



GUN FIT'S KEY TO TOP SCORES

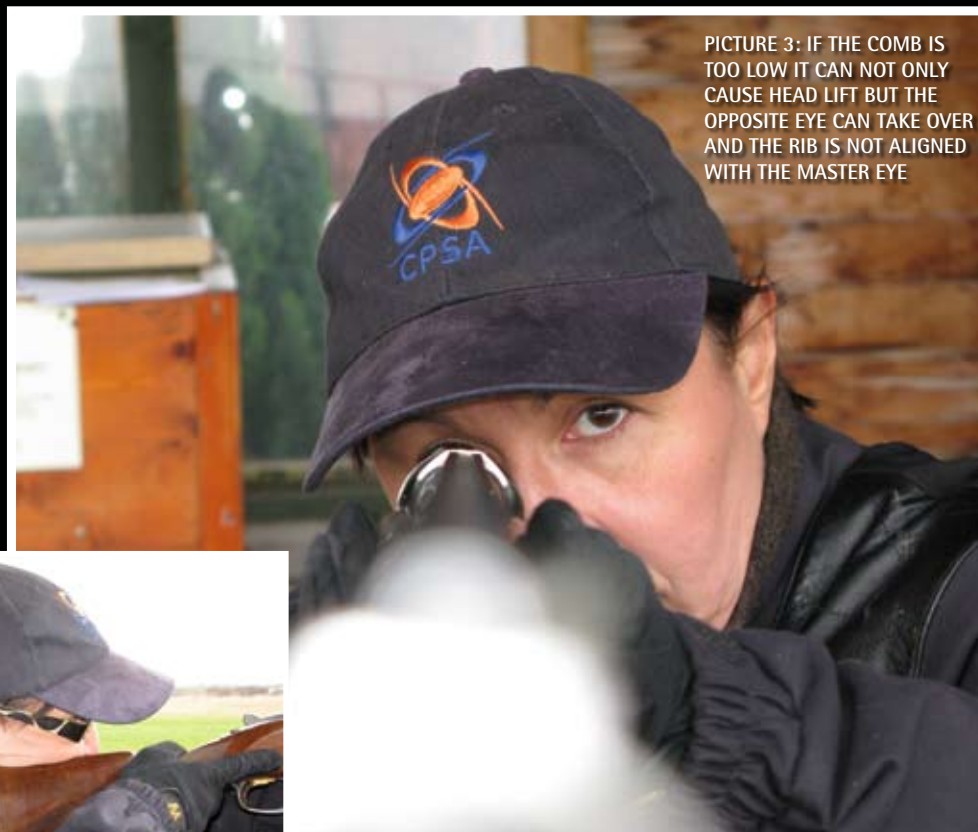
GUNSMITH TO THE TOP SHOTS TIM GREENWOOD GIVES US SOME WISE WORDS ON GUN FIT PROBLEMS – AND SOLUTIONS

Tim Greenwood is gunsmith to many of the country's top shots, including Skeet icon and British Open Skeet Champion 2009 Johnny Walker. He has amassed a wealth of knowledge and respect during his 28 years in the business and recently became the only independent gunsmith to be registered as a trade member with the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association (CPSA). He undertakes action, stock and barrel work in his fully equipped workshop, Greenwood Gunsmiths in Kent, and is the main gunsmith for Chris Potter Guns of Tunbridge Wells, one of the largest retailers in the south east.

Late in 2008 Micky Winters – one of the best Essex Trap shooters – introduced me to Tracy Meston, owner of the clay shooting company Frock Stock and Barrel and the most infectious enthusiastic coach I have ever met.

We duly met at Dartford Gun Club to have a chat about her gun fit problems. Tracy said: "As a coach, I know that good gun fit is essential and when I recently purchased my Grade 5 MK38 Trap gun for OT, I knew that I wanted it to fit me exactly, so Mick Winters took me to meet Tim Greenwood."

As you can see from her profile (Picture 1), Tracy has a long neck and very high cheekbones. When shooting with a shotgun with



PICTURE 3: IF THE COMB IS TOO LOW IT CAN NOT ONLY CAUSE HEAD LIFT BUT THE OPPOSITE EYE CAN TAKE OVER AND THE RIB IS NOT ALIGNED WITH THE MASTER EYE



PICTURE 2: FOR TRACY'S FACE TO HAVE PROPER CONTACT WITH THE STOCK HER HEAD AND NECK ARE ROLLED FORWARD, WHICH CAN LEAD TO HEAD LIFT



PICTURE 1: TRACY HAS A LONG NECK AND VERY HIGH CHEEKBONES, WHICH CAN CAUSE STRESS IN THE NECK

By Tim Greenwood



PICTURE 4: TRACY'S HEAD IS NOW IN A FAR MORE UPRIGHT POSITION AND IN LINE WITH HER BODY

standard stock dimensions, as you can see in picture 2, for her face to have proper contact with the stock her head and neck are rolled forward. This causes stress in the neck, leading to fatigue and, of course, head lift.

