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First Words image: David Mason
Cover image: Rebecca Green

Fox control is not something that has formed a big part of my shooting life so far, so it was something of a revelation to join our new foxing contributor Dean Harrison in sitting out for a fox recently. I am not a naturally patient person and I find it hard to unwind; as such, I used to think that activities which required patience were not for me – fishing, for instance. I just couldn't understand why anyone would want to spend hour after hour, casting line after line, day after day and – worse still – rarely catch anything! But, living with a fanatical fisher, I eventually saw the error of my ways! Now, having enjoyed many salmon fishing holidays, I understand the appeal. Aside from the relaxation, it's all about the anticipation of every cast you make; each time believing you might just feel that unmistakable and electrifying 'jolt' at the end of your line...

It was that familiar feeling of anticipation which surprised me about my foxing outing. "It's unlikely he'll show up," Deano had said as we headed off. "It's a bit of a long shot, but you never know..." As we sat there in the fading light, the cold wind whistling through the truck, I eagerly scanned the hedgerow in front of us, convinced the fox would appear. Meanwhile, Deano, who had gone out with low expectations, admitted as soon as we arrived that he suddenly 'fancied his chances' for a shot. As it turned out, Charlie didn't appear, but it was the

anticipation that created a sense of excitement, the same as it does when you're up a high seat waiting for deer to come out; or even standing on the peg wondering where and when the first covey might appear. Sometimes, when the weather's awful or you're dead on your feet, anticipation is the only thing that actually keeps you out there.

But it's more than that. Granted, sometimes there is the simple fact that a job needs to be done; but often these outings provide a unique opportunity to observe the countryside in all its peaceful glory. When you are still and quiet, Mother Nature carries on her business around you, unaffected and (hopefully) unaware of your presence, and there is something incredibly relaxing about that. We watched hares boxing, a proud cock pheasant guarding his hen, roe deer coming out to feed... none of which we would have seen or experienced fully if we hadn't been sitting, patiently waiting for Charlie. I know I am not alone in finding this one of the best aspects of country and sporting life and am sure these feelings resonate with many of our readers, whether out rabbit shooting, stalking, foxing or simply doing the daily rounds on the shoot.

So, I hope you enjoy the issue. Just don't let it distract you too much from appreciating those precious, peaceful moments!

Rebecca

REBECCA GREEN
Editor





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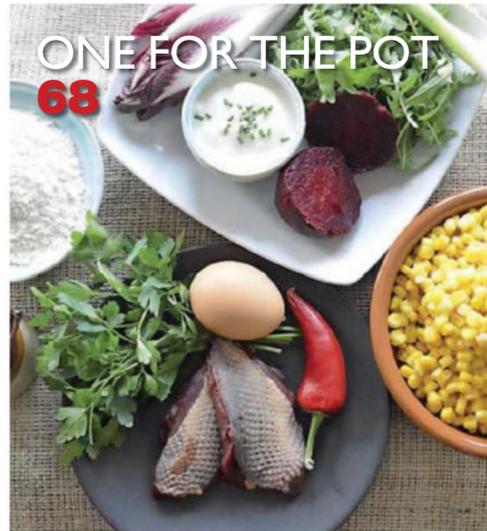


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- your essential guide!
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ONE FOR THE POT
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Deep concern over new proposals for EU firearms regulations

Shooting organisations are united in their concern over new firearm regulations proposals made by the European Council; they are in addition to the changes that have been the subject of much discussion over the past few months.

Many of the original proposals – some of which were considered unnecessary or poorly worded – have been widely discussed and consulted upon, and there was strong evidence that MEPs understood the need to alter them for the benefit of legitimate shooters.

However, now a number of additional proposals have been added which are causes for considerable concern, and the Countryside Alliance is working as part of FACE to ensure that MEPs understand the potential negative impact they could have on the shooting industry.

One such proposal is the possible introduction of computers in gun shops and

registered firearms dealers, which would be installed at the shops' expense, linking their firearms registers to a central system. The cost of installing such equipment could be cost-prohibitive, especially for smaller shops that are often based in rural towns, and the knock-on effect of job loss and closure could be highly damaging for rural economies.

Stephen Curtis, BASC Director of Operations, condemned the proposal: "BASC is concerned that this is an entirely disproportionate proposal which will negatively affect the £2.5 billion shooting sector. The proposal delivers little obvious benefit and has not been subject to an impact assessment. It will destroy jobs and harm the rural economy."

Also causing concern is the proposed banning of certain semi-automatics with the ability to hold more than six rounds without reloading – this



PICTURE: NICK RIDLEY

would cover almost all semi-automatic firearms in the UK. Finally, the requirement that firearms and ammunition (including shotgun ammunition) must be locked in separate compartments has been regarded as unnecessary and unworkable.

Countryside Alliance Chief Executive, Tim Bonner commented: "The European Council believes it needs quick-fire legislation to regain public trust in the fight against terrorism; unfortunately, and as we have continuously stated, these proposals will have no effect on terrorists but a significant effect on the legal shooting community."

"We have already seen sensible steps taken by the European Parliament led by Vicky Ford MEP and the IMCO Committee. We hope the meeting on 11 April will see further positive steps towards a workable text that can be put successfully in front of the Commission in September."

New health monitoring system for FC holders

As of 1 April 2016 a new procedure comes into force, led by the Home Office, which will mean the continuous monitoring of health issues for firearms and shotgun certificate holders; the stated intention is to reduce the risk of a medically unfit person gaining possession of a firearm.

The system will allow closer cooperation between the police force and general practitioners (GPs). It will make it easier for GPs to draw attention to any relevant medical condition that may be cause for concern during the lifetime of the certificate, and will ensure the GP is aware of the fact that their patient holds a certificate.

If a medical condition that may affect the holder's fitness to possess a firearm arises midway through the certificate life, GPs will be prompted to contact the police firearms licensing department. The current medical issues of concern, and the reasons the police ask for medical certificates, will not be altered by the new system.

Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance, Tim Bonner commented: "The Countryside Alliance has sat on the medical evidence working group since its origin. We have been searching for an improvement to the system that would have minimal impact on the majority of certificate holders but help to prevent those rare occurrences when failure to detect health concerns has led to a risk to public safety. We hope that this process of continuous monitoring can pave the way towards a longer certificate life which will reduce the burden on police forces."

"With the full cooperation of certificate holders, GPs and police forces, we can see this system being a success. However, and vitally, there will be a review of the project after six months and another after a year, to make sure any issues that may arise can be straightened out."



PICTURE: BETTY IMAGES / ISTOCKPHOTO

GWCT secures demonstration farm



PICTURE: GWCT

The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) has achieved its long-standing aim of securing a demonstration farm in Scotland, similar to their Allerton project at Loddington.

The aim of the new project is to demonstrate what farming and maintenance practices are necessary to retain the wildlife and actively manage biodiversity back into Scotland's upland farms. In Scotland this type of farmland can be home to much game and wildlife, but is coming under increasing economic pressure, which is proving to have detrimental consequences for the wildlife.

The Common Agricultural Policy and the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill presents very challenging proposals for those who invest in shooting and farming, and who also enjoy wildlife. The risk posed to Scotland's wildlife and countryside in marginalising beneficial management has not yet been effectively communicated to politicians.

The GWCT hopes that by providing practical examples backed by science, and by putting their advice into practice, they can change the views of the aforementioned politicians. >>

Third Big Farmland Bird Count a great success

The results are in for the third Big Farmland Bird Count (BFBC), organised by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), with this year's event seeing record numbers of participants and species recorded.

The BFBC was launched in order to highlight and record the positive work done by farmers and gamekeepers to reverse the decline of farmland birds. It provides a nationwide, simple method of recording conservation efforts that these individuals carry out on their land, including winter scatter feeding, creating conservation headlands, and growing crops specifically to provide seed for birds.

The five most commonly sighted birds were blackbirds, woodpigeons, robins, blue tits, and pheasants. There were 25 species from the Red List for Birds of Conservation Concern recorded, with six of these appearing in the top 25 most frequently recorded species. The five most counted species were woodpigeon, starling, rook, fieldfare, and lapwing – this reflects the two previous years' findings, with the only difference being that lapwings have managed to shunt chaffinches down to sixth place.

Of the 970-plus farmers that took part, 50% were providing some sort of additional feed for the birds – either by scatter feeding or by planting wild

bird seed mixes – and 60% were involved in some form of agri-environment scheme.

The GWCT should be commended for its dedication to this scheme, running 17 identification training days throughout the year to prepare participants, and already gearing up to start planning the fourth BFBC, taking place in February of next year.

The results show the long-term commitment and dedication of farmers and gamekeepers to environmental management and conservation – an element of rural life which often goes unnoticed, and which is becoming increasingly important to promote.





GWCT's Big Farmland Bird Count Results 2016

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust's third Big Farmland Bird Count took place between 6-14 February 2016. Here's what was seen.



In 2016 more than 970 farmers took part. That's more farmers than in previous years.

130
In total, 130 different species were recorded.



Farmers from every county in England took part and there were responses from Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Herefordshire had the most returns with 66 farmers completing the survey.

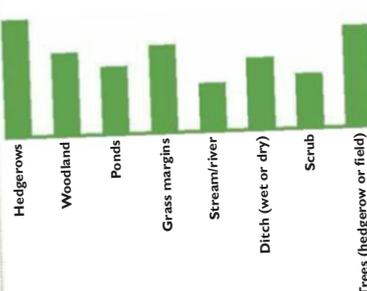


The five most abundant birds seen were starlings, woodpigeons, fieldfares, rooks and lapwings.

7 species were recorded for the first time in 2016 and these included black grouse, lesser redpoll, red grouse and snow bunting.

63% of farms are growing combinable crops, **53%** have beef or sheep and **12%** grow field vegetables. A number of dairy farms, horticulture units, poultry producers and pig producers submitted counts.

Where did they count?
The survey areas included important environmental features such as hedges, woodland, ponds, grass margins, ditches and trees.



Environmental Feature	Relative Count
Hedgerows	High
Woodland	Medium-High
Ponds	Medium
Grass margins	Medium
Stream/river	Low
Ditch (wet or dry)	Medium
Scrub	Medium
Trees (hedgerow or field)	High



The number of raptors seen this year was 10, while 4 owl species were also recorded.

There were **25 Red List** species recorded including fieldfares, house sparrows, starlings, yellowhammers and song thrushes [Red List is the highest conservation priority species, which need urgent action].



Over **50%** of participants provide some form of seed feed for birds, either as wild seed mixes, by scatter feeding or by feeding via hoppers.

Over **63%** of participants are in some form of agri-environment scheme.

What next?

The fourth Big Farmland Bird Count will take place from 4 - 15 February 2017

For more information please visit www.gwct.org.uk/BFBC or contact Emma Graver on 01425 651000 or by email to egraver@gwct.org.uk

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PICTURE: DAVID KJAER

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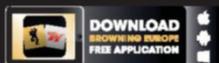
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Welsh fox snarers urged to abide by Code

Shooting and rural organisations are urging all users of snares for fox control in Wales to abide by the Welsh government's *Code of best practice on the use of snares in fox control*; failure to do so will result in a complete ban.

The Code, which some of the organisations helped to draw up and endorse, is a ten-page bilingual booklet, published last September. It provides clear

and concise advice to farmers, gamekeepers, and other land managers in using fox snares efficiently and humanely using detailed best-practice considerations and key legal points.

Those using snares for fox control in Wales are advised, in the strongest possible terms, to obtain a copy of the Code and follow it to the letter.

North Wales Chairman for the National Gamekeepers' Organisation, David Pooler commented: "The ball is firmly in our court. I won't preach, but either we use modern, high-tech, code-compliant fox snares in the correct way, or snaring – a vital wildlife conservation tool – will be lost to us."

A spokesman for the Farmers' Union of Wales added: "As one of the organisations responsible for drafting the Code, we are encouraging all farmers to follow it. It is an important step forward in terms of animal welfare, both in terms of fox control and protecting livestock, which can be killed by or receive horrific injuries from foxes."

The message is clear: use the Code or lose the fox snares.



PICTURE: DAVID KJNER

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crimestoppers has launched a campaign to tackle crime in rural Scotland. 'Scene it, herd it' encourages people to provide information under guaranteed anonymity. Sixty thousand information postcards will be sent out to rural households in Scotland, followed by a social media effort to promote the campaign.

A 10-year project to restore a driven grouse shoot at Langholm Moor has ended after numbers of grouse failed to reach sufficient levels for shooting. Despite a larger grouse population than that recorded at the start of the project, they were unable to produce a surplus of driven grouse to economically underpin the project.

Drones could potentially change the way land is managed. Farmers benefit from immediate targeted images across vast acreage to identify problems and track livestock, while Askham Bryan College Gamekeeping students have demonstrated how vast landscapes, such as moors, can be monitored from above to better assess vegetation and improve understanding of how they can be managed.

Urban foxes have been suggested as culprits for a string of attacks on newborn lambs in the middle of Exmoor. Farmer Alan Collins lost 33 lambs in a week and, upon shooting eight foxes in one field and noting them to be unafraid of lamps and vehicles, has suggested the foxes were caught in towns and released onto the moors.

Hampshire-based shooting suppliers, Cavendish Country, is providing a cartridge collection and recycle service for empty shells, in an attempt to solve the often expensive and environmentally damaging issue of disposing of them. The service will be offered free to shoots that buy clays from them. Visit <http://buff.ly/1UNFzVg>

Shooting for the future with BASC and GWCT

The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) are joining forces to provide a two-day course in shooting techniques and shoot management, based at the GWCT's Allerton Project – a demonstration farm in Leicestershire.

Day one focuses on shooting technique, starting with an interactive session discussing performance in the field and followed by a number of practical shooting activities. These end with a focus on improving shooting skills within the individual's capabilities; BASC shotgun coaches will be working with groups to hone their shooting skills.

Day two begins with 'best practice' presentations

– including subjects such as predator control and cover crops – and is followed by an afternoon visit to a working shoot to put some of the theory into practice.

A previous attendee commended the course, commenting: "The high standard of presentations and coaching reinforced my opinion that conservationists and game shooters are very well represented by GWCT and BASC, who do so much for the environment and their membership, which is open to all."

Both days are available at a cost of £150, or each day can be booked individually for a cost of £85.

To book and for more information, visit <http://buff.ly/1SETxCU> or call 01425 651013.



PICTURE: DON BRUNT

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'Try before you buy' Gunmakers' Roadshow to tour Britain

A new initiative will be touring Britain this summer and making appearances at all seven of the Countryman Fairs events; the Gunmakers' Roadshow provides a unique 'try before you buy' experience for shooters looking to purchase a new shotgun.

Bringing together top international shotgun brands – including Perazzi, Browning and Blaser – the Roadshow gives brands a chance to showcase their products in the purpose-built tented village, which incorporates retail outlets, dedicated clay shooting lines, and BASC-accredited coaches who will be on hand to help.

The not-for-profit initiative is the first of its kind and will help to give potential buyers confidence in their purchase, as they can 'test drive' it first using the free clays and cartridges (provided in a bid to encourage some newcomers to try the sport).

Countryman Fairs' CEO, Ian Harford explained what makes the Gunmakers' Roadshow different:

"As a result of visitor and exhibitor feedback, we have redesigned the layout of all our outdoor events so that the Gunmakers' Roadshow is at the heart of the show. It will be a one-stop shop for members of the public interested in seeing and handling the latest shotguns on offer from the leading brands.

"There's no need to wait all year for that one big game fair; the Gunmakers' Roadshow is coming to a county near you. We want to see the British gunmaking industry thrive and never-seen-before initiatives like this will really help to promote the sport to a new audience."

The Gunmakers Roadshow will be in attendance at the Sussex Country Show (taking place on 18 and 19 June at Parham Park, West Sussex), so if you are lucky enough to win some of our giveaway tickets, why not pop by and try out some of those fabulous shotguns?



PICTURE: DOM HOLTAM

WIN TICKETS

With a wealth of entertainment, activities, retail and food, Countryman Fairs make for a fantastic day out. There's something for everyone to be found among the many trade stands and exhibits; whether your passion be clay shooting, game shooting, or hunting, you can be sure there will be plenty to occupy! A healthy mix of crafts and music, scattered among the 'gun gear', means non-shooting spouses or friends needn't be bored either. For a full itinerary of the show, go to www.countrymanfairs.co.uk

Countryman Fairs is kindly providing five pairs of adult one-day tickets for the Sussex Country Show, worth £30, to give away to some of our lucky readers. For your chance to win, just answer this question:

Q Which endangered dog breed is having a mass gathering at the Sussex Country Show this year?

- A. Weimaraner
- B. Hungarian vizsla
- C. Sussex spaniel

SEND YOUR ANSWER ALONG WITH YOUR DETAILS TO:

Sussex Country Show Comp, Sporting Shooter, Evolution House, Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2EG, or email your answer to competitions@sportingshooter.co.uk

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Find the creature hiding in this issue and you could win a terrific pair of binoculars. Everyone who finds him goes into the draw for a pair of 8x21 binoculars, but if you want to receive one of our badges, send us a self-addressed envelope with 58p of stamps. Send us the page number, your name, telephone number and address by *email to: ispy@sportingshooter.co.uk* *By post to:*

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CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Christine Short who found Pete Parrot on p55 of the April issue. See p106 for a list of other successful creature finders.



PICTURE: DAVID MASON



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BX-2 Acadia
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Slim, lightweight, in-line roof prism binoculars with exceptional brightness, contrast, and clarity.

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10x50	£275	£239.99
12x50	£299	£259.99

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Crafted to Hunt

Lightweight binoculars, bright, brilliant, crisp and sharp. Yet rugged, reliable and fully waterproof.

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8x42	£645	£579.99
8x42	£716	£649.99
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Swaro-Aim EL 8x42 & EL 10x42
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FREE Seasonal Cleaning Kit worth £10

All the features of SWAROVSKI OPTIK EL Binoculars without compromising on optical quality, while integrating a powerful & reliable laser with SWAROVSKI OPTIK's newest technology, "SWARO-AM"

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	£2520	£2268

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Experience every spectacle nature has to offer thanks to brilliant optics & an unparalleled natural wide-angle field of view.

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	£2075	£1849

Bushnell
Trophy XLT
30mm Rifle Scopes

With fully multi-coated optics for ultra-bright images.

1.5-6x44	4A	RRP	NOW
1-4x24	IR	£174	£149.99
1.5-6x42	IR	£232	£199.99
1.5-6x42	IR	£250	£219.99
3-12x56	IR	£279	£239.99

SAVE OVER £54

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For extreme accuracy at extreme ranges

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2-12x42	CDS	RRP	NOW
3-18x44	Side Focus CDS	£1193	£1034.99
3-18x50	Side Focus CDS	£1300	£1129.99
3-18x50	Side Focus CDS	£1408	£1219.99

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For the most demanding hunter. Clear and crisp illumination, day or night, in addition to an illuminated reticle dot with adjustable brightness.

1.6-3x24	Choice of 4 Reticles	RRP	NOW
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1.8x12x20	Choice of 9 Reticles	£1950	£1619
2.4-16x56	Choice of 4 Reticles	£2150	£1729

SWAROVSKI OPTIK
Z6i Mk2
Illuminated

The original perfected

Z6i 1-6x24	IR	RRP	NOW
Z6i 1-6x24	IR EE	£1780	£1600
Z6i 1.7-10x42	IR	£2080	£1870
Z6i 2-12x50	IR	£2170	£1955
Z6i 2.5-15x44	P IR	£2220	£1999
Z6i 2.5-15x50	IR	£2340	£2105
Z6i 3-18x50	IR	£2330	£2095
Z6i 5-30x50	IR	£2440	£2195
Z6i BALLISTIC TURRET			
Z6i 1.7-10x42	BT	£2190	£1970
Z6i 2-12x50	BT	£2300	£2070
Z6i 2.5-15x44	BT	£2340	£2105
Z6i 2.5-15x50	BT	£2470	£2225
Z6i 3-18x50	BT	£2450	£2205
Z6i 5-30x50	BT	£2560	£2305

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X5i 3.5-18x50 RRP £2570 NOW **£2379**

X5i 5-25x56 RRP £2740 NOW **£2549**

STEINER
Ranger
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High Contrast-Optics and are superbly capable in low light by a light transmission of more than 90%. Their lightweight, shockproof and appealing design give you the most for your money and will always deliver unflinching performance whatever the weather or target you prefer.

3-12x56	RRP	NOW
4-16x56	£775	£715.99
	£850	£795.99

PULSAR
Quantum XD
Thermal Imagers

Quantum XD 195 **£1899.95**
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Quantum XD 505 **£2899.95**

PULSAR
Quantum LD
Thermal Imagers

Quantum LD 195 **£1699.95**
Quantum LD 385 **£2299.95**
Quantum LD 505 **£2649.95**

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Apex XD
Thermal Imaging Riflescope

Apex XD75 **£3799.95**
Apex XD50 **£3399.95**
Apex XD38 **£2799.95**

PULSAR
Digisight LRF N870
Digital Nightvision Riflescope

The laser range finding capability comes to the scope that started it all. The Digisight series of night vision riflescopes will now feature an integrated Laser rangefinder.

Digisight LRF N870 **£1499.95**

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Sentinel
Nightvision Riflescope

GS 2x50 CF Super **£669.95** **£649.99**
GS 2.5x50 CF Super **£699.95** **£679.99**
G2+ 3x50 MD **£1619.95** **£1579.99**
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PULSAR
Forward DFA75
Digital Nightvision Unit

The digital night vision attachment designed for fast and easy conversion of a day optical sight into a night riflescope.

Forward DFA75 **£1199.95**
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PULSAR
Edge GS
Super Nightvision Binocular

2.7x50 L **RRP** **£549.95** **NOW** **£525.99**
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PULSAR
Challenger GS
Nightvision Monocular

SAVE OVER £49

1x20	CF Super	RRP	NOW
2.7x50	CF Super	£289.95	£249.99
3.5x50	CF Super	£339.95	£289.99
4.5x60	CF Super	£429.95	£389.99

YUKON
NIGHTVISION
GOOGLE KITS
with NVMT Spartan 1x24 and Tracker NVG 1x24

Google Kits Inc. RRP NOW
NVMT Spartan 1x24 **£249.95** **£239.99**
Tracker NVG 1x24 **£509.95** **£489.99**

YUKON
PHOTON XT
Digital Riflescopes

Now featuring a digital reticle, with the one shot zero function as seen on the popular Pulsar Digisight N550/N750/N750A

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NITESITE
VIPER NIGHT VISION
SHORT RANGE STROKE NITESITE

1 integral IR LED + 1.5x6 Scope mounted Battery + Weight including battery 1.3kg + Operational run time up to 7.5 hours + Identification Range: 100 metres (110 Yards)

Designed to be the most affordable, high quality night vision system on the market for short-range distances, the Viper is perfect for the up-close and personal hunter

£449

NITESITE
WOLF NIGHT VISION
MEDIUM RANGE STROKE NITESITE

1 integral IR LED + 1.5kg weight including battery 2.2kg + Operational run time up to 25 hours + Identification Range: 300 metres (330+ Yards) + 1.5x6 Scope mounted Battery

Perfect night vision unit for any hunter, delivering high quality, clear night vision through any day vision rifle scope. Provides maximum versatility & a huge advantage to the night hunter.

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NITESITE
EAGLE NIGHT VISION
LONG RANGE STROKE NITESITE

1 integral IR LED + 1.5kg weight including battery 2.3kg + Operational run time up to 25 hours + Identification Range: 300 metres (330+ Yards) + 1.5x6 Scope mounted Battery

For the hunter who wants a product without limitations, the Eagle is a force to be reckoned with. Much like nature's eagle, this VibeKite will spot and identify quarry so far away it almost seems unfair.

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NITESITE
SPOTTER TREME HANDHELD NIGHT VISION
LONG RANGE SPOTTER

Designed to complete the night hunting experience, (Zany what no night vision monocular can do) the NiteSite SpotterTreme allows the hunter to identify and advance on the prey without direction.

£949

BUCK
OPEN SEASON SKINNER
with Gut Hook

Designed to cut easily while ensuring edge retention and corrosion resistance. With a 10" 530V outhook blade. Rosewood, Dymondwood or Thermoplastic handle.

Thermoplastic	RRP	NOW
Rosewood Dymondwood	£99.95	£89.99
	£139.95	£124.99

BUCK
OPEN SEASON SMALL GAME
Fixed Blade Knife

Perfect for small game such as bird and trout. With a 14" 530V stainless steel blade. Available with Rosewood, Dymondwood or Thermoplastic handle.

Thermoplastic	RRP	NOW
Rosewood Dymondwood	£79.95	£74.99
	£124.95	£109.99

BUCK
OPEN SEASON SKINNER
Fixed Blade Knife

Designed for easily skinning game while ensuring edge retention & corrosion resistance. With a 10" 530V fixed blade. Rosewood, Dymondwood or Thermoplastic handle.

Thermoplastic	RRP	NOW
Rosewood Dymondwood	£99.95	£89.99
	£139.95	£124.99

BUCK
OPEN SEASON SKINNER
with Gut Hook

Designed to cut easily while ensuring edge retention and corrosion resistance. With a 10" 530V outhook blade. Rosewood, Dymondwood or Thermoplastic handle.

Thermoplastic	RRP	NOW
Rosewood Dymondwood	£99.95	£89.99
	£139.95	£124.99

BUCK
SELKIRK SERIES
Fixed & Folding Knives

Selkirk Knife - Fixed
RRP **£84.95** **£64.99**

Small Selkirk Knife - Folding
RRP **£49.95** **£44.99**

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RRP **£84.95** **£79.99**

BUCK
SELECTOR 2.0
in 1 Folding Knife

Based on the successful Open Season line, the Selector 2.0 currently features three interchangeable blades: Drop point, Drop point partially serrated, and a gutting blade. Each blade is 42HRC steel and heat treated by Buck's patented heat treat process.

RRP	NOW
£124.95	£109.99

BUCK
BUCKLITE MAX SERIES
Fixed Blade Knives

Bucklite Max Small Knife - Black
RRP **£29.95** **£26.99**

Bucklite Max Knife - Black
RRP **£37.95** **£34.99**

Bucklite Max with Gut Hook - Black
RRP **£43.95** **£38.99**

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Buffalo River
6 PIECE KNIFE SET

Featuring 5 knives including Sharpener Sheath and Knife Roll.

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FOLDING KNIVES

Minnow Folding Knife - Black / Grey
RRP **£18** **£13.99**

Minnow Folding Knife - Black / Orange
RRP **£18** **£13.99**

BROWNING
FOLDING KNIVES

Ignite Knife - Black / Orange
RRP **£34** **£26.99**

Ignite Knife - Black / Grey
RRP **£34** **£26.99**

BROWNING
FIXED BLADE KNIVES

Woodrunner Knife - Ironwood Handle
RRP **£76** **£59.99**

Woodrunner Knife - G10 Handle
RRP **£59** **£49.99**

HELLE
FIXED BLADE KNIVES

A triple laminated stainless steel blade and a handle of curly birch and vulcan fibre indicate the effort behind this brand new rock knife, accompanied with a genuine leather sheath.

