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Tech Spec

Model	Longthorne High Rib Trap De-Luxe
Bore size	12
Weight	7lbs 10oz
Barrel Length	30"
Chamber	2 3/4"
Chokes	To order
Rib	Tapered 8mm – 6mm
Stock	To special order
SRP	£19,000 De-Luxe model as tested. £14,250 Standard grade
Contact	Longthorne Gunmakers
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T:	01772 811215
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Gun Test:

Longthorne Trap De-Luxe

Vic Harker looks at a Trap gun with revolutionary potential



Vic Harker has been a familiar face around the international clay shooting circuit for decades; he is a prolific writer and a keen shot

This month's gun test represents something of a landmark in that I am reviewing a shotgun for competition designed and manufactured by a British maker. James Longthorne established his Lancashire based company in 2006 and he has subsequently produced a number of over-and-under guns with all the high standards of manufacture and finish we expect of an English gun, combined with groundbreaking innovation in methods of production.

The Longthorne gun is extraordinary in many ways, one of which is that it's a true sidelock for an incredibly low price. This would not be achieved without Longthorne's state of the art production, which

bears scant resemblance to most other gunmakers in the UK. For all that, their gun lacks nothing in the way of traditional appeal; it was a long time coming but modern technology is very much part of the British gun trade and this gun is a notable example.

The company's first competition gun is to special order for live pigeon shooting. Not the putting out of decoys and concealing yourself in a hide kind, instead it's for competitive live pigeon shooting as they still stage it in Spain, Mexico and some parts of the United States. It's where Trap shooting in all its forms originated, most particularly the difficult international disciplines.

The first Longthorne Trap gun has, apart from the 20mm high rib, a traditional appearance with an elegant pistol grip and a forend with an Anson rod fastening. Bring it to the shoulder and it has a feel and balance quite unlike most modern Trap guns, but of course it is at 7lbs 10oz (half a pound lighter than, for example, a Perazzi with

a similar barrel length). It possesses a lively ready to go feel that may auger well for the game shooting field, but the Trap range?

My immediate reaction was that it was too light. From experience I've found light, fast handling Trap guns do not always work well. A smooth, controllable swing a heavier gun provides can get you on target nearly as quickly and the recoil and muzzle flip, another characteristic of the light Trap gun, can be both disconcerting and tiring. However, from my very first experience with a Longthorne I dubbed it 'the gun where nothing happens when you pull the trigger'. The reason for this is the total lack of muzzle flip and perceived recoil due to the one-piece barrel assembly. Instead of separate tubes and the ribs having to be soldered together, the Longthorne's barrels are manufactured from a single billet of steel. When I first heard of this revolutionary process I was doubtful, imagining the result would provide the



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gun with all the handling qualities of a steel girder. Instead to my amazement the barrels are beautifully light, incredibly strong and attached to the rest of the gun balance perfectly, and yes everything is machined from one piece of steel.

The Longthorne, like all guns, goes bang and that's all, there is nothing to recover from. Its benefits soon become obvious: your second shot if needed, as in the case of Double Trap, is so much quicker and also more accurate. Until you have tried it you cannot appreciate how the total absence of recoil and muzzle flip alters the shooting experience. All I can say is the

Longthorne is different and in the same way, although my test guns barrels were exceptionally light they remained controllable. I find this difficult to explain but it may be because the Longthorne's recoil, or lack of it, doesn't disturb you, it encourages a more relaxed hold. In other words the shooter is under control and so is the gun.

It's early days and this Longthorne Trap gun is for live pigeon shooting, a different game from Olympic Trap or Down The Line. Nevertheless its total lack of recoil is unique in my experience and very different to the recoil reducing properties of bolt-on inventions. The other exciting aspect of the Longthorne

is its relative lightness in contrast to other guns and devices intended to reduce recoil, which always equate with extra weight. Perhaps the most revealing aspect of shooting the Longthorne is, though with a conventionally constructed gun properly fitted you may not be aware of recoil, you are in fact still experiencing its effects. With the revolutionary development the one-piece barrel assembly represents, these are just not there.

There may still be a lot to understand as to the reasons for this but at present the Longthorne in all its forms remains a development of huge potential so far as clay target shooting is concerned. ■