



National Rifle Association Journal

Summer 2003 Volume LXXXII Number 2



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NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



by
Bob
Fishwick

In this, my first "Notes" I believe that it is appropriate for me to update you on changes that you will see in the Journal now that the way ahead for the Association is clearer. Matters which relate exclusively to Bisley - the activities conducted at the National Shooting Centre - will be addressed elsewhere. I will concentrate on wider aspects of interest to the Association and its members. So, whilst much of that which you see below has been provided by others, principally Martin Farnan, I will concentrate on NRA-wide matters.

The Poll

The Scrutineers (Mr J Raistrick for Mr Sarony and Mr N Molyneux for the Council) have certified that there were 1,350 valid votes cast with 31 spoiled papers and abstentions. Of these there were 769 votes cast for the four Resolutions and 581 votes against.

Accordingly I am pleased to report that the Resolutions adopted at the Spring General Meeting on 29 March 2003 and put to a Poll have now been duly passed and the new Rules for our governance now become effective.

MoD Licence Fees and Range Fees

The topic of MoD charges is regularly on the agendas of interested committees and we closely monitor developments in the interest of the membership. As many will be aware, confronted by increasing financial pressures themselves, the MoD are conducting an overall review of future charging regimes. However, in advance of the outcome of that review, we have recently been advised of the charges to be applied for civilian clubs using MoD ranges during the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004. Already a number of significant changes have been incorporated in these charges. To give the full picture, shown below are last year's alongside this year's charges. All range charges are **per lane per half day** (but see Notes) and all charges are **exclusive of VAT**.

	2002/3	2003/4
MoD Licence Fee	£50.00	£15.00
IBSR Range ⁽¹⁾	£40.50	£25.00
ETR Range ⁽¹⁾	£23.00	£7.50
CGR Range ⁽²⁾	£23.00	£15.00
Gallery Range ⁽²⁾	£12.00	£12.50
25/30m Range ⁽²⁾	£13.50	£15.00
Zeroing Range ⁽²⁾	£13.50	£12.50
Multi Target Range ⁽²⁾ (per lane of four targets)	£13.50	£15.00

Notes:

- (1) Based on the total number of lanes available.
- (2) Based on a minimum booking of two lanes.

In essence, this could possibly be judged as having a swings and roundabouts effect on us. Gallery Range charges have risen by 4% and 25/30m and Multi Target Ranges by 11%, but CGR charges have fallen by 35% and Zeroing Range charges by 7%. The minimum booking criterion of two lanes on the five ranges to which this applies is unlikely to inconvenience many, (if any) clubs unless they routinely book only a single lane.

In the case of whole range charges it might, at first sight, appear alarming that (say) all 12 lanes on an ETR must be paid for. However, on closer examination, things are perhaps not so dire; for example, comparing the old and the new charges, four lanes for a full day on an ETR in 2002 would have cost £184, whereas all 12 lanes in 2003 will cost only £180. It is also likely that the number of firers who could compete on four lanes in a full day will be able to complete the same course of fire, using all 12 lanes, in half a day, thus costing the club only £90.

Club Secretaries may also have recently received their "Annual Licence to use an Open Range" and may have been concerned at the particular wording in connection with the Club's insurance liability. The specific paragraph refers to the requirement that the club shall have in force "at all times, a public liability policy of insurance . . . in an amount of not less than £2,000,000 . . . ". It then goes on, however, to say "provided that the effecting or existence of such insurance as aforesaid shall not be construed to limit or affect the extent of the club's liability under the indemnities in (the previous paragraphs) **which shall be unlimited as to amount**".

This last sentence has been brought to the attention of our insurers who have stated that this requirement is unacceptable and have advised that this particular form of words should be struck out. They have also suggested that a number of other small changes would be appropriate. We have written to the Head of the MoD Business Unit and have asked him to review this policy which is clearly unworkable. However, in the meantime, in case of any difficulty with a Range Administering Unit (RAU), the club concerned is invited to contact the NRA (Assistant Director of Shooting) who will try to alleviate the problem.

First Aid Kit and Staff on MoD Ranges booked by Civilian Clubs

Club Secretaries should be aware of their responsibilities in connection with the provision of adequate First Aid cover in the event of an accident on any range on which they are shooting. This applies in all cases, but particularly in the use of MoD ranges where proof of this First Aid cover (as part of the MoD's Duty of Care) may be required before the club is allowed to use the range. If any clubs are having difficulty in interpreting this **mandatory** provision, please contact the NRA (Director of Shooting).

Technical Advisory Service (TAS)

Unfortunately, many of you are suffering as a result of problems of staffing within the Technical Advisory Service (TAS). The bare facts are that its establishment has been reduced by one SNCO, who unfortunately was the one responsible for looking after civil and police ranges, and by a further SNCO whose post has been "gapped". Understandably perhaps, they judge that inspection etc of military ranges must come first, and that civilian range problems must come bottom of the list. It was reported that a delay of up to two years might occur in some areas although we already have reports of delays significantly greater than that. Thankfully, recent news is a little more encouraging and some assistance to civilian clubs may be possible in the future.

I am asking any club secretaries who are experiencing problems to let me have full details, in writing please, so that a properly documented case may be made for the re-establishment of the post. Similarly, on a case by case basis we will do all we can to have the service to individual clubs reinstated, but I am afraid that delays are inevitable. In case of particular problems please contact Doug Glaister on ext 148.

2002 Overseas Postal TR Match

The winners of the 2002 Overseas Postal TR Match were Brisbane RC for the third consecutive year. The Duke of Gloucester's Challenge Cup will be engraved accordingly and nine Lord Wakefield silver medals have been forwarded to the winners. More entrants are required and Secretaries of overseas clubs are encouraged to compete for this prestigious trophy and medals.

Team Captaincies

Nominations required for 2004

I need nominations for Captains of the following teams as soon as possible please (by no later than 15 June):

2004 NRA Team to the Channel Islands

2004 GB Kolapore Team

If necessary, a ballot will be held by 14 July, and the results will be announced at the Umbrella Tent Meeting on Wednesday 16 July 2003.

Appointments of Team Captains 2003/2004

The following are to be congratulated on their appointment as Team Captain for the teams concerned:

2003 GB Black Powder Team in the World Championships in England
Mark Hodgins

2004 GB F Class Team to the World Championships in South Africa in March/April
Mik Maksimovic

2004 GB Under 25 Team to South Africa in March/April
Erica McMullan

2004 GB Under 25 Team Match on Friday 23 July
Jacqui Rankin

NRA General Council Elections

Results

Nominations closed on 26 April 2003. There being no more than one person standing for each vacancy, there will be no election. Accordingly, the following will serve on General Council:

Ordinary Members ⁽¹⁾

S Belither	re-elected
CM Brooks	re-elected
AR Horrocks	re-elected
S James	elected
KD Robertson	elected
JA Watson	elected

Discipline Members

Practical Rifle	P Hunter	elected
Gallery Rifle & Pistol	N Jones	elected ⁽²⁾
Sporting Rifle	J Kynoch	re-elected

Regional Members

West Midlands	ID Bennett	re-elected
Wales	PS Gray	re-elected
London & South East	CD Law	re-elected
South West	Remains Vacant	

Notes:

- 1 As notified in the Spring Journal, lots will be drawn to decide who serves for one year (to complete the term of P Bloom (retired mid-term)).
- 2 To serve for two years (to complete the term of CN Farr (retired mid-term)).

NRA Bisley General Meeting

The NRA Bisley General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 16 July 2003 at 21:00, in the Umbrella Tent.

Imperial Meeting - General Notices

Partners' Programme

It is intended to reinstate the social programme for partners this year. A Ladies Meet and Greet Coffee Morning will be held on First Friday (details will be posted on the NRA Noticeboard) and coach trips to

Windsor and further afield are planned. Further information can be obtained from Iris Bennett who can be contacted at 29 Oakhill Avenue, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 1LZ or telephone 01562 69708. During the Meeting Iris can be contacted in Caravan G5 on Site 1 or via the NRA letter rack.

Beating of Retreat

Members are reminded that there is an open invitation to attend the traditional ceremony of The Beating of Retreat performed by our military colleagues. The event will be staged on the Exhibition Lawn, on the evening of Wednesday 2 July, starting at 19:30.

Perhaps the ceremony has particular poignancy this year in the wake of the War in Iraq, so if you are around, why not come along?

South African Championships

Congratulations to the following on their successes recently in South Africa:

Wg Cdr David Calvert for retaining the South African Championship, the Grand Aggregate and the Bramley Chain and for coming second in the State President's Prize.

The GB Under 19 Team for winning their Long Range Match.

FORTHCOMING TOURS

Great Britain Under 25 Team To South Africa - March/April 2004

I am greatly honoured to have been elected Captain of this team. I should like to take this opportunity to invite any under 25 shooter qualified to shoot for Great Britain, who would like to be considered for this team to apply. Please send a current shooting CV, detailing both team and individual experience and successes for at least the past two years, to the address below:

Erica McMullan
182 Shore Road
Greenisland
Carrickfergus
Co Antrim
BT38 8TT

E-mail gbu25sa2004@yahoo.co.uk

The closing date for applications is Friday 4 July 2003. Further details will be posted at www.gbu25.org.uk.

Erica McMullan

GB Match Rifle Team to Australia 2004

I am greatly honoured to have been appointed Captain of this team, notice of which was previously posted in the Spring edition of the NRA Journal.

The focal point of the tour will be the Australian Match Rifle Championships followed by the match for the Woomera Trophy, to be shot at a new range on the Gulf of St Vincent, north of Adelaide, South Australia, from 6 - 11 October. It is hoped to include an additional MR event either before or afterwards, possibly at Woomera itself, and for those interested in other forms of shooting the South Australian Queen's will take place on the range in the week preceding the MR Championships.

At this early stage I am unable to be specific about the precise dates of the tour, the size of the team or the cost, though one should assume that minimum expenditure will be in the region of £2,500, depending on airfares, before taking any sponsorship support into account.

If you wish to be considered for this team please write to me, care of the NRA, as soon as possible (not by e-mail, please) and no later than 20 June. Please annotate

the envelope GBMRT. Please indicate whether your main interest is as coach, shooter, adjutant, treasurer or in any other capacity, and also state in no more than 50 words what attributes you believe you could bring to the team in addition to your shooting ability. I plan to select the team by the end of July this year.

Having just returned from a visit to Australia with a Scottish MR team I can assure you of two things: our Australian friends will give us a great welcome, and they will be hard to beat!

Colin Hayes

England Team to South Africa 2004

I have great pleasure in announcing the England Rifle Team that will tour South Africa in 2004. The provisional dates are 19 March to 8 April 2004. We intend first to visit the Cape where we shall shoot and relax before travelling to Bloemfontein for the South African Bisley Union Championships.

<i>Captain</i>	Dick Horrocks	Lancashire
<i>Vice-Captain</i>	David Taylor	Lancashire
<i>Adjutant</i>	David Dyson	Yorkshire
<i>Coaches</i>	Dom Harvey	Surrey
	David Allen	Yorkshire
<i>Shooters</i>	Nigel Ball	Norfolk
	Robin Baker	Kent
	George Cann	Devon
	Toby Coleridge	Northants, Leics & Rutland
	Tracy Fitzsimons	Cheshire
	Dani Foulston	Suffolk
	Doug Gass	Cheshire
	Chris Haley	Cambridgeshire
	Pete Holden	Norfolk
	Susie Kent	Surrey
<i>Reserves (travelling)</i>	Nigel Penn	Northants, Leics & Rutland
	Hamish Pollock	Hampshire
	Alistair Speirs	Northumberland
	John Stevens	Yorkshire
	Steve Thomas	Hertfordshire
	Jon Kent	Surrey
	Lucy Mace	London

MATTERS OF FACT RELATING TO RECENT POLL

Comment from the Secretary General

With the Poll now resolved, we can look ahead. However, there are a number of misunderstandings that endure on issues brought up at the time. So, before finally moving on, and to ensure that all do so from the same basis of understanding, the Trustees of the Association have asked that I set out the facts that are germane to the issues surrounding the Poll.

The 1890 Royal Charter

The Charter requires that the Association work within the Law and it makes void any rule that is “repugnant to the laws and statutes of our Realm”. Consequently, the Association must abide by current laws (such as The Charities Acts and the Firearms Acts) rather than those in force in 1890.

Elected members of Council have always been, and still remain in the majority thus ensuring the primacy of the wish of the membership.

The Estate

Originally, the War Office (now MoD) and the NRA purchased extensive acreage in the area near Brookwood. Only later, by entering into the 1894 Agreement (a sale and buy back), did the NRA release itself from the unmanageable debt that it had accumulated by that time. Under the agreement, the NRA made the ranges, which it had built, together with manoeuvre rights over both camp and ranges, available to the Army. However, the Association retained the freehold of the ‘Camp’ area (approximately 90 acres) and the use of the ranges and danger area ‘in perpetuity’. The only condition to this arrangement was that if the NRA ever wished to sell the Camp, it had first to offer it back to the MoD for a sum of £5,500. Thus, by the buy back option, the NRA Freehold of Bisley Camp has been encumbered since 1894.

In 2000, it became clear that the 1894 Agreement gave inadequate security of tenure for the Lottery to advance money for the new facilities then under consideration. Council therefore negotiated a 125 year lease with the MoD for the ranges and, at the same time, the removal of the previous buy back arrangement in relation to the freehold of the Camp. The Association now has an unfettered freehold of the Camp site and a 125 year lease over the ranges. The Association is liable to pay 10% of ‘relevant income’, to the MoD, out of rents from buildings erected and let on land outside the freehold Camp area.

The only freeholds disposed of in the last 30 years comprise those to the NSRA for its offices (since sold to the CPSA) and for the new Lord Roberts Range and land sold to the NSRA for an accommodation block.

Long Siberia was closed, by the MoD, in 1972, for safety reasons. However, the land has recently been

rented out to the benefit of the NRA. Cheylesmore has been rebuilt. Clay target shooting does not compromise activity on Short Siberia.

The vast majority of the £2.5 million cost of the clay target facility was paid for by the Lottery Fund, through Sport England. The NRA’s investment in the facility is approximately £400,000.

The Bank Loan

Whilst the need for the NRA bank loan was partly attributable to the cost of the clay range (approximately £400,000) and there was other net capital expenditure, the larger part was due to operating losses over several years including operating expenditure leading up to the Millennium and Commonwealth Games.

National Shooting Centre Limited

The establishment of the National Shooting Centre Limited (NSC), as a trading company, was a requirement of the Charity Commissioners. It is wholly owned and controlled by the NRA. The Directors, a majority of who are NRA trustees, are governed by Company Law, which requires them to ensure that the company trades solvently. The only assets transferred to NSC were the operating stocks and Melville and Shorts (on a sub-lease), at a commercial rent. These transactions enabled clay and pistol range building to be carried out (funded as explained above).

The latest audited accounts of NSC (to 30 September 2002) show the NSC is expected to be able to service and repay its interest bearing loan on time.

NSC does not control the NRA’s assets; it manages them. All freehold property remains directly held and controlled by the NRA. Members rights of access, to Bisley, are unaffected by the arrangement with NSC.

The Clay Shooting Centre is a commercial venture and open to the public (for the ultimate financial benefit of the NRA). There is subscription membership, which provides privileges, for those regular users who want it.

Officers of the Association

The previous Chairman, John de Havilland, gifted his house to the NRA and we subsequently sold it on a leasehold for the benefit of the Association for £235,000.

The present Chairman, John Jackman, was elected, by Council, to join Council and appointed Chairman, in October 2001. He was neither introduced nor proposed by his predecessor.

The previous Chief Executive’s annual salary was significantly less than £100,000; the exact amount is confidential.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SHOOTING



*by
Martin
Farnan*

Imperial Meeting

General

Most of the changes affecting this year's Imperial Meeting were detailed in my notes in the last Journal, but there have inevitably been a number of last minute changes which are highlighted below.

Free Grand Aggregate Entries

County Secretaries are reminded that the free entry to the Grand Aggregate, awarded to each affiliated County, should ideally be awarded to those who would not otherwise be able to attend the Imperial Meeting. The award is not intended to be won by the best shot at the County Championship, for example, unless there are particular circumstances which, in the opinion of the County, warrant such an exception.

Early Entry Draw

The winners in the Early Entry Draw, for those competitors who returned their entry form (amounting to £50 or more) by 1 May, were as follows:

1st	Mr BFC Roberts	Index No 70 (100% refund of entry fees)
2nd	Mr GA Atkinson	Index No 279 (50% refund of entry fees)
3rd	Mr PE Hammond	Index No 42 (25% refund of entry fees)

These refunds apply to entry fees (including the 8% obligatory surcharge) **only**, and not to meeting membership, marker fees, sweepstakes or any other payments made on the Individual Entry Form.

Target Rifle

RPA have decided (after the publication of the "Bisley Bible"), not to sponsor the RPA Aggregate. It will therefore revert to being known as the "Wednesday Aggregate" and the prize list shown in the "Bible" should be deleted, and replaced with "List B" (£20, £15 & £10).

Andrew Tucker has very generously decided to present a trophy, in addition to the cash prizes already sponsored by him, in the Tucker Aggregate. This will be available for presentation this year.

McQueen

The McQueen competition that will be shot during the Imperial Historic Arms Meeting will be fired at **200 yards** on Butt 10 on Century. Scores made in this match may **not** be counted in the McQueen Classic competition. The five McQueen Series that are shot during the Imperial Meeting will also be shot on Butt 10 but will be fired at **300 yards**. The targets will remain as before but the bull has been increased to 6", scoring 5, with the rest of the target scoring 4. In the event of tie shoots being required the previous 4" bull will be used as a V bull to break ties where necessary.

Both the Australia Match and the Junior Australia match are being fired on Second Tuesday and, as a consequence, the County Championship Long Range will, for this year, be shot at one distance only. The match conditions will be one sighting shot and 15 to count at 1,000 yards for the usual teams of six.

F Class

There are a number of changes to the F Class rules, summarised as follows:

- A bipod or front rest is permitted to support the rifle or hand.
- The maximum rifle weight is now 10 kg.
- The previous minimum trigger weight limit of 0.5 kg is removed. The trigger must, however, be safe (ie the rifle must not fire when the bolt is cycled rapidly).

I would request all F Class shooters actively to encourage more competitors to come forward. The maximum number of competitors in any year so far has been 41, and the NRA would very much like to increase this number.

Schools

As this article is being written the L81 A2 Cadet Target Rifle (CTR) is in the process of being issued to Cadet Units and Schools. The ISCRM and Schools Meetings will therefore be shot mainly at 300 and 500 yards this year with some matches at 600 yards. The Marling and the Devon and Dorset Falling Plates will continue to be shot with the L98 A1 Cadet GP rifle.

Mr Rae Wills, the organiser of the Imperial Historic Arms Meeting, has again very kindly said that visits by competitors attending the Schools Meeting to try out some of the classic and historic firearms available will be most welcome. Further details will be included in all Schools' packs. Masters are encouraged to bring their pupils to 'have a go' at a fascinating selection of rifles and pistols from a bygone age.

Gallery Rifle & Pistol

In order to open up the matches to as many competitors as possible, it has been agreed that there will be only two designations of sights, metallic and optical. The previous designation of "open metallic sights" has therefore been dispensed with.

Ranges

Range Radios

All range users are reminded that they **must** bring the radio, which was issued to them first thing in the morning, back to the Range Office at lunchtime. Failure to do so may mean that they may have the wrong radio for the afternoon, someone else may not have a radio at all and, in addition, they may end up with a flat battery. Please obey this simple rule.

A number of radios have recently failed due to the fact that RCOs have been carrying (and swinging!) them by their antennas. The wire has, in some cases, broken inside the antenna and, in others, the socket has been damaged. This has caused great inconvenience in many cases, and all range users should note that the radio should **only** be carried by the body.

Please also note that a number of radios are channelled to different sub-tones of the same frequency. This means that, though a user may not be able actually to hear other users on a different sub-tone, his radio cannot transmit or receive while the red light on the top of the radio is on. This red light indicates that other sub-tones on that frequency are in use. The simple answer is to wait and try again when the red light goes out. The radio is **not** broken!

Use of Short Siberia Range

The present restriction on the use of Short Siberia Range by members of affiliated clubs is being considered, and a revised signing-in form may be introduced. The reason for this will be to ensure that all users of this range have the appropriate insurance cover in place.

Weekday Markers

Club Secretaries and individuals making bookings for targets on weekdays are reminded that markers can only be arranged if they are available. Most of our markers are school children and are therefore generally **not** available on weekdays (school holidays excepted, of course). All those making weekday bookings should therefore be aware that the NRA will probably only be able to provide a limited number of markers on weekdays, and that they should be prepared to arrange their own markers, particularly if a large number of targets has been booked.

Access Road on RHS of Century Range

It now appears that a full ecological survey of the route of the proposed new access road along the RHS of

Century is required before our application for planning permission to build this road will even be considered. We are informed that this is unlikely before June at the earliest, and will take ten days! With the Imperial Meeting following only weeks later it is unlikely that the road can be started before the NSRA Meeting in August.

We are therefore looking at ways of improving access up Century Range to the right of target 108. This is especially important on days when reverse echelon shooting is taking place, and for both Classic and Historic Arms and disabled shooters.

Breaches of safety

Please be aware that any breach of safety will probably lead to a suspension of the right to shoot on the Bisley Ranges until the incident has been thoroughly investigated. This is due to the potential safety implications and attendant NRA liability of allowing someone to continue shooting (or acting as an RCO) where there may be doubts about his or her safety on a range. Please be aware that alleged incidents or breaches of safety need not have happened at Bisley, but could have happened on any range throughout the UK.

Ammunition Sales

Club Secretaries are reminded that all orders for ammunition will only be accepted if made in writing. Arrangements may, of course, be made verbally or by telephone but must be confirmed in writing before the order will be processed. If an order is made and confirmed, and then subsequently cancelled in favour of another supplier, a charge of 10% of the value of the order will be made.

RCO Renewals

You are again reminded that this qualification is valid for six years from the date of issue of the certificate and is applicable on any range throughout the UK. You may apply to renew your certificate on or before the sixth anniversary of the passing of your course, and full details are available from the Shooting Administrator on ext 150. After this date it may be necessary to attend another course to re-qualify.

In the case of those who hold a military range management qualification up to the equivalent of Stage 3 (which has been validated by the SASC) they may apply for a straight "transfer" to the NRA RCO Qualification. Please note that this also applies to Cadet Force Officers who hold the CRCQ qualification. Again full details are available from the Shooting Administrator on ext 150.

Range Office

Opening hours

May I remind you that the **Range Office is closed on Mondays**, and no staff are on duty to take bookings.

VAT payable by Associations

Secretaries of Associations that are affiliated to the NRA should note that all range bookings made by them are subject to VAT, unlike bookings made by Clubs. The reason is to do with the fact that whereas Clubs pay a 'per capita' charge, Associations do not and pay only a fixed sum. The NRA must therefore remit VAT on all bookings made by Associations, and must therefore charge it accordingly.

Members' Enquiries

Booking In

It is obligatory that all Range Conducting Officers (RCOs) sign in at the Range Office before going to the range. Please read the certificate at the top of the sheet if you are the RCO concerned: it defines your duties and responsibilities.

Signing In Cards

Home Office Approval for Clubs states the following within its Criteria for Approval: "The Club will maintain a register of the attendance of all members together with details, for each visit, of the firearms which they used and the competitions, if any, in which they took part."

The NRA implements this by setting up a "Signing In" card, kept in the Range Office, for members to sign each time they shoot at Bisley. We also retain a record of all entries to the Imperial Meeting each year. Those members who are **only** members of the NRA, ie who are not members of any other Home Office Approved Club, **must** complete their personal attendance card on each and every visit to shoot at Bisley.

This card must show attendance dates and a record of all firearms used. This is necessary for the NRA to comply with the present legislation and, if this is not done, then those who have not recorded their attendance will be reported to the appropriate Firearms Licensing Authority as required by law.

All others who shoot at Bisley are also welcome to use this service to keep their "shooting history" fully up to date. If you wish to do so, which will require a card to be prepared for you, please send a passport sized photograph, with your name and membership number written on the back, to the Membership Secretary. Please also forward details of your firearms (make/serial number) to allow for the easy completion of the card.

Courses

Courses are normally run during the months of October /November - March inclusive, and the "Course Season" is now closed. A Club Instructor's Course will be held in the Autumn and full details of all courses, as from next October/November, will be given in the next Journal.

RCO Courses which are to include Muzzle Loading will no longer require the applicant to hold the (previously named) Approved Instructor

qualification. This course has been discontinued, and replaced with an assessment course more appropriate for ML RCOs. It will be run in addition to the RCO Course by MLAGB or NRA Assessors who have been validated by the MLAGB. Further details may be obtained from Phyllis Farnan, the Shooting Administrator, on 01483 797777 ext 150. All applications to attend courses should also be made to her.

RCO Courses

One day RCO Courses will be held on 20 and 21 September, and on 8 and 9 October 2003.

