



# National Rifle Association Journal

Summer 2004 Volume LXXXIII Number 2





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## CONTENTS

2	Notes from the Acting Secretary
4	Notes from the Director of Shooting
8	Notes from the Managing Director of Bisley
10	Forthcoming Tours
12	Shooting Discipline Matters
16	Regional Matters
16	Medical Services at Bisley Camp
18	Introducing Glynn Alger
19	General Council and Principal Committee Attendance
20	NRA Open Day
22	Clay Pigeon Prospects
22	Ibis Rifle Club Meeting
23	Quantifying Performance
29	Chief National Coach (TR)
30	NRA Cadet Coaching Course
32	ICFRA - What is it?
34	The Three Elcho Shields
38	The England Tour to South Africa
43	Great Britain Under 25 Team to South Africa
47	Great Britain Under 19 Team to South Africa
48	Spring Into Action Weekend
50	The Entente Cordiale Match
53	Spring General Meeting
57	Obituaries
60	Letters
63	Trade Members
64	Members' Page

## ADVERTISERS INDEX

ibc	Beechwood Equipment
28	Bisley Pavilion
28	Centra
51	Norman Clark
37	Diverse Trading Company
bc	Edgar Brothers
51	ETSys Electronic Target Systems
20	A Ford
17	Gehmann UK
28	Gun and Sport Shop
37	Haring
49	HPS Target Rifles Ltd
ibc	Moonstone Systems Ltd
15	Proofmark
52	Shearwater Insurance Services
31	JH Steward (Bisley) Opticians
9	Surrey Guns
11	Andrew Tucker Jackets
13	TWP Designs
ifc	Viking Arms

Cover photos: *Something for everyone at the recent NRA Open Day.  
Photos by Karen Robertson.*

### Expected publication dates

Spring	Last week in February
Summer	Two months after the Spring General Meeting
Winter	Between end of October and second week in November

## NOTES FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY



by  
*Simon  
Dixon*

### **New Members**

We should like to extend a very warm welcome to the 120 new and probationary members who have joined the NRA so far this year with more in the pipeline.

### **Landmarc**

Discussions are ongoing with Landmarc and the MoD over the issue of increased range charges. There is considerable concern on behalf of both the NRA and Clubs regarding the level of increase. Currently the NRA, on behalf of members, is disputing the increase and, in particular, Range Warden charges. It has to be said, however, that Landmarc needs to comply with Treasury guidelines which compel them to charge a commercial rate. The current negotiating team is conscious that they must get the best deal for shooters, but inevitably Clubs must unfortunately expect to pay more than hitherto.

In future, we might all have to adjust the way we hire ranges to ensure that shooting costs do not become unmanageable. The best way may be for Clubs to act in partnership and book a range together, thus sharing the costs. I must emphasize that there has been a misconception that this cannot be done, in that the MoD will only hire exclusively to one Club at a time. This is not the case in respect of ranges, it is the hire of lanes that is exclusive. We have heard from Landmarc that they would positively encourage this approach and that they have given direction to their staff to support Clubs in this way.

As a result of the Landmarc experience, the NRA is aware that we all need to think more seriously about how we provide range facilities. To this end and with your help, the NRA will be investigating all options to ensure that the sport of shooting is safeguarded for future generations.

### **NRA Engraved Medals for Clubs**

As you will know from previous remarks by the Chairman, we are keen to encourage Clubs in as many

ways as possible. One initiative is the provision of NRA medals for use by Clubs and Associations, which could be made available at cost, for Club events and inter Club competitions. The medals would be in gold, silver and bronze colours, the obverse featuring 'Bill and Ben' (as seen on the Journal front cover) and the reverse having a wreath at the top and pre-engraved to Club requirements. We have obtained a guide price that includes engraving which works out at approximately £4.50 per medal. This also includes the estimated recovery of set up costs and the final price will be fixed depending on the likely future demand. I shall be writing to Club and Association Secretaries but, in the meantime, please do not hesitate to write to me to express interest.

### **New Trophy**

We should like to thank the Normandy Rifle Club for their donation of a trophy for long range competition in F Class.

### **NRA General Council Elections**

#### **Results**

Nominations closed on 24 April 2004. The following were elected or re-elected unopposed:

#### **Ordinary members**

KD Robertson	re-elected
JH Carmichael	re-elected
ARK Clayton	elected
MWT Walton	re-elected
There is one vacancy	

#### **Regional members**

Northern	MJM Black	elected
Yorks & Humberside	CS O'Brien	re-elected
North Western	DG Young	re-elected
Eastern	vacant	

#### **Shooting discipline members**

Target Rifle	JPS Bloomfield	elected
F Class	Dr P Monaghan	re-elected
Muzzle Loading	vacant	

### **Team Captaincies**

#### **Under 25 Team to South Africa 2004**

Congratulations to Erica McMullen and her Under 25 team on winning both of their International matches in South Africa.

