

Ernest Hemingway And His Westley Richards Double Rifle

by
J. E. Fender

Every reader of the *Double Gun Journal* knows of Ernest Hemingway, has read some or all of his writings, and likely has opinions, either favorable or unfavorable, of the man's writings and personae. Whatever your measure of the man Ernest Hemingway's writings forced readers to reflect upon and question their own perceptions and beliefs, and irrevocably altered the way American literature is written, read, and understood. Fifty years after Hemingway committed suicide we remain interested in the iconic writer who is still the second most translated author who wrote in English (the mystery writer Agatha Christie is the most translated). We are well aware of his love of fishing and hunting, and of his long and abiding love of firearms. Any firearm with an impeccable Hemingway *provenance* interests us, and of particular interest is a Westley Richards double rifle in caliber .577 Nitro Express that went under the hammer at the distinguished Maine auction house of J. D. Julia in March of this year with a pre-auction appraisal of \$150,000–\$200,000.

This double rifle was used by Hemingway during his second African safari in 1953–54, and while the essence of that safari was captured in an elaborate article in the 26 January 1954 issue of *Look* magazine, Hemingway never published during his lifetime an account of this second visit to Africa to rival that of his December 1933–January 1934 safari captured so vividly in his 1935 book *Green Hills of Africa*. However, Hemingway did leave several manuscripts in a Cuban safe deposit box, and one partial manuscript written in 1956 and described as his “African Journal” dealt with the 1953–54 safari. The 200,000 word manuscript was extensively edited by his middle son, Patrick, and was published by Hemingway's long-time publisher, Scribner's, in 1999 under the title *True at First Light* to coincide with the centennial of Hemingway's birth. Another adaptation of this manuscript, entitled *Under Kilimanjaro* was published in 2005. Given his agonizingly slow recovery from injuries received in two light aircraft crashes in a two-day period in late-January 1954, either of which could have ended his life, further injuries when he subsequently lost his balance while fighting a bush fire and was severely burned, extensively prolonging his convalescence, and the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in October of that year, Hemingway's failure to publish a more contemporaneous account of the 1953–54 safari is understandable.

The firearms accompanying Hemingway's first safari are far better described. As a young man Hemingway had read *African Game Trails*, Theodore Roosevelt's account of his post-presidential 1909–1910 hunting in British East Africa, and he had been impressed by the life-size mounts of two lions on display in Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History. J. H. Patterson had sold the skins to the Museum in 1924 for the then very considerable sum of five thousand dollars, and the lions were indeed those Patterson described in his famous *Man-Eaters of Tsavo*.

Hemingway had long dreamed of hunting in Africa, but that first safari, quite an expensive proposition in the midst of the Great Depression, would not have been possible without the financial assistance of Augustus (“Gus”) Pfeiffer, a dotting uncle of Hemingway's second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, who contributed twenty-five thousand dollars—over half a million of today's dollars. Hemingway was advised on appropriate firearms by Richard Cooper, a wealthy, somewhat eccentric English *bon viveur* who owned a large coffee estate near Lake Manyara in the Great Rift Valley of Tanganyika and who had hunted extensively throughout Africa. Various referred to as “Major Cooper” or “Colonel Cooper”, or just “Dick”, Cooper had been an officer in the British Army and in 1917 while serving in France was credited with shooting down at least one German aircraft strafing British forces, with his .450 Holland and Holland double rifle.

Hemingway had been introduced to Cooper by Jane Mason (who most Hemingway scholars agree was the model for Margot Macomber, who figured so prominently in Hemingway's famous *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*), and it was Cooper who put Hemingway in touch with his friend, Bror Blixen, who with Philip Percival formed Tanganyika Guides, Ltd. Philip Hope Percival had not been one of the guides retained by Newland, Tarlton & Company for the Smithsonian-Theodore Roosevelt African Expedition of 1909/1910, but when Roosevelt accepted the invitation of Alfred Pease to hunt lion from horseback on Pease's ranch outside Nairobi, Pease hired Percival as an assistant—and launched Percival's impressive career as the “dean of East African professional hunters”.

