



## An Affordable Classic

Three months ago I invested in a 12 Bore Beretta 686 special over-and-under some twenty years old, little used but with cosmetic attention to the wood work required. Primarily a 28" barrelled multi choke sporter (there is a game model) I considered it would be the best choice as I was seeking an all-round, adaptable gun of quality for a minimal investment.

Beretta are located in Gardone Val Trompia, Italy have been making guns since the early 1500s. And whoever in the Italian company designed the original 686 was a genius. Simply, it epitomises the very best in engineering practice: it is strong, long-lived, and simple, does its job extremely well, and has elegance all of its own.

Unlike most other over-under actions, the bolt is mounted high in the action sittings just under the forward end of the top strap. Two conical locking bolts pass through holes in the breech face to locate with conical holes in the barrel shoulders just below the centre-line of the upper barrel. These bolts are released into the locked position when the breech ends of the barrels depress a small round-nosed pin projecting from the breech face above and to the right of the upper firing pin.

The barrels hinge on circular stub pins located in the forward end of the main action block with spring-loaded ejectors running in dovetail slots machined in the barrel monobloc.

A simple, robust action, which has stood the test of time virtually unaltered for many years. It is the low-profile action against which all others

are judged. As a matter of interest should it ever shoot loose, then bolts with over-size tips, and over-size stub pins, are easily available for expert fitting.

Into the rear of this action is fixed a trigger plate which carries the main elements of the firing mechanism. Hammers are hinged at the bottom and, so are the sears, which are located directly behind the hammers. The hammers are driven by coil springs running on guide rods cocked by independent rods running through the action side walls to engage with twin cocking levers projecting from the rear of the fore-end iron.

The simple but effective trigger mechanism incorporates an inertia weight which is moved by the recoil of the first shot to transfer the trigger to the second barrel. Initial barrel selection is via a switch built into the safety catch.



Built on the familiar monobloc principle, with 3in (76mm) chambers, barrels were produced in 28", 30" and 32" lengths and fitted with a ventilated top rib tapering from 10mm at the breech to 8mm at the muzzle, matted to reduce glare as is the blacking on the barrels. Five flush-fitting stainless choke tubes were originally supplied as standard.

The woodwork was stripped and the odd dent steamed out then oil finished in best London tradition (more perhaps later) and with a Kick Eeze Sporting pad fitted it was off to put some 28 gram cartridges to good use on clay targets.

Not for the feint hearted we started on some driven clays off a 120 foot tower using half choke in both barrels. All I can say is the results were more than impressive, what a little sweetheart, fast handling, controllable, low recoil and a pleasure to shoot.

Next we plumbed for a round of English Skeet, not my forte by any means, but with Cylinder and Improved Cylinder chokes 24 ex 25 from the ISU gun down position will do me thank you.

Finally, a recent morning's Pigeon shooting over decoys produced eighteen good birds for twenty-three cartridges before rain stopped play.

Beretta have over time subjected the original 686 to cosmetic changes (much to its detriment in my opinion) and it is now branded Beretta Silver Pigeon and commands a recommended retail price of £1,665.

However, original 686 specials are out there priced dependant on condition from £650 to £900 and are well worth the money. As to my little beauty it represents more than value for money and as a general all round fast handling shot gun, it is a delight to shoot, own and is socially acceptable in any environment.

*John Goddard*



 **BERETTA**

# Lesley Hits Hat Trick

**L**esley Goddard has continued her winning ways with Gold at the British Universal Trench Grand Prix. The recent competition was shot at Nuthampstead, Hertfordshire. The weather was fine and dry and quite warm, with no wind on the Saturday, and then increasing wind during the Sunday, making a few of the targets 'bounce'.

'Nutty' is a notorious ground for a bad round, where, for no particular reason, the score will be low, and this causes quite a few shaking heads, with competitors left wondering what had gone wrong. Sometimes when this happens it can rob them of medal positions. This was what happened to Lesley, with a last round of 19 on the Saturday, and a first round of 18 on the Sunday. Ask her why? She has no idea! Every round should have a 2 in front of it, 21, 22, 23 etc. So no excuses, just work harder, dig deeper, and carry on to the next 'one shot'.

Going in to the last round, using all her sport psychology and hypnotherapy skills, Lesley's thoughts were; "I am still in with a chance, don't give it to them, make them win!"

That was the plan of action, relax, let it happen, shoot every clay as if it is the only one you're going to get. Even in the wind, with clays dropping and bouncing, Lesley managed to score 23, finishing on 174 ex 200. Abby Burton, who had won the competition the previous two years, now had to shoot 24 to win, 23 for a sudden death shoot off, or 22 for runner-up. She was on 23 with two targets to shoot, then she missed the penultimate one, and that meant Lesley had won.

What a season this has been for Lesley, ending it with a hat trick of titles.

## **The English, British and World Champion.**

Lesley will be running sport psychology seminars (which cover all sports) around the country, if you are interested, to learn how your mind works, so you can improve your sports performance, then please contact her on 07961770971, or email [info@lesleygoddard.com](mailto:info@lesleygoddard.com). The first seminar was held at East Yorkshire Gun club, nr Beverley on Thursday 29th October, 2009, and the second seminar on Saturday 14th November, 2009. Other dates and venues to be arranged.

Lesley has also (in partnership with Phil Underwood), started the new Hypnoslim Clubs.

For information, check out the website [www.hypnoslimclubs.co.uk](http://www.hypnoslimclubs.co.uk)

LESLEY GODDARD

