

011-4471

November 21, 1989

r,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 17th November, and we have confirmed your provisional appointment with the West London Shooting Grounds on the 5th January 1990 from 11.00am to 1pm.

We have also booked the same two hours, with another instructor, for your friend Mr. Richard Smith, and note that you have arranged for your own car and driver to collect you from the airport and take you to the grounds.

We will look forward to seeing you during your visit to London.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Beaumont

OAKLEY V. ANDREWS

3200 NATIONAL CITY CENTER

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

September 1, 1990

AIR MAIL

I today received your invoice dated August 21, 1990, for the work performed on my guns (Order No. 95606). I have noted the statement printed on the bottom of the invoice regarding value added tax and the personal export scheme. I am writing to inquire about taking delivery of my guns in London and to request that you send me any documentation which may be required. While I had originally anticipated being in London in early November and would have picked up my guns at that time, my plans have now changed so that I will not be able to pick up my guns until January 4th when I will be in England for a week of driven birdshooting.

The notice on your invoice indicates that value added tax will become exigible within three months of final invoice. I do not know whether this applies to repair work; however, if it does, it may be desirable from my standpoint to ask you to delay issuing a final invoice until after October 4th so that I will not run afoul of the three-month requirement if it pertains to my situation. Your advice regarding this matter will be greatly appreciated.

For the moment then, I will await further information and/or documentation from you. I will,

September 1, 1990
Page Two

of course, have a properly issued Visitor's Gun Permit covering the period in January when I will be using my guns in England.

As soon as I have your reply, I will proceed with whatever arrangements you recommend and will be happy to remit payment for part or all of your recent invoice in accordance with your directions.

With thanks, as ever, for your very fine service and kind attention to my account, I remain

Yours sincerely,

OVA/ck

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3200 NATIONAL CITY CENTER

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OVA/ck



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JTG.

September 12, 1990

er,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 1st September, addressed to Mr. Richard Beaumont who is away on holiday.

It will be quite in order for you to collect your guns when you come to England on the 4th January 1991. Your letter is quite acceptable to our Customs people of your intention to export these guns even though it is after the three month period mentioned under the VAT heading on our invoice.

You can collect your guns from us providing that the Visitor's Shotgun Permit you will have covers the date on which the guns are collected. If however it starts from the date you will actually be shooting, we would have to arrange to send the guns to the organiser of the shoot.

With regard to the Value Added Tax, which amounts to £435.83 Sterling, on the total cost of the repairs carried out to your guns Nos.26548/9, you will be required to send us a deposit to cover this tax, we will then issue you with a VAT Reclaim Form with a copy of the invoice. You must then have this form stamped by our Customs when you finally leave the country with the guns. They return the form to us and we then refund the deposit to you.

Perhaps you would confirm, nearer the time, whether your permit will be effective from the date you will be collecting the guns, or whether we are to make arrangements to send the guns to your shoot, together with the VAT paperwork. In the meantime, we would be most grateful to receive your settlement of the invoice.

Yours sincerely,

R. W. Cornfield

Secretary.

OAKLEY V. ANDREWS

3200 NATIONAL CITY CENTER

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

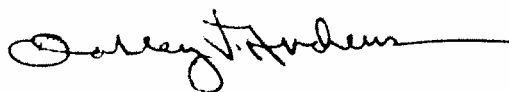
October 11, 1990

AIR MAIL

I am enclosing a Pound draft in the amount of £2,905.50 payable to the order of James Purdey & Sons Ltd. in payment of your recent invoice, a copy of which is enclosed. I understand that a payment of VAT will be required to be made by me prior to my taking delivery of my guns and I will send a draft for the required amount well in advance of my arrival in London on January 4, 1991.

If it is not too inconvenient, I would like to arrange to take delivery of my guns at the West London Shooting Ground on Friday, January 4, 1991. I would also like to book an hour's instruction from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This will enable me to try out my guns to get used to the new stock dimensions and also receive some shooting instruction. If you would be kind enough to make these arrangements for me, I would be most grateful; or, if you would prefer to handle delivery of my guns differently, please advise me.

Yours sincerely,



OVA/ck
Enclosures



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NORTHOLT, GREENFORD,
MIDDLESEX.

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND
COMPANY REG. NO. 208756

JTG.

October 23, 1990

er,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 11th October, enclosing your cheque for £2905.50, and we have booked you an appointment at the West London Shooting Grounds at 11.00 a.m. on Friday, 4th January 1991 for one hour.

As mentioned in our letter of the 12th September, providing we have a copy of your Visitors Shotgun Permit which covers the date of your visit to the Shooting Grounds, we can deliver your guns to the grounds for you to collect. If this is not the case, then we will have to send your guns to the organiser of your shoot, but we will need a copy of your Certificate as soon as it is issued. We will also at that time issue you with the VAT Reclaim form as mentioned in our previous letter.

If you can let us have a copy of your Certificate prior to the 4th January, we will of course delivery the guns to the Shooting Grounds. But if your Certificate will not be valid until after that date, please let us know so that the necessary arrangements can be made to send your guns to your shoot.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Beaumont



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LONDON W1Y 6ED**

TELEPHONE: 071-499 1801/071-499 5292

TELEGRAMS: PURDEY-LONDON W 1

FAX 071-355 3297

SHOOTING SCHOOL

AT WEST LONDON SHOOTING
GROUNDS,
NORTHOLT, GREENFORD,
MIDDLESEX.

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND
COMPANY REG. NO. 208758

JTG.

December 18, 1990

or,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 7th December, enclosing your cheque for £435.83, and also a copy of your Visitors Shotgun permit.

