

MAY 1991

VOLUME 31 No.5

£1.40

# guns review



**The Smallest Working Flintlock Pistol**  
**Restrictions on New Members to Rifle & Pistol Clubs**

Pistol '91  
Poignard Prize

Shot  
Show '91

128th Rütli  
Schiessen

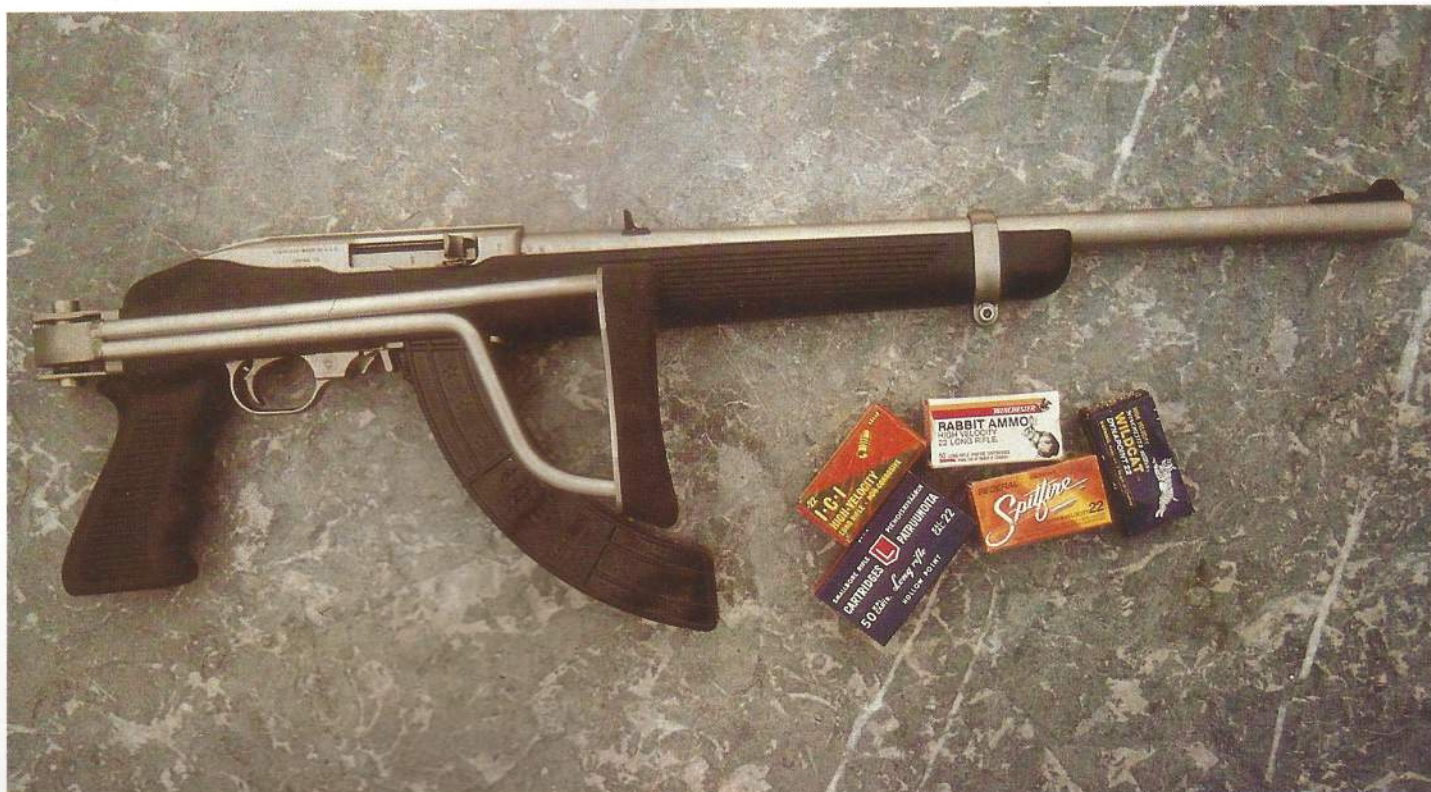
**The AMT Lightning .22 Rifle Tested**





# THE GUN REVIEW

## The AMT Lightning .22 Rifle



*The AMT Lightning with its stock folded – a remarkably handy and useful package for the vermin shooter as well as for the plinker.*

