Nick Harvey

WEBLEY & SCOTT MODEL 912 OVER AND UNDER

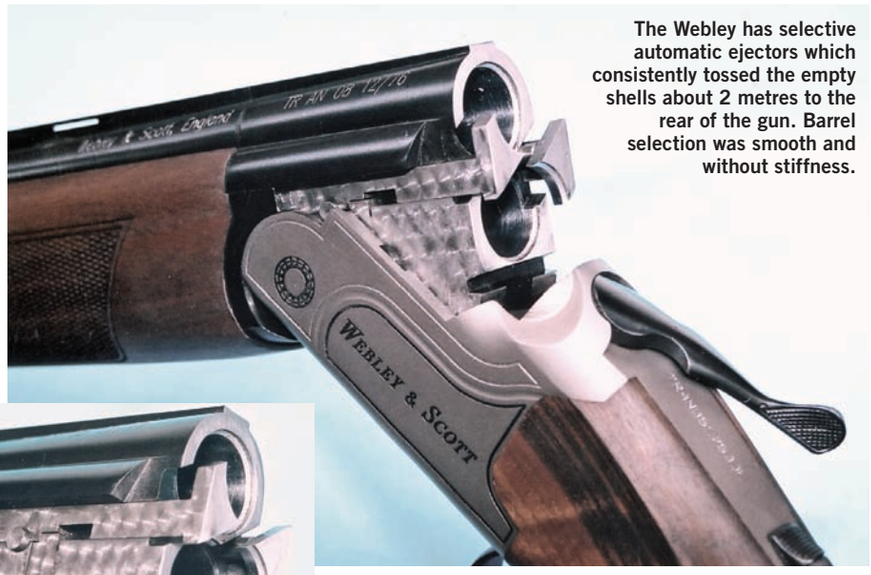
Highland Sports has introduced a new high-quality, value-priced over-under shotgun from old-line English gunmaker, Webley & Scott

English gunmakers are world famous for the amount of handwork that goes into the custom building of their fine double shotguns. The first company to break with this tradition was Webley & Scott who adopted the conventional boxlock principle and began making a line of traditional game guns known as the Model 700 series, which employed more machine work than was normal in the aftermath of World War I.

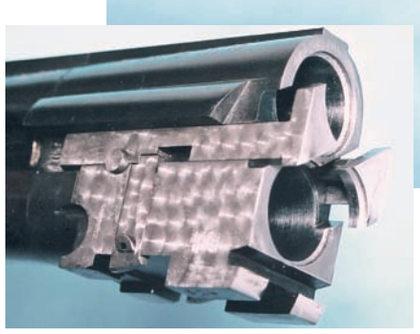
Some hand labour was still involved of course, and was used for those jobs where it was still superior to the machine. But the quick accurate cutting of parts and use of semi-inletted stocks allowed increased production and lower labour costs. Thus, Webley & Scott guns, although reasonably well-balanced and visually appealing, were priced well below the almost totally hand-made guns turned out by more prestigious English companies. Total hand labour is what sends the costs of production into orbit.

The semi-production approach taken by Webley & Scott added a further economy by eliminating the added fitting costs that would have accompanied incorporating a Greener crossbolt in the Model 700 series. Instead they depended solely on Purdey-type double underbites.

The Birmingham background in gun making which saw Webley & Scott's increasing use of machinery to build the Model 700 series evidently played a big part in influencing their future approach to building more affordable doubles like the new high-quality, value-priced Model 912 over-under being currently being offered by Highland Sports. The 912 offers a choice of 71cm or 76cm barrels with 76mm chambers in 12 gauge, selective automatic ejectors and five interchangeable extended choke tubes.



The Webley has selective automatic ejectors which consistently tossed the empty shells about 2 metres to the rear of the gun. Barrel selection was smooth and without stiffness.



LEFT: Model 912 employs a conventional box lock action built on the monobloc principle. The bloc is jeweled. Lock up is by a Browning-like lug the width of receiver that engages a single under lump.