#### **Forthcoming Teams**

We send our best wishes for success to:

Richard Bailie - NRA Team to the Channel Islands  
Martin Townsend - Kolapore, Bisley  
Jacqui Rankin - Under 25 Team, Bisley

### **Appointment of Team Captain**

Paul Wheeler is to be congratulated on his appointment as Team Captain for the 2005 Under 25 Team to Australia.

### **Nominations required for 2005**

I need nominations for Captains of the following teams as soon as possible please (by no later than 28 June).

2005 NRA Team to the Channel Islands

2005 GB Kolapore Team

2005 GB Under 25 Team Match - 22 July

2005 NRA vs Continental Palma Council Team at Bisley

### **General Notices**

#### **NRA Bisley General Meeting**

The 2004 Bisley General Meeting will be held in the Umbrella Tent at 9.00pm on Wednesday 21 July 2004.

#### **Imperial Meeting - General Notices Beating of Retreat**

Two Beatings of Retreat will be held this year. The first will be by the Band of the Royal Rifle Volunteers, who are the MILFORCE this year, and will be held on the evening of Saturday 3 July. The second will be held on the evening of Wednesday 7 July by the Band of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and has been arranged by the Army Rifle Association as part of the military Central Skill at Arms Meeting. Both ceremonies will take place on Exhibition Lawn. Timings, when confirmed, will be published on the Notice Board by the front door of the NRA. Please bring along as many friends as you wish to witness these splendid ceremonies.

#### **Coach Trips during the Bisley Meeting**

Once again, we thank Mrs Iris Bennett very much for making arrangements for visitors during the Bisley

Meeting to participate in coach trips to places of interest. For further information please contact Iris Bennett 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.

### **Imperial Meeting Prize Givers**

These are as follows:

ISCRM	Admiral Sir Peter Abbott GBE, KCB
TASAM	Lt General Sir John Kiszely KCB, MC
Ashburton	Major General The Duke of Westminster KG, OBE, TD, DL
Imperial	tba

### **Disciplinary findings**

Mr FJ Beardsworth has been fined £200 for breach of Rule No 4 of the Camp Standing Orders set out in Appendix 1 of the Bisley Bible.

Mr C Pocock has been fined £200 for breach of Rule No 4 of the Camp Standing Orders set out in Appendix 1 of the Bisley Bible.

### **Review of Firearms Legislation**

As I reported in the Spring Journal, we have now received the Consultation Document from the Home Office. The process is expected to take three months.

If you would like to obtain a copy, it can be downloaded from their website at:

[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/controls\\_on\\_firearms.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/controls_on_firearms.pdf)

If you have any point which you want to make, please write to the new Secretary General, Glynn Alger.

### **New Secretary General**

Although I will occasionally be going into the NRA offices until the end of May, I officially handed over to Glynn Alger on 6 May and wish him every success for the future.

## **National Shooting Centre Limited**

### **Non-Executive Director (Honorary)**

The Council is seeking a non-executive director for National Shooting Centre Limited to replace a director who is retiring. This is an opportunity for someone with proven commercial and business experience to contribute to the success of the National Rifle Association through supporting the management of Bisley.

National Shooting Centre Limited is responsible for the Association's charitable, ie target rifle and pistol shooting, activities at Bisley as well as developing trading activities for the financial benefit of the Association.

Experience in a leisure based or similar customer focussed business would be an advantage. If you are interested in this position or require further details please speak to the Managing Director, Jeremy Staples on 01483 797777 ext 133.

Please send applications to: Michael Walton, Vice-Chairman of the Council, National Rifle Association, Bisley - National Shooting Centre, Brookwood, Surrey GU24 0PB.



# NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SHOOTING



by  
*Martin  
Farnan*

## Imperial Meeting

### Fees for Visitor's Firearms Permits

A large amount of staff work is involved in processing applications for Visitor's Firearms Permits (VFPs), and all documents are sent to and from both the applicant and the Surrey Police by Registered Post. To cover these costs it has become necessary to make a small charge in addition to the obligatory fee charged by the Police. The total fee for an individual application will now be £20, and for a group permit (for a group of up to 20) will be £70.

### Free Grand Aggregate Entries

County Secretaries are reminded of the free entry to the Grand Aggregate. This should be awarded not as a prize, but to those who would not otherwise be able to attend the Imperial Meeting, and ideally to one who has not attended previously. A County Association must first clear with the NRA Secretary General any exceptional reasons for allocating the free entry.

### 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 | JM Holmes | Competitor No 175<br>(100% refund of entry fees) |
| 2nd | SJ Morton | Competitor No 43<br>(50% refund of entry fees)   |
| 3rd | JT Felton | Competitor No 19<br>(25% refund of entry fees)   |

These refunds apply to entry fees (including the 6% obligatory surcharge) only, and not to meeting membership, marker fees, sweepstakes or any other payments made on the Individual Entry Form.