A somewhat travel-worn Hemingway, with wife Pauline and Charles Thompson, a close friend from Key West in tow, arrived in Nairobi in early December 1933 without actual assurance that Percival would be their professional hunter. Fortunately, Percival was just ending one safari and agreed to take the





Ernest Hemingway is shown here with a large Cape buffalo which he took while on his second African safari using the Westley Richards .577 featured in this article. Photo courtesy of the John F. Kennedy Library

Hemingway party if he were given sufficient time to organize the necessary details for their hunt. Hemingway, Pauline, and Thompson waited at Percival's home at Potha Hill in the Tanganyika colony, and used the time to acclimate to the altitude and shoot some plains game.

While waiting for the 20th of December departure Hemingway struck up a friendship with Bror Blixen and met the wealthy

thoroughbred horseman Alfred G. Vanderbilt II, son of the multi-millionaire sportsman whose philandering was forgiven when he unhesitatingly gave his life jacket to a woman to save her life, though his was lost when the *Lusitania* was torpedoed by a German submarine on 7 May 1915. Vanderbilt, accompanied by his equally wealthy polo-playing neighbor from Brookville, New York (dubbed by *Business Week* magazine as the



wealthiest town in America), on the northern coast of Long Island, Winston Guest, a second cousin of Winston Churchill, who was Guest's godfather, had just concluded a highly successful safari with Blixen. Blixen, an aristocratic Swede with a title, is perhaps better remembered today for his marriage to his Danish second cousin, Karen Dinesen, who wrote numerous well received books under the pen name Isak Dinesen—and who Hemingway conceded was equally deserving of a Nobel Prize for Literature.

Contrary to some reports, Hemingway did not meet Guest at this time since Guest had already departed for the United States to play in previously scheduled polo matches and marry his first wife, Helena McCann, a granddaughter of department store magnate F.W. Woolworth. Hemingway was impressed by a marvelous pair of tusks from an elephant Guest had taken and which Blixen was preparing to ship to Guest, along with other trophies. Although more renowned for having taken the Prince of Wales (later briefly King Edward VIII of England) on two safaris, Blixen guided Winston and the entire Guest family on several occasions, including one which he organized for father, Captain, the Right Honorable Frederick (more commonly known as "Freddie"),



Photos courtesy of James D. Julia

17424	By 28.01.1938	Serial	17424
17425	By 28.01.1938	Serial	17425
17426	By 28.01.38	Serial	17426
17427	By 28.01.38	Serial	17427
17428	By 28.01.38	Serial	17428
17429	By 28.01.38	Serial	17429
17430	By 28.01.38	Serial	17430
17431	By 28.01.38	Serial	17431
17432	By 28.01.38	Serial	17432

CBE, PC, DSO (Commander, Order of the British Empire, Privy Council, Distinguished Service Order), mother Amy, elder son Winston, younger son Raymond (later U. S. Ambassador to Ireland), and daughter Diana.

To term the Guest safaris as “luxurious” would be an understatement. Freddie Guest brought out two Gypsy Moth aircraft to use in scouting game, as well as a seven passenger Bellanca to shuttle family members between Nairobi and the hunting camps. Winston Guest earlier had brought out a string of polo ponies with the avowed intention of running down lion and Cape buffalo from horseback, but Blixen tactfully dissuaded Winston from this effort. The weight of Winston Guest’s elephant tusks Hemingway found so impressive was apparently never recorded, but his sister Diana killed one elephant whose tusks, as weighed on a railroad station’s baggage scales, went 125 and 126 pounds. So close was their friendship, that when safari life lost its glamour, or to use Blixen’s phrase, “Life is life and fun is fun, but



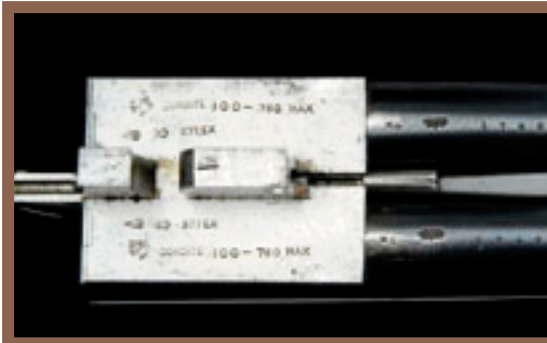
Prior to the auction, the author and James Julia discuss Hemingway and his rifle, Ser. No. 17425, which left the Westley Richards factory (above) in October of 1913.

it’s all so quiet when the goldfish die” and Blixen left Africa for good in 1938, Guest retained him to manage the hunting on Gardiners Island, just off the eastern Long Island shore, which Winston Guest was leasing at the time.