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Combo Pack Deluxe Assorted Orange
£129.99

Combo Pack Deluxe Powder Coated Orange
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FULL SIZE MULTI-TOOLS

Crunch
Locking pliers that fold away into the Leatherman Crunch unlike any multi-tool available today.
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Code Break 5.5"
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Outback Break 6" 6.5"
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Blum Clay 8"
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GOVERNOR 6" 6"
Governor 6" 6"
 RRP £149.99/£174.99 **£99**

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 BILEY SERIES
Biley Series
 Cotton blend waterproof jacket with taped seams, ambidextrous recoil patches reinforcement and elastic side band
Biley Waterproof Shooting Jacket
 RRP £154.95 **£129.99**

BERETTA
 TECHNO WIND SHIELD
Tech Wind Shield
 The idea of this Combat Soft Shell jacket with bi-elastic sides panels takes its origin from one of Beretta's classic shooting vest.
TW Soft Shell Shooting Jacket
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BERETTA
 SKEET VESTS
Trap Cotton Vest - Ambli
 Ambidextrous shooting vest with cotton padded shooting patches, contrast colour piping and internal pockets.
Trap Cotton Vest - Ambli
 RRP £59.95 **£54.99**

BERETTA
 SKEET VESTS
Silver Pigeon Vest - Ambli
 Ambidextrous shooting vest with cotton padded shooting patches, contrast colour piping and external pockets.
Silver Pigeon Vest - Ambli
 RRP £69.95 **£59.99**

BERETTA
 SKEET VESTS
Silver Pigeon Vest Women's - Ambli
 Ambidextrous shooting vest with cotton padded shooting patches, contrast colour piping and external pockets.
Silver Pigeon Vest Women's - Ambli
 RRP £69.95 **£59.99**

BERETTA
 SKEET VESTS
Urban Camo Mesh Vest - Ambli
 Cotton and mesh vest with Beretta urban camo mesh print
Urban Camo Mesh Vest - Ambli
 RRP £104.95 **£84.99**

BERETTA
 SKEET VESTS
DT11 - Ambli
 Ambidextrous shooting vest in cotton and breathable mesh with no suede leather front patches and DT11 receiver embroidery
DT11 - Ambli
 RRP £99.95 **£89.99**

BERETTA
 SKEET VESTS
DT11 Women's - Ambli
 Ambidextrous shooting vest in cotton and breathable mesh with no suede leather front patches and DT11 receiver embroidery.
DT11 Women's - Ambli
 RRP £99.95 **£89.99**

BERETTA
 SKEET VESTS
Stretch Shooting Vest
 An innovative shooting vest that is light and breathable, and is developed with a blend of high performance fabrics including Anoretta cotton and 30, 4-way stretch material.
Stretch Shooting Vest
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M.O.L.L.E Shooting Vest
 Cotton and mesh vest with Beretta urban camo mesh print
M.O.L.L.E Shooting Vest
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BERETTA
 POLO-SHIRTS
Corporate Polo Shirt
 In comfortable pique cotton.
Corporate Polo Shirt
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BERETTA
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Victory Set of 3 Clay T-Shirts
 Set of Three T-Shirts, same size different colours.
Victory Set of 3 Clay T-Shirts
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BERETTA
 POLO & T-SHIRTS
Uniform Pro Polo White
 RRP £54.95 **£49.99**
Uniform Pro T-Shirt White
 RRP £39.95 **£32.99**

BERETTA
 SKEET VESTS
Regent Skeet Vest
 With Napier's AWD System, for even weight distribution across the shoulders & front panel.
Regent Skeet Vest
 RRP £93.50 **£84.99**

BROWNING
 HIDALGO SERIES
Shooting Vest
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £74 **£56.99**
Hall Vest with Ammo Pockets
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £44 **£36.99**

BROWNING
 MASTERS 2 SERIES
Masters 2 Skeet Vest
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £149 **£119.99**
Masters 2 Polo Shirt
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £46 **£36.99**
Masters 2 Cap
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £19 **£14.99**

BROWNING
 CLAYBUSTER SERIES
Shooting Vest - Black/Orange
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £109 **£89.99**
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 RRP ~~NOW~~ £19 **£14.99**

BROWNING
 ULTRA POLO SHIRTS
Ultra Polo Shirt - Anthracite
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £39 **£32.99**
Ultra Polo Shirt - Beige
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £39 **£32.99**
Ultra Polo Shirt - Dark Orange
 RRP ~~NOW~~ £39 **£32.99**

Seeland
 SKEET VESTS
Skeet Waistcoat
 With its well-designed shaping, flexible shoulders and large cartridge pockets, the Skeet gilet allows optimum freedom of movement and easy access to your cartridges.
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Seeland
 SKEET VESTS
Tournament Waistcoat
 Functional and practical shooting vest for use on the range or a simulated game day.
 RRP £74.99 **£69.99**

Seeland
 SKEET VESTS
Skeet Ladies Waistcoat
 Shooting gilet with well-designed shaping for optimum freedom of movement.
 RRP £54.99 **£49.99**

Ridgeline
 JACKETES
Storm Jacket II
 Guaranteed to keep you warm in even the most rugged of conditions!
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Ridgeline
 PINTAIL SERIES
Pintail Smock
 Teak / Olive
 RRP £39.99 **£49.99**
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 Teak / Olive
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Ridgeline
 VESTS
Highland Vest - Olive
 Ideal as a mid-layer, the Highland Vest is made of fleece with membrane. This means it is windproof and weatherproof.
 RRP £39.99 **NOW ONLY £15**

Ridgeline
 TROUSERS
Stalker Trousers
 Ridgeline have taken the classic Rieer fleece trouser to a different level because it can be so much more than just a casual pant.
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Ridgeline
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Norwester Fleece
 A truly functional fleece is developed with the sportsman that needs everything at hand and within easy reach.
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Ridgeline
 FLEECES
Talpan Hooded Fleece - Olive
 Made with Southern Star fleece with membrane the hooded fleece is weatherproof and windproof so it will keep the chill out whenever you are.
 RRP £74.99 **NOW £49.99**

Ridgeline
 HOODIES
Anniversary Hoodie - Olive
 Ridgeline is 30 years old and to celebrate this Anniversary Hoodie. Made from a warm fleecy fabric and adorned with special embroidery, this hoodie will look great where ever you are and whenever you are with.
 RRP £47.99 **£27**

HÄRKILÄ
 JACKETS
Arvik Reversible Jacket
 RRP £199.99 **£189.99**

HÄRKILÄ
 JACKETS
Arvik Reversible Waistcoat
 RRP £169.99 **£149.99**

BROWNING
 WINDSOR SERIES
Windsor Fleece Vest
 Wind resistant and breathable polar vest, featuring the X-Change zipper system allowing you to attach different insulating products on the inside of XPO light and Windsor Coats.
 RRP £75 **£64.99**

BROWNING
 POWER FLEECE SERIES
Power Fleece Reversible - Xtra / Green
 Reversible fleece featuring zippered pockets and Zip'n system. Perfect for all weather.
 RRP £109 **£89.99**

HÄRKILÄ
 HEADWEAR
Reider Cap
 Fleece hunting cap in 100% cotton. With Härkilä logo.
 RRP £29.99 **£26.99**

HÄRKILÄ
 POLO SHIRTS
Gerit Polo Shirt
 Polo shirt in moisture-transpiring and quick-drying PolarTec® Power Dry®. Can be used as a base layer.
 RRP £59.99 **£54.99**

HÄRKILÄ
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Thor Fleece Jacket
 High-stretch jacket in DWR treated fleece, with windproof, breathable GORE WINDSTOPPER® membrane and mesh lining. Designed for active hunting in the spring.
 RRP £199.99 **£189.99**

Seeland
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Fading Stag T-Shirt
 T-shirt in a cotton and polyester blend. It has a fading stag print on the front.
 RRP £15.99 **£13.99**

Seeland
 T-SHIRTS
Camo Stag T-Shirt
 T-shirt in a cotton and polyester blend with a stag print in camouflage colours on the front.
 RRP £15.99 **£13.99**

Seeland
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Camo Seeland T-Shirt
 T-shirt in a cotton and polyester blend with Seeland printed in camouflage colours on the front.
 RRP £15.99 **£13.99**

Seeland
 SHIRTS
Trekking Solid Shirt
 Stylish cotton shirt for active hunting, safaris and daily wear. Trekking has extra large chest pockets on both sides and adjustable cuffs.
 RRP £49.99 **£39.99**

Seeland
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River Shirt
 Classic check cotton shirt for hunting and everyday wear. River has a chest pocket on the left, button-down collar and adjustable cuffs.
 RRP £49.99 **£44.99**

Seeland
 SHIRTS
Timber Shirt
 Timber is a lightweight shirt in a quick-drying stretch material with mesh ventilation in the back.
 RRP £49.99 **£44.99**

Seeland
 FLEECES
Scout Fleece
 Robust and warm fleece jacket with YKK® zippers for hunting and recreation. Made of thick and soft fiber that retains body heat and provides good insulation.
 RRP £74.99 **£66.99**

E-TOE Prices subject to change. Goods subject to availability



A passion for foxes

Introducing our new fox shooting expert, Dean Harrison, who grew up chasing after Charlie and still can't get enough of outsmarting these wily opportunists

It's Saturday night. There's a hint of spring in the air, but only *The Voice* to entertain on TV. Who in their right mind would want to stay in? Well, certainly not our new fox shooter Dean 'Deano' Harrison – not when there's a tricky customer to catch up with, that's for sure. Which is how I find myself sitting out in the (now wet and windy) night, waiting for Charlie and finding out just what it is that makes shooting these bushy-tailed bandits such a passion of Deano's...

"Growing up, I was your typical country lad: I was out beating, ferreting and setting snares from about 12 years old. I had an air rifle and was

'I've got some fantastic deer trophies on my wall, but from a passion point of view, I'd sooner shoot one fox than 10 gold-medal heads'

always out hunting rabbits, so it's fair to say I was pretty much hooked on hunting from an early age.

"I got to know the local gamekeeper and helped him out when I left school. Even then I was a fair shot with the rifle. Right from the age of 17, I was out lamping all the time – and I mean all the time – in an old Renault with the back cut out of it, before we got a Land Rover! I went out any time I could, laying out for foxes, lamping for foxes – I just couldn't get enough of it. The keeper eventually moved down to Dorset and around the same time I started working in the construction industry, but all my spare time was spent out shooting.

"I still went beating on the Dorset shoot and the opportunity came up to run the deer stalking operation on the estate, which I took up – culling, monitoring and taking guests out. I loved it, and whatever I was doing I always had my rifle with me and, with a game shoot on the land, many a fox fell to me there. Sometimes I'd leave home [in Wiltshire] at 3am in the morning just to get down there if he had a problem fox when he was rearing. I did this for about 15 years, all the while working full-time as a bricklayer. I was also helping out with fox control at other shoots back home and on the Plains. I was everywhere! I've

since learnt to say no though, because otherwise I feel you don't do anywhere properly, but that's another story.

"A promotion at work made it more difficult to keep up that level of deer and fox work. I found I was exhausted and, in all honesty, I was losing the passion to shoot the does in the winter anyway. Life was becoming more comfortable financially so I didn't need the money from the deer management as much and that side of things came to an end. I drifted into fishing. I was still shooting a few deer but the lamping and foxing side had gone. If I came across a fox I often left it – with no game shoot to protect, I had no specific reason to kill them, so I was more than happy to watch them. I've always had that 'work ethic' mentality in my shooting (apart from game shooting – that is a sport for me) and I almost can't call fox shooting a 'hobby' because of it. Gradually, I went down the road of game shooting, which eventually led me full circle back into fox shooting..."

The day of the fox

"Four seasons ago I was lucky enough to be invited to my local partridge and pheasant shoot in Wiltshire for the first day of the season. We



Deano has been shooting foxes since the age of 17

PICTURE: REBECCA GREEN

'It's getting that fox that's been doing the damage that really appeals to me. I love the satisfaction of it, of being able to outwit them'



were expecting a 150 to 200-bird day. I stood there with my wife, Michelle, feeling very excited... first day of the season... bag full of cartridges. I've shot there before so I am familiar with the drives and I knew I'd pulled a particularly good peg for the first partridge drive. But as the beaters came through the cover I began to worry – not a single partridge had taken flight. I'd noticed a couple of pheasants flick up and then go back down again, and said to Michelle, "There's a fox in there." Sure enough, two foxes came out of that first drive.

'Fox shooting is the ultimate: nothing else gives me the same buzz, whether that's sat waiting at first or last light, or out lamping'

And that set the scene for what followed – we just saw fox after fox all day, no partridge. We finished on a bag of 54. It was an absolute disaster (although I'd enjoyed the day, nonetheless), and I really felt for the shoot owner – he was devastated. But I thought no more of it, until at 7am the following morning, driving to work, the phone rang. It was the shoot owner. "Do you want to come and shoot my bloody foxes?" he asked pleadingly. I knew immediately that I wouldn't say no, despite knowing that I would have to commit my all to it. So I said yes, already feeling that familiar pang of excitement that only comes, for me, with fox shooting."

The birds are back

"So, I rallied my long-suffering wife, Michelle, and off we went – her with the lamp, me with the rifle. We shot nine foxes in two weeks, which gave them back their pheasant shoot as the pheasants came back to the feeders, although it was too late for the partridge. And I've been doing it ever since. In that time, bag numbers have returned to normal and the owner is much happier as a result. It's all down to perseverance. I'm on them all year, apart from a slight lull when the crops are up and it's hard to catch up with them. This is when the other side of the job comes in: there is a massive pig production to police on the 2,000-acre estate, with over 400 pigs being sent off each week, and part of my commitment to the estate and the farm is protecting the piglets in the farrowing fields. Since I've taken over controlling the foxes their pig production has shot up. I also shoot the rabbits on the farm. So there's plenty to keep me busy throughout the year."

Passion

"Some people might find it hard to understand my passion for fox shooting when I've got plenty of deer stalking and game shooting freely available

to me. But for me, fox shooting is the ultimate: nothing else gives me the same buzz, whether that's sat waiting at first or last light, or out lamping. It's getting that fox that's been doing the damage that really appeals to me. I love the satisfaction of it, of being able to outwit them. I'm the sort that just when everyone else is starting to think, 'It's not happening', I'm thinking, 'He's coming!' Anybody who goes out with me will tell you how excited I get... and sometimes a bit grumpy too! When you're tired, you can always think of a hundred reasons why you shouldn't go out foxing, but unless it's absolutely pouring with rain (which the foxes don't like either) my favourite saying is: 'You won't shoot them sat in your armchair.' But if you go out, you've policed the ground for starters; if you don't get the fox that night at least you've marked him, you know where he is ready for the next night.

"I've got some fantastic deer trophies on my wall, but from a passion point of view, I'd sooner shoot one fox than 10 gold-medal heads."

Kit bag

"As far as kit goes, I'm fairly old school. At the moment I just use a lamp and I squeak them in using the back of my hand (and I have my own rather unique shouts and calls that I've developed over the years), but I'm keen to work with some of the more technological kit as there's no denying it's impressive stuff. I'm currently shooting with a .308,



Deano's patience is rewarded

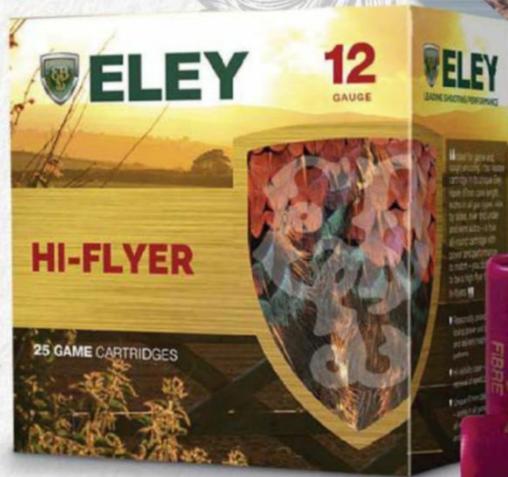
which, I admit, isn't your typical foxing rifle, with a 123gr bullet – again, heavier than many foxers would use – but it's a set-up that works for me. It's a Japanese rifle with a Japanese scope. The scope is one that I bought off a gamekeeper about 20-odd years ago and it's still going strong. The main thing is that I'm not afraid to try something different. And sometimes, with the really tricky foxes, trying something new is the only way you'll get them. For me, though, foxing is all about using the information that's available to you on the ground and that nature gives you, and I hope through these articles that this is something I can share with you, the readers.

"So hopefully that's given you an insight into what makes me tick as far as shooting is concerned. Now, you're probably wondering about that troublesome fox Rebecca mentioned at the start of this piece... well, that's a story for another issue. Suffice to say, I've still got a good excuse to be missing *The Voice* of a Saturday!"



Kit-wise, Deano is happy with the basics, and of course his black Lab, Saxon, for company

PICTURES: REBECCA GREEN



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SILENT BUT DEADLY

Sometimes time, resources and even location can work against you when it comes to corvid control... Will Edwards has just the solution

This month we are looking at the essential role of pest control and the most user-friendly methods that will help shooters to get the best results when other factors are against them.

With the likes of crows, rooks, magpies and those pesky squirrels looking to start breeding, we need to start hitting them hard to reduce their numbers for crop protection. From a general conservation point of view we are also looking to safeguard our wild songbirds, as well as the gamebirds that made it through last season.

My most efficient gun for use on areas that are noise sensitive is my Mossberg .410 Hushpower three-shot pump action shotgun. This very affordable bit of hardware has vandalised vermin for me over the last five years. I purchased it after surveying an area of land belonging to

a local market gardener who had neighbours residing along one side of his boundary, making the report from my normal 12-bore, especially with the very early morning starts, a real no-no – it would have caused no end of uproar with the natives!

The vegetables and flowers this landowner spends all of his time nurturing were taking a right pasting and, without any doubt, his land was the best restaurant in town for the pests. Well, what a 'sound' investment that gun was. It's as quiet as a spring-powered air rifle, if you feed it a diet of subsonic fodder. I've tried several different types of cartridge, but have now settled on the Lyalvale Express

Magnasonic after reviewing them for this magazine some time back. I love how quiet they are, but being 17g of no.5 shot they really hit hard, so at sensible ranges even a bolting rabbit is

cleanly dispatched – something I wouldn't, and couldn't ever achieve with an airgun.

So let's look at some tactics for an easy set-up if you don't have the time for a full-blown day out in the field. I quite often visit various clients' land prior to going off to work in the mornings. What I try to do is get regular updates as to where the current 'hot spots' are. This makes the whole procedure more time efficient and gives far better chances of getting the baddies. I'll travel light, with nothing more than a box of cartridges in a coat pocket, my gun and a small bag attached to my belt, which holds just one full-bodied crow decoy, a small knife and a ball of garden twine. Let me explain the last bit. If I find an area where the crows or rooks are busy tucking into a crop, I have two options available to me. I can either try and get as close to their flight line as possible and simply whack them on the wing, or, if that's

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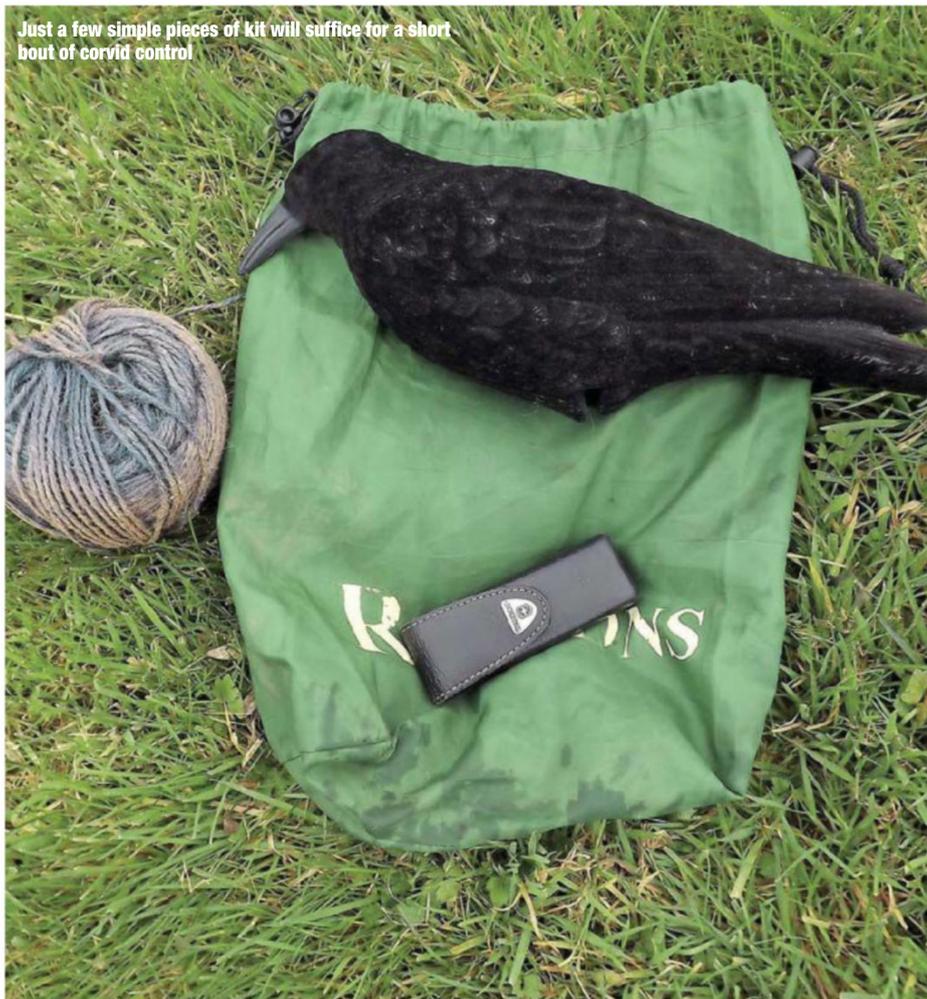
PICTURES: WILL EDWARDS

not possible, and this could be for various reasons, I can cut a long hazel stick, put it through the body of my decoy and fix it with the twine to a fence post or the top of a bush to try and coax the offending birds my way. It's a very simple and fast method if time is short, and on occasions has worked remarkably well. In both cases you must try to find cover to hide behind and remain as still as possible until the last second prior to taking your shot, or you will spook your quarry.

The traditional rough shooting method is another option open to us and it's one that I've used on many occasions. This is where you walk around your land trying to be as quiet as possible and being super observant for ambush opportunities. At the very least it's great exercise for you and your dog at the start or end of the day, and a large area can be covered in a relatively short time. This is ideal if you have a small shoot or farmland as you can also check on fences, gates, pens and feeders. This is a great multi-functional favourite of mine as if you do come across something amiss and you can communicate this back to the landowner, it shows that you're an extra pair of eyes and ears looking out for their interests... Brownie points by the bucket load. ■



The Mossberg is as quiet as a spring-powered air rifle when fed subsonic cartridges



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Heading out for the night shift

Andy Crow's pest control duties are never done; but it isn't always pigeon on the menu

There's no doubt that Crowman's number one shooting passion is the pursuit of woodpigeons. He loves it. But as a full-time farm manager, it makes up just a single facet of his pest control responsibilities. That focus shifts with the seasons and as the crops rotate, but for the majority of his excursions he uses a vehicle and waits until the sun heads for the horizon.

And the vehicle has been something of a problem in recent times because his trusty and long-serving Polaris Ranger ATV had finally become a bit of a concern. "It had been a real stalwart but recently wouldn't start and ceased to be reliable. Time on the farm is too precious to be walking back from the middle of nowhere because of a mechanical breakdown!"

So a replacement has been drafted in. "The salesman kept telling me I had to have a front screen, saying, 'You'll never use it without a windscreen, you'll be too cold.' I'm not sure he understands what I will be using it for!"

So no windscreen, but the first thing Andy did was take the vehicle to his friend and avid rifle shooter, Justin. Justin constructed a bespoke shooting frame that bolts to the existing superstructure of the Polaris. Andy has covered the rest with board and some pipe insulation to create a stable shooting rest. "For me the key aspect of the rest is the ability to have the back arm and elbow well supported, not just the fore-end. This gives the capability for taking confident longer shots."

Andy is also trialling a new Tikka T3x in .243 Winchester for foxing and deer control. The T3 has long been a favourite in the UK market with its guaranteed MOA accuracy, affordability and range of models. The T3x upgrades include interchangeable pistol grips, tweaked stock design and a revised ejection port. But it still feels familiar and somehow just 'right'.

Andy has ram-raided the GMK product portfolio pretty hard, topping the T3 with a Steiner Ranger

3-12x50 scope. It is an optic I have used extensively and been very impressed with the performance and quality at a price-point measured in the hundreds, not thousands, of pounds.

Out front there is a Stalon moderator. This brand is little known here in the UK but is well regarded in Scandinavia and has performed strongly in comparison tests in the independent shooting press up there.

"It looks a really nicely made unit and the noise control is very good. There are a lot more moderators to choose from these days at various price points, but this one isn't bulky or heavy. Most importantly for me, it virtually eliminates muzzle flip so you can see your shot land and that is always an advantage, especially when shooting deer, and you can see the reaction of the animal and be ready for an insurance shot should you need it."

We set the rifle up and tried both 75gr ballistic-tipped ammunition and 100gr soft points.



PICTURES: DOM HOLTAM

Andy's custom-made shooting frame provides a stable shooting rest

Andy prefers the former for foxing, but the latter for deer. In the end we zero with the 100s, as Andy has been seeing plenty of fallow deer and wants to get a few more bucks on the deck before the close of the season. Both deliver sub-inch groups from the comfort of the rest. "Not bad for an out-of-the-box rifle and factory ammo!"

The scope has a simple 4A reticle with illuminated centre dot – no mil dots or anything. So we have zeroed an inch high at 100 yards to give Andy the ability to aim dead on at up to around 200 yards when stalking.

"I use the buggy a lot. Especially for rabbit control. You can cover thousands of acres in a matter of hours. The balloon tyres and light weight means that it gets around really well and doesn't leave deep tyre marks. A heavy vehicle, like a Land Rover, would make a right mess where the fields are lying wet, but the Polaris floats over the top a bit, meaning you can get out more often."

With the rifle sighted in we decide to go and give it a bit of a field test. Andy plans to park up in an overgrown gateway close to where he knows the deer are active and use the vehicle as

'The T3 has long been a favourite in the UK market with its guaranteed MOA accuracy, affordability and range of models'



The new T3x has a redesigned ejection port

a temporary high seat. And once the light is gone, we will have a scan round with the lamp for Charlie.

It is a long, cold wait in the buggy, and I can't help but think that the salesman had a point about the windscreen as a northerly bites into the open cockpit. Andy is calmly patient. Fallow like to move late on this land. "It's ideal country for them here – plenty of woodland and arable. This winter wheat is proving attractive to them at the moment... here we go!"

A couple of young bucks have emerged from our left but are soon hidden in a crease of ground. But Andy knows where they are headed and settles onto the rest to await their reappearance. They aren't rushing, the wind is in our favour and we are tucked back into cover. As the front animal pauses to look around, Andy squeezes the trigger.

The buck kicks out, runs 20 yards and keels over. His mate actually runs towards us until he suddenly realises the gateway he was heading for is blocked. He stops to reconsider, and it is a fatal error of judgement. The T3's muffled bark drops him in his tracks.

It is almost fully dark by the time we have loaded the bucks, so we decide to take them back to the farm to gralloch them in a bit more 'comfort'. We have a spy round with the lamp as we return but no sign of any foxes tonight. Lots of rabbits, though, and Andy will be back with the Polaris and a rimfire the following night to begin making a dent in their numbers before the wheat crop grows any further and they are too difficult to spot. No rest for the wicked... but with his new buggy and new rifle, there won't be much rest for the local vermin, either. ■



The Polaris buggy enables Andy to cover thousands of acres in a matter of hours



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On the blacklist

Corvids present a serious problem for farmers and, as a result, are firmly on Eric's blacklist; here he explains how the Sussex Pest Control Team deals with the blighters

Feral pigeons, collared doves, carrion crows, rooks, jackdaws, and to some extent magpies, devour tons of animal food from dairies and piggeries throughout the country. In addition to this, they pose a serious risk of infection, as their droppings foul the feed and drinking water. Also, they will defecate over tools, implements and all types of machinery in and out of the buildings. Another point to consider is the increasing population of most, if not all species of the crow family. The problems presented by them will worsen in the future: they will concentrate on the larger complexes as the smaller producers

diversify due to ever-lowering milk prices.

It's about now (in June and July) that the attacks on piggeries and dairies will be at their highest. The parent birds – crows, rooks and jackdaws – will be introducing their offspring to the best sources of quality food in the area, with numbers increasing by a staggering 300% plus. It's common to see 4,000 diving into the silage bins at this time of year. Now is the most effective time to reduce numbers before they disperse onto the stubbles in August.

As with pigeon shooting, do not rush in without doing that most important reconnaissance. I

suggest that you visit the farm a couple of days before you intend to shoot. The first day is to assess the numbers and to work out where they are concentrating their attacks. Drive them well out of the area, and sit in your vehicles at a good distance to watch as they return, noting the flight lines back in. Do the same on the second day, and leave plenty of time to erect your hides from the wooden pallets already roughly positioned (by the farmer, at your request).

Hide building for maximum success and comfort

You can erect any type of hide you like, but I prefer a roomy pallet job that keeps me warm on cold, windy days, and cool in hotter weather. Another advantage of a pallet hide is that it will not blow down in a strong wind. At times, we will use the fifth pallet as a roof – doing this keeps us well hidden, especially from above. However, the downside is that it prevents us from taking

Gliders are low-cost and extremely effective



The Hushpower in action >>

‘The crows do not need to be pulled in from a distance – they already know where they are going. All they need is confidence, which the standard decoy will give’



out the high birds that have no intention of decoying. Usually, in addition, we use four hide poles with the normal netting used for pigeons, including a roof. Generally, the net used for overhead cover is positioned just to hide our body (a half roof) allowing sufficient clear space above to take out those high birds. If the wind is strong, we secure the hide poles to the pallet sides for additional stability.

Usually, the hides are located on the incoming side of the silage pits, or near to a sitty tree close to the farm buildings. All positions will have been decided during the reconnaissance duties. Decoys, mainly full bodied, will be stationed at a maximum of 25 paces from the hide, either directly in front or out to the side, depending on the wind direction and strength. They will be approximately two paces apart, using 15-20, which will be reinforced with dead birds as we go.

Personally, I'm not a great believer in the use of all the new gadgets for crow shooting, especially around farm buildings. After all, the crows do not need to be pulled in from a distance – they already know where they are going. All they need is confidence, which the standard decoy will give.

The only simple low-cost aids I do use extensively are gliders, which are similar to the normal cradles but stand higher and include wing extensions. They are extremely effective on the oncoming edges of the decoy pattern, and at the front end of the killing area, and are very quick and easy to erect. I usually use three or four in the pattern. As far as I can remember, the gliders are available from a company called The Pigeon Shooter (www.pigeonshooter.com / paul@thepigeonshooter.com).

Guns and ammunition

Usually, standard ammunition and 12- or 20-bores are used by most Guns, just as they would use if shooting pigeons. Our team uses the moderated 20-bore over-and-under Hushpower fed with the special Gamebore Hushpower ammunition, loaded with 30g of no.5s.

As a result of their success, we now have four Hushpower 20-bores on the team. I find that the major advantage over other moderated guns is that this one was cleverly designed with the moderator close to the natural line of sight, which



A good bag for the day

allows it to swing up to the point of aim quickly and effortlessly.

I've been using mine for the past six or seven years and find it ideal for the job. Combined with the special cartridge, they are very quiet with excellent knock-down power. Being so quiet, I frequently take out crows over the decoy pattern, with others behind continuing to decoy more confidently as they believe that the forward birds have dropped in to land. Another plus is that we can set the hides up close to livestock, who take very little notice of our activities.

A further benefit of the 20-bore Hushpower is that we can now operate in areas where there is

potential for what is now known as 'noise pollution', when out after woodpigeon close to housing estates and factories. Interestingly, Hushpower, located at Biggin Hill in Kent, is developing another new moderated gun which I will be testing over the summer months, and will report back at a later date.

For more information on the Hushpower range, contact Jon Powell on 01959 573089 or email hushpower@btinternet.com

Finally, remember that time spent on culling the crow family will no doubt win you increased opportunities on the pigeons in summer, as a thank you. Keep shooting, and shoot straight! ■

A pattern of 15-20 full-bodied decoys is set out to lure the crows in



Eric has a vast amount of knowledge on controlling corvids, drawn from many years out in the field



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LETTER OF THE MONTH



Stick a plug in it

I am sending you this email in response to your reader's letter entitled 'Oil overload' in the May issue of *Sporting Shooter*. I responded to a similar letter some time back regarding oil soaking into the stock of a shotgun if it is stored 'barrels up'. The method I use after cleaning is to get three sheets of toilet tissue, fold it into three lengthways, and then roll it up to make a plug which can then be inserted into the breech just below the breech face. This will stop any seepage of oil into the stock provided the barrels have not been drowned in oil.

The response I got was "What about the ejectors?" To overcome this problem I don't use oil there; I use light, high-melting point grease, which is after all only thick oil, and it works very well.

Before the gun is used, obviously, the paper plugs must be removed, and pushing them through the barrels with a cleaning rod will remove any residual oil and any remaining fouling which might be present. I have found that this method works very well, proven by the lack of any oil around the area of the firing pins.

Bert Palmer, via email



A scary situation!

After a season packed with great days out in the field with great company, we came to the last day of the season. This was a walked-up day and, to make the most of the day, we covered a lot of ground to try to seek out those canny birds that had made it this far into the season.

At this point I should introduce Jack, my three-year-old springer spaniel. This was Jack's first full year and he has done me proud, working the thickest of cover and working the hedges and woodlands, going where most wouldn't dare. The last day of the season was no different and he worked hard, as usual. We got to the last drive and as we set off Jack fell onto his side and locked his legs, shaking frantically, with his eyes rolled to the back of his head and frothing at the mouth. I didn't know what to think; I had all sorts running through my mind and didn't think he was getting up again. This went on for a minute or so until he started to come round. He was confused and dazed and lacked energy. I gave him a flapjack bar and carried him back to the truck. By the time we were home he was back to normal.

After doing some research and speaking to other gundog owners I now know this was a hypoglycaemic seizure due to low blood sugar, and seems to be common among working dogs.

I will now ensure I increase his feed over the season and give him some extra during shoot days (he's very reluctant to eat when working). I think it would be useful to others for you to run

an article on this and ways to keep your dogs topped up on shoot days. It was a very frightening situation; at the time I thought I was losing my buddy!

John Tapp, via email



SNAP SHOTS



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New-found love

Being a young 58-year-old I recently married, and for the stag do was taken on a clay pigeon day, along with three friends, in the Scarborough area. I may add that this was the first time I had come into contact with the sport or shotguns.

The venue was very professional with a great instructor – with the emphasis on safety first, fun second – and the venue itself was very well kept and very well run by very friendly people.

I became smitten and wondered how I had missed this wonderful sport, and decided to go on another day local to me, in South Yorkshire. What a difference! Three of us arrived on a very busy weekend to be given no safety instruction whatsoever and were given a box of cartridges each and a pump-action gun and sent to the stands.

Shells were scattered everywhere, even though bins were provided, and it seemed a free-for-all! On one of the stands, clays were landing on us from another area.

It was really unsafe and poorly run and was pretty discouraging as we didn't really know what we were doing. Since then I have found and joined a club close to me and am now happy as it's very well run, again with the emphasis on safety first, and not a 'take your money and run' type outfit.

I hope that others wanting to start up with this sport are not put off by these poorly-run outfits if they come upon one, and I can vouch that if you look around and read the reviews, you will find a good club with the right frame of mind and with a strong safety culture embedded, as it should be.

I'm in love, and my wife of three months understands it's not entirely with her! Paul Hirst, via email

Two-legged retriever!

