



Marque of SUCCESS

An avant-garde shotgun maker has chosen the award-winning Daystate Regal as the chassis for an exclusive dabble with a premium-quality air rifle limited to a worldwide production run of just 150. **Nigel Allen** gets a few weeks with one of the gorgeous Boxall & Edmiston PCPs...

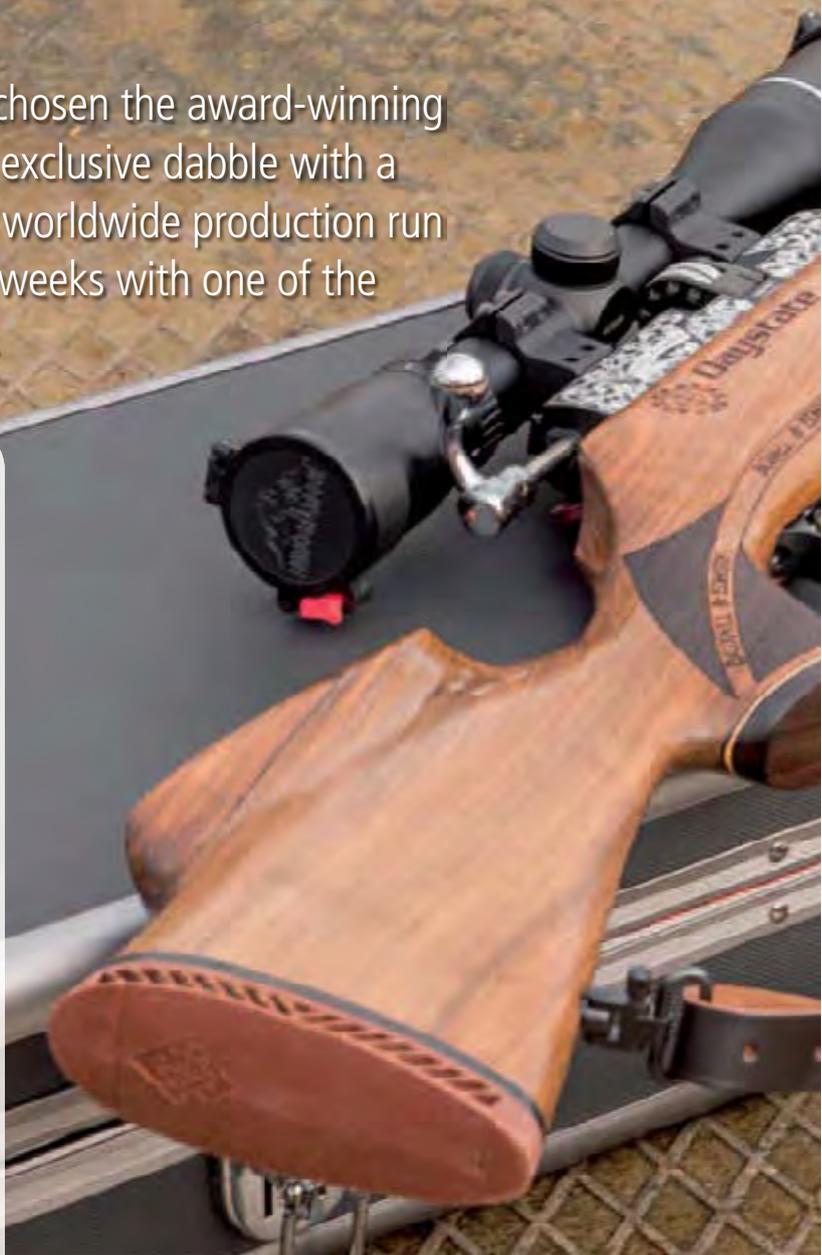
I'm not sure that when, on 1st June 2013, Daystate launched their Huntsman Regal at Kibworth Shooting Ground, they were expecting it to be as successful as it's turned out to be. Paying homage to the Huntsman's fine lineage, the Regal combined a raft of new technology with the traditional sporter design that has made its Huntsman models extremely popular down the years. Sales of the remaining Huntsman Classic inventory – the rifle it was ultimately replacing – suddenly shot up, despite there also being high demand for the new debutant.

The upshot was that even though the Huntsman remains the 'entry point' rifle in Daystate's PCP stable, in the Airgun Shooter Awards, the Regal scooped gold in the Best New PCP category, with the Huntsman model taking the overall title of Airgun of the Year, 2013.

Now, the Staffordshire-based airgunmaker happens to be the master when it comes to 'special edition' models, and no sooner had the Regal been launched, than news broke of another, very unique Huntsman project that Daystate had been fanning the fires of for some time. Ironically, with the recent awards and gun shop success, this makes the Boxall & Edmiston LE rather worth getting hold of.