Winston Guest, whose grandmother had married Henry Phipps, a partner of Andrew Carnegie in the Carnegie Steel Company, had a winter home in Palm Beach, Florida, and sometime after the Hemingways’ return from Africa met Ernest Hemingway and established an enduring friendship. I cannot confirm the actual date of the first Hemingway-Guest meeting, but Bror Blixen and his third wife, Eva Dixon, in the company of Dick Cooper, visited Vanderbilt and Guest in 1935, then went on to visit Hemingway in the Bahamas. It is possible that Guest accompanied Blixen to the Bahamas and thus met Hemingway—of course, Guest and Hemingway certainly knew of each other through their various mutual friends.

After Hemingway relocated to San Francisco de Paula, some 15 miles outside Havana in 1939, Guest was a frequent visitor to Hemingway’s Finca Vigía (translated as either “Lookout” or “Watch Tower” farm) where Hemingway would reside a third of his life. They became such close friends that Winston Guest was Hemingway’s best man on the occasion of his 14 March 1946 marriage to Mary Welsh, and Hemingway was Guest’s best man when Guest married his second wife, fashion icon and socialite Lucy Douglas Cochrane (universally known as CeeZee) one year later. Both weddings took place at the Finca Vigía.

J. E. Fender, J. D. Julia, and W. R. factory photos by David Trevallion; others courtesy of James D. Julia.



17423	Serial 100-790 MAX	17423
17424	Serial 100-790 MAX	17424
17425	Serial 100-790 MAX	17425
17426	Serial 100-790 MAX	17426
17427	Serial 100-790 MAX	17427
17428	Serial 100-790 MAX	17428
17429	Serial 100-790 MAX	17429
17430	Serial 100-790 MAX	17430
17431	Serial 100-790 MAX	17431

In 1942 Guest became Hemingway's second-in-command or executive officer in what many critics described as a cockamamie scheme to arm Hemingway's sport fishing boat, *Pilar*, and patrol Cuban waters in search of German submarines. Hemingway's wife at the time, Martha Gellhorn, from whom he was already more than a little estranged, was certain the scheme had been concocted in order to obtain severely rationed gasoline which would enable Hemingway to continue fishing for billfish. Whatever the motivation, the operation was vintage Hemingway,

Guest served admirably until "Operation Friendless" ended the first of April 1943, with no German submarines sighted, much less sunk. Even though then aged 36 and considered too old for military service, Guest was not a dilettante, and after one final celebratory party at the Finca Vigía managed to obtain a commission in the United States Marine Corps. Perhaps the celebrated African aviatrix Beryl Markham who frequently scouted for elephant in her Avro Avian for Guest on safari with Bror Blixen, described him best as a "dynamic Mr. Guest, who seems to wring



Photo courtesy of David Trevallion

and from his coterie of exiled Basques, jai-alai players, hangers-on, diplomats and wealthy friends such as Guest, Hemingway put together the "Crook Factory" to embark on "Operation Friendless" (named for a favorite cat). Wrapping a canvas banner emblazoned with "American Museum of Natural History" around his *Pilar* and armed with Thompson sub-machine guns, hand grenades and .50-caliber Browning machine guns (which were soon removed because shooting them would have shaken *Pilar* to pieces) Hemingway prowled the waters north of Cuba searching for German submarines. Certainly German submarines had torpedoed many of the slow tankers ferrying petroleum and gasoline from the Caribbean refineries to East Coast and United Kingdom ports. There had been substantiated reports of German submarines surfacing near fishing boats in the Caribbean and demanding foodstuffs and newspapers.

