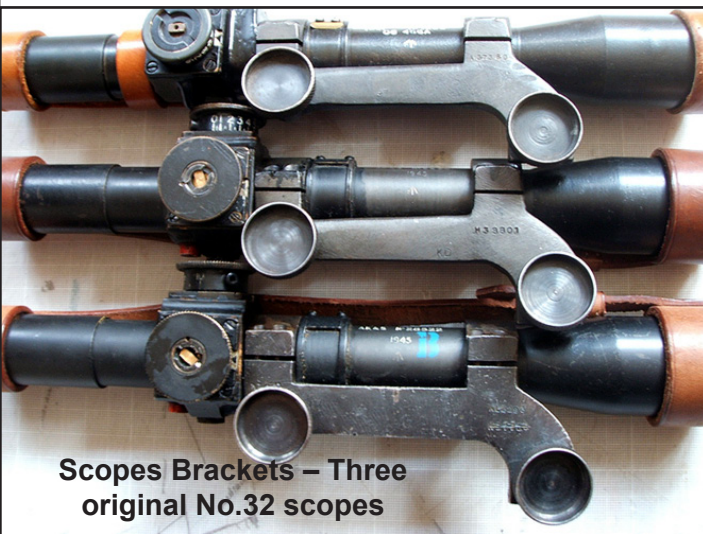


# Reproduction No.32 Scope Brackets

**Nigel Greenaway**

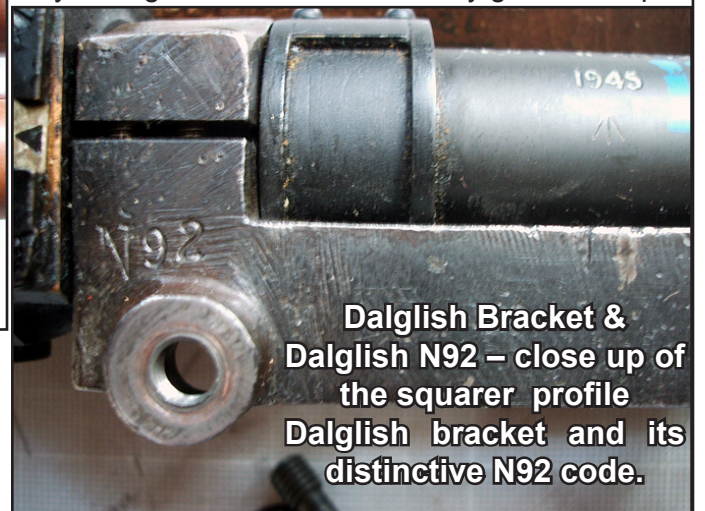
Over the years the value of complete, shootable No.4(T) sniper rifles has continued to rise – no doubt

is likely to be £2,000. For a correct matching rifle with its scope tin, leather sling and lens caps, Scout Regiment spotting scope and wooden transit cases - then the price will be upwards of £3,500 and more. All this has resulted in a veritable cottage industry of miss-matched rebuilds made up from genuine rifles, non-matching scopes and mount brackets, all the way through to rifles where the only genuine sniper



**Scopes Brackets – Three original No.32 scopes**

helped by the introduction in 1989 of a new 600 yard sniping competition run as part of the South London Rifle Club classic event. These competitions evolved in to the famous Trafalgar meeting and there are now several 200 yard McQueen, snap, double snap, 600 yard and 900 yard sniper competitions for which No.4(T) and the later L42A1 sniper rifles are eligible. The demand for these rifles remains insatiable the total price for even a miss-matched rifle and scope

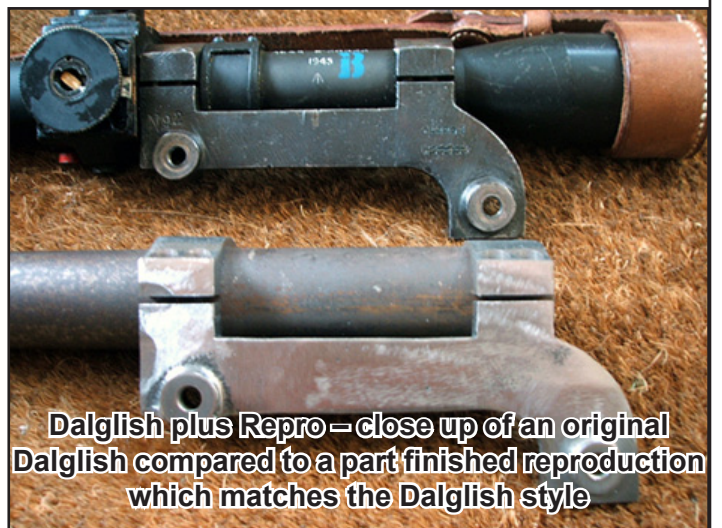


**Dalglish Bracket & Dalglish N92 – close up of the squarer profile Dalglish bracket and its distinctive N92 code.**

item is the No.32 sniper scope. For those lucky enough to have a correct No.32 scope it is relatively easy to fit it to a suitable scope less No.4(T) or even a basic No.4 or to make an



