

Tim's Greatest bits



Tim Greenwood has been a gunsmith for almost 30 years and his skills are relied upon by many of the top names in clay shooting

Clay Shooting's Expert Gunsmith counts down his greatest bits – bits that he has successfully managed to put back together again

It never ceases to amaze me how far and wide *Clay Shooting* magazine is read. Because of the circulation of this magazine, I now have customers from as far away as Australia, the USA and all over Europe. Recently I have had several visitors from the Channel Islands, where clay shooting has a very strong following, and lots of new customers crossing the Irish

Sea from the Republic and Northern Ireland.

In the Summer issue, I was thrilled to learn that you can now contact and give your comments about *Clay Shooting* on Facebook! Heaven only knows, with this kind of following, where my next customers will contact me from.

This month's article is in response to the comments on *Clay Shooting's* recent Letters

page by Mike Hill, who said, with perhaps his tongue planted firmly in his cheek, how much he enjoys reading about how I "rescue lumps of wood".

So for this month only Mr Hill, I bring you my greatest hits! Or perhaps that should be the greatest number of bits I have rescued and put back to whole lumps of wood again.

4 In fourth place, not because it was the easiest to repair, nor because it was one of the earliest repairs I showed you back in June 2010, but because it was only in two pieces, was a repair made to an English boxlock, which had already been recently re-stocked at great expense and which the owner was loath to spend several more thousands of pounds having done again.

The trickiest part of this repair was boring through the head of the stock, after initially putting the two pieces back together, down through the grip to re-enforce the broken area with a 12mm hardwood dowel. Once this was achieved, it was only a matter of re-chequering the grip and locally re-finishing the area to make good and hide any evidence of the damage.

A re-occurring theme in a lot of my stock repairs is the need to re-produce crisp, clean, matching chequering over the damaged area. Most breakages occur around the hand grip area as it is usually the thinnest area of the stock and therefore the most vulnerable to every day stresses and strains. It is also the area most likely to break on an over-and-under if the stock, or draw bolt, is not regularly checked and allowed to come loose. Most modern guns are supplied with a draw bolt key – a long, sometimes plastic-handled thing with a hexagonal end. Take off your pad or heel plate, insert it into the draw bolt tunnel and check that your stock is done up tight. If you don't, you will end up having to spend lots of money either having a broken stock repaired or replacing it.



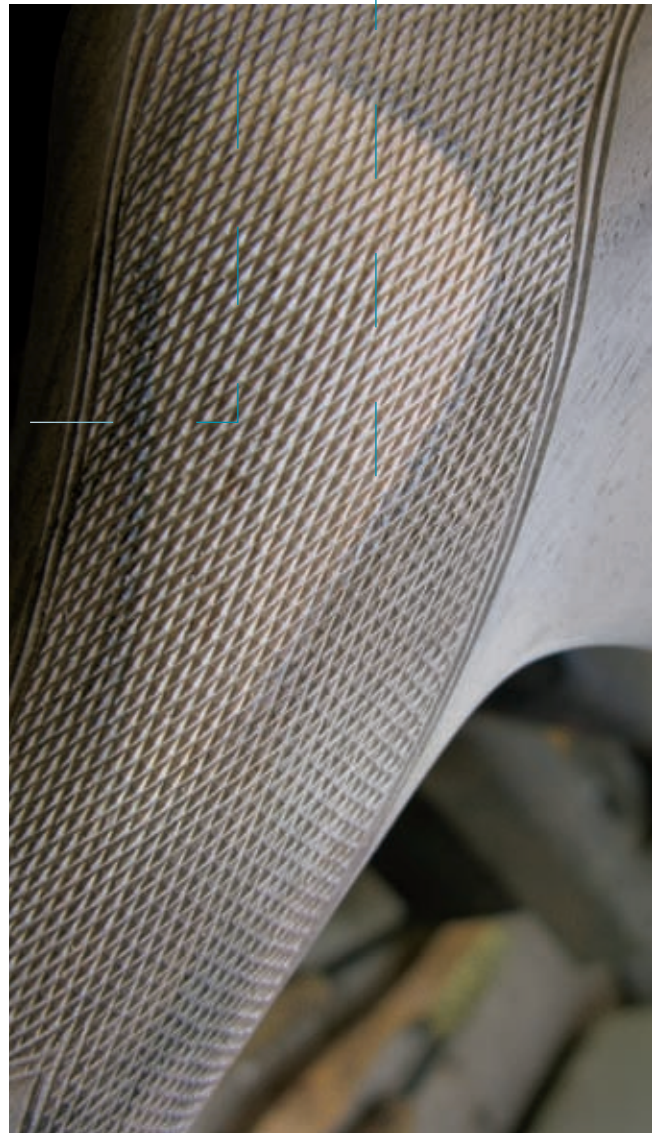
In fourth place, a repair to an English boxlock, notice the length of the boring bit used to bore through the head of the stock to allow a hardwood dowel to be inserted, then re-chequered and finished