Methods of Instruction (MoI) Courses

Two 2 day MoI Courses will be held over the weekends 27/28 September and 25/26 October 2003.

GBTSF Club Coach Course

A GBTSF Club Coach Course is planned for the weekend 18/19 October 2003, but depends on enough applicants for the course if it is to be run.

GBTSF County Coach Course

A GBTSF County Coach Course is planned for the weekend 13/14 December 2003, but again depends on enough applicants for the course if it is to be run.

World Long Range Individual Championships

It has been agreed by the Chairman of the ICFRA Long Range Committee, which has taken over responsibility for these Championships, that these Championships may now be opened up as follows:

- All members of Palma Teams
- All members of World Veterans Teams
- All members of World Under 25 Teams
- All members of World Under 21 Teams
- All competitors recommended by their own NRA (subject to overall numbers – maximum 500 – and being of a suitable shooting class ie class X or A and possibly some class O).

I therefore ask all UK competitors who wish to compete in these Championships to write/fax/e-mail me with their request. All will be acknowledged and, in the event of over-subscription, a waiting list will be maintained.

The Great Fire

Not an original title, I know (the last one was in 1666 and started in a Baker's Shop in Pudding Lane!) but that was certainly what will linger in people's minds when they think of Easter 2003. Started by children having a picnic on West End Common it swept from East to West behind Stickledown on Maundy Thursday, the fire front being three miles long at one time. It then backburned during Good Friday and Easter Saturday, finally being beaten on Easter Saturday afternoon. A full report is contained later in this Journal along with some fascinating photographs!



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Firearms Advice Service

Members are reminded that John Horton offers a firearms legislation and licensing advice service. He can be contacted on Tuesdays and Thursdays on 01483 797777 ext 132.

Amendment to Bisley Bible

On page vi under the headings **2005** and **Elected**, please add CAJ Oliver-Bellasis and JA McAllister.

The Barn

The National Rifle Association are pleased to offer the Barn for let. Rental offers are invited for a lease of between 10 and 21 years, to be received by Jeremy Staples by first post on 1 September 2003.

In line with normal policy the NRA reserves the right not to have to accept the highest or any other bid.

Viewing can be arranged by prior booking on weekdays with Sherril Dixon ext 135.

Caravans

With reference to the new scale of charging for caravans as detailed on page 5 of the Winter 2002 Journal. For the avoidance of doubt, the caravans were measured based on the length of the body of the caravan excluding the tow bar. If any individual wishes to discuss their individual caravan measurements, please do not hesitate to contact Sherril Dixon, Accommodation Office ext 135.

NRA Aunts and Uncles Scheme July 2003

This has become, and is recognised as, one of the finest schemes of its kind in any sport anywhere in the world.

It is open to **any** firer from any country or county shooting TR and F Class who would like help during the Imperial Meeting. It is **not** restricted to less experienced firers and novices.

If anyone would like to have an Aunt or an Uncle to help over shooting matters, do please get in touch with me. Likewise, anyone with appropriate experience wishing to be an Aunt or Uncle will be more than welcome to join the team. Again, do please contact me.

Tim Elliott

Lark Hill, Haynes West End,
Bedfordshire MK45 3RB

Telephone and fax: 01234 740334

Mobile telephone: 07932 706171

E-mail: tje@easynet.co.uk

INTRODUCING JEREMY STAPLES MANAGING DIRECTOR NATIONAL SHOOTING CENTRE

by Tony de Launay

As an introduction it must have been a tad exciting. Within days of starting your new job there is a fractious Spring General Meeting laced with recrimination and conflict, and then fiery elements approach your entire stock of targets with the intent of burning them to a crisp. Such was the welcome that faced Jeremy Staples, the new Managing Director of the National Shooting Centre. Jeremy is the third appointment to the revised Bisley structure, and while the Treasurer and the Secretary General are, undoubtedly, key appointments in their own way, his is the position that is central to the day to day cash-flow of the organisation.



His approach is refreshingly without pre-conceived ideas or traditional baggage. He is an active sportsman, naming rugby, village cricket and mountain walking among his active hobbies. He also skis, which accounts for the fact that my first contact by telephone caught him dangling from a chair lift in the Alps. He is not a shooter, but he realises that acquisition of a clear view of shooters' priorities is essential. "I do not have to know how to shoot: what matters is that I am a sportsman and know what is important to sportsmen and women. At Bisley, history is important but so is progress. The members will not thank me if the facility sits still and continues to fail to earn its way". He is also

His background lies in management and utilisation of Real Estate. From Christ's Hospital School via the City of London Polytechnic in the late 1970s he gravitated into surveying and property management, having the tenacity to qualify as a Chartered Surveyor through night school. Some sixteen years of this role developed a wide experience of real estate work including acquisition, disposal, valuation, management and investment projects. Spells with two leading companies, where his corporate real estate management skills were developed, led him to the leafy acres at Bisley.

His first reaction: "We have a magnificent facility. We must manage it more efficiently and exploit the commercial opportunities. Look at it: it is greatly under-utilised during the week and I am sure we can find different user groups who would relish the chance to hold their events on our grounds". That sounds like a cry for marketing. "Correct: we need to get among the potential users and to use all our contacts. As a sportsman, but not a shooter, I can bring that contact whether it is a spin-off from rugby contacts or Chartered Surveyors in London and the South-East".

As a member of the managing board of NSC he will also have a pivotal role in carrying out the duties of the old Estate Committee. This will inevitably lead him into contact with the Clubs on the Common, with a number of whom recently the NRA has had something of a stuttering relationship. "I also see my job as a conduit for business opportunities for the Clubs. If we improve our usage of the ranges through an increase in, for example, corporate days, the guests are going to need somewhere to eat and sleep. That is where I can broker the introduction to the Clubs as providers at no cost to them".

determined that everything he does is transparent, without favour and consistent.

He accepts that the history and the practices of Bisley will impose an almost vertical learning curve. However, that is part of the challenge. "I shall wait until we have concluded the Palma Match, dealing for the moment with the immediate issues. Then we can start looking to build a medium and long-term plan. What it needs is time and energy: I've got the energy and one way or another we are going to make the time".

Range Office Targets

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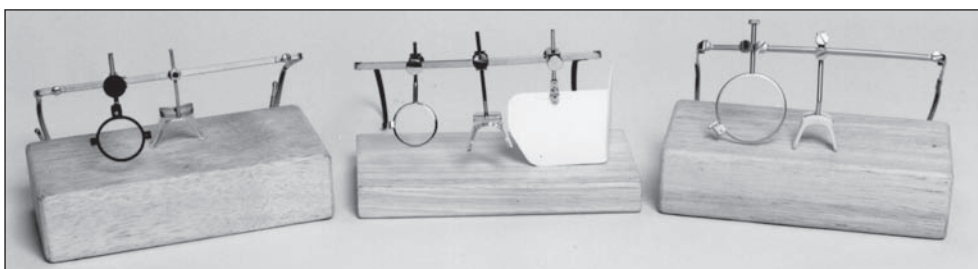
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500: iris and snap-in filters & polarisers	£89	551: iris, 1.5x and twin polarisers	£120	525: iris and fine crosshairs	£69
510: iris only	£40	570: iris, 1.5x and 6 colour filters	£139	591: spirit level, fits under clamp ring	£35
566: iris and 6 colour filters	£110	568: iris, 48 colours, twin polarisers	£159	581: as above but radially adjustable	£39
575: 1.5x diopter, 5 cols & polarisers	£149	507: 6 snap-on col. rings for alignment	£13	586: 1.3x magnifying lens	£20
577: adaptor, allows use without diopter	£7	508: as above with 6 coloured filters	£33	524: iris to restrict white round bullseye	£36

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Plenty of advice: Bob Fishwick chats to Gregg Wilmshurst.



John Jackman made the presentations.

AWARDS

GBTSF County Coach:

M Maksimovic	Stamford School
M Jackson	Stamford School

GBTSF Club Coach:

R Le Page	Elizabeth College
P Maiden	Southern Area SCC
M Meatyard	Oundle School
M Norman	Victoria College/JRA
M West	Sevenoaks School

NRA Club Instructors:

D Bray	Sussex ACF
L Gilbert	Sussex ACF
J Juniper	Southern Area SCC
P Martin	Southern Area SCC

NRA Marksman:

H Blott	Christ's Hospital School
G Brett	Sutton Valence School
S Lai	Stamford School
R Peckett	Stamford School
J Redman	Sevenoaks School
N Thorburn	Stamford School
GJ Wilmshurst	Sussex ACF

NRA Skilled Shot:

O Adams	Christ's Hospital School
D Benest	Elizabeth College
W Gray	Elizabeth College
J Hollister	Sutton Valence School
C Kendrick	Sevenoaks School
C Marsden	Elizabeth College
G Oates	Sevenoaks School
I Ritchie	Sutton Valence School
O Smith	Oundle School
O Williams	Stamford School
S Willis	Stamford School
GF Wilmshurst	Sussex ACF



And everyone had a great time!

2 INFANTRY BRIGADE CADET TR COACHING COURSE

by Andrew Penfold

Two weeks before the course I received that phone call I could have really done without – Surrey Army Cadet Force training centre was being used as a temporary fire station during the dispute. I had 42 cadets and nine adults from the Channel Isles and South East attending. It was a most nerve racking seven days, months of planning could be thrown into confusion, it all hinged on the diplomacy of the Deputy Prime Minister!

It was going to be quite an experiment - four different courses running simultaneously: GBTSF Club Coaches, NRA Club Instructors, Advanced and Basic Skills Enhancement.

Mik Maksimovic and I got to Bisley early in the morning to complete the required admin and takeover. Everything went smoothly – too smoothly I thought, or perhaps it was the fact we had planned so well. It was at lunch when Mik hit me with the bombshell - could we look at the logical flow of the programme? We spent the afternoon rewriting the entire timetable.

Just when I thought it couldn't get any worse the bulbs blew on the overhead and PowerPoint projectors. Thankfully Mik had kept back the PowerPoint projector loaned by Surrey ACF, whilst Pete Kearsey called in some favours to borrow an OHP from the Camberley Sea Cadet Corps. I could relax once more.

For the Skills Enhancement course, the first two days were spent in the classroom, laying the foundations with a thorough grounding in the four principles of Marksmanship.

We managed to break the monotony of the classroom work with Martin and Phyllis Farnan turning out in support. Martin was even persuaded to talk about his shooting career, including his winning HM the Queen's Medal for Service Rifle shooting, along with showing the cadets some of the medals they could win at Bisley.

Martin spent days beforehand telling me that 30 minutes was more than enough time for him to talk - I did explain that last year David Calvert had the cadets eating out of his hand for two hours! One and a half hours later we had to call a halt to Martin's enlightening lecture to avoid having to rewrite the programme once again.

Marc Jackson put the Club Coaches through their paces in the art of teaching techniques and lesson plans. After some scary dress rehearsals, constructive critique from their peers and minor re-adjustments, the club coaches were all required to present their

subjects to the assembled Skills course - whilst being independently assessed. All completed the task with good humour, confidence and expertise.

Nine experienced cadets, who have previously completed the Skills course, were put through their paces to prepare them for greater things; the UK Cadet Rifle Team to the Channel Isles, the Athelings Team to Canada and the GB U19 Team to South Africa.

On the Monday it was time to put theory into practice! Would it work? The course ventured out to Ash Ranges where, under the Range Officer expertise of Adrian Moore, we spent the day zeroing rifles, introducing novices to fullbore target rifle shooting, letting coaches loose with their new found skills and knowledge, as well as getting the Advanced course to coach themselves with confidence.

During shooting on Tuesday we were delighted to welcome Phyllis and Martin Farnan and Bob Fishwick, the new Secretary General of the NRA, who spent time talking to the students.

Tuesday evening was our last evening and we were delighted that John Jackman could join us (he ventured all of one mile from his home) to present the certificates and badges. After the presentations, most of the adults adjourned to the nearest local hostelry where the course director was seen to buy a round. Must have been a blue moon!

On Wednesday morning we cleared up our mess, said our fond farewells to Steve Rootes, the Master Chef, who, owing to his culinary expertise, had ensured we all came away far heavier than when we had started. We are grateful to Surrey ACF for looking after us so well.

The morning spent on Century range introduced some of the cadets to their first visit to Bisley, whilst the old hands were able to prove themselves without being in awe of their surroundings.

Did we achieve our aims? Everyone enjoyed themselves and learned from the experience - an awful lot want to come back next year, so yes I think we did. None of this would have been possible without the support of a dedicated directing staff, the NRA, CCRS and Surrey ACF.

The course is open to cadets and adults in the cadet forces and next year it will run from 13 to 18 February. Should you wish to bid for places, contact either the NRA Shooting Administrator or Andrew Penfold (arp@tonbridge-school.org).

DISCIPLINE AND REGIONAL MATTERS

Practical Rifle

2002 Practical Rifle End of Year Report

by Steve Beard

The 2002 programme started off well with the potential of thirteen competitions to count for the league. However the final number to count (due to lack of range space) ended up with eleven competitions at the following venues: Fingringho, Bangor, East Holme, Llansilin, Ash, Sennybridge, Bodmin, Diggle, Bisley, Beckingham and ended with the Nationals at Bisley, Ash and Stoney Castle ranges.

There were the usual assortment of rifles used, primarily in .308 and .223. The black rifles (AR15 derivatives) were again more in evidence this year. For those of you who primarily shoot 7.62 on the TR scene be advised that the accuracy of these rifles, mating as they do a heavier bullet with a faster twist barrel is fast becoming very, very competitive. In the PR discipline it is no longer a rare sight to see them shooting (and getting high scores) out to 600 yards and beyond.

This year we have seen the introduction of the official PR logo which is available on sweat shirts and badges, with polo shirts being the latest on offer. These look smart and are a good advert for the discipline.

The service rifle shoot (Individual and the Methuen team events), went very well with excellent results for the civilians. A number of civilian teams took part on the Wednesday, again with very good results, in particular those put forward by those clubs with a bent towards the Practical Disciplines, ie the High Power Association and the London Practical Shooting Club. It is hoped that more civilian teams will take part this year. A Practical Rifle League team has now been selected. The

quality of shooting at this event is getting better and better as we get used to the courses of fire and the routine.

For those who are interested in taking part in Practical Rifle you can look on the web site at www.practicalrifle.co.uk or send an e-mail to prnl@practicalrifle.co.uk or send a sae to PRNL, 52 Roping Road, Yeovil, BA21 4BE for more information and entry forms.

Entering is easy. All competitions are open. The safety requirement is exactly the same as you would have been taught by your local club or organisation. All that is needed is your entry form along with your entry fee, after that it's just a case of turning up.

As for 2003, it looks like there will be 12 competitions to count toward this years league. Six competitions have already taken place with dates for a further four on the books plus two more to be confirmed. The dates are as follows:

South East Fingringho	1 Feb
North Wales Bangor	21/23 Feb
Southern East Holme	8 March
North Wilts County	30 March
Mid Wales Llansilin	13 April
The Kemble/Classic	11 May
The Blue Team	31 May
South West Bodmin	7 June
Northern	28 June
Beckingham	12 July <i>provisional</i>
North West Altcar	(tbd)
PR 2003	(tbd)

The South East Championship

by Steve Beard

This, the first practical rifle League competition of the year, was hosted by the Dunmow and District RPC and the High Power Rifle Association.

It took place on 1 February at the Fingringho Rifle Range. This is a 600 metres range with electronic targetry at 100 metres (a fig 12), 200 metres and 300 metres (fig 11s). The competition itself consisted of three stages shot from the 300 metres firing point, and a further three from the 600 metres point. All stages utilised all three targets in each of the competitors lanes. In other words the competitors had exposures of targets at 100, 200 and 300 metres whilst on the 300 metres firing point and exposures of 400, 500 and 600 metres whilst on the 600 metres point.

It was run with their usual efficiency by Fred Cook and Mark Bradley on the firing point and Matt Greenall in the console with Dave Green on Stats. Apart from the usual problems that occur on ETR with targetry breakdowns, the competition ran smoothly. It started a

little bit later than planned but this was partially due to the atrocious weather and partially due to "Nurse" Fred Cooke going to the rescue of the range warden who'd had an unfortunate argument with a circular saw. Despite this, the competition was completed by 14.00.

The competition took place following some very wintry weather; snow and freezing conditions made getting there a potential nightmare. In the event nature was very kind and by start time it was only drizzling. It was however still cold with a layer of snow on the ground but no wind. The snow remained with us until the early afternoon by which time it was melting and turned the 600 metres point into a mud wrestlers dream. But to offset that the sun shone and the wind remained absent. On with the plot. As already mentioned there were six stages. The first was a nice easy series of exposures of each of the three targets (falling when hit). The first was the 100 metres fig 12 with a series of six 5 second exposures to be shot from standing, shooting round a post. The post could be used as support.



Feeling cold at the South East Practical Rifle Championship.

(Photo: S Beard)

The second series of six exposures was at the 200 metres target. Again each was of five seconds, only this time they had to be shot from the sitting position round a post.

The last series was of eight exposures shot prone unsupported. Ten seconds were allowed between each series of exposures to adopt the new position. Needless to say safeties were applied during all movement. M Bradley and D Livingstone tied for first place with G Flemming in third.

Stage 2 was of a type becoming more familiar these days forcing the competitor to use as many positions as the organiser can squeeze into a single stage. In this case it was a series of exposures of each of the three targets (falling when hit) with a different position being adopted for each series. At least two of the targets were to be engaged during each exposure. They were, in order, Standing, Squatting, Kneeling, Sitting, Prone Unsupported and finally, Freestyle. The stage winner was M Bradley followed by P Williams and S Oakland.

Stage 3 (the Mogadishu Ration) was, as most of you will have already surmised by part of the name, a variation of the now infamous Rourke's. In this case it was with all three targets exposed for 150 seconds (not falling when hit). Competitors had three magazines of ten rounds, two of which were placed about two metres behind the point, competitors started from behind the point holding the remaining magazine. On the appearance of targets they had to move to the point, adopt a prone supported position, load and engage the targets with no more than ten to count per target. So far so good and fairly straightforward. The only down side was that once your existing ten rounds had been used, you had to crawl to the rear to pick up the next magazine. Picture if you will your normal ETR firing point complete with very cold and very slushy snow! M Bradley, P Williams, M Harrington and R Cooke all tied for first place.

Stage 4 was split into two parts. The first (4a) was a good way to check whether your zero was good for the ETR targetry, consisting as it did of three 6 second exposures of the 400 metres (fig 12) target, three 7 second exposures of the 500 metres target (fig 11) and four 8

second exposures of the 600 metres (fig 11) target. All targets fell when hit and were shot from the prone supported position.

Next (4b) was of a single extended ripple of 40 seconds. Ten seconds after the 400 metres target appeared, the 500 metres was put up and 10 seconds later the 600 metres target. Shot from the prone supported position and with unlimited rounds, (provided you were confident in your zero) this was a chance to check your ability to shoot fast and accurately. Targets did not fall when hit. S Oakland won this stage.

The penultimate Stage 5 was a distant ripple. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this term, it is a series of exposures starting and finishing with a single exposure of the 600 metres fig 11 target. In between these two exposures are a series of six groups of three targets. Each of the 4, 5 and 600 metres targets would appear two seconds after each other for a period of six seconds each in random order. Shot from a freestyle position this is great fun as if you don't drop them in the correct order you'll inevitably miss an exposure. In my case, simply being able to see the well camouflaged 600 metres fig 11 would have been of some benefit; it was only when it was on the move that I was able to locate a dim outline, but that, as they say, is Practical Rifle. Surprisingly yours truly won the stage, S Oakland was second and M Bradley, P Swire and P Hunter shared third.

Stage 6, the final stage, had competitors standing to the rear of the 600 metres firing point. On the appearance of the 400 and 500 metres targets for 15 seconds, competitors had to move forward, adopt the prone unsupported position prior to engaging each target which would fall when hit. There was then an interval of five seconds for the competitors to adopt a supported prone position prior to the 500 and 600 metres targets appearing for 15 seconds, again these fell when hit. Competitors then applied safety catches prior to standing and repeating the whole procedure to give a total of five series of exposures. First was M Bradley, second D Green and third P Williams.

Top overall three places	Mark Bradley Steve Oakland Dave Green
Top Veteran (50 and over)	Steve Oakland
Top Tyro	G Hay

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The Bangor and District Practical Rifle and Pistol Club North Wales Championship

by Neil Beeby

The annual practical rifle shoot at Bangor is now well established as something quite special. The theme of the shoot varies every year, this year's being the Vietnam War, but the common factor is always the element of surprise. There are invariably a few surprises for the organisers too. This year's surprise was a build up of smoke in the longer tunnel due to unusual ventilation factors. It soon became apparent that the 'fog of war' was going to be a serious problem, with fumes collecting half way along the longer of the two tunnels and refusing to budge. Those stages involving movement towards the targetry were altered so that all shooting was done at 400 yards, reducing the output of fumes in the troublesome sector of the tunnel. This was a blow to those of us whose only hope was to get a bit closer to the targets! Whoever coined the phrase 'smokeless powder' should be chained in the tunnel for a couple of days.

Luckily, the fun was not spoiled in the long tunnel, movement forward being supplanted by a good dose of jumping up and down and impacts with hard surfaces. Coupled with the usual trickery with the lighting, this made for some testing moments.

Four Green Bottles (or know your come-ups) proved a come-uppance for some. Steel plates were alternated with ceramic ones from 100 to 400 yards, illuminated at 15 second intervals. With bonus points for rounds

remaining out of 20 after the fourth plate was downed, it was vital to hit all four to get a decent score. Given that correct elevation was achieved by holding over or adjusting without light, a surprising number of competitors hit all the plates, with six shooters achieving a maximum score.

The Rourke's Jungle Experience was heavily modified but still exhausting. Shooters started standing but had to fling themselves down on the appearance of their 400 yards target and engage it supported by a 'Vietnamese bi-pod' (a rough log). This was repeated several times with shooters returning to the standing alert position between exposures. M Dougan came off best in this stage, six points clear of Mark Bradley. The Hue Hoedown was a seemingly never ending series of double taps from each position from standing down to prone unsupported, twice over, and at twice the 200 yards distance as originally intended. Some were unfazed by this, Bill Ellis winning with an excellent score of 86.

If you hadn't hit the 400 yards plate in Four Green Bottles you weren't going to have much luck with the 400 yards Fig 14 in Long Shot with White Feather. With no fall of shot visible in the darkened tunnel it was all or nothing, but Steve Oakland had it all with a score of 70 from 10 six second exposures.

The short tunnel (100 yards) was unaffected by the ventilation problem, but had added atmosphere provided by a contemporary sound track from the likes of Hendrix, played LOUD. Steel helmets were worn by all competitors, some of whom came to wish they had smoked the 'joints' thoughtfully attached. You have to calm down somehow!

The Khe Shan Defence was shot from a simulated bunker through a camo net, from a sitting position. Three waves of targets were illuminated from the rear first, for thirty seconds at a time. The nearest wave were so close that some failed to spot them altogether, with tragic consequences for their scores. It was fast and furious, but Bill Ellis again remained 'chilled' to win with 143 ex 150 points, seven points ahead of Fred Cooke.

The La Dang Assault involved a simulated helicopter mission with a wave of 11b shot 'legs dangling' and another engaged after jumping clear and assuming a kneeling position. When you choose to land on your head it makes you grateful for a helmet! King of the chopper squad was Phil Woolley with 64 ex 100 points.

The final stage was a Shoot-out in Saigon - four exposures of five targets engaged from standing, around cover. Again this was fast and furious and dimly lit. Mark Bradley was fast, and the rest furious (79 ex 100). When the dust settled, the final score sheet looked like this:

1	Bill Ellis	517
2	Mark Bradley	512
3	Steve Reese	496

Norman Clark

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The Bridport Shooting Club Southern Championship

by Neil Beeby

Hosted by the Bridport Shooting Club, the Southern Championship (one of those that count for the Practical Rifle League) is actually shot at East Holme, near Lulworth Cove, nowhere near Bridport. It is well worth making a weekend of it because this is a lovely part of the country, even in early March. The range is a very well kept 400 yards facility with a view of Poole Harbour and Brownsea Island (but don't look that way when the red flag is down or your next view will be even more heavenly!).

The weather can be nasty in March, of course, but despite an intimidating forecast, the worst of the rain passed, with only a sprinkling for those who shot in the afternoon. Those of us who shot first had to do without the cooling effect of rain, but we coped bravely. The wind was fresh by East Holme standards and, whilst appearing to be blowing straight towards the firing points, did in fact have a slight bias.

The consequences of the deceptive wind conditions were misses to the left for some of those shooting Stage 1 who opted for the smallest and highest scoring of the three targets available. There were five 20 seconds exposures of a fig 12, fig 14 and fig 12c on a backer, which meant that no fall of shot was visible. This didn't faze Chris Vale who won comfortably with 162.