**“Unrepentently we had fun testing the Lightning: precise target shooting, hunting or vermin control.”**

THE ONLY type of self loading rifle now legally available to the shooter in this country is the .22 rimfire. Mr Hurd's disgusting Firearms (Amendment) Act proclaimed his view that the legitimate shooter in this country is not fit to be trusted with any other self loading rifles — and .22 self loaders would have been banned but for the late discovery within the Home Office that very large numbers of them are in use by farmers and others for perfectly legitimate reasons. They feared that their dirty tricks might all collapse if they included the .22s and Members of Parliament might begin to look more carefully at the proposals. But it is not the real purpose of a gun review to rail at a past Home Secretary or the weakness of the shooting community which allowed him to get away with his ban, our purpose is to report on tests of a .22 self loading rifle, the AMT Lightning and, by inference, its more sober stablemate, the AMT Small Game Hunter.

Both rifles have identical barrels and actions in stainless steel and the differences lie only in the fact that the Small Game Hunter is traditionally stocked whilst the Lightning has a folding stock. The Lightning is normally supplied with a 30 shot magazine whilst its more sober partner is satisfied with a ten shot version. The Lightning also comes fitted with iron sights whilst the Small Game Hunter has no sights.

We have tested the Lightning because it contains all the features of both rifles but, additionally has the folding stock feature which we feel has been badly evaluated in recent years, being attributed with “undesirable” qualities and seen by some as being Ramboesque. A choice of a bull barrel or tapered barrel is available and our rifle boasted the heavier bull barrel which suggests both stability and accuracy.

Overall the AMT Lightning is 37½" long with the stock extended, and an extraordinarily convenient 26" with the stock folded. The rifle weighs eight pounds and so is no toy. It is stable enough for accurate shooting and is surprisingly well balanced. With the stock extended, the point of balance is at the magazine well, keeping the weight between the hands and allowing for fast mounting.

The stock is of black polypropylene with a clean, smooth finish. It has a full pistol grip and has deep parallel lines on the pistol grip and fore-end to give a comfortable non slip hold. The buttstock is of stainless steel with a rubber butt pad. It folds by depressing a stud at its forward end and is firmly locked in both open and folded position by means of a 1¼" bar which locks into a recess in the pivot. The buttstock may look pretty spartan but a number of shooters tried it both with iron sights and with the scope that was fitted. All expressed surprise because of the comfort and precise head placement created. It is a rifle which can be shot in carefully aimed fire from all positions both on the range and in the field.

The 17 inch bull barrel is of stainless steel, 0.935" diameter in the chamber area tapering rapidly to 0.765" and remaining straight thereafter. That is a hefty barrel, more than adequate for the .22 rimfire and designed to help with both accuracy and rifle stability. The internal finish is very good, with a nice polish. The external finish is matt stainless.

A single blued square notch blade rearsight is fitted along with a square blade foresight mounted on a ramp. The resulting iron sight picture is that of the Patridge sights on most pistols and is easy to find and use. The top of the receiver is dovetailed for 'scope bases which can be installed without further work.