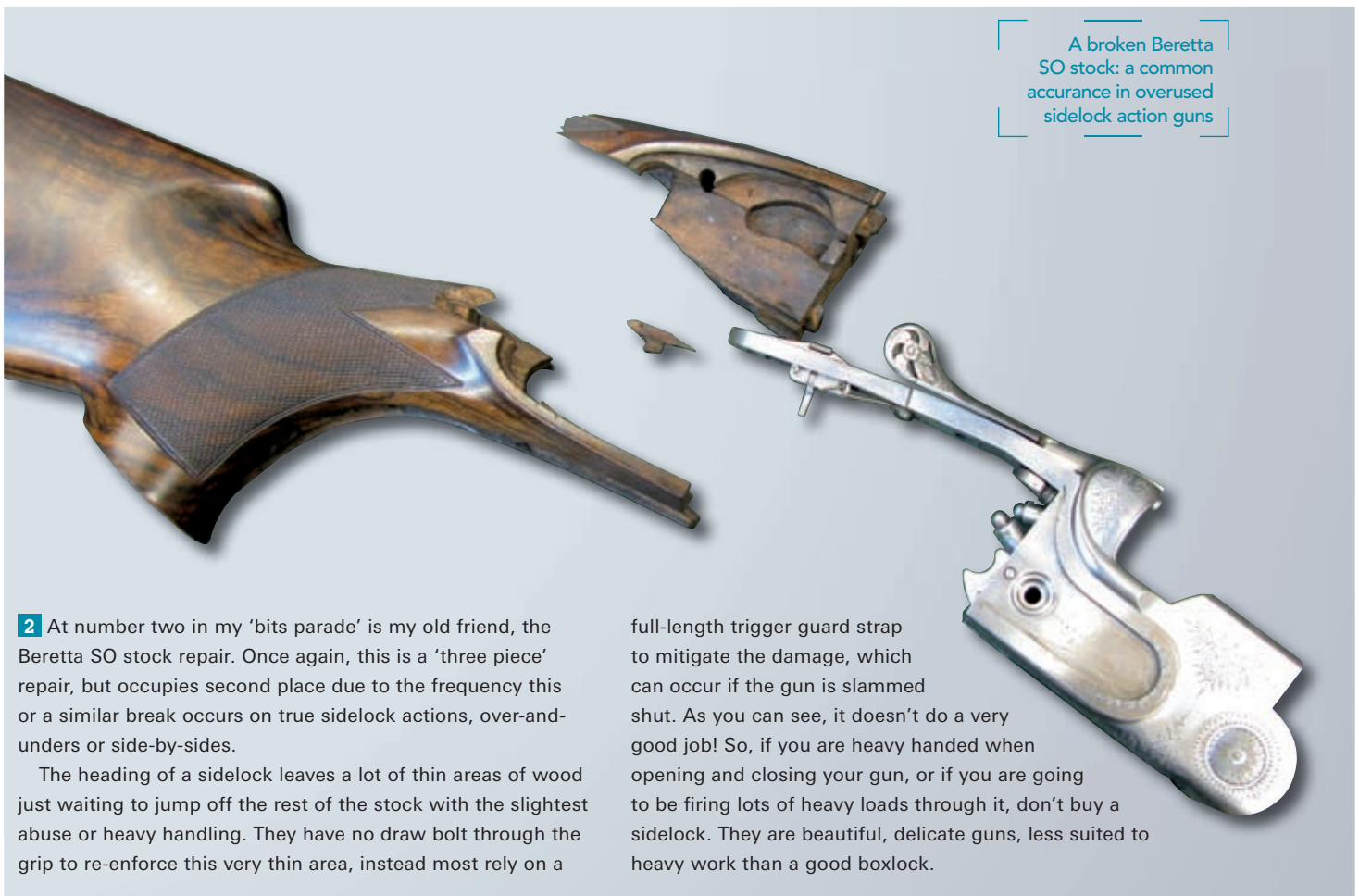
3 In third place is a classic example of a break caused by a loose stock – the woodwork of this Browning was in three pieces. With a break like this, it is essential to have the action with the stock so that all the parts can be aligned properly.

The action is first treated with a releasing agent and then all the broken edges of the stock are treated with industrial strength glue and fitted onto the action with the draw bolt fully tightened. Sometimes these breaks are caused by poor casting or bending of the stock and it is essential that they are glued together in the position they want to adopt. This is the only way to ensure the repair will not fail. Once again, cleaning up the repair, local re-finishing and a very minor amount of re-chequering brings the stock back to an 'as good as new' condition.

The ability to re-produce crisp, clean, matching chequering is vital if you want to achieve a good invisible repair



In third place is this classic break and repair of an O/U caused by a loose stock bolt. Use your stock key to keep it tight on the action



A broken Beretta SO stock: a common occurrence in overused sidelock action guns

2 At number two in my 'bits parade' is my old friend, the Beretta SO stock repair. Once again, this is a 'three piece' repair, but occupies second place due to the frequency this or a similar break occurs on true sidelock actions, over-and-unders or side-by-sides.

