



## HOW I STARTED SHOOTING

At six years old, I was swept up in 2012 Olympic fever. My family and I eagerly took in the excitement of the canoe slalom, modern pentathlon, Para athletics, and Para dressage. I found myself captivated by the thought of competing at such a high level of sport one day. To start with, my love of horses led me down an equestrian path, so I spent a few years developing my dressage skills. Then one day my dad suggested I try clay shooting. It was a sport he and my mother used to enjoy before I was born, and they still had their guns locked away.

So, in 2018 at the age of 11 I held my first shotgun, within one shot I was hooked. Then after a few lessons with Ken Rist at Lea Valley Shooting Association, I was eager to test my skills at a school Clay Shooting Championship called IAPS. I asked my school to sign me

up, and four weeks later I found myself at the prestigious West London Shooting School. I watched wide-eyed as busloads of school teams in matching kit and their coaches arrived. Meanwhile on my bench it was me, my dad, my mum's spare 20-bore and some free cartridges. I felt out of my comfort zone, but I was determined to give it my all and make my mark on the competition – by not coming last. It wasn't easy but I managed to apply what I had been taught, keep my focus, and grab as much information as I could from the friendly referees. A few hours later I won my age group and became the U11 Ladies champion.

A year later, having shot



## MY BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS

In May I had the honour of representing Great Britain at the Junior World Cup in Suhl. As a fifteen-year-old this was my first international competition so a steep learning curve. I competed in three events: individual, team and mixed pairs – which kept me busy throughout the week.

The highlight of the competition was winning a Gold Medal in the women's team event with Phoebe Bodley-Scott and Sophie Herrmann. After a tough morning of qualification, we faced the Slovakia team in a gold medal match. The first station was a draw but we rallied to win the following three rounds to take gold with a score of 7-1.

I continued my 2022 international competition journey at the European Championships in Cyprus where I finished in 10th place. I then competed in the World Championships in Croatia, where I made my first individual ISSF final and placed 8th.

At home, I was crowned the Junior Women's Olympic Skeet British Champion in September. I then took High Gun at the British Shooting Pathway Championships in October, winning the junior women's final and securing a personal best and another all-important minimum consideration score for international selection.

a bit here and there for fun, I got the urge to compete again. That's when I discovered a competition called The Schools Challenge (TSC), a series created for under 21s and run by the Florent family at the Oxford Gun Company. What set this competition apart was a grand final prize like no

other – an MG car! With that target clearly in my sights I did everything I could to win. By the end of 2019 I'd become the overall Ladies Champion at the TSC Grand Final and walked away with the car keys.

The same year I entered my first registered ESK competition at Nuthampstead Shooting Ground. This is where I met Katy Poulson who told me about the British Shooting Development Academy for Olympic Skeet. She invited me to join and my OSK journey began.

## MY SUPPORT: COACHES & SPONSORSHIP?

Zoli UK are my main sponsor, and the Edgar Brothers team ensure I have everything I need to perform at my best, whether that's a well serviced gun, new chokes or kit. They even engraved my initials on my trigger guard. And as a UK distributor of Clever, they also help me with cartridges. The team at CENS Digital provides my ear protection. I have to use passive ear protectors as digital ones are banned according to the ISSF rules. As I am still growing, CENS kindly fit me with new ones every 6 months.

Starkey Outdoors have supported me with Pilla eye protection. I have two sets of arms in case I need to change the lens due to rapid light changes mid-round during a competition.

CommsQuest Consulting help with my coaching costs and clays. They also support my international travel which in 2022 included Germany, Cyprus and Croatia.

Of course, none of this would be possible without my family's constant support. Mum is a great photographer and has captured countless memories for me and my teammates. Dad always travels with me to weekend training camps and whatever the weather he's on hand to help. Finally, my 7-year-old sister Lexi who does her best to entertain our dog Simba when we travel, and never complains when our weekends are dictated by competitions.

My coaches Jeremy Bird and Michael Gilligan are amazing. I have been working with them for just over a year now. They are both relatively new to coaching and represented Great Britain internationally at a high level for a number of years. I am able to learn from their experiences and apply it to my own performance.



### MY GUN & CARTRIDGES

**My gun:** I shoot a 12g Zoli Z-Bella with 28-inch barrels. It has a black action with Swarovski crystals. It has been designed for female shooters and fits me perfectly.

**My cartridge:** I shoot with Clever Mirage T2s for training and T3s in competition.



### THREE DESERT ISLAND ESSENTIALS

A good book – I really enjoy reading, and I find it helps to take my mind off competition between rounds, My dog Simba and headphones – I love listening to music or true crime podcasts, especially when warming up.



### MY FAVOURITE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT AND WHY?

When it comes to kit, nothing tops my Zoli gun. It's more than just a gun to me; it looks great with the Swarovski crystals and my initials kindly laser engraved by the team at Edgar Brothers, but it also performs brilliantly and although it was built for me it has plenty of adjustment in it.

## WHAT PIECE OF EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN MOST CHALLENGING

As a shooter that enjoys sporting, trap, and skeet, finding the perfect gun has been a challenge. My trusty Browning XS Pro served me well for sporting and trap, but its weight and long 32" barrels made it hard to control in OSK. My parents were hesitant to invest in another gun until I was fully committed, so I borrowed two different Beretta's while I made up my mind. Eventually, I chose to stick with OSK and began a search for the right gun. After speaking with several manufacturers, I decided on the Zoli Z Bella - and I was incredibly grateful when they agreed to sponsor me. Unfortunately, Brexit and Covid-related transport issues delayed the arrival of the 28" barrels I'd planned for, but I refused to let that stop me. With a standard 29.5" Z Bella, I straightened my first competition round. Half way through the year my new 28" arrived in the UK and despite advice not to change guns mid-season, I couldn't resist switching. As it happens 2022 turned out to be a very successful year.



### BETHANY'S TOP TIPS

- TIP 1** Expect ups as well as downs in your journey – especially if shooting OSK
- TIP 2** Concentrate on one clay at a time
- TIP 3** Remember to keep things fun and enjoy what you do
- TIP 4** Accept there are some things beyond your influence so control the controllable, and the rest will sort itself out
- TIP 5** Don't stop shooting other disciplines if you enjoy them. Young shots are often advised to focus on just one thing, but variety can help.