The picture is of my son Sam Miller, who is seven years old now, but was still only six in the photo. He goes shooting with his grandad (George Taylor) who took the photo and asked me to send it in to you. He has been going shooting with his grandad since he was five, and he loves it. They usually shoot pigeon, but this was his first duck shoot at a friend's farm near Durham. Grandad actually shot these ducks and Sam retrieved them, as Grandad no longer has a gundog.

Sam is hoping for a gun of his own very soon as he says he "wants to shoot himself his own dinner!"

Georgia, via email



Talk amongst the Guns

As a picker-up I am able to spend time with the Guns during drives. I often overhear a variety of subjects being discussed, one of them being eye dominance and how it can affect a Gun's shooting ability. Your article in the March issue ('The eyes have it') offers a comprehensive and definitive guide and has given me an understanding and insight (excuse the pun) into eye dominance. It has highlighted the complexity of this subject area and the importance of obtaining the correct diagnosis. I now realise why it is a frequent topic of conversation amongst the Guns. Thank you!

Wendy Bardsley, via email



WIN FOLD UP DECOYS

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QUIZ QUESTION

Q RAT DINGINESS is an anagram of what activity that magpies are particularly well known for?

SEND YOUR ANSWER TO THIS MONTH'S QUESTION TO:

Win Decoys (June), Sporting Shooter, Evolution House, 2-6 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2EG, or email your answer to competitions@sportingshooter.co.uk

APRIL ISSUE WINNER

Congratulations to Mr A M Fawcett from Northampton. The answer was WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE.

RULES: Closing date is 1 June. Answer will be published in the August issue. Normal Sporting Shooter rules apply. For full terms and conditions, send an sae marked t&c to the postal address above.

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with:



DOM HOLTAM
STALKER AND
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dom is an experienced stalker and deer warden



DON BRUNT
CLAY SHOOTING

Don is a keen clay shooter and follows the country's top shots on the circuit



ANDY CROW
PIGEONS

Crowman has forgotten more about pigeons than most of us will ever know



DIGGORY HADOKE
CLASSIC GUNS

Diggory Hadoke is an authority on old guns and buying at auction



JONNY CROCKETT
COUNTRYSIDE

Jonny Crockett teaches survival courses and other backwoods skills



WILL EDWARDS
SHOOTING

Will Edwards is an APSI-qualified shooting coach



LIAM STOKES
SPORTING ISSUES

Liam is Head of Shooting Campaigns at the Countryside Alliance

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE
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An expert team of lecturers run Sparsholt College's full and part-time gamekeeping courses

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Sporting Shooter,
Evolution House,
2-6 Easthampstead Road,
Wokingham,
Berkshire RG40 2EG

OR EMAIL: news@sportingshooter.co.uk

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Law change for licence holders

Q I understand the procedure by which doctors report medical concerns about certificate holders has changed. Should we be worried?

A LIAM STOKES replies: You are correct. Since 1 April, doctors no longer have to rely on firearm or shotgun certificate holders telling the police about a medical problem when they renew their licence. GPs will now be made aware of which of their patients hold firearm or shotgun certificates

and can get in touch with the police immediately if they feel there is a problem that might affect that person's fitness to possess a firearm.

We believe this is a positive move and will reassure the public further about those very rare occasions where a health problem has led to public safety concerns. There will, however, be a review of the scheme after six months and again after a year and we shall enter vigorously into these reviews to ensure the shooting community's interests are safeguarded.



Licence to sell

Q I've been shooting for a few years and would like to know more about how to sell the fruits of my evening labours around the fields and hedgerows. What do I need to do to be able to take them to the game dealers?

A JONNY CROCKETT replies: My advice would be to go on a Game Meat Hygiene course, as it sounds like you are shooting rabbits, pigeons and small game. I would check out the National Gamekeepers' Organisation website for details of the course. The course provides information about EU rules and regulations on taking food to Approved Game Handling Establishments (AGHE), more commonly known as 'game dealers', and about introducing the game you shoot or trap into the human food chain. It's a one-day course and costs around £120. The certificate is a lifelong certificate but the onus to update yourself will be driven by changes in legislation.

Hunters wishing to sell game to game dealers must be authorised to do so



PICTURES: DOM HOLTAM

Driven out of sight

Q I struggle to shoot driven targets – whether game or clays – in the traditional straight-on method. In theory, my barrels will blot out the target when swinging through and it causes me to lift my head to see where the target is. Any advice on this would be really helpful as I'm joining friends next month on a simulated game day.

A WILL EDWARDS replies: I totally understand your dilemma, and to be honest with you it's something that plagued me personally for ages. I love the fact that you're attending a sim game day as this is the perfect opportunity to put my advice into practice as you will have a good variety of clays.

Okay, here we go... As you see the clay launched towards you, what you need to do is turn and take it as a crosser. You will have to be a bit nimble on your feet to ensure you are what I call 'body balanced', but for me, and many of my clients, approaching a driven target this way means the target is visible throughout the shot.

You simply pick up on the line of the target, turn on your feet, then start behind it and swing through, nailing it almost above your head. This also means you still have plenty of movement in your upper body if you need to give it a swift follow-up shot. Good luck!



Seeking advice on apprenticeships

Q How do I go about finding a Game and Wildlife apprenticeship?

A THE SPARSHOLT TEAM replies: Contact the Sparsholt Apprenticeship Team at apprenticeship@sparsholt.ac.uk or telephone 0845 850 0916. An application form will be sent and, on receipt, an invitation for an interview and assessment will be arranged with the College. This will identify requirements of the individual and suitable shoots currently advertising for positions, as each year a number of employers make contact to source an apprentice.

Employers can gain assistance with

advertising vacancies and the recruitment of apprentices. However, if you have an employer who is willing to take you on as an apprentice, we would make contact with them and help you secure a position on our apprenticeship programme.

Apprentices will be supported by dedicated Apprenticeship Liaison Officers who are always at hand to support individuals through the whole process.

Should you wish to talk through the process in more detail, contact Dave Ballantyne, Game and Wildlife Apprenticeship Assessor at dave.ballantyne@sparsholt.ac.uk or call him on 07738 754420.



Bush tactics

Q I have been trying to master the Andy Crow 'bush' hide placed out in the field but really struggle to pick up birds coming in from behind. Would I be better off sticking with my old hide in the hedge?

A ANDY CROW replies: A hide tucked in the hedgerow is absolutely fine – and quicker and easier to build. I like the 360-degree view from a bush hide, but then I am always on

the lookout for the next pigeon. But if you aren't used to it, it can be tiring on the old neck muscles!

If you prefer a sit down and a cup of tea – like Dom! – you'll miss out on a few birds. But there is no 'right' – or 'wrong' – solution. Do what works for you and what makes your shooting comfortable. If you are more confident taking those birds coming in from the front, that's not a problem. If you think you might have more opportunities placing the hide in the field, that's fine too.



PICTURE: DOM HOLTAM

What gun should a newcomer to clay shooting buy?

Q I am a brand-new clay pigeon shooter at the age of 58! I have read and had so much conflicting advice as to what type of shotgun I should purchase and am totally bemused. Having just purchased a subscription to your magazine I thought I would ask an expert.

A DON BRUNT replies: I would definitely recommend an over-and-under to anyone who is fit and healthy, and unless you are over 6ft I wouldn't worry too much about 32" barrels. Instead, go for 30" tubes, and if you are a little on the short side I would suggest 28s. I would suggest a second-hand gun from one of the three big brands – Miroku, Browning or Beretta – simply because if you find that the

sport's not for you, these are the easiest to resell, as second-hand guns from these marques are always in demand. There's no need to spend a fortune; a budget of £700-£900 should get you something to be proud of. Do make sure that the gun fits you properly, though. Read up on the subject a little beforehand as although most gun shops are conscientious, there are a few that will sell you anything, even if it's a long way from fitting you. Hope this helps...



PICTURE: DON BRUNT

Roe call for munties?

Q I read about calling muntjac deer with a roe deer call, but I'm not having any success. Is there a specific time of year that I should be doing it?

A DOM HOLTAM replies: So normally, when calling deer, you would have good success during the mating season – whether it is the roe rut, the red deer roar or even rattling-up frisky fallow in the autumn. But muntjac breed year-round so surely you can call them at any time of year, right? Well, in theory, yes – but in reality, not necessarily.

We spoke to deer expert, Owen Beardsmore of Cervus UK and he has noticed certain times of the year are more productive: "I've always found

that later in the spring is a good time and I do wonder if muntjac have preferred breeding patterns to ensure that their young have the best chance of survival. The call mimics a fawn in distress, and as muntjac does come into season as soon as they have given birth, this might explain why sometimes the bucks are more responsive. If several receptive females are in the area at the same time, it brings out the bucks' competitive instincts."



PICTURE: DOM HOLTAM

It is definitely a tactic not to be overused on a particular piece of ground, but it is a useful tactic to have in your arsenal to bring a buck out of cover if all else fails.

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Brits perform in South Africa

This year's Pan African FITASC was held, as ever, at its spiritual home – the beautiful Valley Gun Club. George Digweed shot a phenomenal 193, but was beaten by Hungarian top shot András Szerdahelyi on 196. Tony Manvell took third after

a shoot-off with Mark Marshall, as both men had shot 190.

However, George had his revenge on András in the Compak event, where he managed a near faultless 199 to take the win by two targets. Joe

Emmett took third on 195, having beaten Tony Manvell 24-22 in a shoot-off. It was also a good day for Caroline Marshall who won third place in Ladies.

For full results, visit www.fitasc.com

George won in Africa yet again



'Turnip' top at Barrow Heath

Phillip Thorold took the win at the first England Sporting Team selection shoot of the year, held at Barrow Heath; Adam Curtis took the second spot on the podium just one target behind; while Richard Bunning was third on 95.

A bumper entry of 382 shooters from around the UK took part over a 14-stand course that was something of a game of two halves, stands one to

seven being relatively friendly on the top half of the ground, while the other stands out in the wide open spaces gave ground owner Phil Moss plenty of scope to test the very best. A sim pair of crossers from a high tower proved to be especially testing, while a 70mm teal had many scratching their heads.

In Juniors, Josh Bridges took the win with a

classy 93, followed by William Baughan and Henry Collins on 89.

P Chapman's 87 was enough to finish on top in Ladies, with Tracey Riddington close behind on 86, and Hannah Gibson third on 84.

Steve Brightwell made his mark once again in Vets with an excellent 92, just pipping John Bidwell and Arnie Palmer (91) to the win.



Josh Bridges was on top in Juniors

Testing weather at Midlands

Scott Barnett of Mickley Hall did a good job of running the Midlands Grand Prix, which took place on 25, 26 and 27 March. Despite the weather conditions making for a challenging few days, there were still some great scores among the 300-strong entry.

Paul Wilkinson proved to be the class of the field, with a 146 that saw him win a Zoli gun for his troubles, while T Simmons was second on 143 and John Lee was third thanks to a 142.

AAA winner

C Daniels / D Hughes / B Davies jointly on 141

AA winner

K Bridges 141

A winner

P Hutchinson 139

B winner

J Brodie 134

C winner

J Lilwall 128



A rather quiet Italian Grand Prix



This year's Italian Grand Prix Compak, held at TAV San Martino, was a relatively quiet affair with only 57 shooters taking part. However, Cheryl Hall made it to the podium once again in Ladies with 186, this time taking silver behind Martina Marruzzo of Italy on 188. Young Amy Easeman nearly made the top three, finishing just four clays behind the bronze medal position.

For full results, visit www.fitasc.com



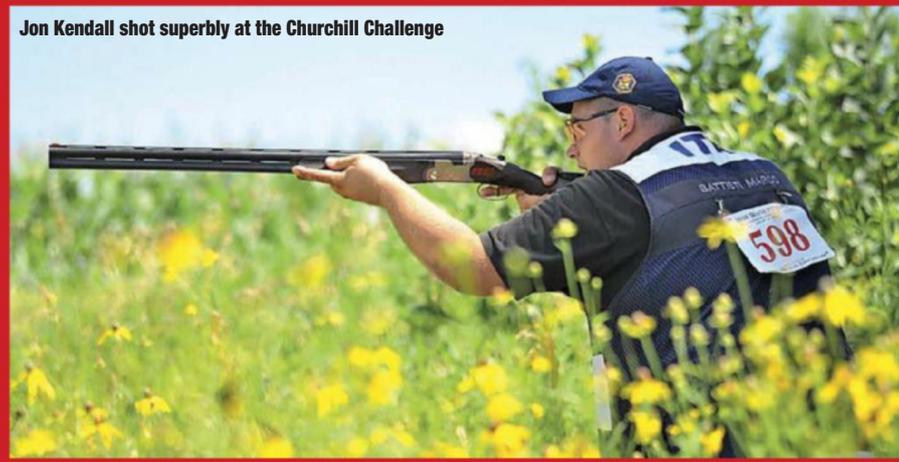
Churchill Challenge concludes

The 100-target spring Challenge at EJ Churchill has come to an end, with Jonathan Kendall sharing the top spot with Jamie Brightman, after both men scored 96. Cheryl Hall took third place on 95 alongside Henry Arnold.

The event has seen some 450 shooters taking part over a combined course of Sporting targets and 20-bird sequences, which have proved very popular.

For full results, visit www.ejchurchill.com

Jon Kendall shot superbly at the Churchill Challenge





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THE MARKETPLACE

Your one-stop shop for shooting gear

Welcome to the Marketplace. In this section you will find everything you need to know about the kit you need to go shooting with – from product tests and reviews to in-depth features.

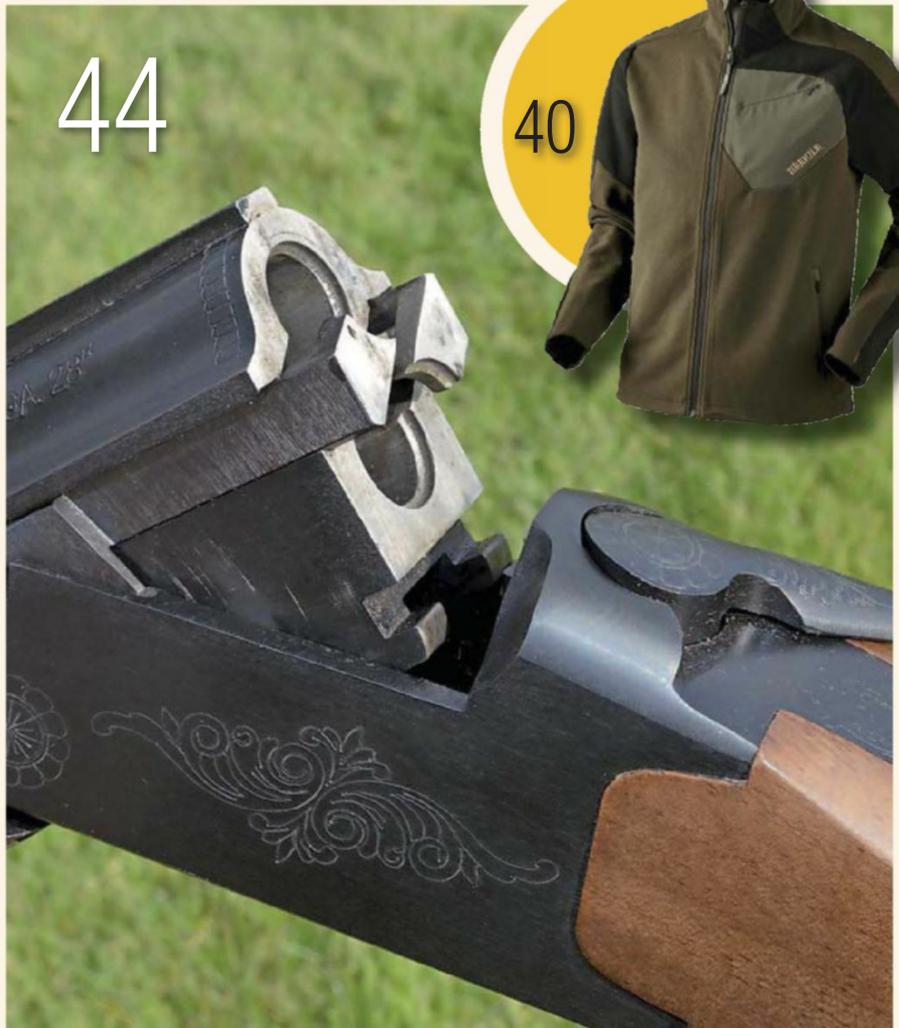
Whatever you want to know about or buy, we've got it covered. And if we've missed something that you'd like to see tested, drop us a line by post, telephone or email at the usual addresses.

INSIDE THE MARKETPLACE THIS MONTH...

38 **Tried and Tested** – Ever wondered who wears the trousers in the Kay household? Mr and Mrs test Fjällräven's latest. Plus predator calls, hyper-realistic decoys and some groovy gaiters

42 **Cartridges** – Are you caught in a Trap? If so you'll need Vic's guide to the top cartridges for Down The Line

44 **Gun test** – Small, very affordable and surprisingly good. Mike tests an ideal beginners .410 from little-known Turkish manufacturer, Armed



Our pick of the latest kit, the best value buys and the brightest new ideas

Happy in the trouser department

Ryan's review of the Fjällräven Barents-Pro Trousers

When I reviewed Fjällräven's Sörmland Pile Jacket last month, I mentioned a pair of Fjällräven's Vidda-Pro Trousers that I'd bought back in January. Very tough and well designed, these Barents-Pro are practically the same, but with an unfinished leg. This, for lanky sorts like me, is a godsend. Finding adequate trousers suitable for a life outdoors that fit well in the leg is a bit of a nightmare. Thankfully, Fjällräven seems to cater very well for the taller gent!

Looking through their website, you notice a material that features heavily with many of their garments: G1000. This is a very durable polyester/cotton blend and to say that these trousers are made up of just one layer of this material is incredible, because they are extremely tough. I was a little too relaxed when clambering over some barbed wire, and scraped down the inside of my leg with a barb, before looking down and expecting to see a nice new rip – but nothing. I'm



not saying they won't rip, but this material is very hard-wearing.

Extremely densely woven, it proves to be windproof, especially when you apply the recommended Greenland Wax.

As a cargo-style pant, the only places where the material does double up is on the rear and the knee. They also have a slot below the pre-shaped knee area, to insert some pads if you want a bit more comfort when knelt down.

There are 13 different colours to choose from, including the usual dark olive (pictured here). Plus, despite there being no rear pockets, they do boast six other pockets, including a map pocket, a knife pocket and an axe pocket! Robust and well made, they should last.

Available sizes: EU44-60

RRP: £115

Alison's review of the Fjällräven Övik Trousers Curved

We're desperately trying not to look like Harold and Hilda here, but while Ryan has his own problems, seeking out trousers long enough for a 35" inside leg, us ladies can be faced with different challenges when pursuing the right clothes suitable for the field. Short of being kitted out in bespoke shooting attire, I sometimes see women turn up beating or shooting in a pair of dark jeans, or maybe to cover the jeans, over-trousers, on what may be quite a warm day. It can be down to the lack of available options for women who are required to trample through the same brambles as the guys.

Fjällräven has several choices for ladies trousers but I was recommended to try the Övik Trousers Curved. These are specifically designed for women with curvy figures. The curved fit is definitely more generous over the thighs and rear, and the waist is supposed to be more emphasised than that of other trousers available. The back is slightly higher and because of the fit they don't feel too tight when bending down. Also, the G1000 material used here is slightly more refined than Ryan's Barents-Pro trousers, the Öviks use a 'silent' version of the material, giving a softer finish.

I tested these out while we were away walking in the Derbyshire Dales at the end of March. Ryan did me the courtesy of melting-in an extra waxed layer, so I was prepared for the unpredictable spring weather.

While these are not waterproof, they did feel very windproof with the added wax, and although the weather was kind during our walks, I'm convinced they'll certainly hold off a sharp shower or two.

I found them to be very comfortable and



practical, while looking smart enough for most scenarios.

Unlike Ryan's Barents-Pro, the Öviks have two rear pockets, and just one leg pocket, which suits me, as I've no need to hide some big ninja knife and head for the hills! At 5' 7" I'm not the tallest, nor the shortest woman to be found gracing the beating cart, but should I be a six-footer, these trousers would also suit, as they too come in a raw leg length, with a handy little pack of the same matching tough cotton, if they need to be taken up. Here, I've simply turned them up for the time being. These trousers will certainly take me through most of the British spring weather, but I may be opting for some of Fjällräven's waterproof-style trousers when the really cold, wet weather sets in.

Available in five different colours, including black and dark olive.

Available sizes: EU34-46

RRP: £100

www.fjallraven.co.uk



New FLX500 predator calls

If you haven't yet mastered your mouth scratches, or have yet to acquire the ability to imitate a distressed rabbit using the back of your hand, you need the new Flextone FLX500 electronic predator calls from Wildgame Innovations.

Distributor Scott Country have had two of the UK's top fox controllers test the FLX500 to its limits, and reckon that they have one of the UK's best electronic predator calls now available: "Both our pro staff have experienced fantastic results with the calls, finding the mouse and red fox calls to be particularly productive."

As well as offering more diversity than mouth calls, the ability to locate the caller away from your position and operate via a wireless

remote gives you advantages in terms of concealment and beating the wind.

The new FLX500 is in stock now and is packed with features including:

- Multi HD speaker system for crystal-clear natural sound reproduction
- Programmable 150-yard wireless remote with night-vision mode
- Water resistant for use in extreme weather conditions
- Professional library organised by species with 100 preloaded calls
- Up to 500 call capacity, easily controlled via the remote or manually

The FLX500 is priced at £169.99.

For more information, visit www.scottcountry.co.uk



Call 'em in

Sometimes, the best way to get what you want is to ask for it. If you want a couple of corvids to fly your way, try giving the Acme Crow/Magpie/Rook Call a blow – it's the corvid equivalent of saying, "Hey, come over here, buddy!" Combined with a good decoying pattern, a caller can make a huge difference to your results. This one has been carefully assembled (by John Rothery in England) to give a faithful reproduction of the crow/magpie/rook sound, every time, and you can vary the pitch by altering the position of your hand/mouth on the call. Ideal for pest control.

Available from UK Shoot Warehouse (www.ukshootwarehouse.com).

RRP: £6



Born in the USA

If you've been reading our corvid control articles, you'll know the importance of decoying and, consequentially, of purchasing decoys; if you're a diehard pest controller, the chances are you already have a cupboard (or three) full of them. Either way, these particular decoys could make a big difference to your shooting experience. UK Shoot Warehouse are the exclusive European distributor of Sillosocks

Velour Crow/Corvid decoys – a new design combining the best features of Silhouette and Windssock decoys, previously only available in the USA. Made from ultra-soft velour, they eliminate glare to give a realistic appearance in any weather conditions. The windssock design catches the slightest breath of wind and inflates to replicate the size, shape and silhouette of a real bird perfectly; they also present a very realistic 'bobbing' motion in the process, naturally mimicking the birds feeding and moving about, and putting any incoming corvids at ease. The real selling factor with this kind of decoy, however, is the ease of transportation – a dozen of these, plus ground stakes, weighs just 600g, which makes them effortless to move and carry around. To give yourself the edge, intersperse some UK Shoot Warehouse Full Bodied Flocked decoys with the Sillosocks. The flocked coating again prevents glare in any weather conditions, and the detailed design and attachable feet make for an ultra-realistic decoy; mingle with the Sillosocks and you'll be fighting them off!

RRP: Full-bodied Flocked Crow/Corvid decoy £5 each, six or more £4.75 each, 12 or more £4.50 each, 24 or more £4 each; Sillosocks Velour Crow/Corvid decoy £4.50 each, six or more £4 each.

www.ukshootwarehouse.com



Double-take decoys



Crowman is always telling us that the woodpigeon has excellent vision, hence the need for a good hide and to keep out of sight for as long as possible. But it is also the reason why he often favours real shot birds over plastic decoys – because some imitations just aren't life-like enough.

Not a criticism you can level at these full-bodied lovelies from DJ Decoys. Called the Enforcer Pro Series, the attention to detail, and in particular the crisp white on neck, beak and wing, should really catch the eye of passing pigeons and make them look twice.

Here is why: they are subject to a 14-stage hand-painted finish on every single decoy. The paint, we are told, never shines – whether wet, dry or frosty, thanks to MatteBlock technology, while UV stabilisers are added during production to draw in passing birds.

They are 10% larger than life, further enhancing their appeal. The plastic construction was tested over a two-year period to find just the right mix of toughness and durability, while giving that lifelike paint finish.

Finally, they are mounted via the BreezeRider stakes that ensure just the right amount of natural movement.

Apparently the Enhancer Pros can withstand being shot, stood on and battered about in bags and trucks – because that's how serious pigeon shooters treat their gear!

We will be trialling these in the field as soon as we can get our hands on a full set! Watch this space for our verdict.

There are two models available: the classic 'sentry' and 'feeder' poses. These are the first examples in, but stocks should be ready and available to buy by the time this magazine goes on sale.

The package costs £69.99 for 10 decoys (6 x feeder, 4 x sentry) and mounting stakes.

Contact DJ Decoys on 01942 518452, email gwyn@djdecoys.co.uk or visit www.djdecoys.com for more information.

RRP: £69.99 for 10

Whatever the weather

The Harkila Thor Fleece was designed with our changeable weather in mind. Made from a high stretch DWR-treated fleece, it will keep you warm and has water-repelling properties for when those scattered spring showers catch you unawares. The high collar and adjustable hem, along with the breathable Gore Windstopper membrane, prevent chilly breezes from finding their way in. Designed for shooters, the jacket features zipped side pockets (perfect for cartridges), a radio pocket, and is available in two natural shades that will help you to blend into woodland. The jacket exudes Harkila's famed quality and style, with shaped black panels and a smart shape. This is the perfect mid option for when the coats come off but we're still a long way from T-shirt weather.

Why not top it off with the Reider cap? It's sturdy, stylish and perfect for keeping the sun out of your eyes or the rain off your head... whatever the weather decides!

RRP: Fleece £199.99; Cap £39.95

www.harkila.com



The Black Islander Co. Gaiters Delux

Up until a year ago, I was a wellingtons-only girl. I then made the transition across to boots when I was bought a nice pair of Alt-Bergs to test out. And that was fine, but when you buy hunting or walking boots, you then need to acquire some gaiters too. Buying a pair of gaiters for the average Joe isn't a problem – the choices seem plentiful, and the guys can fill their boots, or more appropriately attach to their boots any random gaiter that seems to come in one size only!

The choice for women's gaiters in the shooting field, however, is much more limited. Perhaps the demand just isn't there, but thankfully one company does cater for pretty much everyone when it comes to gaiter sizes, plus they happen to be one of the best on the market! Black Islander Co. are well known as a manufacturer of some of the toughest gaiters out there.

Their Delux Gaiters (pictured here) are reputed as being the best. Made in the UK, there are stories of keepers acquiring a pair and them lasting for 10 years plus. They are totally waterproof and breathable, and completely machine washable, plus they are the only manufacturer that makes gaiters in four different sizes: Small (15" for ladies and boys), Medium (17" zip – up to 17" calf), Large (17" zip – up to 19" calf) and X Large (17" zip – up to 21" calf).

The front fastening is a heavy-duty zip, protected by a sturdy Velcro flap, with a press stud both top and bottom. There are proper laces at the top for tightening, rather than the more inadequate elastic thread and stopper that some gaiters appear to be equipped with. My Alt-Berg boots are a little short – only six inches high – so I was worried that the gaiters would ride up above

the back of the boot, but once the strong laces hook is attached, the tough buckle and strap definitely keeps the gaiter firmly in place. The ankle area is made of robust Cordura, which is a proven material for tackling bramble and harsh cover, and this is backed by a waterproof skin on the inside. I wore these on a continuous five-hour walk, covering some very tough ground, and they also proved to be very comfortable.

I feel at £74.95 plus P&P these gaiters are a good investment, as you may only ever need one pair!

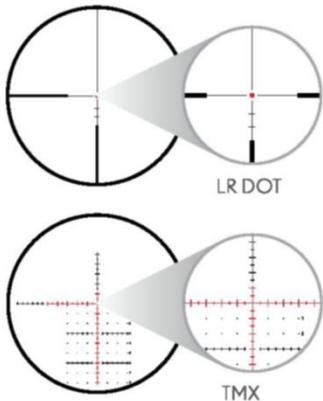
www.blackislander.co.uk



TESTED BY:
ALISON KAY

YOUR MISSION. OUR VISION.

A NEW LEVEL OF OPTICAL PERFORMANCE.



FRONTIER 30 SF

Red IR | 30mm | SF | Waterproof
from £499.95

The new Frontier range offers a new level of optical performance. The hallmark of the Frontier line is the precision engineered optical system with index matched lenses. It is easy to see the quality with exceptional clarity throughout the field of view and crisp image transmission. The 6x optical system provides increased flexibility suiting it to all shooting situations.

Featuring a comfortable 4" eye relief suited to high recoil centrefire calibres, high grade 30mm mono-tube chassis, fully matched positive click turrets, side focus parallax (from 10 yards on the 2.5-15x50 model and 30 yards on the 5-30x50 model) and exclusive illuminated glass etched reticles (LR dot or TMX).



VISION ACCOMPLISHED

www.hawkeoptics.com/frontier
Born in the UK

The Line of fire

Vic presents the best cartridges for the discipline enjoyed by club shooters and top shots alike. Down The Line, DTL or Trap shooting – whatever you call it, he’s got a cartridge for it!

Trap shooting, or Down the Line as the British dubbed it, is by far the longest established form of clay target shooting in both the UK and in the United States where it all began, and remains as popular as ever. Second only to the ubiquitous Sporting discipline, the Dougall Memorial (the first British Championship for DTL) was held in 1896, while the first National Championship for Sporting was held in 1927. Still immensely popular throughout the UK, DTL’s appeal is at least in part due to the ease with which a competition can be staged, and therefore its accessibility. It’s also all things to everybody: the smallest club can stage a DTL competition as it requires only a single oscillating trap, while international competitions between the home countries of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland are staged annually. As a discipline, it’s not as technically demanding as some, but at the same time it can be very competitive, so every target counts. This, therefore, puts the onus on the ammunition manufacturer to ensure his Trap loads possess very consistent ballistics. This month’s cartridge pages feature ammunition from the UK’s best makers, specially designed for a game that both the novice and the expert can enjoy, and, at least so far as ammunition is concerned, they can have an equal chance of success.

1. ELEY DTL GOLD

From the longest established British cartridge maker – who has supported clay target shooting in the UK from its beginnings, which took the form of Down The Line – the new DTL Gold is in that same great tradition of ensuring, in this case, the British shooter gets what he needs on the Trap range and the pattern plate. Consistent, evenly distributed patterns are absolutely essential to success in Trap shooting or any other form of clay target shooting, and DTL Gold delivers just that.

Available in 28g plastic wad 7, 7.5 and 8, £208 per 1,000.

2. ELEY 1ST SELECT

Everybody has to start somewhere – make it a flying one with Eley 1st. Easy on the shoulder and, again, showing well-distributed patterns, both its performance and price will put a smile on the face of the beginner and veteran alike.

Available in 28g plastic and fibre wad 7.5, 8 and 9, £182.25-£192.25 per 1,000.

3. LYALVALE EXPRESS SUPER COMP DTL

A legend in its own lifetime, Express Super Comp has been delivering success in clay target competition shooting for decades. Super Comp

DTL is a load tweaked and tuned to the demands of the Trap shooter, at any level of competition, and is presented at a reasonable cost.

Available in 28g plastic wad 7.5, £221.50 per 1,000.

