

The intager

THE OFFICIAL
NEWSLETTER OF
THE DOUBLE
GUN SOCIETY,
VINTAGE
GUNNERS

VOLUME TWO, ISSUE 3 ----- THIRD/FOURTH QUARTER 2017

President's Message

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want thank all of you for a great 2017 Vintage Gunners Cup. As usual Hopkins Game Farm did a wonderful job; our thanks go out to them. Although a bit on the toasty side, we did manage to avoid the hurricanes. The targets were very nice and the exhibitors, as usual, brought some museum grade goods. For those interested, event scores can be found on WinScoreOnline by clicking [HERE](#).



We are already planning next year's event. The Vintage Gunners Cup will be at the same time and place: September 21 - 23, 2018 at Hopkins Game Farm. Put it on your calendar. Remember this is YOUR shoot, so make plans now to come out and support it.

I want to thank the L.C. Smith, Parker, Fox and German gun collector associations for their efforts in making the Vintage Gunners Cup a success. The Parker Gun Collectors Association has chosen the Vintage Gunners Cup to host their annual meeting in 2018. Thank you, we are honored.

Also, a special thanks to Stephen Murray and George Juer of Purdey for such a wonderful presentation on English gun making. The compliments are still coming in. I hope they can repeat it next year.

And I especially want to thank Morris Baker and RST for the central tent we were all able to enjoy.

Hammers back!

Gary Lacey
President, Vintage Gunners

2017 Vintage Gunners Cup

Some pictures from the 2017 Vintage Gunners Cup. Most are courtesy of Morris Baker of RST.



For the first time, not only were the winners of the two-man flurry event honored, but also their loaders.







Out on the rifle range. Not pictured here, but a big “Thank You” to Haley Pearsall for his work on making the rifle events happen.









News from the Field

Special Report: Election of New President of The Vintage Gunners

On December 13, 2017, the Board of Directors of the Vintage Gunners met to elect a new President.

After completing a two-year term in office, Gary Lacey tendered his resignation, having led the organization through difficult change and re-organizing the Vintage Gunners Cup. We thank Gary for all his hard work on behalf of the Vintage Gunners and the double-gun community at large.

Stepping in to take over the Presidency is Tom Snyder, current President of the Northern Appalachian Mountains chapter in Pennsylvania and New York. Tom brings great energy and enthusiasm to the office and is looking forward to growing The Vintage Gunners. We will be hearing from him directly in the next issue of The Vintager in the first quarter of 2018.

Also elected on December 13, was Joe Norcom to the office of Treasurer. Joe is the President of the Carolinas chapter and has been a loyal member for some 20 years. This role at the Vintage Gunners has been vacant for too long, and we appreciate his leadership and dedication in taking on the job of Treasurer.

For now, dues and correspondence can continue to go to the Georgia Headquarters address as the transition of duties is completed. Look for further official correspondence from Headquarters in January.

In the meantime, extend your congratulations and appreciation to Tom Snyder and Joe Norcom. We are honored by their service to our organization.

Florida vs. California SxS Challenge

By Hal Hare, President, Sunshine Vintagers

On August 19th the 3rd Annual SxS Shotgun Challenge was conducted pitting the California SxS Society against the Sunshine Vintagers of Florida in an East versus West shooting challenge for side-by-side bragging rights.

The Challenge between these two clubs began in 2015 with the help of Dr. Robert Hill, who is a member of both clubs. 'Dr. Bob' spends six months in California and six months in Florida shooting his favorite side-by-side games. Both groups enjoy the competition with their favorite side-by-side shotguns.

Our 'challenge' is a match in which each club shoots 100 Sporting Clays targets on the same date. This is not a 'shoulder-to-shoulder' competition due to the distances involved, but rather an Internet match, allowing each club to shoot at their home club - and then exchange their team scores via e-mail. All members of each club are invited to participate, but only the top five scores were used for the team competition.

Florida won the inaugural event in 2015, with California taking the event in 2016 to tie up the competition. The 2017 match-up was to serve as a tie breaker. The California club is larger and was able to field a team of 21 shooters, while the Florida club could only muster 9 souls to represent the Sunshine Vintagers. [Many of our members are only in-State for the winter months which limits our summer shooting attendance.]



Both clubs shot on an extremely hot August day with temperatures of 95 degrees. The California Team's top five shooters posted a 357x500 bowing to the Florida Team's 443x500 to take the SxS Challenge Title for 2017.

In the photo above: Sunshine Vintagers l-r: Carl Norton, Jeff Walker, Steve Sauter, Matt Piechoniak, Bob Hunter, Stan Williams, and Brett Youngster. Not shown: Hal Hare and Michael Hope.

