

goods were often stamped with his logo of a jockey's cap with riding whip beneath and the brand name 'Nimrod'. This name arose from his factory known as the Nimrod works which was to be found at 105 Eldon Street c.1870-c.78 and then c.1883-c.90 at No 111. He designed a powder measure jointly with Dougall with a spring loaded cut-off and funnel in 1869 and he also produced excellent cartridge extractors. One nickel plated example in the Author's collection with ring and long hook for removing cut-off paper cases from shotgun chambers, is well finished and marked with his name and logo.

Incidentally it is a common misconception amongst many sportsmen that the ring is a cartridge sizer, only in rare cases is this so as it was designed for a finger to give a good grip.

Although there were many other small implement and flask makers both in Sheffield and elsewhere, those outlined above are probably the best known and whose products still fetch premium prices when they change hands.

A A Brown & Son – Alvechurch

Albert Arthur Brown was first recorded in the Birmingham directories in 1929 as a gunmaker at 27½ Whittall Street and only later around 1936 as an action filer as well. Either way, he operated like so many other craftsmen in Birmingham pretty much exclusively for the trade including a quantity of work for Clabrough & Johnstone until they shut down. It would not be until after WWII that the business started some degree of private retail work for the general public.

He remained at Whittall Street until 1938 although for the last year or so the number was 35½, and then the same year his two sons Albert Henry who had been with Webleys and a few months later Sidney Charles came into the firm which was then to be known as A A Brown & Sons. Their next address was in Sand Street which was first recorded in 1938 and was to remain their base until 1960. There was one short break during the war due to bomb damage which caused a brief sojourn in Shirley before they returned to Sand Street in 1945. By that stage they were advertising themselves only as gunmakers

although still largely for the trade. During the war they had undertaken vital toolmaking for Willmot Breedon helping the production of Spitfires at Castle Bromwich.

It was as the war ended, and like everyone else in the trade they were looking around for work, that they undertook the manufacture, largely from existing components, of the Anson Star airpistols. These were the invention of E Anson whose previous and rather more widely known venture into this field was his patent 24837 of 1907 better known as the Highest Possible and sold under the Westley Richards name. To be frank the Star was not a commercial success and when Anson died, and the business closed in 1936, Joseph Curry of New House Lane, Whittall Street, acquired the remaining stock of components. He then got Browns to assemble and finish the few of them that had survived the war. Of the 37 made Browns still retain No 37 which is now on loan to the Birmingham Proof House Museum and the others are prized collectors items because of their rarity.

This venture into airpistols turned the Brown family's mind in this direction since raw materials were in short supply in the aftermath of war. As a result they redesigned the Star to greatly improve its efficiency and named their version the Abas (A Brown & Sons), the same name they gave to their works from 1946. The Abas also became a collectors' item and the family believe around 1840 were made and retailed out until the early 1960s.

In 1960 the business moved to Bournbrook adjoining the Westley Richards factory for whom they did a great deal of work especially on sidelock guns. When they left there in 1974 it was to move to their present premises at Snake Lane, Alvechurch on the edge of Birmingham. There they have extensive machinery available for their gun production which was boosted by their takeover of the business and machinery of A E Bayliss in the 1940s and especially by their subsequent acquisition of Joseph Asbury's business which by that stage was largely that of a machinist. Asbury produced machinings for many barrels and action bodies and their 'J A' stamp will often still be found on these, most visibly on barrels just forward of the flats on many makes of gun. The same barrel stamping on Purdey guns from prewar until recent years however refers to their leading barrel filer of that period, Jack Aldous.

Today Robin Brown, grandson of the founder and son of Sidney Charles, who still comes in to keep an eye on things once or twice a week, runs the business and has a full order book for their best quality side by side guns. To augment those they introduced a more modestly priced range in 1997 based on a Beretta o/u which they customise to the purchaser's requirements and which are known as their B B Range (Brown Beretta). Although still hand finished they involve a more realistic financial outlay and waiting time. Albert Henry Brown was Chairman of the Guardians of the Birmingham proof house from 1958–1962 and his nephew Robin was appointed Vice Chairman in 2003.

Brown, David McKay – Glasgow

Having started his working life as an apprentice draughtsman in the field of heavy engineering David graduated to another apprenticeship, this time with the Scottish gunmaker Alex Martin of Glasgow in 1957. However before long Martin's business was absorbed by John Dickson of Edinburgh and, although the old Glasgow premises were to remain as a gunmakers under the Dickson umbrella until 1988, David transferred to Dickson's head office and factory at Edinburgh and remained there getting valuable experience of the Dickson round action design.

At that stage, although subsequently re-invigorated, Dickson's actual gunmaking side was running down and he decided to set up on his own in 1967 at 39 Portland Place, Hamilton, Lanarkshire where he was to stay until 1980 when he moved to his present premises at 32 Hamilton Road, Bothwell, Glasgow G71 8NA. When he started out his old employers were sufficiently keen to retain his services that they sent him a great deal of work which kept him so busy that it was not until 1974 that he was able to start building guns bearing his own name. Within a few years the build up of work saw his move to Glasgow to cope with the flow of orders for his round action side by side guns. In 1992 he registered the design for his round action o/u gun which rapidly became very popular, the 20 gauge model being the most sought after of all the guns and double rifles he builds.

Having himself trained up a skilled workforce of four in-house specialists, Robin Moir (actioner), Jim McDonald (barrel filer), Brian Sinclair (stocker) and Douglas Procter (lockmaker), all of whom have been with him since they were apprenticed, he is able to produce around thirty guns per year. Whilst staying entirely faithful to the original Dickson design of 1882 he is not averse to a little fine tuning to improve it even further when he deems it opportune. The one thing he won't compromise on is his standard of best quality and the hundreds of his guns and double rifles in circulation around the world bear ample witness to that.