### Changes

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.

### Target Rifle

The Wednesday Aggregate (formerly the RPA Aggregate) will now be sponsored by Shearwater Insurance Services Ltd. The prize list will be List A (£40, £20 & £10) in each of the four Classes X, A, O and T.

### Centennial Astor Trophy Match

This year is the centenary of the Astor County Championship, and to mark the occasion it has been agreed that those clubs which competed in 1904 and which are still in existence shall be allowed either to enter the Final on payment of the normal entry fee (whether they qualify in the First Stage or not) or to compete alongside for special commemorative medals which will be free of charge.

### McQueen

The McQueen will be shot in six series this year, each series being designated not only by title but also (as previously) by a letter. The six series will be:

McQueen A	(Issued Sniper Rifle)
McQueen B	(Target/Match Rifle)
McQueen C	(Classic Sniper Rifle)
McQueen D	(Sporting Rifle)
McQueen E	(Open Sniper Rifle)
McQueen F	(Any Rifle)

The McQueen F (Any Rifle) will be open to literally any rifle which complies with range safety regulations. A new class will be introduced, the McQueen E (Open Sniper Rifle), while the McQueen Classic will become the McQueen C (Classic Sniper Rifle). Those shooting in classes A, C and E will be eligible for the Sniper ACE Trophy generously presented by Peter Hobson, who has also presented the Selous Trophy for the McQueen F (Any Rifle). All six series will be shot on Butt 10 but will be fired at 300 yards.

The McQueen competition which 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 C (Classic Sniper Rifle) competition.

### Gallery Rifle and Pistol

Most of the Gallery Rifle and Pistol events will remain as last year, and will again be held on Melville Range from First Wednesday to Second Wednesday only. A number of new matches have been introduced and some of the qualifying scores for medals have been amended in light of the number qualifying for gold, silver and bronze medals during the last few years.

### F Class

A new trophy, generously donated by the Normandy Rifle Club, will be presented this year for long range



The Normandie Trophy presented to the NRA by the Normandy Rifle Club. *(Photo: Laurie Ingram)*

F Class shooting. I 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.

## **Rifle Safety**

### **MAB Barrels**

All firers should take note of the fact that two MAB barrels have recently failed during firing, and have split throughout the entire length of the barrel. Fortunately no-one was seriously injured, but the MAB Engineering firm have decided to recall all their cut rifle barrels made from the batch of steel concerned. A total of only 11 barrels were made from this batch, and all 11 owners have already been contacted by MAB Engineering. Should you wish to contact them their e-mail address is [jan@mab.com.au](mailto:jan@mab.com.au).

### **Rule 276**

All firers are reminded that Rule 276, ie the fact that (other than when on the firing point) a breech flag is to be inserted in a rifle if the bolt is in, applies **at all times**. If a firer intends to insert the bolt before replacing the rifle in its case then Rule 276 must be complied with, and a breech flag inserted.

## **Ranges**

### **Distance Banding on Century Range**

All firers, but particularly Club Secretaries, should take note of the fact that it is intended to introduce Distance Banding on certain weekends on Century Range in 2005. The reason is that the very large number of variations of firing practices currently requested, by clubs in particular, leads to very

inefficient use of the targets. As a consequence, large numbers of targets are unavailable since they are used as safety gaps. This often reduces the number of targets available for hire by more than 50%.

It is intended that, with effect from 26 March 2005 (the start of Summer Season) use of Century will be banded by distance, probably on reverse echelon weekends. One side of Century will be 300 yards all day and (with a suitable safety gap) the other side will be 500 yards from 8.30 to 10.20, followed by 600 yards from 10.40 to 12.30. This will be followed by a similar pattern in the afternoon, though it may be 600 yards followed by 500 yards.

Full details will be published in the Winter Journal but this early notification will allow Club Secretaries to plan for the 2005 season.

### **Snail Bullet Trap**

A Snail Bullet Trap is in the process of being installed on the right hand side of the Zero Range. This may be used for blow-off or fouling shots, running in a new barrel etc. This will therefore allow competitors to blow-off before matches during the Imperial Meeting without having to lie down on a firing point. This will make the process quicker and easier, and allow full use of the Zero Range for those wishing to check their sight settings.

### **Third Party Public Liability Insurance Cover**

Full individual members of the NRA are automatically covered by the NRA insurance policy which covers individual insurance, their equipment and also third party public liability. Members of affiliated clubs who are not individual members of the NRA, using Bisley ranges, should confirm that they are covered by their own Club's insurance policy, and that this also covers them for third party liability. If this is not the case then the names of those firers who are not covered for third party liability must be given to the Range Office before firing commences. They will then be covered by a special policy taken out by the NRA.

