



FROM £12,000

Boxall & Edmiston scrollback boxlock

Boxall & Edmiston boxlock	
GAUGE	12-bore (20, 16 and 28 made to special order)
BARRELS	Length to customer's specifications, fixed chokes, with Teague chokes an option
ACTION	Anson & Deeley boxlock
FEATURES	21st century technology incorporating 19th century principles
MAKER	Boxall & Edmiston, tel 01743 762352, or visit www.boxallandedmiston.co.uk
PRICE	£12,000 plus VAT



The decoration on the steelwork is Boxall & Edmiston's latest in-house pattern

Action Station

The Boxall & Edmiston boxlock ejector very much embodies the traditions of British gunmaking. The scrollback boxlock is visually pleasing and has an attractiveness and honesty of design that is hard to beat.



To manufacture a quality shotgun in the UK is a brave enterprise, given all the rules

butt, hand of the stock and fore-end are simple yet elegant and beautifully executed — likewise, the neatly proportioned panels and drop points. As for the dark chestnut-coloured walnut with darker veining, this is a piece of wood that would not disgrace a best sidelock. The wood is oil finished, of course, contrasting nicely with the liquorice black barrels and polished action.

Attention to detail

Viewed overall, it is a very attractive double trigger boxlock (a single trigger version is on the way) with Anson & Deeley lockwork, modified Southgate ejectors and Deeley push button fore-end catch. The finish is super, and the decoration on the steelwork — Boxall & Edmiston's latest in-house pattern — has an elegance that I found very attractive. It is not necessarily to everyone's taste, of course, but on production guns there is the option of bespoke engraving.

Even when put in those terms it does not seem to be anything out of the ordinary because, like many Best quality British guns, it is actually very conservative in concept. What makes the difference between a good gun and an exceptional one is the attention to detail, and there are some very thoughtful features incorporated in the Boxall & Edmiston design, not all of them actually visible.

Take, for example, the increased thickness of steel under the action flats, something unseen but a vital contribution to the inherent strength of the gun; or the carefully tapered barrels to help impart good handling characteristics, and long forcing cones to help reduce recoil and

shot deformation resulting in improved shot patterns. The wide and well-positioned extractor cam is another plus point.

To me, the crowning technical delight on all the production guns are the triangular section extractor legs. Together, these form a self-supporting diamond shape negating the need for a potentially weak guide leg and an aid to reducing frictional forces. This is not, it has to be said, a completely new idea but has been rarely used in the past, probably due to the difficulty of making the mating hole to accommodate the legs.

There are other subtleties such as the large dogtooth strikers, something that may seem old hat compared with disc set strikers, but which are actually in many ways superior. From the gunsmith's point-of-view I also like the idea of being able to insert a mainspring while the hammer is in position — a simple and efficient method of assembly that has eluded many British gunmakers for years.

Sweet to use

Still, what really matters, whether it is a £100 gun or a £10,000 gun, is performance in the field. The Boxall & Edmiston truly is a lightweight game gun. The 36g loads of No. 5 shot, which are needed to simulate "high pheasants" do, however, give fairly noticeable recoil. In reality, this gun is built around 30g loads and with those it was sweet to use.

Ejection was flawless, well-timed and effective, proving that a side-by-side is no laggard in these matters. Trigger pulls proved to be crisp and creep-free, qualifying very much for the oft-quoted "breaking glass" category. An auto-safe is standard,

This elegant scrollback boxlock from a new English gunmaker is a finely finished shotgun that will perform on any shoot, says **Lewis Potter**

There is a story about a farmer who won a million pounds and, when asked what he would do with it, replied that he would carry on farming until it had all gone. This is a view members of the gun trade can sympathise with, especially if they are a maker. Yet the wonderful thing is that those with sufficient enthusiasm continue to produce fine guns, and new manufacturers do enter the business.

To manufacture a quality shotgun in the UK is in itself a brave enterprise, particularly given all the rules, regulations, overheads and

other costs that bedevil UK businesses. Many individuals contemplating such a move would look at the financing and conclude that some short cuts might be necessary, perhaps at least until they are properly established. The other common approach is to purchase an existing and recognised name as a marketing ploy to give instant credibility.