Hemingway became quite fond of his second-in-command, who had been nicknamed "Wolfie" by Hemingway's sons Patrick and Gregory due to Guest's supposed resemblance to Lon Chaney's character in the 1941 motion picture *The Wolf Man*.

from each moment of his life its ultimate squeal of excitement".

Unknown at the time, but a possible reason why Hemingway received permission and logistical support from the U. S. Embassy in Cuba to engage *Pilar* in a seemingly harebrained scheme was the contemporaneous highly classified "Q-Ship Project" which began in March 1942. Q-Ships were small but well-armed warships disguised as inconsequential merchant ships, targets hopefully not worth the expenditure of a German torpedo. The concept indeed envisioned a German submarine's surfacing in order to use its deck gun to destroy the merchant ship—at which time the Q-Ship would expose its superior armament—and if surprise and weight of metal on target prevailed—sink the submarine. These "decoy" ships were modeled on a British Royal Navy effort in World War One. However, when the Q-Ship USS *Atik* went down with her entire crew (a loss later attributed to the decoy's being torpedoed by the German submarine *U-123*), the Q-Ship project was cancelled. Viewed in this light, "Operation Friendless" was not as quixotic as it appeared.

A long-time friend who shot extensively with Hemingway at

Havana's Club Cazadores del Cerro (Hilltop Hunters Club), Ellis O. Briggs, a senior consular official in the United States Embassy in Havana, included a lengthy chapter about Hemingway's hunt for German submarines in his 1957 book, *Shots Heard Round the World—An Ambassador's Hunting Adventures on Four Continents*, confirming that the United States Government thought enough of Hemingway's plan that the U.S. Navy installed sophisticated high-frequency radio-detection equipment (HF/DF—the so-called Huff-Duff) aboard *Pilar*. The Navy further contributed a senior non-commissioned officer to operate the HF/DF gear which computed bearings to submarines surfaced to transmit radio messages. Triangulating bearings from two or more sources would provide a "fix" on a submarine's position precise enough to permit aircraft or high-speed surface vessels to locate the submarine. HF/DF was a technology German U-boat commanders feared, for dozens of German submarines were sunk shortly after being "fixed" after transmitting radio messages.

"Wolfie" Guest is reported by Hemingway's only living son, Patrick, who accompanied the "Crook Factory" on several sorties, to have had the Westley Richards .577 Nitro Express aboard *Pilar*. However, in order to authenticate the Hemingway provenance of the Westley Richards double rifle it is first necessary to review this firearm's creation.

The Westley Richards' day books record that double rifle .577/100/750 (cartridge caliber, weight of nominal cordite powder charge and nominal bullet weight), serial number 17425 was created for "S. H. Christy, Esq." and was ready for shipment from Westley Richards' Birmingham premises as of 31 October 1913. "S. H. Christy" was Stephen Henry Christy, born 6 April 1879, who in 1913 was living with his wife at Plaish Hall in the parish of Cardington in the Shropshire Hills of the West Midlands region of England. Plaish Hall, still privately owned, is a country manor, the main house of which was reportedly the first brick

building constructed in Shropshire. The property (and as legend has it, complete with the ghost of a craftsman enticed by an early owner to build ornate chimneys in exchange for his life but who was hanged upon completion of the work when the treacherous judge, William Leighton, reneged on his promise) is historically and architecturally significant enough to be listed on the British equivalent of the Registry of Historic Buildings.

S. H. Christy had joined the 20th Hussars, a light cavalry regiment in 1899, served in the Boer War and the Sokoto-Burmi campaign in North Nigeria, rose to the rank of captain, was awarded the DSO (Distinguished Service Order), was wounded in action and was mentioned in dispatches. He resigned his commission in order to marry Violet Chapell-Hodge and settle down to married life. Captain Christy was an excellent horseman, and the one surviving photograph I have located shows him in the livery of the Master of the South Shropshire Hounds. His experiences with the

20th Hussars in Africa may have kindled a desire to return there to hunt, hence the order for Westley Richards 17425, but whether Captain Christy took delivery of this double rifle is unknown. His wife of a short eight years became ill and died on 27 November 1913. Captain Christy was certainly too preoccupied to consider his .577 Nitro Express or Africa during his wife's illness and death, and a parish newsletter written a year later reported that he never recovered from his loss.

