

# Stableford

*by* G.E. Simons

Mike Summer's moustache was perfect. Hard bristle and so symmetrical it looked cut to the angles of a military imperative.

He was pretty proud of it, thought the team of beaters, who watched him as he sat on the boot ledge of his sage green Mercedes 123 T, combing it fan-like with the thumb and forefinger of his right hand.

A real Brylcreem gigolo in chestnut brogues.

When the day's shooting had begun that morning, he'd kicked his brown and white springer spaniel in its lean flanks for no reason, sending the animal into a yelping cower.

He was pretty proud of kicking his dog thought the team of beaters as he whistled the animal, before lighting a John Player Special through a smirk and joining the line of guns as the synchronised walk began across the popsicles of frosted grassland skirting the wandering River Worfe.

When the day's shooting ended, waterproofs were removed and the leathery game bags had been emptied, the concrete standing in front of the barn was lined with uniform drills of braced pheasants, partridge, pigeons and two rabbits.

Mike Summer invited Pooler, a first-time beater, over for his money, who as he folded it into his pocket, asked if he could also take one of the rabbits home for the pot.

Mike said sure and grabbed one of the dead animals by its ears and dangled it prize-like.

"This one OK?"

"That's great, thanks."

As Mike passed him the rabbit he squeezed its distended lower belly and a jet of piss soaked the shins of Pooler's jeans.