Watson Brothers Gun and Rifle Manufacturers: The London Gun Makers You May Not Have Heard Of

By F. Jack Hurley, Carolina Vintagers (Last two photos courtesy of Watson Brothers)

My journey to find Watson Brothers began, as do so many of my small adventures, with a gun. I had been cruising the Holt's Auctioneers website (as is my wont) when my eyes lit upon a pretty little 20 bore with a couple of unusual features. First, there was the trigger guard; it was like nothing



I had ever seen from the modern era and more like something one might have found on an 18th Century fowler. Then there was the extra-long forearm, again unlike anything I had seen on an English small bore. As I looked closer, I realized that the engraving was fabulous, straight from the 1920s Gothic Revival and looking suspiciously like the work of

Harry Kell. Whoa! Nice gun! The high/low estimates seemed attractive, so I put the gun on my watch list and made a hard copy of the Holt's entry, noting the maximum that I would bid on the gun.

On the day of the auction (in December of 2016) I was on pins and needles and I watched closely as item after item came up for sale and lot #1507 came closer. When the bidding on the little Watson Brothers began, I was right there, via skype, up 100 BPS, up another 100 BPS, getting close to my top - - then, magically, the bidding stopped and I was the final bidder. Hot Damn!

The process of importing the gun took months, but then it always does. There is simply no point in trying to rush these things. Neither British nor American bureaucrats like being nudged. Eventually the little gun did arrive and has proved to be everything I could have hoped. It is simply a fabulous little 20 bore. Now, however, I began to turn over a lot of questions in my mind. Even more convinced that the engraving was by Harry Kell, I wanted to know if this gun was a standard model that Watson Brothers made or if it was a "one-off." When was it made? What else could I find out about this little five pound, ten ounce wand?

First, I wanted to learn what I could about Watson Brothers and for that I went to that font of information and visual treats, *Shooting Sportsman: The Magazine of Wingshooting and Fine Guns*. There, in the July/August Issue of 2015



was an article by Douglas Tate, with luscious photos by Matthew Brown on “Watson Big Bores.” From that piece I learned that Watson Brothers was founded in 1875 by Thomas W. Watson, son in law of the pistol maker, William Trantor and became Watson Brothers in 1884 when Thomas took on his brother Arthur H. as a partner. The two men prospered by specializing in small bores, made to exquisite proportions with wonderful engraving. Many of their guns were sold as boys or ladies weapons. After the two brothers died in the 1930s, the company was combined with several others



and rode out the depression specializing, as it always had, in the smallest of small arms.

After several more re-combinations, the name was bought in 1989 by Mike Louca, a Purdey trained master gunsmith who was determined to bring the name Watson Brothers back to stand-alone status. Since then he has worked with a small in-house staff and a stable of England’s finest out-workers to make some of

the most desirable guns and rifles that the London gun trade has ever seen. Two additions to the Watson Brothers line have been designed and created by Louca: a wonderfully svelte over-and-under that is lighter, gage for gage, than any other on the market and, at the far end of the gunning

spectrum, a series of massive side-by-side four bores for use in taking geese on the British foreshore.

The more I learned about Watson Brothers, the more I wanted to learn more about my own little 20 bore and the more I wanted to meet this creative genius named Mike Louca. As luck would have it, I had already scheduled a trip to visit family in Scotland and England and so I emailed Staci West, general factotum at Watson Brothers and set up a visit on my last full day in country. At the appointed day and time, I presented myself at 41 Tower Bridge Road. Now, if you have visited the Purdey shop in Mayfair you need to understand that Watson Brothers is the anti-Purdey. No fancy showroom here. Tower Bridge Road, or at least this part of it, is in Southwark (pronounced Suthuck) on the unfashionable side of the Thames. The plain door, with a small brass plaque announcing the name of the firm, leads directly into the large workroom. There are a milling machine, a couple of lathes, some workbenches with vices, their tops covered with gravers burins, cold chisels and hand files - hundreds of hand files on benches and racks all over the room.

The young man who answered the door, James Brown, Actioner for Watson Brothers, led me through the workroom to an office at the back and introduced me to Mike Louca. The man who has designed some of the most iconic guns of the modern era in England proved to be a compact, strongly built, rather self-effacing gentleman with a ready smile and an equally ready willingness to take some time from his busy day to look at photos of my little gun and to show an American visitor some of the shop's finished products as well as some of the things they were currently working on. Oh yes, side-by-side lovers, I handled and admired one of his over-and-under twelve bores and it is a lovely thing withal. There were also several stunning side-by-sides, including a

twenty-eight bore that was simply to die for. The action for one of the four bores was lying on a work bench and it was massive. I handled it briefly and I swear it weighed more than most twelve gauge shotguns. Those guns, finished out, weigh



upwards of twenty pounds with thirty-eight inch barrels. The pink footed goose population of Britain will need to watch out when these guns start showing up on the foreshore.



Before leaving, I made arrangements to have my gun researched and a few days after my return to the US a letter arrived. The gun was completed in 1923, just as I had guessed. Staci West's letter continued:

“The gun is a 20 bore Anson and Deeley boxlock ejector, with an Anson rod and Southgate ejector system with an extra long forend of 10 ½ “. The action is also based on the Purdey model. Interestingly, which confirms your photographs of the trigger guard, it [The work order] says ‘special guard’ with a small sketch showing the guard shape which is exactly like the photograph you showed to Michael.