There is no record of Captain Christy's leaving England until August of 1914. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary on 28 June 1914 plunged the Continental European nations into the horrors of total war. England was initially not a participant, but Germany's Schlieffen Plan, which

called for the capitulation of France in 42 days, necessitated the invasion of France via neutral Belgium. Britain and Belgium were allied through the London Treaty of 1839, but the German



Center two photos by David Trevallion, others courtesy of James D. Julia

Chancellor reckoned that “the Britons would not go to war for a mere scrap of paper”—wrongly as it turned out, and on 4 August 1914 the United Kingdom declared war on Germany.

S. H. Christy was heartily welcomed back to his old regiment with his former rank and assigned as second-in-command of B Squadron. The 20th Hussars regiment was in France in two weeks, where in the late afternoon of 3 September, while B Squadron was retiring in good order across the Marne River via the La Ferte Bridge, Captain Christy and his favorite mount were killed instantly by German artillery fire. He was buried in the Perreuse Chateau French Nation Cemetery at Signy-Signets.

Did S. H. Christy ever take possession of Westley Richards number 17425? And how did this .577 Nitro Express double rifle find its way to Ernest Hemingway’s gun cabinet? At this point we must resort to several hypotheses, and these hypotheses may raise questions about their literal truth. However, paraphrasing Hemingway, “some things are truer than if they had actually happened.”

The first hypothesis is that S. H. Christy *did not* take delivery of the double rifle made for him by the Westley Richards gun-making firm, even though the factory’s premises in Birmingham were less than an hour’s train ride from Shrewsbury station. Parish accounts describe a grieving Christy as being greatly affected by his wife’s death, and although he continued the philanthropic works in which he and Violet were engaged at the time of her death, until the Great War intruded, Christy became reclusive and was not interested in anything occurring outside the parish of Cardington.

The second hypothesis is that, more likely than not, Freddie Guest obtained the .577 Nitro Express double rifle sometime prior to his safaris with Bror Blixen. Although Christy, a member of the landed gentry and a cavalryman, and Freddie Guest, a polo player, shared a mutual interest in horses, they did not move in the same social circles. While both had served in the Boer War during the same period it is unlikely that they ever met. Yes, Christy could have taken delivery of the Westley Richards double rifle 17425 at some time prior to his setting off for France in August 1914, but since he and Violet had no children the double rifle would have been inherited by one of his older brothers, who could have sold it to Freddie Guest. However, I believe it far more probable that Westley Richards, perhaps after a communication from

S.H. Christy that he was no longer interested in purchasing the rifle, retained .577 Nitro Express number 17425 in inventory.

Exactly how and when this Westley Richards came into Freddie Guest’s hands, absent locating some contemporaneous record of its acquisition, is unknown. The letters of Bror Blixen, frustrating because they are incompletely dated, contain references to some of the firearms the Guests used while on safari with him. There is no mention of a .577 Westley Richards, though interestingly, there is a reference to Freddie’s use of a .505 Gibbs Magnum Mauser. This .505 Gibbs came into Blixen’s possession (most probably as a gift from Freddie Guest) and became Blixen’s “signature” rifle.

Although Patrick Hemingway confirmed that Winston Guest had the .577 Westley Richards in Cuba in 1942–43, what evidence exists to place the double rifle in Guest’s hands prior to Guest’s joining Hemingway’s “Crook Factory”? The evidence is tenuous, but here it is. In his “Lyon’s Den” column dated 26 June 1953—the day before Ernest and Mary Hemingway embarked aboard the *Flandre*, flagship of the French Line’s fleet of passenger liners, widely syndicated columnist Leonard Lyons wrote that he had accompanied Hemingway to the basement shooting range of Abercrombie & Fitch’s sporting goods store on Madison Avenue. In the column entitled “A Day in Town with Hemingway”, Lyons quoted Hemingway as stating he had once hunted in Africa with Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, who brought only 10 of these .577 shells, and did not bring more “because they cost so much”.

