

Sportsman's Association News

July 2015

By Mike Wells, General Secretary

WE TEST THE LAW

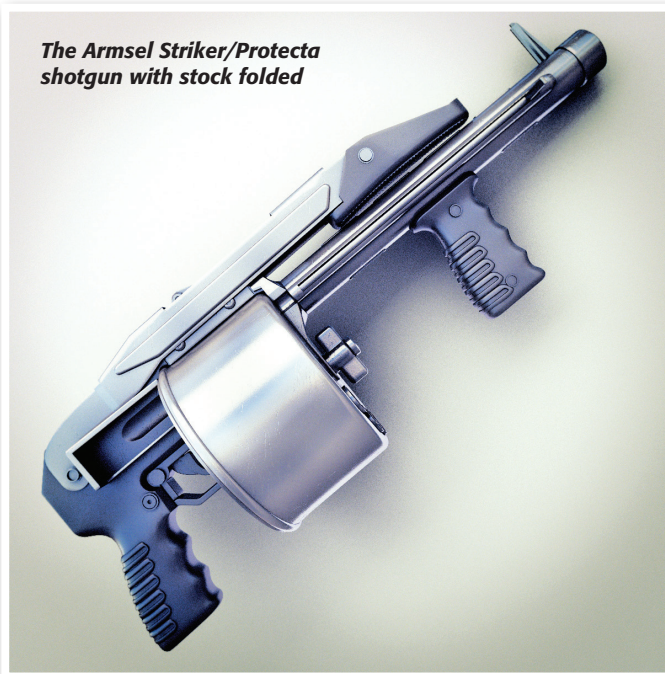
You may recall that three years ago I asked readers to be the judge on the following case of a Taurus Judge smooth bore .410 5 shot revolver.

Some of you may be aware that the firearms act allows for the grant of a .410 or 9mm rimfire shot pistol for the destruction of vermin and pests. The reason for the grant was because in confined areas such as barns and outbuildings it was deemed safer and more convenient than a section 2 shotgun. Single and double barrelled shot pistol are prohibited section 5 handguns, as they are less than 60cm in length but provided you can demonstrate good reason, your Firearms Enquiry Team should grant you a shot pistol on a section 1 Firearms Certificate. Note that the weapon is still Section 5, and if you wanted to dispose of it you would have to go through a Section 5 dealer.

What goes around

A quantity of Taurus Judge revolvers chambered for .410 shot shells and smooth bored were imported two years ago. The Taurus Judge is a conventional revolver with a cylinder to accommodate five rounds. Well the police did their usual knee-jerk and have tried to say they were illegal as a shot pistol as they fell foul of the Firearms act as a section 5(1)(ad). It is not a section 5(1)(aba) handgun; I say rubbish. The act states that a revolver gun is a firearm where the cylinder or drum rotates upon firing. This applies to the South African Armsel Striker, also known as the Protecta. The rotary drum magazine has a spring which is wound, and the drum loaded with 12 shotgun cartridges in 12 gauge. In essence it is a quick-firing semi-auto shotgun for use against insurgents – once fired the drum rotates and ejects the spent cartridge. The

The Armsel Striker/Protecta shotgun with stock folded



Judge does not rotate upon firing whereas the Striker does.

Load of bull

I was asked to supply a Taurus Judge 5 shot revolver that I believe to be a Section 5 (1)(aba) handgun, and NOT a Section 5(1) (ad) as the Home Office claim. The purchaser's certificate issued by Kent Police clearly stated that to acquire or possess one five shot .410 revolver. I had the Judge in stock so I completed the sale and notified Kent police of my transaction to their certificate holder.

I must point out that I had written to the Home Office with our legal opinion as to the status of the Taurus Judge. As usual I was greeted by the Government 'Wall of silence'. I got no reply to my numerous emails.

I was advised that I should not have made the sale as this 'grey area' was under investigation. I prepared myself for my third arrest.

Some weeks later my customer advised me that he had been visited by a Kent firearms officer requesting that he surrender the Judge on the grounds that they thought it was a "revolver gun". My customer, incidentally a Sportsman's Association member refused, and got on the blower to me. He advised me that it looked as if we were both to be prosecuted, even though Kent had authorised the acquisition of a 5 shot .410 revolver. Twelve months later the Kent Firearms officer visited our member to advise him that he could keep the Judge; no explanation was offered, the officer was somewhat dismissive, inferring he shouldn't don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

Our legal expert concluded that the Home Office and the Crown Prosecution Service had second thoughts, bowing to the Sportsman's Association's superior knowledge in the matter of this firearm.

Taurus Judge is a conventional revolver where the cylinder is locked upon firing, it only rotates upon cocking, or when the trigger is pulled in double action. In my view it is clearly a section 5(1)(aba) and is in no way caught by section 5(1)(ad). The only revolver I can think of that rotates upon firing is the Webley Fosberry, and the Judge is not one of those.

Owners of the Taurus Judge have had them confiscated, awaiting legal opinion.

We have made a video of the two firearms, and they are clearly different as the



Mike Wells with the Judge .410 shotgun/revolver