Stage 2 was a Short Regina - this is not a medical condition but could well lead to one. It involves a run-down from 400 to 100 yards with double taps from progressively less stable shooting positions. It culminates with a further six exposures of the fig 12 and 12c to be engaged, as before with one shot each, but from a standing position. The wind buffeted the shooter more than his bullet, making this very tricky. Steve Sheldon was up to the job however, scoring 148, four points ahead of Chris Vale.

Stage 3 involved a complicated sequence of positions at 300 yards, requiring different numbers of rounds for each

phase. Brain fade was much in evidence with a number of penalties being imposed. J Morgan-Hosey kept a clear head to win with 158, twelve points clear of Neil Beeby.

Stage 4 was a modified Rourke's Ration at 200 yards, requiring seven rounds from each of the sitting, prone unsupported and prone supported positions. Ammunition was retrieved from the 300 yards point before each phase, necessitating a total of 600 yards of sprinting. The trip out was a breeze, but the trip back to the firing point was like running through treacle in a wind tunnel. However, a relatively generous five minutes were available, and some of us failed to take full advantage of this, shooting too quickly. You can't miss fast enough to win, as someone once said! P Hunter judged it very well indeed to win with 184 points, Steve Oakland was in hot pursuit with 180.

The final stage consisted of pairs of three second exposures of a fig 14, the first shot of the pair to be taken standing and the second shot kneeling. The wind was stiff and the target small, but P Mansell, Bill Ellis and John Nightingale managed 120 points each to tie for first place.

Overall winners were Chris Vale in pole position, Steve Sheldon as runner up and, with only one point, barking at his heels were Neil Beeby and John Morgan-Hosey. Top Veteran went to Fred Cooke, top Tyro was Kevin King and top Lady was Ann Nightingale with Jenny Hunter a mere 14 points behind. Top Iron Sights went to Christina Brown with one of Armalon's new .223" calibre L42 derivatives.

Thanks of course go to the Bridport Shooting Club for hosting this event and to the organisers, in particular John and Ann Nightingale, Robin and Christina Brown for running the butts, Steve Beard and Martin Mitchard for running the firing point and Mark Bradley for the stats.



Jenny Hunter in the kneeling position.

(Photo: S Beard)



Top Tyro Kevin King in the sitting position.

(Photo: S Beard)

Gallery Rifle and Pistol

by Kevin Hosey

Hendon League – Winter 2002-3

The Hendon League for Winter 2002-3 attracted a total entry of 177 competitors from 17 clubs in nine different disciplines. The winners were:

Precision LSR Open sights

Div 1	K Kingsbury	Croydon RPC
Div 2	F Carnell	Croydon RPC
Div 3	RC Pateman	Boro of Wandsworth RC
Div 4	M Barton	Surbiton RC

Any Sights LSR

Div 1	R Freiter	Hendon RC
Div 2	K Hosey	Hendon RC
Div 3	N Milner	Caterham & D RC
Div 4	W Emms	Market Rasen RC
Div 5	P Skinner	Surbiton RC
Div 6	RC Pateman	Boro of Wandsworth RC
Div 7	M Laundry	1 st Ealing RPC
Div 8	M Wilson	Caterham & D RC
Div 9	A McCormick	Surbiton RC

Precision Gallery Rifle Open sights

Div 1	K Kingsbury	Croydon RPC
Div 2	William Noble	Kodak RC
Div 3	F Carnell	Croydon RPC
Div 4	PJ Bennett	East Barnet SC
Div 5	A Cartwright	East Barnet SC
Div 6	J Bowman	Kodak RC

Black Powder Pistol

Div 1	P Jones	Chobham RC
Div 2	F Carnell	Croydon RPC

Rapid Fire Gallery Rifle Open sights

Div 1	K Kingsbury	Croydon RPC
-------	-------------	-------------

Standard Pistol LSR

Div 1	S Hodgson	Camberley RPC
Div 2	P Roberts	Chobham RC
Div 3	I Garner	Gainsborough RC

Standard Handgun Gallery Rifle Open sights

Div 1	K Kingsbury	Croydon RPC
-------	-------------	-------------

Long Range Air Pistol

Div 1	K Hosey	Hendon RC
-------	---------	-----------

Gallery Rifle Precision Any Sights

Div 1	K Kingsbury	Croydon RPC
Div 2	D Francis	Staines RC
Div 3	A Yousof	East Barnet SC

There are other competitions which we intend to run in the next season. All the targets that the league uses are the current pistol targets and copies of the entry forms are available from:

The Hendon League Organiser
63 Eastern Avenue
Pinner
Middlesex, HA5 1NW
Tel: 020 8866 6654
E-mail: hendonrifleclub@hotmail.com

Web site:

<http://members.fortunecity.com/hendon22/thehendonrifleclub>

300 Metres

by Ian Shirra-Gibb

Graham Hawarth got the 300m season off to a flying start by shooting his way into the Clermont Range record books. Graham won both Individual matches between a NRA-BFRC team and the French regional club Clermont Creil. His first match score of 598.43x was a new range record.

The first Europa 300m Cup event of 2003 was held from 22 - 26 April in St Jean De Marsacq in France. The GB team managed to get two shooters through to the prone final; Simon Aldhouse was fourth in elimination relay 2 and Andrew Pearse won relay 3 with a personal best competition score of 597. The final resulted in Andrew finishing in seventh place and Simon eleventh. The surprise (and popular) winner was Matthias Raiber of Germany on 597.

The ladies prone event was shot on the Saturday with a nail biting final string for Mary Pugsley who needed an 96 or better to beat Germany's Iris Fricke. Mary achieved this to finish on 587 winning the Bronze medal on countback.

The NRA 300m Championships 2003 was held over the weekend 3 and 4 May.

300m British Championship

Free Rifle 60 Shots Prone

1	S Aldhouse	593.26
2	T Lincoln	589.17
3	G Hawarth	588.23

TR / Standard Rifle 60 Shots Prone

1	M Pugsley	585.20
2	A Pearse	584.20
3	E Pearce	543.06

Prone Aggregate

1	A Pearse	1167
2	M Pugsley	1165
3	A Campbell	1157

3 x 40 Free Rifle

1	M Scrivens	386	345	369	1100
2	E Pearce	384	302	351	1037

Congratulations are extended to all the winners.

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302: eyeshield combined sideshield £19
340: iris to improve depth-of-field for pistol £39
337: three-colour rotational filter set £45
343: matching frosted set for other eye £24
342: clip-on individual colour filters £14



392: 3-colour push-fit filter set £29



373: velcro-fastened headband with iris and eyeshield combined sideshield £55



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F Class

by Paul Monaghan

F Class days at Bisley

Every month there is an F Class day at Bisley consisting of a morning shoot at 600 yards and an afternoon shoot at 1,000 yards. These go on all year round. To get details of these and other F Class events e-mail phyllis.farnan@nra.org.uk and put 'F Class List' in the subject line. There are now over 100 members of this list, so if you or your club are running a shoot which includes F Class, let Phyllis know and it will be sent to all on the list. We have been experimenting with shooting at more demanding targets and at 600 yards have been using the 300 yards face with a half minute V bull. As you can see from Figure 1, this is quite a demanding target at 600 yards. At 1,000 yards we are using the Palma target. These are informal days and everyone is encouraged to come along and give F Class a try. No-one has come up with a really good explanation, but everyone who tries it agrees it brings the fun back into shooting.



F Class day at Bisley.

Rule changes

Some may be surprised to read that there is now no minimum weight for trigger pull on F Class rifles. Bench-rest shooters around the world have been using triggers with very light trigger pulls for many years. The F Class competition standard around the world now has no minimum trigger weight and the World Championships in Canada last year were run under these rules. One of the best triggers in the world is made by Arnold Jewell in the States and many of the best actions in the USA will have Jewell triggers fitted. The weight of trigger pull can be adjusted easily on these triggers from a few ounces up to 1.5kg, but with the low recoiling 6PPC and similar cartridges it degrades accuracy to have a heavy trigger pull.

For the change for F Class rifles, the main issue is safety. A light trigger is not, by definition, a dangerous trigger. It is possible for some idiot to adjust a trigger down to unsafe levels, but it is impossible to shoot consistently with such a trigger. The rule applies to an F Class rifle sitting on a front rest or bipod and a rear bag. Thus even if a trigger does fail, the shot is safely on target and probably in the black. By removing the minimum trigger

weight rule we will be able to build competitive rifles here in the UK (think about an RPA Quadlite action and Jewell trigger, perhaps?) for competition around the world. Furthermore, shooters from abroad will be able to come here and legally shoot their rifles in our competitions. The maximum weight for an F Class rifle is now 10kg.

Does V really = 6?

Well yes, in international F Class competitions it does. This year for the first time in the Imperial Meeting, the scoring will be 6 for a V bull, 5 for a bull, 4 for an inner and so on. Bearing in mind F Class shoots alongside TR, is this going to cause chaos on the firing point? The simple answer is "No". Scoring on the firing point will stay as V, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and the stats computer will recognise an F Class shooter and convert the V bull to a 6. This way, there will be no confusion between TR and F Class scoring.

There was some discussion about the move from the traditional scoring system to V = 6, but following the decision of ICFRA to hold the next F Class World Championships in South Africa in March 2004, it was felt the Imperial Meeting should be shot under as near to international rules as possible. The decision to move to V = 6 was not taken lightly as it is not just a case of adding a few extra points to the scores. The real benefit of the change is that keeping in the bull is not good enough and shooting for Vs has to become standard practice with its attendant pressure on equipment, ammunition and shooter. Moving to V = 6 should improve the overall standard of shooting F Class in this country. That's the theory, anyway. Are there any other effects of the change? Well, it does affect the final placings and your view on this may be coloured by where you came in the F Class Grand Aggregate last year. The table opposite shows the top 20 places in the Grand Agg scored as last year in the traditional method plus these scores converted to V = 6. Whilst there is no change to the top two places (something of a relief to the author) there are quite a few minor changes, with a couple of bigger ones. Des Parr and Charles Oliver-Bellasis would have benefited markedly from the change



Figure 1: The F Class face on the left and the normal 600 yards face for comparison on the right.



George Barnard with his new F Class rifle.

(moving up five and six places respectively) but Wolfgang Scholze (the reigning F Class World Champion) would have seen his ranking go down four places from 5th to 9th equal with Jim McAllister. We will see how it goes this year.

Phoenix Meeting

F Class will be at the Phoenix Meeting again this year and this gives a good opportunity to get some practice at the distances shot in the Imperial Meeting. The course of fire includes 400, 500, 600, 800, 900 and 1,000 yards and will be scored, like the Imperial Meeting, on a V = 6 basis. Most of the shooters from last year will be there as well as a number of newcomers, so this is a good chance to try your hand at F Class shooting. If you are unfamiliar with the basics of F Class, there was a good article in the March issue of Target Sports magazine. Alternatively you can contact me by e-mail on monaghan@quista.net.

Last year's Imperial Meeting F Class Grand Agg scored traditionally and converted to V=6

Name	Score		Position	
	V,5,4 etc	V=6	V,5,4 etc	V=6
P Monaghan	703.120	823	1	1
MPL Personne	703.116	819	2	2
JA Bridger	700.111	811	3	3=
D Pickering	700.110	810	4	5=
W Scholze	700.106	806	5	9=
F de Castro	699.110	809	6	7
W Norman	699.108	807	7	8
JA McAllister	699.107	806	8	9=
C O-Bellasis	697.114	811	9	3=
D Parr	696.114	810	10	5=
JM Knight	696.106	804	11	12=
K Rathbone	696.96	792	12	16
JO Wright	695.109	804	13	12=
W Cuthbert	694.111	805	14	11
M Maksimovic	693.102	795	15	15
EJ Hobbs	692.107	799	16	14
R Greenwood	692.93	785	17	17
J Crawford	683.74	757	18	19
H Morley	681.81	762	19	18
C Shorthouse	673.67	740	20	20



Mik Maksimovic gets in some practice in case an F Class World Championships is ever held in Antarctica.

Great Britain F Class Team to the World Championships in Bloemfontein, South Africa April 2004

Could all F Class shooters who are interested in applying for the Great Britain F Class Team to the World Championships and are full members of the NRA, please send their applications to the Shooting Administrator, Phyllis Farnan, at the NRA as soon as possible.

It is intended that squad team training will commence in August 2003.

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Classic Arms

by Rae Wills

As I write this the Programme for the Imperial Historic Arms Meeting, to be held on 5 and 6 July, is with the printers. Mailing will be soon after Easter, so if you competed last year in either the Imperial or the Trafalgar or have requested a copy, by now it should have arrived. If you have missed out, contact the NRA for your copy.

One of the tasks that fall to a Match Director is balancing the wishes of the competitor, who is your customer, and the correctness of the Rules, whatever that may mean. For example, how do you equate the wishes of some to use a modern supportive shooting jacket, against the historical fact that before 1945 it was not usual to deviate much from normal clothing, perhaps with a bit of elbow padding or a sling button added?

This year there are a few changes that you should look at before rushing off your entry. There has been no take up of the modern type percussion rifle, so these matches are now entirely covered by the "In the Spirit" rules. This has enabled the target rifles to be run in two classes, one permitting supine and other NRA positions, the other not. A class for Standing Percussion Target Rifle has been added to correct a previous omission.

In the pistol classes the 25 metres Precision Matches are now entirely under MLAGB Rules; this clarifies the position, and allows scores to be assessed with other MLAGB Meetings on a level basis. The matches P15 and P17-R are now Target and Standard Revolver respectively. Target Pistols compete in P12.

Under review for change next year is in the 25 metres Slowfire; at present there are separate classes for open and closed frame revolvers. In practice it appears the differences between the two are not so marked as to justify this, so it is proposed to reallocate these two classes to Target Revolver and Standard.

Another item is the small aiming mark on the Historic Pistol target; this causes problems for those who regularly shoot on the more common PL7. This raises a conflict between them and those who welcome the

challenge of trying something different. A suggestion was made that the size of the aiming mark, but not the scoring rings, should be enlarged, however that suggestion will have to be considered in the future as we have just restocked with at least three years worth of targets! But it was always in the Rules, so I am told, that auxiliary stick-on aiming marks are permitted, so this year this is emphasised and the Rule is now printed in the Programme. The mark must be provided by the competitor, and must not exceed the size of the original mark.

On the Sunday afternoon of the Historic Arms Meeting, the NRA Percussion Revolver Championships will be held. There will be one detail only, so competitors must enter one of three classes, Target Revolver, Standard Revolver, or Open. The Open Class really means what it says and is not under the restraints of any historical content, so nitro variants are acceptable even if percussion is by primer and not by a cap; full details will be posted with the Programme, and entry is on the Historic Arms entry form.

I make no apologies that this report has been all a bit technical but it has been the result of feedback by you the competitors, and I am very grateful for the time and assistance that Dave Robinson, Dave Spittles and Allan Whiffin have given me.

Parting shot: don't just moan, do something; if you have an idea, tell me!

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.22 Smallbore at the NSRA Meeting.

(Photo: Jim Hallam)

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Glyn Barnett, Bisley 2002



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SCOTTISH MATCH RIFLE TEAM TO TASMANIA 2003

by Colin Hayes

The story of this tour begins at Blair Atholl in July 2001 where the Scots and the Australians held an epic match and many friendships were forged. Personal invitations to visit Australia were made, and in January 2002 a small Anglo-Scottish touring party with Colin McEachran and Allan Campbell-Smith to the fore visited the Antipodes. Colin came back in the spring with the message that our Australian friends were very keen to see a Scottish team at the Australian MR championships in Tasmania in January/February 2003, and he himself would provide a trophy for competition between Scotland and the Australian States. There was not a lot of time to get mobilised and at first it seemed we were unlikely to raise the numbers. But the lure of the Australian summer at the beautiful Campbell Town range proved irresistible, and we soon had a touring party of eight consisting of Jim Bell, Martin Brown, Joanna Campbell-Smith, Colin Hayes (Captain), Hamish Hunter, Bruce Mackie, Jim McAllister, and Colin McEachran.

Remarkably, all eight arrived at our hostelry at Campbell Town on 27 January within an hour of each other, by diverse routes and after various alarms over permits and ammunition with Customs at Melbourne and Sydney. Even after months of meticulous preparation it was a close call for some of us. Hunter, Mackie and McAllister had all been to Pontville first to shoot F Class at the TR Meeting, accompanied by Martin Brown who spent a week in searing temperatures making MR ammunition for the team, courtesy of materials and equipment provided by our loyal friend Gil Walker. The Foxhunters Return is a wonderful hotel, a Georgian building dating from 1830 and one of the oldest coaching inns in Australia. Together with Adrian Abbott we occupied it entirely, made hugely welcome by Roseann the manageress (who had come originally from Scotland) and her daughter Rebekah. Enormous breakfasts were served a la carte in a fine colonial dining room, surrounded by pictures that defied all political correctness.

Campbell Town lies in a fertile valley, broad and beautiful, in prime grazing country with distant blue mountains to left and right. With Ross along the main highway in one direction and Perth the other, we Scots felt well at home. The range itself is over a hundred years old, the long-range firing points climbing a slight slope and the butts set against a hillside lightly wooded with gums, with pasture and marsh in the dead ground between. There is zero pollution between Tasmania and Antarctica so the air is gorgeously clear; a thousand yards doesn't look the distance, but it certainly is, and the breezes that wrap around the hillside from both directions soon have one putting on lots of minutes.

Our rifles had gone in advance and had been collected by Graeme McGee. All went well on our practice day with not a technical hitch, the sun blazed from an azure sky, temperatures perfect in the high twenties. From the UK we heard satisfying stories of appalling weather.

Wednesday 29 January saw the beginning of the individual competitions in the Championships. The Australian turnout was smaller than expected, only about forty shooters. A number from the mainland (or the North Island as Tasmanians call it) had stayed away because of the situation with the terrible bushfires, notably our friend Bill MacFarlane whose family were at one time seriously threatened. Fires were burning in Tasmania too, but not so severely. The Scots however did not acquit themselves well on day one. The wind was unreadable to us; an eight or nine minute bracket was normal at each of the three ranges, with five minute changes coming through faster than one could see them from each and every direction. Greg Warrian of WA led the day with a great 210 but only three shooters broke 200. Hamish Hunter was our best with a mere 188, with Jim McAllister on 186 and the rest of us nowhere. In the Grand Aggregate we never recovered from this poor start.

A cool change came through overnight. It rained heavily for the morning and the day was declared a washout. Disappointing, but a blessed relief for the island as it put out the bushfires at a stroke. Several Scots, inspired by an unusually good local unoaked Chardonnay the night before, set off to do some serious research into wineries up the Tamar Valley. This proved more successful than our shooting. In Tasmania's temperate climate some of the whites are first-class, and the Pinot Noir can be excellent too. Look out for any bottles from the splendid Tamar Ridge winery.

Day three dawned fine and bright with a cool westerly wind that hustled all day. James Freebairn juggled the programme ingeniously to make up lost ground and we began with two consecutive competitions at 1,200 yards. The wind bracket and changes were as monstrous as before, Colin Hayes finishing the first range with a bull on one right and beginning the next with a bull on fourteen. The bulls were rare events. He then had eight perfectly square magpies in one fifteen shot shoot and got up announcing "I resign", an achievement that later earned a consolation medal from James Freebairn. These were no conditions for back-gunners and Jo fared no better. But others seemed to be getting the measure of Campbell Town. Star of the day was Bruce Mackie whose 72.6 at 1,000 yards won the range, while Jim McAllister and Colin McEachran shot solidly throughout, though the rest of us, whilst shooting fine elevations, had flocks of crows.

That night we hosted a Burns Supper for the entire meeting, including spouses, partners, and the excellent markers. Bruce had been the prime mover of this, locating haggis and neeps in Tasmania ahead of our arrival, though tragically his side of smoked salmon was impounded by Customs. We all brought highland dress and whisky. Our Australian friends rose to the spirit of the occasion, many of them sporting varieties of Scottish attire (Tom Lowndes magnificent in Tam O'Shanter and



The team at the Foxhunters Return.



The team host the Burns Supper.



Tom Lowndes bids for Scots citizenship.

Scores

The McEachran Trophy

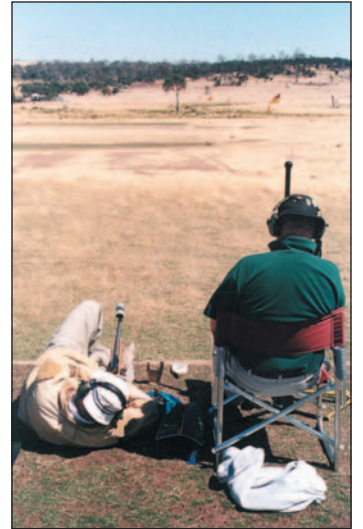
Tasmania	809.57
Scotland Blue	808.36
South Australia	799.44
NSW	794.46
Queensland	791.47
WA/NT	788.34
Scotland White	785.39
Victoria	785.36

Scotland v Australia

Australia	1406.69
(Walker 241, Abbott 241, Bain 235)	
Scotland	1373.76
(McAllister 234, McEachran 232, Brown 229)	

Scotland Blue

Hayes	202.03
Hunter	193.09
McAllister	211.14
McEachran	202.10



Colin coaches Colin at 1200 yards.

(All photos: Colin Hayes and Jim McAllister)



Jim coaches Jo at 1,100 yards.



Scotland v Australia: the combined teams.



Scotland Blue: we nearly won!



Scotland v Australia: we pushed them all the way.

sporrán) and made short work of our whisky. We presented Gil Walker with honorary life membership of the National Rifle Club of Scotland; he had gone to exceptional lengths to make our tour possible. Bruce addressed the haggis in blood-curdling style; and the evening concluded in the traditional manner with recitations from Robbie Burns and Australia's poet AB "Banjo" Paterson.

The final day of the competitions was shot once more in perfect weather, and in a wind that was almost readable. Greg Warrian maintained his fine form to carry off the Grand Aggregate just ahead of Gil Walker and Adrian Abbott, but Colin McEachran's 96.7 at 1,100 yards won that range and helped him to second place in the daily aggregate, whilst Colin Hayes's 91.5 at 1,200 yards was only just off the pace. Jim McAllister's consistent shooting put him eighth overall, losing no further ground since the first day; he was top Scot by some distance. Jim Bell won the Chicken Trophy for the most magpies, out-scattering his Captain on the final day. The Freebairn Trophy for teams of four picked randomly was shot in the afternoon. No visitor in the winning team this time, but Colin McEachran was in the team that came a close second.

That evening we were the guests of Dawn and Gil Walker and their family, together with several of the Aussie team, at their beautiful property about thirty miles away. Gil is a wool-producer of some note. We sat outside, sheep grazing in the evening sun, magpies warbling in the gums, kangaroo sausages and wallaby steaks sizzling and the beer flowing. The hospitality was wonderful. This was the life!

Sunday 2 February saw the match for which we had really come. The Australian States compete for the Rowlands Trophy over three ranges with teams of four, a needle match for them. Colin McEachran had brought a silver quaich to be contested alongside between Scotland and the Australian States, and the Australians meantime had established yet another prize, the Phil Cole Trophy, to be contested between the Australian States and any overseas regional team. English, Irish, Welsh, Normans, and all other MR shooters please take note; this new trophy is now available for competition every year. We entered two Scottish teams: Scotland Blue consisting of Hayes, Hunter, McAllister and McEachran, and Scotland White with Bell, Brown, Campbell-Smith and Mackie. Each team had of course to coach itself. New South Wales and South Australia were strongly fancied, but Tasmania soon showed that they were the ones to beat. Our Blue team had a modest start leaving us eight points adrift, but then shot a blinder at 1,100 yards, ten points better than the rest, to lead Tasmania by two points at lunch with the rest of the field trailing. At 1,200 yards we were holding our own and McAllister's 211 was a fine score on the day. But, sadly, McEachran was signalled an unlikely miss between two bulls, when for once the wind was doing nothing, and Tasmania got home to win by a single point and, it must be said, with a lot more V bulls. The White team meanwhile found their form and topped the range

at 1,200 yards by seven points, Brown leading them with a fine 68, but it was too late to bring them into the reckoning. Thus the local team carried off all three trophies, and popular winners they were.

On 3 February, by agreement with James Freebairn, we shot an unofficial match between Scotland and Australia: teams of eight over three ranges, two targets, 20 shots at 1,200 yards, and the best three scores on each target at each range to count. Here we were at a disadvantage as we had to coach ourselves whilst Australia had eight shooters plus their complete coaching set-up on the firing point, and their eight were very nearly their full international team. It was yet another glorious day with, for once, an almost windless start. McEachran led off with a splendid possible whilst Mackie, McAllister, Campbell-Smith and Hunter all had 74s. We were just two points adrift after 1,000 yards. Then the range reverted to type, huge changes once again, and at 1100 yards anything over 70 was good. Campbell-Smith went back with a fighting 146, as did McAllister and McEachran, but by lunch we trailed by nine. We thought we could catch Australia at 1,200 yards as we had done at Blair, but this time they turned the tables, coaching superbly and shooting fast in a devilish wind. Gil Walker's 94 and Adrian Abbott's 93 showed the way. McAllister's 88 was the best we could do until the very end, when Brown shot an excellent 90. But by then the Aussies had pulled away to win by a well deserved 33 points. We had more Vs . . . but we had more outers too!