Lyons gamely accepted Hemingway’s offer to fire a round, but was quite unprepared for the recoil—which threw him and the double rifle to the floor of the indoor range. There is a rather handsome scar on the buttstock of the Hemingway .577 that probably resulted from Lyons’ dropping the rifle. While Lyons was an astute chronicler of café society with a world-wide audience, he

was not a gossip columnist, and Lyons was a close-enough friend of Hemingway that his widow listed Lyons as an honorary pallbearer for Hemingway’s funeral.

As we have seen earlier, Alfred G. Vanderbilt II was staying with Bror Blixen when Hemingway arrived at Philip Percival’s farm in December 1933. The chance quote from the “Lyon’s Den” seems to indicate some ownership or at least permitted use of the .577 Nitro Express by Vanderbilt. So, the third



Photos above and on facing page courtesy of James D. Julia



hypothesis is that Winston Guest brought the .577 Westley Richards his father had earlier acquired for Vanderbilt to use. The .577 Westley Richards would not formally become Winston Guest's until he inherited it upon Sir Freddie's death in 1937. Blixen thought enough of the Guest family's generosity to him that he made the arduous trip from British East Africa to London to attend Sir Freddie's funeral.

No record of Winston Guest's gift or sale of the .577 Westley Richards to Hemingway has been located, but whatever the means of transfer, Hemingway certainly possessed the big double rifle during the 1953–54 safari. The rifle is mentioned in Mary Welsh Hemingway's recollection of her life with Hemingway, *How it Was*, and there are photographs of Hemingway with the Westley Richards in the sixteen pages of coverage of the 1953–54 safari published in the 26 January 1954 issue of *Look* magazine. This safari, scheduled to last for five months, consisted of the Hemingways, Philip Percival, in his late sixties, but coaxed out of retirement out of loyalty to Hemingway, a Cuban friend, Mayito Menocal, a game ranger, photographer, and 22 scouts and attendants.

Hemingway definitely used the .577 to dispatch a previously wounded rhinoceros—quoting from the caption on page 29 of the magazine: “He came at a trot that turned into a gallop. I let him come much further that it was good for either of us in order to be truly sure. As the .577 fired he whirled with the shot and you could not see him in the rising of the red dust.” Other photographs show Hemingway with the .577 Westley Richards barrels forward over his right shoulder and he and Mary Welsh Hemingway stand facing Mount Kilimanjaro. In the introductory “Behind the Scenes” sidebar Hemingway is shown holding the Westley Richards as he faced off with a small bull elephant at a distance of perhaps forty feet.

Earl Theisen, the photographer accompanying the Hemingway party took over 3,000 photographs, and photographs of Hemingway posing with the big Westley Richards double rifle and lion and Cape buffalo trophies, have been published elsewhere.

Hemingway's health was gravely affected by his three near-death experiences at the safari's conclusion, and Mary Welsh Hemingway's primary concern was getting her invalid husband to appropriate medical care. The Hemingways' hurried departure from Kenya meant that their firearms were left in the care of friends who secured them in a bank vault. The firearms eventually were shipped to the Finca Vigía. In January 1959 the corrupt and repressive government of Fulgencio Batista was overthrown by Fidel Castro, and in the initial heady days of victory Castro's Communist regime seemed bemused enough by the long-time presence of one of the world's most famous authors to leave the Hemingways to their own devices. However, as the true nature of the Castro regime manifested itself, the unhindered movement the Hemingways enjoyed in this most beautiful but also the poorest country in the Western World was severely circumscribed. It was not long before a detail of Castro's troops appeared at the Finca

Photo courtesy of James D. Julia





Westley Richards No. 17425 was built for Stephen Henry Christy of Shropshire, England, in 1913. In 1953 Ernest Hemingway took it on safari, but only after it had been used by the likes of Freddie Guest (seated) and Blor Blixen (second from right), shown here with Guest's "Gypsy Moth," used for scouting plains game. Photo courtesy of David Trevallion

Vigía, and confiscated many of the Hemingways' firearms.