**Rose KD – close up of the rounded profile Rose Brothers brackets, marked JG or KD**



**Dalglish plus Repro – close up of an original Dalglish compared to a part finished reproduction which matches the Dalglish style**



**Pattern – one half of the Pattern to cast 8 brackets**

L42A1 lookalike. However this process of refitting scopes only started when Roger Payne, an RFD and an expert on these rifles, who regularly has a stand at the Birmingham International Arms Fair, decided in 1990 to make reproduction scope brackets. Without the bracket you really are stuck and the rifle is only eligible to enter the military class competitions if a contemporary mounting system is used.

Roger has, over the years, made five batches of 100 brackets, cast out of malleable iron and machined just like the originals, using original blue prints. Experience and minor tweaks have made each successive batch better and the quality is so high that, to quote the noted authority on the subject, Peter Laidler, when answering a question on one of the internet collector forums "...about 50 or so of Roger Payne's brackets were utilised on the latter rebuilds of the L42's destined for War Reserve stocks and they were indeed perfect. It's ironic that some of the L42 owners out there who would probably shudder at a repro anything, probably have an MoD fitted repro bracket. Does that make it a repro? The owners of those rifles can at least be assured that they have one of the dedicated War Reserve Stocks held at xxxxxxxx in Berkshire. The steel stock and quality assessment was done at the

material labs at Shrivenham and even that was the same horrible black-heart (or was it white-heart...?) malleable cast! It's such an old formula that I can't find the mix in Machinery's handbook any more!"

The purpose of this article is to show the considerable effort that goes in to making the brackets – something that I know about because I have joined Roger in helping to make the latest batch. They are made to tight tolerances to ensure that they collimate within acceptable limits when fitted to genuine rifles (something that can't always be said about some of the Indian made copies that have recently appeared). Roger's brackets are difficult to distinguish from an original and have helped pair up many a No.32 scope with a suitable rifle which would otherwise have continued to gather dust in a corner. The value of a complete rifle, even if the rifle and scope are mismatched, is far greater than the sum of its parts so the brackets are a great investment. However, before describing this labour



**Dalglish Rose – Looking down on the scope rings and fitted cradle screws of a Dalglish bracket above a Rose bracket.**

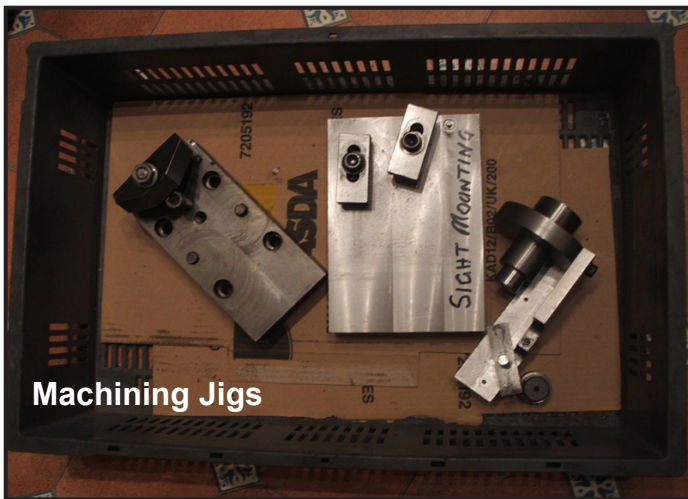
of love, a history lesson is in order.

