

Ready To Pump?

Mark Camoccio explains the ins and outs of the new Hill Mk5 Airgun Pump

I've been testing airguns for many years now, but I don't deny that I've rarely carried out a long-term test, so my findings are a snapshot of how that gun performed on the day, rather than what it's like to own and use the gun and how reliable it is long term. Of course, I've owned quite a few models along the way, so it's fair to say I have a pretty good idea how many products shape up in the real world. However, there's one piece of kit that I can personally vouch for with no hesitation as a good, long-term investment, and that's the Hill Airgun Pump.

INDEPENDENCE

I've always slightly resented the reliance on an external power source that comes with the PCP, so unsurprisingly, I've had a pump in operation for many years, giving me independence, not to mention some much needed exercise into the bargain; and it's a Hill pump that I've had in constant use throughout.

On test here is the very latest Mk5 version, and whilst it looks almost identical to the last one to the untrained eye, there are some subtle differences to justify the Mk5 status, and we'll come to those in just a moment.

WITH OR WITHOUT?

These pumps can be specified as pump only, or bought with the Dry-Pac assembly, and for the sake of an additional £25-£30, you'd be crazy not to go the whole hog. So, just what is the Dry-Pac all about? Well, for those unfamiliar, one of the negatives with using a pump is that moisture content in the air can find its way into the gun's internals. Where a diver's bottle uses totally dry air, the pump feeds from the atmosphere, and the Hill's clever Dry-Pac pod is claimed to eliminate up to 95% of the moisture content by passing the air through a medium, held inside the pod, as it is sucked





LEFT: This shows the bleed valve



LEFT: You'll need to source your own adaptor end piece



RIGHT: The new Mk5 goes to 300 bar/450psi

inside. Admittedly, the effectiveness of the system relies upon the medium being changed periodically, and ideally that's 3-4 months, but it's cheap to replace. My test pump came complete with the Dry-Pac, so let's put it together.

EASY ASSEMBLY

Everything comes 'flat-packed' so to speak, in a protective carton, and with all the constituent parts laid out, and comprehensive instructions to hand, assembly really is very simple. First take the body tube and remove the plastic collar. Drop down

BELOW: Flat-packed, but easy to assemble

the footplate into position, tighten in place with the collar, screw on the airline, nip up gently with a spanner.

complete. I say 'almost' because Hill don't supply the end piece for the airline. Instead, they leave that

"with all the constituent parts laid out, and comprehensive instructions to hand, assembly really is very simple"

Now for the Dry-Pac. Unscrew the body and fill the top section, screw the body together, then locate over the pump tube and into position. (This is all explained in the pics. Then finally, screw on the handlebars, and assembly is almost

to the owner to source their own adaptor end, to suit their particular gun. This is an irritation, but given that the appropriate fitting can be purchased from their website for just a few quid, or from specialist outlets such as Best Fittings, it's



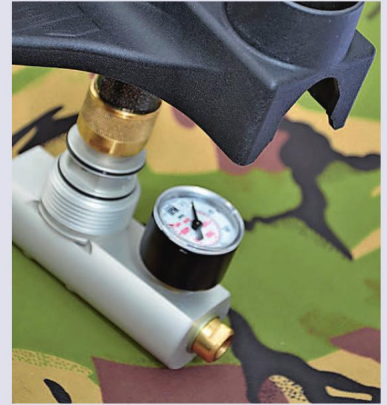
STEP BY STEP



1. All ready for assembly



2. First unscrew the plastic collar



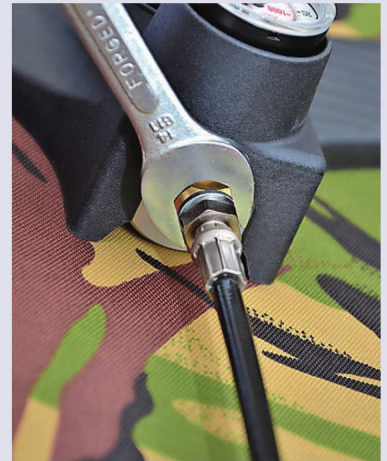
3. Drop over the base



4. Lock it in place with the collar



5. Attach the air line



6. Nip it up with a spanner



7. Lock it in place with the collar



8. Fill the base with medium



9. Screw the body together



10. Now push the Dry-Pac into position ...



11. ... and finally screw on the handlebar



12. Super-solid construction sets this pump apart

no big deal. I screwed on a Foster fitting, and if you utilise the Quick coupler attachments (again from Best Fittings), switching adaptors from one make of gun to another, is achieved in seconds, as a snap-fit.

MAIN BENEFITS

So the big question has to be, what makes this Mk5 better than previous models? Well, firstly, it is claimed to be Hill's easiest pump yet, requiring around 20% less effort to use. Secondly, it's faster and easier to service, which is always reassuring. On that note, I've been lazy with my Mk4; that's been in use for some while, and having never lubricated it, it hasn't shown any signs of impaired use.

Alongside the old model, I also noticed that the new body tube is actually around 2mm narrower, and this helps the MK5 to shed 3/4lb in weight over the previous spec., and that can be significant if you're lugging it around to an event. Perhaps the most significant bonus is the fact that the new model can now pump to a higher pressure of 300 bar (4500psi), compared to the 250 bar of the old version.

COMPARISON TEST

Since I had the old version lying about, it seemed obvious to run the two pumps for a comparison test, and the task selected was to top-up an Air Arms S510R, from 150 bar to 250 bar. Using my old Mk4 version, it took 69 pumps, and the new Mk5 version actually took 71 pumps, but of course, this doesn't tell the whole story. The pump strokes are marginally easier with the new model, but to be honest, overall, is there much discernible difference? Er – not a lot – unless you have health issues, the effort needed is very manageable, too. I'm no athlete, so it proved the point!

I still don't like the handles used, since they feel a bit crude and are rough on the hands during pumping. Softer rubber or foam would be preferable, although I appreciate maybe not so durable. The old version is slightly more stable, too, due to the weight, but it's all largely academic.

CONCLUSION

The Mk5 has that higher pressure advantage, and in my view, is



ABOVE: *Bending the knees is the best approach*

still arguably the best pump on the market, given how well it's constructed, and of course, that comprehensive Dry-Pac moisture feature. If you really don't like the thought of being reliant upon heavy, divers' bottles, these pumps are the answer – super-reliable, from one of the biggest names in pumps, and a sound investment for sure. ■

HILL MK5 AIRGUN PUMP

- Max fill pressure- 300 bar/4500psi
- RRP: Pump only- £149 guide / Pump including Dry-Pac £175 guide
- Distributor: John Rothery Wholesale dealer network www.airriflepump.com