

PRESS RELEASE

GAVIN GARDINER TO OFFER GUNS BELONGING TO THE HIGHEST SCORING RAF FIGHTER PILOT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, JOHNNIE JOHNSON IN DECEMBER SALE.



Gavin Gardiner Limited's December sale of **Modern & Vintage Sporting Guns** on Wednesday, December 13, 2017 – just in time for the Boxing day Shoot - will include a good selection of fine English and European sporting guns by makers such as London makers Purdey, Holland & Holland and Boss & Co. The auction, the only Sporting Gun Auction to take place in Mayfair – the heart of London's world-famous gun-making district will commence at 2pm and takes place at *Sotheby's, New Bond Street, London W1A 2AA*.

Among the highlights of the auction is a matched pair of 20-bore no.1 model sidelock ejector guns by Spanish maker AYA that belonged to Air Vice Marshal Johnnie Johnson - the highest scoring RAF fighter pilot of the Second World War, which is estimated at £7,000-9,000. Johnson was a remarkable man - he shot down 38 enemy aircraft in the skies over Europe between June 1941 and September 1944 and often likened air combat to wildfowling. He flew over 1000 missions over the course of the War and was never shot down. His aircraft was only hit once

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by a single tray cannon shell and all of his victories (bar a quarter share of a ME110) were against single engined fighters, a quite remarkable feat. With his tremendous eye and judgement he brought to his performance with the cannon of his Spitfire the same principles of deflection shooting that had proved so effective against game birds with a shotgun in his youth (see *catalogue for more biographical details*).

Elsewhere, a few items with connections to politicians or aristocracy include a fine pair of 12-bore self-opening sidelock ejector guns by James Purdey & Sons is estimated at £25,000 – 35,000. The maker confirms that the guns were built in 1917 and they are formerly the property of Paul Channon, the former Conservative MP and later Baron Kelvedon.

While a scarce pair of 12-bore side lever sidelock ejector guns by Henry Atkin is expected to fetch £10,000 – 15,000. The maker confirms that the guns were built in 1906 for Henry Cadogan, Viscount Chelsea. The guns were subsequently re-barrelled and restocked by the maker in 1969. Henry Cadogan, Viscount Chelsea, was born in 1868 and was a British Army Officer, Civil Servant and politician. He was the Conservative member of the House of Commons, elected twice to the seat of Bury St Edmunds. He died in 1908.

A .275 bolt-action sporting rifle by John Rigby & Co is estimated at £2,500-3,500 and was built in 1927 for the Earl of Clarendon. It was re-barrelled by the maker in 1969 and it is thought that the scope was fitted at this date. Clarendon took his seat in the House of Lords on his father's death in 1914. He served as Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and in 1931 was appointed the Governor General of South Africa, a post he held until 1937. He was made a Knight of the Garter and was later Lord Chamberlain of the Household between 1938 and 1952.

Another rifle of interest is a .300 hammer rook rifle of Holland & Holland pattern. The rifle appears to be an example of Holland & Holland's celebrated "Five Guinea Rifle". Although the barrel top surface is not signed, the serial number is in the correct range and the barrel underside is stamped with the HJH mark that is usually found on these rifles, as illustrated on page 81 in Colin Greenwood's book on the subject (est: £700 – 900).

GAVIN GARDINER LIMITED

Auctioneers of Fine Modern and Vintage Sporting Guns, Rifles and Accessories

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The sale will include a strong section of accessories and more curious items – which could make wonderful Christmas gifts.

VIEWING:

Tuesday, December 12 – 9am – 4.30pm

Wednesday, December 13 – 9am – 1pm

NEXT AUCTIONS:

April 18, 2018 - Sotheby's, New Bond Street, London

August 27, 2018 – Gleneagles Hotel, Perthshire, Scotland

FORTHCOMING 2018 VALUATION DAYS:

Geneva - 23 January

Brussels - 24 January

Paris - 7 February

London - 9 February

Tiverton - 16 February

Edinburgh - 21 February

Glasgow - 22 February

Sussex - 26 February

Birmingham - 28 February

Harrogate - 1 March

For further information, please visit

www.gavingardiner.com or call 01798 875300

You can follow Gavin Gardiner on Twitter @GavinGardiner

For further Press Information, please contact

Rachel Aked on 0044 (0)7790 732448 or Rachel@rachelaked.co.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Gavin Gardiner is the only specialist firearms auctioneer holding his auctions in the heart of London's West End, where he holds two sales each year as well as his prestigious sale at the Gleneagles Hotel, Scotland in August. Gavin has over 20 years experience in this field. Coming from a traditional background, he was brought up with guns and shooting and has been involved with the Gun Trade from an early age. He first worked for Sotheby's in 1982 helping with weekend viewing of a Sporting Gun auction, while still at School. From that moment he was hooked and has been involved in almost every Sotheby's Sporting Gun auction since. His passion became a full time job in 1987 when he joined Sotheby's initially as a porter on a one day a week assignment to the Gun Department, this soon became five days and he never looked back. He has been involved with many memorable auctions over the years, including Sotheby's sales in New York and Geneva as well as the renowned Gleneagles auction that has remained the market leader in this sector for over twenty years. He has also worked for one of the leading London Gunmakers which gives him a unique perspective in this field. Returning to Head Sotheby's Sporting Gun Department Worldwide in 2001 he doubled turnover in his first year, and has continued to develop and refine the auctions since. He left Sotheby's at the beginning of 2006 to establish his own company.

November 2017