

# Project complete

This month, **Tim Greenwood** finishes his Skeet gun and performs nothing short of a miracle on a char-grilled stock



**Tim Greenwood** has almost 30 years' gunsmithing experience and is relied on by many of the top names in clay shooting

I start this month's article with one of my famous "Marmite" moments – I have managed to find the time to finish my gun for Skeet.

As you can see in pictures (1) and (2) it is the kind of gun which, now finished, you will either love or hate. Over the last couple of articles you have seen me take this well-used Browning 325 12-bore and transform it into the gun you see today. As you may recall, I have built up and thickened the comb using walnut veneer, and extended the grip in ebony before shaping it to form an anatomical grip. I have also fitted a very pronounced palm swell using walnut veneer.

As I have problems extending my left arm, I wanted to lighten the front of the gun as much as possible, as well as shortening and re-shaping the forend to suit. Although this only saved just over 40 grams, I felt it was worth it and I think the new fore-end shape suits the whole look of the gun.

Having completed all the basic fitting work – the comb, palm swell, grip extension and the anatomical shaping I required – the stock and forend were removed once again from the action and forend ironwork ready to be rubbed down for finishing <sup>(3)(4)</sup>. It is almost impossible to chequer an anatomical grip to any standard as chequering is designed to go in straight lines, not around corners. Therefore I applied stippling to all the areas where I wanted to enhance the grip, but left smooth areas of the forend where my hand touches to remind me not to grip it too hard; a bad fault of mine which leads to stopping the swing of the gun when



shooting. I also decided to hide the layers of veneer and enhance the look of the gun by extending the stippling back from the pistol grip around the edges of the veneer which formed the new comb.

Unlike chequering, which needs considerable practice to achieve a crisp design with even pointed crowns, stippling is far easier to apply as there are no straight lines. The centre punch, one of the methods that can be employed, must be kept moving in a circular pattern <sup>(5)</sup> to produce the desired effect <sup>(6)</sup>. Using this method takes considerable time and patience; you need the mentality of a demented woodpecker, but it will produce a pleasing pattern with the best possible grip you can achieve on your gun. There are electric engraving tools, which may be used for the same purpose, but extreme caution should be taken when using one of these, as they can easily break up the surface of the wood leaving it splintered and very uncomfortable to hold.

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So there it is, my completed Skeet gun, as good as I can make it. Now, who do I know who can make the owner as good as the gun?

Last year Ron and Di, good friends of mine from Essex suffered a terrible fire in their temporary accommodation while their new house was being built. All of their guns were damaged by the heat and water, including their son Mark's, which was subsequently taken to a local retailer who said that it was only fit for scrap. Instead of taking the shop's advice, and because of Mark's attachment to this particular Browning grade 6, they decided to come and see me for a further assessment.

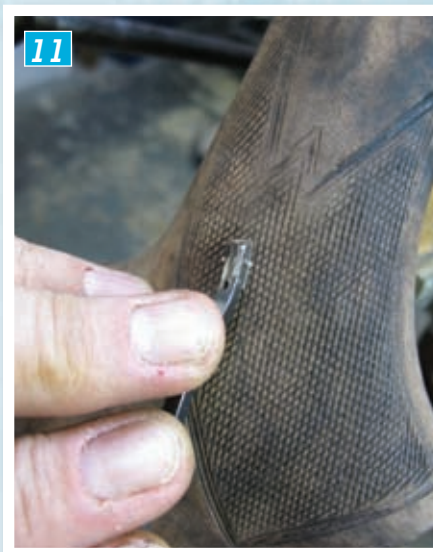


Ron had done his best to clean off most of the scorching to the stock and forend while the action and barrels had certainly seen better days. When wood burns, it is always the edges which carbonise first as the heat tends to attack the end grain which is present. Therefore when Ron cleaned off the softened areas, most of the lines and profile of the head of the stock and forend became rounded, not crisp as when the gun was made.

My first job was to finish cleaning off the carbonised areas and to re-produce these crisp lines to the affected areas <sup>(9)</sup>. Large areas of the chequering had been damaged by the heat and by this cleaning up process, so the next job was to go over what was left and re-extend it to match the original pattern. Believe it or not, this is far harder than starting the chequering from scratch as no two finishers chequer the same; most stockists would remove what was left and start again, but with so much wood already lost through the fire, I wanted to keep as much of the original stock as possible. Using a no. 22 chequering tool <sup>(10)</sup> and a C1 single line <sup>(11)</sup>, I managed to reproduce the original pattern quite successfully.

As you can see in picture 12, the whole job didn't turn out too bad. So, the moral of this month's article is, when a retailer tells you your gun is only fit for scrap, talk to a gunsmith first. It cost less than half of the price of a comparable second-hand replacement to restore this Browning. ■

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### What can Tim Greenwood do for you and your gun?

- Tim offers a full gunfitting service and free help and advice
- He can do anything required to your stock, barrels or action
- He specialises in wooden stock extensions matched to your existing stock
- Tim will also make any specialist parts as required and offers full servicing and maintenance services
- Visit the website: [www.greenwoodgunsmiths.co.uk](http://www.greenwoodgunsmiths.co.uk) or ask Tim's advice by emailing [asktheexperts@blazepublishing.co.uk](mailto:asktheexperts@blazepublishing.co.uk)