4. LYALVALE EXPRESS WORLD CUP

As the name would suggest this cartridge is world class, but not at a price that’s out of this world. The first British cartridge to win a UIT World Cup event in 1989, it’s been a winner ever since. For those seeking DTL’s glittering prizes, load up with World Cup, and you will be on your way to gaining them!

Available in 28g plastic and fibre wad 6.5, 7, 7.5, 8 and 9, £236.50-£247 per 1,000.

5. HULL CARTRIDGE COMP X

An award-winning cartridge from this redoubtable Northern maker, and one which represents extraordinary value for money. This, and the technical expertise gained over the years as a market leader, puts Comp X right up there for performance and consistency. A great cartridge for DTL at any level; the clubman or the AA shot will appreciate a performance which will fulfil all their requirements.

Available in 28g plastic and fibre wad 7.5 and 9, £179.50-£189.75 per 1,000.

6. HULL PRO ONE DTL 300

This cartridge is a high-performance DTL load but at a moderate cost, and was chosen as a training load for GB’s Olympic shooters, which gives an indication of its qualities. Its high velocity at 40 yards plus ensures that you are hitting targets hard every time. On the pattern plate the evidence is impressive, with excellent pellet distribution and the absolute minimum number of flyers, which will instill confidence and help to break more targets.

‘As a discipline, it’s not as technically demanding as some, but at the same time it can be very competitive, so every target counts’



PICTURES: VIC HARKER



Available in 28g plastic and fibre wad 7, 7.5, 8 and 9, £219.75-£227.50 per 1,000.

7. GAMEBORE EVO

From a company that's always pushing the envelope in terms of cartridge performance, their Evo load is an excellent combination of hard-hitting performance and low recoil. If you shoot a lot of cartridges, but want to finish the last round in as good a shape as you began the day, Evo is the natural choice. Super smooth, low recoil, but with patterns that retain their hitting power at range, as a cartridge for DTL Gamebore's Evo has few equals.

Available in 28g plastic and fibre wad 7.5, 8 and 9, £185-£192.75 per 1,000.

8. GAMEBORE PLATINUM TRAP

Developed in conjunction with former British Olympic Trap Manager, Ian Coley, Gamebore's top-of-the-line Trap load has an outstanding performance. Developing a muzzle velocity of 147fps, Platinum Trap combines this with surprisingly light recoil, due to the careful matching of the highest quality components.

Though not the cheapest cartridge on the market, if you are looking for the best of everything, you can't afford to be without it.

Available in 28g plastic wad 7.5 and 8, £235 per 1,000.

9. FIOCCHI 4HV

From Italy's longest-established ammunition manufacturer, the list of champions who have won the greatest prizes with FIOCCHI cartridges is a long one! The new 4HV 28g load will provide the DTL shooter with all he needs in performance and more. Copper-plated lead shot with 5% antimony and the FIOCCHI 616 gold primer makes this the ideal Trap load that hits very hard at longer ranges. On the pattern plate, results were convincing, and 4HV comes highly recommended for a game in which you can't afford to miss.

Available in 28g plastic wad 8.5, £217 per 1,000.

10. FIOCCHI FBLU

Another high-quality competition cartridge with all the ingredients that provide consistent ballistics, shot after shot. With the same antimony content



as more expensive loads, FBLU represents another smooth-shooting, highly effective target load at a good price.

Available in 28g plastic wad 7.5, £179.75 per 1,000.

Down the Line is the Trap shooting discipline for everyone, and is readily available at hundreds of shooting grounds around the country. Beginners and experts alike can enjoy the game and, at the same time, have fun at any level. This month's cartridge choices will only add to this enjoyment. ■



Starter .410

Fun to shoot, great for young shots and at a very reasonable price... Mike finds plenty to like in the Armed SPE .410 from Turkey

This month's test gun is potentially a bit of fun for big lads and lasses, and something which might also be a good starter gun for a young shot of your acquaintance. It's an Armed (from Turkey) SPE .410 imported by Edgar Brothers of Macclesfield (who also import the Turkish brands Akkar and Hatsan). First impressions are not especially inspiring, although the general form of the gun seems sound. The SPE's flat-sided action is black (there is a nickel-plated option), with some sparse – but

inoffensive – scroll engraving. The stock wood is plain and laser chequered well. The standard of finish generally is reasonable, although there could have been a bit more preparation and polishing on the metalwork.

Before going any further, though, we should perhaps note that the RRP of this business-like, if basic, little gun is just £550. This, remember, is the price for a new gun. I doubt if an English gunsmith could replace even the fore-end of a similar model for that sort of money.

By today's standards it is extraordinarily inexpensive, and it can only be fairly judged keeping that reasonable price point constantly in mind. So, with that stated, let's continue.

The small bore is a sensible weight (just over 6¼lbs) and on the heavier side for a 28" .410 (the only barrel length available at the moment), but probably better for it. There are too many featherweight, and consequently uncontrollable, .410s knocking around. They can make what is already a challenging

bore size even tougher to shoot (.410s need a lot of control to shoot well as they tend to be quick to start and quick to stop, therefore they need to be driven; follow through takes on a whole new importance).

The barrels of the test gun are 3" chambered and superior proofed in England (which I always find reassuring, especially in a .410 where pressures are especially high – much higher than in a 12). They are made on the monobloc system. Fit of tubes to the monobloc is good with no visible gaps. Finish to the monobloc and ejector work (yes, this is an ejector) is a little rough cosmetically. The 6mm ventilated top rib, however, is nicely laid and cross-hatched. Vented side ribs also pass muster. The plain metal bead at the muzzles would be hard to improve upon (and much better than a fragile plastic one). Barrel bores are tight at 10.5mm. The fixed chokes are very tightly constricted too at extra-full and extra-full. They could well do with being relieved significantly. Such tight chokes might well disrupt patterns (but I did not have the opportunity to test this formally).

Although the stock wood is nothing special, the shapes of the stock and fore-end are good. The butt has a subtle hog's back and there is nothing wrong with that, especially as it is not too obvious. The full but slim pistol grip has an open radius and suits the gun well, save that purchase is reduced by a synthetic stock finish which is also quite prone to marking. I liked the comb profile and the slim schnabel fore-end. The stock is a good length as well: 14½" from middle of the



PICTURES: MIKE YARDLEY

trigger to middle of butt sole including a thinnish black rubber recoil pad. Cast was slight, and there seemed a little twist in the comb. Other dimensions weren't bad. The drop at the front of the comb relative to the rib axis was $1\frac{3}{8}$ " and $2\frac{3}{8}$ " to the rear. The European industry norm would be $1\frac{3}{8}$ " and $2\frac{1}{8}$ or $2\frac{1}{4}$ ". On this gun, which might well be used by young people and ladies, 2" would be better in my opinion (a little too high being a lot better than a little too low). The distance between the centre of the eye orbit and the cheekbone is reduced in most women and youngsters, so stocks need to be higher. I am Mr 5' 11" Average in gun-fit terms and could still lose the bead with a bit of cheek pressure. It's all easily rectified by means of a comb raiser, though.

Technical

The all-steel action, as you might expect, is compact and notably low in profile. It appears (like the ejector work) to be built on an Italian plan. The barrels hinge on bifurcated lumps with stud pins in the action walls near the knuckle (you've seen it all in a Rizzini). Jointing of the barrels to the action is not only competent but better than many guns costing a lot more. There are twin cocking bars (again, just like a Rizzini). The single trigger is mechanical, a feature which is always welcome on a .410 when very different payloads may be encountered. The trigger pulls are not especially refined and very heavy. If you are going to use this gun regularly, and most certainly if you were going to let a young shot use it, the pulls would have to be sorted. This is not the end of the world but would probably set the budget back another 50 quid on top of the purchase price. It is also a typical failing in many cheaper .410s.

My thanks to Will Hewitt of Edgar Brothers, and also to Lyalvale Express for the cartridges used in this test. ■

SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

I have become seriously interested in shooting .410s recently. I shot them as a boy, and I have encountered them many times since professionally. But last season really got me enthused. I was invited to a .410 day and had the time of my life! Indeed, I had so much fun – and was so impressed with the potential of the diminutive guns in skilled hands – that I bought another day at the same shoot a few weeks later. I borrowed a gun, not unlike the test gun, and shot 15 pheasants – another brilliant day! Thus, I took our test gun to my local Skeet/Sporting layout with real interest. Happily, I connected with most targets, but not without some extra effort. The weight of the trigger pulls was off-putting (I adapted by using the first joint, rather than the pad, of my trigger finger). To get results that were anything like consistent, however, both concentration and control were required. I also had to see more lead than normal – say 25% – to get results. I liked the gun, nevertheless. Recoil was low, even with full payload cartridges. The basics are all there. It would make an especially interesting custom project. Better pulls themselves would transform the SPE .410; bring the stock up a bit and offer 30" barrels and this could be something really special without breaking the bank. Meantime, it is a solid little gun and excellent value for money.

WE LIKE



- The price
- The general form
- The specification

WE DISLIKE



- The trigger pulls

TECH SPECS

- Make: Armed (Turkey)
- Model: SPE .410 Ejector
- Distributor: Edgar Brothers
- Bore: .410
- Chambers: 3"
- Barrels: 28"
- Chokes: Extra-full and extra-full
- Rib: 6mm ventilated
- Weight: 6lbs 4oz
- RRP: £550

UP CLOSE



The full but slim pistol grip suits the gun well



The black action features sparse, but inoffensive, scroll engraving



Compact and low in profile, the all-steel action has the hallmarks of the Italian style



The top-mounted safety also allows you to select barrels for the single trigger

DIAMOND LONG RANGE

- 30mm aircraft-grade aluminium, one-piece main tube
- Glass-etched HOLDFAST reticle
- Fully multi-coated lens
- Microlux ETE GEN III glass coatings
- Zero-stop turrets
- ¼ MOA turret adjustments
- 4" of eye relief
- Side Parallax Adjustable from 10 Yards to ∞
- Dual-color red/green illumination settings
- Supplied with 2 ballistic drop turrets
- Sunshade included
- Optional side-wheel available

Designed and optimised for long range advanced shooting where accuracy and consistency is critical. Recent improvements in bullet technologies and calibres combined with advancements in rifle precision and accuracy have resulted in the need for a scope that matches these developments. The Diamond LR (Long Range), available in both a 4-16x50 and 6-24x50 variation - is the perfect fit.

Using premium grade lenses featuring the latest in optical coatings combined with a 30mm aircraft grade aluminium tube ensure maximum light transmission and clarity. Interchangeable ballistic turrets which can be customised for specific calibres and precise ¼" MOA increments ensure every shot is on target - First time, Every time!



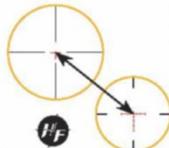
Waterproof



Shock Proof



Fog Proof



HOLDFAST



4-16x50



6-24x50



FREE BALLISTIC DROP TURRET

Extra blank Ballistic Drop Turret enabling addition of your own customised markings for your relevant bullet drop.



Optional side wheel available



WITH BASC'S CONOR O'GORMAN

Shooting saves lives, says BASC

If people could not shoot it would lead to an extra 106 deaths per year and an economic cost of £300 million due to inactivity... Read on to discover the reasoning behind BASC's belief

Tackling physical inactivity in adults and children is becoming an ever-increasing priority in our society and we are seeing a flurry of government and private sector funded studies, reports and recommendations on how to improve what some are describing as a national crisis. So, what has this got to do with shooting? A lot actually!

Last year the government published a new strategy *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation* which includes a commitment to support the role of outdoor recreation in keeping people active.

In our response to an earlier consultation on this strategy, BASC made a case for comprehensive recognition and support for shooting and its role in bringing people together and getting them more active outdoors.

We drew on the results of a survey we carried out on 1,400 people. This found that 95% said shooting was important to their personal wellbeing and 84% said it helped their physical wellbeing.

On average, each person made 20 friends through shooting. Ninety-one per cent said they would spend less time outdoors if they could not shoot. Eighty-eight per cent said shooting gives them moderate to intense physical activity. Seventy-one per cent said their levels of physical activity would be reduced without their shooting activities.

The top three reasons for taking part in shooting were spending time outdoors, enjoyment and relaxation. Seventy-seven per cent of people said their social life would suffer without shooting.

So, what has this got to do with physical inactivity in the wider population? Not a lot, unless we make the links and showcase shooting as part of the solution. If we don't proactively make the links, nobody else will.

One of our key messages to policymakers is that shooting is open to

people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities and is an activity that people can take part in throughout their lives.

BASC coaches make up a network of highly qualified airgun and shotgun coaches nationwide. These coaches provide tens of thousands of adults, children and young people with shooting opportunities annually, ranging from public places such as shooting clubs and countryside fairs to schools, scout jamborees and cadet camps.

Participation in shooting is growing and we can each do our part to help by taking someone we know shooting for the first time. BASC encourages members to introduce friends and family members to shooting through its 'take a mate shooting' initiative. Have a look on our website for more details (www.basc.org.uk).

By now you might be thinking, how did we come up with the 'saving lives' headline?

A Natural England study was recently published entitled *Investigating the potential increase in health costs due to a decline in access to greenspace*. Using the World Health Organization's Health Economic Assessment Tool, the study estimated that decreases in physical activity may lead to an additional 374 deaths per year, with an economic cost of £434 million per year.

We linked the same methodology to statistics from our *Personal Value of Shooting* study, and using a conservative figure of 600,000 UK live-quarry shooters, we estimated that if people did not shoot, this reduction in activity would lead to an additional 106 deaths per year and an economic cost of £300 million.

If the sports strategy is implemented as intended we will see a thriving outdoor activities sector growing as an important alternative way that people can engage in sport and physical activity.

BASC wants to see shooting included and we can each play a key role in welcoming newcomers from all walks of life and ages into our sporting interests.

Government recognition and support for shooting will grow as participation increases coupled with BASC's political and policy work at all levels.

However, BASC's resources are not limitless and our voice can be stronger with your support. If you are not a BASC member, please consider joining. It's a great time to be a member, not only for the insurance and great deals on products and services, but in supporting the work we are doing for all shooters locally, nationally and internationally. ■

BASC
The British Association for Shooting & Conservation

Health and wellbeing the personal value of shooting

- 95%** said shooting is important to their **personal wellbeing**
- 91%** said they would spend less time outdoors if they could not shoot
- 84%** said shooting is important for their **physical wellbeing**
- 88%** said shooting gives them moderate to high-intensity exercise
- 59%** take part in picking-up, beating, or physical conservation work
- 20** the average number of friends made through shooting
- 71%** said their levels of physical activity would suffer without shooting
- 77%** said their social life would suffer without shooting

The top three reasons for taking part in shooting:

- Enjoyment
- Time outdoors
- Relaxation



Art nouveau

Sporting art tends to reside in one of two categories: the beautiful but mortgage worthy, and the overpriced yet underwhelming. Diggory's unexpected visitor may have broken the trend

I answered the mild-mannered knock at the door expecting to see the usual Barbour-clad local with a shotgun in need of some attention. Instead, I beheld a long-haired chap in knee-length lace-up boots – more Goth than Hugh Grant or Rowley Birkin, which was a refreshing change.

Under his arm was tucked a small flat-pack bag, from which he produced some paintings of gamebirds, which looked strangely familiar. My visitor's name was Christian Schwetz, and he was to prove surprising in a number of ways; not least that this apparent extra from a documentary on *The Damned* rode to hounds and had made a speciality of equestrian photography.

His reason for darkening my particular door was his recent experimentation with gamebird still-life artwork, which turned out not to be painting at all, but photography in the style of some old masters. I was immediately struck by their unique quality, and impressed with the technical and artistic skills involved in producing them.

Christian wondered if I might have some suggestions as to where he may find clients for this kind of thing and what my reaction, as someone in the gun trade, might be. He also ventured that he

was looking for objects to include in the artwork, beyond the birds themselves, and had mulled over the inclusion of old guns and ephemera to add variety to the fruit and cutlery used so far.

I well know that shooting men like their guns, their books on guns and their sporting art. Unfortunately, painting a picture is a time-consuming and costly business, and the results are often unpredictable, as has been evidenced by some of the, frankly dodgy, portraits of their Gundogs that several friends have paid hard cash for over the years.

'He experimented with his still-life compositions with rural Shropshire providing the inspiration and objects in the form of locally-shot gamebirds'

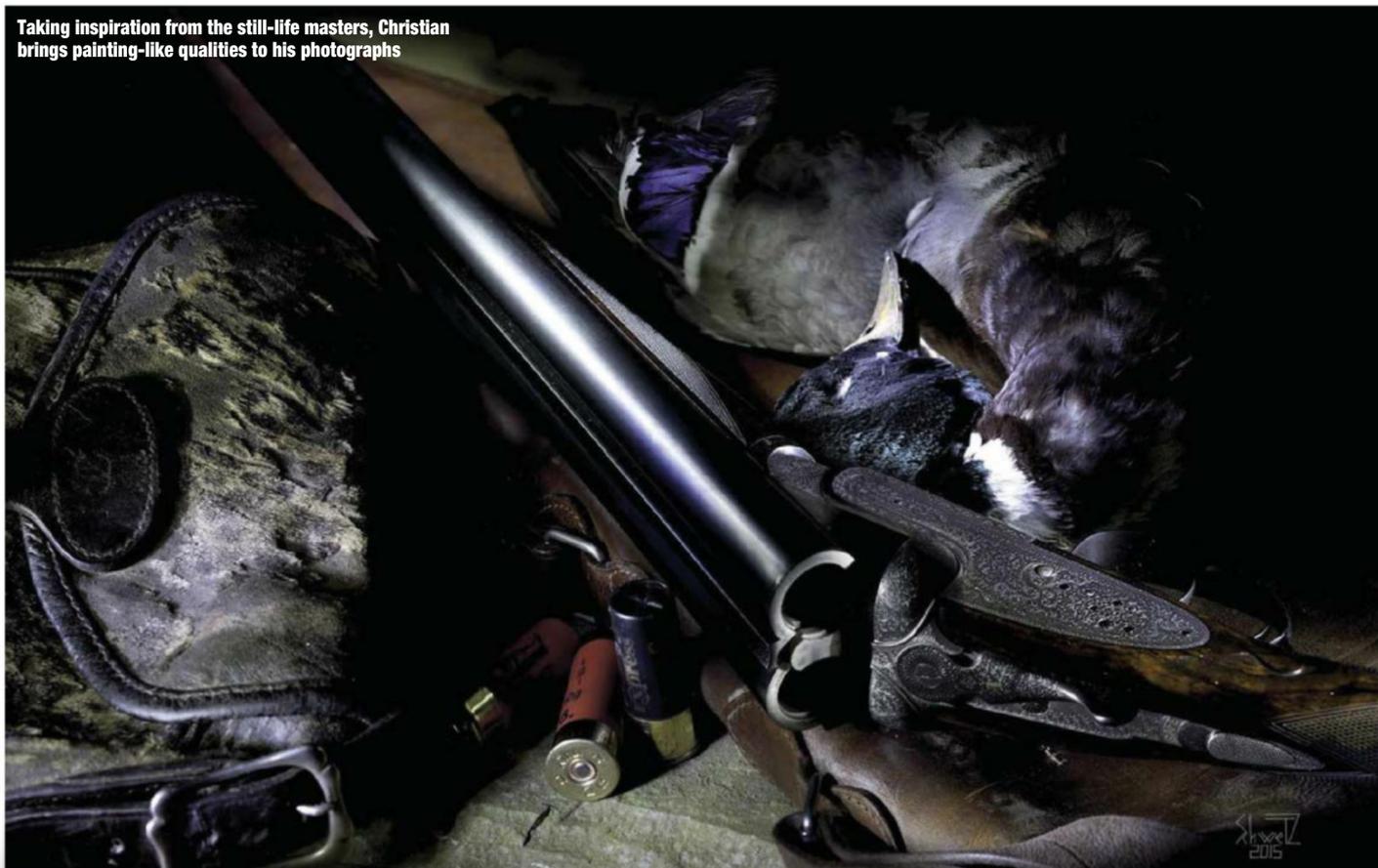
Photography, however, requires all the same set-up time but the shots themselves can be experimented with, deleted, and fine-tuned until light, shadow, composition and texture are all to the satisfaction of the artist. Time-wise, the photographic process for composing one piece requires a day, rather than weeks. This brings this kind of art within reach of a wider audience, with a unit cost of around £750. Not cheap, but within range of a generous gift to mark a special occasion.

It occurred to me that many of my clients have favourite shotguns and may enjoy the opportunity to feature one in a unique piece of commemorative art. We selected a couple of guns and a few bits and pieces, to add texture to the gamebird sets, and off went Christian to see what he could assemble.

The artist himself is an interesting character. Educated at Cambridge, after graduation he went to Czechoslovakia and witnessed the revolution, staying in Prague to work as a teacher for a while.

Upon returning to London, he studied photography at St Martin's, before working as a photojournalist in Asia and Africa. This led up to

Taking inspiration from the still-life masters, Christian brings painting-like qualities to his photographs





his move to Shropshire and a specialisation in equine photography.

Christian explained his focus on the art form: "I've long been exploring the connection between painting and photography. Even the word 'photography' means painting with light. I've always paid special attention to lighting and my equine portraits are often mistaken for oil masters, so it seemed a natural extension to take these techniques further."

Christian's influences are drawn from past masters. A still-life painting by Francisco de Zurbarán, a 17th century Spanish painter, was an early inspiration: "It's of a slaughtered lamb, simply presented, bound and laid on a slate slab against a black background. I also looked at the Dutch masters of still life from the Golden Age. This was a time when people rapidly found new wealth, connected with trade and the Indies. This created a market for art and the depiction of luxury. The perfect conditions for an explosion of the still-life form."

Christian experimented with his still-life compositions with rural Shropshire providing the inspiration and objects in the form of locally-shot gamebirds and wildfowl. He told me: "I wanted a variety of birds in the feather to give colour and represent a dream bag. Enquiries at various butchers proved too slow for my impatience. By chance, though, we walked into a shooting party at our local pub and they were treating the gamekeeper to some post-shoot drinks. I've found Shropshire to be such a warm and open county, and five minutes later I had the promise of all sorts of exotic birds."

The Spanish painter Juan Sánchez Cotán often painted still-life pieces of birds hanging in food stores. This approach fitted perfectly with Christian's aim of structuring his photographs and ordering the elements within the composition. The black background isolates the objects and the viewer is invited to scrutinise each form.

His first piece was a cock pheasant, locally shot and presented on local stone slabs, reclaimed from a demolished country pile a few miles away. The result was encouraging and a white pheasant followed, set with pomegranate, "as a good colour combination and to symbolise rebirth, following the story of Persephone."

The same stone frame was retained for the next foray: woodcock. Further inspiration was taken from the artist Grinling Gibbons, who lived during the reign of Charles II, producing lime wood carvings for stately homes. A great deal of thought goes into each piece. Christian explained the thought process behind shooting a woodcock alongside grapes: "Woodcock are more subtle than the, by comparison, garish pheasant. I wanted their subtle yet beautiful plumage to be given space to speak for itself. Having tried augmenting with lemons, I went for just red

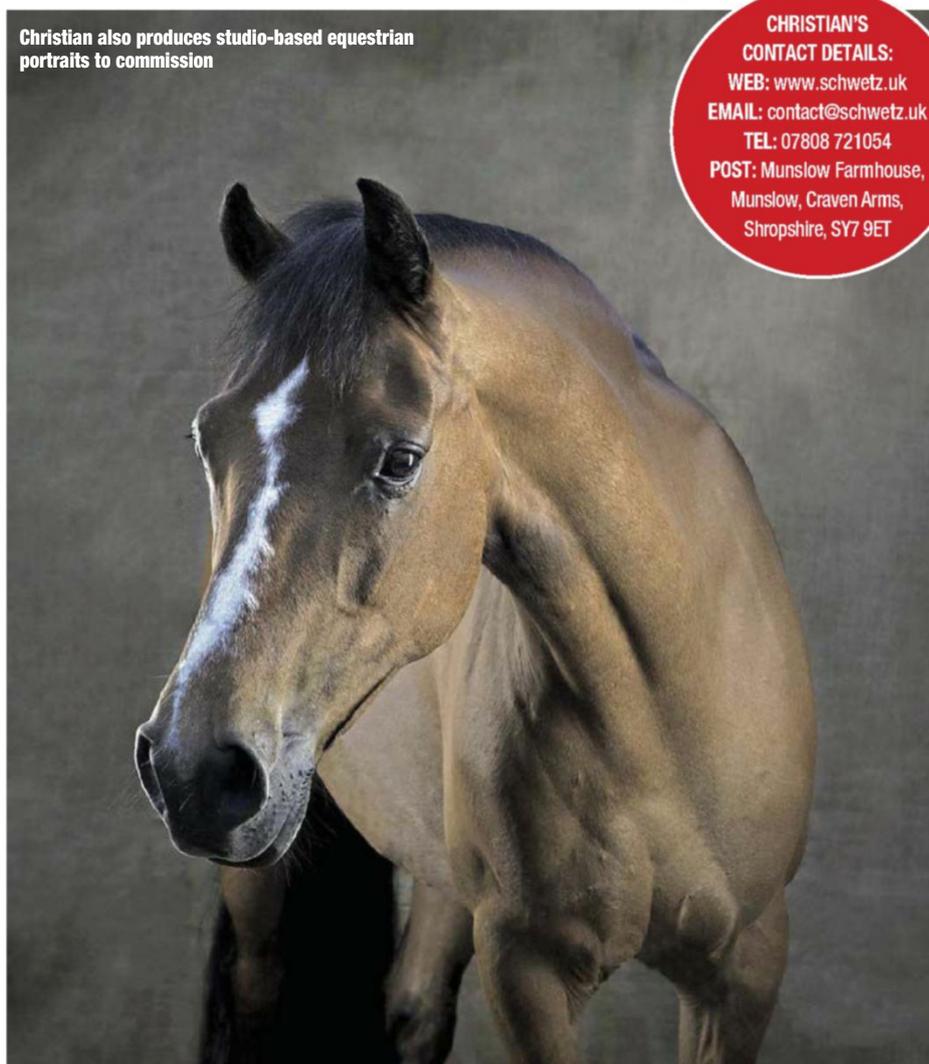
grapes, which I could drape and sculpt and whose subtle colour wasn't going to detract."

Wildfowl followed, with the lovely vibrancy of mallard and teal plumage providing the colour, and their different sizes adding variety to the structure. Christian noted the importance of working with fresh birds, where possible, as the hues change and the feathers lose their sheen only a day or two after death.

The question as to how Christian manages to bring painting-like quality to a photographic process remains his secret. He hints at the importance of lighting, and his experiences of equine photography were important educational steps, leading him to the current project. I think Christian's art offers real differences to much of what is available to the shooter or countryman wanting some personally decorative piece. It bridges the gap between commissioned drawings or paintings, and the usual shoot photography that is now being offered by the top men in that field, like Jonathan McGee.

I'm looking forward to seeing his latest efforts featuring some of my guns, which should add an extra dimension, with their lovely figured wood and hard-earned patina. ■

Christian also produces studio-based equestrian portraits to commission

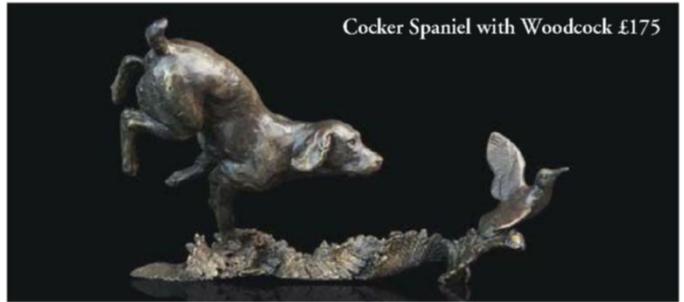


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Tick tock

Treating Lyme disease is a bit like bomb disposal: the longer it takes, the more harm it's likely to do you. Fortunately, scientists are now working on a cure and quick diagnosis...

Lyme disease is a real problem for many of us who stalk, shoot, work dogs, and go beating or picking-up. It is a particularly horrid thing spread by ticks when they bite us. Doctors find it very difficult to detect and some don't really know what to look for. Lyme affects us all in different ways, but broadly speaking, it attacks the nervous systems of those bitten and can cause blindness, paralysis, memory loss, or even organ failure.

The key to treating Lyme is to get the diagnosis early, and take a course of strong antibiotics over a 10- or 14-day period; these are the same drugs

'Phages can be thought of as friendly viruses and so, for Lyme disease, the enemy of your enemy really could be your best friend!'

that are used to treat syphilis and, although the treatment isn't pleasant, it is far better than contracting the disease with all the possible problems that it can cause. If you have been bitten by a tick you need to look for the telltale signs, such as a red target around the bite site, flu-like symptoms, muscle spasms, and generally feeling tired. However, you might not get all of these symptoms; it could be just one. If you experience any of these symptoms after being bitten by a tick then you must go straight to your GP, and explain what you do and what has happened. It is unlikely that they will consider Lyme disease initially without the information that you are a shooter and have recently been bitten by a tick. Currently, there is not an accurate test to determine if you have Lyme or not, which can make the doctor's job very difficult.

However, there are a group of very clever people at the University of Leicester who are trying to change that, and have funding to conduct research into this nasty disease. Prof Martha Clokie, Dr Jinyu Shan and team Phelix (doctors treating patients with Lyme

disease) are trying to find better ways of detecting and treating this disease with viruses. It does sound a bit strange to treat a disease with a virus, but there is a very good reason why they think that this will work. Firstly, a bit of background to familiarise you with the difference between a bacteria and a virus. Bacteria are self-contained organisms that just need a food source in order to live. Most bacteria are either harmless or useful to humans, but a few of them make us sick, such as MRSA which causes infections, and *Borrelia* which causes Lyme disease. Viruses, in contrast, are parasites that don't make their own food but use the energy their host makes in order to live and replicate. Viruses are everywhere, but each type infects in an incredibly specific way; so, my flu virus would not infect my dog, regardless of how often I sneezed on it!

Similarly to animals and plants, all bacteria have their own viruses that infect them, and they are called bacteriophages – phages for short. These phages attack bacteria in a very precise way, so a phage that would kill Lyme disease wouldn't kill other bacterial species, or us!

Fortunately for us humans, most bacteria that cause infectious diseases have these natural virus enemies, and in some Eastern European countries they are used routinely to treat bacterial infections. So, phages can be thought of as 'friendly viruses' and so, for Lyme disease, the enemy of your enemy really could be your best friend!

In short, the scientists are trying to fight fire with fire, and discover the specific type of phages that will kill the Lyme within your body before it does any damage. If they can isolate this they will also be able to find a quick and safe test to see if you require any treatment at all. If they are successful, then this will make our sporting and working environments much safer places to operate in.

The scientists need our help with this vital research, and what they need from us are ticks! They need a massive volume of these nasty creatures so they can study them, isolate any with the Lyme bacteria present, and start to work on the cure.

