

ALL CHANGE — AGAIN!

Phil Hardman has changed his hunting rifle - but the apple hasn't fallen far from the tree, it seems

It's not often I change rifles, or try out different models really. Anyone who reads my pieces regularly will know I have a firm belief in mastering the kit you have, and sticking to it, preferring the intimate bond you build up over time spent using a single rifle in the hunting field, to the pull of shiny new toys to play with. The buzz of a new rifle isn't lost on me though, and I know exactly why it is that people change their rifles so often, or eventually amass a huge collection. You can therefore, imagine how exciting it is for me when I do get a new gun, given how rare an event it is. Well, that's exactly what's happened this month, for the second time in less than a year; Hardman has a new hunting rifle!

The last change I made was to

the Weihrauch HW100s back in late summer last year, and it was one of the greatest things I ever did. I immediately bonded with it and it rejuvenated my interest in hunting in a way I didn't think possible. It's a partnership that

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has seen me operate in the hunting field at efficiency that I couldn't have dreamed of previously, such is the savage accuracy of the thing, and if you'd have asked me at any time since I got it, if I'd think of replacing it with any other rifle in existence, the answer would have been a

resounding no. However, that was in a world where I didn't know about the existence of a then secret new rifle that Weihrauch had been working on, and now that I do, I think I am allowed to maybe change my answer. Enter then, the Weihrauch HW110, which I was lucky enough to

receive a few weeks ago.

NOT A REVIEW

I'll start off by saying straight away that this isn't a review, mainly because the editor is the reviewery (that's a word, honest) type, and I find it boring, plus I'd be rubbish at it and he seems to be pretty

okay at it, so we'll leave that to him, but I will run you through my first impressions of the rifle as we made the journey together, from box, to field.

Firstly, ignore pictures of it. She's a looker in the flesh, but doesn't necessarily photograph as well; a bit like me really, because trust me - I might look like 7 out of 10 in these pages, but in real life I'm a 9! I wasn't impressed when I saw pictures but yes, I think they got it bang on aesthetically.

Build quality is everything you'd expect from Weihrauch, so I won't harp on about it too much but the rubber-coated stock is a particular highlight for me. Having felt many similar items in the past, this one is by far the best I've used. The polymer action feels as rock steady and strong as the action on the HW100 or any other rifle I've





The jackdaw was a formality once I'd closed the range sufficiently.



I'm enjoying every minute with the new HW110.

ever tried, so that's no concern to me, but the advantage that brings to handling is apparent as soon as you pick the thing up. It's pointable, stable, changes direction easily and is about the perfect weight, in my opinion. I topped mine with a Hawke Airmax 4-12 x 40 scope, which didn't add too much weight but offers really top performance optics, and by the time I'd finished doing that I was so excited about shooting the thing that I decided to stop taking notes of what I thought, and just go shooting.

ZERO HOUR

I arrived to zero it full of excitement, as I loaded up the pair of 10-shot magazines that come with the rifle. The mag's themselves are a joy to use; just push the pellets into each hole and a little rubber 'O' ring draws them into place and holds them securely - no rattles, no skirts sticking out, simple. I pulled the side lever back and the rifle's internal mechanisms did their thing much in the same way as with the HW100. It's hard to

describe, and I hate drawing on national stereotypes, but German engineering is famous for a reason and when you cock an HW110 you immediately feel that reason happening in your hands. Popping the mag' into the rifle, I lined up on my little card target and sent the first pellet downrange. The first thing I noticed was that the rifle is quiet! There's no action noise that I noticed at all, and barely any muzzle report either, and I'm not sure if it's down to the inner workings or the sound absorption of the polymer action, but whatever it is, it was enough to make me wonder for a second if the rifle was running at full power. I had a few more shots as I brought the scope to zero and it became clear that the power was as it should be. The rifle is just silent, and after a couple of shots and a few tweaks of the adjusters on the scopes turrets, it also became clear that this thing will group pellets with such ease that doing groupings, even at 45 yards becomes boring within seconds.

SEEN ENOUGH

I did warn you that I was terrible at

The Weihrauch HW110 has changed the way I think about my hunting.