We would confirm that your pair of 12 bore guns of our make, Nos.26548/9, will be delivered to the West London Shooting Grounds in time for your appointment at 11.00am on Friday, 4th January 1991, together with a VAT Reclaim form. You should have this form stamped by our Customs who will then return the form to us and we will then refund the VAT to you.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Beaumont

OAKLEY V. ANDREWS

3200 NATIONAL CITY CENTER

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

December 7, 1990

AIR MAIL

Thank you very much for your letter of October 23, 1990. I very much appreciate your booking an appointment for me at the West London Shooting Grounds at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, January 4, 1991, for one hour, per my earlier request.

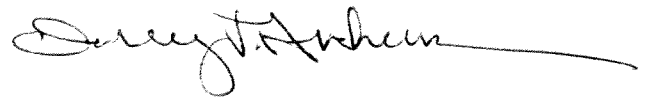
I am enclosing herewith a copy of my Visitor's Shotgun Permit, together with a Pound draft in the amount of £435.83 in payment of the VAT attributable to the work you recently performed on my guns. Your remittance advice for my account is also enclosed for your reference.

I would like to take delivery of my guns at the Shooting Grounds on the 4th and, hopefully, at the same time, to receive from you the documentation necessary for me to file the appropriate claim for refund of the VAT. I assume that your receipt of the enclosed documents and draft will permit you to proceed with the necessary arrangements. However, if anything further is needed, please notify me promptly.

December 7, 1990
Page Two

Again, with thanks for all your kind attention, I remain

Yours with best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dorey T. Arden", followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

OVA/ck
Enclosures

STATEMENT



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II
GUN AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS



BY APPOINTMENT TO
H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES
GUN AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS

JAMES PURDEY & SONS LTD.

(Inc. JAMES WOODWARD & SONS)

**57-58 South Audley Street,
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GUN, RIFLE & CARTRIDGE MAKERS

Telephone: 01-499 1801/2 01-499 5292

VAT Registration No. 239 0610 76

ACCOUNT NO.

STATEMENT TO: 31/10/90 PAGE: 1

DATE	TRANSACTION REFERENCE	DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE
31/08/90	INVOICE 50 096580	3,311.33		3,311.33
22/10/90	CASH 80 CB 713		2,905.83	435.83

RMS - MONTHLY ACCOUNT. 10 percent interest will be charged on overdue accounts.

PLEASE NOTE THAT NO FORMAL RECEIPTS WILL BE ISSUED UNLESS
SPECIALLY REQUESTED.

TOTAL DUE

435.83

STATI



JAMES PURDEY & SONS LTD.

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London W1Y 6ED
GUN, RIFLE & CARTRIDGE MAKERS
Telephone: 01-499 1801/2 01-499 5292
VAT Registration No. 239 0610 76

ACCOUNT No

STATEMENT TO: 31/08/90 PAGE: 1

REMITTANCE ADVICE

OAKLEY V. ANDREWS ESQ.,

ACCOUNT TO: 130121 PAGE: 1
STATEMENT TO: 31/08/90

DATE	TRANSACTION REFERENCE	DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE	REFERENCE	DEBIT	CREDIT
31/08/90	INVOICE 50 093560	3,341.33		3,341.33	50 093560	3,341.33	

RMS - MONTHLY ACCOUNT. 10 percent interest will be charged on overdue accounts.

ADDITIONALLY NOTE THAT NO FORMAL RECEIPTS WILL BE ISSUED UNLESS
SPECIALLY REQUESTED.

TOTAL DUE £3,341.33

TOTAL DUE £3,341.33

PLEASE RETURN THIS REMITTANCE ADVICE WITH YOUR PAYMENT
JAMES PURDEY & SONS LTD.

INVOICE



BY APPOINTMENT TO
H.M. THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND
GUN MAKERS



BY APPOINTMENT TO
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LONDON W1Y 6ED**

N, RIFLE AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS

VAT REGD

TERMS—MONTHLY ACCOUNT. Interest

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ORDER NUMBER	METHOD OF DELIVERY	DESPATCH DATE		INVOICE DATE
130121	95606	IN STORE	31AUG90	0	31AUG90

CODE	DESCRIPTION				
110099	PURDEY GUN NOS. 26548/9				
110019	LENGTHENING STOCK	2.000	192.00	1	
110099	DOING UP STOCKS, FORENDS				
110099	& RECHECKING.				
110004	TIGHTENING GRIPS & SHOES	2.000	64.00	1	
110099	POLISHING FOREND IRONS				
110099	FITTING 4 GUARD SCREWS				
110099	SETTING STOCKS FOR BEND				
110099	& CAST OFF, & CLEANING.				
110099	RESETTING GUARDS				
110099	FITTING NEW GOLD OVALS &				
110099	ENGRAVING INITIALS.				
110007	REPAIR BRUISES IN BRLS	2.000	32.00	1	
110001	STRIPPING & CLEANING	2.000	96.00	1	
	C/FWD				

AT DE	RATE	GOODS VALUE	VAT VALUE

GOODS TOTAL	VAT TOTAL



BY APPOINTMENT TO
H.M. THE DUKE OF ENDBURGH
GUN MAKERS

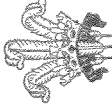
BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II
GUN AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS

JAMES PURDEY & SONS LTD.

(Incorporating JAMES WOODWARD & SONS)

**57-58 SOUTH AUDLEY STREET,
LONDON W1Y 6ED**

N, RIFLE AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS



093561

BY APPOINTMENT TO
H.M. THE PRINCE OF WALES
GUN AND CARTRIDGE MAKERS

TELEPHONE
01-499 1801 & 2

TELEGRAMS
PURDEY — LONDON, W.1.

VAT REGISTRATION No. 239 0610 76

TERMS—MONTHLY ACCOUNT. Interest will be charged on overdue accounts.