The university will send you a tick collection kit free of charge, which will contain a plastic tube to put the ticks in, and a pre-paid envelope to send them back to them. I would urge everybody to help with this and the shooting community is the best-placed to do so. To get your kit please email Prof Martha Clokie at mrjc1@le.ac.uk ■



PICTURES: DOM HOLTAM / LAURIE CAMPBELL (INSET)



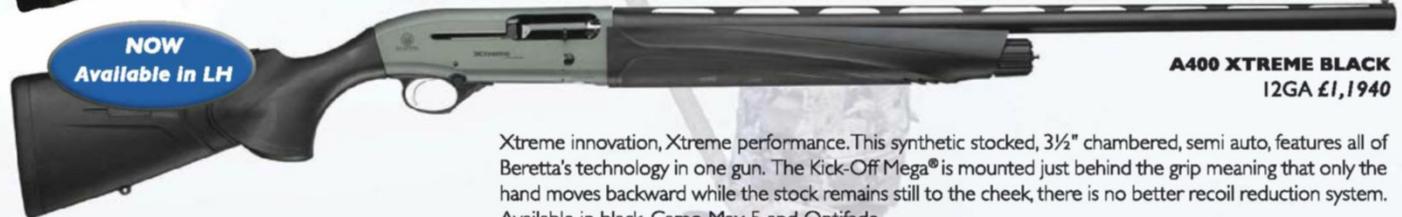
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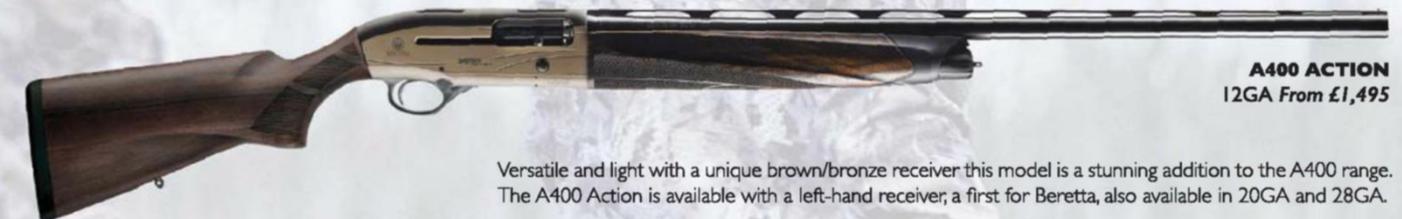
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For every action...

... there's a slightly different action that looks pretty much the same! Longthorne explain the difference between the boxlock, sidelock, and back-action boxlock

Most experienced shooters will know the differences between a boxlock and 'true' sidelock gun, but for the novice it's not always obvious, and it can get very confusing when considering which to go for. A true sidelock mechanism is a very sophisticated piece of engineering, with many more moving parts than a boxlock mechanism. It is always deemed to be a higher quality mechanism because of the complexity involved in making it, and the ability of the gunmaker to get it working correctly and to fine-tune it, much like a Swiss watch. It therefore costs more to manufacture, and would typically be more expensive to buy, than a boxlock of similar external finish.

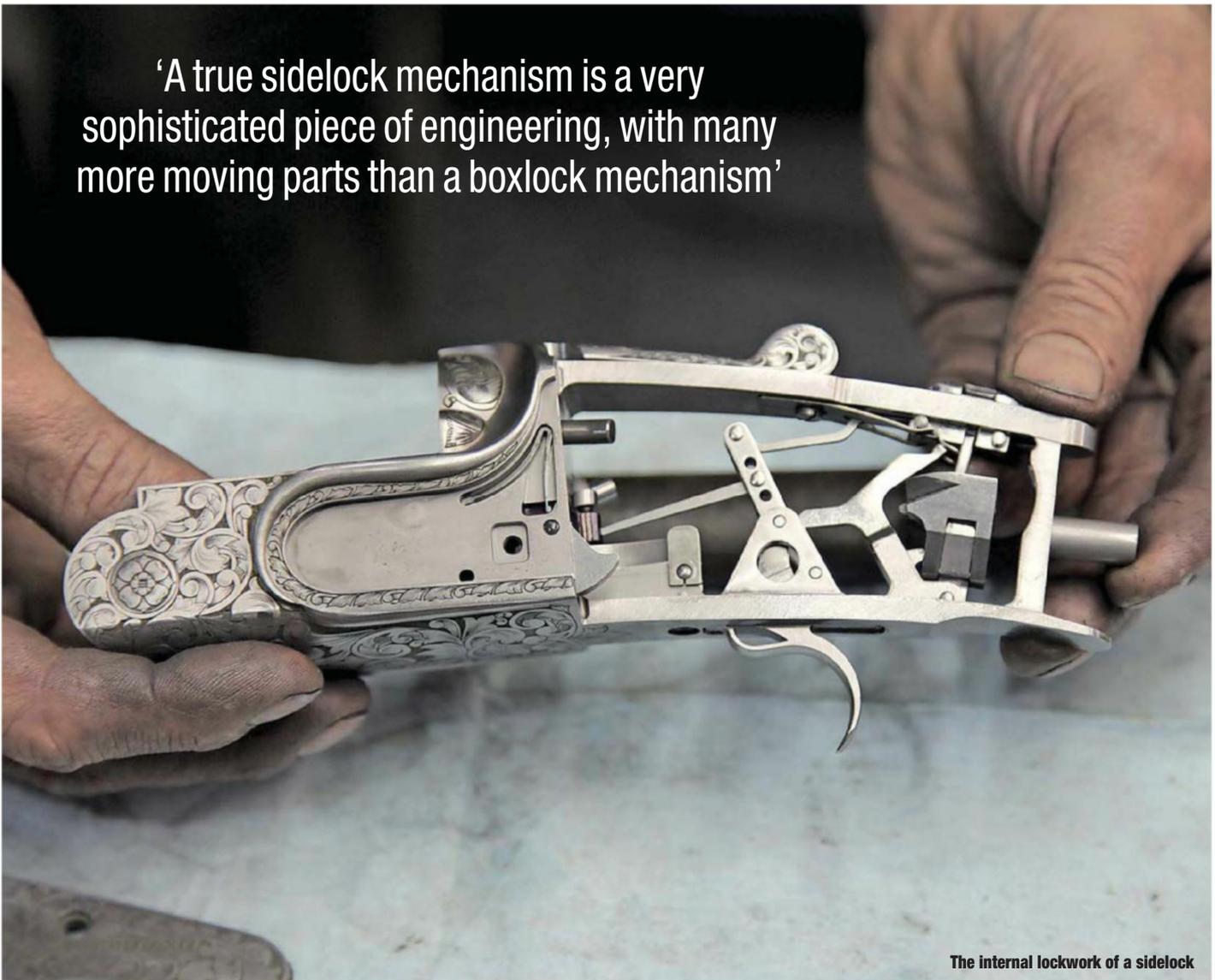
Another reason that the sidelock mechanism has been favoured in the past is because of the option it provides, using a spare set of locks, to change the locks in-field should the need arise. This was common practice when English guns were exported overseas to be used in remote areas, such as Africa, around the end of the 19th century.

Some boxlock guns are clearly not sidelocks, however many boxlock guns are made to look like sidelocks, to the extent that some even incorporate 'pins' in the plates on each side of the action (to replicate the traditional appearance of a sidelock gun). These are known as 'side-plated boxlocks' and, unless you know to ask the

questions, they will look pretty much the same to the untrained eye. Side plates on a boxlock also allow a larger canvas for engraving, so can look more attractive, whereas without side plates the area available is reduced.

Does it really matter? The main difference in a sidelock mechanism is the fact that, dependent on the design, we are able to adjust the trigger to the desired weight, which gives it a faster response time. This is more repeatable because the trigger mechanism is controllable, and of course if you have a pair of guns, you can be sure that the trigger weights are the same in both. This feature would be best appreciated by a seasoned shooter.

'A true sidelock mechanism is a very sophisticated piece of engineering, with many more moving parts than a boxlock mechanism'



The internal lockwork of a sidelock »

Generally speaking, the boxlock action is a cruder mechanism; without the sophistication, there is little to 'tune' and therefore less skill needed in its manufacture. It could be argued that the boxlock has less moving parts to go wrong, however, a well-made sidelock will be very reliable.

Popular with sporting shooters, a 'back-action boxlock' resides in the middle ground between a sidelock and a boxlock. It incorporates some of the features of a sidelock, in that the lock work is mounted behind the breach, and a similar trigger mechanism to a sidelock can be incorporated. The disadvantages of this mechanism are that if it does not have a drop-out trigger assembly, it is difficult to change in the event of a spring breaking, which can be a bit inconvenient if shooting competitively.

If you are getting a bit serious about your shooting and don't want to go to the expense of

'Sidelocks have been favoured in the past because they provide the option to change the locks in-field should the need arise'

buying a true sidelock, a back-action boxlock drop-trigger mechanism may be the answer. These are quite a good idea as you can have a replacement drop-out trigger mechanism, so they are easy to change quickly, but both of these are fairly basic in terms of mechanical design.

This said, providing you are aware of what you are buying, there are some really lovely boxlock guns around, particularly if they have been well made. As a less expensive option they are a good choice for a novice shooter, or those of you who don't want to stretch the wallet too far, and we

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will be adding these to our Longthorne range in due course. ■



Sidelocks are less suited to novice shooters due to their cost

Dependent on the design, a sidelock's trigger can be adjusted to the desired weight

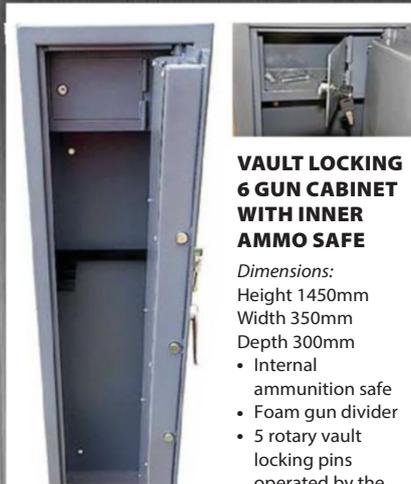


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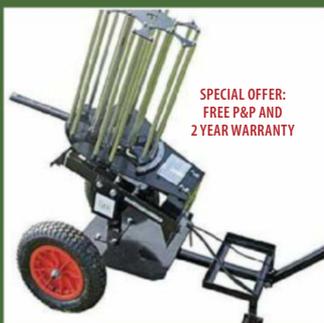
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Slacktivism

noun /slaktiviz(ə)m/ The policy or action of attempting to bring about change using vigorous campaigning on social media, rather than doing anything real; “Animal rights slacktivists take to Twitter... again.”

When one petition calling for grouse shooting to be banned comes to a faltering end, another is immediately launched. In the age of internet campaigning, where activism can be reduced to the click of a mouse (‘slacktivism’ I like to call it), this is probably something we in the shooting world are going to have to get used to. But how do we respond?

As shooting has been awakened to the perils of social media, the call has gone out to increase the number of rural people on Twitter and similar platforms to counteract the noise of those who oppose us. This is an admirable aim. There are a reasonable number of hard-line animal rights activists on Twitter, and they certainly make a lot

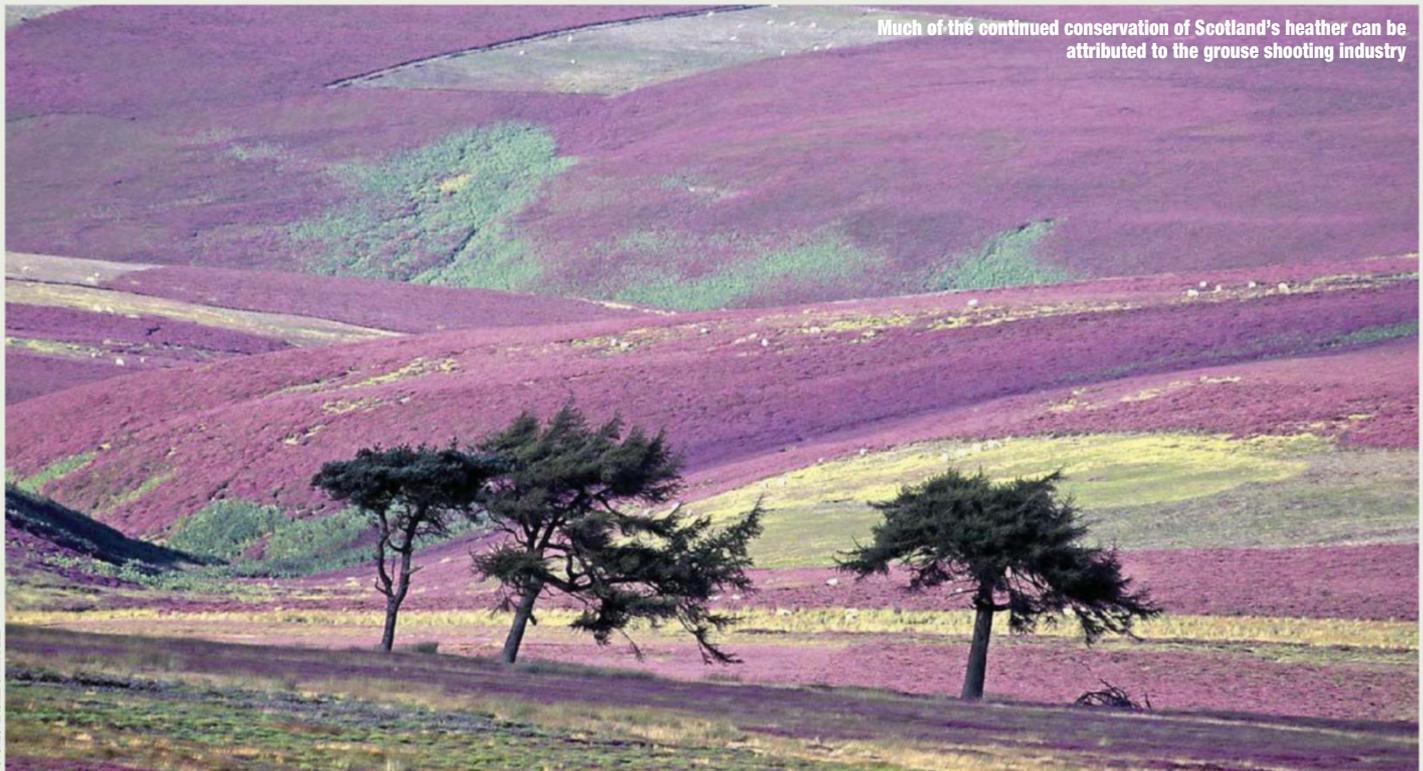
‘We should face the fact that the complex way in which shooting supports wildlife is hard to capture in the 140 words or fewer limit of Twitter’

of noise. Our community outnumbers their community, and could make a similar amount of noise. But that really isn’t the point. There is a far larger segment of the online community that are not animal rights activists, but will engage in any campaign that they feel resonates with their idea of a progressive agenda. These people are an enormous presence online, and social media is effectively designed to amplify their voices. Messages with which one superficially agrees (‘Stop cruelty!’) can be repeated instantly at the click of a ‘retweet’ button; the intervention of a well-followed, well-meaning but ultimately ill-informed celebrity can give a minority view the appearance of wildly popular public opinion; while ‘hashtags’ group everyone who even fleetingly agrees into one seemingly unified hive mind. Unfortunately, shooting is an issue which tends to inflame exactly this sort of response.

The priority for shooting campaigners – those of us who understand the value of shooting in conservation, communities and economies – is not necessarily to challenge anti-shooting sentiment head-on in the social media arena (although we do). It is to help decision makers understand that a lot of noise on social media is no sort of electoral threat and no indication of a real issue on the ground. Our message is that,

while there will always be a minority whose opposition to shooting might swing their vote, for most people their engagement with these issues begins and ends in front of a computer screen.

This year has thus far seen a flurry of anti-shooting activity, and in the process provided a number of examples of the ‘slacktivism’ phenomenon. Take Animal Aid’s recent attempt to oppose Natural Resources Wales (NRW) leasing shooting rights on public land. They began by placing anti-shooting articles in Welsh papers and news websites, which soon made their way onto Twitter. They announced they were briefing Assembly Members as their posts accrued retweets. Animal Aid has more than 60,000 followers on Twitter and one tweet sharing a briefing paper on the perceived evils of pheasant shooting was shared at least 90 times. Assembly Members could have been forgiven for mistaking the campaign for a genuine outpouring of public opinion. But then Animal Aid made the mistake of taking the campaign out of social media and into the real world, announcing a protest march to deliver an anti-shooting petition to NRW. Of those 60,000 followers, and even those 90 people sharing the anti-shooting brief, how many could be bothered to head to Cardiff to march in protest? Wait for it... five!



Much of the continued conservation of Scotland’s heather can be attributed to the grouse shooting industry

GET IN TOUCH...

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Given the difficulties in moving the online supporter base into actual action, it is perhaps unsurprising that other anti-shooting groups have chosen to maximise social media impact to the detriment of real-world credibility. Happenings in Wales were swiftly followed by the publication of the League Against Cruel Sports' *The Case Against Bird Shooting*. There was a small soirée to announce its launch, but otherwise the whole campaign has been almost entirely targeted at social media. Emotive pictures and carefully edited videos – pointedly brief to hold the attention of those scrolling through their Twitter feeds – formed the substance, but most noteworthy was the often repeated phrase 'This is canned hunting', which it demonstrably isn't. Anyone with any experience of the UK countryside and even a passing understanding of canned hunting knows this phrase is of no relevance whatsoever to gamebird shooting. So why use it, despite the damage to credibility? Perhaps the answer lies with LACS' new CEO, international campaigner Eduardo Gonçalves. A veteran of many global campaigns but with little experience of the British countryside, it is unsurprising that Mr Gonçalves would seek to move the shooting debate onto ground on which he feels comfortable. He would also be aware that canned hunting is hugely contentious in Africa and North America, conflated by anti-hunting activists with trophy hunting, and is an issue guaranteed to fire up social media warriors around the world. The cost to credibility, among those who work on the practicalities of conservation and countryside management in the UK, may be worth it for the social media rage that can be stoked by spuriously linking gamebird shooting to big game hunting.

It would be great to see more shooters and gamekeepers on social media, but we should also face the fact that the complex and intricate way in which shooting supports wildlife is hard to capture in the '140 characters or fewer' limit of Twitter. By contrast, pictures of dead foxes and a #cruelgame effectively communicates all the animal rights activists have to say. So, just as the anti-shooting voices increasingly play to their strengths by focusing on enraging the online crowd, the shooting community needs to maximise its own strength – the delivery of tangible conservation benefit in the real world. By all means, get on Twitter, but also engage local communities with shoot walks, talks and open days; show people wildlife as it exists in the British landscape, in harmony with shooting and other land uses. Let's not just talk about well-managed woodlands, copses, cover crops, hedgerows, conservation headlands, beetle banks and the benefits of well-implemented predator control, let's show them to people. This way, when those same people log onto their computers and see the emotive photographs and hashtags of the animal rights community, they will be that much less likely to be taken in. ■



Predator control and cover crops that double as a food source have helped declining species, such as the lapwing, to make a comeback.





The three Ls

Ladies, lefties and little 'uns (well, juniors) often find gun fit and gun choice a challenge. Nick Hollick explains how to overcome the most commonly encountered issues

It might sound crazy to say it in this day and age but ladies, left-handers and youngsters often find that their first shooting experience can be a negative one. Poor gun choice (or loan), a bad fit and sometimes just plain old bad form on the part of their supposed 'mentors' can sometimes combine to put a youngster or lady off for life. But it needn't be this way.

"The classic thing we see a lot is the father-and-son situation where father has let son have a go with a full-length 12-bore; it's kicked him around and the son comes to us very nervous of the gun," explains Nick. "Or you'll have the youngsters 'hanging off the back' of a gun that has been bought for them to 'grow into' and which they simply cannot shoot with. Both of these scenarios are really unnecessary and completely unrewarding and demotivating for the youngster.

"There are all sorts of great options out there now; the gun market is starting to recognise the importance of having the ability to change stocks [from junior to senior] and 'add-on' in order to accommodate the needs of youngsters and those of smaller builds. In fact, this is something we are working with a gun manufacturer on at the

moment. Here at Honesberrie we have had four of our 20-bores cut down and raised in the comb so that they are a more appropriate fit for youngsters. This way, we can give youngsters or women a gun that's appropriate for their build and the shooter has a much more positive experience."

Ladykillers

"Virtually every other week a female shooter comes to us who has just been handed a 12-bore and been told, 'That'll do.' And a 12-bore that's not properly mounted, and which is often being shot with competition cartridges too, is going to give you a nasty bruised shoulder. We assess the woman's height and build and give her an appropriately fitting gun – just as we would for a man or a youngster of course. Getting knocked about by excessive recoil can put someone off for life and that's not in anybody's interests – theirs or ours."

As to whether women 'should' shoot a 12- or a 20-bore, Nick is pragmatic. "It is very much dependent on what their aspirations are. If they want to become a top competitive shot then they would be at a huge competitive disadvantage to

ABOUT NICK HOLLICK

Honesberrie has industry-leading instructors to suit all styles of shooting. Nick Hollick is the owner and founder of Honesberrie Shooting School. He has more than 23 years' shooting experience, including having represented England and Great Britain in World and European Championships, competing around the world in Sporting and FITASC disciplines.

Nick is a member of the Association of Professional Shooting Instructors and offers private tuition to individuals of all levels. Nick has been involved in encouraging many local schools to start shooting teams. He is also renowned for setting challenging competition courses. Nick's coaching style is very technical.

shoot with a 20-bore. If that individual has never touched a gun before or if they are quite petite then it may be best to start off with a 20-bore and then progress to a 12-bore if appropriate.

"With ladies and with juniors, an off-the-shelf gun is less likely to fit than it would your average man," explains Nick. "This is because the cheekbones in youngsters and in ladies are typically a lot higher, and both are usually slimmer in the face, making it really important to have the right height in the comb. A standard Beretta, for instance, would typically be too flat in the comb for a lady, so having this readjusted by a gunsmith is, in my mind, very important. If you were to talk rough dimensions, a standard Beretta Silver Pigeon would have a 14¾" length of pull yet, broadly speaking, 13½ to 14" inches is a better length for youngsters and ladies, although of course this is very much dictated by the length of your arms and neck and how tall you are.

"Barrel length is also really important. Most schools would suggest 30" barrels for pointability. However, if you're quite new to it and gun weight is a bit of an issue (as it often is for novice lady or young shooters) then you'd be better off starting with a 28" and then maybe move on to 30". Only if you get to a more advanced level would we suggest 32" barrels; although pointable, they lead to a much heavier gun."

Left or right?

"As crazy as it sounds, diagnosing whether an individual needs to shoot off the left shoulder has become a more widely accepted thing these days. In the past, there was very much an attitude of just putting up with it and making adjustments. Today, that's not the case, although sadly, in the industry, left-handed guns are still fairly limited in supply.

"Often with a group of shooters, perhaps on a corporate day, nobody would respond with a 'yes' when asked if there were any left-handers. We would then go through and eye test to determine which eye is the master eye and find people who have a left master eye but are right-handed.



An off-the-shelf gun is less likely to fit a lady shooter

A well-fitted gun is important to create a positive first experience

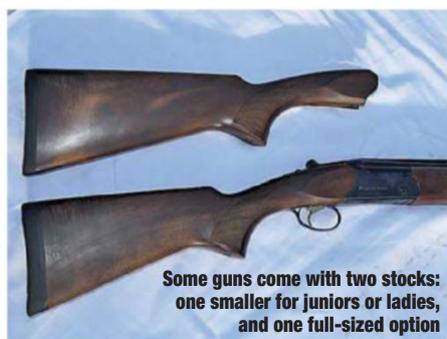
"Here at Honesberrie we don't advise people with conflicting eye dominance to their natural right- or left-handedness to just shut one eye or wear a patch. We would rather get them shooting off the correct shoulder so that they can have both eyes open. We sometimes find people are resistant to this, but normally the results then speak for themselves once they've experienced this approach in action. It's one thing diagnosing an eye dominance issue, but getting their head seated on the gun properly is when the real work starts. Because it feels so alien, they might not sit their head in the right place, and if they can't correct that position then it doesn't give you the right footing from which to prove to them that this new approach is the right way forward.

"There's no denying that it can be confusing. If you've always been used to having one eye shut, when you do have the ability to keep both eyes open, you are almost in fear of what you are seeing; you are seeing so much information that you just look back at the end of the gun, and when you do that you then miss the target. This is

a common mistake with people who are trying to move from using one eye to two – looking at the end of the gun, rather than beyond it and out to the target.

"But I've got countless case studies where getting a client of mine to switch shoulders has worked – even in some cases after 20 years or more of shooting.

"With all of these issues, the message here is that, it's like skiing – you need to have enough lessons to make you safe and technically correct with the way you handle the gun, the way you mount it. That gives you the correct footing from which to build upon." ■



Some guns come with two stocks: one smaller for juniors or ladies, and one full-sized option

While many manufacturers offer a left-handed model, true left-handed guns are rare



ABOUT THE GROUND

HONESBERIE
SHOOTING SCHOOL

Located on the Warwickshire/Oxfordshire/Northamptonshire border in 400 acres of farmland (easily accessible from London and the North), Honesberrie Shooting School is owned and run by GB and England representative Nick Hollick and provides first-class clay and game shooting instruction. Nick and his team offer a full programme of shooting tuition as well as running private parties, corporate events, stag and hen parties, and charity days. With 80 different clay traps available, Honesberrie Shooting provides a wide variety of sporting targets suitable for both the clay and game shooter with a high tower facility and grouse sequence. Clay traps are set up to simulate actual game shooting drives.

Honesberrie has a relaxed atmosphere, welcoming the experienced shooters along with those who are learning from scratch. The school's conference room allows businesses to host team-building days, with instructors offering bespoke, exciting shoots. The school has proven itself to be a perfect venue for charity shoots, offering a variety of comprehensive packages. Honesberrie also has a wide variety of opportunities for young shots.

- www.honesberrieshooting.co.uk
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WORTH PERSEVERING...

Both editor Rebecca and editor-in-chief Dom have experienced these issues first hand. "I found gun choice pretty limited as a left-handed shooter," explains Dom. "And even if you could get a stock with left-hand cast, the opener was likely to be the 'wrong' way round. Finally finding a gun that fitted me well and felt natural made a big and almost immediate improvement to my shooting."

Rebecca is over six feet tall so handling a full-sized 12-bore is not necessarily a problem. "I'm tall but also quite small in the shoulders, which means a 12-bore can be quite uncomfortable to shoot because of the recoil. I have quite a long neck, too, so often feel that an off-the-shelf gun forces me into quite an unnatural shooting position. However, there does seem to be a shift in the market towards smaller bores, and increasingly there are more guns with adjustable stocks allowing you and your instructor to find a suitable fitting solution without breaking the bank."



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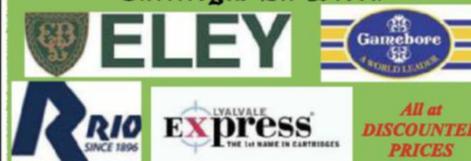


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Predator politics

Rupert looks at how pest control has changed since he was a nipper, the impact of urban sprawl, and why we need to better educate city dwellers on the real chaos caused by corvids

Many moons ago, far more than I would ever like to admit, I entered a project into the Irish Young Scientists Competition. In essence, it covered the whole subject of nest predation, with particular reference to members of the crow (*Corvidae*) family. Over a series of weeks I placed a total of 121 artificial nests in all typical locations. Of these 121 nests, 77 (representing 63.6%) were predated. Of these 77, 51 were predated by members of the crow family, primarily hooded crows and magpies.

Although the project was completed many years ago, the underlying problems still exist today. Both magpies and hooded crows (more commonly referred to as greys here) are a major

problem at both egg and nesting stage. I have often watched as magpies systematically search a hedgerow for nests. They are extremely thorough and unrelenting in their endeavours. We will never rid ourselves of such tormentors, not only to game species but to bird populations in general. All we can do is reduce their numbers to manageable proportions.

Many years ago when I was but a nipper, we used to shoot both magpies and greys from a car window at the crack of dawn, while meandering down some country lanes – a system that would be frowned upon nowadays. Sneaking up on nest sites as the hen bird is sitting was also a common practice but, due to modern time restraints, it is

no longer practiced to any great degree. I was also amazed at how quickly the cock bird could find a new partner, once the hen bird had been dispatched. Chat up lines must be something those corvids practise on a regular basis!

Larsen traps are our main means of control these days, but have to be moved on a regular basis to be totally effective. A few years ago I mounted one on a timber frame some five feet off the ground, with enough room for the birds to land on the periphery. It worked extremely well, due mainly to the fact that magpies in particular are more comfortable at a height. The only drawback at the time was that it was extremely cumbersome to move.

Magpies raid nests and steal eggs each breeding season

‘I have often watched as magpies systematically search a hedgerow for nests. They are extremely thorough and unrelenting in their endeavours’



PICTURE: MARTIN OSBORNE

Roost shooting at dusk is another favourite method of ours. It is a time when the normally beady eyes of these corvids are relaxed to some extent. Five or more Guns are required on such occasions to ensure that all possible escape routes are covered.

Magpies, in particular, tend to sit tight in their roosts on windy nights. A good lamp coupled with a reasonably good air rifle can be extremely productive on such occasions. Even if they do take flight it is unusual for them to fly more than 50 yards before settling again. In my younger days, this form of shooting was a firm favourite of mine.

Corvids aside, rising mink and fox populations are also hampering our endeavours. Before I go on any further, I'll have to tell a wee story. While shooting duck some years ago, a large male mink

'Roost shooting at dusk is another favourite of ours. It is a time when the normally beady eyes of these corvids are relaxed to some extent'

broke cover by the water's edge. Firing as he disappeared into some rushes, I was slightly amazed to see one of the dogs returning with him, moments later. Sean, my shooting companion on this occasion, decided that he would bring it home to show his kids. I carried that mink back to the car, which was quite a few fields away, before depositing it in the footwell on the passenger's side. Jumping into the driver's seat, I was just about to get going when Sean asked as to where I had put the animal. Imagine my horror on realising that he was no longer in residence. Needless to say, we both exited the vehicle at a rate of knots.

As it turned out, the aforementioned mink was somewhere between stunned and the afterlife, but had still managed to slide himself under the passenger seat. With the help of some hazel sticks we eventually managed to prise him out. We had a smile or two about it afterwards – rather nervous ones, I must admit.

Back to our mink and fox issues. By virtue of their nature, mink are the most secretive of creatures, and as such are hard to pinpoint. An abundance of waterways in this wee isle of ours makes containment difficult. It is up to both fishing and shooting clubs throughout the land to control their own patch, thus restricting their movements. Foxes, on the other hand, are more visible, especially during bouts of severe weather, and therefore are more easily controlled. Shooters tend to prize them as a vermin species above all others.



Timing is key when it comes to roost shooting

On the whole it is an ongoing battle to control the spread of all the above. As with most forms of shooting these days, restrictions in various guises are a major stumbling block. Urban sprawl, I feel, is also a major factor, for it is in many of these towns and cities that vermin species, in particular winged ones, are expanding at a rapid rate. People outside of the shooting fraternity need to be educated on the damage that these species

cause, not only to gamebirds, but to populations of birds and mammals as a whole. To address these issues properly we need more scientific studies at hand to back up our claims. Then, and only then, will the general public feel more sympathetic to our plight. After all, the population of songbirds in your garden is directly related to the amount of vermin in your locality. This is the simplest of equations and should be kept as such. ■

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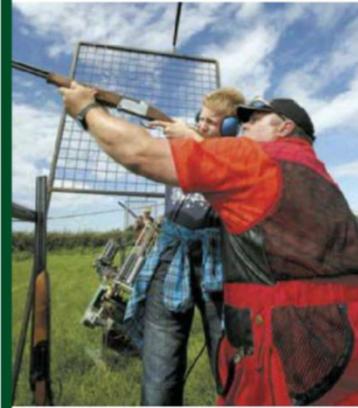
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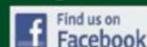
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ONE
FOR THE
POT

A slice of fried gold

Perk up your pigeon with these easy sweetcorn fritters; serve them at any time of the day and they're sure to add a little sunshine to the plate, writes Laura Paton



I have a lot to thank a humble sweetcorn fritter for. Hard to believe? Well, let me set the scene: Sydney, 2010 and I'd been living in a hostel for six months and subsisting on bleached white bread, plain omelettes and Pure Blonde beer. My taste buds had fallen into a deep slumber. After seven months of travelling, food had slipped to the bottom of my priority list: my bank balance looked forlorn and no amount of hopeful pavement-pounding, CV in hand, was getting me a job.