The gun's outside appearance is one of English elegance. This field model over-under's receiver is made using CNC machining, with all parts heat-treated, has a nitrided French grey finish, which contrasts with the deep black on the barrels which resembles some type of black chrome. The trigger guard, top lever, safety and forearm release lever have the same black finish. The receiver is rounded and relatively unadorned except for the manufacturer's name; a deep-etched black line on each side of the receiver acts as a border with "Webley & Scott" stamped into the metal and coloured black. On the bottom of the receiver is "W&S 912" surrounded by a modest amount of scroll engraving. The trigger is gold-coloured.

The W&S 912 has a single-selective mechanical trigger. The top tang-mounted manual safety functions as both a safety and barrel selector. Moving the button rearward places the gun on "safe" and exposes the letter "S". Pushing the button to the right exposes two red dots and is the position in which the under barrel fires first. Pushing

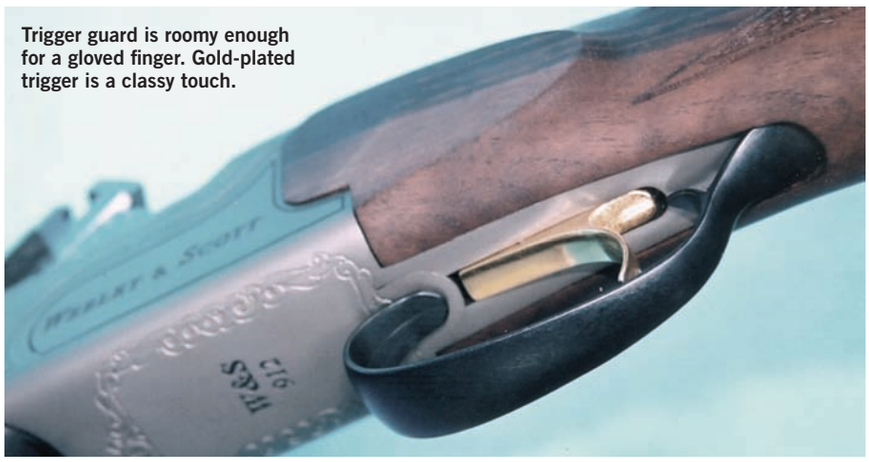
the button to the left exposes one red dot and selects the over barrel to fire first. However, to perform this function, the safety must be in the rear "OFF" position. The action is a conventional boxlock with a minimal number of parts. with considerable simplification in cocking and ejection mechanisms. Hammers are powered by coil main springs and are held cocked by sears pinned to the top of the action Rebounding firing pins are held back by coil springs, and the single, selective, gold-plated trigger resets to the other barrel by an inertial block.

The receiver remains rather deep and lock-up is the Browning-type, whereby a single bolt the width of the receiver protrudes from the bottom face of the standing breech and engages a bite in a pair of lumps below the under barrel.

Barrels are bored from solid bars of chrome-moly steel, internally honed, chrome-lined, and fitted in a jeweled steel monobloc then joined by ventilated side ribs. The top rib is ventilated, 10mm wide, cross-grooved to reduce glare and has a single red fibre optic front bead.

The muzzles are threaded to accept extended choke tubes which when installed protrude 25mm ahead of the muzzles and are knurled to make them easy to install or remove with the fingers. However, the chokes should still be nipped up with the wrench supplied or they could shoot loose and damge the threaded muzzles.The Webley & Scott 912 comes with five of these choke tubes: F,IM, M, IC and C. Barrels and tubes are rated for steel shot through Modified constriction. Firing steel shot through IM and tighter chokes may cause damage, and voids the warranty. To simplify matters each choke is marked "Steel Shot" or "No Steel Shot."

Webley & Scott Model 912 has plenty of heft to absorb the recoil of heavy 76mm field loads and swing smoothly for ducks on the pass.



Trigger guard is roomy enough for a gloved finger. Gold-plated trigger is a classy touch.