ORDER NUMBER	METHOD OF DELIVERY	DESPATCH DATE	INVOICE DATE	INVOICE DATE	VAT CODE
95606	IN STORE	31AUG90	0	31AUG90	93560
DESCRIPTION					
B/FWD ALTERING THE CHOKE ON NO.2 GUN & REGULATING. FITTING NEW HANDLE & STRAPS TO GUN CASE. ONE HALL CANVAS OVERCASE				VALUE	VAT CODE
				2,528.00	1
				192.00	1
				196.50	1
				129.00	1

TE	GOODS VALUE	VAT VALUE
00	2,905.50	435.83

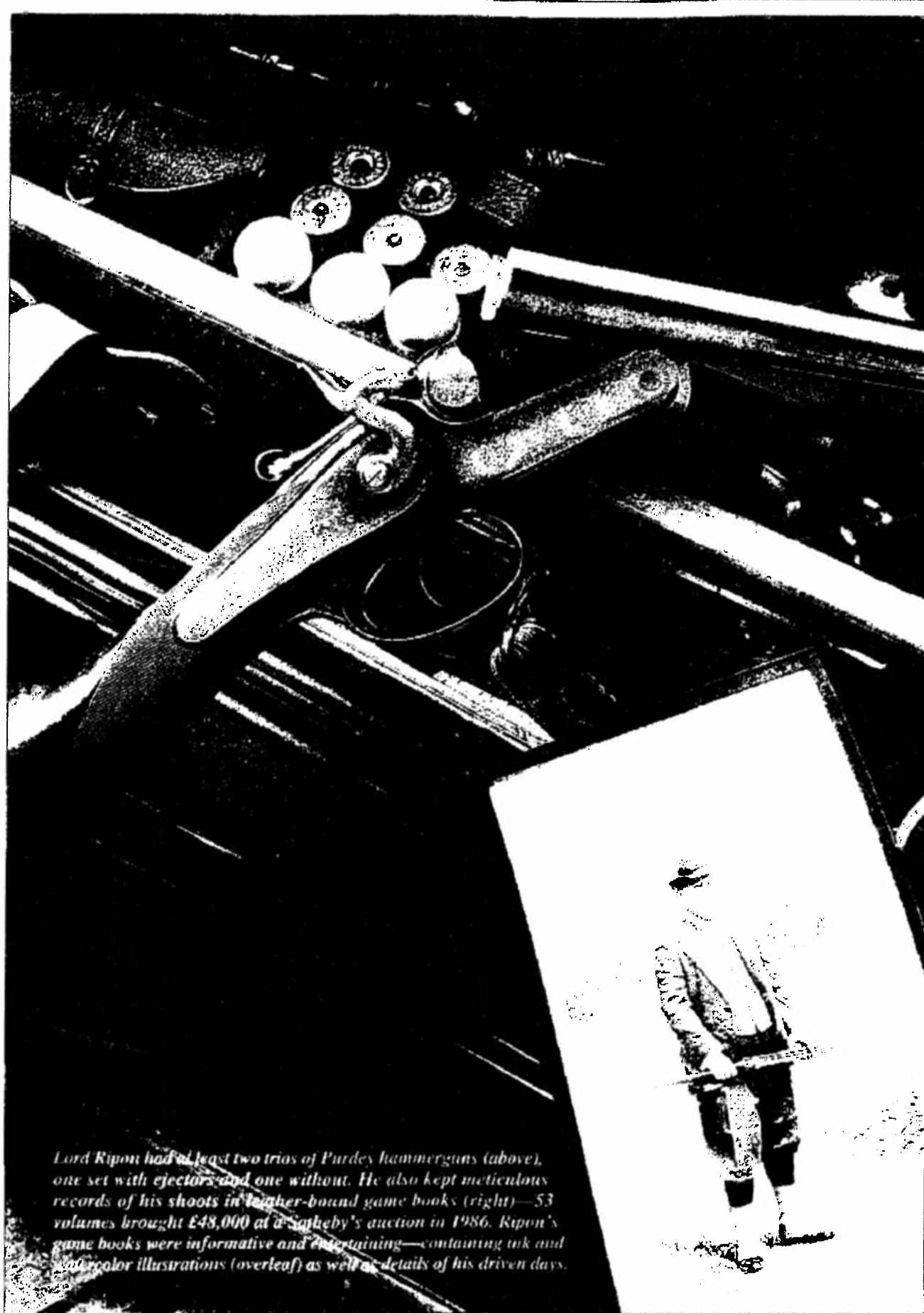
GOODS TOTAL		VAT TOTAL	PLEASE PAY THIS AMOUNT INVOICE TOTAL £ STERLING	
2,905.50		435.83	3,341.33	

REMITTANCE ADVICE

ACCOUNT NUMBER	INVOICE DATE	INVOICE NUMBER
130121	31AUG90	93560

THIS INVOICE	CURRENT MONTH	OVERDUE	TOTAL BALANCE
3341.33	0.00	0.00	3341.33

1
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Lord Ripon had at least two trios of Purdey hammerguns (above), one set with ejectors and one without. He also kept meticulous records of his shoots in leather-bound game books (right)—53 volumes brought £48,000 at a Sotheby's auction in 1986. Ripon's game books were informative and entertaining—containing ink and color illustrations (overleaf) as well as details of his driven days.

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THE BEST SHOT THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN

RICK PRATT

... and it's all true, I swear

Lord Ripon, aka Viscount of Goderich, Lord de Grey, Earl of Ripon, 2nd Marquess of Ripon, was born Frederick Oliver Robinson on January 29, 1852, at Carlton Gardens, in England. To avoid the confusion that attends the English habit of giving nobles many names, I will stick to Lord Ripon or simply Ripon.