Thus ended an intensely enjoyable and happy tour. The weather was glorious, the scenery spectacular, the competition spirited and sporting, the friendship palpable. We had no personal problems or technical troubles, and everyone agreed that Martin Brown's ammunition was superb, our elevations earning the Aussies' admiration. Match Rifle shooters should know that there are now MR meetings at different times of year in most of the Australian States, and long-range targets crop up all over the continent, at far more locations than in the UK. There's great competition to be had, tremendous fun, and our Australian friends will give a very warm welcome to all comers.

The Scottish Match Rifle Team Tasmania 2003 would like to thank the following for their generous support:

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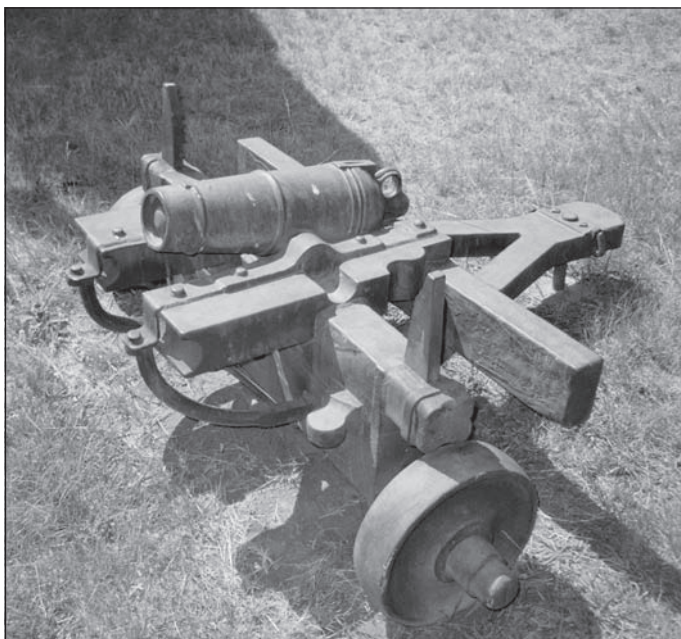
WELSH TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA 2003

by Richard Jeens

Travelling in large parties is always troublesome and further complicated by taking rifles; the outward journey to South Africa was no exception. Contrary to expectation the tour party, which numbered twenty one in total, departed Bisley ahead of schedule several hours ahead of our flight. Despite the efforts of the Captain, there was scant time in duty free before boarding as Heathrow felt the need to confirm that our rifles really were rifles three times over. Fortunately procedures were less arduous upon arrival and we were very pleased to be welcomed by Richard van Lingen and our tour provider Jim Parker. Under their guidance, transfer from flight to freeway was fluidly effected and the tour began in earnest.

Acclimatisation

The three weeks tour was broadly divided into two sections. The first week consisted of acclimatisation and travel, while the second and third weeks involved participation in the South African National Meeting and the major team matches. Our first stopping point was the Battlefields Lodge near Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal province. After the inevitable problems with Customs and the disruption of an overnight flight, the hospitality here was most welcome. From this base we spent two nights visiting the principal sites of both the Zulu and Boer wars. Each day we were guided round the sights with a full and informative commentary enabling us to develop an impression never really attainable from written sources. We visited Rorke's Drift, Isandlwana, Bloodriver and Talana battle sites as well as the museums that accompanied them. Driving between each location was revealing of both the physical scale of the country and gaps in investment. Dirt track roads that wound between small villages, for example, regularly had a plethora of road signs and markings to guide the tourists.



Cannon at Blood River.

(All photos: Welsh Rifle Team)

At each location the differences between Boer, Zulu or English accounts of the events remained striking over a hundred years on. At Bloodriver, for example, the Boer memorial suggests up to five thousand Zulu deaths, while the Zulu site estimates under a hundred. The scale of bloodshed in the region was perhaps most dramatically clear at Isandlwana, where the piles of stones marking the mass graves had been whitewashed and so starkly stood out from the land.

We moved on from Dundee to our next stop at the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi game park. The journey was somewhat enlivened by a puncture to one van, falling logs from a timber transporter and Chris Hockley's approach to parking at our lunchtime stop. This combination of annoyance, downright danger and amusement meant that we were very appreciative of the supper awaiting us at Hilltop Camp. From here we saw a huge range of wildlife on dawn and dusk drives. The more adventurous also went on bush walks and were rewarded with a much closer view of the rich habitat and its occupants. Some more senior members of the tour felt that the Dutch girls on the afternoon walk contributed to the scenery. The only disappointment came with the absence of lion or elephant. So it was with great reluctance that we left the park and headed towards our first shooting engagement.

Arrival at the Nottingham Road range was accompanied by a collective kit explosion. A quick afternoon shoot was sufficient to reassure most people, however, that the flight had not damaged anything beyond repair. Shooting proper started the next morning with an individual competition, which most of the party spent trying to adapt to the less than conventional distances. This was not, however, accepted as an excuse by the insurance company for the blue van's collision with a gate post into the range! The afternoon team match was narrowly won by Wales Red with Tim Valentine top scoring for Nottingham Road and Richard Jeens for the Welsh. Nottingham Road Rifle Club proved themselves superb hosts at the dinner in the evening, the culmination of which was the auctioning of the top shots from both sides in advance of the bi-national pairs match the next morning. Some generous and alcohol fuelled bidding resulted in a suitable supplement for club funds. Much to their credit the youngest members of the team, who were the last to leave the party, were the first to appear at breakfast the next morning. This display of efficiency was betrayed by the failure to communicate the later start time the night before. Perhaps fittingly the two top bidders topped the eventual ranking, despite Al Haley having to be reminded that he had actually bid the night before. The close victory for John Howard Davies and Tim Valentine combined with the generosity of our hosts to ensure that Nottingham Road was a very pleasant and memorable part of the tour.



Nottingham Road - the view from the 600 yards firing point.



Nottingham Road - the view from the butts.



"There must be a golf course around here somewhere . . ."



Team Wales on early morning game drive at Hluhluwe.



Shooting at General de Wet Range at Bloemfontein.



Braai preparations at Reyneke Park.



Team Wales preparation.



Waterfalls in the Drakensburg Mountains.



Warthog in Hluhluwe Game Reserve.

Before moving to the National Meeting at Bloemfontein, the team spent two nights in the Drakensberg Mountains. Amid the stunning scenery and dramatic storms, we were able to relax a little before the start of the business end of the tour. The adventurous minority braved the chain ladders and gale force winds to be rewarded with spectacular views of the amphitheatre and valleys that fall away from it. The less intrepid had their walk enlivened by John Howard Davies' attitude to dead snakes. Lou Lou Brister and Chris Hockley's attempt at golf was foiled by the course's dereliction and encroachment of the township. Indeed the drive from the Witsieshoek resort to Bloemfontein revealed the extent to which this area of outstanding natural beauty is juxtaposed by the uglier side of man's settlement and social iniquity. Despite this and problems with the resort, it was a worthwhile stay ahead of the Bloemfontein meetings.

Bloemfontein

The team's drive to Bloemfontein went well despite the 'Wing Commander navigation system' spontaneously breaking down any time our convoy went anywhere near a golf course. Team spirit was guarded by the regular refuelling stops at guest houses (and in some cases the addition of "a nice bottle of cold white wine"). Arrival at Reyneke Park coincided with the meeting of the remainder of the party who had travelled solely to shoot. Once supper had been organised there seemed a clear sense that the tour had begun in earnest.

This determination was rather dimmed the next morning by the absence of ammunition with which to practice. Some of the team were able to borrow RG from the Great Britain Under 19 team and participate in the pairs section of the Free State Provincial Meeting. Fortunately the rest of the team were supplied by the afternoon and everyone was able to contest the individual competitions. Unfortunately, for most of the team, this again demonstrated the strength of local shooting and also the particular challenges of the General de Wet range. Unlike in the UK, the vast majority of wind coaching in South Africa has to be based on the mirage reading. For those of us accustomed to the flags at Bisley this, and the different size of flags overseas, meant that accurate assessment of what the locals dubbed 'the weather' was extremely challenging. A trip to the Beef Baron in the evening provided some with an opportunity to drown their sorrows. Chris Watson failed in his attempt at a one kilo steak and Al Haley demonstrated a unique singing talent on the way home.

The Free State Meeting was followed by a series of team matches in which the Welsh experimented with a variety of coaching combinations. The Friendly International was marked by a combination of personal and collective errors that contributed to a thorough defeat by a well-drilled South African Palma team. The smaller team matches the following day were more instructive in the potential for the coming week. Overall, however, the scale of the challenge in the Protea Match was starkly

clear. Nonetheless, the clutch of respectable scores achieved in the team shooting at least demonstrated the future potential of many newer team members.

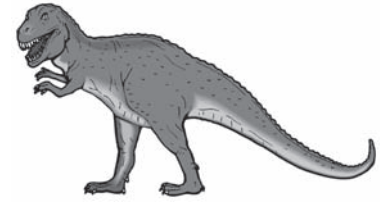
The 67th South African Bisley Union (SABU) Meeting was marked by an intensity in the shooting program not normally seen in the UK. With five or six ranges a day, maintaining focus in the heat, which regularly reached thirty five degrees Celsius, was a real challenge. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the most consistent success came to locals or British firers used to the conditions, such as regular visitor David Calvert. Eight years of consecutive visits was rewarded with a third consecutive victory in the Grand Aggregate with 650.60. Although there were pleasing moments, individually none of the Welsh managed to string these shoots together into an aggregate of note. Much more successful was the team reception organised at Reyneke Park on the Wednesday evening. The food was superb and the staff excelled themselves in facilitating a superb evening and an opportunity to thank the South Africans for the welcome that had been extended to the Welsh team and other overseas guests.

Aside from the individual shooting the main focus of the tour was the Protea International Match. Following the second stage of the State President's, the match was shot in challenging conditions that were rarely typical of what had been encountered in the preceding week. Being pitted against the South African Palma team, the current World Champions, on their home range was a formidable challenge. Wales elected to use two of their three targets to maximise the coaching talent available and relied on slick team organisation to fit into the allotted time. Despite some initial nerves this approach appeared to be working until the South Africans pulled away at 900 metres. Though defeated, Wales had performed creditably against strong opposition; they had also developed younger firers who were notably absent from their opponent's side. Indeed the margins may have been smaller had the Welsh not suffered a rifle and target malfunction in the vital closing stages of the match. Final result: South Africa 1759.163 to Wales 1672.96.

With the team shoot over, the remaining fixture was the State President's Final for the top hundred firers qualified over the previous two stages. Four Welsh firers had qualified, notably of a younger vintage, but were not able to make an impression at long range. David Calvert was eventually crowned Open Champion despite only finishing second in the Final. At the team's return to the Beef Baron, Yorke O'Leary and Taff Wilcox showed Chris Watson how to finish a one kilo steak and so earned wall plaques. The late finish to the evening flowed relatively unimpeded into the early start as the tour headed for home. For the party leaving directly, the loss of a passport and ticket was overcome with relative ease while discussion among the Sun City party centred upon methods of defying gravity. Eventually all participants returned home safely and with great gratitude to Chris Hockley, Paul Gray and Russ Jackson for their efforts in organising the tour.

READING YOUR PALMA

T Rex writes



The Gunroom
BCRC
Bisley
Dear Simon

Sitting here, waiting for the feeling to return after the surgeon's attentions to my right knee (last year it was the left one), I have been reflecting on the little engagement coming your way in July. It reminded me that twenty two years ago, after a distinctly indifferent performance in the late Freddy Payne's 1981 GB team to Canada, I was asked if I was available to join the following year's team which would contest the Palma Trophy at Ottawa. I guess that it was by being the bottom score in the winning Commonwealth Match team that this prospect appeared at all.

Thinking back, I probably did not then realise exactly what that enquiry implied. Had they really got rifle ranges on Majorca? If there had been a Huntley around I might have thought that someone was taking the biscuit. Be that as it may. As a youngish (thirty something), junior and relatively dispensable member of staff I floated the need for a four weeks period of time off (using all my holiday of course) to my Director of Admin who, in turn, put it to the Director-General. I cannot remember exactly what the words of the reply were but, to the best of my fading recollection, they ran something along the lines of "What does he think this is – a holiday camp?"

Perhaps the mistake was to have been a cog working in private industry and not self-employed, or in local government, the civil service or possibly the military. Thus blew out my one and only chance. You see, rivals for places have all got rather good and got younger - and I have not. So this year will see the 27th World Long Range Rifle Team Championships for the Palma Trophy taking place here at Bisley with Great Britain arguably favourites on their home ground, and I will be spectating - unless, of course you suddenly have that flash of inspiration that requires me to step in to save the day? No? I thought as much.

Simon, I am sure that I do not have to relate the history of the match. You will know it all. There is a comprehensive record that will give you the fine detail from 1876 onwards, including the scores. It will also tell you that this year's teams of 16 will shoot twice on consecutive days at 800, 900 and 1,000 yards at NRA of America 6 foot decimal targets, 15 shots at each distance, giving a maximum possible score of 14,400 points per team (900 points per shooter). The nine (or possibly ten) countries competing this year are Australia, Canada, Channel Islands, Continental Palma Council, Germany, Great Britain, Kenya (probably), South Africa, United States and West Indies (hopefully). Oh, you knew that?

But Simon, what it will not tell you is the winning team and perhaps this is where I can help. I suppose that is what crystal balls are for. Give them a bit of spit and polish and what do we see ahead?

You have had your troop practising hard for some two years. Inevitably you have had to slim down the squad and some of them received their P45s last year and returned home disappointed. Never mind that one or two feathers may have been ruffled along the way or egos dented; life at the top is like that. By the time this letter is fished out of the waste-paper basket of time you might well have surprised us all with your final selection. You have got an exceptional pool of hardened campaigners and talented youth at your disposal.

I know it is the fashion these days for every football manager to credit the opposition with equal skills, but what will we find alongside you on the firing point?

The South Africans will be coming as reigning champions, no doubt intent upon repairing the dent in their reputation inflicted by England's performance in the Millennium Match and a certain RAF officer's single handed demolition of their domestic championships for the past three years running. They do seem to have produced a team that can act as a team, with the characteristic never say die attitude of their country.

At the opposite corner of the circular world the Americans can produce shooters and occasionally novel tactics. But in recent years the grape-vine might say that politics and strategy on and off the point have let them down. I would not count on this still being an issue that will inhibit their shooting skills. They have formidable shooters and I get the feeling that they are talking themselves into a challenging performance. On the law of averages they are due to catch up with the front runners.

Reverting to the Southern Hemisphere, the Australians are fearsome on their home ranges but, unlike their wine makers, do not seem to travel so well. Was there just a hint in past years that their selection pool has been suffering from *anno domini*? I gather that they picked their team some time ago, so some might have gone

past pensionable age by now. Interesting to see how their Australia Match team will compare, in selection terms, with their Palma Match team; must watch carefully.

That said, a distinct threat to British hopes and expectations might have come from the Kiwis after their performances in the Australia Match in Perth, and bronze medal place in the last four Palma contests. Well, bang goes that theory. Sadly a large crack has appeared in the crystal spheroid with the news that NZ will not be contesting the Palma, although they will probably have enough representatives for the Australia Match. No worries then about Kakapos in the heather.

And then there is Canada. They have had such a miserable run of form away from home in recent years that it is tempting to believe that it is far too late for them to produce a surprise victory. They have the talent and the flair from which to select, but if selection is based solely on the finishing order in last year's national championships, it may not be the recipe for the Palma. An unbiased observer might say that it would be good for shooting, and particularly Canadian shooting, for the Maple Leaf to be on the podium; perhaps they can make a little luck of their own.

So, who else is there? Continental Palma is a brave combination but is unlikely to pose much of a threat, nor the separate German team or Kenya. To compound this sudden bout of pedidentology, the alliance of Jersey and Guernsey might just produce an upset. They are no strangers to the Stickledown hill and frequently start well. Their challenge will be to produce the stamina and the concentration for the two days at long range; if they can, they might be worth an each-way bet for an outsider's place.

So Simon, being as fair as I can I reckon it will end up as a tussle between the Brits and the Boks with perhaps the USA taking the final podium place. Oh, you did not want to know that? Never mind, the observations are freely dispensed, and even more freely dispensed with.

All that remains is for me to wish you and your final gang good fortune, good weather and whatever wind best suits you. I reckon there are many others who will back me on that one. Have a hugely enjoyable time.

Yours aye,

T Rex

Glossary of Terms

Palma – large town in tourist infested Balearic island

Long range – distance at which visitors remark “goodness, can you really hit that from here?” and/or “which target?”

Crystal balls – devices used by gurus to determine advice given to important people

Selection – process by which some of those who feel they should be in the team are shown the door, and by which the Captain adds to his own confusion

P45 – Inland Revenue form handed to you as you take up your employer's offer to allow you to develop your skills and career elsewhere

Coach – quiet and unassuming individual despite whom the shooter may still make a good score, and who is responsible for every shot outside the bullseye wherever it may strike the target

Internal politics – knowing you are right and everyone else is wrong

Strategy – plan for getting to your objective despite internal politics

Theory – see internal politics

Anno domini – when even the range officers look younger than you feel

Pedidentology – from the latin pes (a foot), dens (a tooth), and ology (the art of putting the former in the orifice containing the latter).

Kakapo – flightless, slow moving, but rather lovable, endangered New Zealand parrot. It is endangered because it is flightless, slow moving etc.

Palma results (simplistic version)

Year	Place	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1982	Ottawa, Canada	Can	Aus	NZ	GB
1985	Bisley, UK	USA	GB	Aus	Can
1988	Malabar, Australia	Aus	GB	NZ	USA
1992	Raton, America	GB	Can	NZ	Aus
1995	Trentham, New Zealand	GB	USA	NZ	Aus
1999	Bloemfontein, RSA	RSA	GB	NZ	Aus



A VOLLEY GOOD SHOW

by John Higgs

During early December the NRA staff at Bisley requested that they be allowed to examine and, if possible, fire the Baker volley rifle which I possess.

This rifle was made by Ezekiel Baker about 1820 in a percussion form. Six barrels are mounted around a central barrel making seven in total. The calibre is .390 which uses patched ball of .360 or sized bullet of .388; each barrel is rifled with four grooves and right hand twist. For demonstration purposes and to reduce stress to both rifle and firer, patched ball was used.

A charge of 25 grains, Henry Kranks medium powder was used per barrel, making a total charge of 175 grains, quite a heavy load in a rifle weighing just over seven pounds.

When loading, great care has to be taken to ensure that a single charge and a single ball is placed in each barrel. All balls have to be started in the muzzle, then rammed, otherwise powder is blown from one to the next - this means that one will have no powder with the next having it all. Also by this method you do not end up with two balls down one and probably no powder behind.

Ramming is quite a problem; it is possible to ram one compressing the next ball back up the barrel. Having had a good demonstration from Frank Page on the art of using a wooden ramrod, we decided to use a brass one. (Hands and balls have to be kept in good order).

When loaded and capped the final problem arose. What idiot could we get to fire the first shot? Many good words and advice were given and names put forward. Since Mr Page was not available at this time to give any further demonstrations, it was unanimously agreed that as ladies should always go first, Olivia Lamount should have the honour. The results were quite spectacular, a large explosion bringing the range to a standstill, even the markers in the butts questioned who had caused the noise. When the smoke had cleared I was pleased to see that the rifle (and Olivia!) were still intact.



The shot was fired on Short Siberia range, Bisley, at 100 yards at a standard 4 feet square target, with all seven shots arriving on target. A further shot was fired at the stop butt and again a four foot group was achieved.

The barrels are linked by touch holes from the nipple to the central barrel which then radiate out to the other six, they in turn are linked to each other by touch holes, the cleaning of this arrangement is a long process as the dirt keeps moving around.

The photographs show a little of the loading, firing and cleaning. Notice the tremendous recoil and position of the rifle, Olivia still wishes to know about the sudden blackout that happened, was it an omen not to have another go?

Whilst the rifle is a fearsome thing to fire, to face it must prove most alarming; seven is supposed by some to be a lucky number, but if all seven balls had hit you I do not think that it would be classed as lucky.



PALMA AMMUNITION

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Allocations to customers will be strictly made on a "first come, first served" basis. All ammunition will be provided on sale or return terms and the price will include a deposit for the new cartridge cases used. Full credit will be given for unused cartridges and empty cases that are returned in original packaging.

Prices will be:	50 – 2,000 rounds	42p/round + 5p new case deposit = 47p/round
	2,050 – 10,000	41p/round + 5p new case deposit = 46p/round
	10,050 +	40p/round + 5p new case deposit = 45p/round

A deposit of 50% of the order value will be required at the time of ordering to guarantee the delivery. The balance will be payable upon collection.

Samples are currently available for testing. Please contact us today for further information.



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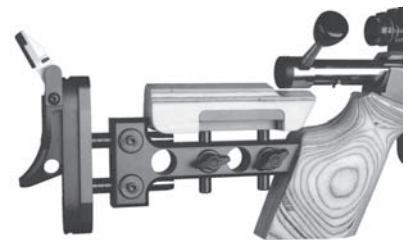
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YOUNGEST PERSON TO WALK TO THE SOUTH POLE



At 16:59, 2 January 2003 NRA member Andrew Cooney joined the ranks of world explorers when he successfully completed his world record attempt to be the youngest person to walk to the South Pole.

The expedition took three years to plan from the initial idea. The 730 miles journey, from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole, took 53 days. During that time Andrew dragged a sledge weighing 180lbs for up to nine hours a day at an average mileage of 13.7 miles a day. The air temperature stayed between -20°C and -30°C and during the worst storms the wind chill would drop the temperature to below -55°C.

The team faced constant dangers, not only from the cold wind and blown snow, but from crevasses that had to be crossed with caution. On numerous occasions the tents had to be dug out of the snow in the morning, thus delaying the start of the day's travel.

Andrew sustained a serious injury to his shoulder on day 10 of the expedition; this resulted in him having to take painkillers and anti-inflammatory drugs for the duration of the expedition. He also had altitude sickness, which lasted for days whilst climbing on to the Polar plateau at 3,500 metres, but Andrew's resolve to complete the journey never wavered.

Final funding

The expedition cost was £55,000. This cost was covered by corporate sponsorship until 10 days before departure from the UK, when Andrew's main sponsor pulled out £30,000. To ensure the success of the expedition Andrew's father cashed part of his pension fund and Andrew had to borrow the shortfall.

Money raised for charity

As well as setting a world record, Andrew has raised over £7,000 for the Oesophageal Patients Association,

a charity which was set up to help the survivors of oesophageal cancer. The money raised was presented to Mr D Kirby OBE (National Chairman of the Oesophageal Patients Association) and Dr J Darnton (Clinical Research Scientist to the Oesophageal Cancer Fund) at the opening of the National Boat, Caravan and Outdoor Show in February 2003.

Support

Without the support from Andrew's family, friends, supporters and sponsors this expedition would never have succeeded. If any reader would like to make a donation to support Andrew and the Oesophageal Patients Association, please contact Andrew at the following address or visit the expedition web site at www.youngestpersontothesouthpole.co.uk

South Pole 2002 Expedition Office
6 Priory Park, Thurgarton, Notts, NG14 7HE
Tel: 01636 830 517

E-mail: amcooney@rya-online.net

Andrew is also available for talks and presentations on his remarkable achievement.



Achievement is not what people expect or think of you, it's about having a dream or a goal and achieving it despite setbacks and adversity.

(Andrew Cooney, South Pole 2 Jan 2003)

GREAT BRITAIN RIFLE TEAM TO NEW ZEALAND 2003

by Alex Henderson

From the Captain Bob Aitken

Delegation is a recognised means of spreading any load and Captaining a GB Rifle Team would be almost impossible if each member did not take on their share and contribute to the overall team workload. My team did so, and more, which resulted in a most successful, exciting and enjoyable tour. The Home Country mix of the team was a real benefit even if some accents, Nationalistic oversights and mannerisms took some getting used to. I have already heard from our New Zealand friends of how much they enjoyed the team's company, sportsmanship and friendship and are looking forward to coming over to Bisley in the summer to meet up again. It is therefore right and proper that the following team report was compiled and written by the team scribe and offers a wider perspective than any individual report could achieve - thanks Alex.

This is the story of the 2003 Great Britain Rifle Team to New Zealand. As it is a topsy-turvy sort of a place, we thought we'd follow suit and decided the best way to start a 2003 team would be to leave in 2002 and go to Hawaii and not New Zealand at all.

And we had a very nice time in Hawaii indeed, thank you. The sun shone, the sea was warm, the food was excellent, the scenery spectacular and – best of all – we never touched our rifles once.