Who are Boxall & Edmiston? Well, they're a relatively new name in the shotgun-making world, having set up shop in 2009 with co-founders Peter Boxall and James Edmiston. They're men with rich shooting heritage; Peter was the MD of the famous Holland & Holland, and James was MD of the equally renowned Sterling Armament Company. Furthermore, Peter's input has been sought by Daystate for decades – and with B&E's shotguns now winning plaudits for the way they have incorporated *avant-garde* CNC manufacturing processes with traditional gunsmithing skills, a Daystate/B&E joint venture seemed a natural avenue to explore.

Here we have two gunmakers keen to push the boundaries in order to take their respective guns to the next level, while at the same time not forgetting their highly-acclaimed roots. The result is a heavily-embellished Daystate Huntsman, built to Regal specification and limited to a production run of just 150, each one individually numbered. While the bad news is that fewer than 50 of those are destined for UK gun shops, the good news is that you don't have to find 15-grand to buy into the B&E brand.



The breech is beautifully engraved



Main image left: The award-winning Daystate Regal has become even more special

Right: The scope carries a silver emblem on the saddle that corresponds with the rifle's unique run number



This model came with the MTC Optics 3-9x40 Genesis UL scope in two-piece Blueprint mounts



You still need two Ks, mind – but it may be an astute move to splash out your savings on one. With money currently accruing pants interest in the bank, investing in airgun masterpieces should pay dividends in the long run – as anyone who bought a BSA Airsporter Centenary model back in 1982 will attest to! Indeed, some of the rarer vintage airgun pieces are now making huge hammer prices at specialist arms and militaria auctions.

The UK-bound B&E Daystates are available in either .177 or .22 at 12ft/lb, and with the option to convert the .22 to 30ft/lb on a ticket. I reviewed the sub-12ft/lb Regal back in the October 2013 issue, and to all intents and purposes, the B&E Huntsman performs identically, albeit

with the addition of a specially-designed Huggett silencer and barrel shroud.

However, as the images here show, the B&E isn't simply a variation of a theme; it's got to rank as the finest of all Daystate's special editions! Most noticeable is the fabulous engraving work on the breech. The pattern emanates from B&E's craftsmen and is very finely laser-cut into the black-anodised breech using the same state-of-the-art machinery as deployed on the side plates of B&E's expensive shotguns.

The rifle loaned to me was number 122, a .177 which came complete with the MTC Optics 3-9x40 Genesis UL (Ultra-Lite) scope in two-piece Blueprint mounts. The latter adds £207 to the rifle's £1,900 price tag (or £1,992 for the FAC version) but should be seriously considered. Not just



Jewellery Quarter silverware adorns the dust cover



The B&E sits low in the forestock like the Huntsman



because of its Advanced Mil-Dot (AMD) reticle, neat zero-locking facility and high-clarity sight picture – but because if acquired with the rifle, it carries a sterling silver emblem on the saddle that corresponds with the rifle's unique run number.

The silverware comes from Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, and more of it adorns the pull-off dust cover for Daystate's usual quick-fill valve. I see that the roundel's centre has been left clear – obviously for the proud owner to have his initials engraved. (I would!) Elsewhere, highly polished aluminium and steel add further bright and complementary touches – to the bolt, trigger and closing ring behind the barrel collar.

Given their shotgun interest, B&E have married their action to a specially selected Turkish walnut stock; a minimum standard of Grade Three. Number 122's is beautifully straight-grained, and the quality of the blank shows in its finish: there's no open grain as you often see on typical 'airgun' woodwork – this is a handle fit for the finest of English shotguns, sporting a divine rollover cheekpiece!

It's shaped like the Regal's stock, with the action sitting lower so as to give the shooter the full benefit of the Huntsman's obvious sporter qualities. Although this woodwork has been fabricated by Italian stocker, Minelli, the embellishments it's been given are very much in line with the style of B&E's shotguns. The Boxall & Edmiston moniker flows elegantly through the dual-sail panels of stippling, while Daystate's logos above the trigger guard pay homage to the B&E's chassis.

Included with the B&E Limited Edition are Daystate's usual snap-fit filling connector, along with a single-shot tray, the new-style 10-shot magazine, a high-quality leather sling and a Vanguard flight case which allows a degree

of 'fitting' by way of removable foam blocks. As well as attractive plaits, the sling sports an anti-slip liner and fits to the B&E by way of QR (quick-remove) swivel fittings that clip into eyelet studs. The sling is adjustable for length via brass buckles at either end – but if this were my gun, I'd certainly tape them up in case they dented the woodwork.

Besides Daystate's excellent Handbook, the B&E also comes with a Certificate of Authenticity unique to the run number – something that's essential to give the rifle provenance in the future.