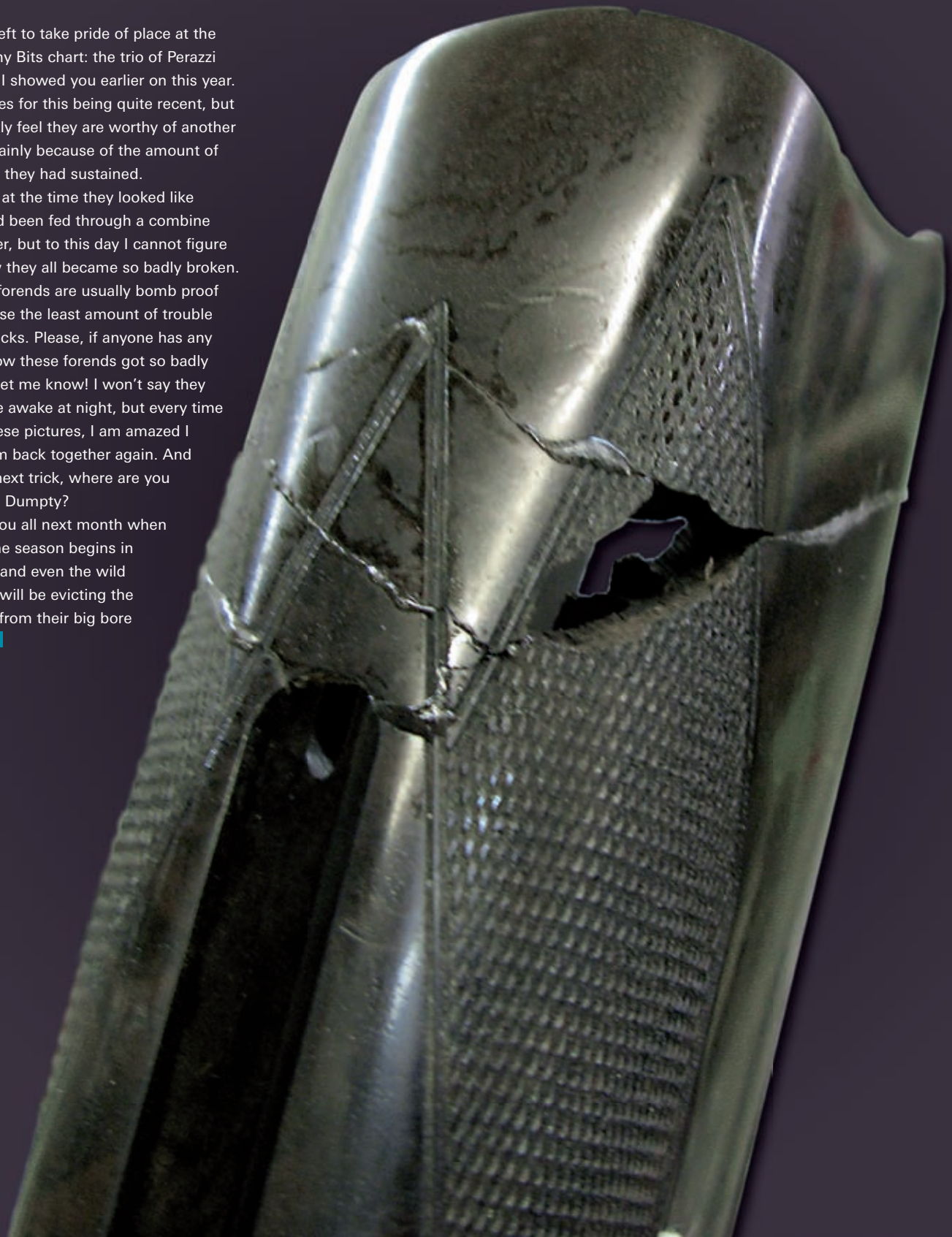
The heading of a sidelock leaves a lot of thin areas of wood just waiting to jump off the rest of the stock with the slightest abuse or heavy handling. They have no draw bolt through the grip to re-enforce this very thin area, instead most rely on a

full-length trigger guard strap to mitigate the damage, which can occur if the gun is slammed shut. As you can see, it doesn't do a very good job! So, if you are heavy handed when opening and closing your gun, or if you are going to be firing lots of heavy loads through it, don't buy a sidelock. They are beautiful, delicate guns, less suited to heavy work than a good boxlock.

1 So, left to take pride of place at the top of my Bits chart: the trio of Perazzi forends I showed you earlier on this year. Apologies for this being quite recent, but I honestly feel they are worthy of another view, mainly because of the amount of damage they had sustained.

I said at the time they looked like they had been fed through a combine harvester, but to this day I cannot figure out how they all became so badly broken. Perazzi forends are usually bomb proof and cause the least amount of trouble with cracks. Please, if anyone has any ideas how these forends got so badly broken let me know! I won't say they keep me awake at night, but every time I see these pictures, I am amazed I got them back together again. And for my next trick, where are you Humpty Dumpty?

See you all next month when the game season begins in earnest and even the wild fowlers will be evicting the spiders from their big bore guns. ■



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 you need doing to your stock, barrels or action
- Tim 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 Tim's website: www.greenwoodgunsmiths.co.uk or ask his advice by emailing asktheexperts@blazepublishing.co.uk