Sadly, after four days our Captain decided we had achieved what we set out to do (recover from the worst of the jet-lag and begin to get used to the heat as opposed to the British snow we left behind) and so it was time to depart for New Zealand. But not before we had continued in our contrary vein by donning Hawaiian shirts, drinking champagne and singing "Auld Lang Syne" at the tops of our voices at 2:00 in the afternoon. This was not purely to frighten the locals (although it did that quite successfully too) but more because it was midnight in the UK, whereas we were going to be wrestling with Customs officials at midnight local time.

Through crossing the international date line on our way from Honolulu to Auckland, we felt terribly cheated that we had lost a day's holiday, and extremely miffed that our scheduled seven-hour flight had apparently taken 31. We stayed in Auckland long enough only to clear Customs before catching a domestic flight to Christchurch on the South Island for the start of the shooting.

Well, I said "the start of the shooting" . . . what I really meant was "more holiday" as we still had almost three days off before the shooting started. Sadly no tour is long enough, no pocket deep enough, no employer understanding enough, no sponsor generous enough and no partner patient enough to allow anyone, ever, to see all there is to see in New Zealand. The South Island, particularly, has the most amazing landscape, with snow-capped mountains leading through steep spectacular canyons and gorges to sandy semi-tropical beaches, all within a few miles of each other.

But, as you will imagine, we did our utmost to see as much as we could, although some of the most spectacular scenery was just a little too far for most of us to visit. We did, however, find the time for a tour of local vineyards (including a relevant, but not excessive, amount of sampling), we swam with dolphins, we were taken for a spin through canyons in a jet boat, we watched whales from a helicopter, we did a little shopping and apparently we visited one or two pubs along the way.

After about a week of fun the holiday came to an abrupt end and the shooting began. It began fairly gently with two one-day matches against regional clubs on the edge of Christchurch, both of whom welcomed us with open arms – we later learned that we were the first GB team ever to visit them.

Both Tai Tapu (Saturday 4 January) and Malvern (Sunday 5) were small, rural, beautiful ranges in the foothills of the Southern Alps and both clubs sported a selection of international shots, despite the limited number of members. Scoring was very high throughout, with GB taking first place on both days by slim but comfortable margins.

Having completed our goals for the South Island, we caught a brief connecting flight from Christchurch to Wellington, on the Southernmost tip of the North Island.

Before arriving at our hotel, the Hawk's Inn Motel in Upper Hutt, we visited the Trentham Range complex to drop off our rifles and have a look at this fiendishly difficult wind we had been promised. Not sure what all the fuss was about really.

We had the range to ourselves on Friday 10 January to practise and test our kit, as well as giving the coaches the chance to play with the wind; they had a taxing day debating the difference between a half and a quarter of a minute at 900 yards while the shooters calmly slotted in a string of 50s as people always do when it's only a non-counting practice.

This was the perfect evening for us to see the sights of Upper Hutt. Both of them. Upper Hutt (twinned with Basingstoke) is a huge thriving metropolis with a population the size of Brookwood, three pubs, a church, a post office and a night-club closely resembling the London and Middlesex on Queen's Final night. Night life was clearly not going to play too major a part in our lives for the foreseeable future; our wallets, health and shooting would probably benefit, but that was slight consolation for many. Ian Shaw, in particular, claims he is unable to shoot without seventeen pints of beer and fewer than four hours' sleep.

The weekend gave us some warm-up introduction matches where we split into teams from UK Clubs for a thorough and unmitigated humiliation in front of our hosts. This was when the wind started to blow and show us why Trentham is feared and revered by those who

know it. Winds that change rapidly between two left and two right at 1000 yards are generally considered tricky; when it does this at 300 yards you have a battle on your hands.

Monday 13 January, the day of the New Zealand Match, dawned cold, grey, wet and vaguely reminiscent of last year's St George's I. Blessing our newly issued waterproof jackets we struck out at 300 yards to finish one point adrift of our hosts. The wind picked up as the morning wore on so the coaches had to start to earn their keep, while everyone else tried to stop the scoreboards blowing away in a heroic piece of acting, almost convincing onlookers that there was actually some wind to contend with. Even so, all three teams (NZ, Australia and GB) were within ten points of each other at lunch.

Then the wind really blew. We were pleased only to have one shot blown right off the paper, but with far too many drifting into the white, the home team, who knew the nuances of Trentham winds better than we, were at a distinct advantage and won the day, beating Australia by five points and GB by a further 25.

New Zealand	1902.174	(M Collings - 195.21)
Australia	1897.171	(D Thompson - 195.24)
Great Britain	1872.165	(L Peden - 193.19)

Tuesday saw the start of the Grand Aggregate and more difficult winds, although this time with a few calm patches. Since New Zealand opt for string shooting, there was frequently the opportunity to wait out the tricky patches and then fire twelve rounds in as many seconds when the wind dropped; some people became adept at this, others were either less adept at shooting fast, or simply less lucky, with the result that scores, especially at 900 yards, ranged from Chris Hockley's 49 to Alwyn McLean's 30, with pretty well everything in between featuring somewhere on the prize lists. Jonathan Haward's 42 at 300 yards, despite his ¼ minute elevation group, rather summed up the day.

On Wednesday the weather, people's scores and everyone's general humour all improved substantially; Ian Shaw rose to close the day lying second in the Grand, and our Captain Bob Aitken wound up 13th on the day, putting him in the lead for the Veterans' Aggregate. Unfortunately, it wasn't just the British scores which improved: there were ten scores of 50.10 at 500 yards alone, and every shoot that day was won with a 50.7 or higher, so even the well-placed GB shooters were too close for comfort to the competition.

Happily, Ian managed to retain his position through the next day, landing himself first in the Belt Series (the Grand), first in the Short Range Aggregate and second by the narrowest of margins going into the final of the Ballinger Belt (the Queen's). Bob Aitken also retained his form and won the Veterans' Aggregate, as well as being one of the eight members of the GB Team to make Saturday's Ballinger Belt Final.

Saturday morning, with its almost non-existent winds, provided a brief respite from the individual shooting, with another inter-clubs match. The main event was a closed match between NZ teams, but we took the

opportunity of thrashing the Australians (a) because they weren't going to be there for our "Palma" match on Sunday, (b) because it was about time somebody did and (c) because we wanted to. Our nominated A team of five dropped only two points between them over a Queen's I (all five producing scores of 35.7 at 500 yards along the way) which put them firmly at the top of the prize list, even though no-one matched Australia's Darren Enslin's score of 105.21 (despite his first sighter at 500 yards landing ten targets too far to the right).

The afternoon saw the final of the Ballinger Belt (the equivalent to the UK's HM Queen's Prize) which was a single-range 2 and 15 shoot at 900 yards. Eight GB shots took part in a comparatively tricky wind. Again, some competitors took advantage of the time allowance afforded through string shooting, rather than the UK's 45 second rule. Just as the earlier shooters were finishing and we had worried that Ian Shaw had fallen asleep, as he had yet to fire a shot after ten minutes, he sprang to life (well, OK – Ian doesn't spring very well, but he moved, and that's a start), completing his string as the only person on the firing point. Ian was firmly convinced that the shot he dropped halfway through had knocked him off the top spot; we knew otherwise and were willing him to finish with a row of bulls and win the Belt. It was only after he had done so that the dreadful realisation dawned that we now had to carry him back to the clubhouse. Ian was, not surprisingly, jubilant, not just because he had won the Belt, but also because he was only the fourth Briton to do so, the first Scot and (most importantly, he implied) because he had beaten Andy Luckman when he won it a few years ago.

If you have ever been to Trentham you will have come across the Kiwi Court. If you haven't you should do. This is the occasion where one of the more vocal, articulate and entertaining members of the NZ team entertains us all by reading a list of our misdemeanours during the Meeting. It is rather like Dom Harvey at Dewdrop night in the Surrey, but more vocal, articulate and entertaining. For every crime you are alleged to have committed, be that swearing, cross-shooting, failing to sign a card, arriving late or anything else that can be considered noteworthy, you are compelled to put a dollar in a pot. This pot then goes behind the bar until it and we are completely drunk. Needless to say bar profits were up this year with a GB team visiting. The ensuing Karaoke serves only to prove that we had paid enough. We had.

On our final day in Trentham we had a "Palma" match against the NZ Palma Team. Sadly the Australians had departed by this stage in the Meeting, so it was simply the visitors against our hosts. At 800 yards we were just in front, but with flat calm winds and all-round high-scoring the first range was little more than its usual formality. At 900 yards the wind started to make life a little more interesting, but both teams kept largely on top of the conditions, with GB leading by a handful of points at lunchtime.

Midday brought the wind. While we thought we had been blown about a bit in the New Zealand Match, the



Paradise Lost!



Paradise Found!

(All photos: GBRT New Zealand 2003)



"Well the flags are no good, so I brought my own wind indicator."



Ahh . . . Trentham . . . what a breath of fresh air!



The team on the firing point at Te Puke.



"Funny . . . that flag definitely looks like right wind."



We knew we brought Roger for a reason!



The team after the Palma Match v NZ.



Ian Shaw wins the Ballinger Belt.



Note the Kiwis don't deal in numbers, they just use "Left" and "Right" and sometimes get even that wrong.

wind that blew that afternoon took us completely by surprise and was way beyond anything we had experienced before. When the coach can say "Go on," and then five seconds later "No, wait," then make a twelve minute correction from eight right to four left, everyone agreed that there was little anyone could do to read, predict or even keep up with this wind. The New Zealand coaches were extremely gallant and generous, congratulating us on how we had coped and admitting that the third range was a complete lottery, but their forty point victory must have come from somewhere, and whatever they say we believe it had a great deal to do with their vastly greater knowledge and experience of how to cope with Trentham when it is in a mischievous mood.

On 22 January we waved farewell to the Hutt Valley and drove North to Rotorua, deep in the heart of Maori Country. One free day after the long drive was enough to unwind and see some of the sights, but no tour ever has enough free time to see everything before we found ourselves, once again, strapping ourselves into our shooting jackets, this time for a match against Te Puke Club (pronounced "Tay Poo-kah" lest you feel tempted to make the same mistake we did). Te Puke is another of these strange little clubs which have about eighteen members, thirty of whom are in the current Palma Squad. We never did quite work it out, but were repeatedly surprised by the breadth and depth of talent that such small clubs could muster. It was an informal, friendly little match and the scores were . . . err . . . incompletely recorded. OK – we've lost the results, but can confidently assure you that one of our teams was slightly in the lead. Just don't ask us to remember who was in it.

One final day of fun was spent deep sea fishing, playing golf or chartering helicopters to collect lost and stranded team captains who had hoped to have gone fishing, if only they hadn't been left in the hotel before the tour finally ended with the North Auckland Championships, a two day shoot at Mt Kauri Range. This time the scoring was lower than one might have expected, as the conditions were generally less favourable. GB shots continued to top the prize lists, but the very few possibles on display came as something of a surprise. David

Lloyd, Ian Shaw, Matthew Charlton and Duncan Bedding all came away with at least one first place over the weekend.

Finally, before reluctantly leaving this beautiful country, we shot our last team match of the tour: GB v North Island, again in horrendous winds. Despite an average only a shade over 45 GB managed to show that we were at last getting used to the winds and beat our hosts by 542 to 508.

The only downside of the tour came right at the very end when we discovered one of our minibuses had been broken into. Not much was lost, but one digital camera crammed with never-to-be-seen pictures and a new Kowa telescope were the major casualties. Like all disasters, though, it had its up-side in that Chris Hockley's and Tom Walters' passports were pinched, so we had an excuse to leave the Welsh behind in this land of sheep. Don't worry – they followed a day behind once arrangements had been made.

New Zealand 2003 - what a great tour and what a gorgeous country. Our thanks go to all of the management team, our hosts and all of our supporters, both moral and financial, for making it possible and so enjoyable.

Postscript

It therefore remains for me to close with a few words on what happened after the main team party had left for home. Chris and Tom were able to join my wife Margaret and I at our hotel in Auckland. We all went out for late meal to a rather posh restaurant to unwind and console ourselves but as luck would have it Tom's bad run continued when the waiter spilt red wine down his one remaining white shirt. In return he was offered a restaurant navy blue one as compensation.

First thing next morning all three of us, in team uniform, presented ourselves at the British Consulate to obtain replacement passports for Tom and Chris. "It will take at least three days" says the lady at the desk, and emergency help can only be provided if you are "destitute"? "We are destitute" says Chris, as he stood smartly dressed, in uniform, but without any money, credit cards, personal kit or means of departing New Zealand so further negotiation was urgently required. First of all pressure was brought to bear using a Services requirement for Chris to be in the UK rather urgently to respond to a World situation! No luck there so a team brochure was produced for perusal and, surprise surprise, there was an immediate change of attitude on seeing the portrait of HRH Prince Charles on the inside cover; suddenly passports were produced in under three hours. Prince Charles has since responded to the effect that he was pleased that he had been of some help to the team! Onwards to Air New Zealand where we had the same difficulties - it seemed they did not wish our Welsh contingent to leave NZ. After some frantic phone calls and some excellent service from Sportsworld finally all was well and Tom and Chris set off for home only one day late.

Thank you team, and especially the management, for making this tour my most successful, enjoyable and memorable, and I look forward to continuing our friendships around the ranges when we next meet.

Captain Bob

THE GREAT BRITAIN UNDER 19 TEAM TO SOUTH AFRICA 2003

by Simon Fraser and Mik Maksimovic

The GB U19 Team:

Commandant:	Simon Fraser
Adjutant:	Mik Maksimovic
Armourer / Coach:	Peter Medhurst
Team members:	Sam Adamson
	Nick Bussell
	Jen Charlton
	Sam Dash
	James Headon
	Peter Law
	Cerise Macintosh
	Tanja Shields

The team assembled at Bisley on the Friday evening. As a warm up we shot all ranges on Saturday and had a match on Sunday morning before setting off, full of anticipation, for Heathrow. To quote one young lady team member, "I can tell that this is going to be fun!" South Africa here we come.

We had expected a wall of heat as we left the aircraft in Johannesburg but it was actually cooler than London; the Commandant's credibility was shattered already! Met by Deon and Jeanette Burger, Christo Lauterbach and John Clipstone we were soon on our way to Krugersdorp, a game park west of Johannesburg where we stayed for our first night. It was beautiful and relaxed. On a brief safari we saw rhino, lion, giraffe, meerkat, ostrich, wildebeest and antelope as well as many beautiful birds. We swam and sunbathed before dinner followed by an early night in upmarket rondavels.

The next day we travelled to General de Wet range at Bloemfontein via Potchefstroom. The journey was largely uneventful and we arrived in the rain. The accommodation proved a surprise for some, so a hasty shopping trip for some home comforts was rapidly scheduled before dinner in Bloemfontein.

We soon had to get down to business as the first international match was in three days. Zeros were checked and major restoration was executed on Mik Maksimovic's F Class rifle and scope, which had been damaged in transit. Despite these difficulties we shot with some success alongside the Free State competitions on Wednesday and in competition on Thursday. Everyone had a taste of the difficult wind conditions and achieved a zero at all distances. Sam Dash, James Headon and Tanja Shields won medals and the team were beaten into third place in a concurrent match by just three points by Wales.

Friday started with the Scottish Sword, a warm up match in the morning, and the first International, 2 and 15 at 800 and 900 metres in the afternoon. Despite such little practice on a range that is totally unique and far from easy, our coaches, James and Sam

Adamson coaxed the best out of our firers and managed to take 39 points from the South Africans at 800 metres. The longer range was trickier still but we gained a further eight points to win, 788.25 to 741.25. This was an outstanding achievement and the GB U19's first long range victory against South Africa on their range. Jen Charlton top scored with 138.6.

On Saturday we shot alongside the team events for more much needed experience in the difficult range conditions; in the evening the team members dined out with the younger Welsh contingent in Bloemfontein. A good night was had by all! Luckily that Sunday allowed the team's first lie in before hitting the mall and an Italian style lunch on the Waterfront. Reyneke Park beckoned; was it the swimming pool, the trampoline or the final of the Six Nations rugby, Ireland v England that was the star attraction?

Monday started with the opening ceremony and it was down to business in earnest. Over the next six days we were to be thoroughly tested by Bloemfontein's conditions, the learning curve was truly steep but fun, if frustrating. After shooting we held our official team party at the New York restaurant in Bloemfontein to thank many of those who did so much to make our tour both possible and the fantastic experience that it was. On Tuesday Nick Bussell top scored at 900 metres in very tricky wind and light. Hardly had shooting finished than we piled into a pick up for a game drive into the range danger area courtesy of Captain Heinric Terrblanch. The quantity of game was mind blowing, some 6,000 springbok, thousands of hartebeest, wildebeest, zebra and other antelope all galloping madly across the ground as far as the eye could see, often racing the vehicle. They are apparently very suspicious of vehicles and run as soon as one enters their area. The whole plain seemed to be on the move and the dust was flying everywhere. We even saw a giant tortoise and some meerkats.

Wednesday was the first stage of the State President's; Cerise led the way then came 16th in the King's Norton at 600 metres, whilst Peter Law top scored in the Col Bodley at 900 metres. On Thursday Jen had the top score of the team in both morning matches and in the afternoon we checked wind zeros ready for the Junior International. On Friday morning in the State President's, Cerise confirmed her place in the Final with Peter Medhurst who achieved an outstanding 150; Mik qualified for the Final in F Class. We then switched into team mode for the Simon Fraser Cup, the Junior International Match, 2 and 10 at 300, 600 and 900 metres. The coaches were the same as for the long range match and all went well at 300 where we went eight points clear; at 600 we gained a further



The Great Britain Under 19 Team to South Africa.



The two teams together.

(All photos: Simon Fraser)



Peter and Mik were starting to regret their visit to the crocodile pool.



The team chill out at Cape Agulhus.



"Quick someone light the barbie . . . I think I've caught lunch!"



The team in action.



"Well I think we'll give Table Mountain a miss today then."

four, however it was still too close for comfort with conditions at 900 as difficult as at any time in the meeting. It was very close and unfortunately we were leaking points. No scoreboards were run so it was only at the end when totals had been carefully checked that it was confirmed that the South Africans had won by just one point with equal V bulls. It had been an outstanding match and many congratulations to the South African team on a great fight back. We were obviously disappointed but soon recovered to enjoy the Protea dinner and as James said in his Captain's

speech, we look forward to renewing the contest at Bisley in July. On Saturday, after a hasty last trip into Bloemfontein, it was back to the range to support Cerise, Peter M and Mik in the Final. We made a quick change into uniform for prize giving during which everyone was eaten alive by swarms of mosquitoes. Supper was a farewell braai with the SA team.

The following day we travelled 700 kilometres to Oudtshoorn via Beaufort West with a brief stop to enjoy some amazing rock formations and a waterfall

passing through a mountain pass. Our home for two nights was a back-packers hostel; "great" was the verdict of some, others were not so sure. Next day we went to explore the Cango Caves. To quote our diarist "the caves cannot be done justice with pen and paper"; photographs even struggle to capture the majesty of the formations, they were truly amazing and the adventure tour was deemed a must. Then we went to the Rus en Verde waterfall, a wonderfully tranquil and cool oasis in the heat of the countryside, en-route to an ostrich farm where several team members rode the birds. In the afternoon we visited a crocodile park, which also had domestic animals and several big cats. Most ventured into the cheetah enclosure to stroke the cats and be photographed with them.

Next day we completed our journey to Kleinbaai via George, an astonishing mountain descent, breakfast at Mossel Bay, and Cape Agulhus, the southern-most tip of Africa where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet. We made one further stop for the brave or foolhardy to do a bungee jump off an old bridge. Wednesday was a much needed admin and rest day before the next early start for our visit to Cape Town. We were lucky to get up Table Mountain, it was the only day in the week it was open and the view was fantastic.

On Friday, those interested in wine (who wasn't?) had their chance to savour some of South Africa's best as we visited two vineyards, tasting and buying at both and with a full conducted tour at the Hartenberg Wine Estate followed by a visit to the largest shopping mall in the southern hemisphere. Saturday was to have been crayfishing day but the weather was too foul so we went to Hermanus for some final shopping, lunch in a cave almost at sea level, and a brief visit to the yacht club. Sunday's weather was not perfect but the crayfish were not to escape as Cedric van der Vyver took us out in his boat in relays and several crayfish were netted along with a few sharks. Cedric and Bets cooked crayfish and Sam A made spaghetti bolognaise for our final dinner at home.

It had been a tremendous tour and everyone had had a great time. I must end by thanking all those, far too numerous to name, both in the UK and South Africa for everything that they did to make our tour the trip of a lifetime. Thank you one and all. Finally to the team thank you for a great time and most enjoyable experience.

Postscript: Any shooter under 19 on 1 Jan 2004 who is interested in applying for the tour in 2004 please contact Major Fraser at Derby Lodge, Bisley. E-mail: simon@taraccrs.co.uk

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SPRING GENERAL MEETING - 29 MARCH 2003

Notes:

- 1 Reported speech is shown in "quotation marks", records of discussion are shown in normal typeface and notes to aid the reader are shown in italics.
- 2 Copies of the complete transcript of proceedings, compiled from contemporaneous tapes and notes, are available on request from the Secretary to Council.

Speech by John Jackman, Chairman of Council

Introduction

"Good evening and thank you for coming.

Firstly, please pause a moment in thought for our members in the reserve and permanent forces in Iraq. Thank you.

I should like to introduce those who have joined me on the dais, as some will be unknown to you.

Bob Fishwick - Bob joined us at the beginning of January as Secretary to the Council.

Michael Walton - elected to Council in 2001 was elected Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee last August.

Philip Currie FCA - elected as Honorary Treasurer last September. Philip had a brief commission with the Royal Marines, but is not a shooter himself. He brings independence to the role.

Michael Blythe FCA - our Finance Manager, whom you know.

Charles Brooks who was elected as Vice Chairman of Council last September.

Charles Oliver-Bellasis who was elected to Council last year and appointed Chairman of National Shooting Centre Limited last October.

Colin O'Brien who you know as Chairman of the Shooting Committee.

Martin Farnan, previously Shooting Manager, who was appointed Director of Shooting last August.

Lastly, I am very pleased to welcome Jeremy Staples as Managing Director of the National Shooting Centre, Bisley. Jeremy is a chartered surveyor with commercial experience and his priority will be management of the Estate and developing activities, particularly new sources of income."

The Secretary to the Council read the Notice convening the meeting from page 9 of the Winter Journal.

"This evening, the meeting will be in three parts.

Firstly, I shall deal with the accounts and finances and take questions.

Secondly, I will make a statement on certain Association affairs and take questions

Lastly, I shall introduce the Special Resolutions. I shall ask Robin Pizer and Peter Hobson to make a presentation

in relation to their proposed Amendments dated 9 March. Following this I shall take questions.

Finally, I shall submit the proposed Amendments, followed by the Resolutions dated 10 February 2003. I emphasise that the proposed Resolutions have been made only after 18 months of consultation of what is required, including by Council on no less than five occasions. Of course, with the diverse interests and desires of members, let us not pretend that the proposals have been unanimously accepted and not be surprised at this. It would be wrong to say that there is only one way of proceeding. However, the fact is that the final proposals have been well thought through and co-ordinated and take into account the requirements of the Charities Act. They have been overwhelmingly supported and that is why they will be put to you today."

Financial Position

The following is a summary of the Chairman's further remarks on the Financial Statements, picking up the salient points.

"It is appreciated that the format of the annual, audited, Financial Statements (as now required by the Charity Commission) has become cumbersome and I have therefore tabled a simplified statement of the operating result which shows the significant features making up the operating surplus of £122,223 (*copied on page 48*). The operating surplus has gone towards reducing bank borrowings.

The key point on the balance sheet is the effect of our re-financing by way of medium term loans of £1,261,818 over initially ten, now nine, years. As a consequence of this and a standby overdraft facility we now have a secure working capital with which to manage our day to day affairs. There was a surplus of current assets of £119,456 at the end of last September. I should also draw attention to the figure of Deferred Income shown in the accounts, namely, £2,065,298, reference note 15 in the published Financial Statements. The larger part of this is the balance of the Lottery Grant arranged through Sport England. Each year, part of this is, and will be, amortised and set off against the depreciation which we would otherwise have to charge for the Clay Ranges, buildings and equipment and the extension to the Melville Pistol Range.

Now that capital projects, associated with the Commonwealth Games, have been completed we have provided you with a statement of capital expenditure over the last three years. (For those not present and who require a copy, please request from the Secretary.)

I shall now pick up a few points."

The Clay Target Range

"A year ago today I highlighted how management of the Clay Target Range was a new venture for us. Projections had been made, but none of us now in office had any illusions that it would be an easy task to manage it. Last year was its first full year of trading and it had to support the Commonwealth Games.

The result last year, after the net depreciation charge of £14,577, rent of £18,000 paid to the NRA and a share of interest charges of £21,600, was a loss of some £17,500. However, the director, Sarah Bunch and her colleagues should be congratulated and thanked for the significant progress achieved during this first full year, for the development of a members' club and for the outright success of holding the Clay Target events for the Games. In the current year our budget is to make a profit of about £17,000 which will go straight towards repaying our borrowings. In the first five months of the current financial year, and with careful management, the results are on track to achieve this.