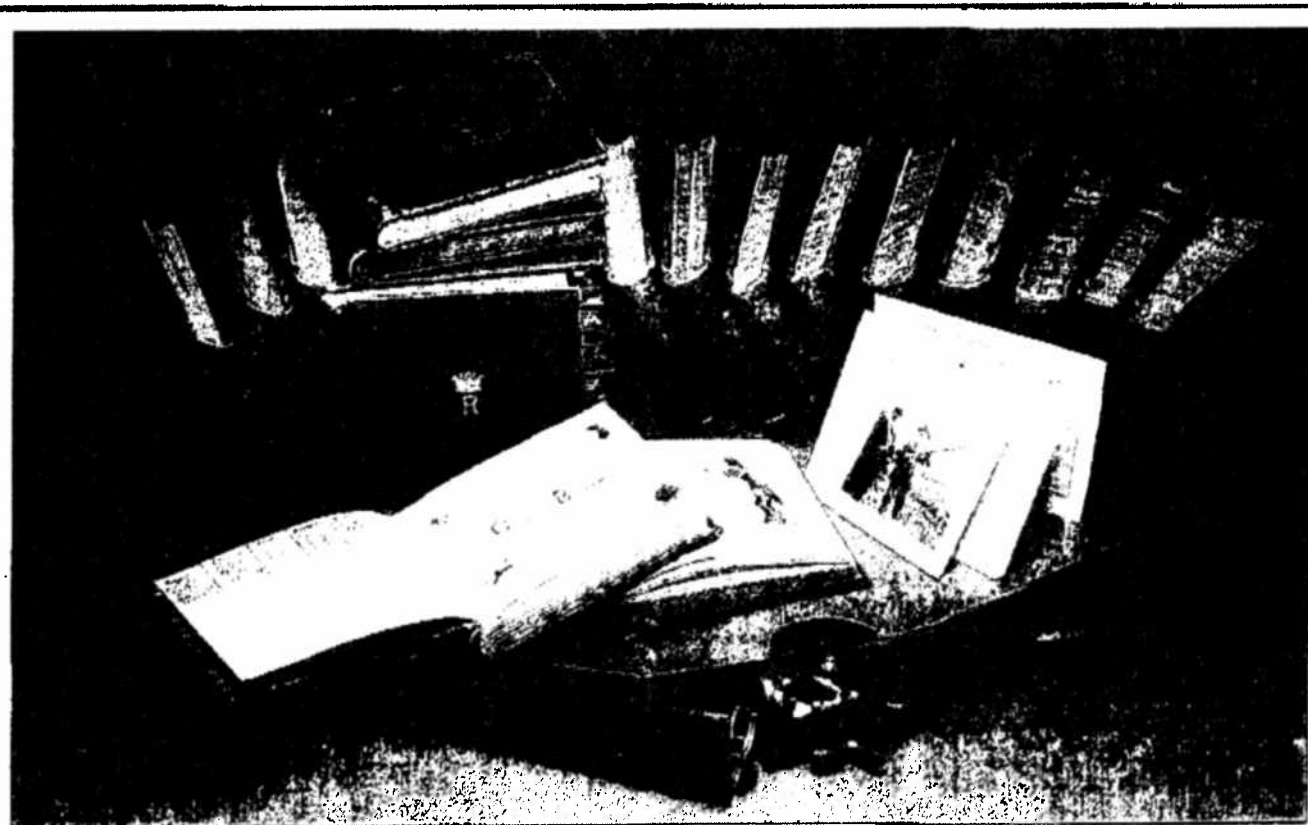
Lord Ripon and I share the same first name, almost the same birthday (mine is one day earlier) and the absolute conviction that the hammergun is the ultimate form of shooting device. Unfortunately, we don't share equal shooting skill, to understate grandly.

The first thing I ever read about Ripon, and just about the only thing commonly known about him, was the astounding number of birds he killed. And astounding is the only word I

can think of that properly describes the huge pile of winged creatures he accounted for.

His total bag, amassed between the years 1867 and 1923, was 556,813. The count includes a couple of rhinos, (a right-and-left double taken from elephantback in Nepal with a 4-bore rifle), a smattering of tigers, some Sambar stag, the odd deer and pig, a few rabbits and hares and some of those things listed as "various" in Victorian game books. But the great majority were birds, including more than 124,000 partridge and 240,000 pheasants, all taken on the wing.

That he could establish such a record at all was an accident of timing. Ripon was born into the era of the big shoots, a period when nearly all the privileged class of England took up shooting, in part because the Prince of Wales so loved it. The



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SOUTHERN

Prince became King Edward VII, continued his patronage of the sport, and what the King did everyone else did. These organized shoots were ideal for a class devoted to luxury and leisure because they were both extravagant and very exclusive.

This remarkable period of intense involvement with shooting by people of great wealth saw the initiation of the practice of employing beaters to drive birds over the guns. The birds were raised on the estates solely for the purpose of providing sport, and this in turn elevated the practice of game management to the level of a science. The intensely competitive nature of the practice produced legions of excellent shooters and drove the development of the English game gun to a state of near perfection. Lords competed with each other to produce the best shooting and largest bags, sparing no expense in their drive to get and keep the King's favor.

These lavish events started as just weekend shooting parties but evolved into full-blown social extravaganzas the scale of which was staggering—and more than one wealthy man went bankrupt in this pursuit. They lasted up to a full week, with grand formal dinners and nightly entertainment. Ladies brought huge trunks loaded with fine gowns—one for each dinner, of course—for the nightly competition with the other ladies.