But back to that fritter. My friend and fellow backpacker was leaving the city. So we decided to treat ourselves and mark the occasion with a meal at Bill's in Surry Hills. Bill's, the eponymously named restaurant owned by chef Bill Granger – who is all sun-kissed skin and lackadaisical movements – was light, bright, and filled with white-washed wooden furniture and food-savvy Australian suits on their lunch breaks. For us, it felt like another world.

For one delicious hour we said goodbye to eating canteen-style, elbow-to-elbow with the other hostel guests – a mixture of eager and world-weary travellers in equal measure – with the huge wall-mounted telly blasting out American sitcoms that no one found funny (not even the Americans). Instead, we ate outside, at a table just for two, blinking as the sun's rays glinted off the polished cutlery, with big grins across our faces, which broadened further when the waiter came to take our order.

Served with streaky bacon, avocado salsa and roasted tomatoes, Bill's fritters – which have gained quite a reputation since he first added them to the menu 25 years ago, and were the subject of an *Independent* article last year – were crisp and golden brown on the outside, soft on the inside, while each kernel retained its 'pop'. It was a thing of joy.

Ever since, sweetcorn has reminded me of sunshine, summer and all it promises. So it's little wonder that when the lighter mornings and evenings kicked in, with some sunny days to boot, sweetcorn sprang to mind as an accompaniment to some lovely woodpigeon. Granted, we are a few months away from the hot nights of the sweetcorn season, when we can enjoy it on the cob, butter gliding across the kernels, covering them in a shimmery gloss. But that's not to say that we should eschew this flavoursome ingredient. Tinned or frozen, it's just as good. And in a fritter, you'd never know the difference.

Fritters are really easy to make – even easier than pancakes – so they're ideal for when you're in a hurry, or need a recipe that the kids can help with. You can swap the sweetcorn for peas if you want to – as they also work well with pigeon – or go half and half. I've chosen bitter leaves to complement the sweet pigeon meat, but if you don't like rocket and chicory, then any crunchy salad leaves will do. You can serve this dish up as a lunch or a light dinner – or why not swap the salad for some bacon and a poached egg for a brunch that's sure to set you up for the day!



PICTURES: LAURA PATON

PAN-FRIED PIGEON WITH SWEETCORN FRITTERS AND A BEETROOT SALAD

Serves 2

Preparation and cooking time: 45 mins

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PIGEON:

- ◆ salt and freshly ground pepper
- ◆ butter
- ◆ olive oil
- ◆ 4 x pigeon breasts, skin on

FOR THE SWEETCORN FRITTERS (MAKES 6 FRITTERS):

- ◆ 50g self-raising flour
- ◆ 75ml semi-skimmed milk
- ◆ 1 egg, separated
- ◆ ½ red chilli, finely chopped
- ◆ 1 tbsp flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- ◆ 2 spring onions, finely sliced
- ◆ 125g sweetcorn, (thawed if using frozen)
- ◆ sunflower oil for frying

FOR THE SALAD:

- ◆ a large handful of rocket
- ◆ ½ head of red chicory, trimmed
- ◆ 1 cooked beetroot (not in vinegar), chopped into small chunks
- ◆ 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ◆ 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ◆ ½ pinch sea salt
- ◆ ½ pinch freshly ground pepper

TO SERVE:

- ◆ sour cream

METHOD

1. To make the fritters: sift the flour and a pinch of salt into a large mixing bowl. Pour the milk into a jug, add the egg yolk and mix well. Make a well in the centre of the flour and gradually add the egg

mixture, whisking until smooth after each addition. Once combined, stir in the chilli, parsley and spring onions.

2. In a clean, grease-free bowl, whisk the egg white until it forms soft peaks. Fold into the batter along with the sweetcorn. Leave to stand for a few minutes.

3. Heat 1 teaspoon of oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Ladle spoonfuls of batter into the pan. Cook in batches of three. Fry the fritters for 3-4 minutes on each side until golden brown, then keep warm in a low oven while you cook the second batch, adding a little more oil to the pan if needed.

4. Meanwhile, heat some olive oil and a knob of butter in a heavy-based pan. Season both sides of the pigeon breasts. Once the pan is hot, add the pigeon breasts, skin side down. Cook on a medium to high heat for 2-4 minutes on each side (depending on the thickness of the breasts). Remove from the pan and allow to rest for approx. 5 minutes.

5. While the pigeon rests, place the rocket, chicory and beetroot in a bowl. Whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper and drizzle over the salad. Toss lightly.

6. Slice the pigeon breasts and divide between the two plates. Remove the fritters from the oven and make a stack of three on each plate. Serve with the salad and a generous dollop of sour cream. ■

'Bill's fritters were crisp and golden brown on the outside, soft on the inside, while each kernel retained its 'pop'. It was a thing of joy'



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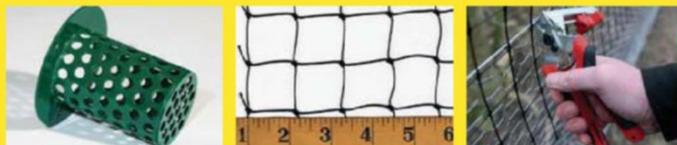
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Success through the ages

Whether it's on the world stage or at grass-roots level, age is no barrier to success in clay pigeon shooting, as these talented Welsh sportsmen are proving

Welsh clay pigeon shooter Ben Llewellyn has done the country proud by taking a silver medal in Skeet at the Shotgun World Cup held in Nicosia, Cyprus from 17-25 March.

The event was the 21-year-old's first World Cup and his first big competition of the 2016 season. So strong was Ben's shooting that he scored 120 in the qualifying rounds to reach the semi-final.

Ben then held his nerve to shoot a perfect 15/15 to reach the gold medal match where he and Mikola Milchev of Ukraine both shot 14,

which put them into a sudden-death shoot-off where the first to miss concedes defeat.

Knowing how hard it is to perform well under pressure, his silver medal placing is a fantastic result for the Pembrokeshire-based, Zoli-sponsored shooter. Ben commented: "To compete at my first World Cup and get straight into the final was amazing, and then to come away with the silver medal was incredible, especially considering the competition I was up against: two Olympic Champions and three World Champions. So it was no pushover. I'm now going

to concentrate on the rest of the season: hopefully reselection for the British team, as we have a British qualifier coming up; to compete at the next World Cups; and to get out to some Grand Prix competitions and win a gold medal!"

In many cases, successful clay shooters start their shooting careers at the grass-roots level and often by joining a local club. I've written before about Clwb Saethu Clai Tregaron, my local clay club, which does a fantastic job of encouraging youngsters to take up and progress in the sport.

Its annual clay club dinner, held recently at Y Talbot Hotel in Tregaron, really brought home to me how clay shooting—and indeed any type of shooting—can give men and women of all ages such enjoyment. The culmination of the prize-giving part of the evening was evidence of this when 78-year-old John Davies was crowned Skeet High Gun for the year 2015, while 10-year-old Moe Willis took Junior Skeet High Gun and Club Junior High Gun. The notable point is that the two crack shots are the oldest and youngest members of the club. Well done to them both.

On the subject of both the young and those of more advanced years being able to enjoy country sports, it was good to see Natural Resources Wales (NRW) promoting fishing – which is enjoyed by many shooters – on its website as part of Visit Wales's designation of 2016 as the Year of Adventure.

Rob Evans, Freshwater Fisheries Advisor NRW, commented: "Whether you're an experienced angler or a complete novice, Wales has something to offer everyone who wants to cast a line. Fishing provides a healthy recreational activity for both young and old to enjoy, and the variety of physical activity involved in different types of angling makes it a sport for everyone. For the experienced angler there's always something new to try, whether it's one of our breathtaking lakes like Llyn Tegid in Snowdonia and Llangorse in the Brecon Beacons, or our wonderful rivers like the Teifi in West Wales and the Wye in the East. And for those new to the sport there are hundreds of community-based angling clubs across Wales providing good-value angling and plenty of information online providing help and guidance for anglers of all abilities."

Tony Rees, of Angling Cymru, added: "It is important that anglers purchase a rod licence and fishing permit as it is this money that will fund projects for improvement to fishing and fish stocks. Licence fees also help to fund introductions for new anglers through qualified coaches in Wales." ■



Proving that it's a sport for all ages, John (L) and Moe both scooped awards at the prize-giving



Welsh Skeet shooter, Ben Llewellyn took home Silver from this year's Shotgun World Cup

The fame game

Adam Smith reveals that far more celebrities enjoy their game shooting than you might think, so wouldn't it be nice if a few more – or better still, a lot more – had the moral courage to stand up for their sport?

Sir Ian Botham, Marco Pierre White, Eric Clapton, Sol Campbell, Theo Paphitis, Sir Jackie Stewart, Edward Stourton, Guy Ritchie, Vinnie Jones and Gareth Edwards are all famous names in the public eye, and all enthusiastic game shots. And while many will already be known to you as shooters, one or two might come as a surprise – but nothing like the surprise you'd get if I were able, without gagging orders and lawsuits, to trot out the names of all the other A-list celebs who regularly shoot their pheasants, partridge and grouse in the UK and elsewhere at venues entirely in keeping with their prestigious status.

Actually, if you're anything like me, you'd be as much depressed as surprised to find so many well-known figures 'on the game' as you might say. I'm talking about those stars who are happy to experience the thrill of driven game shooting but don't, or won't, allow the fact to become common knowledge, and who are essentially cowardly. Not least because they must know that the sport is under pressure, and that their support would add genuine weight to the cause, but worse still that they apparently expect all the rest of us to fight for the sport we love but, despite in

some cases carrying a vast amount more potential than you or me, they prefer to hide behind a cloak of secrecy. Quite honestly, that young man on the cover of the April issue of this magazine shows far more pride.

By comparison, the attitude of some of these 'stars' is plain bloody shameful, and smacks very much to me of having several large slices of luxury gateau without any weight gain or associated guilt – because, in many if not most cases, the reason behind all the secrecy will be guilt. And greed, of course.

Not guilt for shooting gamebirds, but guilt for fear of their peers finding out that they do it, and worse still, enjoy it. What two-faced heroes.

And not greed for the number of birds they bag to their own gun on all the grand shoots they might grace with their presence; the greed is for desperately hanging onto all the benefits of 'star status' without daring to risk any potential drop in income due to their 'antisocial' and 'bloodthirsty toffs' hobby.

Some, I'm sure, will simply follow the advice of their agent or management team who, with eyes fixed firmly on the finances, recognise the negative effects of 'killing things' and steer their

cosseted money trees away from any risk of exposure. This, of course, is a significant factor, especially among the impressionable, star-struck, and dare I say it, incorrigibly ignorant majority who live out their lives pressed firmly to the shadows of the famous.

The overwhelming majority of these fans, on whom most of our celebs depend, have an entirely jaundiced, biased and politically correct view of field sports, fostered initially by their schooling together with an almost entirely antagonistic media.

Of course, with the sort of names involved, there just might be a case to suggest that if sufficient publicity were given to the way they choose to relax, public opinion might begin to swing. And I suppose my whole point is that some of these people are capable of starting that sort of swing, if only they could be generous and sporting enough – in the best sense of the word – to see things from a different perspective.

Stranger things have certainly happened, as any glance at military and political alliances over the past century or so can show, with enemies now friends and rivals now working in harmony. But still, with things as they are it is not all that



Game chef and TV personality, Mike Robinson (centre) supports and promotes the shooting industry

surprising that a large number of people in the public eye who enjoy their sport seem so ashamed of what they do. Pitiful, but, as I said, not all that surprising.

And so, by a happy comparison, all the more credit must go to Beefy, Vinnie, Slow Hand, Sir Jackie, Marco Pierre and all those brave souls confident enough to stand proud for their sport and damn the antis. Thank you, one and all.

Countryfile revisited

A month or so back, I had a pop at the BBC's flagship 'country' programme *Countryfile*, and a pop that Rebecca was kind enough to mention in her editorial since it related to a subsequent item, a slightly more positive contribution on gamekeeping. She made the valid comment that the presentation showed a slight improvement – although she may not have been aware of the extent to which the antis later slated the programme on Facebook with all their usual balanced, informed and temperate assessments.

My earlier gripe had been on the way in which pest control had been covered by the programme, and most especially for the way one of its intrepid reporters – Tom Heap by name – left viewers in no doubt where his personal prejudices and ignorance lay on the subject in general and shotguns in particular.

Luckily, the programme and the BBC being what they are, a more recent edition has managed to top this Oscar-level performance, this time on the subject of flooding. All flooding, of course, is the result of climate change – that goes without saying – but I think I've covered that particular can of worms enough lately, so I will concentrate on the mechanics.

For the purposes of the programme, *Countryfile* went back in time to the *Blue Peter* studio, and although loo-roll tubes and sticky back plastic played little part in the assembly, we were still left thrilled by the creativity and original thinking behind the 'working model' put together by the resident experts.

This was a well-conceived and visual demonstration of how pointless dredging can be as a means of managing and controlling floodwaters. Both clever and inventive, the living proof was recreated using what was essentially a large tray, full of sand, with a hand-crafted groove winding across it, representing 'the river'. So you put a downhill angle on the tray, pour a jugful of water along the 'river' channel and, would you believe it, the 'banks' cave in and all the water runs out over the floor. Proof positive that dredging doesn't work, costs a massively wasteful amount of money and causes havoc in the environment including lengthy mopping-up operations by trained staff.

And this, mind you, on prime-time TV with an impressionable audience, happy to believe all the 'experts' tell them and some of them no doubt willing to join the next demo in support of renewable energy in order to save the planet. ■



'There might be a case to suggest that if sufficient publicity were given to the way they choose to relax, public opinion might begin to swing'

PICTURE: NICK RIMLEY



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Spring is sprung

Robin's reconnaissance shows signs of an early spring, and the heather burning on the hills reminds him of his own treacherous heather-burning forays

An early spring is on its way. The mountain hares are changing their white pelage to a dull greyish brown relatively early this year, for I pen these jottings before the Ides of March are out. The oystercatchers are making their way inland a bit on the newly-sown fields near the sea, their piping indicating the mating ritual. Long streaks of thawing snow on Ben Wyvis foretell an early spring.

Heather burning is clouding the hills with acrid smoke, thanks to a relative dry period and some fairly gentle winds to help keep the fires under control. Nevertheless, fires can quite easily get out of order with even just a gentle shift of the wind. I will never forget, many moons ago, when Jim and I headed out to the moor where some heather

'We both soon worked up a gentle sweat and had a really good fire going, enough to burn the dry heather, but not enough to burn the roots'

needed burning – pretty rank stuff that would require some careful handling. To keep our spirits up, I planted a couple of cans of lager where I thought we might need it most as the day progressed. After a good recce of the moor we formulated a plan of action, taking into consideration the possibility of a change of direction in the wind.

All went well to start with. We both soon worked up a gentle sweat and had a really good fire going, enough to burn the dry heather, but not enough to burn the roots. Meanwhile, the lager cans twinkled in the sun. However, the gentle breeze began to work itself up into quite a strong one. A vigorous blow soon developed; sweat poured from our brows as we tried to keep control of the flames.

Jim and I had started out some 20 yards apart. I always favour relatively small patches of a burn; this, I feel, gives control, and when the young shoots come and the grouse start feeding on them they have easy reach of shelter in the mature heather, if predators are about. Nevertheless, the fire was getting wild, and Jim and I were getting further apart, and the cans of lager were getting nearer. Sweat flowed from our reddening brows, the twinkling cans got nearer and nearer, and soon I was on them with the fire now really quite out of control. So was I, I think, for there was no



In the warmer months, the mountain hare's coat changes to a greyish brown colour

way I could stop to gather them up. Jim made some rude gesticulations as I glimpsed through the smoke.

Eventually the blaze ran its course and petered out in the burn at the bottom of the hill. Now, some 40 years on, there is little left of our inferno for the whole hillside is covered with maturing pines, and devoid of any game save a few black grouse.

The grey geese are off on their migration to the north lands. I will miss their evening chatter as they fly over our house to their roosting grounds across the Firth. We have had rather fewer this year, notwithstanding my spies in the far north telling me of greater numbers. ■

With just a small change of wind, fires can get out of control so they have to be watched closely



PICTURES: LAURIE CAMPBELL

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A notch above the rest

Last month Jonny showed us how to make an arrowhead. Now you need to make an arrow shaft to attach it to...

In the last article we looked at making a simple arrowhead. This time we need to make an arrow shaft, complete with notches, to fix the head into.

Find a long, straight piece of wood. The straighter the better! (You may have to straighten it, so it might be handy to have a fire burning in the background.) It could be hazel, ash or sycamore. This time I've chosen sycamore. It's a bit heavier and so the flight is more stable.

Scrape all the bark off and trim off any knots or rough patches [pic 1]. You could even sand it down to make it as true as you can get it. Every flaw you remove will improve the flight and accuracy.

You need to cut a pair of V-shaped notches opposite each other about two inches from the end of the arrow shaft [pics 2 and 3]. Do not be tempted to cut your notches right up at the end of the stick or you'll have nothing to hold onto later in the process. Now roll the shaft 90 degrees. About one inch further down from the end of the shaft (or the length of the stem of your arrow head), cut another pair of V-shaped notches opposite each other [pic 4]. Hold the two-inch end of the shaft in your non-cutting hand and, with your knife, put the knife into the first V-shaped cut. Now prize the knife into the cut and ease the fibres apart until the split works down to the second pair of

V-shaped cuts. If you don't go deeply enough with the knife, you may not get enough wood out, but too deep and you may simply split the stick from end to end. Carefully does it! Do this for both sides.

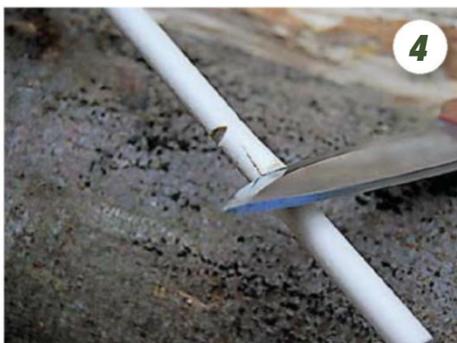
Now you can grip the two-inch section in one hand and gently wiggle it from side to side [pics 5 and 6]. The two-inch section should come out leaving you with a notch cut in the end of the shaft [pic 7].

The first two notches will automatically taper towards the arrowhead when you've inserted it into the shaft [pics 8 and 9]. You may need to tidy up the cut, but when you lash in the arrowhead and fix it with resin it'll look fantastic. ■

PART TWO

YOU
WILL NEED:

- 1 x arrow shaft
- 1 x knife
- 1 x arrowhead (see p77 of the May Issue)



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Birth of the breech loader

Diggory tells the story of Britain's reluctant slide from the muzzle-loading era to the breech-loading era; the latter of which produced some of his favourite guns

My main area of interest is the centrefire breech-loading era, from 1861 to 1939. To me, the period provides what I think are the most interesting, varied, but still usable guns available. However, I'm often called upon to explain how the period began, so I'm inclined to step back a few years to the birth of the modern breech-loader, and see what started the ball rolling.

By 1850, muzzle-loading had been the accepted method of loading sporting guns since barrels and gunpowder were first combined, in handheld wildfowling pieces. Some exotic experiments had been conducted over the years, but the man of wealth and taste still loaded his gun from the muzzle, rammed home his wads, powder and shot, and put his percussion cap on the nipple, prepared for each shot.

Earlier, the diaries of Col. Peter Hawker provide us with an amusing and enlightening account of the forays of a sportsman equipped with the traditional shooting accoutrements of the early 19th century. Hawker was born in 1786 and died in 1853. He began his sporting career with flintlocks, and lived to see the pin-fire breech-loader introduced to the London crowds at the Great Exhibition of 1851, where he also exhibited his wildfowling equipment, punt guns and some of his own inventions.

The gentleman sportsman of the early Victorian period, represented by Hawker at the newly built Crystal Palace, was unknowingly witnessing the beginning of a furious period of innovation in British gunmaking.

The spark that was to set off this powder keg of activity was the embodiment of a continental idea, one which Hawker had previously called 'a horrid ancient invention, revived by foreign makers, that is dangerous in the extreme'.

Exhibit 1301 at the Great Exhibition, which took place in London from 1 March to 15 October 1851, was a breech-loading gun with self-contained ammunition. The patent was that of Casimir Lefauchaux, and it attracted the attention of a London gunmaker, also exhibiting his wares.

Joseph Lang, son-in-law to James Purdey, is largely credited with taking the 'French Crutch Gun', as it was disparagingly referred to in certain quarters, and introducing his version of the Lefauchaux to the British public.

David Baker and Don Masters suggest the actual conduit was the gunmaker Edwin Charles Hodges, who made a copy and sold it to Lang. Whatever the truth, Lang was quickly advertising that he had a breech-loader 'on an entirely new principle, the simplest and quickest ever offered to the public'. Lang also claimed his gun

handling and lightweight game gun. The 1850s saw pin-fire gain in popularity, as new patents vied with one another to provide the perfect combination of strength, reliability and speed of loading.

As mechanisms improved, pin-fire cemented its place in the market. Initially, successful patents cured the action of weakness, with inert 'slide and

'The 1850s saw pin-fire gain in popularity, as new patents vied with one another to provide the perfect combination of strength, reliability and speed of loading'

'combines strength and durability'. Unfortunately, he was overstating this, as his forward-facing, single screw-grip, under-lever gun suffered from the Lefauchaux weakness of the bolt being rather too close to the hinge, and being prone to shoot loose quickly. Another commentator, Sir Ralph Payne-Gallway, called Lang's gun 'a crude fore-runner of the modern breech-loader'.

Examination of these early pin-fires also indicates that they were built too light and on frames that were flimsy when compared with later guns, which generally have stronger bars, deeper fences and

barrels thicker at the breech end.

Despite its shortcomings, Lang's breech-loader represented a relatively fast loading, nice

drop' mechanisms, like Dougall's and Lancaster's, working better than most. Later, loading speed was improved with the introduction of snap-action guns.

By 1860, pin-fires were safe and dependable. The problem was the ammunition. Having to deal with the small protrusions from the side of the cartridge was not convenient, either for carriage or loading, and detonation was not yet fail-safe.

Charles Lancaster introduced an alternative to the British public, around 1856. His 'slide and drop' action was excellent and his ammunition, called 'base fire', was promising. However, his attempt to hold a monopoly over manufacture and the distribution of ammunition contributed to its failure to catch the wider imagination. The majority of breech-loaders continued to be made on the pin-fire system. It would take another Englishman, bringing another continental patent to these islands, to create the momentum for a proper pin-fire replacement. That would not happen until 1861. ■



The first breech-loaders often suffered from the weakness of the bolt being too close to the hinge

PICTURES: DIGGORY HADOKE



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Migration mysteries

Alan's ponderings on the old mystery of bird migration leads him to straighten out a few modern misconceptions regarding a certain sort of goose

The mysteries of bird migration are better understood today than ever before. We have moved on from those mystic days of yore, when barnacle geese were believed to drop out of sight into the sea during the summer months!

For all that, there is much to ponder on. Gone are many of the mysteries, but as the world is in constant change, the factors that shape bird migration change too.

Whether people believe some of the more dire warnings about global warming or not, there can be little doubt that temperatures and weather patterns have changed significantly. Here in the South East, for example, the number of frosts this winter could have been counted on two hands.

It is well known that, by and large, birds move as a reaction to stimuli, with the most significant being weather. As the weather turns colder in the

North, so the birds move south and west to find warmer climes.

The most noticeable impact of warmer weather here has been a significant drop-off in the numbers of migrant birds reaching our shores in the winter. All duck species have been affected to some extent, with the end of season WeBS (Wetland Bird Survey) count in my local estuary system being 8,000 birds down.

These birds have not disappeared: they are stacked up on continental Europe, enjoying the benign weather conditions there. This is reinforced whenever we get that occasional and increasingly rare arctic blast, when birds pour into the eastern parts of the UK, their feeding grounds on the Continent frozen out.

European white-fronted geese are perhaps the most striking indicator of that in the southern part

of the country. Numbers in Kent have dropped to between two and three hundred, while the former stronghold for this species in the South West fares little better. This, against a backcloth of over 1,100,000 white-fronted geese in Europe.

‘Wildfowling was a form of subsistence hunting, and has evolved to where we are today while maintaining so much of that earlier ethos’

Wildfowling has no major effect on overall bird numbers



PICTURE: MICK RIDLEY

This phenomenon is known as 'short-stopping', and poses no obvious threat to bird numbers throughout their 'flyway'. It does, however, give those opposed to our sport an opportunity to fret about the number of birds reaching our shores, and the ever-present danger that, because numbers may be down, 'something must be done!'. That something is, it seems, always focused on wildfowling, when we can all see that the problems lie beyond these shores.

Returning to white-fronted geese, it is well documented that the population of the Greenland race of white-fronts – wintering in the West, most

'The most noticeable impact of warmer weather here has been a significant drop-off in the numbers of migrant birds reaching our shores in the winter'

significantly in Wales – has been declining. Wildfowling have responded to that with a decade-long moratorium on the shooting of this species, even though the species' decline is undoubtedly to be tracked back to what is happening on its Arctic breeding grounds.

The most recent response of those opposed to shooting is to seek a statutory ban on shooting; some might ask what difference it makes if the Greenland white-front is not being shot anyway? The answer to that is simple: the antis never stop there; today it will be the Greenland white-front, tomorrow the European white-front, and so it goes on!

Arguably, without huge vigilance on our part, attention will turn ever more to the SSSIs which have been designated for their bird assemblages – bird SSSIs. As bird numbers decrease, due to such factors as short-stopping, so increases the danger that wildfowling over those areas will come under increased scrutiny. It's food and drink for those opposed to our sport, even though we know most of the problems lie well beyond these shores.

Tradition forms an essential part of wildfowling, which has always been carried out in a

sustainable way in the UK. In its early days it was a form of subsistence hunting, and has evolved to where we are today while maintaining so much of that earlier ethos.

No doubt there will be some upset by the TV programme *Life Below Zero* – available on one of the many digital channels – which features families and individuals living in Alaska eking out a living by harvesting the local wildlife. Recently, one family fell upon flightless Canada geese during the moult period on the tundra, and clubbed and shot 14 birds in order to feed themselves and start to build up a store for the coming winter.

That is subsistence hunting in the raw, with a modest harvest being taken and consumed, and nothing being wasted. This type of hunting may seem brutal to the squeamish, but is the way wild birds have been harvested for thousands of years.

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Birds move as a reaction to stimuli, such as a change in weather

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Beretta 686 Special 28" barrels, multi-choke	S/hand	£895.00	Shadow Indy 12g 27½" skeet. "Same condition as above, superb"	S/hand	£995.00
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INSIDE THIS MONTH...

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Howard explains why we can't just rely on dummies to teach steadiness – we've got to keep it in mind at home and when other dogs are around, too

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Vicky takes a look at labour and how to ensure newborn puppies are growing and developing as they should be



HOWARD'S TIP OF THE MONTH: *First aid knowledge*

Ensure you have a basic knowledge of gundog first aid. Know how to restrain and muzzle your dog in case of an emergency situation.

Don't assume your pet pooch will be a willing patient; if he's frightened and in pain your dog may just lash out and try to bite you or anything that's near him, causing serious injury to you or anyone that's trying to help.



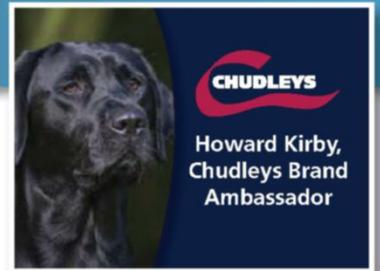
99 **Sporting Shooter**

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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CHUDLEYS





Get the balance right

Steadiness training isn't just about dummy exercises – it begins with behaviour in the home and when you are socialising your puppy, as Howard explains

For many gundog owners striking a happy balance between the dog's training, working requirements and family life often leaves them confused. I firmly believe that with only a few exceptions the behaviours that we go to great lengths to instill in our gundogs are the exact same ones that you would require from any companion dog. In fact, those in the know regularly call us asking if we are about to retire any of our older gundogs as they make perfect companions. Have a think about it – if you gave a companion dog owner a dog behaviour wishlist, they are most likely to want/need the following: that the dog walks on a loose lead and doesn't pull; it comes back when it's called; it doesn't chase livestock; and it's well socialised with other dogs. This, by the way, means it minds its own

business and doesn't charge over to every other dog or person it sees, and that when it meets people, dogs, livestock and myriad other things that it doesn't leap and jump all over them (yes, I'm talking to you, spaniel owners – not everyone, especially not retriever-owning ladies in big hats, likes being covered in muddy paws every time they bump into you). In essence what they actually want is a well-trained gundog.

It's perfectly possible, with the right balance, to have a dog that lives indoors, lies next to or on top of you on the couch while watching *Eastenders*

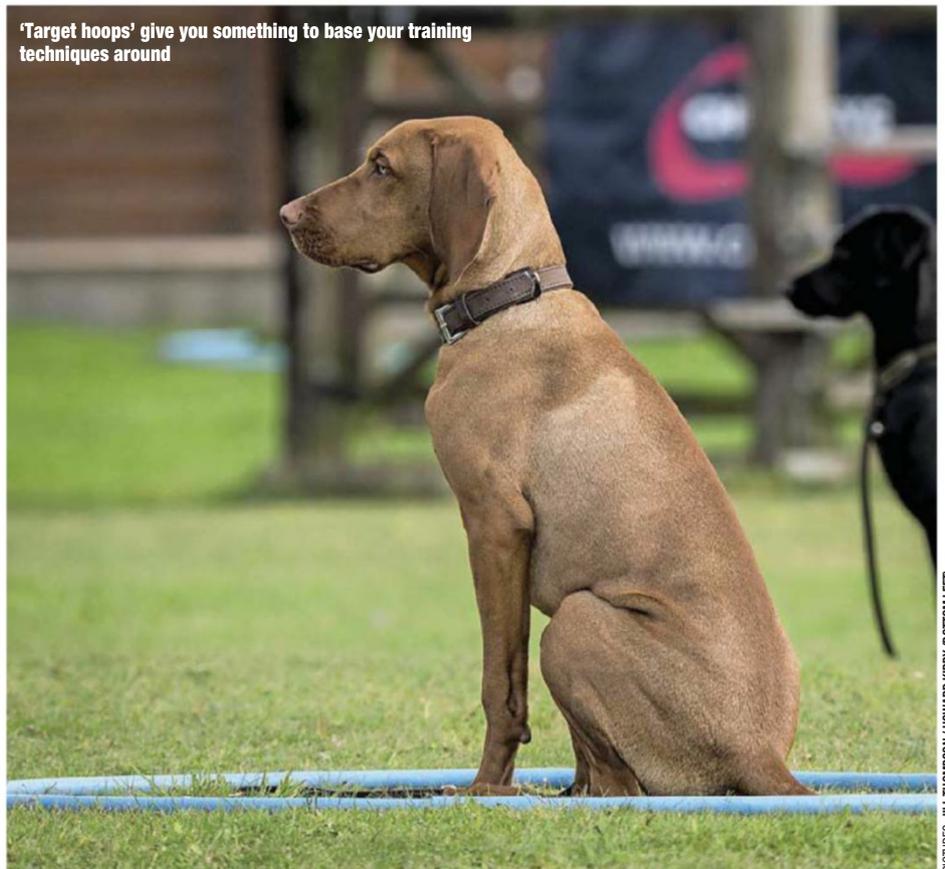
(whoops, gave away one of my bad habits there) and generally interacts with you and yours while still being able to be trained as a first-class gundog. "Come on, Kirby, get on with the steadiness training article. What's all this companion dog nonsense about?" I hear you muttering. A really steady dog – and by that I now mean one that will stay put and stay quiet with a freshly-shot bird fluttering 10 feet away from his nose – will be balanced in most aspects of his life, including his nature and nurture. So day-to-day management of your dog will be as important as

Important things for you to get right

Your puppy needs to be allowed to socialise with other dogs. Let him mix with others in a supervised environment – friends and family with dogs (that you know are safe) or with young puppies can be a really great way to do this. Things can go wrong very quickly, so make sure you know about the temperament of the other dogs in the social group. The key word here is 'supervised'.