"I didn't look at them, but I have a suspicion that they were watching me closely as I sauntered nonchalantly across the muddy yard and disappeared behind the wall of the shed"

reviews and this is why, within 10 minutes I'd seen enough. The gun had proven it was up to the task, and I knew I was, so for me everything else was just a waste of air. Luckily, my day suddenly got more interesting when a decent sized rabbit made the mistake of hopping out of the bushes right in front of me. I'd love to tell you that it succumbed to a heroic 40-yard shot, but the truth is it was about 12 yards and I was sitting, rested on the window of my car, so really it was about as easy as it gets, but a kill is a kill and it was first blood for the little 110.

After that I decided to have a wander around the land to get a better idea of how the rifle's handling felt in the real world. Carrying the gun is no problem because I'm already used to carrying my HW100s, which is heavier than the 110, but I wondered if that light weight would cause a lack of stability for standing shots, and although you can simulate this with practice, nothing can beat actually lining up on a real target to show up any strengths or weaknesses in a rifle's design.

OUT AND ABOUT

I started off by heading along the small plantation where the first rabbit had come from, before wandering into my little zeroing range. Wood pigeons often use this as a daytime roost so I made sure to keep my eyes up in the trees as well as down on the ground, but for the most part I saw very little as I stalked my way through. Next, I ventured into the farmyard where a group of jackdaws caught my attention. They were perched in a large tree that sits halfway through the yard. They were about 60 yards from my position so I had to close the distance down, but had no cover at all to use to do it. I decided instead to try to look like the farmer by just walking the 20 yards across the open yard to the barn on the other side, hoping I could then get into a position for a shot. I held the rifle in one hand, down by my side trying to make it

look like a shovel or spade, something they would be used to seeing the farmer do regularly, I hoped.

I didn't look at them, but I have a suspicion that they were watching me closely as I sauntered nonchalantly across the muddy yard and disappeared behind the wall of the shed. I actually had no idea if the plan had worked or even if they were still there, but I shouldered the rifle ready and slowly edged myself out sideways to take aim at the tree. The birds were still perched there so I lined up the reticle on the Hawke scope with the lowest bird and sent the shot on its way. The impact was signalled by a small puff of feathers as the jackdaw just flopped forwards and fell earthwards without so much as opening its wings.

EVERY MINUTE VALUED

I continued to have a slow walk around the land, but I didn't get any more chances. Still, I don't count that as a bad thing really because every minute I spend out >>



This is a proper hunting gun for sure.

"the 110 is no entry level HW pre-charger; it's a full-on, lead-launching supergun"

with the rifle I'm learning, and any opinions I will gain from using it will only be made on the go, as I hunt. If the cocking lever is in the wrong place, it will only become noticeable as I try to do it in view of a pigeon or a rabbit without being seen. If the safety-catch clicks loudly, I'll only know when it spooks something and costs me the shot. I can't honestly tell you what I think of every little part of the rifle until I put it through every scenario and weather condition and see if it can still perform, but what I will say is, the fact that I will take it out into the field instead of its proven older brother, the HW100, says a lot about how confident I am that Weihrauch got it spot on with this rifle.

TWO'S COMPANY

That said I won't be retiring my HW100 either. For the first time

ever, I will operate two hunting rifles alongside each other, that's how impressive they both are. The HW110 isn't a replacement for the 100 in HW's line-up, and was never designed to be, and despite being cheaper I think it would be extremely unfair to look at it as the poorer man's rifle or the beginner HW PCP, which is how I have heard it described on social media by people who have never fired it, or even handled one in the field. Its cost could have something to do with efficiency of the design; the HW100 was designed over a decade ago, and times have changed, I don't know, but I promise this; in no way does either rifle have any sort of quality advantage over the other. They're both built to the same high standard, and the 110 is no entry level HW pre-charger; it's a full-on, lead-launching supergun. It just

somehow does it whilst still being affordable, and for me that just makes it even more impressive.

I've already spent a few sessions out in the field with it and I'm confident that over the next few months we'll become the perfect hunting partners. I can't wait, so stay tuned to see how we get along. ■



I love the feel of the coated stock.