The guests, most often attended by several of their own servants, stayed for the duration, putting a great strain on kitchens and larders. An entire wine cellar, patiently acquired for years, could be wiped out in just a few days. The workload for the household servants must have been incredible.

The whole process began in the 1860s and had mostly ended by the 1920s, just about encompassing Lord Ripon's lifetime. He was born into a shooting world and, blessed with natural ability, wealth and a drive for perfection, became the best shot in the empire.

The unknown Ripon

Ripon was such an incredible shooter that virtually everything else about him was ignored, particularly by the sporting press of the day, which concentrated on reporting his scores. The image we are left with is of a dull and dour fellow, obsessed with shooting to the point of neurosis. Even some modern writers, George Bird Evans for one, have focused entirely on the slaughter attendant to Ripon's record without

of the London Opera; had frequent and popular parties; served as trustee of the renowned Wallace Collection of art, arms and armor; and was a member of parliament. Dull and dour? Not likely.

From grand beginnings

Lord Ripon's grandfather was a politician who served as Prime Minister for five months, the shortest term on record. He was apparently also one of the worst on record, as contemporary accounts have little good to say about him.

Ripon's father was born at 10 Downing Street during his own father's short tenure as Prime Minister. He too followed the political road but, unlike his father, was very successful. He served in many high posts and won acclaim at all of them, and is counted as an important man in British political history.

He was also a splendid shot and a great devotee of shooting. He was a popular host at shoots on his own acres at Studley Royal, and during his tenure as Viceroy took most of the game animals and birds that India had to offer.

Ripon's mother, Henrietta Anne Theodosia, was no less successful. She was a lady of the bedchamber of the Princess of Wales, quite an honor, and a member of the Imperial Order of the Crown of India, an organization for women deemed worthy of royal decoration.

Lord Ripon himself married Lady Gladys Lonsdale, a titled widow and one of the liveliest and loveliest women in England (the Prince of Wales once described her as a professional beauty). She was also one of the most popular hostesses in London. This helped thrust Ripon into the center of the social whirl. His wife was the party queen, and everyone wanted to meet the best shot in England.

The couple's parties were attended by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra and later King George V with Queen Mary. Caruso and other luminaries entertained the guests, the wine cellar was legendary and the china was superb. Ripon was in fact a great connoisseur of fine china and served as resident expert for several museums and collectors and as a restorationist for one of the finest galleries in London. At one of Ripon's parties, a footman dropped a tray filled with some of his rare porcelain; at several following parties Lady Ripon had cheap china brought in and instructed a servant to dump it just to watch the old boy jump.

Raison d'être

There is no doubt that Ripon was the best shot of his day—perhaps of all time. And, to my great delight, he shot hammerguns exclusively, well after hammerless sidelocks had become the guns of the day. He used three at a time and had them handed to him, at full-cock, by a team of two loaders.

He was so fast with his trio and team that he once killed 28 pheasants in one minute—that's one every 2.4 seconds. On another occasion he had seven birds dead in the air at once, which means he had to change guns 3½ times in the few seconds it takes a high pheasant to fall to the ground! The man was quick and very, very accurate (witness the time he took 2,105 birds with 2,800 shots over the course of three days). Lord Knutsford wrote that Ripon "kills his bird deader, if there be such a word, than anyone I have ever seen."

Another attribute of Ripon's was his skill at shot selection. One of the most often told stories of sporting skill at the turn

seeking a context for it, and found reason to dislike him.

Only a ghostly profile of the "other" Ripon can be conjured now, and that largely through the efforts of the few of his contemporaries who left us memoirs. The image gradually formed in my mind is of a man gifted and driven, striving for excellence in everything, and strongly devoted to shooting. A man with a keen appreciation for art, music and nature who enjoyed the company of his wife and friends.

He was in fact a man who did everything well. Besides his celebrated skills as a shooter, he was a writer, an artist, a collector of fine art, one heck of a billiards player and a singer possessed of a fine tenor voice. He shot with at least four Kings; was treasurer to Queen Alexandra for 22 years; was a director

of the century concerned both Ripon and Lord Walsingham, another top shot of the day. From Jonathan Ruffer's book, *The Big Shots*: "The two men were at a pheasant shoot at Lord Ripon's shoot at Studley Royal in Yorkshire, when a covey of eight partridges suddenly swept over a hedge. On seeing the two groups of guns and loaders, the covey scattered in all directions. Both men got a left and right with each gun, so killing the entire covey, which was picked up on the spot."

Ripon never took another man's birds and he loathed anyone who did. On one occasion a friend was stationed next to him at a shoot and took some of Ripon's pheasants. The incident was reported by the Duke of Portland this way: "I heard de Grey [Ripon] call out, 'All right, Harry, all right. Two can play at that game!' Bang! Bang! Bang!—and very little went to Harry after that."

Ripon's sense of propriety did make allowance for his own exceptional skills though, and one day while shooting next to a colonel he took all the man's birds *after* the colonel had missed them. On the next drive, an easy partridge flew by and Ripon

missed it with both barrels. The colonel was seen to fall to his knees, saying "Lord, I thank thee from the bottom of my heart!"

Ripon was a very consistent shooter who apparently didn't suffer slumps. The Duke of Portland, commenting on Ripon's remarkable consistency and accuracy, wrote: "I remember four extremely high birds passing over de Grey on the Groveley beat at Wilton, where the birds fly exceptionally high. He killed the first three quite dead, and I said to myself, 'The fourth has escaped.' But no!—It came down quite as dead as the others. One remarkable thing about de Grey's shooting was that one hardly ever saw a bird even flutter after he had fired at it."