T W Chambers & Co – Alness

The gunmaking firm of T W Chambers & Co now situated in Scotland has a long history of working for the British gun trade. Established as a business in 1823 in London there were several branches of the family who gradually came together to produce the current business and Paul Chambers who currently heads the business has done considerable research into his family members going back to the 18th Century. With his permission are listed below the various references to members of the gunmaking family which he has unearthed and some additional references to members of the Chambers family can be found in *British Gunmakers* Volume I, (first published as *London Gunmakers*), although it is not certain that such references may necessarily all be the same Chambers family. Similarly it is not known if the William Chambers who was a gunsmith and journeyman to John Currie in Glasgow in 1715, or more recently the Charles Chambers recorded in Salisbury, Wiltshire c. 1883 were related.

Initially the business from 1823–1874 went under the name of Thomas Chambers, then from 1874–1946, or possibly only until c.1939, as Charles Chambers and then certainly from after World War II it has been T W Chambers. Paul has some family correspondence which might indicate T W Chambers setting up under his own name in 1939 but it may be that the war intervened before he could put that move into effect and subsequently restarted in 1946 or 1947. The addresses and dates listed below

A A Brown & Sons Ltd – Alvechurch

The records are kept at 1 Snake Lane, Alvechurch, Birmingham B48 7NT, Tel 0121 4455395, Fax 0121 4452113.

Apart from a single gun known of in 1946 the records of their own name guns start in 1950 in the 2/3000 series. Circa 1960–61 a new series was started using a 79 prefix for sidelock guns and usually a 78 prefix for A & D guns. There were very occasional exceptions to this system or special Nos by request.

The first gun of the new series (No 79180) started life as 19180 for a trade outlet but was needed urgently by Browns so was taken out of the production line and the first digit easily altered from 1 to 7. This sequence stuck thereafter. For many years the business made guns for the trade almost exclusively and that production is not listed here.

Also listed are some details of the Anson Star and Abas air pistols and Brown's special finish Beretta Game guns.

In the list below the 2/3000 series dates given are normally order/starting dates whilst the 79000 series may be start or finish dates. Due to the slightly fragmented numbering system at certain points in the records, groups of numbers or a broad span of numbers indicate that years approximate production or orders whilst single numbers indicate the earliest recorded that year. Numbers and spans can overlap or sometimes appear out of normal sequence.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Serial No.</i>
1946	2501	1979	79699
1950	2900/3015/40/56/ 60/1/63/9/75/6/87	1980	79707
1951	3175–3318	1981	79717
1952	3306–3383	1982	79736
1953	3304–3409	1983	79742
1960/1	79180–79621	1984	79744
1962	79622	1985	79750
1963	78623	1986	79748–79887*
1964	79582/3	1987	79758
1968	79580–79590	1988	77777*
1969	79591	1989	79760–79764
1970	79594	1990	79727–79780
1971	79593–79600	1991	79749–79784
1972	79603/14/5	1992	79766–79772
1973	79612	1993	79889*
1974	79632	1994	79890*
1975	79650	1995	79770
1976	79655	1997	79784
1978	79668	2000	79752–79786

* Special Numbers.

ANSON STAR AIR PISTOLS

These were made up by Browns just after WWII from surviving components and only 37 were made carrying Nos 1–37. (E Anson himself made some up before his death in 1936 but no records survive.)

ABAS AIR PISTOLS

Approximately 1840 were made (No 1 in 1946) and numbered sequentially over the period until the late 1950s or early 1960s. The earliest model had wooden grips, the second smooth Bakelite and the third and last chequered Bakelite. The best quality ones were engraved by Walter Howe and there was a deluxe crackle finish available.

B B (BROWN BERETTA) O/U GAME MODEL

1997	BB1-12
1998	BB8-20
1999	BB21-35
2003	cBB50

Due to slight variations in specification requested finish dates could overlap.

David McKay Brown (Gunmaker) Ltd – Glasgow

The serial No. of his first gun in 1974 was determined by the date it was ordered so his system started with (19)7401 but continued numerically from that point. In the following listing the occasional early gap would indicate either a number reserved or for some other reason not used. The gaps in more recent years indicate either reservations or guns still in course of production since the year dates given are those for completion of that appropriate serial No or Nos. He is currently working on serials in the 7850 range.

David McKay Brown (Gunmaker) Ltd, can be contacted at 32 Hamilton Road, Bothwell, Glasgow G71 8NA, Tel 01698 853727, Fax 01698 854207 where he holds the original records and can answer enquiries about any of his guns.

<i>Year of completion</i>	<i>Serial No(s)</i>	<i>Year of completion</i>	<i>Serial No(s)</i>	<i>Year of completion</i>	<i>Serial No(s)</i>
1982	801/2*	1985	7425	1992	7473/4
1983	803*	1993	7426/7	1990	7475/6
1974	7401	1986	7430	1991	7477-90
1979	7402/3	1987	7431-3	1992	7491-3
1980	7404	1988	7434-42	1993	7494/5
1982	7405	1989	7443	1992	7496
1984	7412	1989	7444-51	1993	7497
1990	7413	1990	7453-6	1994	7498/9
1983	7414/5	1991	7457/8	1992	7500
1984	7416-9	1990	7459/60	1994	7501
1986	7420-2	1991	7461-3	1992	7502/3
1988	7423	1999	7464-7	1994	7504
1989	7424	1991	7471/2	1993	7505