Following receipt of grants from Sport England, the NRA investment in the clays is just over £400,000, including associated legal fees. We are determined to seek a good return, over time."

The Bank

"Our Honorary Treasurer, Philip Currie, has now taken over from me the lead role in overseeing our arrangements with Barclays. I am pleased to say our relationship is as firm as it could be and I am pleased to report that our loan interest will be reduced very shortly by a further ¼% to become 1½% over base – a fine rate and a further saving in costs."

The Current Year

"As reported previously, our target surplus, this year, is £200,000. We believe it is achievable. It was envisaged that we might have our two new senior positions filled by the beginning of this financial year. The fact that we have not done so means two things. Firstly, we have been delayed in moving ahead with some desired new developments, but on the other hand, there has been a saving of costs against our budget. During the last few months I and we owe our thanks to Sandy Ewing, a number of Council and Committee Members and to our staff for keeping things moving. At the moment we are on target for a surplus, but we must not too readily anticipate it, as events can overtake us. However, the surplus will be used to further repay our bank borrowings.

As I said, a year ago, we do recognise the burden of cost to shooters from our borrowings. From my study of the last ten years and to give you a better idea, it would have been wise to have achieved surpluses, rather than the operating deficits, which occurred in all but one year. Thus our reserves of cash were sapped. If we had budgeted and achieved surpluses of, say, £50,000 pa – which was a small percentage of our assets - we would have been better off by towards £½m. It would have meant, however, higher prices on our key income sources of about 8% -12% over those years - which we have to pay now. Having borrowed to finance the runaway expenditure from 1997 to 2001, our prices have been further increased by some 12% to repay our debt and additionally a surcharge, which is currently 8%, to pay the bank interest. This is now history, but I am not unhopeful that prices to shooters might now reduce in

real terms provided we maintain and increase our activities, which we plan to do.

Barring accidents, we shall further reduce the surcharge this next autumn to reflect reduced borrowings."

Capital Expenditure

"Capital expenditure is still being curtailed. The main project in hand, I mentioned last year, is to improve access to and parking at about 300 yards at the east end of Century by building a road along the old Wharncliffe tramway just inside our boundary to Short Siberia with a spur to Century. This will give better access to short range shooting, especially when reverse echelon is in place. It would be good if this could be financed by one or more donations and we are turning our minds to this, but it is planned to go ahead, in any case, subject to Planning Consent and reasonable contractors' tenders.

We are very aware that the loss of our Short Range on which, I regret, some monies were spent abortively, is missed by many of our shooters. It is effectively unusable. There are a number of members and shooting disciplines which need a short range. You may recall that a plan was hatched to build one to the west of Stickledown. After initial cost was incurred it was discovered that there is much wartime unexploded ordnance which would have to be cleared. Altogether, I am informed that to build a small 200 yards range could cost up to over £200,000. Such a project would need a generous benefactor and no further work on it is being done at the present time, particularly until we can see the benefits of the work at the east of Century and Siberia.

May I now please take questions restricted to the accounts and to my financial statement?"

There were none.

"I now move on to other developments."

Management Changes

"As I said, in my letter to you of 10 February relating to governance of the NRA, the making of management changes is within the remit and powers of the Council acting as Trustees. Following adoption of the so-called 'Bisley Ltd' report last September, we have been gradually making the changes."

The Secretary – Bob Fishwick

"We welcome Bob Fishwick. He will fulfil a new role, which, ironically, is not far different from that of the original secretaries of the NRA. He is chief officer of the NRA for the Council and his remit is to encourage membership, promote target shooting, particularly away from Bisley and, with me, as Chairman, to develop our Public Relations, all under the direction of Council. He will work closely with the Membership Committee which, we hope, will incorporate input from our regional representative members of Council. Although Council's senior official, he will not be directly involved in the running of Bisley. As members, your main point of contact is Bob Fishwick for all else other than, ordinarily, your requirements at Bisley. He is supported by Heather

Webb, the Membership Secretary, and please do not hesitate to contact either of them with your ideas and concerns.

Expect to see Bob at some of the shoots and meetings away from Bisley in due course.

I mentioned Public Relations. In the Financial Statements we describe, as required, the major risks we face. Second to finance we mention, in essence, politics. You will recall my article in the Journal following the Commonwealth Games. The Games were good for us, projecting our position as an international sport. We shall do all we can to maintain and develop our relations with our ministries, the MoD, the Sports Ministry and the Home Office plus our contact with the Association of Chief Police Officers. Our relationships with the Charity Commission and the Privy Council are also important and we shall do what we can with the media. It is our duty to promote marksmanship and we have a common interest with the NSRA and CPSA with whom we shall work closely.

As I said in that article, the best public relations tool we have is how we conduct ourselves in the public view. Unfortunately, many of the public fear, and have turned against firearms, and neither understand them nor how they can be used safely and be of benefit through the practice of marksmanship. We must recognise and understand this even though we believe that they are wrong. However, our position as an international sporting body must help our cause.

It would also be better if we could say that we have more members. We have less than 5,000 individual members and this is hardly impressive in the political arena. We can only really guess how many participate through affiliated clubs and associations even though we believe that it is very many thousands. We must encourage more individual membership and to those who say "what is in it for us?" I say that we need your subscription and your membership to ensure that we can protect and encourage the pursuit of marksmanship. With more registered members we can reduce the subscriptions in due course. As it is we reduced the surcharge this year to give a consistent message towards where we want to go.

We are also working on a basic Introductory Course to precede our increasingly popular Probation Courses.

At the last Bisley General Meeting I referred to the cadet target rifle and how the current leaders in the Services appreciate training with the fullbore target rifle for their services and schools cadets. I have learned that the cadet target rifle has been adopted and barring any final hiccup is being issued this coming month. Following this we can make a push to encourage more young target rifle shooters to carry on after they leave the cadets."

The National Shooting Centre Limited (known as NSC for short)

"I found, early on, that the position of NSC was not well understood. It was formed, belatedly in fact, in March

2000 to manage the non-charity activities for the NRA, as required under the Charities Act and to manage the finances of the Lottery Funding Agreement for the building of the Clay Target Range and the extension of the Melville Pistol Range for the Commonwealth Games. I want to especially compliment Sandy Ewing, its first Chairman, for ensuring that NSC itself was financially well controlled in fulfilling the Lottery Fund Agreement, against difficult pressures.

As I shall explain shortly, one of the major headaches which I faced on becoming Chairman, was the unconstructed way monies were borrowed and passed to NSC by the NRA. Last September we were able to capitalise NSC with a £550,000 interest bearing loan which will be repaid over ten years in accordance with Charities Act rules and saved the day, just in time.

NSC also managed, as I have indicated, some, but not all, of the activities at Bisley. This cross-over of responsibilities was inefficient and, as I have reported before, NSC has been moving towards managing all activities at Bisley for the NRA under the direction of Council. I emphasise that it will manage. It will not take over ownership of NRA property.

NSC is now in the final stages of taking over the management of running Bisley which will be much more effective. The role of the new Managing Director will be to take this project further.

At this point I want to thank some people who have been working so hard for you, particularly to ensure that the new Managing Director, when appointed, would not be faced with a difficult backlog.

Firstly, we should thank Nick Jeffs and the Estate Committee, supported increasingly by Sherril Dixon, our Accommodation Officer, as Colin Cheshire wound down, for getting a grip of a plethora of outstanding issues and anomalies relating to the Bisley Estate. You will have read Nick Jeff's article in the Winter Journal.

At the end of last year we began the transition of management with the appointment of Charles Oliver-Bellasis as Chairman of NSC following his election to Council. Charles had already contributed to the work of the Estate Committee as a co-opted member, but the work he has put in since last September has been well beyond what was expected and I thank him. In Charles you have someone who wants to get things done and get them done right. He has been well supported by Sandy Ewing as acting and part-time Managing Director and I am pleased that Sandy is prepared to remain as a non-executive director for a while to ensure a smooth hand-over. I also thank Julian Hartwell, a property specialist lawyer who has contributed so much to our Estate Committee since his co-option last summer and who, recently, has been engaged in ensuring that all our freehold land is accurately and fully registered.

Jeremy Staples will be supported by Martin Farnan as Director of Shooting and Sarah Bunch as Director of Clays as well as the Trustees' representative non-executive directors.

NSC will also have an Estate Committee in an advisory and supporting role, drawn mainly from members of Council to provide advice to the Managing Director and to take up with him issues of concern to members.

We intend that a much closer working relationship is established with the users and tenants at Bisley and especially with the resident clubs and associations for mutual benefit and development of activities.

We also intend to open up Bisley. The Council has agreed that we should promote the name, Bisley, National Shooting Centre. We have made enquiries over the use of 'Brown' notices on the nearby major roads. It is feasible and we have begun discussion with other users of Bisley, such as the NSRA, towards organising it and financing it, if we can. We have received permission to use the Sports Council logo which will also help our image and marketing as a leisure centre."

The Charity Commission

"The Charity Commission is, essentially, our governance regulator in this increasingly regulated world. I promised to let you know where we are. I can say that we have a much better relationship than before and we have been encouraged in the changes which we have made and propose today. Their inquiry into our affairs has closed, but we have not yet received their draft report.

I spoke to the enquiry officer earlier this week to try to obtain an indicator for you. The central issue, which the Charity Commission decided to look into, was the absence of professional advice taken on board before the NRA headed into debt and the exposure of charity monies to risk by passing it to NSC to pay the bills for expenditure committed by the NRA before the Sports Council had approved and funded it. This covers the period from 1999 to 2001. Beyond this I would be guessing and that would not be helpful.

Their Report will be published."

In response to the Chairman's request for questions

Question: Mr A Lowe said that his club had reduced its bookings because of increased prices; he asked whether reducing prices might increase usage (as most clubs could not afford the prices) and what was being done to encourage range use.

Answer: The Chairman emphasised that Council recognised the burden of cost on shooters and reported that there had been a change in the pattern of use, but where some clubs had reduced their activity others had taken up the slack so that rifle range use had remained constant. Pistol range use was up, but Gallery and Winans use was slightly down. Martin Farnan also reported on new competitions that had been introduced and reminded the meeting that range fees for 2003 had been held at 2002 levels.

Question: Mr P Molyneux asked what was being done to promote Heritage Pistol Shooting (Section 7(3)) and why the Phoenix Club were not asked to bid for the use of Melville Range this year.

Answer: Martin Farnan replied that the NRA's responsibility was to allocate ranges and all interested groups had been invited to the Pistol Bids Meeting. However, bids for Heritage Arms were complicated by the requirement to allocate unused bays on either side. The Historical Breechloading Shooters Association (HBSA) was discussing this with the Surrey Police and the Home Office. If they allowed the use of Heritage Arms without the blank bays on either side, it would be possible to allocate more weekends to Heritage Arms. However, as Heritage Arms were classified as Section 5 firearms, only designated persons could use them. Therefore, although Bisley was a suitable site, guests were not permitted to use Heritage Arms during Open Days.

The Special Resolutions

"Shortly after I became Chairman I received a letter from a member of Council, who I do not know well. He argued that the main reason why we had experienced difficulties in recent years was the size of Council. It was not uppermost in my own mind among the possible reasons, but it was a remarkable and accurate analysis. In this complex and fast moving world it is difficult, if not impossible, to govern and manage with a management board of 60 members. It cannot be accountable. It is too easy for one person to leave it to another and to avoid the effort of taking up points of concern. As a result, direction tends to centralise.

I have been asked what I mean in my latest letter by "checks and balances". The proposed Council or board of Trustees will all be accountable, all appointed by the elected General Council and bring particular expertise. No officer or member will have complete power. It is inconceivable that such a body of people would expose themselves to incautious actions by colleagues for which they would be directly responsible, in law, personally.

From my own enquiries I am convinced that had we put the proposed structure in place since shortly after the passing of the Charities Act in 1993, and followed the Codes of Conduct set out by the Charity Commission (but which were becoming the general rule and basis for corporate governance generally), the difficulties we now face would not have occurred.

Lastly, we need candidates and volunteers for our work on Council and Committees. Please do not hesitate to come forward or to put forward others who have something to give. I am sure that we would welcome more younger members.

We have tried to ensure that all the proposed changes have been explained for those who want to take a close interest and that the reasons we have for rejecting the Amendments proposed are well understood. As I have said, we can re-visit any matter in later years in the light of experience."

Proposed Amendments

The Chairman asked that the meeting consider the proposed amendments first. Mr P Hobson and Dr R Pizer reviewed their proposed amendments (as previously advised to members). Mr Hobson closed the presentation by saying that both Dr Pizer and he supported Council, particularly the Chairman. The amendments were not a criticism but it would be better to have the safeguards that they were suggesting in place now.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hobson and asked if there were any questions about the amendments.

Mr P Sarony spoke at length about past problems. His main allegation was that a small number of people who had been effectively in control of the NRA for many years were determined to promote shotgun shooting to the detriment of all rifle shooting disciplines.

Mr P Sarony then called for a ballot of the members as an alternative to voting on the Resolutions (at the Spring General Meeting).

Mr H Watson suggested it would be better to look forwards. He believed things were beginning to improve, but members were suspicious. Essentially, he wanted to see the Association prosper and run efficiently. Council had spent a lot of time working on the special resolution proposals and it should be supported - however, if they do not work, members would be "after blood".

The Chairman then asked for votes on the amendments to the resolutions, taking each in turn (abstentions were not counted).

Amendment 1 - Independence of Disciplinary Body

33 rejected the amendment; 16 supported it.

The Chairman confirmed that Council would keep this under review.

Amendment 2 - All officials elected

31 rejected the amendment; 16 supported it.

The Chairman reminded members of the need to ensure an appropriate balance of professional skills but confirmed that Council would keep this under review. However, he emphasised that the members would elect the majority of members of the General Council, and that General Council would, in turn, elect the members of Council.

Amendment 3 - Representation of the Services

Peter Hobson withdrew the amendment on the understanding that Council would try to have a Service representative as a Trustee in due course.

Amendment 4 - Voting powers of co-opted members

There was some discussion between Mr Lowe and the Chairman about whether the Charities Acts requirements for electing a Trustee were at variance with the requirements of the Association Charter. Mr P Sarony commented that only the F&GP (new Council) would be the Trustees and they will not be elected by the membership. The Chairman pointed out that having

the present F&GP Committee membership as the Trustees was a transitional arrangement before advising the meeting that copies of governance documents were available, on request, from the Secretary to Council. 32 rejected the amendment; 17 supported it.

Amendment 5 - Accountability of NSC

35 rejected the amendment; 6 supported it.

The Chairman confirmed that General Council would see the minutes of NSC. Whenever NRA became involved in investments, the Trustees were on notice to ensure that those investments were secure.

Amendment 6 - Voting Procedures

36 rejected the amendment; 11 supported it.

However, the Chairman noted that there was considerable sympathy with the concerns that prompted the proposals and hoped that the new administrative procedures would go some way to obviate those concerns.

Amendment 7 - Fairness of Disciplinary Decisions

35 rejected the amendment; 8 supported it.

The Chairman confirmed that all the issues would be kept on record and the undertakings given would be followed through.

Resolutions Dated 10 February 2003

The Chairman said the old rules had only been amended in accordance with the Bisley Ltd report (as outlined on page 3 of the 2002 Winter Journal) and in the light of various things we needed to do in law.

Mr Hobson commented that there were only 64 members present. The Chairman pointed out that all members had had the information and there had been very few queries. He asked if there were any final questions, which prompted Mr A Lowe to comment on the practice of providing liability insurance for the Trustees, which he thought iniquitous if the Trustees were not elected by the members.

The Chairman asked for a show of hands on the Resolutions (abstentions were not counted).

Resolution 1 - To replace the existing rules with the new rules

39 voted for the resolution; 3 against.

The resolution was passed.

Resolution 2 - To act with the Privy Council in relation to the President's trustee status

39 voted for the resolution; 0 against it.

The resolution was passed.

Resolution 3 - Transitional arrangements for the President

49 voted for the resolution; 3 against it.

The resolution was passed.

Resolution 4 (a and b) - Short Term Transitional Trustee Arrangements

Dr Pizer objected to some of the named interim Trustees. The Chairman suggested that the meeting should not

get involved in personalising issues. He reiterated that there is nothing fixed beyond 31 July 2003. There were 36 for the resolution; 3 against it. The provisional Trustees did not vote. The resolution was passed.

The Poll

Mr Sarony reminded the Chairman that he had called for a ballot of members. Mr Hobson agreed and observed that there were too few members present to decide the future of the Association. Col R MacKeith reminded the meeting that members had had the opportunity to attend, or write to the NRA. Mr P Dodd agreed and said the proceedings were right and proper. Mr A Clarke mentioned proxy votes, which the Chairman said he would support in principle but there was no provision for them in the current rules. He asked whether those present would like proxy votes. There was general assent by a show of hands.

Mr Sarony asked for a show of hands on the poll. The Chairman stated that if at least 12 of those present wished for a poll, there would be a poll; the cost would be around £2,500. After discussion during which some members registered their discontent with the need for a poll, the Chairman asked for a show of hands to support a poll on a proposition to reject Resolutions 1 to 4.

Mr Sarony and 17 others supported the call for a poll.

Scrutineers

The Chairman announced that Mr N Molyneux had agreed to act as the scrutineer on behalf of Council and asked Mr Sarony to nominate the second scrutineer in due course.

The Chairman closed the meeting.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

by John F Jackman, Chairman

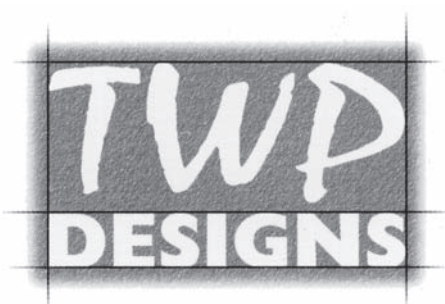
Charity Commission

I can inform you that the Council has now received a draft of the Charity Commission findings from its recent Inquiry to confirm issues of fact (but we cannot query their opinions) prior to finalisation of their Report and publication. I am told that the Charity Commission Report will be published on the Charity Commission web site at the end of May. We shall copy it onto our own web site and any member who would like a copy and does not have access to the web should request one from the Secretary General. I can say, however, that the Charity Commission Report will cover the issues which I have reported above and before and will confirm that, in closing their Inquiry, the NRA Council has addressed and taken all the necessary steps to satisfy their concerns.

Members may wish to be reminded that, as a Charity, we are regulated by the Charity Commission. We benefit from considerable tax concessions available to charities for their charitable activities, which vary from year to year, but which are currently calculated to be worth towards some £120,000 pa. Achieving a swift closing of their Inquiry allows the Council the opportunity to solely focus on the development of our sport nation-wide and the preservation of annual benefits for being a Charity and save £120,000 pa.

Finance

I am pleased to report that we remain on target for the current financial year. We have sufficient cash in hand to meet foreseeable contingencies and the Council has just repaid early the September 2003 instalment of our bank loan. The effect on the surcharge will be announced in the autumn, as usual.



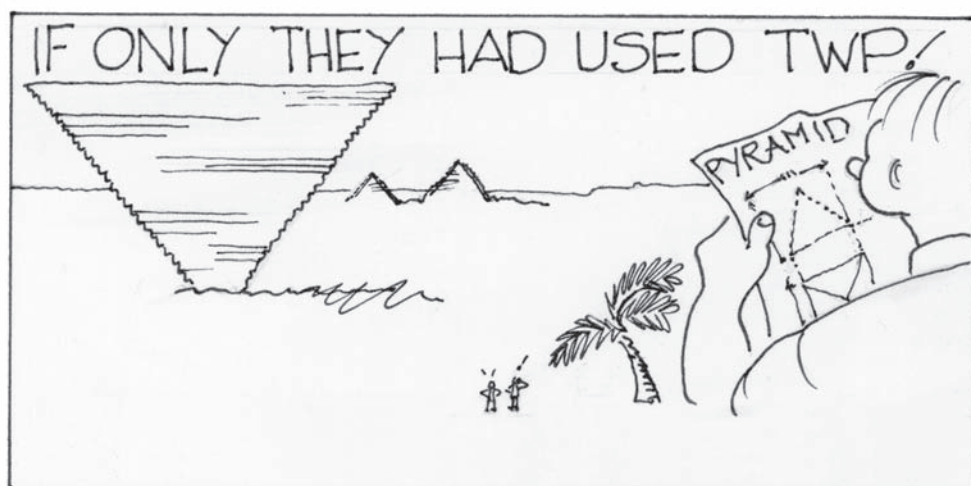
RUSHALL, DISS, NORFOLK, IP21 4RT

Contact Tim Webster

01379 741174

Or visit our website

www.twp-designs.co.uk



National Rifle Association incorporating National Shooting Centre Limited

Summarised Consolidated Results - September 2002

		Year to 30 Sept 2002	Year to 30 Sept 2001
		£	£
Income			
	Shooting	479,240	333,344
	Estate	539,007	517,342
	Membership	437,334	329,797
	Imperial Meeting	406,410	373,929
	Clay	278,195	60,206
	Other	6,498	5,031
	Total income	<u>2,146,684</u>	<u>1,619,649</u>
Expenditure			
Staff Costs			
	Shooting	314,562	349,664
	Estate	245,299	219,978
	Membership	38,161	68,429
	Imperial Meeting	71,902	77,421
	Clay	140,044	63,283
	Central	276,241	288,947
	Total Staff Cost	<u>1,086,209</u>	<u>1,067,722</u>
Other Costs			
	Shooting	45,701	77,289
	Estate	178,471	231,096
	Membership	12,795	21,836
	Imperial Meeting	99,134	99,233
	Clay	125,376	32,960
	Central	234,060	205,571
	Bank Interest	100,112	122,197
	Depreciation	142,603	141,624
Total Expenditure		<u>2,024,461</u>	<u>1,999,528</u>
Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)		122,223	(379,879)
Year End Adjustments			
	Loss on sale of plots of land	-	(8,745)
	Donation - sale of Cottesloe Lodge	-	234,808
	Deferred Income, premium on leases	1,246	-
	Surplus on Revaluation of Property	-	2,814,528
	Valuation fees	-	(10,000)
	Recovery of legal fees	-	58,750
	Lottery professional fees	-	(77,323)
	Accommodation block design and research	-	(92,000)
	Charity Appeal Fund	-	(5,109)
	Corporation tax - NSC	(8,887)	-
	Net movement in Trust Funds	8,450	(7,665)
		<u>123,032</u>	<u>2,527,365</u>
	less unrealised losses on investments	(25,631)	(38,109)
Net Increase in Funds per Audited Accounts		<u>£97,401</u>	<u>£2,489,256</u>
Capital			
NRA			
	Spent in year	26,828	315,400
	Received - Accommodation site	(92,000)	-
NSC Lottery Project			
	Spent in year	84,167	1,069,659
	Lottery grant received	(179,978)	(656,886)
Total Net Capital (Receipts) Expenditure		<u>£(160,983)</u>	<u>£728,173</u>
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)		<u>£119,456</u>	<u>£(1,577,118)</u>
Medium Term Loan Finance		<u>£(1,261,818)</u>	<u>£(19,891)</u>

100 YEARS AGO

by Ted Molyneux

HM Queen Victoria was dead and her eldest son, HM King Edward VII, was beginning the third year of his reign. The third Boer War had ended in 1902 and the British public were demanding explanations for the shortcomings of our army exposed by the Boers' irregular fighting force, especially in marksmanship. The Edwardian era was one of fierce pride and patriotism which stirred the nation out of its complacent attitude of comfortable imperialism in the world. This enthusiasm was reflected in the popularity of rifle shooting.

In 1900, the decision to encourage the activity, by the formation of civilian rifle clubs, had produced no fewer than 343 affiliated clubs by the beginning of 1903 and a further 93 joined in that year; the total membership now reaching 30,000. At Bisley, Stickledown had doubled its capacity, in time for the Imperial Meeting, by increasing the targets from 25 to 50.

The previous year, Great Britain and Ireland had won the Palma Match at Rockliffe, near Ottawa, Canada, so, in accordance with the original rules of the match, the NRA hosted the 1903 match at Bisley. This took place on Saturday 11 July and was won by America, 15 points clear of Great Britain in second place. Canada, Australia, Natal, Norway and France also competed and finished in that order. At the time, the American service rifles' back sight was considered an advantage, as it was laterally adjustable, a feature soon to be adopted by most nations. It is worthy of note that the .303" ammunition used by the GB team, was produced by the King's Norton Metal Company with a 220 grains bullet and a slightly larger than standard cordite charge, 215 grains bullet being the regulation service weight.

It was in this year that Captain (later Colonel) Barlow presented the splendid wrought iron gates which graced the entrance to Bisley Camp until taken as raw material for the war effort of World War Two. It also



A Frith's series postcard showing the wrought iron gates at the main entrance to Bisley Camp as seen from Queen's Road.