### **Compliance with the Firearms Act**

A number of instances have recently been observed where parents have been letting their children (or firers have been letting their friends) 'have a go' with their firearms on days which were not designated Guest or Open Days. You are reminded that this practice is in contravention of the Firearms Act and is illegal. The parent or firer concerned could well have his or her FAC revoked as a consequence, and this has already happened within the past 12 months. Please be aware that letting others (without FACs) 'have a go' is forbidden by law, and do not do so.

### **Insurance of Club Officials and Club Markers**

Club Secretaries should be aware that if they are supplying their own markers or range officials, these should be included in the Club insurance policy taken

out by the Club. They are not covered by the NRA insurance policy (since they are not acting on behalf of the NRA). In cases where Clubs appoint their own officials or markers they are advised to take out "Optional Extension (E) – Employers' Liability Insurance" as part of their insurance package with Graham Brown Insurers.

### **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 have been booked.

### **Payment of Markers**

For the avoidance of doubt I should like to confirm that if shooting has to be curtailed or cancelled for any reason outside the NRA's control (for example wind or other extreme weather, or fire in the danger area) all markers, who have been booked by the NRA on behalf of any club or individual, will still be paid for the duty for which they were booked. Not to do so would be effectively breaking a contract with the marker(s) concerned.

For this reason those clubs or individuals who have booked markers will still be required to pay for them. The NRA may reduce or cancel the target hire charge(s) depending on the reason for the curtailment or cancellation of shooting.

### **Cancellations by Clubs if Markers are not Available**

All Clubs and individuals have been made aware, on many occasions, that markers are in exceedingly short supply. We have recently taken a number of steps to try to improve the situation, and we are hopeful that the problem may be reduced. However it will always remain a possibility that insufficient markers may be available to cover the requirements when the allocations are made in the Range Office on Wednesday afternoon.

If it appears likely that some clubs will have reduced numbers of markers at the weekend, the Range Office will make every attempt to contact the Club(s) concerned on the telephone numbers supplied by the Club. This will be done commencing on the Thursday morning, but it cannot be guaranteed that contact will be made. Since Clubs have had ample warning that there is a shortage of markers, the normal cancellation fees will apply to any club which then cancels its booking for this reason.

### **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 their safety or competence 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 in 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.

### **The 2004 Ages Match**

The 2004 Ages Match will be held over the weekend 30/31 October 2004. It is intended that teams will be of 16 firers, and the proposed match conditions are a Queen's II on Saturday afternoon followed by a Palma course of fire on Sunday. The suggested age brackets, which may be adjusted depending on entries received, are:

- a under 25 years of age;
- b between 25 and 35 years of age;
- c between 35 and 45 years of age;
- d between 45 and 55 years of age;
- e between 55 and 65 years of age;
- f over 65 years of age.

Those who wish to be considered for the appropriate team, dependent on age, should write to me giving their full name, contact details, date of birth and whether you would be prepared to Captain or be an officer of the appropriate team.

### **2003 Overseas Postal TR Match**

It was unfortunate that there was only one entry for this match in 2003 (the Kenya Regiment Rifle Club) and regrettably the trophy and medals cannot be awarded this year. Overseas Club Secretaries are encouraged to enter this match for the Lord Wakefield Trophy, and full conditions will be forwarded to those clubs which request them.

### **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 Deputy Director of Shooting 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 Deputy Director of Shooting 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 which are affiliated to the NRA are again reminded that all range bookings made by them are subject to VAT, unlike bookings made by Clubs. The reason is 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 no record of their attendance during the previous twelve months 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 (makes and serial numbers) to allow for the easy completion of the card.

## **Notes from the Deputy Director of Shooting**

### **NRA Open Day**

The second NRA Open Day for 2004 will take place on Saturday 4 September at Bisley. Please note this date, advertise it to your friends and acquaintances and bring them along to have a go at air rifle, gallery rifle, fullbore target rifle, F Class rifle, McQueen sniper rifle, black powder pistol, archery, clay pigeon and laser clays. Volunteers to coach and assist at this enjoyable event will be required; why not help out for a half day and spend the other half enjoying the activities on offer. If you can assist in any way please contact the Deputy Director of Shooting 01483 797777 ext 150 or e-mail [phyllis.farnan@nra.org.uk](mailto:phyllis.farnan@nra.org.uk). Details of the hugely successful Open Day held on 1 May can be found on page 20.

### **Courses**

Training courses at Bisley are normally only run from September - April and, with the exception of the Probationary members course, the course season is now closed. Regional courses however are not affected and continue throughout the year.

### **TR Club Instructor's Course**

The next course will be 25 and 26 September.

### **RCO Courses**

One day RCO courses will be held at Bisley on 25 and 26 September, and on 30 October 2004. Proposed dates for courses in 2005 will be advised in the next Journal.

