

# ONE IN A HUNDRED ... AND SIXTY-THREE!

The HW77 is a common rifle, but not when it has a natural laminate stock. Pete Evans explains all



One of just 163 sold in the UK - and it's mine.

The HW77 launched back in the mid-1980s was a game-changer for many, and continues to hold its own in today's marketplace despite stiff competition. I don't know the exact number made to date, but surely it must run to many thousands. The majority of those made will have a beech sporter stock, with colourful laminate stocks making their presence known in more recent years.

Back in 1998, laminate stocks on airguns were relatively uncommon, sometimes seen on 10m match rifles, and custom specials, but not seen on a factory-supplied Weihrauch. Despite these considerations, I have before me a factory-supplied HW77K from 1998, with a

laminate stock. What's the story behind this rare beast? To find that out, I needed to apply some detective work which included scouring the Internet, and speaking to some people in the know at Weihrauch importers, Hull Cartridge Company. Before getting to the finer details, it might be worth getting the background on how this special gun got into my hands.

## TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

As is my custom whilst visiting the historic city of Hereford, I always ensure that I visit Phillip Morris and Son, principally the upstairs gunroom. Regular readers of my rambblings may recall the rather nice BSA Mercury S I bought there some years ago. Gunroom

manager Mark Jones usually has a few interesting second-hand guns on the rack, and on this occasion a brace of BSAs, a Webley, and a laminate stocked HW77K.

At first glance I thought the '77 was a new model because their laminate stocks have become quite commonplace – in fact, I have one of their summer laminates with an attractive green hue. On closer inspection, I could see a few marks so it was clearly used, but there were still a couple of things that didn't seem right; the first was the colour, which was devoid of the usual colours used by Weihrauch – reds, blues, and greens. I was aware that there was an autumn colour stock which did have some browns, but this one didn't have that

appearance, it somehow looked a bit more, well natural. The other thing that struck me was the shape, which didn't fit the pattern of the modern Weihrauch stocks. This one was more squared in shape, the same as my Mk3 1994 model with a beech stock, in fact.

At this point, numerous questions passed through my mind, the principle one being, 'Do I really need another HW77?' There is a difference between need and like, so I rephrased the question to my myself, and decided that yes, I would like another HW77, especially as I didn't have one quite like this. A short while later having parted with £275, I carried my new acquisition away, but not really appreciating what I had just bought.

**INTERNET IDENTIFICATION**

Using the Internet certainly makes life a lot easier when undertaking research, and in this case, I started by picking the brains of the generous folk on the AirgunBBS. Within a few key strokes I discovered that my gun was known as a 'special edition natural laminate stock'. These guns formed a batch of 163 received by Hull Cartridge back in 1998. Personal theories suggested that Weihrauch had decided to dip their toe in the water with the laminate stocks, hence the low initial numbers. Further reading disclosed that there were two batches, identifiable by their serial numbers. These serial numbers were 1458842-1458941 and 1459688-1459752, all supplied in .22 cal – my own gun sitting in the middle of the second batch.

Specific information came courtesy of Chris Horner of Hull Cartridge. Chris kindly consulted the company archives and confirmed that the guns were received on 20/02/1998, my own gun being sold on 11/05/1998, and the complete shipment was sold out by 23/07/1998. Thanks to Chris and Hull Cartridge Co for their valuable assistance.

With the identification and history determined, it was time to consider the specifics of this rarely seen classic.



**If you want a modern version, why not try out the new Summer Forest model.**

**LOVELY LAMINATE**

Of course, the defining feature of this gun is the laminate stock, which is distinct from the modern offerings because it has a more – well – natural look. I can't tell if the laminate is made from different colour woods, or if it has

and deep fore end.

As might be expected on a gun of this age, there are a few marks and scratches, which may be a bit more difficult to disguise than with a standard item. As far as I am concerned, this really isn't a problem because if it were pristine, I would

*"As might be expected on a gun of this age, there are a few marks and scratches"*

been dyed, but which ever method, it has a particularly pleasant appearance. Laminated wood will be stronger than its equivalent in solid beech, and will also likely be a bit heavier. The HW77 has never been a light gun, but any extra weight from the stock, really isn't noticeable. As identified earlier the design imitates the design of the contemporary beech stock, with a fairly low comb, for open sights,

be less likely to take it out for fear of damaging it – a bit of honest wear just adds to the character. Being more natural in appearance helps the outline of the stock break up a little whilst out in the woods, a little inbuilt camouflage, if you like.

**ACTION**

The gun's action is standard Mk3 HW77K fare, this edition is only available in .22. For those

**Wot no writing? This will please the Weihrauch fan club.**



**A few scratches may be difficult to cover, but not something to worry about.**





The Mk.2 HW77 had a sliding catch, which can be fiddly.



A few rust speckles, I'll be keeping under review, and keeping oiled.

curious about such matters, the HW77 was never quoted as being a Mk specific gun, although there is difference between guns over the years which is easier to consider in Mk's.

The main difference is the under-lever catch, the Mk1 having a ball-bearing catch, which means the under-lever just pulls down. From experience, this is not particularly durable, the ball bearing and tensioning spring often parting company with the housing since it is only 'staked' into position.

The Mk2 has a sliding catch to hold the under-lever, which is durable, but can be a bit of a fiddle to release. The Mk3 will be most familiar because this is used on current guns, and consists of a knob which is depressed to release the lever. In my opinion, this is the preferred system, and one which must be working for the majority of shooters because Weihrauch have not changed it for some time.

**It's not pristine, so I don't mind taking it out.**



There are stock differences between guns – Mk1 and Mk2 having a shallower fore end than the deeper MK3.

Aficionados of the Weihrauch brand will be keen to note that the back block is devoid of embossed lettering, detailing safety notices,

*"It's funny how a sound can trigger memories, or transport you to a different time"*

which is complained about more often than raising council tax bills. Close scrutiny shows some minor rust speckles, but otherwise all the bluing is present, with only minor signs of wear.

#### OUT AND ABOUT

Having bought the rifle from a reputable source meant that the power had been checked before sale, and in this case, it hovered around

10.3 ft.lbs. using JSB Exacts, with pleasing consistency. Cocking the action, gave the customary sucking noise caused by the piston's seal rubbing inside the compression chamber as it returns to the forward position. I've always found this sound endearing and

somehow reassuring. I know it sounds a bit sad, but it's something that's been a part of my shooting experience for 30 years. It's funny how a sound can trigger memories, or transport you to a different time. If you have a HW77 listen for it, but I'm sure you already know what I'm talking about.

It didn't feel as though this gun had any extra work, misguided or otherwise, feeling standard in its shot delivery, and by that I mean mild recoil accompanied by a degree of spring noise. No dieseling was evident, and the gun's inner action appeared devoid of any lubricant.

All the fixings were intact, and undamaged, which led me to think that this gun had received fairly light use, and had not been stripped too regularly.

With this in mind, I was keen to get the gun apart, change routine service items, and smooth things out a little – in essence, nothing radical, expensive, or anything that will change the character of this limited edition, which for a gun like this is exactly how I would want it.

Next month, I will be undertaking the work, so you can see exactly what's involved in the refinement process. ■

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mark Jones and the team at Phillip Morris and Son. [www.phillipmorrisdirect.co.uk](http://www.phillipmorrisdirect.co.uk)  
Chris Horner at Hull Cartridge. [www.hullcartridge.co.uk](http://www.hullcartridge.co.uk).