Colour Sergeant WT Davies, winner of the Queen's Prize 1893 and the King's Prize 1903.

saw the introduction of the Astor Challenge trophies, for competition between the clubs of each county, and of the Astor County Championship Cup. Some concern was shown at the reduction of entries for HM the King's Prize, from 1705 to 1530, which was won for the second time, by Colour Sergeant Davies, 3rd Battalion Glamorgan Volunteers. His previous win was in 1893, using a Martini-Henry rifle; this time he used a .303" magazine rifle. He was only the third person to have twice won the Sovereign's Prize, the other two being Pte Cameron (1866 and 1869) and Pte Ward (1897 and 1900).

Tonbridge won the Ashburton for the first time, from Bradfield, with a new record score of 500 ex 560; 42 schools competed. England won the National from Wales, Scotland and Ireland in that order, also winning the Mackinnon from Canada, Australia and Scotland. The visiting Australia team won the Kolapore by 11 points from the Mother Country, with Canada, Natal and Guernsey following in that order.

Meanwhile, elsewhere, the Suffragette Movement was founded by Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst, Orville and Wilbur Wright made the first successful flight in a petrol engined aeroplane and the Government rejected the idea of imposing fines for drink-driving!

INTO THE BREECH

A personal view from Sarah Bunch, Director of Clays

Little did I know, in those distant days of the millennium year, that I would end up as a director of one of the foremost clay shooting centres in the world. We have come a long way in that short time. There were only two years to get a viable and properly run facility together to host a very public competition, the clay events of the Manchester Commonwealth Games, and to turn the facility into a commercial operation which would bring in clients and also provide the NRA with some much needed income.

When I arrived on the scene from my previous duties at the NRA, there was just a vast heap of earth and rubble where the old Shorts Range had been, and not much else. And it was raining. It rained and rained and the mound of earth became soggy and soggy and the poor contractors who were trying to put in the concrete tunnels and the new defence wall for the markers walkway really had their work cut out.

Eventually one could make out the shape of things to come, and by the use of a lot of imagination and the dedication of Barry Desborough (Ground Manager) and David Dale (Chief Instructor), one could see how the lunar landscape which faced us every morning when we got to work would eventually look. We put the 71 state of the art Matarelli traps in place and began to set out the layouts and the safety areas, adjusting as necessary until we managed to achieve certification from the CPSA (the clay world's equivalent to the NRA) in all the formal disciplines and the 'Down the Line' layouts, some of which would be used every other weekend each month by our colleagues from the Bisley Gun Club.

We turned our attention to the new Clay Pavilion. I was pleased to be able to have an input during the design stages of this building, and after much discussion we came up with a building we felt we could manage to work with. Unfortunately, the office area which we insisted upon was rather larger than Sport England were prepared to fund. The kitchen was another additional facility which we felt we could not manage without and for which we had to find the funds. This meant that we were struggling to provide any niceties for the building, and we found ourselves bidding at the auction of redundant kitchen equipment from the Millennium Dome, and scouring the local skips for the office furniture!

Indeed we were very fortunate in that we received generous gifts from many of our friends. For example some of the office chairs were given to us by Tim Webster of TWP Designs; instructors' skeet jackets were given to us by Kennedy's Gunshop; our first computer was donated by a member of the NRA staff; shotguns for those without were provided by our Chief Instructor until we could afford to buy our own;

the web site was originally designed for us by John Stevens with the new version by Toby Coleridge; and much of the turf was donated by NCSC members to name but a few. There are also those who became members to support us financially in the first two years. The amount of generous and unsung help we have had from so many people has been a revelation - but for which we are extremely grateful.

Eventually, with a lot of help from our friends, we managed to get the place finished and partially turfed, (the seeding which had been done three times and washed away three times by the rain was no longer a viable proposition to provide green grass on the layouts in time for the Games), and we rather nervously arranged for a Grand Opening to be held on 10 August 2001, to which many dignitaries from the clay world were invited. We were horrified to wake up on the day to find it teeming with rain, and all our carefully brushed concrete paths covered in mud washed down from the top of the range. Thankfully the rain stopped, and after some feverish work from all hands with the brushes, we managed to have the place looking reasonably shipshape in time for the ceremony. We had a large turnout and we felt that all had gone well. Indeed it appeared that our guests thought so too, as they were, thank goodness, very enthusiastic, and the word began to spread.

We only had a couple of weeks of trading to sort out any teething troubles before the Commonwealth Shooting Federation Games were held, and we had much to do, tidying up and testing the computerised electronic releases and scoreboards. The place was humming with activity, not only from our own personnel, but also with observers from Manchester and TV crews. It was an exciting time.

Just in time, we were ready for the Federation Games and we were blessed with wonderful weather. The International Jury were happy with the arrangements and we got on with the shooting. While of course there were some moments of drama behind the scenes, the competitors seemed to be very pleased with the layouts, and the whole event went well.

We now knew that we had to consolidate, get a working membership, get people using the facility on a day to day basis and provide a service for our members so that they wanted to come again. It was our strategy to create a core of regular shooters in a club-like atmosphere, and to provide a steadily growing number of registered events as we grew in confidence to attract a wider audience.

By the time we reached the Commonwealth Games, we had the confidence to know that it would be a success technically, and we had the task of pacifying our clay shooters for losing out on valuable shooting

time while we put together the final preparations for the Games. We were becoming a well known facility with reliable and good shooting positions, and we had already held some important selection, County and other shoots.

Enough has been written about the Games already. Suffice it to say here that for me it was a hugely enjoyable experience and one which I shall never forget. It was wonderful to be in at the beginning of a project, knowing one was working primarily to make a success of the Games, but also knowing that if the Games were a success, the facility would get a huge amount of favourable publicity which would help us in the future. Perhaps the only disappointment was the lack of coverage from the media.

That is all now history, and we are moving forward. We are now running courses for all levels of competence, from those who have never picked up a shotgun to those aspiring to international status, and our special courses run by the Soviet Olympic Skeet Champion, Peter Pakk, have been very well received by our most advanced members. Again, do get in touch if you would like a go.

Our plans for the future include the expansion of our Corporate days, thereby making full use of the building and also other facilities at Bisley during the week when it is quiet, and laying on group shoots,

expanding our tuition and eventually holding a World Cup at the facilities.

We are now becoming very booked up for every weekend for the rest of the year. But we are owned by you, the readers of this Journal, and I think that many of you have not yet come up to see your facilities. Come and have a try (lessons can be booked Wednesday to Friday inclusive). Come in and see what we have done, and sample the food from our cafeteria. Ask about Corporate days. We can provide an original and very enjoyable day at Bisley for you and your colleagues at surprisingly reasonable cost. The Pavilion is set up so that the building can be divided for private functions, and you can hire a room at reasonable cost in the evening for meetings, bridge clubs, bell ringing . . . you name it! Give me a ring if you would like to discuss any ideas you might have.

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THE GREAT FIRE OF 2003

by Martin Farnan

The original Great Fire started in a baker's shop in Pudding Lane in London and destroyed most of the City. The latest fire to hit Bisley and Pirbright also started innocently enough, with a picnic fire lit by some children on West End Common, and could well have destroyed much of Pirbright and Bisley Ranges. In the event a combination of skilled firefighting, dedication on the part of all staff and sheer good luck resulted in minimal damage to our facilities.

The first hint of trouble came over the radio before lunchtime on Maundy Thursday when the potentially ominous words "There's a fire behind Long Siberia" were overheard. An initial inspection from Stickledown Range showed a large pall of smoke well behind the range, and off to the right. It was noted, however, that the prevailing wind was from right to left which would bring the fire towards the range complex so it was decided that a close watch should be kept on the fire to see how it developed.

Things developed very quickly and we learned that the fire was advancing rapidly, helped by the strong wind, in a line parallel to Red Road. This was threatening the houses along the north side of this road, and the road was closed by fire crews for safety reasons. At this time the fire appeared to be about a kilometre behind Stickledown butts and was continuing to move towards the west, so the ranges did not seem to be in any immediate danger.

An interesting development occurred shortly afterwards when the Range Office received a call from the Army saying that there were a large number of "blind" (ie previously unexploded) mortar bombs and other pieces of ordnance which were now exploding in the intense heat of the fire. Since the blast area of a mortar bomb is in the region of 5,000 square metres, and since there was danger of other pieces of ordnance being blown onto the range areas, they suggested that all firing should cease and all firers be withdrawn from the ranges.

For the first time in many years the Emergency Cease Fire was sounded, and a tannoy message calling all firers into Camp was broadcast. Some were slower to move than others; one group on Short Siberia, which was nearest to the fire, delaying by some ten minutes before being moved on in ten seconds by Big Jim! It was clear that the fire was now a very serious one indeed for housing along Red Road and Chobham Ridges, and reports were that up to twenty fire engines were engaged in fighting it.

When darkness fell the fire front could be seen stretching from east to west in a line some three miles wide, and slowly advancing up towards Chobham Ridges. In view of the danger of exploding ordnance, the fire teams were not able to go out into the danger area to fight the fire but had to wait along the edges of the cleared areas and

roads for the fire to reach them. There did not appear to be an immediate threat to the ranges, however, and no fire tenders or firefighters had yet appeared in Camp.

An inspection at 07:00 on Good Friday by NRA and Pirbright staff showed that the fire had been stopped at Chobham Ridges, but was continuing to burn in an arc towards Pirbright Ranges. Despite the fact that the wind was still blowing from the east the fire now appeared to be burning backwards against the wind, and was finally advancing towards Bisley Ranges. Being Good Friday all the ranges were closed. Since the main threat appeared to be to Stickledown, contingency plans were put in place to reschedule the long range events over the Easter weekend.

The first fire officers arrived at Bisley at about 08:30 and inspected the whole area from Stickledown stop butt. Divisional Fire Chiefs were briefed on which areas had been cleared of unexploded ordnance and where it was safe to move. The fire was advancing slowly towards Stickledown, but again could not be fought in the Range Danger Area. Two fire tenders appeared mid-morning and were positioned in Stickledown butts. It was extremely frustrating watching the fire as it slowly advanced, knowing that there was nothing that could be done except wait for it to arrive.

The fire finally reached Stickledown butts about lunchtime and the gorse bushes, tinder dry, caught readily. The firefighters were ready, however, and were able to contain most of this fire. A couple of the number boards were scorched but no real damage was done. The fire, meanwhile, continued round the left side of Stickledown and continued towards Pirbright. The real danger was that the fire would go round to the right of Stickledown and into Cottesloe Heath, the Bisley Shooting Ground (BSG) sporting clay complex, and on to Century and Short Siberia. With advice from NRA, NSC and BSG staff the fire teams were able to check routes and make contingency plans.

By late afternoon flames were seen advancing towards Cottesloe Heath, but again no move could be made out into the Range Danger Area. The fire was also advancing into Pirbright Ranges, and their clay ranges were under threat. The Deepcut Officers Mess was evacuated as a precautionary measure. With NRA and NSC assistance the BSG staff started moving their traps and other equipment out of the Cottesloe Heath area, "just in case".

With the large amount of water being used resupply was a potential problem, but the emergency water tank by the NRA Office, with a capacity of some 300,000 litres, was used for the first time in living memory (except for Big Jim, who has worked for the NRA for some 40 years!). The pump used to refill the fire tenders had an impressive performance (1,600 litres per minute); it refilled a tender in 75 seconds and a water bowser in



Good Friday during the day.

(Photo: Mark Cavey)



Evening approaches and the fire threatens Stickledown.

(Photo: Mark Cavey)



About 01:00 Saturday morning.

(Photo: Carol Beecher)



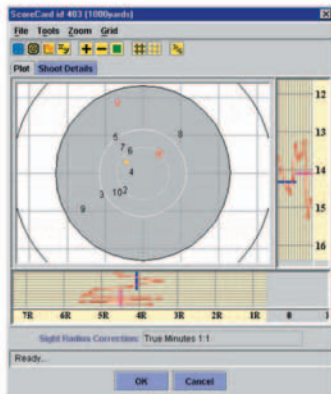
Afterwards.

(Photo: Chris Wall)

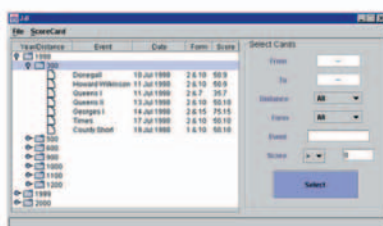
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Wind	4.0R	5.0R	0.0	3.0R	3.0R	4.0R	4.5R	5.0R	5.0R	4.5R	4.0R	3.0R	46
Elev.	15.5	14.5	14.5	14.0	14.0	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	V
Calc	ok	LR	ok	?	ok	ok	L	LL	?	ok	?	ok	4
Value	4	V	C	V	4	V	4	V	5	4	4	5	4

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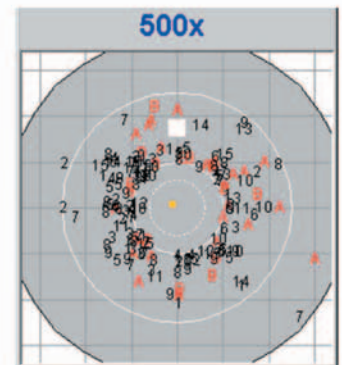
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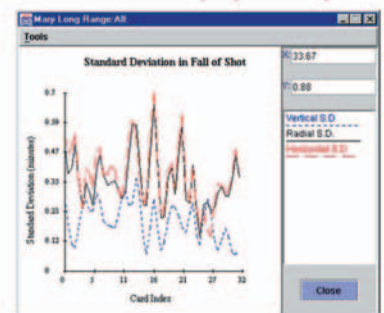
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just over three minutes! There were now five fire tenders, two Landrover appliances and a water bowser on site.

As darkness fell the view began to resemble Dante's Inferno. The sky glowed and the flames could be seen behind and on both sides of the range area. The fire finally reached both Cottesloe Heath and the edge of Stickledown butts and range, and both the trees in Cottesloe Heath and the gorse on Stickledown burst into flames. Two fire tenders were dispatched into Cottesloe Heath but were unable to stop the fire advancing up the range.

At almost exactly the same time the fire was sweeping through Pirbright Ranges; it was not long before the Ammunition Compound was surrounded. Additional ambulance cover was called out, again "just in case", and the fire continued across Nelson and Langley Ranges towards Caravan Site 7. It was at this point that the order to prepare to evacuate all caravan sites, and the Camp itself, was given, and parties of soldiers and firefighters, co-ordinated by Doug Glaister, began going round caravans and clubs warning of a possible emergency evacuation if the fire swept through the trees between Pirbright and Bisley Camp.

The whole of the bottom 200 metres of Cottesloe Heath was blazing, as was the entire width of Stickledown. The flames surrounded the flag poles and dwarfed the fire tenders, and advanced so rapidly that the firefighters had to make a hasty withdrawal. One fire tender stalled and it was in the balance whether to abandon it or risk the crew in getting it started. In the end it, and the crew, were saved but it was a close run thing.

Such was the intensity of the fire between the two camps that the senior fire commander withdrew all the fire tenders to form a line between the two camps, thus leaving the fires in Cottesloe Heath and on Stickledown to rage unchecked. It seemed as if all the Stickledown targets and butts and the whole of Cottesloe Heath would be lost.

The fire had, meanwhile, spread eastwards and was threatening Short Siberia and the Century target sheds.



Over 800 targets had to be moved from the butts.

(Photo: Karen Robertson)

It was now midnight but an emergency call for staff and volunteers produced most of the target shed staff and four markers. With the use of a tractor they managed to move nearly 800 targets from the target sheds out onto Century range floor, taking up most of the width of Butts 18 and 19. This was done, incredibly, in just over one hour!

The fire in Pirbright had begun to die down; at about 02:00 the Fire Commander released some tenders to recommence fighting the fire in Cottesloe Heath and on Stickledown. The fire in Cottesloe Heath had reached a natural fire break in the trees, and it was here that the fire crews managed to hold it and prevent it advancing further up the range. Due to this action the greater part of the range was saved and BSG lost no equipment at all.

The fire on Stickledown was also dying down at the same time. This was due, coincidentally, to the fact that a large area of heather had been cut the previous week to improve target visibility on Butts 0 and 1, and this acted as a perfect fire break. The flames only reached the butts access road over a distance of about 50 yards rather than 1000 yards, and never jumped the road, thus saving the firefighters from facing flames on three sides at the same time.

By 03:00 it seemed as if the worst was over and most staff left for a few hours rest before returning early on Saturday morning. By 08:00 there were firefighters from three counties on site, some of whom had been on duty for 16 hours and had not eaten. Sarah Bunch and her team from the Clay Pavilion came to the rescue, producing tray after tray of hot bacon sandwiches and flasks of coffee.

The Pirbright and Stickledown fires were out, with just the odd hot spot still smoking, but the fire was now advancing eastwards, helped by a following wind, and was now approaching the Century stop butts. It was decided to meet this threat head on, and the Divisional Commander organised a team of firefighters to contain the fire in a line from Cottesloe Heath towards Short and Long Siberia. This finally did defeat the main fire in the immediate vicinity by about noon, almost exactly 48 hours after it had started.

It was unfortunate that the entire Easter Meeting and all other events that weekend had to be cancelled, but this was necessary since the firefighters had to have freedom of access to all areas behind the butts to deal with any new flareups as they occurred in the freshening wind.

Incredibly the NRA, NSC, NCSC and BSG lost no equipment or targets at all. All staff worked together with the firefighters during the period to ensure that the fires were fought and defeated wherever possible, and the outcome could have been so very much worse. It is unlikely that we shall have another fire for some time to come (there's little left to burn) and there is now no difficulty in seeing the Stickledown targets!

BARBARIANS IN BLOEM!

(Or 'SOUTH AFRICA WITH KNIFE, FORK AND RIFLE')

by Sally Roots

The Team: Richard Bailie, Peter Coley, Sally Roots, Cliff Mallett, Jim Scobie, Garnett Faulkner, Rory White.

With the inviting prospect of a few days acclimatisation ahead, the Barbarians left Bisley on a bright spring afternoon, en route for the hot days and balmy evenings of sunny Cape Town – or so we thought. On arrival, the reality was a little different however, and the persistent rain left some of us regretting our packing strategies and heading for the shops to buy more suitable clothes. But it takes more than a spot of water to dampen Barbarian spirits and, fully-trouserred, sightseeing continued undaunted. On reflection, the full hour's harbour cruise might have been a little ambitious, but at least the less hardy souls were able to retire below to the bar when conditions (think arctic whaling season) got too much. A day's wine-tasting in Paarl and Franschoek, courtesy of Rory's cousin, was much more convivial and provided Sally with the opportunity to meet cheetahs up-close and personal at the Spier estate.

Evenings were spent in putting in a little practice for the serious eating ahead, with Garnett apparently embarking on a personal challenge to eat his own weight in steak within two weeks. The gastronomic highlight was a serious crustacean frenzy at Panama Jack's – an excellent seafood restaurant housed in an outwardly unimpressive wooden and canvas building in the container port. The booking was made on Cliff's recommendation, but left the team with some unanswered questions – just how exactly did Cliff originally stumble on this small shack down a dark alley in a less than salubrious part of Cape Town?

After a shaky start, the sun finally emerged on our last day, although Table Mountain was still shrouded in mist. Breaking out the Factor Dulux sun cream, Richard, Sally and Garnett headed for the Cape of Good Hope, via Simon's Town and the penguin colony at Boulders, while Cliff and Jim took Peter for some light exercise on the golf course. The forecast for the next few days was excellent, but our holiday was over and it was time to get down to the serious business of the tour.

Having flown back to Johannesburg and collected the team vehicles, the next step was to retrieve our rifles from Richard van Lingen, who had met us on our arrival in Africa and kindly agreed to rifle-sit during our visit to Cape Town. Despite having taken extensive notes to enable him to retrace his steps back to Richard's house, team navigator Vasco da Coley still managed to take us on a tour of some of the more dubious parts of central Johannesburg. Proving the truth of the old adage 'If you want to know the way ask a (ex) policeman', Rory took over after an hour or so, and we eventually reached the van Lingen residence in safety, shortly before the efforts of maintaining his fiercest 'don't-mess-with-me-I'm-a-chartered-surveyor' expression proved too much for lead driver Richard.

Fortunately for all our nerves, the remainder of the drive to Bloemfontein was uneventful and the team settled into the comfort of the City Lodge Hotel, where half the team found they were able to watch TV from their baths and the other half were jealous. The first of several visits to the local steakhouse ensued, and kit was sorted ready for the zeroing.

The Barbarians had arranged to buy hand-loaded ammunition from Cherryll and Chris van Niekerk and intended to compress rounds to suit individual chamber sizes, using a borrowed hand press. However, the first morning in Bloemfontein led to the discovery that the press contained the incorrect die and a morning of serious Team Captain phone calls ensued, resulting in Peter spending the afternoon in a cupboard at the back of an obliging local gun shop, compressing sufficient ammunition to cover the first few shoots. A more permanent solution was swiftly found in the form of South African shooter (and Dungannon RC member) Brian Smith, who loaned the appropriate equipment. For a considerable part of the weekend, Peter's hotel room could easily have been mistaken for a clandestine arms factory, with relays of Barbarians feeding and operating the portable press and counting rounds into batches. The effort was worth it, however, as the ammunition performed well in everyone's rifles, as proved by the elevations achieved during the initial club team matches – shame about some of the wind calls!

Much has been said previously about the conditions on the range in Bloemfontein, so it will suffice to say that the Barbarians experienced (and enjoyed) the whole gamut; from cool and blustery through to extremely hot and apparently still, via all points in between. Significant changes frequently occurred while the shooter was in the aim; interpreting the combined meaning of flags, mirage and fall of shot could be challenging to say the least. (Having collected a particularly fine waterline outer, Garnett remained adamant that his call of 1 right was perfectly reasonable at the time, despite his plot indicating that 7 left would have been far more appropriate!) Only Cliff appeared master of the conditions, achieving consistently respectable scores in spite of an unanticipated change of rifles halfway through the week.

The pros and cons of cleaning one's rifle during competition are frequently discussed, but rarely lead to violence. Late one night, however, the peace of the hotel was disturbed by loud thumps, bangs and Meldrewesque exclamations of "I don't believe it" emanating from the direction of Cliff's room. Notwithstanding Garnett's reassurance ("Ah, he's probably just adjusting his sights"), the noise was sufficiently alarming that the receptionist felt obliged to confirm that Cliff was OK. Sadly the same couldn't be said for his rifle, from which even brute force had failed to remove the wedged, and by now rather battered, cleaning rod. Cliff spent the



The Barbarians at Bloemfontein.



At least there was some Hope for the team!



Cat therapy - South African style.



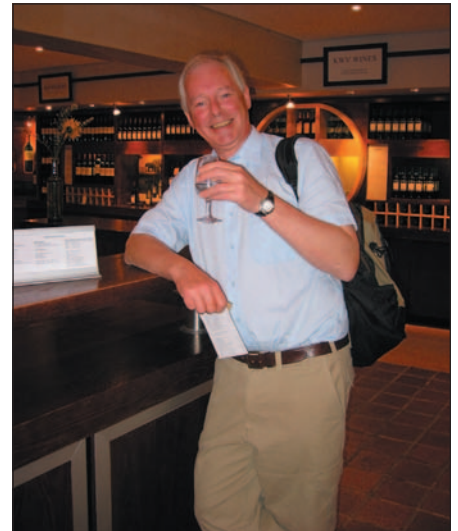
"No, I haven't a clue what it's doing either."



Cliff demonstrates his new method of cleaning rifles.



Pete tells Garnett exactly where he went wrong.



The Captain decides that someone else is designated driver tonight.



"I'll be back!" Dick Horrocks top scores for the British Lions.



"Tanking Off" - the South African version of our "Chairing Off".

next day removing shards of plastic handle from his socks, set up his other rifle and proceeded to produce even better results than before; the hotel staff are probably still finding ball bearings in their Hoover.

As the week wore on, scores remained generally steady, although the occasional crossfire (mentioning no names, but it's always good to see the Captain leading from the front) and unexpected magpies kept the Barbarians off the top of the prize lists. On completion of the State President's Second Stage, Jim the pragmatic immediately entered the Encouragement Match, while the rest of the team (standfast Cliff) waited without too much hope for the Final list to be produced. Not that there was much time to dwell on the individual results, as everyone was involved in the International Invitation Match; Sally upholding Barbarian honour in the British Lions team and everyone else selected for Cliff's International Magpies team. Partway through the afternoon, the cut-off score for the Final filtered along the range and, as expected, Cliff was through, but more surprisingly so were Sally and Peter – for the moment.

Since its formation, the Barbarians Rifle Club has donated a trophy to the local governing body of shooting on the first occasion of a tour to that country. South Africa was no exception and, at the team reception following the International Invitation Match, Richard presented the Barbarians Challenge Trophy to SABU President George Bramley and offered a few well chosen words. Peter also had a few well chosen words to say

that night, although fortunately less publicly; owing to an admin error, too few F Class shooters had been included in the State President's Final, hence six TR shooters would have to be dropped from the published list. Sadly, the error was compounded the following day when it was announced on the range that the decision had been reversed, however Peter was in the throes of a final bout of retail therapy at the time, so missed possibly the hottest shoot of the week. With Bloemfontein flags and mirage at their most interesting, Cliff and Sally claim to have thoroughly enjoyed the final two ranges, but probably not as much as they enjoyed the cold beer on completion.

