

Down the Line (DTL) can claim to be the oldest form of clay target shooting, dating back to the last part of the 19th century, and it still ranks as the second most popular form of the sport in terms of registered

down the line

targets shot. The first governing body for target shooting in Britain, the 'Inanimate Bird Shooting Association' was formed as long ago as 1892. The sport took many of its words and customs from live pigeon shooting but soon developed a strong following of its own, appealing to a new type of shooter for whom clay pigeons offered a more affordable form of shooting. DTL is very similar to the American Trap discipline that was growing rapidly at the same time on the opposite side of the Atlantic.

THE BASICS

DTL can be considered the starting point for all trap shooting disciplines. Virtually all top trap shooters began their careers in DTL before moving on to the international arena.

The layout consists of a single trap housed in a construction approx eight feet wide and three feet high at the front. Five shooting positions, three yards apart, form an arc sixteen yards from the trap house.

The targets (standard size and normally black or blaze according to the background) are fixed in terms of speed and elevation but are variable from side to side to a maximum of 22.5 degrees either side of the straight ahead position. In still air they should fly 50-55 yards. Regulation targets are set by ensuring that they pass through a three ft. diameter hoop set nine feet high and ten yards out along the centre line.

SHOOTING PROCEDURE

Squads of five shooters shoot a round of 25 targets each. Shooting alternately, starting with shooter number one, they shoot five targets from each peg before moving 'down the line' to the right. This continues until each shooter has shot five targets from all five pegs. Full use of the gun is allowed with 3 points for a first barrel kill and 2 for a second barrel. A perfect score is therefore 25 kills, 75 points, usually abbreviated to 25/75. The magic score for a 100 bird event is therefore 100/300.

EQUIPMENT

Specialist trap guns are favoured by the majority of competitive shooters. These will be set up to allow a good view of the target over the rib and will normally place the pattern slightly high as virtually all DTL targets are shot while rising. Barrel lengths of 30 and 32 inches are the most common and most favour fairly tight chokes (between half and full) as the clay is edge on. The rules state that the maximum cartridge load is one ounce (28 grams), shot size 6 or smaller. Most elect to use shot sizes 7, 7.5 or 8 (English sizes).

THE STARS



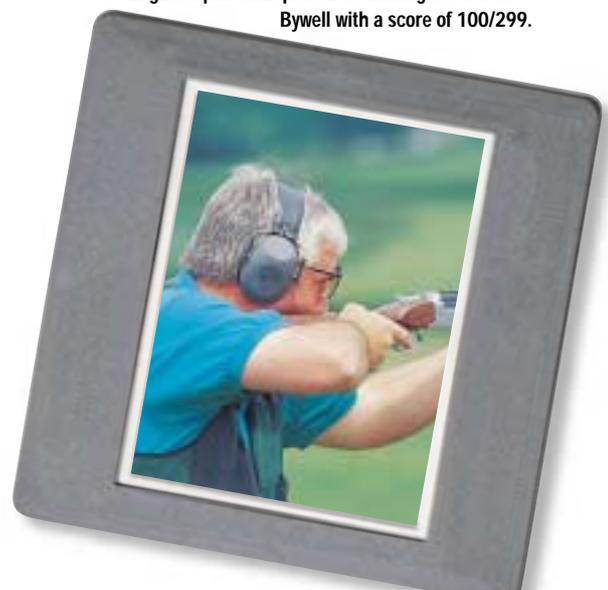
Phil Morgan

Maintaining the tradition of top Welsh trap shooters, Phil has enjoyed consistent success in recent seasons. The British Open Champion in 2001, he added the English Single Barrel to his collection in early 2002 before going on to win the Dougall Memorial, the oldest trophy in the sport and one of the most prestigious major shoots in the calendar.



Tommy Allen

'Turbo' Tommy Allen from Northern Ireland is one of the most talented all-round trap shooters on the circuit, equally at home on the DTL layouts as he is competing in international Olympic Trap events. A consistent winner over the years, Allen is the current English Open Champion after winning the title at Bywell with a score of 100/299.



of shooting



VARIATIONS ON A THEME

In addition to 'normal' DTL there are three other variations commonly shot in Britain:

Single Barrel — as DTL but only one cartridge can be loaded per target. Scoring is simply number of kills to count. The majority of American trap shooting is single barrel.

Double Rise — as the name suggests, two targets are released simultaneously, one angled left, one right. Points are awarded on the basis of two for a single kill and five for a pair.

Handicap by Distance — again popular in America, handicap shooting is less widely shot here. Shooters are moved further back from the trap to a maximum 23 yards according to their CPSA classification. Scoring is as for normal DTL.

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Mike Milne

The Scottish number one is another consistent winner who cannot be discounted whenever the major DTL prizes are up for grabs. A regular in the Scottish team and former British Open Champion, he was also the winner of the very first Krieghoff Classic.



John Twigg

The north of England produces more than its fair share of top trap shooters and Lancashire's John Twigg has been among that number for many years, invariably in the top five in the national averages and in contention at the major championships. In 2002 he landed one of the biggest of them all when he posted the only perfect 100/300 at the British Open, also taking the prize for the highest scorer over the Open/Home International weekend.