The other problem is that with her head in this position, together



‘Good gun fit is essential if you are looking for consistent scores and comfort whilst shooting. Ask for advice from a good coach and gunsmith’

with her high cheekbones, Tracy cannot see up the rib of the gun and therefore she will have to lift her head to see the target. As most of you who have been shooting for a while know, lifting your head, or not having your head in a consistent, comfortable position, is one of the main causes for missing targets. Good, consistent gun mounting is the key to good scores.

Tracy told me: "I have always had to 'crouch' over the gun stock in

order for it to fit me. In fact, most of us shooters 'make do' and we have adapted ourselves to fit the shotgun, not the other way around. Bearing in mind that the 'off the peg' shotgun is designed to suit the average male dimensions, this is a trifle inconvenient for us female shooters."

Tracy added: "Here's an interesting fact which picture 3 clearly demonstrates. If the comb is too low, even though the shooter may be 100% right eye dominant as I am, it can not only cause head lift, but the opposite eye can take over. If you look closely, you can see the rib is not in alignment with my right master eye, the left eye is doing all the work, even though I am only partially sighted in my left eye. The opposite applies for left-handed shooters."

As you can see in picture 4, Tracy's head is now in a far more upright position and in line with her body, allowing for a better swing and movement to a target. She is also more comfortable with less strain in her neck, helping to prevent head lift. With the addition of a small comb raiser, she is ready to start putting in very good scores.

The answer to Tracy's gun fit



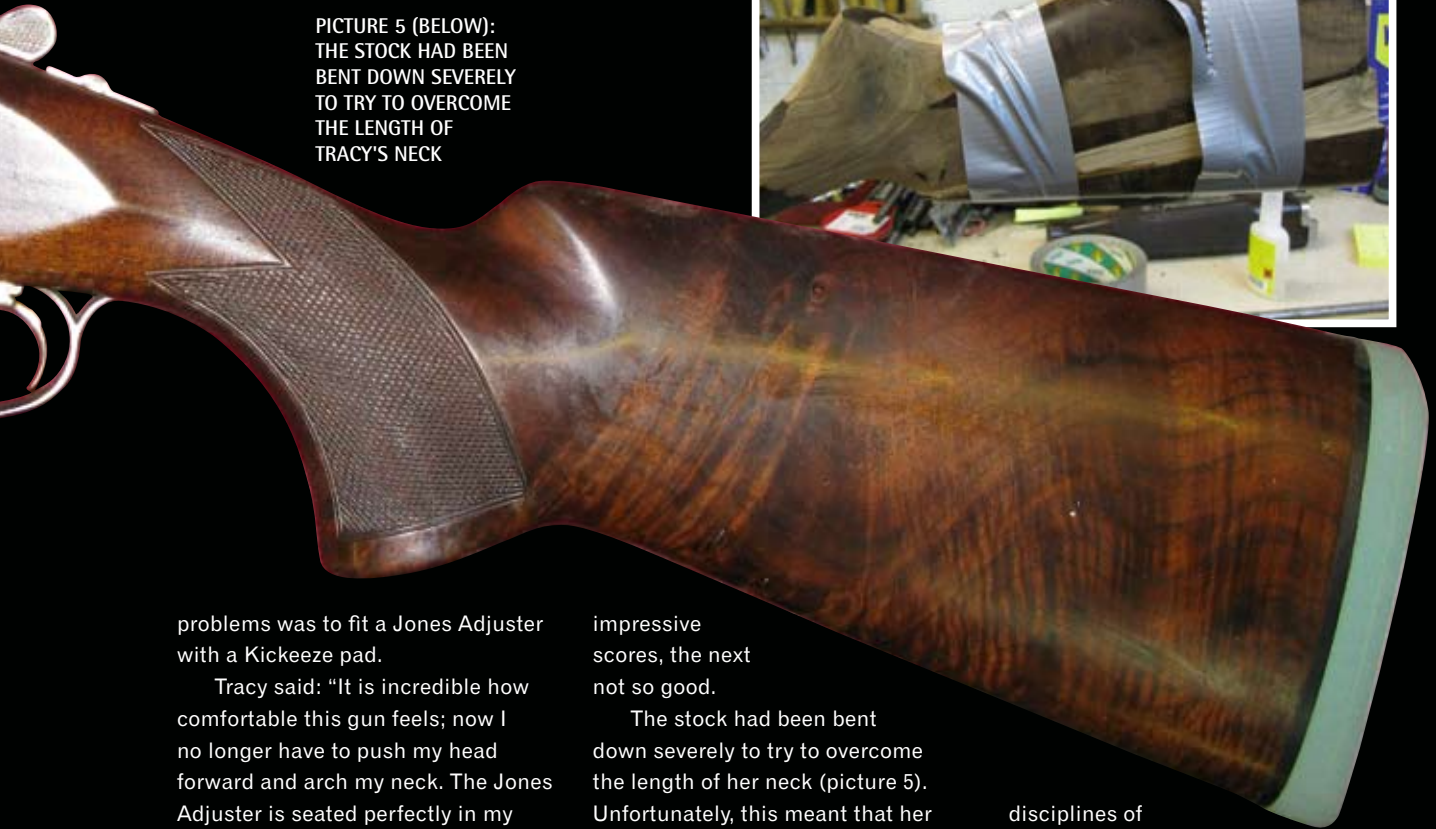
PICTURE 6: THE HEAD OF THE STOCK HAD BEEN BADLY BROKEN SO THE STOCK WAS CUT FROM THE NOSE OF THE COMB TO THE BUTT AND A PIECE OF WALNUT WEDGE INSERTED