One such high bird nearly caused a great deal of grief. King Edward VII was stationed next to Ripon and, owing to an injured foot, was shooting from a bath chair. Ripon killed a particularly high pheasant stone dead and, to everyone's horror, it seemed about to fall right on the King's head. Luckily, it fell just a few inches wide of the royal noggin and burst on the arm of the bath chair, covering the King with blood and feathers. His Majesty was none too happy at the moment, but

Date.	Number.	OBSERVATIONS.
Red Deer		Blankney - 2 Lord
Grouse		
Partridges		
Pheasants	208	
Snipe		
Wild Duck		
Wild Geese		
Woodcocks		
Quail		
Sea Fowl		
Wood Pigeon		
Hares		
Rabbits	100	
Various	3	
Total	251	



Set in 1850!



Top to bottom: Ripon taking a high one (note the rapt concentration on the faces of his loaders); a low one; and taking the reins on the way to the butts at Studley Royal.

after his servants cleaned up the mess, he laughed about it.

Always the one to beat

To beat the best is a compelling challenge to some, and Ripon was always the man to beat. Lord



Wemyss, an excellent shot himself, was shooting next to Ripon at the Duke of Cleveland's grouse moor at High Force. As the day progressed a keen rivalry grew up as to who would shoot more grouse. Going into the last drive, Wemyss was slightly ahead of Ripon and had drawn a better position. Unfortunately, during the middle of the drive a spark from Wemyss's black-powder shells ignited the shooting butt. Wemyss made no attempt to put out the fire. "Flaming butts do not matter," he later said, "but beating the best game shot in England mattered a great deal."

Wemyss was eventually driven out by the flames—but not before he had amassed enough birds to top Ripon. The blaze, however, was fanned by the breeze and ended up taking nearly two weeks to extinguish—requiring the entire local work force to carry buckets of water from the valley.

Ripon recorded the incident cryptically in his game book: "24 August, '87. Wemyss set his butt on fire. Ripon—94, 90, 103." No mention is made of Wemyss's score.

Ripon's game books themselves are entertaining and informative (the 53 leather-bound volumes brought £48,000 at a Sotheby's auction in 1986). In addition to his own ink and watercolor illustrations, he recorded not only his bag but often the names of fellow guns and their scores; the weather; and his

assessment of the sport, the management of the estate and the performance of his guns and cartridges. Also included were various other observations, such as the time he was shooting with the Prince of Wales and 15,000 to 20,000 spectators spoiled the day's sport! Then there was the day he shot 328 grouse, with the next-highest gun recording 79. His simple assessment: "Wind puzzled the others."

Ripon usually remained modest about his accomplishments on the game fields. The Duke of Portland reported that neither Ripon nor Harry Stonor, another excellent shot of the day, "bucked or swaggered about



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE INLTON PICTURE LIBRARY



A portrait of the man (above), his lovely wife (right) and one of the Purdey game guns he used on driven shoots.



their skill. It was not at all necessary for them to do so." And in a compendium of shooting sportsmen done by the English magazine *The Field* in 1913, it was said of Ripon: "To have earned the reputation of being the best shot in the Empire is a distinction of which any sportsman might be proud, yet the subject of this biography wears that honour very modestly, just taking the view that anything that one undertakes is worthy of an attempt at excellence, and it is difficult to get him to talk much of his phenomenal success with both gun and rifle."

According to Portland, Ripon never exaggerated when asked about the amount of game he had killed—and he took counting game very seriously. But author Jonathan Ruffer believes otherwise, considering Ripon to be "apparently not adverse to a little exaggeration." It seems that Ripon was shooting at Lord Howe's place with Sir John Willoughby's loader. At the end

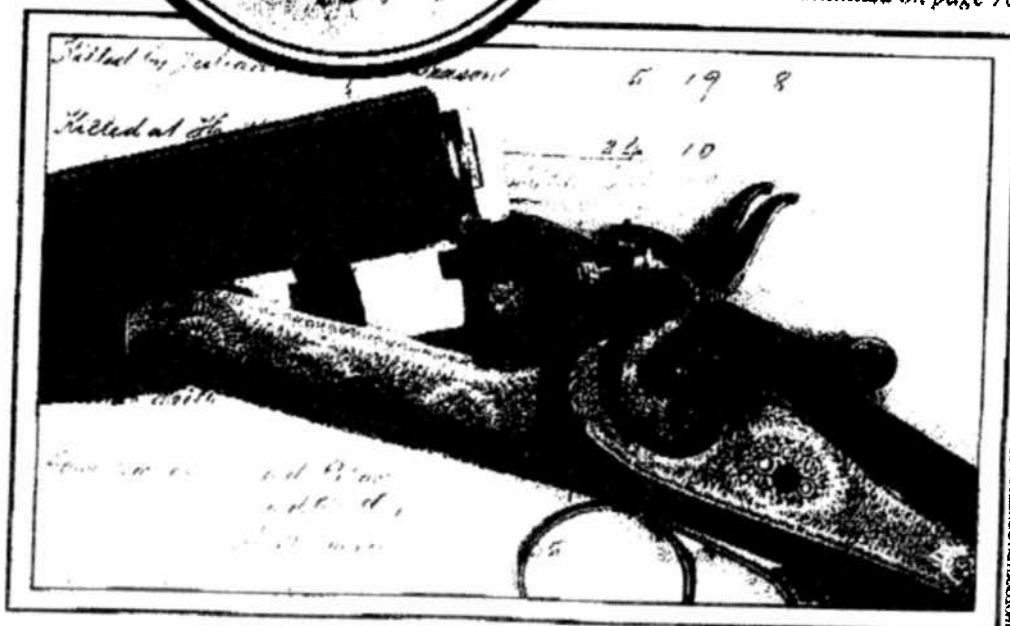
of the day Lord Howe asked how many birds Ripon had killed. Ripon reported that he had taken 124 with 127 cartridges. Willoughby, not known as a tactful man, blurted out "That isn't correct, for my servant told me that you fired over one hundred and fifty." A strained silence ensued, broken by the host urging everyone to join the ladies.

