



A NEW BEGINNING

THE END OF THE SEASON MARKS THE START OF THE NEXT SAYS RESIDENT GUNSMITH TIM GREENWOOD, WHO URGES CLAY SHOOTERS TO USE THE WINTER TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR GUNS AND IMPROVE THEIR FIT

By the time this issue hits the shelves most of the major clay shooting events will be over, the weather will have started to turn at least autumnal, if not fully winter, and getting out of bed at the weekend to stand in the middle of a field and shoot at clays may have started to lose its appeal.

However, as a clay shooter, this has always been the time for me to start getting things sorted for next year's events. While our game shooting brethren put on their tweeds and wellies to brave the frosts, wind and rain in search of their quarry, clay shooters can take the time to sort gun maintenance problems, gun fit and even consider changing their guns to make sure they are ready to compete next year.

I am not suggesting you shoot in appalling weather when the clays

are being blown about so badly you can't tell why you missed, nor am I encouraging you to endure the rain dripping down your neck in the hope that you may discover a new style or stance that may help you shoot that elusive 100-straight. However, there are better days when it is possible to work on changes ready for next season.

So, let's begin with maintenance. First of all look over your gun's woodwork and check for any cracks or splits, especially near the ironwork. Examine the action and the barrels; look for oil seeping out round the stock and for marks or pits in the barrels. Does the gun open and shut nicely, or do the barrels drop away from the action when the top lever is pushed over? If in doubt, take your gun to a competent gunsmith and get them to examine it and advise you on any suggested repair or preventative work



PICTURE ONE: A PERAZZI FOREND – REPAIRING THE CRACK NOW WILL SAVE YOU MONEY IN THE FUTURE

that may be needed (this is normally a free service offered by most of us). Maybe even consider having the barrels re-blued or the woodwork re-finished instead of leaving it until just a month before your first big clay shoot next year and then giving your gunsmith the headache of trying to get it done for you in time.



PICTURE TWO: A SIMPLE REPAIR NOW, BUT IT WON'T BE IF IT FALLS OFF. NOTICE THE BROWN STAIN OOZING OUT OF THE ACTION AROUND THE TRIGGER, A SURE SIGN IT IS DUE FOR A GOOD CLEAN OUT AND SERVICE



PICTURE THREE: THE TOP LEVER HAS SWUNG OVER TO THE LEFT PAST CENTRE. NOTICE THE TELL-TALE BROWN STAIN AROUND THE HEAD OF THE TOP LEVER



GETTING TECHNICAL

By Tim Greenwood

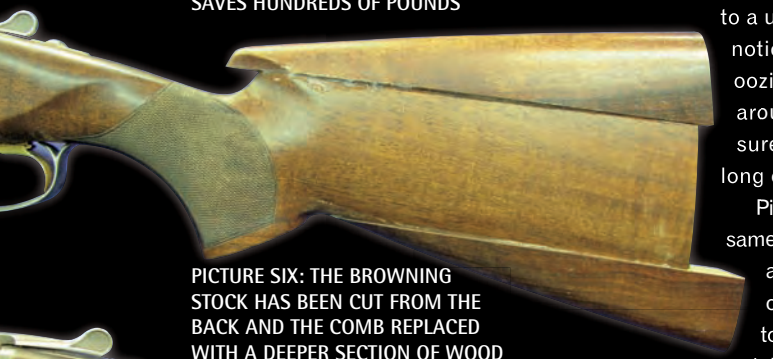


PICTURE FOUR: IF YOU DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO THOSE LITTLE CRACKS, THIS CAN BE THE RESULT

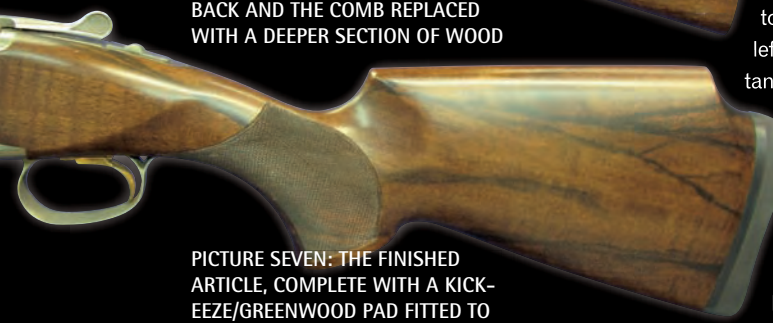
Picture one shows a Perazzi forend with a crack where the knuckles of the forend sit. Most over-and-unders suffer in this area as the wood is very thin at this point and shock from the ejectors operating can cause this problem. It is a very simple



PICTURE FIVE: A GOOD REPAIR SAVES HUNDREDS OF POUNDS



PICTURE SIX: THE BROWNING STOCK HAS BEEN CUT FROM THE BACK AND THE COMB REPLACED WITH A DEEPER SECTION OF WOOD



PICTURE SEVEN: THE FINISHED ARTICLE, COMPLETE WITH A KICK-EEZE/GREENWOOD PAD FITTED TO THE CORRECT LENGTH AND PITCH



PICTURE EIGHT: A STOCK THAT IS SUITABLE FOR BOTH CLAY AND GAME SHOOTING

repair to do at the moment, as the wood is still there and it therefore only needs injecting with a good glue and a little bit of local re-finishing to make it good. However, if it is left the whole piece can fall off and be lost while you are shooting, the result being either a new forend or a new piece having to be made and fitted, both of which are far more expensive than the original repair.