Coil spring-powered hammers are cocked when the action is opened by twin bars that are pushed rearward by an extension of the forearm iron. Notches in the hammers engage top-mounted sears that are lifted to fire, and tripped by the inertial block itself. The safety moves the inertial block out of alignment. A spring-loaded plunger in a block mounted in the rear of the tang applies constant, forward pressure to the inertial block. One or another arm of a U-shaped extension of the block contacts the tail of its sear. After firing, the block moves forward about 2.5mm allowing the bend of the U to contact the other sear.

> "The barrels accept extended choke tubes that protrude by 25mm from the muzzles and are knurled for easy use."

Ejection is selective. The ejector trips on the Webley & Scott are a pair of rods that engage the bases of the hammers. They pass through the monobloc sides, and, as the hammers fall, press up on the ejector sears. These, in turn, hold the ejectors back until the barrels are almost fully lowered, then release them to pelt out the empty hulls. The ejectors are of simplified Superposed pattern, with a separate ejector and extension on each side and the stop screws are replaced by roll pins.

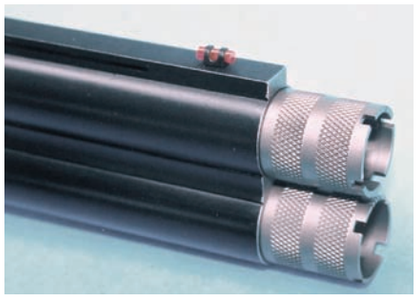
Wood-to-Metal fit on my sample was excellent with only a minimal amount of proud wood around the action sides and forearm iron. Both the forearm and buttstock are cut from the same stock blank, so match-up is perfect. The dark-hued walnut showed a pleasing degree of figure and appears to be dull oil-finished. Checkering is machine-cut in a bordered point pattern of around 18 lines to 25mm. The diamonds are evenly spaced, sharp and functional.

The stock on my test gun was definitely made for a right handed shooter, as it exhibited a noticeable degree of cast-off. The recoil pad incorporates a smooth, hard plastic top portion that reduces the chance of catching when shouldering the gun and a solid lower portion rather than being ventilated to soften the recoil.

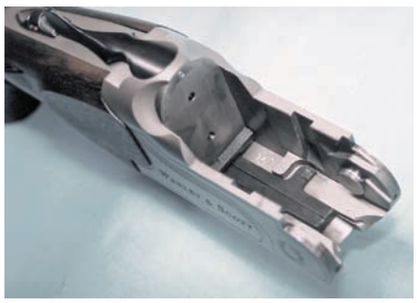
At 3.6 kgs, the W & S Model 912 was a bit slow to get moving, but naturally followed through with virtually no effort. Checkering provided just the right amount of purchase to control the gun without being abrasive and the slip-pad recoil pad helps the gun slide onto the shoulder.

The Model 912's trigger pulls scaled 3.7kgs for the lower barrel and 3.5 kgs for the upper barrel. Despite being a bit heavy, nonetheless, the triggers broke cleanly and were very consistent, ensuring the same trigger feel regardless of which barrel was being fired.

For testing and duck hunting I fitted the modified and improved-cylinder choke tubes. The Model 912 was patterned and function-fired with Super-X 70mm 36 grams of No. 4 shot. There were no malfunctions of any kind, and with the modified tube the Webley & Scott shot even, dense patterns



Monobloc blends perfectly with the standing breech. Sliding manual safety button houses selector that pivots the inertial block to the sear of barrel to fire first.



Browning under lug protrudes from bottom of standing breech and dual steel cocking bars slide in recess in bottom of receiver. Barrels are hinged on trunnions.

Extended choke tubes protrude from muzzles instead of the ubiquitous flush-mounted tubes.

well centred on the point of hold and a shade high at 37 metres. On the other hand, the improved cylinder tube provided a broader spread allowing more margin for error together with adequate killing density.