I'm not going to lie, I was happy enough to just look at this gun – and a little bit scared to take it into the field for testing! Anyone lucky enough to own a B&E, though, will I'm sure have no issues with it, performance-wise. But let's be honest. This isn't the kind of rifle you're going to drag through a hedge backwards, in a muddy field, during a heavy rainstorm, all for the sake of pest control!

That said, I *would* take it hide-hunting or go rabbit stalking with it in the summer months as I'm a firm believer that even 'special' guns deserve to be enjoyed, rather than locked away in a cupboard. Indeed, I've now done a lot of hunting with my own Regal (which I succumbed to buying after testing one last year), and I know first-hand what a great tool it is. Lightweight, legal limit power and very user-friendly handling, it's accurate enough to hunt with out to 50 yards if the conditions are right.

But with it being winter when the B&E was in my possession, I limited my testing to the workshop and general range shooting. From that, I can say that .177 calibre B&E number 122 returned 90 shots per 200BAR fill

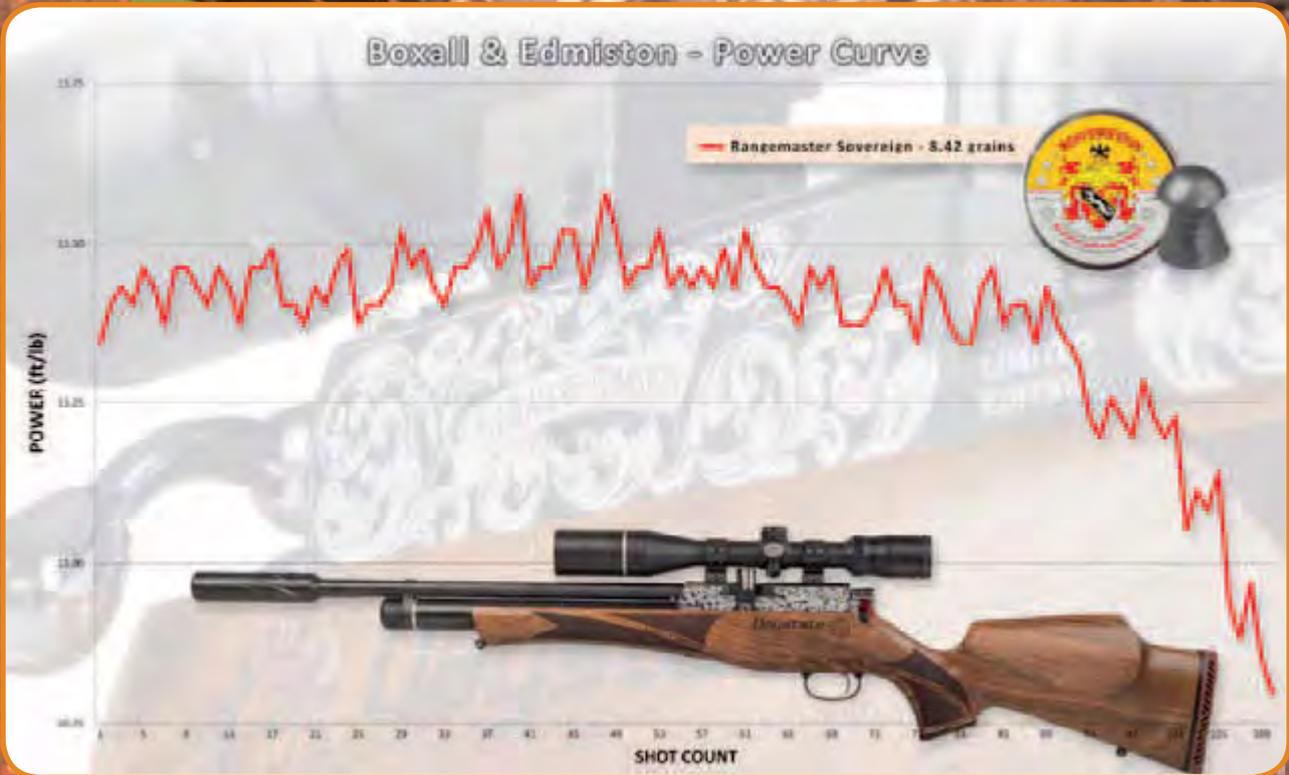
The Turkish walnut stock is both beautifully grained and embellished



The Limited Edition includes a leather sling and a unique Certificate of Authenticity