### **GBTSF Club Coach Course**

A GBTSF Club Coach Course takes place over two weekends and the next course is planned for 25 - 26 September and 23 - 24 October.

Please note that courses can only be run if there are sufficient numbers of applicants. Applications for all the above courses should be made to the Deputy Director of Shooting 01483 797777 ext 150 or e-mail [phyllis.farnan@nra.org.uk](mailto:phyllis.farnan@nra.org.uk).

### **NRA Probationary Membership Courses**

The next course, due to begin on 22 May, is fully subscribed. New probationary courses will start again in September. Please note that enquiries about Probationary Membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary 01483 797777 ext 138 or e-mail [heather.webb@nra.org.uk](mailto:heather.webb@nra.org.uk).

# NOTES FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BISLEY



by  
*Jeremy  
Staples*

## **Short Siberia Access Road**

Planning has finally been received from Surrey Heath Council (subject to a number of conditions) for the link road between Century and Short Siberia together with a car park at 300 yards.

The tree felling was completed in time to meet the restrictions placed on us by English Nature and the base of the road has now been completed. One of the conditions of the planning was that the road surface should meet the approval of both Surrey Wildlife Trust and English Nature. Extensive research has been carried out to identify an inert/neutral surface. It appears that Fittleworth Stone may meet the requirements and I am hopeful that this road will be completed within the next four weeks. Our thanks are due to Peter Hobson of Hobson Industries for his generous donation towards the costs of the construction of this important project.

## **Short Siberia Range**

The additional target frames are due to be delivered very shortly and we expect them to be in place by the end of May at the latest. Work is also being undertaken on the 200 yards firing point and we are confident that the three extra targets will prove to be very popular.

## **Estate**

Discussions have continued with Guildford Borough Council in respect of the possible extension of the caravan season. It appears that the earliest approval for caravans goes back to 1965 and there have been numerous applications since this date. The Planning Officer has suggested that we submit a formal planning application to seek approval to extend the caravan season. This will be submitted within the next few weeks.

If this planning consent is forthcoming, we can then look at the possibility of obtaining planning consent to provide additional seasonal chalet buildings on the Estate if there is demand.

## **Ablution Blocks**

A number of the staff have worked very hard over the winter period to refurbish and redecorate some of the ablution blocks. Early reports from our members also

indicate that the cleaning is much improved from last year and hopefully this can continue throughout the season.

## **Disabled Rifle Shooting at Bisley**

I read with interest the article in the Spring Journal by RJ Taylor in respect of disabled shooting at Bisley. We are certainly looking into access for wheelchairs on Short Siberia and to the benches at 1000 yards. Arrangements have been put in hand to install light sensor switches in all disabled toilets on the Estate.

The new car park at 300 yards on Century should also help disabled access onto the ranges. If any other shooters have any suggestions as to how we can improve facilities then please do not hesitate to let me have further information.

## **Clays**

The clay ranges continue to be very heavily used and I am pleased to report that we are hosting four major CPSA events, including the English Open and the Down The Line Selection Shoot, during the course of the next few months together with two BTCTSF Grand Prix shoots. In addition there are County meetings occurring on almost every other weekend. A large marquee has been acquired and will be erected to the rear of the Clay Pavilion to house the competitors on the busy weekends.

In addition a new generator has been purchased and will be located adjacent to the Clay Pavilion in order to provide a back-up should there be an electrical power failure during a major competition, such as occurred last year.

Finally, due to an increased demand for tuition we have acquired two additional traps and will run 'have a go' or tuition in the area below layout 5 during the busy periods.

## **Staff**

I am very pleased to welcome Michael Lucking into the Range Office as a replacement for Howard Dixon.

Stan Markovic has joined our team in the Target Shed, which is now fully staffed and busy producing targets for the remainder of the season.



Hobson's Way - the new road in its final stages of construction.



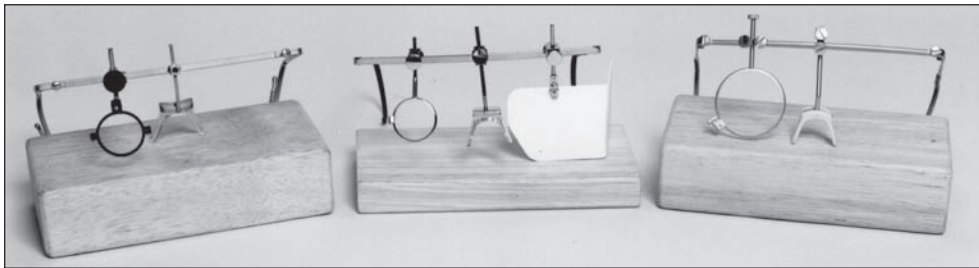
# LOOK AT IT THIS WAY . . .