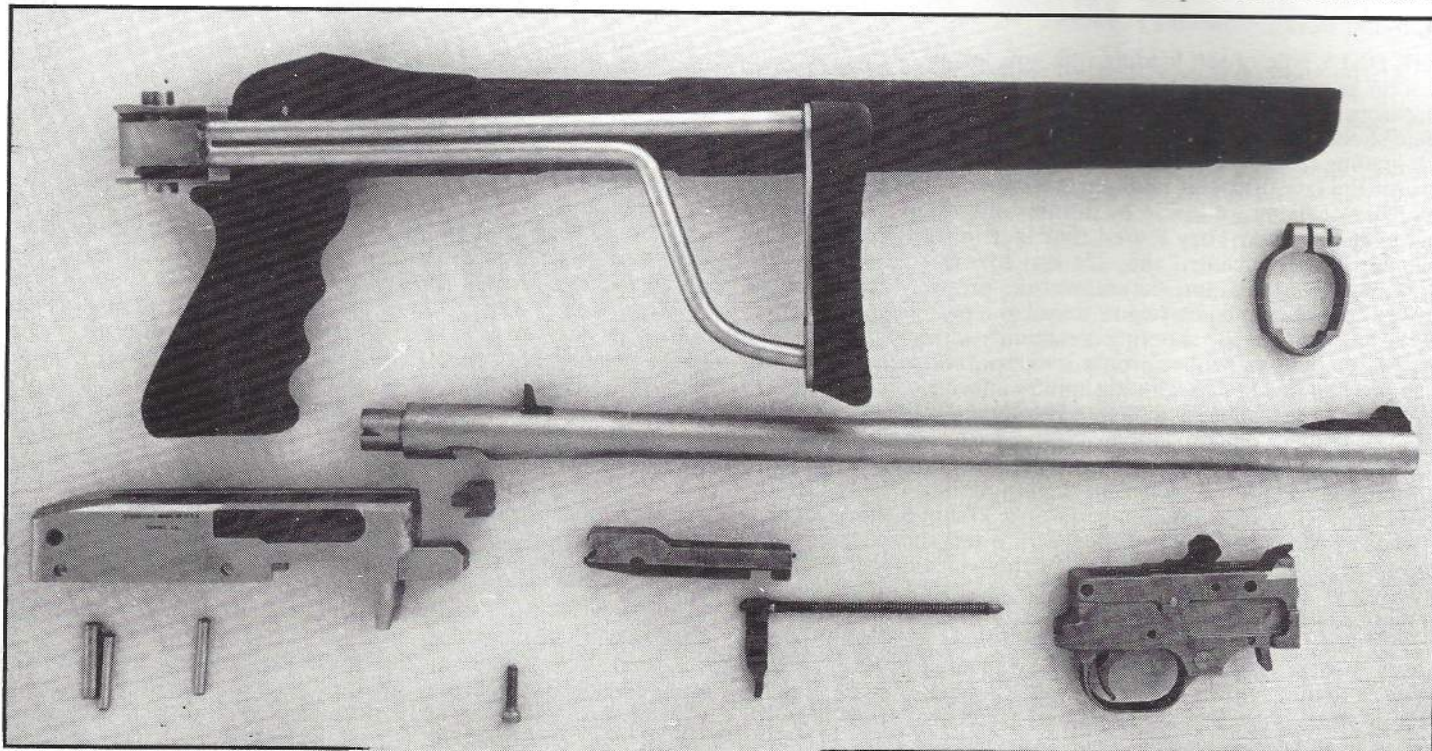
*With the stock extended and 'scope sight fitted, the AMT Lightning is capable of a high degree of accuracy and is easy to use.*

Receiver and action are of stainless steel and the barrel is attached by means of a dovetail clamp on a lug forward of the receiver. The receiver is secured to the stock by a screw into the same lug. The barrel retaining dovetail has two Allen screws to secure it and, as far as possible, they should be left alone. We suspect that uneven tightening of those screws could affect accuracy, though we were not able to prove our point. The barrel slips firmly into the receiver and is held tightly home by the clamp.

