

Any young or mature shooter will be impressed with the HW30

FOREVER YOUNG

Although the Weihrauch HW30 is aimed at the younger shooter, Pete Evans finds it equally attractive to all ages.

Past surveys of *Airgun World* have shown that the majority of readers fall into the middle-age bracket. I count myself among that number, although I have been a regular reader since the age of 13. Attracting youngsters to the sport in recent years has become a hurdle, particularly in the context of online gaming, which negates the need for the individual to leave the bedroom. Unfortunately, such activity is not helpful in the long term; far better to join a local club and engage some real targets, which is going to be far more satisfying

and beneficial in later years.

In a bid to supply guns suitable for the younger shooter, many gun makers have taken the bull by the horns and designed scaled-down actions which will provide a more comfortable fit.

A youngster's gun should be a scaled version of the adult design, where possible incorporating the same standard of parts. Unfortunately, from past experience some guns are not just scaled down, but also contain lesser-quality parts so that the gun can be delivered at a reduced price. The component that seems to suffer most is the trigger, which is a huge shame because as we all know trigger control is one of

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

MAKE: Weihrauch
MODEL: HW30S Kit
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Germany
DISTRIBUTOR: Hull Cartridge
TYPE: Spring-piston, break-barrel, single shot
CALIBRES: .177 and .22
TRIGGER: Rekord, two-stage adjustable
STOCK TYPE: Ambidextrous, walnut-stained beech
WEIGHT: 2.6kg (5.7lb) scoped
OVERALL LENGTH: 98.5cm (38.8in)
BARREL LENGTH: 39.9cm (15.7in)
MUZZLE ENERGY: 7.2-8.1 ft/lb (pellet-dependent, on test)
RRP: £299.95
WEBSITE: weihrauch.co.uk

the most important skills to master. A poorly performing trigger is not a good introduction and can leave ingrained poor technique which is difficult to address down the line.

In producing the HW30, Weihrauch has found the perfect balance of producing a gun suitable for a young beginner, while not short-changing on performance. Not only has a balance been struck but, as we shall see, the HW30 is eminently suitable for adults and as such should not be pigeonholed to a particular group of shooters.



DIFFERENT FORMS

The HW30 is available in two versions, the HW30S, which comes as a kit with a 4x32 scope and no provision for open sights. As an alternative, the HW30SF comes with a set of open sights, to which you can add a scope at a later date. My own gun under consideration here is the S model, and came supplied with the Weihrauch-branded scope. Both are available in .22 and .177, although most of the guns I've encountered including mine are .177.

With an overall length of 98.5cm and 2.6kg scoped, this is definitely a lightweight gun, but don't think for one minute that Weihrauch has skimped on the materials, as we will see with a walkthrough of this gun's features.

GOOD WOOD

Many top manufacturers are turning to Minelli of Italy to make their stocks, and the HW30 is no exception.

Sculptured from walnut-stained beech, it strikes me as similar in design to the HW99 only on a smaller scale. A slim fore-end with chequered panels continues to the similarly chequered grip, before

terminating at the shallow rear stock. Despite being of smaller proportion, this stock should prove comfortable for all but the largest builds. In keeping with universal appeal, the stock is ambidextrous.

It may also be worth noting that there is a junior version of the gun which is 8.9cm shorter and lower-powered, at around 5ft/lb.

Because an articulated cocking link is used, the cocking slot recess on the underside of the stock is short, thus retaining the overall structural integrity of the stock.

BARREL WEIGHT

Opting for the scope-only configuration means that you get a muzzle weight rather than a foresight. This extra weight will add a little more stability and does provide an enhanced hand grip for cocking. Being 39.9cm in length, in standard fettle the gun is easy to cock. If it isn't, someone has over-sprung it or there is an internal problem.

At 15mm, the barrel and breech block are the same diameter as the HW99, although they are not

Cocking takes little effort



Slimmed-down proportions, although no compromise in quality



Neat chequering on the fore-end



The M symbol gives some clue to the stock's origins



Universal appeal with the ambidextrous cheekpiece



Articulated cocking link, allows a short recess in the stock

interchangeable. Rather than a chisel-shaped barrel detent lock, the HW30 has a ball-bearing detent, similar to the Feinwerkbau 127.

It appears that the ball is staked in place, and should there be problems down the line, it won't be serviceable. Having said that, the ball detent doesn't appear to be a

significant problem area, so getting some lubrication behind the ball on routine servicing would seem a reasonable idea.