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## FORTHCOMING TOURS

### **Great Britain Rifle Team - Palma Match 2007**

I am pleased to announce that John Webster, Jeremy Langley and Nicholas Hinchliffe have accepted my invitation to be Vice-Captain, Adjutant and Main Coach respectively of the Great Britain Rifle Team that will contest the Palma Match at Connaught Ranges, Ottawa, Canada in August 2007.

In order to retain the Palma Trophy won by Great Britain at Bisley in 2003, it will be necessary to select the strongest possible team. I therefore intend to form a new Palma Training Squad early in 2005, from which the Palma Team will ultimately be selected. I do not anticipate that the squad will exceed 50 in number.

I expect to invite a small number of individuals who have previously proven their abilities as a firer or coach in a Palma Team to join either the Squad or the Team directly.

I also particularly wish to encourage the development of the next generation of shooters and coaches who have the potential to win a place on future Great Britain or Palma Teams. The Palma Squad will therefore include six places, for one coach and five shooters, reserved for those under 25 years of age on 1 September 2004. These reserved places will not preclude any under 25 shooter or coach from being allocated on merit one of the remaining 44 'open' places available on the squad.

Anyone who wishes to be considered for a place on the Palma Squad should write to me, as soon as

possible, but **not later than 1 September 2004**. Applications should include a **brief** shooting CV, with emphasis on their team shooting experience, and stating if the application is for a shooting, coaching or one of the reserved under 25 places.

John Bloomfield  
Unit 2 Tan Gallop, The Welbeck Estate  
Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S80 3LW

### **Great Britain Under 25 Team to Australia 2005**

I am delighted to have been honoured with the captaincy of the Great Britain Under 25 Team to Australia in 2005.

The tour is likely to be three weeks long with provisional dates of 13 June - 3 July. The estimated cost will be around £2500 before sponsorship and fund raising. This cost is high for under 25s so I am looking for team members to raise at least £1000 each in sponsorship to help subsidise this.

My aim is to take a mixture of experience in the team, with some places reserved for new caps. Applications must be received before 10 July. Please state if you have applied for the full GB tour to Australia in your application.

Paul Wheeler  
65 Henry St, Kenilworth  
Warwickshire, CV8 2HL  
E-mail: [aus05@gbu25.org.uk](mailto:aus05@gbu25.org.uk)

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*Glyn Barnett, Bisley 2002*

***Congratulations to Glyn on his 2003 Queen's Prize!***



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# SHOOTING DISCIPLINE MATTERS

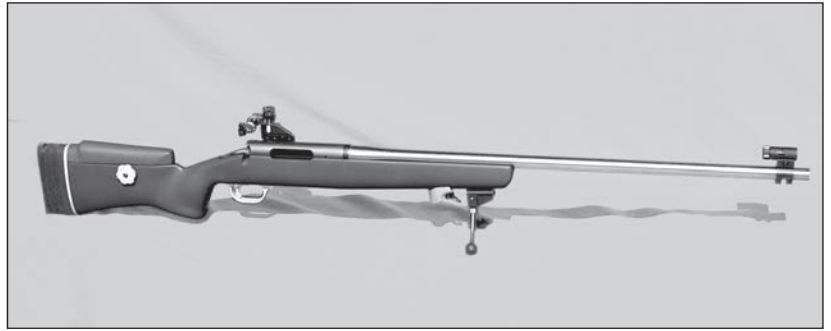
## F Class

by Paul Monaghan

### Issued Ammunition F Class

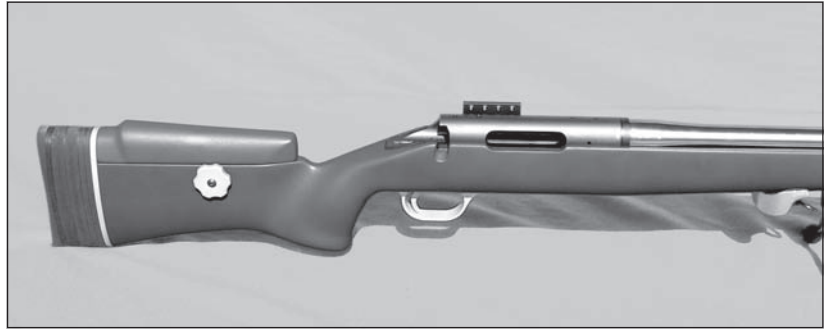
There have been suggestions floating around that F Class has been 'hijacked by benchresters'. Nothing could be further from the truth and it is fair to say that the number of ex-benchresters regularly shooting F Class is extremely small. What has happened is that a number of shooters have taken the opportunity, given by a set of rules that are not a complete straightjacket on rifles and ammunition, to see what can be done as far as accuracy goes. There are some who spend money and there are some who quietly and carefully take their basic rifle, optimise their ammunition and learn how to shoot their rifle when it is rested. There is no direct correlation between the amount of money spent and the results obtained. In words of (nearly) one syllable - you do not have to spend a fortune to win at F Class. Where there is a clear advantage is between those who really work at optimising their shooting technique and their rifle and ammunition combination and those who don't. That's how to win! Damn! I've let the cat out of the bag.

