

# FRIENDS REUNITED

An old chum makes reappearance from the back of the cupboard

“You can only shoot one at a time. What’s the point in having so many?” Sage words from a wife who doesn’t understand the joy of multiple airgun ownership. Oh well, maybe one day she will understand. However, there is a grain of truth in this comment because unless you make a concerted effort to use all your guns regularly, the joy of shooting them can be lost as you get caught up with your everyday air rifles.

Every gun I have has a little story behind it, which comes to mind every time I take it from the cabinet. Sad to say, I don’t get to hear some of those stories often enough.

## VOICE FROM THE PAST

It was 1994. I had got married the year before, and had just qualified as a general nurse. My salary had doubled overnight. Life was good - but I had an itch to scratch. Ever since reading Jim Tyler’s articles in *Sporting Air Rifle*, I yearned for a Weihrauch HW77, which

I knew would take my shooting to a new level. It was with my new-found wealth that I bought a HW77K, complete with a Simmons 3-9x40 scope, and the expectation was not misplaced. The rifle exceeded my hopes by a long chalk.

## UNDERLEVER EXCELLENCE

As a rifle, the HW77 needs little introduction. Since its importation in 1983 it has been a consistent favourite among the shooting public because it has a number of attributes that push it ahead of the crowd – not least its ability to shoot from the box in a manner usually reserved for those special rifles breathed upon by the tuning masters of the day. It gave an instant advantage, enhanced further if you were willing to spend a little time and effort with some fine-tuning.

The rifle was introduced at an opportune time, just right for the burgeoning field target scene, whilst eminently suitable for the hunting field, and all the features were there to

ensure positive performance; fixed barrel precision, direct-to-barrel loading, superb trigger, and cylinder capacity more in tune with the UK power limit.

## CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT

Over the years, Weihrauch have made several tweaks to the gun’s design, which has led to enthusiasts dubbing them as Mk1-3 models, a designation that you won’t hear quoted by the factory. As a general rule of thumb, the Mk1 has a ball catch for the underlever, Mk2 a switch-like retainer, the Mk3 a push-button-type catch.

As well as these changes, there was an increase in cylinder diameter from 25mm to 26mm and this can usually be ascertained by serial number. The rifles numbered after 1301036 should be the 26mm size, but be aware that people do change parts between guns, so it is quite possible to find a 25mm compression tube on a newer gun. Purists will

its good to rediscover old friends, shown here in original clothes.





The ambidextrous rear-stock will be a hit for left-handers.

tell you the 25mm is going to be the best shooting option, hence a steady trade in 25mm compression tubes. It is possible to mimic the 25mm capacity by short-stroking the 26mm piston, if you are so inclined. Having shot the two models, personally, I am hard pressed to see, or should that be 'feel' the difference.

Whichever model you choose, disappointment will not be something you will have to live with – a HW77, given some timely maintenance, will serve you the proverbial lifetime, and then some.

### BACK TO THE PRESENT

During a visit to the Game Fair at Ragley Hall earlier this year, I had the pleasure of meeting Tom and Lynne who were ably staffing the Hull Cartridge stall. As I am sure you will know, Hull have been the official Weihrauch importer since 1977, so well placed to give advice on the HW range.

Aside from their engaging conversation, my attention was drawn to a display of stocks which were either ex-display, or exhibited some small cosmetic damage. Among the standard beech offerings there was a colourful, stand-out, laminate green stock, which when I



A rounded fore stock promotes an open-handed grip – just the

saw it knew would look the bees knees on my own gun. As well as the laminate, they had a rather pleasant thumbhole beech stock, usually seen on the HW97, which will also fit the later HW77. After a few seconds deliberation, I decided that this type of opportunity only occurs rarely, and that it should be grasped with both hands – yep, I bought the pair.

Hull Cartridge do not usually supply directly to the public, rather through their countrywide dealer network, so my advice would be to keep an eye out for them at the shooting shows because this could be something that will be repeated.

### Tom and Lynne of Hull Cartridge, purveyors of fine stocks.



### ONE SIZE FITS ALL?

The beauty of a gun that has undergone fairly minimal change over the years is that a lot of parts will be interchangeable. In regard to the stock, there are a couple of small details to bear in mind.

The early HW77 did have a smaller diameter stock-fixing lug than on the newer models, and this is easy to verify because the newer ones are 15mm in diameter. If you have a smaller one, all is not lost. You can replace it with a newer, larger diameter one, or if you are that way given, you could make a bush to surround the lug to make up the gap.

As well as the lug, there have been some instances of the trigger sear fouling on the inside of the stock, and again, this relates to older models, which may need a bit of work with a chisel to allow a little more relief. Neither of these issues posed a problem for my own gun, and the new stock gently slipped into place, before being held fast by the securing screws.



ticket for springer shooting.

A Rowan 'extra set-back' trigger, for me an essential accessory, which needs to be felt to be believed.