Though Ripon believed that a man must "be born with a certain inherent aptitude to become a really first-rate shot," he was also of the philosophy that practice makes perfect. He worked hard at being the best, going through drills with his loaders at 4 AM on the morning of a shoot and even carrying a cane weighted like one of his Purdeys to better keep in shape for handling them. Of course, things didn't go perfectly all the time. The entry in Ripon's game book on December 18, 1885 reads: "blew top off No. 1 gun with No. 3." Sometimes even a well-oiled machine develops a glitch.

In the off season, Ripon practiced by shooting dragonflies with a .410 while lying on his back! He was also a frequent competitor at live-pigeon matches and, according to Jim Booth, a London writer currently researching a book on such matches, many good shooters refused to compete if Ripon was entered.

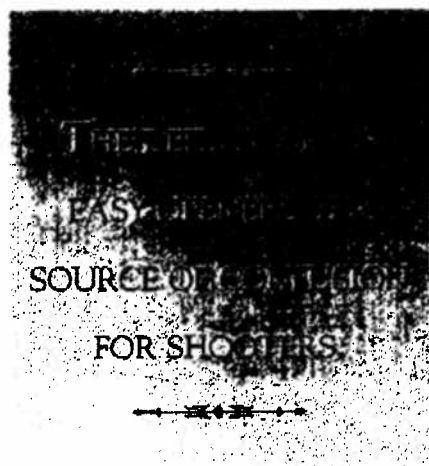
Ripon had his own shooting grounds, at Studley Royal (I love that name!), driven in such a way as to provide the highest pheasants in England, along the east front of Fountains Abbey. At the last drive before noon, a crowd would gather on the lawn to watch Ripon's performance at this difficult spot. The master would stand with his back to the crowd and perform with all three guns and his two loaders, frequently putting on a display that drew subdued applause from his audience. If it didn't interfere with his shooting, he would acknowledge the applause with a grave bow.

continued on page 78



opener, although the mechanism is very different from the Smith. In order to pare down the weight, Lancaster replaced the conventional twin cocking levers with a single lever that lies in the slot of the action bar. This lever's only function is to compress the mainsprings as the action is closed; a separate cocking spring actually rotates the tumbler to the cocked position as the action is opened. At the same time it exerts some force on the steel box that houses the mainspring. This housing bears against the cocking lever, which in turn pushes up against the barrel jump. The cocking springs aren't strong enough to open the action fully, but they certainly make it easier for the shooter to do it.

We don't mean to sound like a broken record, but the confusion over what is a



self-opener (and what isn't) is so pervasive that perhaps you will allow us to say one last time that a true self-opening gun is one that springs open regardless of whether the locks are cocked or tripped; an easy-opener does not.

If there were any Cajun gunmakers, they'd describe easy-openers as *lagniappe*, an extra treat. Owning one is sort of like finding the woman of your dreams and discovering later that she owns a distillery in Scotland. But that's not to say you should pay a premium to buy one, any more than you'd pay extra for a gun that's as good for grouse as it is for quail. Easy-opening is not something that intrinsically merits a higher price—even though some dealers make a great fuss over advertising "assisted-openers" as if they're something extra-special. They are rather special, in their way, but only because they demonstrate the fact that the mechanics of guns can have as many layers of interrelated functions as the uses we make of guns can have layers of meaning.

THE BEST SHOT THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN

continued from page 43

As with all things . . .

Toward the end of his career Ripon apparently grew tired of the highly social aspect of the big shoots, and in a reflective moment wrote: "When I am sitting in a tent taking part in a lengthy luncheon of many courses, served by a host of retainers, my memory carries me back to a time many years ago when we worked harder for our sport, and when, seated under a hedge, our midday meal consisted of a sandwich, cut by ourselves at the breakfast table in the morning, which we washed down by a pull from a flask; and I am inclined to think those were better and healthier days."

And, like most of us when age really begins to show on our faces, he was sure the younger folks were not nearly so dedicated to the art as his contemporaries had been.

"Certainly the young men were keener sportsmen. I remember being hardly able to sleep on the Monday night before a big shoot, and I am sure my feelings were shared by many others of my own age. Now in the youth of the present generation I remark a growing tendency to arrive

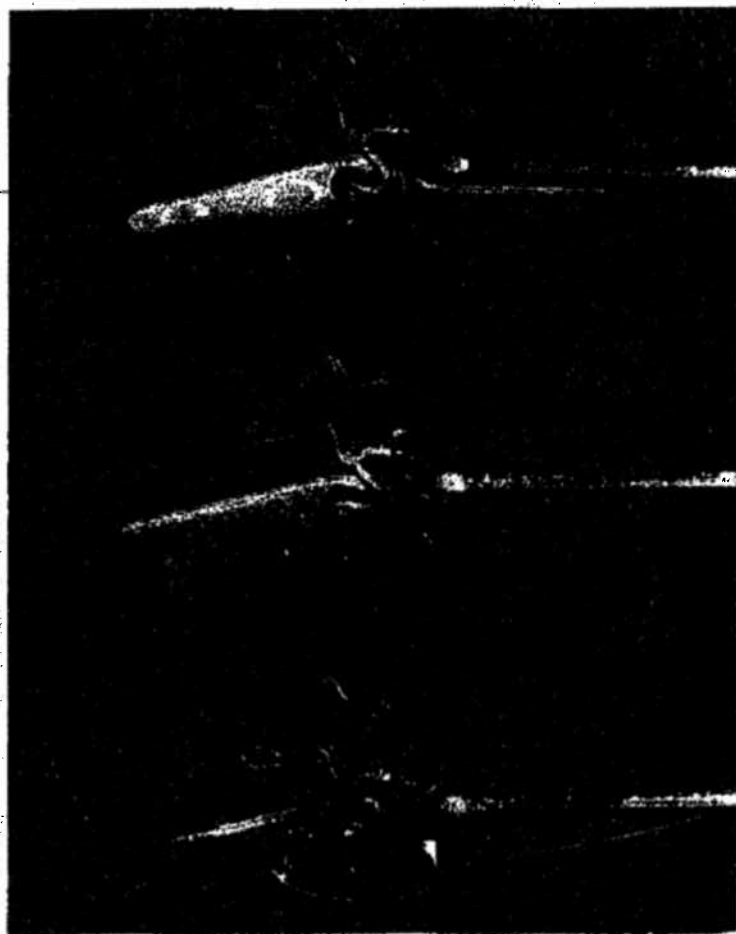
a day later than they are invited, to be called to London by a pressing engagement the day before the shooting ends, and sometimes even to 'chuck,' as they euphoniously express it, a visit altogether."