Barrel fixing is pure Weihrauch with its trademark over-engineered breech bolt, together with a rivet to secure the cocking link. Should there be a need to remove the

rivet, there will always be the option to substitute with a reusable pin. One suitable for an HW99 should be fine.

TALKING TRIGGERS

It would appear that the currently available HW30 models imported by Hull Cartridge have the Rekord trigger, which of course is great news. In case you didn't know, the Rekord unit is the benchmark for all spring gun triggers and has been for the last 60-plus years.

It is possible that you will encounter the HW30, particularly on the used market, with a Perfekt trigger. Knowing the difference is easy, as the Rekord will have the adjusting screw at the rear of the blade and a safety catch mounted horizontally parallel to the end of the cylinder. In essence, it will look like any other HW spring gun.

The Perfekt trigger has no adjustment screw and a safety catch which protrudes from the rear of the cylinder. While the Perfekt trigger is perfectly usable and reliable, it lacks



Plenty of shoulder traction with the trademark Weihrauch butt pad



A barrel weight also doubles as an effective handhold



Ball detent takes the place of a chisel tip

the finesse of the Rekord and lacks the facility to adjust.

Generally, it is accepted that it's possible to swap the Perfekt unit for a Rekord (although the safety can't be fitted), although there do appear to be problems with this.

Well-respected airgun maestro Lyn Lewington has highlighted problems when he attempted this, in particular the inability of the gun to cock correctly. I suppose the takeaway message is to strive to get the gun with a Rekord trigger; if not, it's probably not worth trying to retrofit a Rekord unit.

TESTING TIME

So, exactly how useful is this little gun, and what potential, if any, does it offer the back-garden pest controller?

To answer this question, the gun was set up with its supplied 4x32

scope and a variety of JSB pellets for some preliminary tests over the chronograph.

Generally, a spring gun will produce its highest energy figures with lighter pellets, so I broke out some JSB Exact RS, weighing in at 7.33gr.

These gave an average energy of 8.1ft/lb, with a high degree of consistency (single figure).

With the Exact 8.44gr, a decent 7.8ft/lb was achieved, and the Exact Heavy gave an expectedly lower 7.2ft/lb. These latter two offerings also gave good consistency, with a maximum variation of 11fps.

It's strange to think that back in the 1980s many at this point would tune out, as anything below 11.99ft/lb would not deserve further consideration. Thankfully we live in enlightened times, where

consistency and accuracy are prized over raw power.

ACCURACY

Usually I would set some targets out at 30m and work from there, but in this case, considering the lower power, I started the quest at 20m.

Using the JSB Exact RS, it soon became clear I was doing the rifle a disservice. Admittedly in still conditions, five-shot groups of 15mm were achieved. Pushing out to 25m opened up the groups slightly, but still within 18mm. With varying degrees of drop, similar results were achieved with the 8.44gr and 10.34gr pellets.

I am convinced that the synergy of the benign firing cycle of this gun, coupled with the excellent trigger, gives this impressive performance.

I use the word benign because this rifle doesn't react in a way that



No concerns about lateral barrel movement with this bolt



A 4x32 scope gives a good introduction

you would expect a spring gun to. There is very little movement on discharge, save for some mechanical noise; there really isn't much to let you know the shot has been taken.

When I dispensed with the paper and replaced with 1 in spinners, at 30m it produced similar favourable results – and of course tin cans suffered a similar fate.

CONCLUSIONS

This HW30 is a rare thing, inasmuch as it's marketed as a starter gun, but its build quality and performance match that of its full-size peers. Of course, this is exactly what you would want on starting out, as it's all too easy to get discouraged by poor results which stem from shortcomings with the rifle.

What's also rare is that this 'starter' gun would be equally suitable in the hands of a seasoned Shot, a fact supported by the number of people I know who are buying these and pressing them into service in various roles.

Various roles for this gun would involve shorter-range (20m) pest control, which would include gardens or inside barns, where the lower power is a distinct bonus.

Make no mistake, this gun is a true all-rounder which can be enjoyed by families of all ages. To make the point, I'm taking my gun along to a social evening at a friend's house, where there will be people from a wide age group. He has access to a large enclosed garden, so tin cans and spinners will be the order of the day. I can guarantee that the HW30 will see heavy use and will probably end up with a few people taking the plunge and getting a rifle for themselves.

Following the gathering, I'm going to be servicing the gun and implementing any special measures that will enhance its performance. Hopefully that gives you something to look forward to next month. ■



The top-class Rekord trigger will ensure all your shots are released with precision