The trigger mechanism is in a single unit secured to the receiver by two cross pins which are easily slipped out if necessary. Stripping that mechanism is also very easy. If the hammer is pushed forward, the hammer spring and guide can be lifted out, leaving the parts without tension. Push-out pins release the hammer, disconnect and trigger. A cross bolt safety at the front

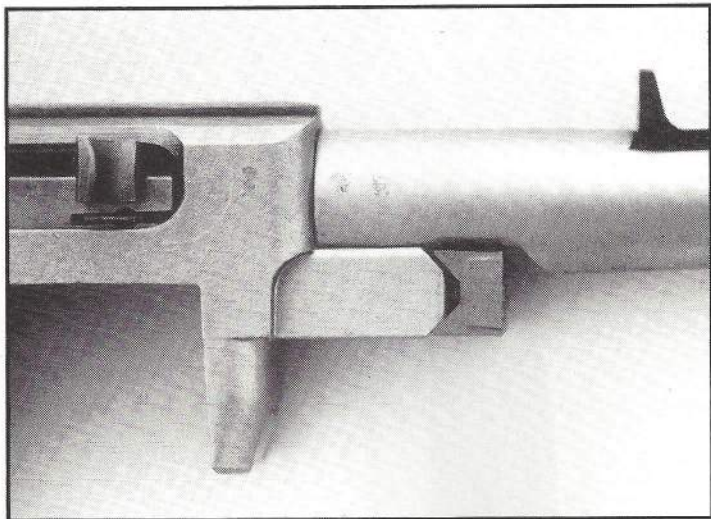
of the trigger guard locks the trigger when it is pushed to the right. When the safety is in the fire position, a red band is visible around it. At the front end of the trigger unit is the magazine release in the form of a catch which protrudes downwards. Pushing that forward, withdraws the large stud in the front of the trigger housing which mates with the top of the magazine. Between the magazine and the trigger guard is the hold-open catch. This is the bottom end of a large plate which protrudes above the trigger unit to slip into the bolt recess when the catch is operated. The plate pivots through an elliptical hole which gives it an odd motion. The catch is slipped upwards until the top of the plate catches on the bolt when the catch is pushed forward and downwards. Releasing the bolt requires the same upward pressure on the catch.

The breech block is housed in the top of the receiver and is



*The Lightning field-stripped. Removing two screws and three pins is all that's needed.*



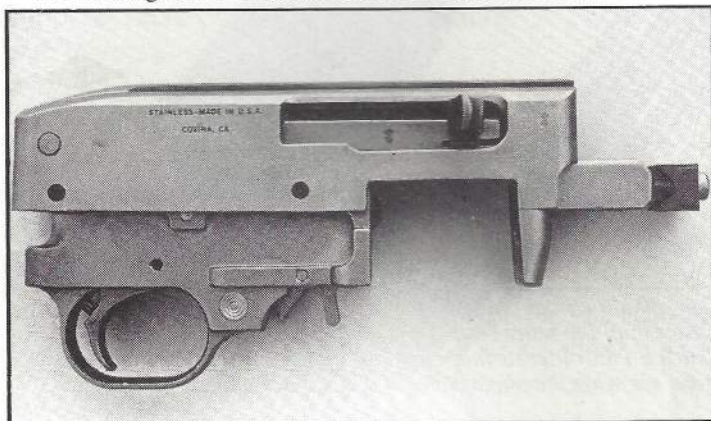


*The barrel is held by a dovetailed clamp secured by two screws.*

removed by driving out a larger cross pin at the top rear of the receiver, allowing the breech block to move just a fraction further back than it normally would. The breech block is pulled fully to the rear by the cocking handle. The front end of the block is then lifted slightly until it clears the handle. The breech block can then be lifted clear and the cocking handle, mainspring and mainspring guide can be removed through the ejection port which is on the right.

Workmanship throughout is good, though the use of a matt finish will reduce the amount of polishing needed on parts cast in stainless steel. Everything fits and works very smoothly and the rifle feels and operates as a good rifle should.