As part of basic training teach the puppy to 'meet and greet'. When you approach other people with or without dogs your puppy needs to be on a lead, and you must ensure you maintain at least five big paces between them and yourselves. He should be taught to sit quietly, while focusing on you. The space between you is essential – without it, the puppy will get overly excited and pull on the lead.

'Target hoops' give you something to base your training techniques around



PICTURES: JILL THOMPSON / HOWARD KIRBY (BOTTOM LEFT)



Reward him with the Best

the 'training field' education that you give him. Dogs that are kept in kennels are generally easier to manage than a dog that lives indoors, but if you organise a system that allows you to properly supervise all of what Fido gets involved in on a day-to-day basis, then you are much more likely to be successful. There! Clear as mud? Let's get on with the training field stuff.

TOP TIP
Keep the 'classroom' distraction-free until your puppy is able to completely focus on you. That way, when you gradually introduce more and more distractions, he should be able to ignore them.

Focus on focus

In order that we can move forward with the steadiness training of your young gundog, it's important that you have really got that focus that I've been talking about over the last couple of articles. In early training I'd encourage you to ensure that the 'classroom' you choose is distraction-free. Slowly but surely, as the puppy learns to focus on you, we can increase the levels of distraction. Other dogs will always be a major source of interest so it's important to teach him to ignore them. We need to devote our training to teaching the puppy to want to be with you to such an extent that nothing else matters to him. This is really straightforward if you have a dog that is very driven and is intent on getting the dummy. So I make no apology for continually reminding you to build the puppy's drive and focus before trying to train with other dogs around him. If you don't get things right you risk diluting his ability to do this.

Other dogs

A good way to train alongside other dogs is to attend classes. Providing the class is well run you can teach the youngster to stay close and focused on you. Of course, if you have friends and



A good dog will eventually be able to ignore other dogs and concentrate on the task in hand



'Puppies and young dogs can only focus for short periods of time so don't expect them to 'work' for the whole hour of a class'

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Things that can go wrong

If every time you meet other dogs you allow the puppies to charge around and play together, this will become the norm and will only serve to teach your puppy that whenever he sees other dogs he should run up to meet them.

As harmless as this seems it can build up to major behavioural issues. You are putting your puppy in danger; if he runs innocently up to strange dogs there is a risk of injury to your puppy. As your puppy matures, he may become more dominant and actually become the instigator of aggression.

To avoid this, you will need to keep the puppy on a lead or long line when in the company of other dogs, otherwise he will quickly learn to out-manoeuvre you and dash off to have fun with the neighbours. If he keeps doing this it will become habit – it's self-rewarding so he will become a problem.

family that can help you then they can work their pups or dogs around your youngster to achieve the same result. Puppies and young dogs can only focus for short periods of time so don't expect them to 'work' for the whole hour of a class. Remember, you are trying to teach the youngster that when he is on his lead, out in public, training, or at a shoot, he should focus on you and all the good things that happen around

you. The first time you go to a class or train around others expect him to be distracted; work hard by using your enthusiasm, the dummy, food and movement – you are trying to motivate the pup to engage with you. Ensure there is plenty of space between yourselves and other dogs; the closer you are to others the more distracted your puppy will be. You will find that if you go to regular training sessions with others that the dogs will simply learn not to expect to be able to interact with each other and they will learn to settle and concentrate on you.

The bigger picture

If you are training a puppy for the first time it's likely that they will become so absorbed in what you are doing that you will lose your spatial awareness. If you watch people that are champions in what they do – be it industry, sport, or dog training – they are always aware of the bigger picture. This skill comes with experience.

Initially you will need every ounce of concentration to ensure that you are moving the dog, your face, hands, kit and those uncontrollable two left feet, in the right direction. Don't worry, this is normal (although if you are in a Mullenscote class and you are still learning the difference between left and right after six weeks, you will be punished by being forced to make cakes for the entire group the following week!). To overcome this, practise regularly with and without your dog. Do walk-through techniques without the puppy, and plan ahead by rehearsing your technique – it will help.

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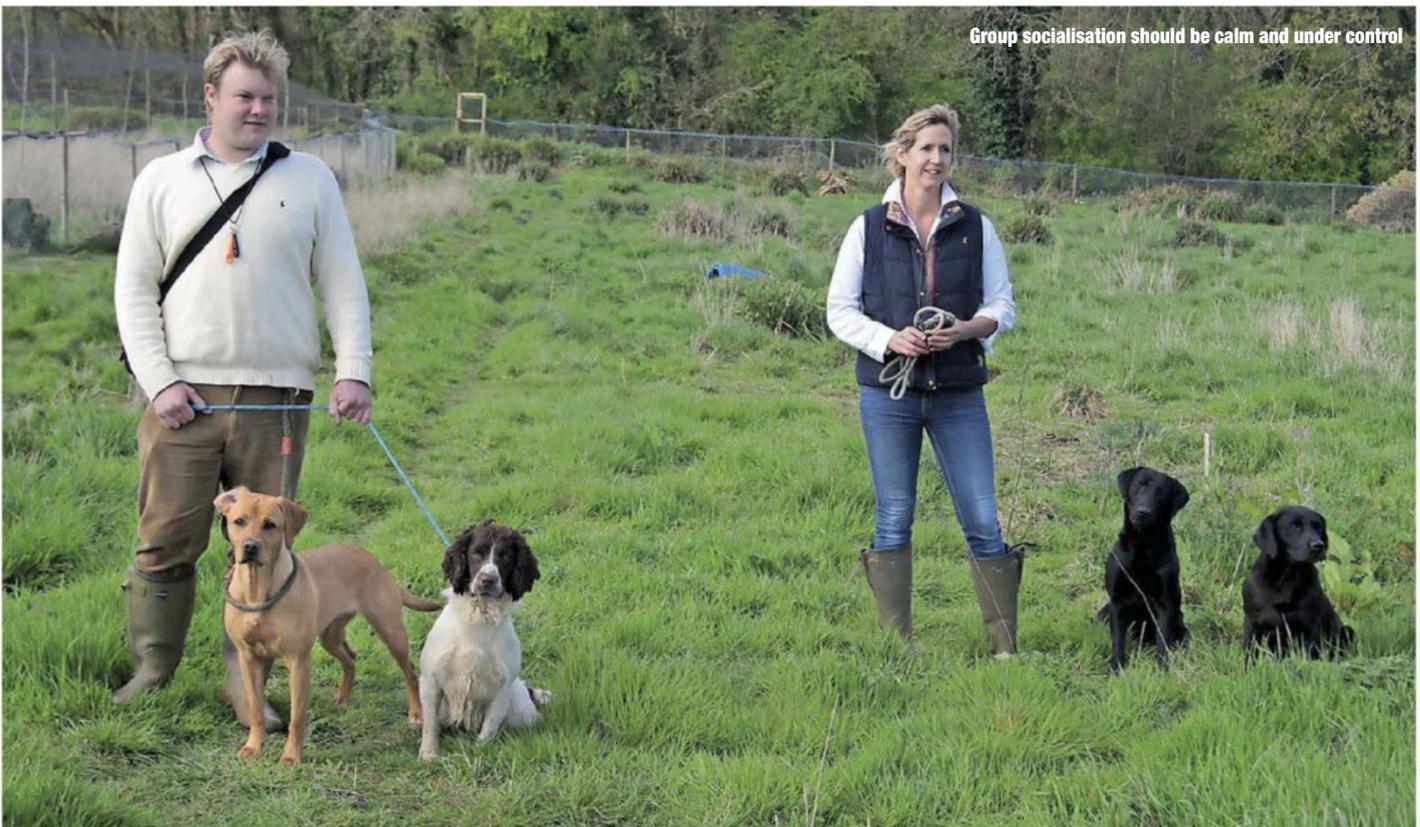
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Once you feel comfortable with technique, practise looking up, watching where you are going, and being aware of what the world around you is doing. In classes ensure you keep half an eye on what other handlers are doing so that you avoid getting too close as this will serve to distract other handlers and their pups. This is just the beginning; once you get into the shooting field this 'peripheral awareness' is something that contributes to the difference between 'those that have to make cake and those that eat it!' (For the record, hats off to all of the wonderful people in the world that *choose to make cake...* you are geniuses).

Using 'target hoops' in class can be incredibly helpful; it locates the handler and gives you something to aim for and base your techniques and movement around. Successful dog training requires that the handler be consistent and accurate in their leadership and instruction; attention to fine detail will pay dividends.

Next month we'll continue to explore the wonderful world of gundog training. In the meantime, make sure you keep studying, practise perfectly and learn the difference between right and left. Have fun! ■



Group socialisation should be calm and under control

PICTURE: HOWARD KIRBY

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Both dummies can be used to help accustom the dog to picking up fur. They will fly along the ground or through the air very well and also float, so are ideal for water-training scenarios in the summer. The cured rabbit skin has been sewn onto the canvas, making it very secure and, should you wish, scent can be applied. The Orbe, as its name suggests, is oval in shape, while the Rocket is based on the size and shape of the canvas dummy launcher.

If you're planning any trials or tests on the rabbits this summer, these would be an ideal addition to your training bag.

RRP: Orbe £18.47; Rocket £19.49
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Our very own Crufts winner...

Each year *Sporting Shooter* vet Vicky Payne hands out a special award on behalf of the magazine. This year, the winner of the *Sporting Shooter* Trophy for Best English Springer Spaniel Bitch was Miss E Heslop's nine-year-old, Canouan Out Of The Blue At Bonisla.

Vicky said: "She was in great muscular condition and well put together, but where she pipped her rivals was with her lovely movement. Congratulations to all the winners, and to everyone who brought their dogs for me to meet.

"I had an amazing time at Crufts, with good entries in all the Working Gundog Bitch classes. It was a privilege to judge so many nice dogs, and the decisions on who to place were not easy."



NEWS FLASH



Ryan Kay is a keen trialler and trainer with a passion for working HPRs and spaniels. He beats and picks up on various moors in North Yorkshire and enjoys rough shooting with his dogs.

Rooting for the underdogs

Ryan Kay attends a local Working Test and discovers that, even when it comes to retrievers, he still favours the quirky ones

I've said it before, Working Tests certainly have their place in the gundog world, and although many see them as a stepping stone to achieving success in Field Trials, many others see them as an end goal, and an achievement high enough in their own right. And why not?! Although a canvas dummy may not be as exciting as a bird falling from the sky, it must surely be a testament to all those handlers who manage to maintain a dog's drive and enthusiasm, whether it be a spaniel or HPR hunting earnestly on gamey ground and then switching back onto canvas for the retrievers, or a retriever sticking to the task at hand while on a lengthy blind.

Last year I reported on Spaniel and HPR Working Tests, but this spring I was drawn to a relatively local Retriever Test in search of viewing some satisfying gundog work 'retriever-style', and in particular to see some golden retrievers ply their trade. You see, for some strange reason, I'm always drawn to the more quirky breeds in a particular gundog sub-group. Yes, I appreciate all

gundogs for the task they've been bred for, and without a doubt Labradors have proven themselves the most consistently effective and the most straightforward to train for their required discipline. But I find that there's something slightly more gratifying in achieving success with a less popular or alternative breed. I suppose it depends on your priorities; say your goal is to achieve Field Trial Champion status with your retriever, a well-bred Labrador will undoubtedly give you a greater chance of getting there.

I often have customers who enquire about an individual breed's suitability as a peg dog. "I want a cocker trained for the peg!" comes the statement. "Well," I explain, "that's doable, but you're generally going against the grain. Why not get a Lab instead?" "But everyone has a Lab," comes the reply! As I said earlier, wanting something a little different, I can relate to, but there's a good reason 'everyone has a Lab'; they're proven time again for the job in hand. Their sheer popularity suggests that they're the top

choice for more than one good reason – for life at the peg or picking-up!

I'm not sure how I've managed to avoid owning a Lab or any other retriever breed all these years, but I have. Labradors were in fact my first encounter with the gundog world, when, as a young lad back in the early 80s, my father would hand me one of his Labs to work in the beating line on a local commercial shoot. Maybe because I grew up with Labs at the forefront, I later veered toward the slightly less popular and perhaps more challenging gundog breeds.

Since those early Lab encounters, I've helped train many retriever varieties, but managed to resist acquiring one for myself. But it's coming, I can feel it... Like an itch that needs a scratch, it'll have to happen at some point. Perhaps this Working Test could show me a little of what I've been missing...

The Yorkshire Golden Retriever Club holds several Working Tests over the spring, and this one, held at Ainderby near Thirsk, took place on the Saturday of the Easter weekend – which is perhaps why it was a little quieter entries-wise than previous years. Nevertheless, Field Trial Secretary and Chief Steward, Martin Greenwood had received enough entries for a decent turnout for both Novice and Open classes. The available area was a little restrictive for the test elements but judges Annette Clarke, Dave Sidwell and Yvonne Storr had still managed to set up some testing scenarios. I arrived soon after the Novice Test had got under way, and meandered in next to Annette who was judging the blind: a 40-yard retrieve through a narrow strip of woodland. The dummy area was clearly marked for the handler, with a white plastic barrel hung up on a branch, directly above where the dummy lay on an open patch of bare ground. Annette, a well-known, experienced trialler and trainer, brought a calming influence to the handlers, encouraging them to take their time when lining the dog up. Some

Golden retrievers are scarcely seen in the shooting field nowadays



PICTURES: RYAN KAY

'Maybe because I grew up with Labs at the forefront, I later veered towards the slightly less popular and perhaps more challenging gundog breeds' »



An experienced trainer and trialler herself, judge Annette Clarke advised the handlers not to rush when lining up their dogs. Here, she shows a competitor the mark for the blind at the Novice.

didn't though, and this cost them points, as the dogs were up against it from the start. However, plenty did do well, and picked the dummy with no fuss, returning with speed and gusto.

I was interested to see Annette's element for the Open class, as beforehand I had been fortunate enough to venture round with the judges for the set-up, and all of them seemed confident that a real 'Open' dog would find this particular test no problem at all!

While handler and dog were stood way out in a stubble field, a marked retrieve (about 120 yards away) was thrown along a hedge side – but this was only to be collected after a blind (about a 100 yards away) was picked from a ditch, which was through a thin scrub and tree-lined area, off at a 45-degree angle to the marked dummy. The windy conditions added to the difficulty. It was predominantly a back wind, and meant that even when they were the correct wind side of the dummy in the ditch, some struggled to locate it first time – the scent apparently just trickling out of the trench, then being met by gusts which kept it close to the floor. Several failed altogether on this test, but one dog in particular really impressed me. Russell Hodgen's black Labrador bitch Roselea Zara received a little applause from the gallery as it completed both retrieves without any fuss – a real pleasure to watch. Others also did well but, understandably, a little more handling was required.

There was a run-off to determine third place, between Victoria Stanley's black Lab dog Minstead Mairget and the aforementioned Roselea Zara. They still needed splitting after one retrieve, requiring another to eventually separate them.

And so it was Victoria Stanley who prevailed overall with Patanavac Brough – producing the most consistent performance throughout the four tests. Second was Mark Demaine with Leacaz Ricky of Caytonfell. After the run-off, third place eventually went to Victoria, with Russell Hodgen's bitch picking up a COM.

A shame to see no goldies or flat-coats in the awards for the Open, but Caroline Hewson's flat-coat did pick up a COM in the Novice class. So, overall, it did make it very much a Labrador affair once again. That said, I'll still be drawn towards the 'underdog breeds' for when that itch needs scratching! I know, I know... I can hear some of the Lab folk groaning... ■

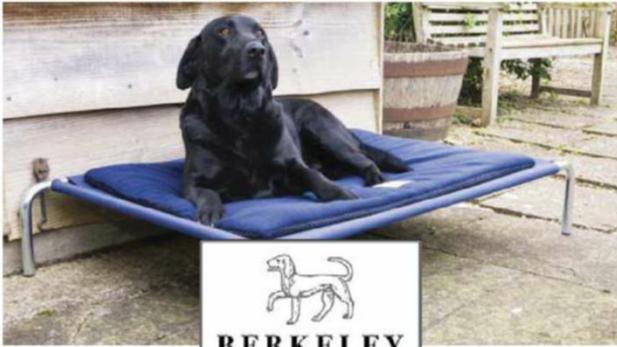
Lee Hartis and his dog, Troddenmills Beck and Call of Leacaz, with a perfect delivery in the Open



The flat-coated retriever is generally more lively than the Labrador

NOVICE RESULTS

First place went to Liverycroft Frisco Tornado – Margaret Piece, and second was Kelmagra Brooke – Mark Demaine. No third was awarded. COMs to Independence Lady Willow – Mr B Chester; Venus in Transit Over Casblaidd – Caroline Hewson; and Royal Rouge – Mrs Catherine Kitching.



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As its name suggests, this model is very much in first position in the competition range of Rizzini guns. The reinforced action is finished in classic business-like black chrome with the model name neatly engraved on the underside. The competition stock is made from well-figured oil finished walnut. Thanks to its excellent balance and handling, the Premier is also finding a keen following amongst specialist high bird shots.

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Canines on camera

Here are this month's entries...

We have teamed up with Chudleys to bring you the *Sporting Shooter* Readers' Gundog Calendar 2017 – a gundog photography competition to find the best snaps, taken by our readers, for a special 2017 calendar.

Each month we will select the best gundog photos sent in by you, and print them here. The 12 best photos will be selected by our panel of judges to appear in print in the 2017 calendar, which will be sent out with the January edition of

Sporting Shooter magazine.

So, if you have a photo you are particularly proud of, then send it our way. Remember to include your name and a short caption, and we'll do the rest!

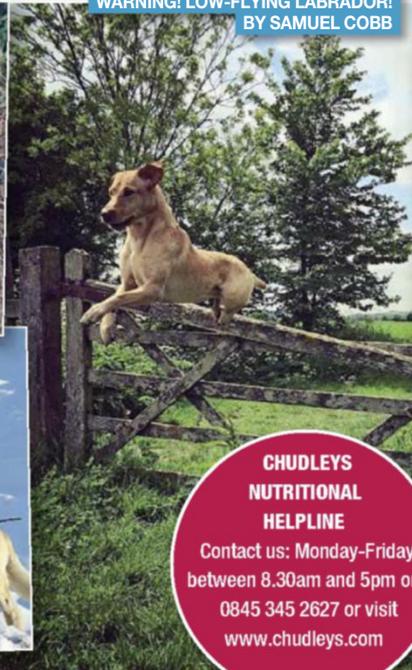
There isn't a limit to how many photographs, or how many times, you can enter, but photos must be a minimum file size of 1MB and you must not be a professional photographer.

So what are you waiting for? Get snapping! See form for full entry details.

TARA JUMPING BRUSHWOOD,
BY TOM ROBERTSON



WARNING! LOW-FLYING LABRADOR!
BY SAMUEL COBB



MILLIE ON KEEPERS' DAY,
BY ANDY MCBEY

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How to enter

Photos can be sent in by post, email, via the *Sporting Shooter* Facebook page or via Twitter. See details below.

Calendar Competition

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Please note, photos will need to be of a suitable quality in order to be chosen for the calendar – at least 1MB in jpg or tif format. Competition is not open to professional photographers.

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CHUDLEYS TIP OF THE MONTH #5

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Specifically formulated for dogs with lower workloads, Chudleys Classic contains an assortment of beneficial ingredients to provide less active working dogs with a healthy, nutritious diet.

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to support intestinal health while strengthening the immune system.

The nutrient package in Chudleys Classic is ideally suited to lower levels of work with reduced protein and fat content, whereas feeds such as Chudleys Working Crunch are designed with higher levels of protein and fat, to suit demanding workloads.

As well as containing an abundance of beneficial nutrients, Chudleys Classic is a delicious and completely flavoursome recipe which appeals to even the fussiest working dog.



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QUESTION OF THE MONTH

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The right reward

Q In your training articles you use food a lot. Most of the gundog friends that I talk to say that food is a waste of time; it will mess my dog up; and that my dog should learn to respect me and do things because I tell him to. There is a lot of different advice and I don't really know what to do. This is my first gundog and I want to make sure that everything is done properly. Can you help to clear up my confusion?

A HOWARD KIRBY replies: Great question, and it's important that you understand that there are a variety of different training styles available to you, all of which will work to a greater or lesser degree. I'm afraid that I would disagree completely with those that tell you that using food rewards to train a dog will, in their words, 'mess up the dog'. Our Mullenscote Working for a Living training plan, encourages owners of both working and companion dogs to use the puppy's daily food allowance to teach many of the basic behaviours: come, sit, focus, stay, heel, directional commands and as many other behaviours as your imagination and skill

will allow. Using food as a reward has been employed by dog trainers since mankind's first interaction with wild dogs. They probably rewarded dogs that were brave enough to approach their campfires by throwing food scraps to 'reward' them. This encouraged those dogs to repeat the behaviour and so began the relationship.

However, my current school of thought is that we will also need to employ some training that will teach the dog that we do not approve of that behaviour. By teaching the dog that there is no reward for certain behaviours and reward for others, we can focus his mind on things that we want him to do. Reward-only based training can be really tricky where the behaviour your dog is offering is what we call 'self-rewarding'. For example, chasing rabbits around the local woods – this offers your dog massive rewards; quite simply, chasing rabbits will give much higher rewards than a piece of dry kibble to an overfull dog.

I suggest that you get someone to help you to develop a training plan that teaches the dog to offer behaviours in order to receive a reward.



This reward could be affection from you, a retrieve, hunting or food. You will need to employ a few or all of these motivational rewards to get the best from your dog – the choice is yours.

In short, if you use food in your training then this should enhance what you do, and not mess your dog up!

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Don't eat that!

Q I have a four-month-old Labrador who has got a nasty habit of eating droppings from other animals, and if she gets a chance she will even eat her own faeces. Could there be something lacking in her diet? And what is the best way of stopping her doing this? She also seems to love eating worms, particularly dried-up ones; is this normal puppy behaviour?

A VICKY PAYNE replies: Eating poop is normal for dogs! It is likely that during their domestication dogs would have lived mainly off human waste food, and human waste. Faeces have some nutritional value, and bitches must also be happy to clean up after their pups. Most puppies eat faeces, and most grow out of it, but you can help teach your puppy that it isn't acceptable behaviour. If you are feeding a good-quality, balanced diet, and your puppy is growing well, there is no reason to assume she is lacking anything. Her own faeces are the easiest to deal



with: simply take her out to toilet on a lead, and after she goes, lead her away from the pile, praise and even offer a food treat, then clear up the poop. Other droppings can be harder to avoid, but again, she should be on the lead at this stage, so if she looks at some droppings use the lead and a food treat to lead her away from the pile, saying, "Leave that." Give lots of verbal praise and a treat when she looks at you. Try to choose dropping-free areas for early training to reduce the distraction. If she eats worms, slugs, and snails I would strongly recommend asking your vet about a preventative treatment for lungworm.

Fence fears

Q My 10-month-old lurcher ran into an electric fence while chasing a rabbit; now she won't chase any more. What can I do about it?

A JACKIE DRAKEFORD replies: Take the 'chase' out of rabbit catching for a while by taking her ferreting, using purse nets and letting her hold the rabbits in the nets. Also, let her seek rabbits in cover, so that she gets a chance to peg some before they bolt. Do not egg her on to chase free bolters just yet – she needs to choose when she is ready to risk chasing again. Sometimes letting them see another dog chasing will start them off again, but be careful the other dog does not bully her, or you will just reinforce the idea that chasing rabbits is scary. You will need to be very patient as some take longer than others to get over their fear, and it's something you can't hurry. But it will come in time.



PICTURES: NICK RIDLEY / REBECCA GREEN (TOP/CENTRE)

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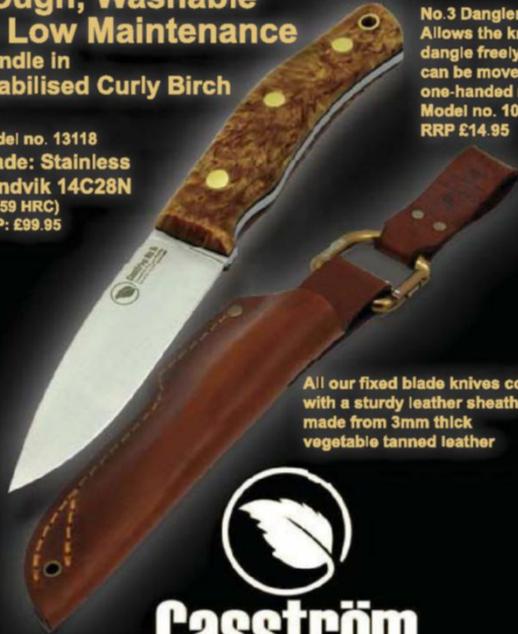
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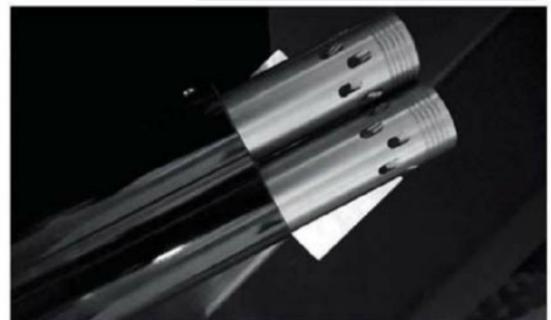
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LIFELONG HEALTH: The patter of tiny paws

Vicky continues the series by looking at the labour stage and the puppies' crucial first few weeks in the world

The first stage of labour can last from hours to a day and involves restlessness, digging, nesting, panting and abdominal discomfort. Proper labour starts when the bitch lies down and has active contractions. Once these start, you should expect a puppy within 20-30 minutes; any longer and you should seek veterinary advice. It can be normal for bitches to have a break of a few minutes to a couple of hours between puppies, but if she seems distressed or you are concerned the break has gone on too long, consult your vet. It is useful to find out in advance what your vet's opening hours and out of hours arrangements are, in case of emergency. Usually a visit to the clinic will be recommended, so imaging and surgical facilities are available if needed. If part of the litter

has been born, take them to the vets too, keeping them in a box with a hot water bottle for warmth.

In a normal whelping, the bitch will remove the membranes from each pup and lick it clean, before the pup heads for the teats. The bitch will also break the umbilical cord in most cases. Avoid cutting or tying the cord; it will shrivel up and drop off in a few days. You may wish to photograph or mark pups for

identification, and weigh them, but let them suckle as soon as possible.

Newborn pups must be kept warm as they can't regulate their own body temperature. Pups should be twitching and moving more or less all the time. It is not unusual for pups to lose a little weight in the first 24 hours, but they should then gain weight steadily, and double their weight in the first week. Early handling for weighing helps the neural development of puppies, as well as helping you to identify any pups that are struggling. In the first few days, also check the



Exercise on grass will encourage strong bones and joints

'In a normal whelping, the bitch will remove the membranes from each pup and lick it clean, before the pup heads for the teats'

pups for any major congenital defects, such as cleft palate. If you require tail docking, contact your docking vet as soon as the puppies are born. Tail docking must be performed on pups no older than five days; dew claws can legally be removed up until the eyes open (but most people won't do this after the five-day mark either).

In the first two weeks your bitch will stimulate the puppies to urinate and defecate by licking them. After this, they start to be stimulated by feeling their feet on different surfaces, but will also soil the whelping areas meaning more frequent cleaning is required.

Solid foods can be introduced from three to four weeks. I have had great success with minced chicken or lightly soaked biscuits, which the pup can learn to mouth rather than suck, but some breeders prefer to introduce a runny 'porridge' made from puppy kibble and milk replacer.

Introduce your puppies to lots of sights and sounds early on; don't protect them from the radio or Hoover! Their visual development can be helped by toys in bright primary colours, and hanging toys encourage curiosity. As the pups grow, using feeding toys or scattering food in dry grass will help develop their noses for hunting. Strong bones and joints should be encouraged from an early age by avoiding slippery surfaces, but encouraging exercise on grass or non-slip flooring. Climbing over, crawling under, and negotiating obstacles will also develop strong joints and good balance. Introduce your pups to lots of different people and, if possible, other animals. I recommend getting a CD of sound effects and introducing gunshot, fireworks, traffic noises, etc. at this early stage when the puppies can associate them with fun and play. ■



Puppies should steadily gain weight in the first week

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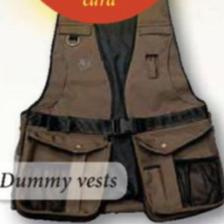
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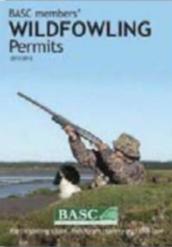
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Lyalvale Express Masters competition to make its debut

Cartridge manufacturer Lyalvale Express has teamed up with Atkin Grant & Lang Shooting Ground to create a brand-new clay shooting competition; The Lyalvale Express Masters makes its debut on 29 and 30 April 2016.

The competition is shot out of 125 targets. This is split between a 100-bird English Sporting set over 12 stands, and a 25-bird Sporting trap. The latter must be shot with Lyalvale Express cartridges, which will be supplied free of charge on the day.

Prizes will be awarded from High Gun down to third place in CPSA classes AAA, AA, A, B, C, Ladies and Juniors. The High Gun will win 500 cartridges and £100 cash, with second place taking 250 cartridges and £50 cash, and third place claiming 150 cartridges.

Lyalvale's Marcus Iddon commented: "We are delighted to have developed this challenging and fun competition with the team at Atkin Grant & Lang. They have invested heavily in the

shooting ground which, in our view, is now one of the best in the UK. I look forward to shooting the course myself"

To enter, call 01582 849 382. Entry costs £45. Both plastic and fibre wad cartridges allowed.



PICTURE: DON BRUNT

CREATURE FINDERS



TO CLAIM A BADGE, SEND AN ADDRESSED ENVELOPE WITH 58P OF STAMPS WHEN YOU ENTER THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION. SEE PAGE 11 FOR DETAILS.