Below: The .177 B&E returned 90 shots per 200BAR fill against the claimed 80





The Milbro Huggett – the Rolls Royce of silencers – is beautifully engineered



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

MANUFACTURER: Daystate, UK / Boxall & Edmiston www.daystate.com / www.boxallandedmiston.co.uk
MODEL: Boxall & Edmiston LE Regal
TYPE: 10-shot precharged pneumatic
COCKING: Bolt-action
CALIBRE: .177 (tested) and .22
FILL PRESSURE: 200BAR (sub-12 model); 230BAR (.22 FAC model)
SHOTS PER CHARGE: .177 – 90 (on test); .22 – 95 (manufacturer's claims)
OVERALL LENGTH: 1,005mm
BARREL LENGTH: 430mm
WEIGHT: 3.75kg (incl. MTC scope)
SIGHTS: None fitted. 11mm scope dovetails
TRIGGER: Two-stage, adjustable
SAFETY: Manual switch, resettable
STOCK: Grade Three (minimum) walnut sporter, right-hand
LENGTH OF PULL: 352mm
POWER: 11.4ft/lb with Rangemaster Sovereign on test
SRP: £1,900, inclusive of QF charging adaptor, leather sling, QR swivels/studs, Vanguard aluminium flight case, silver inlays, Certificate of Authenticity. (£1,992 for FAC version.) Extra: MTC 3-9x40 Genesis UL and mounts, with matching run no. (if acquired with rifle) – £207

as opposed to the manufacturer's claim of 80. Daystate has perfected its slingshot hammer over the years – a patented system which incorporates a hammer in a cage carrier that effectively reduces piston bounce and, thus, wasted air during the firing cycle. This efficient release of air returns both a high shot-count, and pleasant firing cycle.

Equally, I can say that the addition of a custom-designed Huggett muffler stifles the B&E's report better than a conventional-moderator does my Regal, too. The Milbro Huggett is considered the Rolls Royce of silencers, not just because they're so beautifully engineered, but because it works outstandingly well – and I can see why so many people say so many good things about them.

The Belita model on the B&E version measures up at 110mm long, with a diameter of 30mm – compact, yet oh-so efficient in culling the sound. Part of the reason is because it's married – not by a 1/2in UNF thread, incidentally – to one of Huggett's full-length shrouds. On Daystate's B&E model, this has had flutes machined into it to match those on the silencer.

I'm sure there are plenty of pellet brands that the B&E will shoot with unerring accuracy, but as my personal .177 Regal does the business with Rangemaster Sovereign, I started with them in my range testing – and didn't bother trying anything else! At 30 metres, the gun key-holed, and most of my 45-metre groups were coverable with a 2p piece. I tested the magazine against the supplied single-shot tray to see if there was any discernible accuracy difference. There wasn't.

Range-testing was made all the easier by the B&E's special edition scope. Actually, I'm half-tempted to invest in this MTC model – the 3-9x40 Genesis UL, minus silver accoutrements, is generally available. Optically, it performed very well on dingy, winter days, giving a sharp, clear and well-rendered image.

And I'm a bit of a fan of the AMD reticle, too. While the 5-20x50 spec made the original Genesis too big a hunting scope for me, the UL is perfect for sporting use, and complements sporters like the Regal extremely well.

In case you're wondering, that unusual zero-locking button situated below the saddle is used to stop any internal vibrations happening. It'll be useful on a recoiler, no doubt – but you must remember to slacken it off when adjusting the turrets.

Whenever I'm reviewing a rifle, I like to give as honest and objective an appraisal as I can – even if it means I end up getting some stick from the manufacturer. At the end of the day, my job is to help readers make an informed judgement on the gun in question. In the case of the Boxall & Edmiston, though, it's hard to pen any negatives because I simply can't think of anything bad to say about such a magnificent PCP.

And before you say 'its price', let's evaluate that a bit more. Aside of the fact that it's built around an award-winning, time-proven action from one of the most prestigious gunmakers in the world, you're getting over 150 quid's worth of Huggett sound suppression, a single-shot tray, leather sling, QR sling swivels, high-end flight case, silver furniture and at least a Grade Three piece of walnut. Now consider all the specialist engraving work and exclusivity of a limited edition run associated with one of the finest English shotgunning names. As an appreciator of quality craftsmanship, I can't see that's not worth the money. Plus, I can see its future value as a collector's piece.

The Boxall & Edmiston is powerful, accurate, well balanced and a lovely shooter all-round – both a connoisseur's and collector's dream acquisition. Quality like this doesn't come cheap on any type of gun – and, in airgun terms, you don't see it very often, either. It's a lifetime's airgun investment for sure – but it's also one of those guns that you can't afford *not* to invest in.

How many airgunners, when thinking of models like the BSA Centenary, Venom Mach II, Imperial Double Express, ask themselves: "If only I'd bought one back then..."? Well, fast-forward a couple of decades, and I think there could be many reading this article who will be kicking themselves that they didn't grab the Boxall & Edmiston air rifle when they had the chance! ●