

Cock On...!



Straight pull fan Pete Moore sees how two simple modifications can make the Saiga M3 or M4 in your life a real smooth operator

Despite running an AR15, which as a type is probably the most technically advanced, hybrid straight-pull rifle on the planet, I also own and shoot a man-opp AK47. Styled after the AK74 the guns are made by Saiga in Russia and known as the M3 and M4, identical to look at, but the latter has a manual, bolt hold open, not enjoyed by the former.

Roll and bounce

One of the problem areas of the M3/M4 is the cocking handle. Right side-mounted, if you don't get your hand

No more tears! The Bradley Arms AK cocking handle/safety catch conversion gives 100% reliability of operation

out of the way in time as you cycle the action the ejecting case will bounce off it and go back into the port and cause a jam. It doesn't happen all the time, but it's still annoying and I had always thought of doing something about it, but typically never did...

Enter Mark Bradley a keen and experienced AR15 and Practical/Service shooter who in the last year has turned to gunsmithing for the black rifle. I was talking to him about my AK and he suggested I might like to try his cocking handle and safety catch conversion, which addresses the problem of bouncing cases I have mentioned.

The conversion consists of two areas – the cocking handle and the safety catch. The latter is not essential, but when you have had the former done it's to be recommended, just to keep things simple and easy.

Drop-back dog leg

The new handle offers a drop-back bar with an angled knob and is simply located about an inch behind the existing one, which is retained unless you ask Mark to cut it off. To accommodate this the top cover is

machined out to allow the new part to run its full length. When fitted this obscures the front section of the existing AK safety, making it hard to operate, so a replacement unit is fitted. This features a lug on the lower face that you can easily get your thumb on to flip it from STOP to GO.

In use the conversion proved its ability, as the operating hand is moved clear of the existing cocking handle, so making those occasional and annoying stoppages a thing of the past. I ran through about 150-rounds of 7.62x39mm in very short order without a hiccup. Reach to the new handle is shorter and the whole rifle runs far smoother and easier. The new safety is easy to use too, as it shows none of the stiffness we have come to know and hate; I think Mark makes it that way on purpose.

The whole conversion makes the rifle far more shootable and is rather like the Tdi furniture I have fitted to mine; as it improves the old AK out of all proportion to the original.

If you run any form of Saiga M3 or M4 I would heartily recommend the Bradley conversion, as it makes the AK just that bit more practical...

- Price: Full conversion (handle & safety) £150
- Contact: Mark Bradley, 07973 462 542



The new handle is not dissimilar to that used on the AR15 with its angled, dog leg layout