In picture two a cheaper Italian over and under is shown with a very bad crack in the head of the stock. Some glue and time will see it back

to a usable condition, but notice the brown stain oozing out of the action around the trigger – a sure sign the action is long overdue a service.

Picture three shows the same gun from a different angle, looking down on the top lever. The top lever is over to the left-hand side of the top tang, but when the gun was made it would have been biased to the right to allow for wear in the locking bar, or bite, which stops the gun blowing open when fired. So, as well as a

stock repair and a service, the gun also needs to be re-built to be safe to shoot. Once again notice the tell-tale sign of the brown stain where the top lever shaft goes into the action. Although this is quite a lot of work to carry out on a cheaper gun, it would still cost at least four times the repair cost to replace it with an equivalent second-hand gun and is therefore worth the cost involved.

Picture four shows a Browning where the stock had been allowed to come loose over the season and the owner had not noticed the hairline cracks in the wood around the back of the action. When I took the stock off, he was quite surprised to see he was now the owner of a 'three piece stock', but fortunate that it had not been left too long for the pieces to become damaged or lost, which meant I could effect a really good, almost invisible, repair as seen in picture five, saving him about £1,000 for a new stock.

As I said earlier, the other thing to consider at this time of year is gun fit, or indeed changing your gun to give you plenty of time to get used to any changes.

As you know, if you are a regular reader of my articles, I really like the Jones Adjuster as a way of helping with gun fit for those of you with longer necks. However, there are some of you who don't like the look of them on



a purely aesthetic basis, especially if you wish to take them game shooting at any time. It is bad enough on some shoots pulling out an over-and-under from your gun slip. But one with sliding bits of aircraft grade aluminium on the end – it's nearly as bad as pulling out a fully camouflaged semi-automatic and wearing a bandoleer of 3" magnum cartridges. However, by turning a normal, low game/Sporting stock into a flat-shooting Monte Carlo stock there is a way around this.

In picture six, you can see I have cut the stock of this Browning horizontally from the back of the pistol grip to the butt in two places and replaced the old comb and toe with much deeper sections of wood. This is then shaped, as in picture seven, to make a very deep Monte Carlo stock, to bring the comb up to the face instead of having to roll the head forward over the stock to give the proper sight picture. It is also the ideal opportunity to improve the hand grip by thinning it for a smaller hand, as the stock has to be re-finished anyway. Changing the length and the pitch completes the transformation, giving an excellent head-up gun mount, as shown in picture eight.

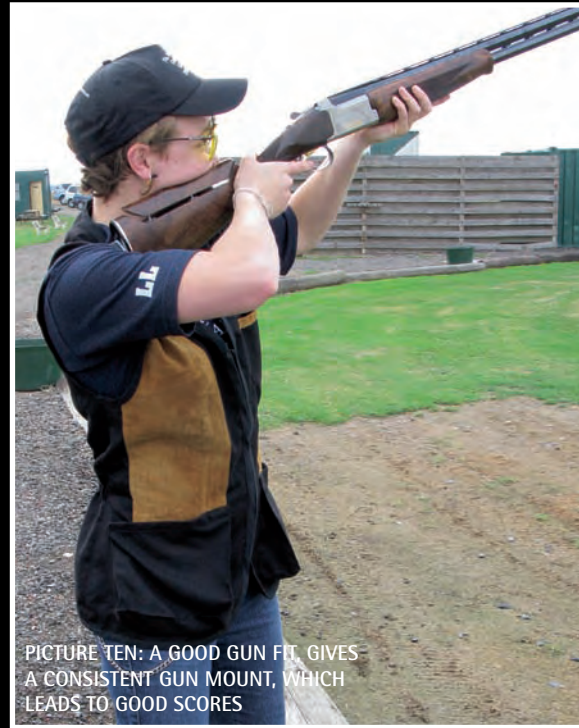
Since I started to write for *Clay Shooting* magazine in February this year, my daughter Flo has often been called upon to act as my model. She has had to deal with having strange guns thrust in her hands and told "hold it like this" or "keep it still" while I am desperately trying to photograph her and the gun to illustrate some point I am trying to make about gun fit, while she has had to shoot a somewhat elderly Nikko that I cobbled together nearly five years ago.

What she had not realised was that one of the guns she was demonstrating was one I had bought for her 21st birthday in August this year and I was taking the pictures so I could fit the gun without her knowing. With the winter ahead, she now has plenty of time to get used to her new 'baby' (picture nine) before next season's competitions. With its Jones Adjuster/Kick-eeze combination, thinned and re-shaped grip it is already helping to improve her shooting (picture ten).

So, my words of wisdom for this month: don't think of this time of year as the end of the season: think of it as the beginning of the next and use the time to get prepared. ●



PICTURE NINE:
FLO WITH HER
NEW 'BABY'



PICTURE TEN: A GOOD GUN FIT, GIVES A CONSISTENT GUN MOUNT, WHICH LEADS TO GOOD SCORES

Tim Greenwood offers the following services:

- Full gun fitting service, free help and advice gained from working with some of the best shooters in the world.
 - All stock work, including cast, bend, lengthening, shortening, repairs to broken and cracked stocks, re-finishing, re-chequering, re-heading.
 - Specialises in wooden stock extensions matched to your existing stock.
 - All barrel work, including choke alterations, re-black, re-brown, re-lay ribs, dent and bulge repairs, lapping to remove internal pits and marks.
 - All action work, including servicing to O/U, box locks, side locks. Replacing of firing pins, mainsprings, top lever springs, tightening, full rejoining, and all ejector work.
 - Specialist part making available if required.
- Visit Tim's website at www.greenwoodgunsmiths.co.uk