So to those who are undecided, the chance is there, from this year's Imperial Meeting onwards, to give F Class a try and show how good you are. In addition to the familiar F Class you can now enter F Class with issued ammunition. You will be shooting only against competitors with the same calibre and ammunition characteristics. If you don't win, as long as your barrel is not to blame, it is you. Your ability to shoot a rifle off a rest or bipod (and there is an art to this technique; different rifles like different techniques – at least that is my experience) and to judge the wind determine your results. So you only have a Target Rifle? Just follow the easy steps shown here and you will have turned it into a winning F Class rifle. In fact you can shoot F Class exactly as you would a Target Rifle - sling, aperture sights and all. Where you would lose out over the telescope sighted rifles is the ability to aim off, particularly when you see the mirage start to run whilst you are on aim. You can also fine tune your group to keep it right in the centre of the V bull. So let us take a Target Rifle and see what we can do.



### Step 1

Take a Target Rifle with standard aperture sights. Remove both and place at the back of your cupboard. You won't be needing them again. Remember, F Class is fun.



### Step 2

Add a rail and telescope sight. This does not have to cost the equivalent of a small car, but quality does pay off here in the long run. Look for a second-hand Weaver, or similar, with a minimum of x14 magnification. More magnification is better but only if the optics are of good quality. At the upper end, Leupold and Nightforce seem to be the most popular at the moment. If undecided, it might be worth asking advice.



### Step 3

Add a means of resting the fore-end. Bipod or front rest; the choice is yours, but if the fore-end is rounded, it will tend to roll around in a front rest. A bipod would be the simple choice. If you insist on a front rest (and the best have windage adjustment – sheer luxury) then you can buy or make a fitment to give the fore-end a flat base, or you could, of course, re-stock the barrelled action. Sorry, I was supposed to keep the cost down, but you should know the options.





#### Step 4

Finally you have to buy a rear bag. No choice here as the best are superb. Bald Eagle or Protector bags with 'bunny ears' are the sort of thing you need. The trick is to set up the rifle on the front rest or bipod with the crosshairs just above the V bull. When on aim, all you do is gently squeeze the body of the bag and the crosshairs can be eased down to exactly where you want in the V bull. Last two shots just above the waterline, but not enough to need a quarter minute change on the telescope? Just ease the next shot an eighth of a minute below the waterline. It's that easy. Try Sinclair International in the US ([www.sinclairintl.com](http://www.sinclairintl.com)) for rear bags and while you are there take a look at their new F Class stocks and interesting-looking F Class bipods. Buy now whilst the dollar is cheap.

#### Step 5

This is up to you. Turn up and shoot, or actually get down to some testing. Shoot some groups at 200 yards. What size groups can you regularly shoot? Custom rifles must shoot under half minute groups to be sure of being in the money. This is not one group, but regularly. Refine your hold on the rifle and practice getting the rest or bipod firmly settled. What group sizes should you expect from issued ammunition with a rested rifle? You tell me after the Meeting. There's plenty of scope for bragging. In fact, I had a brief excursion with RG last year and it performed remarkably well.

Finally, just like the 'terms and conditions apply' bit in the advertisements which no-one believes, you could revert to TR by reversing steps 4 to 2.

Thanks to Colin Shorthouse and Fultons of Bisley for help with the photography.

#### F Class takes up the long distance challenge

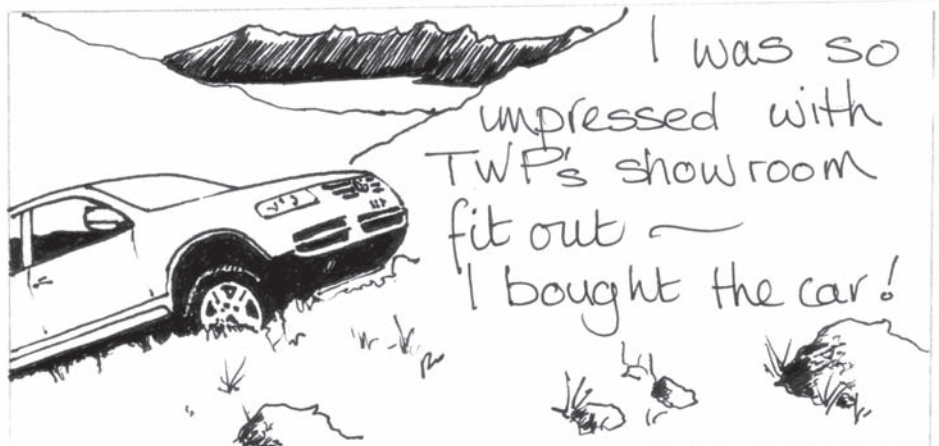
This year for the first time, the Match Rifle (MR) championship - the Hopton - is open to F Class shooters with four days of really challenging shooting out to 1200 yards. In MR the calibre is restricted to .308 Win, the barrel weight is restricted to 5.5 lbs - no-one seems to know why 5.5 exactly, it is lost in the mists of time perhaps, but most are happy to leave things as they are - and the rifle can be shot with the hand under the fore-end rested. The rifle must **not** touch the rest. The reason for this is the fact that MR can be shot prone or in the back or Creedmore position. This looks like a form of torture, but gives a remarkable stable gun platform. Prone shooters have the rested hand in an attempt to give equal support to both shooting styles. Sadly the number of 'backgunners' is slowly dwindling and with it one of the more interesting parts of competition rifle history. The standard of MR shooting is improving all the time, so the chance to try F Class rifles at 1000, 1100 and 1200 yards against some of the best in the country is one not to be missed (except for those of us who shoot MR as well as F Class).

