



Westley Richards 16 Best Quality Droplock

Serial Number 17453

\$25000.00

DESCRIPTION

While Westley Richards & Co. offered and produced 16g guns throughout its history, guns in this bore size rarely come to market, especially with a “droplock” action. The gun featured here was originally made as the number “2” of a pair of 16g *Best Quality Hammerless Ejector Guns* completed in 1913 for Mr. R.A. Datton.

W.R.&Co. has long dealt in pre-owned guns and rifles of all makes and models, but especially in guns of their own make, and this pair of pre-owned guns was later re-sold by Westley Richards to a Mr. R.W. Hill in 1928.

Factory ledgers confirm that gun number “2” was returned to the Westley Richards & Co. factory in 1970 to have a second set of barrels fitted. What happened to the number “1” gun of the pair, remains a mystery to us.

Fifty-four years later the number “2” gun finds itself in the U.S. and once again for sale by Westley Richards & Co.

Built one year after the firm’s iconic Centenary catalog was released and, based on the guns I’ve handled, the beginning of one of Westley’s best eras of gunmaking, this gun has the classic Westley features that were all quite new prior to WW-I. The treble grip action body has Westley’s unmistakable Snap Lever, an automatic safety, patent selective *One Trigger*, a hinged cover plate, and hand detachable locks.

Standard for well over 100 years on best quality guns, the gun is engraved with the House’s small traditional scroll surrounding the Maker’s name in flowing banners on each side of the action and its distinctive pattern on the cover plate. A pointing dog is shown in profile on the guard bow. The words “*Patent One Trigger*” are engraved arching over the top-lever and the word “SAFE” is inlaid in gold. Originally being the second gun of a pair, it has a “2” inlaid in gold in the appropriate places.

The straight hand grip complements the action body’s rounded edges and has a very fine checkering on the forend and hand of the buttstock with a 14 ¼” LOP over a leather covered recoil pad. The original forend has the traditional horn forend tip and Westley’s patented forend latch and ejectors. The stock oval along the toe line is blank.

The gun’s original 30” barrels are made of W.R.&Co.’s own “Special Steel” with saddle lumps, a smooth concave rib, and Westley’s doll’s head rib extension. The original B’ham proof marks (ca. 1904 to 1925) are on the bottom of the barrel tubes as is the barrel maker’s initials (H.L.) for H. Lilly. The barrels now measure .665 in the right and .667” in the left and were re-proofed in London (ca. 1954-1989) at .669” (16/1). The barrels are choked virtually the same between ¼ and 3/8 choke with the right barrel measuring .014” and .013” in the left barrel. The top rib is engraved: “*Westley Richards 178 New Bond St. London Gun Makers By Appointment To His Majesty George V Rex Et Imp.*” (Latin for George V, by the grace of God, the King and Emperor). This was the common way W.R.&Co. marked their best guns with their name, address, and royal warrant, prior to the change of address for the London Agency from New Bond St. to Conduit St. in 1917.

The second set of barrels are 28” with saddle-lumps and are appropriately numbered on the bottom of the new barrel tubes with the original serial number as well as the serial number of the new barrels. The barrel flats have 1970 B’ham proof marks for modern 2 ¾” chambers and have ¼ choke in each barrel. A smooth concave game rib that is inlaid “2” on the top rib and marked simply, “Westley Richards & Co. London” as was customary in the 60’s and 70’s. According to factory ledgers, this second set of barrels were made for a Mr. Glaser.

The gun weighs 6 lbs. 2 oz. with the 28” barrels and an even 6 lbs. with the 30” barrels.

The gun remains excellent as refinished. The original stock has a modern leather covered pad and stock oval installed, and wood refinished. All of this done presumably when the second set of barrels were made. The action body shows traces of original color, and the engraving remains excellent and sharp. Overall, the gun is very nice and, for all intents and purposes, a factory two-barrel set.

To a collector, this gun should represent two periods in Westley Richards’ gunmaking history. Originally made in 1913, this gun still shows the high quality craftsmanship of the early twentieth century that the English gun trade, and this maker, are known for. It is also an example of the post WW-II era when the firm was quite prolific in restoring its own vintage guns. After the Second World War, Westley Richards & Co. did not have the wherewithal to produce new droplock shotgun actions. For many decades having a vintage gun refurbished or original action repurposed was the only way Westley’s could offer a droplock shotgun, until the early 1990’s when the firm once again started making shotgun actions with hand detachable locks.

Not only is it an excellent example of the firm's gun making skills over the decades, but this gun also has all the hallmark Westley features.

What' more, this gun is a pleasure to handle and, no doubt, carry in the field.

Considering its bore size, the way it handles, and its configuration...no one who thinks of themselves as a "bird hunter" will find fault with this gun.

SPECIFICATION

Location	US
Make	Westley Richards
Calibre/Gauge	16g
Action	Trigger Plate
Triggers	1
Ejectors	Yes
Barrel Length	28" & 30"
Rib	Smooth
Chamber	2 3/4" and 2 1/2"
Choke Right	Briley
Choke Left	Briley
Stock	N/A
LOP	14 3/8"
Weight	6lbs
Case	Lightweight Canvas 'VC'

