

Some sportsmen will sacrifice hours of their lives for their chosen sport, travelling hundreds of miles and more during the shooting season in search of the finest birds. With convenience often at the forefront of our minds, a trip to the furthest reaches of north Wales for a visit to a shooting school might seem unlikely.

Set on the Llyn Peninsula in the north west corner of Wales, the grounds have been developed to take advantage of the topography of the land. A dizzying variety of targets are provided, including high pheasant and a set of four grouse butts covered by 14 traps, which provide a real test for guns of all abilities.

A converted block of cowsheds, stables and a granary make up the shoot room. It is warm and welcoming, making you feel like you've stepped through the door of your local shoot. As a place to set a nervous mind at ease or warm down at the end of a testing session with the gun, you will be hard pressed to find anything better.

Bob Valentine's small team is hand-picked, providing calm, confident instruction of a very high standard. The grounds host an open shoot day once a month where experienced guns can pitch up for a 50-bird session, and also hosts larger

Bob Valentine Shooting School & Grounds

charity fundraising events.

Bob can offer just about anything the sporting man, woman or young shot could possibly need. With an unmatched setting, a vast array of targets and shooting disciplines available and great coaching on hand, any visit will be well worth the journey time.

Where is it: Llanbedrog, three miles north of Abersoch on the Llyn Peninsula in north Wales.

Facilities: Excellent. The range of targets and specialist equipment available and an unparalleled setting are the envy of many a competitor.



The charming shoot room lends an authentic feel to your time on the clays.



The stands take full advantage of the topography to present clays which are as close to the real thing as possible.

The delightful shoot room gives the ground a luxurious heart.

What we like: The surroundings of the shooting school are like no other. The stands take full advantage of superb natural topography and are as close to the real thing as you are likely to see without heading out into the field. The grouse butts in particular offer a real challenge, and are exhilarating to shoot. Coaching standards are excellent: we can confidently say after an hour's coaching with Bob we left better educated and more confident than when we arrived.

What we don't like: While the scenery and topography make the ground like no other, some may find it difficult to justify a journey to the far reaches of north Wales just to get their eye in.

Cost: Individual lessons for beginners cost £93. Full simulated game days costs £240 per gun. Prices include all equipment, cartridges, clays and drinks. Catering can be arranged at an extra cost. ■

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CARTRIDGE TEST: HULL STERLING GAME

Richard Atkins tests this 34gram No.5 game load from Hull.

This one is intended to excel where a heavier charge of larger shot is called for to deliver a serious payload for tough situations. It is loaded with 34grams of hard shot, a one-piece fibre wad, plus over powder card and it is finished with a tight, six star crimp closure.

Hull use harder shot in their fibre wad cartridges than with plastic wad versions to reduce pellet abrasion in the barrel and set-back deformation; a recognised way to maintain

pattern quality. This cartridge is intended for high birds but it is also likely to prove useful in other situations such as shooting hares, or even wily crows. By easing back a shade from the velocity of its 32gram version, the recoil is actually no

higher. It is described as 'firm' so these might be best used in guns with a shade more weight than the average English game gun, especially where a good



number will be fired. They are in any case intended for 2¾" chambered guns.

It's a very consistent and competent performer with dense patterning which ensures it delivers. ■

BALLISTIC DATA

VELOCITY	S.D.	PRESSURE	RECOIL	SHOT	CV	PATT	CHOKE
mtrs (fps)	mps (fps)	Bar	N/s	Count UK	Crush %	Count/%	Equiv'nt
360 (1181)	11.8 (38.7)	635	12.22	230/oz = No5¼	15%	187/69%	Full

Hit Factor: 3.8 (1 pellet hit per 4.04 per square inch)

Key: Velocity measured @ 2.5 mtrs from muzzle; S.D = Standard Deviation; Recoil = Momentum (units= Newton/second); Count is the average pellets per ounce and the UK size (#) for that; CV is Crush value (where 20% = hard and 45% = soft); Pattern = average pellet count in 30" circle @ 40 yards + calculated %; Actual choke/ pattern from recorded count. Hit Factor is the area of the 30" pattern circle divided by average pellet count.

Testing method: The data comes from the Birmingham Proof Laboratory. Pattern performance is assessed by testing on a pattern plate. The shot is checked for size and also for hardness as this has a strong influence on patterning ability. A half choke barrel is used to check patterns make the nominal boring for the barrel. Half choke is expected to throw 60 per cent of its shot load into a 30" diameter circle at 40 yards.