I've found that there's more disadvantage to the full choke than the average gunner realizes. Most full choke tubes I've shot threw extra full patterns while the modified choke, perhaps the most versatile of all chokes, particularly where water fowling is to be done was much more effective. One way to open up a modified pattern is to shoot high velocity loads. The increased velocity with the relatively soft lead shot in most hunting loads of No. 6 and 7-1/2 tends to deform more pellets and open patterns slightly. Mostly more than with the same size and hardness of shot fired from lower-velocity shells.

For water fowling, the modified tube in the Webley & Scott patterned beautifully with Winchester Super X Double X Magnum and a payload of hard No.4s and gave full choke performance. Even more satisfactory however, was the more even distribution of pellets around the edge of the pattern than with the full choke tube.

I like improved-cylinder because with the proper shell selection it can be made to perform quite efficiently at the distance at which most game is taken – inside 40 metres. It allows for the mistakes guys like me make in judging the range than does tighter chokes. Full choke of course, will also kill cleanly at the same distances, but actually may cripple more birds than the improved-cylinder unless the bird is perfectly centred in the pattern.

With a 12 gauge, improved-cylinder does its best work at 20 to 30 meters (if the proper shells are chosen) where pellet penetration and energy are still strong and fewer pellet hits of a given shot size are needed to cleanly kill the bird than would be the case at 50 metres where the full choke is most efficient.

Contrary to general belief shotgun patterns do not spread in uniform increments as the range lengthens, nor does full choke show the same rate of dispersion as an improved-cylinder. In fact, the bulk spread of an improved-cylinder at 20 metres is almost twice as large as the spread of a full choke rather than the 20-percent difference those chokes would indicate at 40 metres. Its great for shooting ducks over decoys.

The Webley & Scott Model 912 is just as good with the modified choke for the waterfowler who takes his ducks on the pass since he'll take fewer shots at under 37 metres than the gunner who excels in the use of decoys and duck calls. To duck shooters the uniformity and spread of pattern is more important than the percentage of shot in a 75cm circle.

Pattern performance is greatly affected by changes in shotshell ammunition or changes in shotshell components. For example, a given barrel will often pattern one size of shot very poorly and the next smaller or larger size, beautifully.

Operation of the Webley & Scott Model 912 proved entirely satisfactory. The selective, automatic ejectors consistently pelted the empty shells about 2 metres to the rear of the gun. Barrel selection was smooth and without stiffness. I found the trigger pulls a bit on the heavy side, but acceptable.

Combining excellent balance with a 365mm length of pull and a 35mm drop at the comb, the Model 912 mounted naturally and swung smoothly, important factors when a gun is used for ducks. Felt recoil was negligable, making recovery for a quick second shot quite easy.

At first look, the Webley & Scott Model 912 exhibited better than average workmanship at an affordable price. Since nowhere on this gun or in the instruction booklet does it actually say "Made in England," my hunch is that the Model 912 is a good example of one of the better-made Turkish guns. Nevertheless, this "English" gun offers features currently popular in Sporting Clays circles. In the field, it's a bit heavy for upland birds, but should be right at home in a duck blind. Basically, what we have here is solid, middle-of-the-road value using entirely conventional proven technology.

SPECS

WEBLEY & SCOTT MODEL 912 OVER-UNDER

Manufacturer
Webley & Scott Willenhall, West Midlands, England
Action type:
box lock-over-under shotgun
Gauge
12 gauge with 76mm chambers
Receiver
chrome-moly with nitrided French grey finish
Barrel
black chrome finish, 711mm or 750mm (tested)
Chokes
five interchangeable extended choke tubes
Ribs
full length ventilated brazed steel side ribs, 10mm hard brazed steel vent rib
Overall length
1220mm with chokes installed
Weight
3.6kgsStock: English walnut, oil finished.
Stock dimensions
Length of pull, 365mm; drop at comb, 35mm; drop at heel, 50mm
Accessories
hard case, five choke tubes & wrench
Likely retail price
$1480.00
Trade enquiries contact
Highland Sports
Website
highlandsports.com.au