WE FOUND PETE PARROTT ON PAGE 55 OF THE APRIL ISSUE

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• Debbie Drayton, Lincs • David S Rogalski, Caithness • Christopher Drury, Lincs • P A Green, Heref • Richard Goodacre, Lincs • Raymond Murray, Dumfries • I Henton, Lincs • James Henton, Lincs • Graham Guy, Shrops • Peter Hall, Yorks • Brian Hughes, Northants • Ian Glen, Perth • John Hart, Lincs • Phil Jones, Liverpool • Norman Marshall, Telford • C T Diver, Cambs • Mike Slocombe, Lincs • A M Fawcett, Northants • Brian Mathews, NI • Roger Reed, Gwent • Christine Short, Gwent • Finley Lewis, Glos • Trev Daykin, Notts • Steve Allen, Notts • David Baker, Ellon • Alan Goodwin, Suff • Stephen Restall, Suff • Ali Thom, Powys • Chris Prics, Rugby • Mike Jolly, Aberdeen • Liz Harper, Norwich • Alfie Maidment, Sussex • Terry Clark, Essex • Kevin Sampson, Essex • James Crosby, Cambs • Ken Monks, Ches • Derek Laidlaw, Oldham • Kriss

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nr Romsey. Tel: (023) 80694623 Spitfire Shoot Stockbridge. Open for practice Mon-Sat. One-to-one tuition, groups, corporate, stag/hen parties, in-field game instruction Tel: 01264 810312 Email: info@spitfireshoot.co.uk www.spitfireshoot.co.uk

TEST VALLEY CLAY PIGEON CLUB

Cocksford Firs, Popham, Hants Sporting and Skeet. Every other Sunday. £35 a year membership. Tel: 01256 771055

THREE COUNTIES NR HOOK.

Sporting, Tuition. Contact Paul Beecher on 07739 556790; www.beechershooting.co.uk

WALLERS ASH GUN CLUB

Alresford Drive, Winchester. Tel: 07710872875 email:travellingclays@btinternet.com Practice, tuition, sporting, all abilities catered for www.wallersash.co.uk

HERTFORDSHIRE

BROOMHILLS SHOOTING GROUND

Markyate. Tuition, gunshop. Tel: (01582) 842280 www.broomhills.co.uk

CODICOTE BOTTOM CLAY TARGET CLUB

Codicote Bottom Farm, Kimpton road, Codicote, Herts SG4 8SR. Sporting, DTL, Alternate Sundays 10-1. Tel: 07768 714774 or 01438 814749 www.codicote-bottom.org

CUPID GREEN SKEET & ABT CLUB

Hemel Hempstead, Skeet & ABT Every Weds & 1st & 3rd Sat of

month. Felt/fibre wads only Tel: 01582 849382

LEA VALLEY SHOOTING ASSN

nr Hertford. Tuition, practice, have a go days. Tel: 08707 605057. www.lvsa.org.uk

NUTHAMPSTEAD SG

Sporting DTL, OTR, tuition, shop. Tel: (01763) 848172 www.nuthampsteadshootingground.co.uk

PARK STREET & DISTRICT GC

Tel: (01923) 677 294

ISLE OF WIGHT

ISLE OF WIGHT GUN CLUB

near Godshill. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, ABT. Tel: (01983) 567330

KENT

ABBEY SHOOTING DETLING SG

Skeet, Sporting. Tel: 01580 860783 / 07710 463896

GREENFIELDS SHOOTING GROUND

nr Canterbury. Practice, tuition, have-a-go days. Tel: (01227) 713222 www.greenfields.shooting.co.uk

DARTFORD CLAY SHOOTING CLUB

Sporting, Skeet, OTR, Compact. Tel: (01322) 311001 www.dartfordcsc.co.uk

HIGH BROOMS GUN CLUB

Meet fortnightly. Sunday morning 60-bird shoot. Pembury and Lambhurst grounds. Visitors welcome at cost of £12. Tel: (01580) 892542 email: malbow@fsmail.net

INVICTA ZZ

Off A21 btwn Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells. Helice (ZZ) only. Full Eng breakfast until cook goes to shoot. Reg shoots only. Tel: (01580) 892542

KENT GUN CLUB

near Dartford. Trap, DTL, ADT, ZZ. Free tuition to beginners. Tel: (01883) 340248

KINGSFERRY GUN CLUB

Kingsferry Bridge. Skeet, Sportrap. Non-lead shot only. Tel: (01795) 877037

MARTIN GORSE WOOD CPC

nr Dover in Kent Tel: 01233 713341 www.www.martingorse.co.uk

WEST KENT SHOOTING SCHOOL

Paddock Wood. Sporting, Skeet and 100ft tower. Tel: (01892) 834306 www.wkss.demon.co.uk

LONDON

A1 SHOOTING GROUND

near Rowley Green. OTR, DTL, Sporting, tuition. (020) 8441 9986 www.a1sg.freemove.co.uk

WEST LONDON SHOOTING SCHOOL

Northolt. 100 traps, 8 towers, tuition, restaurant, corporate. Tel: (020) 8845 1377 www.shooting-school.co.uk

OXFORDSHIRE

GREENFIELD ENTERTAINMENT

Islip, nr Oxford. 50 Sporting, tuition. Tel: (01869) 325218 www.greenfieldentertainment.co.uk

SURREY

BISLEY GUN CLUB

Near Brookwood DTL. CPSA competitions held 1st & 3rd Saturday of month. Tel: (01737) 242332 www.bisleygunclub.org.uk

BISLEY SHOOTING GROUND

nr Brookwood, Woking. Sporting (inc towers) tuition & practice. Open 7 days. Booking essential. Tel: (01483) 797017 www.bisleyshoot-ing.co.uk

CATERHAM CLAYS

off Caterham bypass. Sporting. Tel: (01883) 622656

GATWICK CLAY SHOOTING

SCHOOL Skeet, SKD, DTL, Sporting Tel:

Midlands Grand Prix at Red Hall a success

The Easter bank holiday weekend saw Paul Wilkinson come out on top at the Midlands Grand Prix; the first major event to be run by Mickley Hall Shooting School with sponsorship from Promatic LTD, Eley Hawk Cartridges and Edgar Brothers.

Held at Red Hall Farm in Staffordshire, by permission of Mick and Mandy Berrisford, the event saw 450 competitors turn up to shoot in the changeable British weather.

Friday, blessed by warm sunny weather, saw James Attwood, Cheryl Hall, K Bridges and John Lee competing for the top spots; on scores of 140, 136, 141 and 142 respectively, it

was a close call until Paul Wilkinson blasted through a score of 146, which proved unbeatable and earned him the champion spot. Cheryl Hall finished top of Ladies, and K Bridges' 141 was plenty good enough to secure AA class.



PICTURE: HANNOCH WELLS

07769 701842. www.gatwickclay-shootingschool.org.uk

HORNE CLAY PIGEON CLUB

Sporting shoots, tuition, corporate at Gatton Bottom, Markedge Lane, nr Reigate and Court Farm, Chaldon, nr Caterham on the Hill. Tel: (01342) 842986 or 07711 332097 www.clayandcountry.f2s.com

NATIONAL CLAY SHOOTING CNTR

Bisley. Four OTR layouts, Skeet, OS, ABT, Double Trap. T: 01483 797666 www.nsc-clays.co.uk

THE STAR GUN CLUB

CHESSINGTON Sporting. Tel: (020) 8898 3129

SUSSEX

BLACKDOWN SHOOT

Midhurst. 50 Sporting 4th Sunday of month. Fibre wads only. Also at School House Farm, Northchapel: 50 Sporting every 2nd and 5th Sunday. Tel: (01428) 707584 Mob: 07770 777679.

NORTHALL CLAY PIGEON CLUB

Sporting, Compact, ABT, D/T, Skeet, tuition, corporate. Tel: (01825) 791783

OAKESFIELD SPORTING GUN CLUB

Compak, Sporting, tuition and corporate Rudgwick, West Sussex Tel: 01306 740537/01737 222998

SOUTHDOWN SPORTING GUN CLUB

nr Worthing. Sporting, Skeet, Fitasc, Sportrap, DTL, ABT, tuition. Tel: (01903) 877555 www.southdownsgc.co.uk

EAST

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

COUNTRY PURSUITS

Chittering/Stretham. Sporting, Sportrap. Tel: (01353) 669300

FENLAND GC

Washbrooke Farm, Benwick Road, Duddington. Tel: 01354 655583

GRANDSEN AIRFIELD SG

Tel: (01767) 627663 www.grandsenshootingground.co.uk

HADDON LODGE SHOOTING

Ground nr Peterborough. Sporting incl tower, tuition. Tel: (01733) 240119 www.haddon-lodge.co.uk

HIGH HARTHAY SG

Tel: 07956 293390, www.hhsg.co.uk

MOVING TARGETS

Gt Eversden 50 ESP practice 2nd & 4th Sundays. Contact: Tel: 07811815499 or www.mobileclay-shooting.co.uk

ESSEX

BUSH HILL CLAY CLUB

nr Billericay. Sporting. Tel. (01277) 220974

CLACTON GUN CLUB

Little Clacton. Esp, Skeet, DTL. Tel: (01255) 673146

COLCHESTER GARRISON

Clay Pigeon Club Sporting. Tel: 01206 576 756 (Chairman), 01206 392 357 (Secretary)

ESSEX SHOOTING GROUND

nr Harlow. Tel: 01245 283534, www.essexshootingground.com

FENNES SHOOTING SCHOOL

Braintree CM7 5PL Tel: 01376 324599 www.fennesclays.co.uk

FOWES CLAY CLUB

Belchamp Otten. 01787 312930 www.fowesclayclub.org.uk

MAYLAND & DISTRICT GUN CLUB

ESK, DTL, compact. (01268) 470 323

ORION GUN CLUB

nr Brentwood Sporting, Skeet, DTL. 07000 486258 www.gunclub.co.uk

PARKFORD SHOOTING CENTRE

Skeet, Sporting, DTL. Tel: (01255) 820230

SOUTHEND GUN CLUB

nr Rochford Tel: (01702) 219395

THREE ACRES SPORTING CLAYS

Leaden Riding. Sporting, pool. Tel: 07768 742117

WALTHAM ABBEY SHOOTING GRND

Sporting, tuition. Tel: 07768 742117 www.claypigeonshoot.co.uk

SPELLBROOK CSC SPORTING

Tuition. Tel: (01279) 419427 www.spellbrookclays.co.uk

NORFOLK

MID NORFOLK SHOOTING SCHOOL

Taverham, nr Norwich. Tuition, corporate. (01603) 860436 www.midnorfolkshootingsschool.com

SUFFOLK

BADWELL ASH GC

nr Bury St Edmunds. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, ABT. Tel: 01359 259547

BARROW HEATH GUN CLUB

nr New-market. Sporting. Tel: (01322) 405226

HIGH LODGE SHOOTING SCHOOL

nr Saxmundham. Skeet, SKD, DTL, Sporting. Tel: (01986) 784347 www.highlodge.co.uk

LAKENHEATH CLAY TARGET CLUB

Between Mildenhall and Brandon. Skeet, DTL, Sportrap, gun room, tuition. Food. Tel: (01638) 533353 www.lctc.co.uk

NORTH WEST

CHESHIRE

SOUTH CHESHIRE CLAY CLUB

Alasger Nr Crewe, 1/2 mile from junction 16 M6, Cheshire, North West

ENGLISH SPORTING SHOOT

tuition, refreshments. Tel: 07768570132 Catton Hall Shooting Ground nr Frodsham. Practice, tuition, corporate. (01928) 788295

CLOUDSIDE SHOOTING GROUND

nr Congleton. Skeet, DTL, Compak, Sportrap, ABT, OT. Tel: 01260 226392. www.cloudside.co.uk

MIDDLE FARM CLAY SHOOT

Bredbury. Tel: 0161 4302492 North Wales Shooting School nr Chester. Sporting, Skeet, OS, Fitasc, tuition, practice. Tel: (01244) 812219 www.shootingschool.net

CUMBRIA

PENRITH & DISTRICT GUN CLUB

DL, Sporting, ABT. 01697 342062

KENDAL & DISTRICT TARGET CLUB

Kendal, Cumbria. DTL esc b trap Tel Colin Phillips 01539 560298

ISLE OF MAN

AYRE CLAY PIGEON CLUB

Skeet, DTL, ABT, Double-Trap, UT, OT and Sporting. Tel: 01624 880744 www.bluepointshooting.co.uk

LANCASHIRE

A6 CLAY TARGET CENTRE

Westhoughton, nr Bolton. ABT, DTL, Skeet, Sportrap, tuition, restaurant. Tel: 01942 843578 www.a6ctc.co.uk

BLACKPOOL GUN CLUB

nr Kirkham Preston. Sporting. Tel: 07730 409415

KELBROOK SHOOTING SCHOOL

nr Foulridge. (01282) 861632

RUNNING HILL CLAY PIGEON CLUB

Sporting clays, Saddleworth www.running-hill-cpc.co.uk

WITHTS SHOOTING GROUND

Nr. Carnforth Lancashire M6 J35 Sporting, ABT, DTL, Skeet, Practice; Tuition by appointment Tel 07967 194120 www.withtsclyshoot.co.uk

MANCHESTER CLAY SHOOTING CLUB

Sporting, Skeet, tuition, club house. Tel: 0161 653 4438 www.manchesterclayshooting.com

SOUTH WEST

CORNWALL

CART RIDGE SHOOTING CLUB

1/2m east of A38 btwn Landrake & Tidedford. Sporting, tuition. Tel: 01752 851262

COUNTY GUN CLUB

Tel: 01579 863011merys Gun Club 01726 823895

NORTH CORNWALL GUN CLUB

nr North Petherwin. DTL, tuition. Tel:

(01566) 785550

TRAX AND TRAILS ACTIVITY CNTR

Tamar Valley. Tuition. Tel: (01579) 384714 www.traxandtrails.co.uk Devon

ASHCOMBE SHOOTING GROUND

nr Dawlish. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, high tower, tuition. Tel: (01626) 866766 www.ashcombeadventure.co.uk

AXMINSTER GUN CLUB DTL

tuition. Tel: (01404) 881588 Bradford Shooting Ground, Skeet, Sporting, DTL, ABT. Tel: (01409) 281341

CULM VALE GUN CLUB

nr Cullompton. Sporting. Tel: (01460) 234245

CWA SHOOTING GROUND

Winnards Perch, Wadebridge, Cornwall. Skeet and Sporting clays, contact Mike Holmes 01872 864021

FOUR SEASONS GUN CLUB

East Hill Strips, nr Ottery St Mary. Skeet, Sporting, Compact. Tel: (01395) 278862

NEWNHAM PARK SG

nr Plymouth. Sporting, Skeet, ABT, DTL, Sportrap, tuition. Tel: (01752) 343456 www.newnham.co.uk

NORTH DEVON SG

nr Ilfracombe. Sporting, practice & tuition. Tel: 01271 863959 or 01271 850393 ndsg@hotmail.co.uk

SHALDEN SHOOTING SCHOOL

nr Shillingford. Sporting. Tel: (01398) 331021 www.shalden-shootingschool.co.uk

SOUTH WEST SHOOTING SCHOOL

Lynton Cross. Sporting, Compact. Tel:



nr Cheltenham. Sporting, Fitasc, OT, gunshop. Tel: (01242) 870391
COTSWOLD CLAY PIGEON CLUB
Fosse Way, nr Stow. Sporting, pool. Tel: (01451) 821431
GLOUCESTER CLAY SHOOTING CLUB
on the A38 between Tewkesbury & Gloucester. Skeet, OS. Tel: (01452) 739472 or 07785 508238.

IAN COLEY SHOOTING SCHOOL
nr Cheltenham ESP & DTL Practice – Pay & Play. Tuition by Appt. Tel: 01242 870391 www.iancoley.co.uk
LONGRIDGE SHOOTING GROUND
Bromsberrow Heath, Ledbury Tel: (07971) 447138

MORK CLAY CLUB
nr St Briavels. Sporting. Tel: (01594) 530102

PRESCOTT SHOOTING SCHOOL
nr Cheltenham. Practice, Tuition, Corporate Simulated game days. High Tower, ESP Sportrap. Tel: (01242) 673542 or 07921 951477 www.prescottshooting.com

STROUD & DISTRICT CLAY SHOOTING CLUB
nr Bisley. Skeet, OS, DTL. Tel: (01453) 764443

WESTFIELD SHOOTING GROUND
Sporting, tuition, groups, corporate & simulated game. Tel: 0870 6091751 www.theclayshooting-company.com

SOMERSET

BROOK BANK SHOOTING GROUND
nr Cheddar. Sporting, Skeet, UT, DTL, ABT, tuition & corporate. Tel: 01749 871055. www.brookbankshooting.co.uk

IYTHORN SPORTING
nr Street. Compact Sporting under cover. Tuition & corporate. Tel: (01458) 447120 or 07970 151321 www.iythornsporting.co.uk

MENDIP SHOOTING GROUND
nr Wells. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, ABT, clubhouse, gunshop. Tel: (01749) 673471

PODIMORE SHOOTING GROUND
Ilchester. Sporting, Fitasc, Sportrap. Tel: (01935) 862510 www.podimore-shooting.co.uk

SHIPHAM SPORTING CLAYS
nr Clevedon. Sporting, tuition, practice. Tel: (01275) 877851

VALLEY SHOOTING GROUND
info@valleycalyshoot.co.uk

WOODSPRING CLAY SHOOT
Wick St Lawrence, nr Weston super Mare. Sporting/50-bird practice/private parties. Tel: 07503 766373

WILTSHIRE

BARBURY SHOOTING SCHOOL
nr Swindon. Tuition, corporate, Sporting, FITASC, Compact, Skeet. Tel: 07872 666154 www.barburyschool.com

BASSETT BREAKERS GUN CLUB
Flaxlands Shooting Ground, nr Swindon. Sporting. Tel: (01793) 750801

CADLEY CLAY SHOOTING GROUND
nr Marlborough. Sporting, practice, tuition, corporate. Tel: (01672) 512052 www.cadleyclays.co.uk

URCHFONT CLAY PIGEON CLUB
nr Devizes. DTL, Sporting. Tel: (01380) 721218

WOOD FARM CLAY SHOOTING CLUB
nr Warminster. Skeet, DTL, Sporting. Tel: (01747)860471

MIDLANDS

DERBYSHIRE
BAKEWELL & WIRKSWORTH CPC
nr Brassington. Sporting. Tel: (01629) 814395

DARLEY DALE CPSC
nr Brassington. Sporting. Tel: (01629) 733161

DOVERIDGE CLAY SHOOTING CLUB
nr Doveridge. Skeet, DTL, Sporting. Tel:(01889)565986

LOWES LANE SHOOTING GROUND
nr Swadlincote. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, high tower, flush, tuition. Tel: (01332) 866800

OCKBROOK SPORTING CLAYS
nr Derby. Tel: (01773) 714731

YEAVELEY ESTATE
nr Ashbourne. Sporting, Tuition. Tel: (01335) 330247

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

LONGRIDGE SHOOTING GROUND
M50 (Jn 2) Tel: 07971 447138

SOUTH WORCESTER SG
nr Upton-upon-Severn. DTL, Sporting, Practice, tuition. Tel: (01684) 310605 www.swsq.co.uk

WORCESTERSHIRE GUN CLUB
Illey, W Midlands. ABT, Sporting. Tel: 07836 225580 www.w-g-c.co.uk

WYRE FOREST GUNS
nr Button Oak. Sporting. Tel: (01299) 403730

LEICESTERSHIRE

BAGWORTH MINERS CPC
nr Coalville. DTL, Sporting, ABT. (01530) 260816

GRANGE FARM SC
nr Desford. Sporting, Skeet, OS, DTL, ABT. Tel: (01455) 822208

HOTON CLAY CLUB
Sporting. Tel: 0116 230 2311 www.hoton-clay-club.co.uk

KEGWORTH SHOOTING GROUND
(YS) Sporting Tel: 07973 111 650 Long Lane, 1 1/2 miles due north of Kegworth Village, at its junction with Ratcliffe lane. Nearest Sat nav: one mile south of the ground DE74 2GA.

KIBWORTH SHOOTING GROUND
Off A6 Kibworth-Market Harborough Rd. Sporting Skeet, DTL, Tower, Fitasc, Sportrap, flush. Tuition. Tel: 01162 796001 rose@kibworthshootingground.co.uk

MARKET HARBOROUGH & DISTRICT SC
Sporting, Skeet, OS, DTL. Tel: (01858) 463698

NORMANTON SHOOTING GROUND
nr Thurlaston. Sporting, ABT, DT Tel: (01455) 888210

SPA VALE SHOOTING GROUND
nr Lutterworth. Tel: 0116 247 8917 www.spa-vale.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE

ANCHOLME VALLEY CLAY TARGET CLUB
Kirtan Lindsey Airfield. ESK, SKD, DTL, ABT, Sporting. Tel: (01777) 818362 ancholme-valley-ctc.org.uk
GRIMSTHORPE ESTATE SG
nr Eden-ham. Sporting. Tel: (01778) 591128

HAVEN CLAY SHOOTING CLUB
Haven Bank, New York, LN4 4XR. Enquiries to Graham Fordham 07854227175. 30-bird Sporting, DTL, family days, friendly club. Visit havenpc.webs.com for shooting dates.

LINCS CLAY CLUB
Church Lane, South Clifton, Nr Lincoln, Lincolnshire NG23 7AW, www.lincscayclub.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE SHOOTING GROUND
Sutton Bridge. Sporting, Skeet, ABT, Sportrap, tower, tuition, restaurant, corporate. Tel: (01406) 359300/ (01945) 700622 www.shooting4you.co.uk

PINEWOOD SHOOTING GROUND
nr Gainsborough. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, OT, D/T, Compact. Tel: (01427) 628900. www.pinewood-sg.fsnet.co.uk

SINCLAIRS SHOOTING GROUND
Whaplode Drive, nr Holbeach. Skeet, Sporting, Compact, ABT & DTL. Open Weds-Sun, all year. Tel: (01406) 540362.

SPA VALE SHOOTING GROUND
Coventry Road (Near to Magna Park) Lutterworth, Tel No. 0116 2478917 www.spa-vale.co.uk

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

A614 SHOOTING GROUND
Near Nottingham, tuition. Tel: (0115) 9656144

COCKETT FARM SHOOTING GRND
nr Mansfield. Sporting, Skeet, STR, White Gold, tuition. Tel: (01623) 882244 www.cockettfarm.com

NOTTINGHAM & DISTRICT GC
DTL, Skeet, OS. Tel: (0115) 9273492
ORSTON SHOOTING GROUND
Sporting, Skeet, Sportrap, DTL, ABT, D/Rise, Trench, practice, tuition, corporate and shop. Tel: (01949) 851181 or 07831 221110 www.orston.com

OXTON SHOOTING SCHOOL
Sporting, Skeet, Compact, Sportrap, ABT, DTL, Fitasc, tuition, shop. Tel: (01623) 882523

STILEHOLLOW SHOOTING SCHOOL
nr Mansfield. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, ABT, tower, tuition. (01623) 823930 www.stilehollow.com

NORTHAMPTON

NORTHAMPTON SHOOTING GRND
Skeet, DTL, ABT, tuition. (01604) 642252 northamptonshooting-ground.co.uk

SHROPSHIRE

BRIDGNORTH & DISTRICT GUN CLUB
nr Wolverhampton. DTL. Tel: (01562) 883092

WEST MIDLANDS SG
Sporting, Skeet, ABT, Compact, Fitasc, ABT, gun room. Tel: (01939) 200644 www.wmsg.co.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE

CROSS FARM GUN CLUB
nr Kinver. Sporting year-round, ABT in summer. Tel: (01384) 873017 or 07973 875449

GARLANDS SHOOTING GROUND
Tamworth. Sporting, OT, DTL, Skeet. Tel: (01827) 383300

KINGSLEY MOOR SG
nr Alton Towers. Sporting. Tel: (01782) 550371

LEEK & DGC
Sporting. Tel: (01538) 386127

QUARNFORD SHOOTING GROUND
nr Leek. Sporting. Tel: (01298) 22204

RANTON CLAY TARGET CLUB
DTL, ABT, Sporting. (01782) 611775.

RODBASTON GUN CLUB
Sporting & tuition, Weds eves. www.shotgun.me.uk

MILLRAIDE COUNTRY SPORTS
Sporting, Skeet. Off junction 1 of the M54. WV11 2AZ. 01902 725 165 www.millraide-country-sports.co.uk

OKEDGE SHOOTING GROUND
Sporting, Fitasc Sporting, High Skeet, DTL. (01889) 881391

WERGS GUN CLUB
nr Essington. Sporting, Skeet. (01922) 476508

WARWICKSHIRE

BARBY SPORTING CLUB
nr Rugby. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, Compact. Tel: (01788) 891873 www.barbysporting.com

EDGEHILL SHOOTING GROUND
nr Banbury. Sporting, Skeet, OS, DTL, ABT, Compact. Tuition & corporate. (01295) 670100

HONESBERIE SHOOTING GROUND
Sporting, tuition, corporate. Tel: (01327) 260302 www.honesberie-shooting.co.uk

RUGBY & DISTRICT TRAP CLUB
ABT. Tel: (01788) 573257

WEDGNOCK SHOOTING GROUND
Sporting, Skeet, DTL, Sportrap. Tel: 01926 491948 www.adventuresport.co.uk

YORKSHIRE & N.E.

CO DURHAM
SPENNYMOOR & DISTRICT
Clay Pigeon Club Sporting, Skeet, ABT, DTL. Tel: (0191) 3772412 www.keithbutterwick.com/spenny Moor

EAST YORKSHIRE

EAST YORKSHIRE GUN CLUB
nr Beverley. Skeet, OS, SKD, DTL, ABT, UTR, Sporting. Tel: (01964) 551134

HUMBERSIDE SHOOTING GROUND
nr Beverley. Skeet, DTL, ABT, Compact, White Gold. Tel: (01964) 544357. www.pthorn.co.uk/shootingground

MONCKTON SG
N. Newbald. Tel: 01430 827229. www.moncktonshoot.co.uk

NORTH WOLDS GUN CLUB
Sporting, DTL, tuition. Tel: (01759) 368314

PARK LODGE SHOOTING SCHOOL
East Yorkshire DTL, ESK, ESP, ADT. Practice and lessons available. Tel: 07919 694587

NORTH YORKSHIRE

CONISTON SHOOTING GROUND
nr Skipton. Tel: 07831 399860

KNARESBOROUGH & DISTRICT GC
Sporting, Skeet, DTL, ABT. Tel: (01423) 561174.

NORTH OF ENGLAND CTC
nr Rufforth. Sporting, Skeet, OS, DTL, ABT. Tel: (01904) 738120.

NORTH YORKSHIRE SHOOTING SCHOOL
nr Thirsk. 07966 387273 northyorkshireschool.com

THIMBLEY SHOOTING GROUND
nr Osmotherley. Sporting, Sportrap, tuition, corporate. Tel: (01642) 351725 Mob: 07776 223609

WARREN GILL SHOOTING GROUND
nr Ripon. Tel: (01765) 689232 www.warrellgill.co.uk

NORTHUMBERLAND

BYWELL SHOOTING GROUND
nr Felton. Skeet, DTL, ABT, tower, shop. Tel: (01670) 787827 www.bywellshootingground.com

STEVE SMITH SG
nr Dinnington. Sporting, DTL, Skeet, ABT. Tel: (01661) 822444. www.stevesmiths.co.uk

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

FOX HOUSE CLAY SPORTS
Sporting, tuition, corporate. Tel: (0114) 2663822 or 07976 5211369

SYCAMORE SHOOTING GROUNDS
Sporting, DTL, D/R, tuition, corporate. Tel: (0114) 272 4602

WEST YORKSHIRE

BATLEY & DISTRICT GUN CLUB
nr Morley. Sporting Tel: (01484)711874

EMLEY CLAYSHOOT
Sporting every 2nd Sunday. Tuition available. Mob: 07814 538927

GREYSTONE WOOD SHOOTING GRND
nr Otley. Sporting. Mob: 07960 352123

HOLMFIELD SHOOTING SCHOOL
nr Huddersfield. Skeet, DTL, ABT, Tel: (01484) 685464

N. IRELAND

FOYMORE LODGE
off the A4 in Co Armagh (signed from Portadown & M1 j12). Sporting, instruction, club house. www.foymorelodge.com

WALES

CRYNANT SHOOTING GROUND
Port Talbot, South Wales. Sporting, Skeet, OS, DTL, ABT, tuition, corporate. Tel: (01639) 881185 eurotrap.co.uk

DOVEY VALLEY SHOOTING GRND
Llanwrin, Machynlleth, Powys. Sporting, Skeet, DTL, sim game, practice, tuition, corporate. (01650) 511252. www.doveyvalley.co.uk

GRIFFIN-LLOYD SHOOTING GRND
Mid-Wales, Welsh Marches. Sporting, ABT, OT, tuition. Tel: (01547) 550634 Nwww.griffinlloyd.co.uk

FAUXDEGLA SHOOTING GROUND
North Wales. DTL, ABT, Skeet. Tel: 01978 790198

MID WALES SC
nr Llanidloes. DTL, ABT. Tel: (01686) 430654

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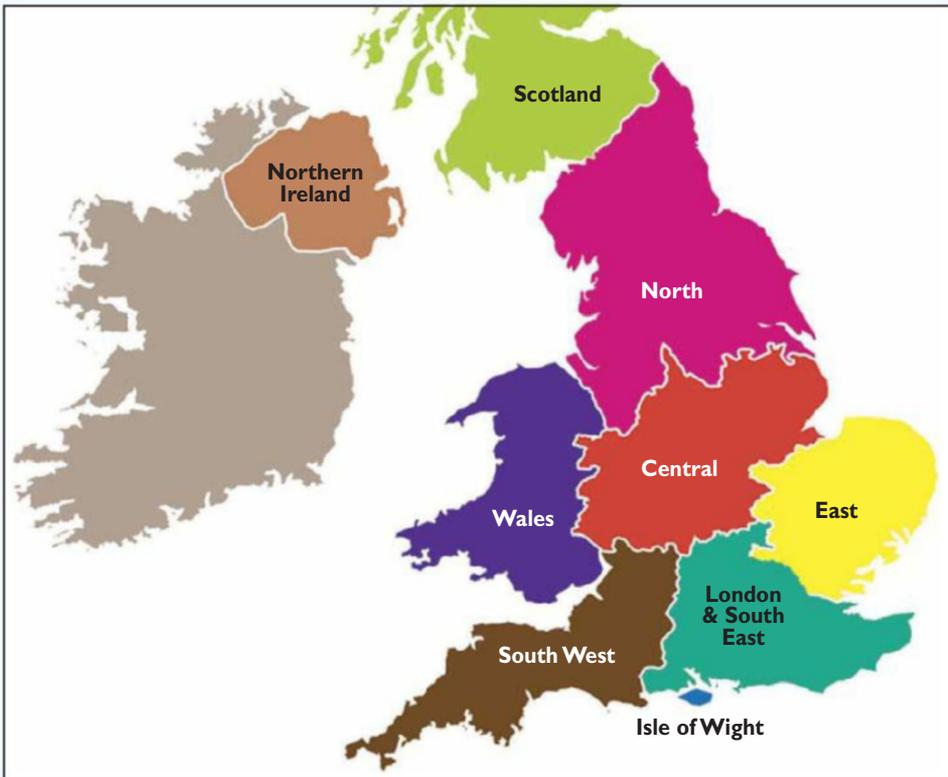


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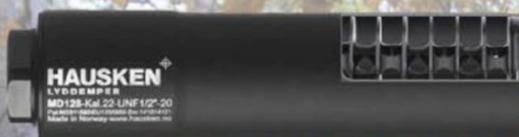




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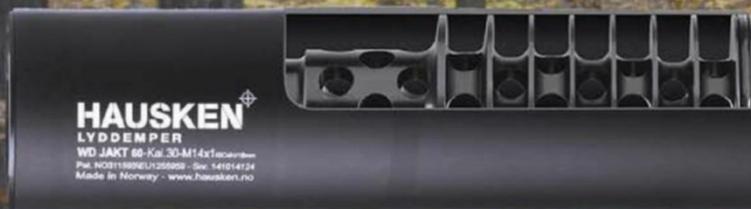
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