**UP-TO-DATE LOOKS**

There is no doubt that a new stock can work wonders when fitted to an older model. It's pretty much like having a new gun. Stock designs have moved on in leaps and bounds over the years. The latest HW stocks are

such as BSA, Daystate, and Air Arms have availed themselves of their services, and why not, when they produce such quality?

It must be difficult to design a non-adjustable stock to fit all, but Minelli have made a pretty good job of it.

no end for accuracy.

The fore end retains a 'full' feeling that promotes a support hold rather than a grip, which as we know is the correct hold for a springer. The laminate design is likely to be heavier than the standard beech, although the layered wood will have greater intrinsic strength.

*"a new stock can work wonders when fitted to an older model"*

produced by Minelli of Italy, and the Italians know something about style and design – it shows in their creations. Airgun manufacturers

For me, nearly everything falls into alignment when using a 40mm objective lens scope in medium mounts, which is going to do

**SEASONAL CAMOUFLAGE**

Owing to the fact that the stock is predominantly green this has been named Summer Forest, looking at it amongst the summer foliage, it does seem to blend quite well. There is an autumn colour type, and also a blue laminate for the HW97 - I'm not sure what season that one represents. Now I would like to see a winter version with black and grey, so if anyone at Weihrauch is reading this, you're welcome to call that one, "Welsh winter".

**Fitting a new stock is almost like having a new rifle.**



**TRIGGER FINGER**

I mentioned earlier that the handling was almost perfect – the small fly in the ointment is the reach to trigger, which I find overly long on all the HW range – the HW30 perhaps being the exception.

Thankfully, help is at hand in the form of 'extra set-back' triggers from Rowan Engineering. In my opinion, these are essential accessories for Weihrauch springers – they make a huge difference to the shooting process. There is a tendency to pull the standard trigger to the side rather than straight back, unless of course you have particularly long digits. The extra set-back has a generous curve which adheres to the finger, and the smooth surface for me is far preferable to the





straighten out the bracket before removing the adjuster screw.



Drift out the trigger pin to remove the blade. Note the adjuster screw and its tensioning spring.

ribbed standard type. The blade gives an extra 10mm of set-back, and there is a standard set-back if that is too much, with availability of brass and aluminium materials.

**STRAIGHTFORWARD SET-BACK FITTING**

Fitting the trigger is a fairly straightforward process, which necessitates the use of a few hand tools.

Start by removing the stock, locate the trigger weight screw behind the blade. You will notice it is held by a bent metal bracket. There will probably be a bend in the bracket, and this will be necessary to 'stake' the adjustment screw in position. Take a pair of long-nose pliers and straighten the bracket. It's fairly soft mild steel.

Remove the adjusting screw. It is a soft alloy and prone to deformation, so always use a well-fitting engineer's screwdriver. Once

With the old blade out, insert the new blade, drift the pin back, and replace the tensioning spring before using the new adjusting screw.



Size is everything; 15mm will happily fit the new-style stocks.

removed, there will be a tensioning spring below. Be careful not to misplace this.

The trigger pivot pin (2mm), will need to be removed with a parallel pin punch. These can be quite tight, but will yield after a few sharp taps.

Remove the old blade, put the new one in position, and drift the pin back into place. The old trigger weight screw cannot be reused with the extra set-back blade because there is no room. There will be an alternative screw supplied with the new blade which should be inserted, remembering to ensure that the tension spring is in place. The trigger weight may then be adjusted to your desired requirement.

Once complete you will fully appreciate the benefits of a well-fitted trigger, which will have correspondingly positive effects on your shooting.

**MECHANICAL MATTERS**

With the 77 handling so well, it really began to

highlight the deficiencies in the firing cycle, which were a product of my own misguided efforts many years ago.

Before the days of enlightenment, it was common practice to change mainsprings for long, stiff types in an attempt to produce power and lightning-quick action times. Following advice from an airgunsmith, I was talked into fitting a stiff overlong spring, which I was assured would transform the gun. He wasn't wrong. It did transform it from something relatively benign, to something unpleasant and unruly. Shortly after this, I started on the pre-charged path, which meant the 77 dropped into obscurity, until its recent reinvention with its new clothes and trigger.

The internals needed to be sorted out to make the most of its new-found cosmetics, so I sort advice from the 'Lord of the Springs', aka Jim Tyler.

Jim confirmed what I thought, and that was that the best way forward was to go back to the beginning and refit a standard spring.

With this brief in mind, next month will see us stripping the '77 to its bare bones, checking the fit and condition of the internal parts, and replacing that mainspring.

I hope this will get the rifle shooting as good as it looks, and give me a few weeks shooting the summer season with the appropriate stock! ■

**CONTACTS**

Hull Cartridge. [www.hullcartridge.co.uk](http://www.hullcartridge.co.uk). 01482-342756.

Rowan Engineering. [www.rowanengineering.com](http://www.rowanengineering.com). 01295-251188. Extra set-back trigger from £35.95.