### WW2 Scope Brackets

There were two British and one Canadian manufacturer of the brackets that held the No.32 scope to the rifle. Rose Brothers of Gainsborough in Lincolnshire marked their brackets with either JG or KD and Dalglish of Glasgow marked theirs N92. Other markings will be successive numbers, like 18 and 19 or 202 and 203, on the side of the cradle cramps or scope rings as we would call them today. Some of the early scopes having single letter prefixes or suffixes. The reason for these numbers is to prevent the caps being put back on the wrong cradle. After 1950 the bracket had the rifle serial number stamped on it. Original brackets without a number will have been sold out of service before 1950. Sometimes you will find brackets with two or three different rifle numbers stamped on them with the previous numbers struck through. The Canadian REL made brackets always had the rifle serial number engraved on them. Rose



**T h u m b screws – the two originals with springs are at the top.**



**Machining Jigs**

Brothers' brackets have more rounded edges whilst the Dalglish brackets have more square edges – as you can see from the picture. Roger's brackets are copied from the Dalglish type.

During the war Holland and Holland carried out most of the conversions – in the process matching scopes to rifles with precise machining of the mounting pads fixed to the side of rifle actions so that scopes would be precisely in line with the bores of the rifles with reticules centred so that the maximum number of adjustment clicks are available for elevation and windage. Hence each scope is collimated to its rifle and the scope number is then stamped on to the butt of the rifle so that scope and rifle remain as a matching pair. Brackets might be swapped when trying to salvage a rifle or scope – hence it is quite common to see different rifle numbers stamped on the bracket but this could be a laborious process with armourers trying different barrels to ensure correct collimation. Having said that, I've never had too much of a problem trying different brackets, a well made one of the correct dimensions and machining will line up well enough to ensure enough

adjustment is left in the scope for relaxed civilian shooting. Notice the emphasis on well made as some of the foreign made reproductions need considerable work to make them even fit on to original mounting pads and collimation is often non-existent so that most of the scope's adjustment is used up in one direction to even get close to the target.

So what work is involved to produce accurate reproduction brackets that have been described as "perfect" by Peter Laidler? The answer is lots of time, effort and considerable expense. Specifically the following elements are required:

1. A "pattern" is hand made by a pattern maker so that a number of casts can be made in one go – in this case eight brackets. The pattern is made in two halves – one half is shown in the picture. A skilled job in itself which is then followed by the skill of casting in malleable iron. A cast bracket is shown from a previous batch which was broken out of the mould too soon and then proceeded to bend slightly before cooling – hence it had to be rejected.

2. Cradle screws - a special tapered pattern that cannot be purchased off the shelf. These are what hold the scopes rings and eight are needed for each bracket so it makes sense to get 1000 made (I have some spares if anyone needs them).

3. Thumb screws – two per bracket, used to secure the bracket to the rifle. They are specially designed so that the circumference of the round thumb piece allows the correct tension to be applied by thumb and index finger. There have been many reports that the foreign made thumb screws have been known to shear off under thumb /finger pressure leaving the threaded portion stuck in the mount pads! Again more spares are available if needed.

The picture shows a batch – the two originals are at the top with the small springs that help achieve the right tension without damaging the bracket.

4. Machining jigs – another hand made and expensive item which is required to hold each bracket prior to precision machining. The same company has been used for the last three batches so quality and accuracy is very high.



**Box of Machined Brackets prior to hand finishing**



**Reproduction bracket prior to hand finishing – red areas are those where metal needs to be removed.**

5. Machined brackets prior to hand finishing with a power file. It takes about one hour to hand finish each bracket prior to stamping the rings so that remain matching then shot blasting, parkerising and spray painting with black suncoarite (the official British military finish). The original brackets had quite a rough wartime finish with obvious pits and marks from casting and finishing. Too smooth a finish makes a reproduction bracket stand out from an original – hence we deliberately try to retain the wartime look.

Over the years Roger has found that the skills needed to fabricate these brackets seem to be disappearing. With each batch of 100 brackets taking about 2 or more years to sell, to a select band of shooters and collectors, it might be as long as three years before, for example, the company who cast the brackets is approached for another batch. More often than not, Roger has found that the original company has gone bust – taking the

expensive “pattern” with them. More time and effort would then be taken to find another company and more money expended to pay the pattern maker. This time it was my job to find the pattern maker and I made sure that I retrieved the pattern. Hopefully it is now fully appreciated just how much time and effort goes in to making these reproduction brackets. The availability of these high quality brackets has resulted in a dramatic increase in the value of No.32 scopes – they typically fetch between £700-£1000 depending on condition and the mark (Mark 3 or 2/1 scopes are easier to zero so they tend to fetch more). If the scope comes with a bracket then this adds £300-£400 to the



**Reproduction - not quite finished**

package. If you are lucky enough to have one of these scopes then purchasing the bracket will be a sound investment. This latest batch of British made brackets cost £200 each, but then quality never did come cheap.



**Can you tell them apart????**