Following a final team meal (steak – for a change!) in the company of just about every other British shooter in town, it was time to pack up and head for Johannesburg. After a memorable flight home (Rory slept through the arrival of his brandy – how much more memorable does it get?), we finally reached Bisley on a crisp spring morning, having thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to get in a little warm weather practice at the start of the season.

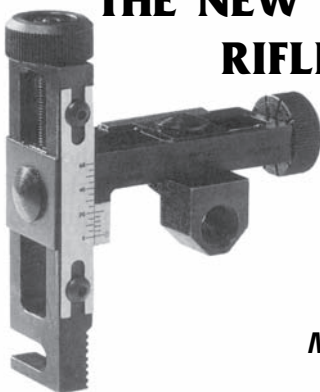
The Barbarians would like to express their thanks to the following for their assistance during the tour: Richard van Lingen for stowing our rifles, Cherryll and Chris van Niekerk for excellent ammunition, Brian Smith for the loan of his press and Roger and Lynne Hanley for coming out of retirement to deliver and collect us to and from the airport.

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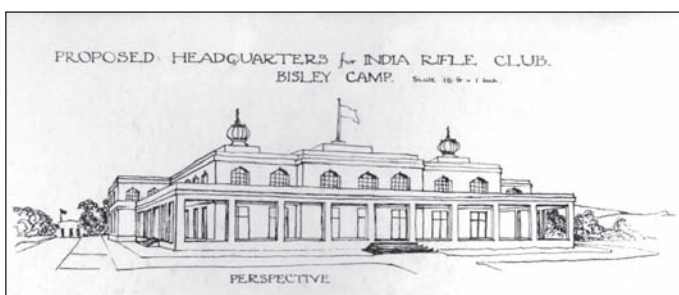
by Tony de Launay



Dotted around the Bisley Common are a variety of buildings of differing vintage and occupation. Some are instantly recognisable – such as the historic Fulton's hollow square. Others have a more conventional structure, yet still possessing the traditional charm of verandah and wriggly tin. One such, tucked away at the access points from Maple Acre to Century Range, is the British Commonwealth Rifle Club.

With sweet chestnut trees towering over it, the Club was originally the India Rifle Club, which immediately explains the Star of India emblem. India first sent a formal team to compete at Wimbledon in 1874, and on the move to Bisley their teams were billeted in the tented lines. This led to the idea of creating a pavilion at Bisley as a permanent clubhouse. The first stage of lounge and veranda was completed for the Bisley Meeting of July 1935 thanks to a final donation of £100 from the Calcutta Turf Club. Further evidence can be found inside the main room where, dominating the wall to the left of the fire place, is a board recording the names of all those who contributed to the founding and building of the Club. It reads like a history of that continent from days long, long ago, where Maharajahs and Lords mingle with Gentlemen and troopers.

In 1947, with the cementing of India's independence, it was renamed the British Asia Rifle Club and shortly thereafter took its current name. In the passageway to the secretary's office are the plans of the original clubhouse, ambitious in the extreme, a palace to rival the Taj Mahal. You suddenly realise that the main room in which you have been standing is no more than one room in a building of many splendoured halls and quarters fit for visiting people of considerable importance.



Alas the dreams of the designers did not materialise and are unlikely ever so to do. With the development of the Commonwealth and the integral and expanding independence of its member states, the purpose of the building had to change. Let David Richards, the current Club Captain explain.

“For many years we have acted as a home from home for shooters from any overseas country, offering use of our facilities when they come to the Bisley Meeting in the summer. As recent examples the Millennium Meeting saw a number of Texans using the Club and during the Commonwealth Games it became the base for Kenyan fullbore and smallbore shooters. We cannot offer living accommodation but the gunroom is well equipped for preparation and cleaning out, our coffee percolator is always on the go and there are daily newspapers on the table”.

The Club is unique on the Common in that it exists solely for this purpose. The NRA has recognised this over the years, working with it to ensure that overseas teams are made aware of the calm haven available in the turmoil of the shooting events. David Richards again, “We exist because of the hard work of a number of UK volunteers who are prepared to respond to the hospitality they have received on overseas tours by paying us £15 per year membership fee and rolling up their sleeves to help to keep the place in good order. It is the members' way of offering a permanent base for reciprocal hospitality”. (To qualify for membership you have to have been a member of an official NRA or GB overseas team, including the GB Cadets.)

The Club holds its own open Championships immediately prior to the Bisley Meeting, scheduled so as to give early arrivals among overseas teams an opportunity to blow out the travel cobwebs. It is also an opportunity for them to adjust to the RG ammunition to be used at the Bisley Meeting. The Club fields teams in an opening international match so that visitors can rehearse their team drills. Visitors can then go off to see the sights or participate at meetings elsewhere in the UK before the Bisley Meeting proper.

As well as offering shelter to those visitors the Club also looks after their inner welfare. The Club is rightly famed for its afternoon teas served to passers-by during the Bisley Meeting. Over the years wives and girlfriends, sons and daughters and a bevy of friends have served traditional teas to shooters and their guests. Cucumber sandwiches, fruit cake, scones and cream with strawberry jam and pot upon pot of tea have helped to raise money for club funds and to maintain the hospitality ethic. Booking a table for Queen's Prize Saturday afternoon is mandatory if you are to stand any chance of a seat; the tables spill out into the gardens.

Go and give it a visit, look at the boards and plans, and above all have a good tea. Then you can boast “Been there, seen it all and eaten the tea”.

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OBITUARIES

**James
(Jimmy)
Watson**



Competitive shooting was a life long interest of Jimmy; he starting shooting and served 24 years with the Ulster Special Constabulary (Reserve Police) who had a province wide network of shooting teams. Jimmy was a fair shot and regularly shot in competitions using SMLEs converted to .22" and .303" No 4 Lee Enfields. In the early 1960s Jimmy joined Comber Rifle Club and became one of its formative members, helping to build the club and contributing to the many successes the club has enjoyed.

Jimmy was respected by all who knew him. He was a man who instead of talking about doing things, quietly got on with it. You could find him carrying out all manner of tasks from patching a leaky roof to mowing the grass on the outdoor range. Jimmy, with the help of his wife Nelly, kept Comber's outdoor range as neat as any garden, this was commented on by all that visited and resulted in the Sports Council for Northern Ireland presenting Jimmy with a plaque for his achievements. He was a great worker and a stalwart of the club. Jimmy loved competing and travelled widely in Ireland and on the mainland. In the process he made many friends - all who knew him will have many fond memories and he will be greatly missed.

Throughout the many years there were a couple stories of note. One year Jimmy purchased a second hand bicycle from a shop in Brookwood and over the years the sight of Jimmy peddling around camp on this old clapped out blue bike was commonplace. One day, however, on his way to the range he fell off the bike; subsequently he shot badly and achieved a rather poor score. This he blamed on the accident. Heading back to the caravan he called in and placed his scores on the Ireland board but in an effort to explain the poor score and keep his chance of being selected for Ireland open, he added a little note "fell off bike". Later, some other unsympathetic Irish shooter added "silly b****r".

In 1994 Jimmy and the Club Secretary decided, for a change, to go to Ascot Races on Queen's Final day. After an uneventful day (we think this meant they lost) they travelled back to Brookwood and in time honoured tradition called in for a pint or two at the Brookwood Hotel. Drinking their beer they wondered how the Queens Final had gone but they might as well have been thousands of miles from Bisley, as none of the locals knew what they were on about. However they spied

the green plumes of some Northern Ireland cadets in the poolroom and went to enquire. They didn't know who had won but thought he was Irish. Two names came to mind, Dave Calvert and Martin Millar. The Secretary reckoned it was Calvert but Jimmy smiled and said "I believe Millar's done it". Had he not asked that very morning why they were going to the races and not staying to watch him win the Queen's? They soon found out who won by means of a Polaroid picture on their caravan door of Martin Millar in the chair. They caught up with the winner's party at the Surrey clubhouse where Martin gave Jimmy a sincere public thanks for introducing him to the sport and supporting him throughout the years; he praised Jimmy to the point where we all felt he had a share in Martins win.

Jack Fitzroy Waters Bennett

Jack Fitzroy Waters Bennett was born in Weymouth in 1916. After leaving school at Sherborne, he followed a career in law and studied to become a solicitor. In the late 1930s he moved to Penzance as a qualified solicitor and soon became a partner in a firm. He remained with this practice until his retirement in the mid 1970s. Even after his retirement he maintained a keen interest in the law and became a Deputy Registrar until the 1980s.

During his 20s he became interested in shooting, both fullbore and smallbore, and soon became an accredited shot. Shooting was to become his main pastime activity and his passion. During World War II he was a Major with the Home Guard and Battalion Commander with the Army Cadets, being in charge of shooting instruction.

From the 1940s he was Secretary of the Lands End Fullbore Rifle Club and then became a founder member and committee member of the Cornwall Rifle Club, based at the Millpool firing range on Bodmin Moor. Other offices included Cornwall Secretary for the English XX Club and County Representative on the NSRA Council where his professional background enabled him to make an important contribution to various legal matters associated with shooting. He was a chairman and later made a life member of the Penzance Rifle and Pistol Club.

He regularly shot at the Imperial Meeting at Bisley, together with various other shooting matches and often represented the Cornwall team. He attended regular fullbore shoots at Millpool and smallbore shoots both in an individual capacity and as a team member for the Penzance club. He continued his shooting until the early 1990s when ill-health prevented him attending meetings. However, he continued his passionate interest in shooting and enjoyed receiving the various journals. He died on 20 July 2002, almost one year after the death of his wife, leaving his only son Tony.

He was a consistently good shot, both fullbore and smallbore and was a true multi-disciplinarian. Despite this, he always remained modest of his achievements. He will be sadly missed by his fellow shooters in Cornwall.

LETTERS

From Stephen Brooks

Revival of the Palma Trophy Competition

This year the Palma World Long Range Championship will take place at Bisley and I thought it timely to provide some insight into the revival of this match in the 1960s since I happened to be a bystander. I joined the Manitoba Provincial Rifle Association in 1964, while an undergraduate at the University of Manitoba. In 1965 I was part of the contingent from Manitoba, which shot in the Tri-Provinces shoot in Dundurn, Saskatchewan. Following the usual general meeting, Colonel Steve Johnson (whom I had previously met in Barbados in the mid fifties, when he was part of the Canadian team touring the West Indies at the same time that Cliff Mallett was touring with the Devon-Jersey team) spoke to us about his ideas of reviving the Palma Trophy competition as the highlight of shooting events planned for the Canadian Centennial in 1967. The aims were to ensure that:

- 1 The match was recognized as an international event;
- 2 The match enhanced the position of the DCRA and its members in the overall National celebrations for the Centennial;
- 3 The match would return to its rightful position in the World's Calendar of Shooting the once highly regarded Palma Trophy Match.

Steve informed us that he had approached Jim Whitney from California, the leader of the American shooters competing in rifle shooting in Canada at that time, to test the feasibility of such an event. To move matters forward, Steve was asked to contact Admiral Mustin of the NRA of America. The result of these discussions resulted in the test match being arranged for 1966 in Camp Perry.

Of equal importance to Steve was the need to establish this match as the 'ultimate' test of marksmanship. In those days we were still using service rifles or modifications of service rifles and I remember the first match in 1967 in Ottawa when team members were able to draw the rifle they would later use in the match, take it away and sight it in prior to the start of the match. I am lucky to have fired in the last match when those rules were followed (Ottawa 1982) and the first match in which the rules permitted team members to use their own rifles (Bisley 1985).

At that meeting in Dundurn there was a very good young marksman who had recently won the Grand Aggregate at Bisley and who was about to leave the RCAF. His friendship has been highly regarded by me, and of course I am speaking of Bob Pitcairn. There was also a young ex-Rhodesian markswoman who had recently come to Canada and who also was part of that 1967 team and who has been a constant friend of mine down the years, and has helped me blow off the dust of years regarding this event. Of course I am referring to Doran Sewell, nee Westhead, who referred my enquiry

to Col Bill Strachan and asked him if he remembered those early days. His involvement at that time and memory of these events produced the final whisk.

To prepare Provincial Rifle Associations for the Palma Match, inter-provincial matches were held across the country on a postal basis. The winning team members were presented with a very handsome badge, and among my treasured trophies is such a badge, which I won while shooting for British Columbia in 1968.

I am certain that Steve would approve of the manner in which the Palma Trophy Competition has developed during the interim period.

From Peter Campbell

Proposal to amend the NRA Rule defining the Match Rifle

As the person mentioned in Richard Kenchington's article in the Winter 2002 Journal, I had hoped that someone else would have replied to his thoughts, but as no-one did then here I go.

Match Rifle (MR) is probably the most gentlemanly shooting discipline I have ever competed in although I would disagree with calling MR the Formula One of target shooting. One glance would see that F Class is becoming the fastest evolving rifle discipline; having held its first World Championship in 2002 and a second due in South Africa in 2004.

Changes to F1 motor racing are invariably done for safety purposes and largely have the aim of slowing the cars. I fear opening the floodgates to cartridge development would not necessarily be one of safety for MR. Richard speaks of those with other calibres being able immediately to compete, whilst expecting that those without would plod along with their existing calibre until barrel wear necessitated a barrel/calibre change. This assumes that MR shooters are happy to plod along in mediocrity; plainly my experience of MR shooters would dispel that assumption! There would be an arms race, where the gun-plumbers and barrel makers would be very happy and all but those with the deepest pockets would struggle to be competitive.

A comparison of the respective accuracy between .308 (MR) and 6.5x55 Ack Imp (F Class), but shot in a MR position, is easy to provide. During last Autumn's English VIII MR Meeting my MR and F Class rifle were in simultaneous use on the Sunday with three or four firing points separation. While I struggled to keep a 1 minute elevation at 1,200 yards, the F Class rifle provided a ¼ minute elevation with ease. Moving to wind estimation the wind corrections showed the 6.5mm using 25% less wind than the MR, so contrary to Richard's view that there would be no significant advantages to be gained by those moving away from .308, there plainly would be. Why would anyone want to go to the expense of re-tooling for anything less than a significant gain?

The very thing about MR, and its best selling-point, is that it is an easy discipline to enter. Many MR recruits come from TR where their eyes have given-up the uneven struggle with iron-sights and crave the sight picture telescopic sights provide. For them a change in discipline can cost as little as two or three hundred pounds with many shooting their first couple of seasons with their existing TR barrels, before taking the plunge and fitting a MR barrel. Most if not all of these would be lost were MR to move to any calibre. We are a competitive bunch after all.

Going over Richard's points one at a time:

Experimentation is being stifled.

I have never stopped experimenting - the day I stop experimenting will be the day before I quit the sport.

Change would take us from the transonic instability.

Yes, probably, but many seem to manage well as matters are now.

Wind deflections would not alter significantly.

Yes they would! The biggest disadvantage of .308" is that only the heaviest bullets give comparable drag coefficients with the 6.5s etc.

Some would change, some wouldn't.

Some would change, many would leave!

Young barrels win.

The barrel that won the English VIII Spring Meeting started that Meeting having shot 5560 rounds; young barrels win some of the time but not always.

No change to scoring.

Scoring is the one area where MR needs change. The North London have been experimenting for several years using the Palma target for MR competition, I feel this would be the way to go for MR scoring.

Near possible scores.

This would be addressed with the above answer.

Match Rifle is a great discipline, populated by a great bunch of men and women who enjoy level competition in their chosen discipline, **without** the additional expense of multitudinous calibres. At this point I should like to record a personal thanks to John de Havilland, whose personal generosity brought me into the discipline several years earlier than I had planned.

Let the discussion continue.

From Chris Hockley

Sportsworld Travel

It is not what one expects to happen at the end of a shooting tour – to be robbed and be left without passport, firearm certificate and flight tickets. The fact that this happened from a locked vehicle in downtown Auckland in broad daylight was a serious shock. Why was it the two Welshmen, you may ask, that lost their flight bags with these vital documents? Well it was all the fault of the Irishman who had hi-jacked the two to drive him to Auckland a bit early to do some shopping. The two of us had then a forced stay of 24 hours in order to get emergency passports and new flight tickets.

Anyway the real point of my letter is to say what a wonderful service was then provided by Sportsworld, our travel agent for the trip. David Freeman jumped in his car and drove from Brighton to Abingdon at 10.30 at night so that he could fax copies of our flight tickets to the numpty in Air New Zealand who would do nothing without such proof.

I cannot speak too highly of Dave Freeman's and Sportsworld's service and the fact that they have now made a breakthrough with British Airways for the carriage of extra baggage to include sports equipment means that I for one, will put future shooting tour business their way as a first port of call.

From Tom McGill

Cheshire Police Firearms Licensing Dept

On 9 January 2003, our Secretary died suddenly leaving three target rifles. I phoned the Firearms Licensing Department at Chester who requested the Club's FAC to allow the Club to acquire these rifles, as we had slots available, and within one week the new certificate was in my home.

I must say that we have always had an excellent service from this section but it is good to see that in the hour of need that they have really excelled themselves. Our most sincere thanks go to the department.

The rifles will be sold to 101 Club members and the proceeds given to his family. A very sad loss to our Club.

From Gary Clarke

Competitor Range Officers

With regard to competitor Range Officers for the Imperial Meeting I feel the situation should be reinstated where competitor range officers are given credit for duties carried out. As Range Officer duties were considered the same as marking duties in the past and as you have already paid not to have to mark, is it fair that we are not compensated when we are required to work? As all competitors have no choice but to buy out of marking, those of us who have gone to the time and personal expense of becoming qualified range officers are being penalised. Is it fair that those who don't make the effort and aren't qualified as range officers don't get any duties? Last year because I was a qualified RO and put my entry in early I received three RO duties whilst others received no duties. It may be worthwhile to let my RO qualification lapse.

From Phil Harrison

Free equipment

I have an elderly coaching communications set consisting of three stations (padded headphones/integral microphone), power units, hub and wiring (thus making it legal for FP use). It works off 1.35 volt batteries which ought still to be available, although I cannot guarantee this! It is free to anyone who wants it, as an alternative to being heaved out.

Please contact on phil@nosirrah01.freemove.co.uk.

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MEMBERS' PAGE

Pete Bloom Fund

As many of you will know, Pete Bloom has been involved in many aspects of shooting over the years. Although noted as a service rifle shooter for many years, he has been both a successful competitor and an energetic instructor, organizer and supporter in disciplines from Classic Pistol to Practical Rifle. Until recently he had served for several years as both an elected member and a Discipline Representative on the NRA Council as well as being a regular contributor to this Journal.

For some time Pete has suffered a debilitating and incapacitating illness, and now he needs our help. Pete is now in a wheelchair; his cottage needs extensive modification to enable him to retain some quality of life at home. The estimated cost is £30,000.

The Pete Bloom Fund has been set up to help speed the work required to modify Pete's home to his needs. If you wish to make a donation, please send a cheque made payable to The Pete Bloom Fund to the address below:

The Pete Bloom Fund
c/o Paul Quilliam
83 Farm View
Yateley, Hampshire, GU46 6JA

All envelopes addressed in this way will be passed unopened to the solicitors managing the fund.

NRA Probationary Courses - Can you help?

Appeal from the Shooting Administrator

The NRA Probationary Course consists of four lessons on target rifle and one on Gallery Rifle and Muzzle Loading Pistol. The lessons are usually held on a Saturday afternoon although occasionally the NRA receives requests for mid-week training. The course has become increasingly popular and has introduced forty new members to target rifle and other disciplines so far this year. However we must have a large pool of good coaches to ensure that our new members are properly trained and encouraged to develop their shooting skills.

The regular team of Probationary coaches has been enhanced this year by members of the GB U25 and the NZ 2003 team, as well as F Class and Match Rifle shooters. Their enthusiasm and expertise has been very welcome.

It is important for the future of shooting to ensure that we can continue to run probationary courses - hence this appeal. If you have coaching experience and may be able to give some time to help the development of our newest members please contact the Shooting Administrator. We are keen to recruit more coaches for target rifle, gallery rifle and muzzle loading pistol. All coaches are recompensed for their time and effort.

A Probationary Coach Briefing Day is planned for the autumn, so please register your interest by e-mailing phyllis.farnan@nra.org.uk

Journal Contributions

If there are any budding reporters or photographers out there who would like to cover any of the upcoming major events in the shooting calendar, please let the Editor know as soon as possible (*contact details are on page 1*).

Of special interest would be volunteers to cover the various aspects of the Imperial Meeting. As in previous years the report will be split up into subsections for each of the various disciplines: some disciplines, such as Gallery Rifle and Pistol, have not been covered in the past. If you feel you can rectify this or indeed do a better job than the current writers (there are only so many ways you can write "Mr A won Trophy B with a score of C"!)) then please contact the Editor.

Photographs are always welcome and will be returned to you after publication. If sending digital images, a CD of JPEGs or TIFFs is preferable but please contact the Editor before e-mailing large files.



The recent Great Britain Team to New Zealand were delighted to find this street sign on their travels: their Captain tried to remember what he did on his last visit to warrant them naming a road after him!



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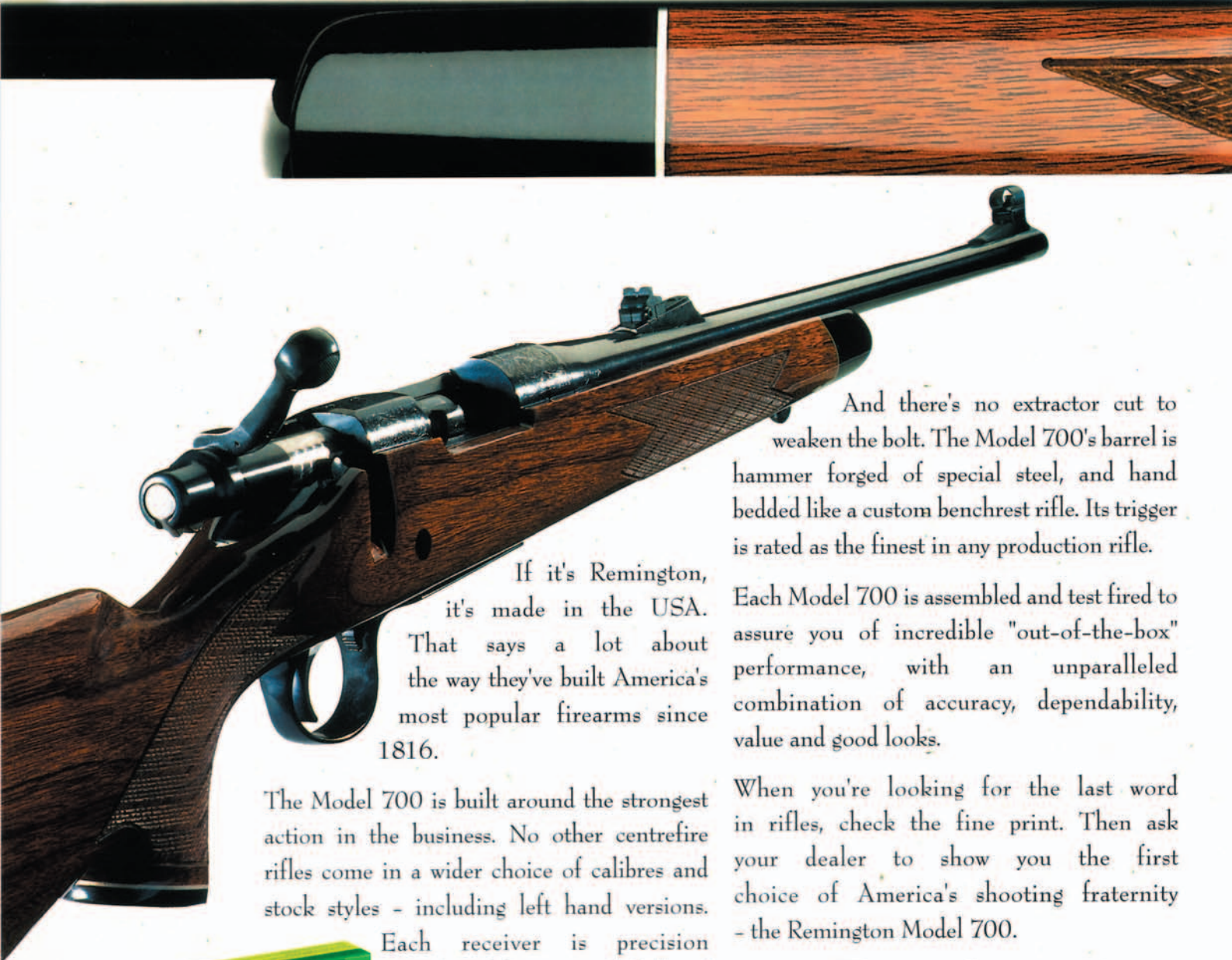
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