Peter Boxall and James Edmiston, the combined brains and finance behind the Boxall & Edmiston venture, have done neither of these and instead have taken the hardest route of all — they have not only manufactured

a truly British shotgun in-house, but have also let the quality speak for itself in establishing the company name.

Lightweight game gun

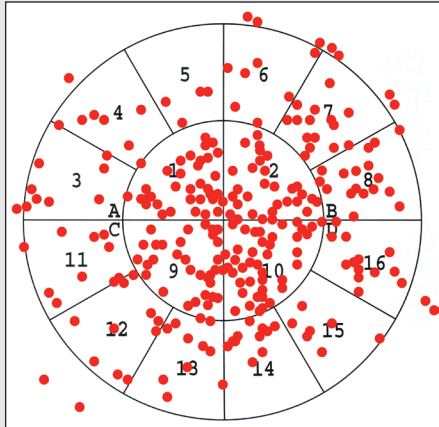
Their present top-of-the-range shotgun is a sideplated boxlock with hidden dowel pins (which hold the hammers and sears), a gun of which it has been said "combines the elegance of a sidelock with the practicality of a boxlock". However, what attracted me was their new scrollback boxlock. It is a style I am particularly fond of, and, though this was the first of its breed (in many ways a working prototype) it is still a finely finished piece of work that you could take out on any shoot.

This gun is a 12-bore with 2¾in (70mm) chambers, and a 20-bore will soon be a standard option with 16 and 28-bores made to special order. At around 6¾lb, it qualifies as a lightweight game gun and handles in a fast, smooth and predictable manner. Happily, it fitted me very well and, though a length of pull of 15¼in is slightly more than I would need when wearing winter clothing, it was balanced out by the 30in barrels. Bespoke stock dimensions are the norm with a gun like this but as a working sample model it has to conform to some reasonably average measurements. So, a drop across the comb running at a fairly standard 1½ to 2½in was no surprise, with a nice bit of cast for a right-hander. The shaping is the essential English style with a slim comb, pleasingly curved face to the stock and neatly inlet silver oval.

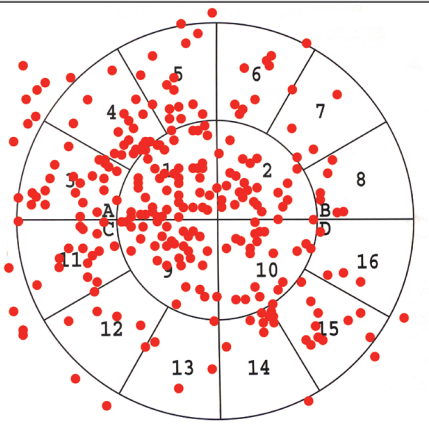
The hand-cut chequering panels on the

Pattern Plates

Patterns were tested at 30 yards using Lyalvale Express 30g No. 6 Shot Supreme Game with fibre wad.



▲ Pattern sheet one: Nominal half choke barrel, even pattern, a bit tighter than expected



▲ Pattern sheet two: Three quarters choke barrel, pattern heavier in the middle

BUYING A NEW GUN?

Visit www.shootingtimes.co.uk for more than 80 online reviews of recent shotgun, rifle and air rifle models!

What's the score?

CONSTRUCTION Well thought out, incorporating subtle improvements to the reliable Anson & Deeley design	20 20
HANDLING Smooth and predictable, it handles as an English gun should, which inspires confidence	19 20
FINISH Best quality, traditional finish with eye-catching decoration but, overall, the styling is restrained	18 20
FIT Normally available as a bespoke fit but some off-the-shelf guns will become available	18 20
VALUE Out of my league, but knowing how much work is involved, it is worth the money	19 20

TOTAL 94/100

CONCLUSION

It was a privilege to test this scrollback boxlock not only because of its fine lines and good finish, but also because of the careful and thoughtful work that went into creating it. Furthermore, it links together the latest technology of machine-aided manufacture of parts with 19th century hand-fitting and values. We really need more of this — it is a bold enterprise and I wish Messrs Boxall and Edmiston the best of luck.

incorporating an attractive and thoroughly practical ramped safety button. Patterns were tighter than expected with the cartridges used on test and, for this gun, showed the superior performance with the type of shot loads it has been built to handle. ■