The folding stock will attract some shooters and cause others to



*The receiver. At the front can be seen the lug into which the stock is secured and at the front end of that is the dovetail which clamps the barrel in place. In front of the trigger guard is the push button safety. Between the trigger and the magazine catch on the lower front surface is the hold-open catch.*

make caustic and sometimes silly remarks. Before they do so they should try the rifle out, as we did, jumping in and out of a Land Rover. There is no catching the rifle on the door frame, no problem in placing it in the vehicle or getting it into action on vermin as soon as one is out. It doesn't get in the way and is remarkably handy. The folding stock also makes the rifle very handy to carry in one hand, producing a remarkably small package. If necessary good shooting can be made with the stock folded, but for accuracy, the stock will have to be extended. However, the person who jumps out of a vehicle to knock over a rabbit, or even the one who knocks over the rabbit from within the vehicle will find the folding stock of great value. The use of stainless steel and polypropylene makes the rifle even better suited for that knock-about vermin killer role. It will stand up to the sort of hard life that many such people will give it.

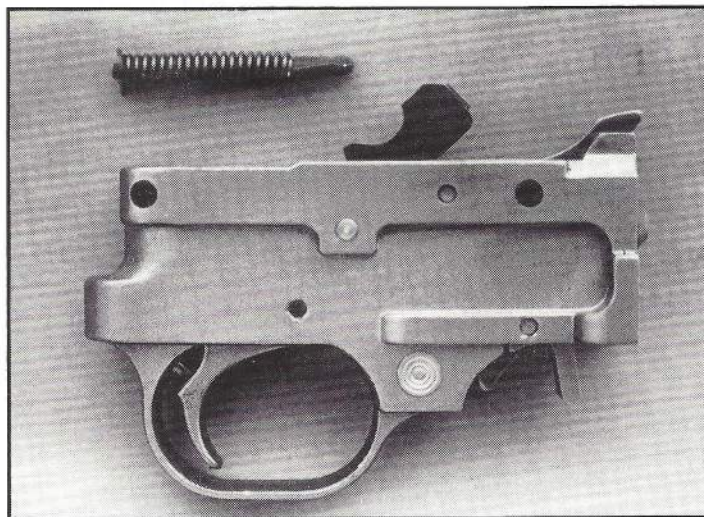
We found that, at shortish ranges, we could readily hit vermin sized targets and even more readily hit tin cans and other plinking targets with the stock folded. It can even be fired one handed, like a pistol, but in truth it is too heavy and unhandy in that mode.

The trigger on our test rifle pulled at just over four pounds but it

was a pleasant enough trigger and no-one who tried the rifle commented adversely upon it. We fitted the rifle with a 'scope but we confess that it looks and feels better without one. It is a matter of choice and the role which the rifle must fulfil. The serious vermin shooter will want his 'scope and that will in no way detract from the handiness of the rifle. The short range shooter and the plinker may well feel that the rifle is better with its iron sights.

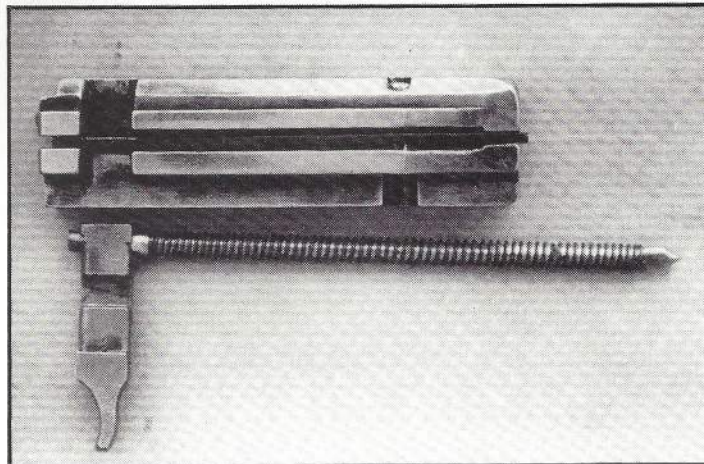
We tried out a wide range of ammunition during accuracy tests. We found that standard velocity ammunition gave the best accuracy but all the high velocity ammunition grouped very acceptably. Head shots on rabbits could be made with certainty out to fifty yards but we repeat the suggestion we have made before in respect of most .22 rifles and that is that the ammunition must be matched to the individual weapon. On the range with standard ammunition we could happily place all shots into an inch at 25 yards.