In a sense, he may have outlived his time to become a sort of relic—a time when the King shot and all the great estates were expected to raise game and put on grand shoots. This unique era was ending as Ripon moved from middle to old age. Both the wealth and position to host such events, as well as the social support for doing it, waned after World War I, when the huge taxes levied to help recoup the enormous costs of that terrible event destroyed many large estates. The loss of so many fine young men of the upper class in the war further curtailed the desire to continue and, like all things, this unique and fascinating period came to a close.

A fitting end

Ripon died a shooter. The final entry in his game books reads as follows: "Tom's Corner, September 22nd, 1923. Lord

GUNS & TECHNIQUE



Ripon 166, Mr. Morris 26, Mr. Wade 21, total 213. Lord Ripon's drives: 40, 17, 22, 51 (including 1 snipe). At the last drive Lord Ripon killed 51 grouse, and at 3:15 PM while the last birds were being brought in he fell down dead. He missed the snipe with his first two shots and killed it with the first shot from his second gun."

On the moors at Studley Royal, gun in hand, loaders attending and birds in the air around him, Ripon hit the deck with a heart attack and was brought in from the field in the game cart with the grouse and his final bird, a snipe.

Author's Note: It is difficult to gather information on a man who died 70-odd years ago, particularly when he lived on the other side of the world—and trans-Atlantic telephone time is so horribly expensive. (The six-hour time difference doesn't help either, nor does the English reticence to talk with writers).

Edward Playfair, of Sotheby's, is an expert on medals and honors and was quick to respond to my requests and sup-

plied me with catalogs and other records. Another big help was Gavin Gardiner, who runs the gun department at Sotheby's. I thank him for his thoughtful and patient answers to my many questions and for the personal recollections of handling Ripon's game books: "I carried them about quite a lot and they were heavy as hell."

And thanks also to James Booth, late of Sotheby's and still an active writer and researcher of guns and shooting. His personal notes gathered during three months of examination of Ripon's game books were most revealing and much appreciated. His forthcoming book on live pigeon matches during the Hurlingham era should be a wonderful read.

Rick Pratt is a freelance writer in Port Aransas, Texas, and the shotgunning editor for Texas Outdoors Journal. He says he would have given just about anything to buy Ripon's trio of Purdey ejector hammerguns, but decided that keeping his wonderful wife was more important. (He couldn't do both.)

It is known that Lord Ripon had at least two trios of Purdey hammerguns made for him, one set with ejectors and one without. He also owned a very rare 20-bore bar-in-wood Purdey, this one a self-cocking hammergun, which set an auction record for hammerguns at Sotheby's in 1986.

Most of the guns were round-body back-actions with "island" locks. A gun configured this way is beautifully slim and has a balance and liveliness that a hammerless gun cannot quite equal.

He used 12-bore guns with 30-inch barrels and believed a game gun should weigh 6¾ pounds and be just a bit barrel-heavy. Ripon's non-ejector trio had no chokes, and the ejector trio was choked light Improved Cylinder and Modified. Purdeys regulated the guns to shoot either 1 or 1½ ounces of No. 6 shot (slightly larger than our No. 7½) and declared the patterns to be excellent. Stock dimensions were 14¾" x 1¼" (at the face, not the comb) x 2¾", with ¼" of cast off at the heel and 3/16" at the toe.

I shot the trio of ejector guns at West-side Shooting Grounds, in Houston, with Lock, Stock & Barrel author Cyril Adams. They were nicely balanced, very eager guns and a distinct pleasure to shoot.

Of course, it takes more than just good guns to become the world's best shot, and Ripon was frequently asked to explain his style of shooting. Doing just that in the book *King Edward VII as a Sportsman*, by Alfred E.T. Watson, Ripon wrote, "My favourite maxim: Aim high, keep the gun moving and never check." In other words, don't stop your swing and remember to follow through.

He also placed great emphasis on footwork, noting, "I have improved the shooting of several of my friends quite 25% by showing them how to stand."

Judgment of distance and picking one bird out of a flock and sticking with it were also quite important, as was determining lead. But mostly, the Ripon method consisted of practice: "Proficiency in any art means hard work and perseverance . . ." But he was quick to add that even a great deal of practice will only pay off if the practitioner has a certain inherent aptitude. Part nature, part nurture.

Though Ripon didn't mention how to hold the gun, looking at the few photographs taken of him actually shooting shows his easy right-hand grip, the gun obviously controlled by the forward hand, and a look of rapt concentration on the faces of his loaders.

—R.P.

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