Realizing there was no place for them in the "Workers' Paradise of the New Cuba," the Hemingways began shipping art work, treasured belongings and firearms out of Cuba as unobtrusively as they could. The Hemingways left the Finca Vigía for the United States in July of 1960, Ernest for good, though Mary Welsh Hemingway was able to return later and retrieve a significant amount of Hemingway's papers. Hemingway still owned the house on Whitehead Street in Key West where he and Pauline had lived, and leaving Mary Welsh Hemingway in New York City, Hemingway visited his old friends Charles and Lorine



Thompson, staying at their Key West home for several days the year prior to his death. Hemingway had known the Thompsons since 1928, and Charles Thompson was one of the few men who had out-shot and out-hunted Hemingway. Charles Thompson had accompanied Ernest and Pauline on the 1933-34 safari (he was given the pseudonym "Karl" in the *Green Hills of Africa*), and the fact that he obtained bigger and better trophies than Hemingway caused a rift between the two very competitive men—though thankfully, both men realized the absurdity of the rift, and it healed quickly.

In some way not documented, Charles Thompson, who was perhaps Hemingway's best friend, became the owner of the Westley



Lower two photos courtesy of James D. Julia



Photo courtesy of James D. Julia Auctioneer, Fairfield, Maine

Richards .577 Nitro Express double rifle, serial number 17425. My last hypothesis is that an enfeebled Hemingway, realizing that he would never again safari to Africa, gave the .577 Westley Richards to Charles Thompson in hopes that Thompson would once more take the big double rifle to the milieu for which it had been created. And yes, Charles and Lorine Thompson did return to Africa, and Charles did bag an elephant, though whether the rifle he used was the Westley Richards .577 obtained from Ernest Hemingway was not recorded. From the Thompson estate Westley Richards serial number 17425 passed into the hands of the person who consigned the rifle to Julia's where the Hemingway Westley Richards .577 will have been auctioned by the time this article appears in the *Double Gun Journal*.

Hemingway's *oeuvre* commands an increasing world-wide respect, and memorabilia associated with the writer bring high prices. The legends surrounding Hemingway continue to grow: in the 50 years since his death numerous biographies have appeared, a Hemingway Society and Foundation has been established, as well as a Hemingway Resource Center, and critical analyses of his novels and short stories are published almost monthly. Autographed letters bring prices in the multiple of thousands of dollars, and first editions of Hemingway's earlier novels easily top one thousand dollars. Even esoteric items such as a Hemingway Cigar Band (apparently not sanctioned by either Hemingway or his estate) fetch ten dollars or more. Handwritten drafts of



Papa and his rifle take a well-deserved siesta while on his second safari in East Africa.

Photo courtesy of David Trevallion

novels and short stories have been auctioned for more than six figures—and subsequently have disappeared into private collections.

Hopefully, the identity of the buyer can be reported, and Hemingway's Westley Richards .577 will be displayed where people sincerely interested in this iconic, larger-than-life writer may view it, and perhaps better understand the complex, tormented soul that was Ernest Hemingway. The essence of what makes Hemingway's writings so unique will never be captured, but perhaps he left a clue in a paragraph deleted from his 1954 Nobel Prize Banquet Speech: "There is no lonelier man than the writer when he is writing except

the suicide. Nor is there any happier, nor more exhausted man when he has written well. If he has written well everything that is him has gone into the writing and he faces another morning when he must do it again. There is always another morning and another morning."

Author's Note: The presale estimate for the Hemingway Westley Richards .577 NE at the J. D. Julia Auction 14 March 2011 was \$150,000–\$200,000, but spirited bidding between two phone bidders resulted in a hammer price of \$339,250 (including the buyer's premium).

The buyer is an American who prefers not to reveal his identity at this time. However, the buyer plans to take the rifle to Africa, and there will be substantial media coverage when that event occurs.

A special thanks to James D. Julia Auctioneer, Fairfield, Maine, and to David Trevallion Stockmaker, Cape Neddick, Maine.