PICTURE 7 (RIGHT) : WORK IN PROGRESS – TRACY WANTED THE SIZE OF THE GRIP REDUCED, AS SHE HAS SMALL HANDS, AND THE GRIP MADE MORE ELEGANT



PICTURE 5 (BELOW): THE STOCK HAD BEEN BENT DOWN SEVERELY TO TRY TO OVERCOME THE LENGTH OF TRACY'S NECK



problems was to fit a Jones Adjuster with a Kickeeze pad.

Tracy said: "It is incredible how comfortable this gun feels; now I no longer have to push my head forward and arch my neck. The Jones Adjuster is seated perfectly in my shoulder pocket and the comb is in line with my cheek. All I have to do is learn how to shoot in a comfortable position."

Having sorted out Tracy's Trap gun to her exacting specifications, a few weeks later she approached me over some problems she was having with her Sporter, an elderly but much-loved Browning Citori. She was having problems mounting the gun consistently, one day shooting

impressive scores, the next not so good.

The stock had been bent down severely to try to overcome the length of her neck (picture 5). Unfortunately, this meant that her cheekbone was nowhere near the comb when the gun was mounted, the root of her inconsistent gun mount with this gun.

My usual approach to correcting this problem would be to bend the stock up until the shooter could see up the rib at the required height, then, as with Tracy's Trap gun, fit a Jones Adjuster to help with the length of her neck. The same principles of gun fitting apply to all

disciplines of clay shooting, a comfortable neck and head position, with the body in line with the head. There are, of course, small variations as there are with each shooter's individual requirements, but, as I said, follow the basics of head position in relation to the body and you will never be far away from achieving a consistent gun mount.

Unfortunately, in the case of Tracy's Sporter, at some time in its life the head of the stock had been badly broken and although it had been repaired well, it was not strong enough to attempt to bend the stock (picture 6).

Therefore, I decided to cut the stock from the nose of the comb to the butt, inlet a piece of walnut, wedge-shaped, deep enough to bring the comb nearly parallel, and high enough for Tracy to see up the rib with her cheekbone in light contact with the comb.

Tracy said: "I was gutted when



PICTURE 8: FINISHED ARTICLE – THE COMB IS NEARLY PARALLEL TO THE RIB, THE RESULT OF THE SMALL MONTECARLO IN THE COMB, AND THE GRIP A SEMI PRINCE OF WALES



GETTING TECHNICAL

By Tim Greenwood



PICTURE 9: TRACY WITH HER SPORTER – HER HEAD IS IN LINE WITH HER BODY, NOT ROLLED FORWARD AS WITH STANDARD SPORTING STOCK DIMENSIONS

Tim told me about the damage to my gun, as I love this Browning. Unfortunately, I shoot very inconsistently with it and I knew that the comb was too low, therefore it was a case of me trying to adapt to fit IT, rather than the other way around.

“I was delighted with the work that Tim had done on the MK38 and also for several of my clients’ guns, so decided to put myself in his hands.”

Looks horrible at the moment, doesn't it (picture 7)? Tracy also wanted the size of the grip reduced,

as she only has little hands, and the grip made more elegant.

The finished article. As you can see (picture 8), the comb is nearly parallel to the rib, the result of the small montecarlo in the comb, the grip made into a semi Prince of Wales.

The last picture (9) shows Tracy with her Sporter. Once again note how her head is in line with her body, not rolled forward as with standard Sporting stock dimensions.

Tracy said: “I was absolutely amazed at the amount of work and

detail that Tim put into my gun. He is indeed an expert, is extremely reasonably priced – it would have cost me hundreds of pounds for a new Grade 5 stock – and I am delighted with the result. I took it for a first outing on a friendly Sporting competition – and won!

Good gun fit is essential if you are looking for consistent scores and comfort whilst shooting. It may be just a case of changing the hard butt plate which has a nasty toe and digs into the shoulder causing bruising and canting of the gun, which can simply and cheaply be rectified. Or the fitting of a Jones Adjuster. Either way, ask for advice from a good coach and gunsmith. Visit Tracy's website at www.frockstockandbarrel.co.uk or Tim's at www.greenwoodgunsmiths.co.uk

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 leaver springs, tightening, full rejointing, and all ejector work.
- Specialist part making available if required.