The Danuser Counter Coil is proving just the job for a number of recoil sensitive shooters. Richard Rawlingson finds out why.

Shooting products and accessories under the spotlight

Kicking the recoil

You all know the story of Victor Kyam who was so impressed with the shave he got from his new Remington razor he bought the company. Well James Hand has a similar tale. Having discovered the American company Danuser's Counter Coil product in a bid to escape from the pernicious effects of recoil, he took on the UK agency for the range. Now it forms part of the activities of one of the country's newest retail outlets, the West Midlands based Briefley Guns, run by James and son Brett. It is a long way from their established business — their company Hand Glass Craft is one of the world's biggest suppliers of glass eyes for dolls — but their business expertise and love of shooting should form the basis of a successful enterprise.

James is a passionate advocate for the Counter Coil product, a hydraulic shock-absorbing device designed to compress as the gun recoils, decelerating the rearward thrust of the stock. He has already lined up an impressive group of top shooters to back his claims, including Joe Kitson, Carl Bloxham, Martin Myers and Stuart Clarke, to name but four.

One of the key features of the Counter Coil is that it is fully adjustable. The cylinder rod has an adjuster ring allowing a range of different settings to be selected, the change taking just a few moments. This means that the unit can be tuned to suit both the cartridges being used and also the individual shooter. It is, for example, not immediately obvious that the shooter's build and weight affect the perception of recoil with, surprisingly, heavily built shooters often suffering more than someone of slight build.

The reason, says Hand, is that the lighter shooter will move with the force, riding the punch as it were, while the bigger man will stay relatively still and absorb the full impact.

For those who are recoil sensitive, or who — like Stuart Clarke — have to battle against chronic neck and shoulder problems, the benefits of any device that can reduce the kick are obvious. It is the reason many turn to the semi-automatic gun, particularly in later years. There are however other benefits available to any shooter and they can be seen in the most valuable place — as extra targets on the scoreboard.

Joe Kitson talks of faster recovery times on pairs, a benefit of particular interest to skeet shooters. Watch a film of someone shooting and see how much deflection of the barrels and disturbance of the head takes place after the first shot is fired. Reducing these effects means that the second bird is acquired earlier and in a more controlled manner.

One happy customer who can attest to
The benefits is skeet shooter Alan Merry. In 16 years of trying the magic 100 straight had always eluded him. A week after having his Counter Coil fitted he reached the hallowed figure in a shoot at Lakenheath.

Carl Bloxham offers another interesting perspective on the advantages of products such as the Counter Coil. At the highest level of sporting shooting one of the differences between the elite and the rest is the ability to read misses and correct mistakes; the average shooter often missing two or more of a difficult target before making the necessary adjustments. The top shooter limits the damage by getting it right second time. Carl reports that the lack of excess gun and head movement is a great aid to reading the picture when a target is missed, aiding the decision making process for the next pair.

And then there is fatigue, a side effect of recoil that can be difficult to pin down. The effects of recoil are cumulative, the more you shoot, the more your body and subconscious mind react to it. Targets lost towards the end of a long competition can often be the result of a loss of the competitive edge needed to maintain performance levels. At its most extreme this phenomenon can be seen in the onset of a flinch.

Preventing the build-up of fatigue is something all parents of young shooters should be aware of. Young bodies still growing can be damaged by excessive shooting, particularly of heavy loads. Another recent convert to the Counter Coil system is the highly promising junior sporting shot, Ed Solomon, encouraged by Carl Bloxham who has been coaching him in recent times.

Having had the chance to shoot several guns fitted with the system, I can attest to the very noticeable reduction in recoil that the Counter Coil achieves. The unusual sensation of the compression of the shock absorber soon passes.

James Hand recommends combining it with one of the excellent Kick-Eez sorbothane recoil pads and this combination should produce just about the softest shooting over-and-under you can get.

You might think that the ultimate soft shooting gun would be a semi-auto fitted with the Counter Coil system. Unfortunately the stock design of autos makes it impossible to fit to this type of gun. Danuser do however offer a slightly different product — the Comp Coil — which can be fitted to an auto, an adaptation of a unit first designed for rifles. This is based on a constant velocity spring and lacks the adjustable element of the hydraulic system. It does however further add to the soft-shooting characteristics of autos and could be of interest to those who have already gone down this route.

Brierley Guns offer a full fitting service with the Danuser units and can also carry out any other stock fitting work that may be required at the same time. The Counter Coil costs £245 including VAT and fitting and the Comp Coil £215. It could prove to be money well invested. For more information contact Brett Hand on 01384 573410.