One of the attractions of this rifle will be to the plinker. The 30 round Eagle magazine supplied with the rifle is of plastic and feeds ammunition in with near perfection. The trouble is that it is so



*The trigger unit is removed from the receiver by slipping out two pins. By pulling the hammer back, the hammer strut and spring can be easily slipped out. The rest of the trigger system can then be removed easily.*

much easier to fire the shots off than to fill the magazines and the serious plinker will find that he needs a large supply of cheap ammunition together with at least three magazines and two spare people to fill them for him. The rifle will go on shooting just as fast and for just as long as he can afford to feed it. One test session was designed to produce faults in feeding. About 250 rounds had been fired and the rifle had not been cleaned. A further three hundred rounds were fired off at great speed and there was a total of three failures to feed but it was difficult to know whether the hard



*The breech block showing how the cocking handle and mainspring relate to it. The firing pin can be seen running along the length of the block.*



## Where's my Guns Review?

- ★ During 1990 Guns Review increased its circulation and has been available in more newsagents than ever before. Even so, some readers continue to write to us about their real difficulties obtaining their copy each month.
- ★ Please write to the London Office and let us know the actual newsagent that will not supply your copy.
- ★ Also consider becoming a subscriber; see the contents panel on page 9 for details.

**guns review**

## SELF BINDER

**Price £5.00** including postage

Send cheque or P.O. to:

**"GUNS REVIEW", STANDARD HOUSE,  
BONHILL STREET, LONDON EC2A 4DA**

## our shooting cap



**NEW**

### NOW AVAILABLE

Two **NEW** colours for our shooting cap, Olive Green or Royal Blue, in uprated 100% cotton drill, with fully lined inner

**STILL ONLY £2.99**

(Two or more please add 50p postage, overseas £1). Please state which colour when ordering

Send cheques or postal order to  
Guns Review, Standard House, Bonhill Street, London EC2A 4DA

Please send me.....caps @ £2.99 each. I enclose.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Please allow 14 days for delivery Please Tick

☐ O/G or ☐ R/B



The 30-shot Eagle magazine which fed ammunition into the rifle faster than the tester could feed ammunition into the magazine. The catch on the outer surface operates the magazine release catch on the rifle, allowing the magazine to be released more easily.

**"Such disclosures will cause rumblings at the Home Office and within police forces, but this rifle provided a huge amount of fun."**

pressed fillers of the magazine were at fault rather than the gun. The final conclusion was that the gun worked extremely well and the whole exercise was great fun. With the stock folded, shots could be 'walked' onto the plinker targets and then kept there hit after hit.

Such disclosures will cause rumblings at the Home Office and within police forces, but this rifle provided a huge amount of fun. It was all safe and harmless fun but we do not doubt that our detractors will see deep hidden meanings and serious threats to the state from the fact that shooters could enjoy belting away a magazine-full of ammunition at high speed at a relatively large target. We are unrepentant. Shooting is surely about fun as well as about the serious business of precise target shooting, hunting or vermin control. Those who agree with that view will find that this AMT Lightning will fill all the roles very well.

AMT Rifles are imported by Tim Hannam, The Granary, Wakefield Road, Swillington, Leeds LS26 8UA. The Lightning is priced at £242 with either bull barrel or tapered barrel. The Small Game Rifle with its fixed stock and absence of sights costs £223.