Adorned with beautiful engraving, done by Harry Kell, with carved fences.

The gun was originally stocked by Watson's renowned stocker Ebenezer Hands... with a finished weight of 5 lbs, 10 oz.

I hope you find the above information of interest. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Kind regards, Staci West”

Well, yes, I do find the above information of interest. Wow! Both Harry Kell and Ebenezer Hands worked on my little 20 bore! I feel like I am shooting with a whole volume of history every time I take it out! This is, of course, why we collect fine old firearms; they connect us to great craftsmen of the past and great craftsmen of the present. They lead us to new friendships and new contacts within the wonderful world of fine guns and gunmakers. What more can one ask?

CZ-USA Custom Shop

By Hal Hare, President, Sunshine Vintagers

Vintage Gunners should know that CZ-USA offers stocks with custom dimensions and various grades of wood for their line of shotguns. A picture of my special order is attached. Cost for mine was \$800.00 plus the cost of the gun. Turn-around time was less than 10 weeks! Seemed like a fair price for a custom shotgun. Sure, some may feel that it is silly to spend \$800.00 on an upgrade of a



\$1,000.00 shotgun—but I thought this was a great deal and easily fit my budget. I am the proud owner of a unique shooter!

The CZ-USA Custom Shop has the capacity to produce only about 20 guns per year so, so they do not advertise this option widely. But, if you are interested in project

contact, Dave Miller, Shotgun Product Manager/Special Projects/Marketing, CZ-USA, at 800-955-4486, ext 325.

Editor's Note

Hello All,

As always, I'm looking for new material for the newsletter, so please send any contributions. It can be anything from chapter news to hunting stories to poetry. I'd also love photos of guns along with any background information you have on them. Ownership of any nice guns can remain anonymous if requested. This is your newsletter, so please contribute.

As a reminder, as a part of your Vintage Gunner membership, you now have a user name and password to access the forums and other non-public sections of our website:

<http://vintagers.org/home>.

Your username is simply your first initial and your last name. So for me, my username would be "mhaney". (The initial is for the first name we have registered with the Vintage Gunners, so if your name is Robert, but you normally go by Bob, your username probably starts with "b".) In a very few cases, we had some overlap of first initials and last names, but fortunately we knew the middle initial for at least one of those people and added it in.

The password is simply set for everyone at this point to "password1901". So please log in and change your password as soon as you can. Below are some directions for logging in, changing your

password and using the forums. If you already had a registered account on the site, we did not change it.

If you have any problems with the website, or to submit material for publication in *The Vintager*, please email me at: mmhaney@comcast.net.

Thank you!

Matt Haney
President, Georgia Vintagers
mmhaney@comcast.net

Announcements

Membership Dues – Speaking of dues, please continue collecting 2018 dues. Membership maintenance and growth remain a priority for 2018.



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We shoot most Tuesdays or Wednesdays -- contact Ron to get on the email invitation/advisory list

NORTHEAST (NEW ENGLAND)

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DOWN EAST (MAINE)

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We shoot most Saturdays or Sundays. Contact Matt Haney to join us.

MAGNOLIA CHAPTER (MISSISSIPPI/TENNESSEE)

Contact: Bill Walters, President -- 662-624-6534, ext 112 -- bwalters@wltalterscpas.com

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Contact: Mark Douglas, President -- hi-sport@sbcglobal.net



Photo of 20ga Parker DHE courtesy of LPC Photography.

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I started gunsmithing 20 years ago for Master stockmaker Brent Umberger at Sportsman Haven Inc./Stocks by Umberger. Mr Umberger has taught me his skillful trade of stock building, stock fitting, checkering, and gunsmithing. After the passing of Mr Umberger, I continued my training by mastering the art of hot bluing and slow rust bluing.

I offer the following services:

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2018 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR THE VINTAGE GUNNERS AND DOUBLE GUN SOCIETY

Please print legibly.

Name: _____

Name of spouse if couple membership: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Date of Birth: (at least month and day) _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____

Cell: _____ (optional but often handy)

Email: _____

Chapter: _____

Check # and amount: _____ Cash amount: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Membership includes issues of the National Chapter Newsletter (by email), ability to advertise in Newsletter, liability insurance coverage at any Vintage Gunners' event, admittance to all Vintage Gunners' events nationwide including The Vintage Gunners Cup and membership in The Double Gun Society.

- 1 Membership is for one calendar year from January 1 to December 31, 2018.
- 2 New members joining after Sept. get the rest of current year and following year.
- 3 Annual Membership: \$75.00 Individual
- 4 Annual Membership: \$120.00 Couple Membership
- 5 Make checks payable to: The Vintage Gunners
- 6 Mail to: The Vintage Gunners
45 Wild Flower Court
Satee, GA 30571