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## Classic Arms

by Rae Wills

This is the time of the year when I veer between sublime confidence and absolute panic getting ready for the coming season, not least assembling the Programme for the Historic Imperial Arms Meeting to be held on 10 and 11 July.

The Programme is now printed and all who requested a copy or competed in either this Meeting or the Trafalgar Meeting last year should have received a copy; it will also be available from the NRA. If the technology does not defeat me, it will also be available on the NRA website.

There are no great changes from last year, but there is a new format for the Sunday afternoon. General shooting practice has only been partially successful, so this year there will be a series of team and individual competitions and I hope this will be popular. Matches will include a team of four volley fire, sniper pairs (modified McQueen), and an individual fixed bayonet match.

When constructing such a programme the question arises as to whether all competitions should be to a standard formula, or to create individual variations. If to an unchanging formula, such as the NRA McQueen or the HBSA Fixed Bayonet, everyone knows exactly what to expect, but that can get boring, and not all rules suit everyone.

So I have taken the plunge and settled on variations and new ideas. So the Fixed Bayonet will be a deliberate shoot, five rounds without the bayonet and five with; of course, you do know your change of impact? Please bring your own bayonet, and be prepared to lend it to others to have a go.

The Sniper Pairs will be as the standard McQueen, but two firers and two targets each exposure. Just be sure you each know which one to hit, as there must be no more than ten hits on one target!

Pete Bloom was our Match Director, and it would be very remiss if we did not include some event to give thanks for all the work he did for us and Classic shooting. Accordingly there will be a modified pool bull competition; a prize has been donated, and all entry fees will be donated to the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Association Forces Fund, a charity chosen by his family.

I may not have accepted all their ideas, but thanks particularly go to Mark Hodgins of HBSA and Richard Seddon of LERA, and all others who gave their time to help me plan these events.

The Spring HBSA Rook and Rabbit competition, at Bisley on 4 April, had a full house of just under thirty competitors, and scores were of a very high standard.

There has been an increasing interest in this class of rifle in the last few years; they come in many varieties, are capable of good accuracy, and can usually be used on any gallery rifle range. Unfortunately the supply is limited and prices have accordingly risen, but ordinary examples are still affordable.

Having now sorted good loads, I took my 'repro' 32/20 and my best trial, fully supported, was four shots in 3/4" at 50 metres; it can now perform far better than I can shoot. My competition score was not an utter disgrace, but I found sitting with your feet only a little below the level of your seat was as well supported as a jelly on springs; funny, it used to be like a rock! Standing, I did not know a lightweight rifle could weigh so much.

An advance notice: the Classics Sub Committee will meet on Friday 9 July (the day before IHAM) at Bisley with a provisional time of 5pm. Letters will be sent to the usual members, but anyone interested should get in touch with me.

On 12 May I will be attending the FESAC Congress, with Roger Cook of the HBSA, at Lyon in France. FESAC is the European organisation which represents all with interests in historic arms be they collectors, shooters, museums, or re-enactment groups.

There are many threats still to our interests, such as possible UN restrictions on the international transfer of arms between individuals, or rationalisation of firearms laws throughout Europe; this might seem a good idea, but it might be the end of our very useful obsolete cartridge list definition of antique firearms, and restrictions on military calibres, such as has been in France for many years.

Anyone who wishes to find out more, or has any matter they feel should be addressed, please contact me.

### Special Events alongside the Historic Arms Meeting

Throughout the first weekend of the Imperial Meeting, the South London Rifle Club are arranging a Trade Fair in the Umbrella Tent with all proceeds being donated to the National Shooting Centre. Although initially small, it is hoped that this will grow into a significant date in the calendar for the collector and shooter of Historic Arms. Trade stands already booked will display a wide range of collectable and shootable arms from flintlock to fifties (1950s), accessories, books and memorabilia.



## 300 Metres

by Ian Shirra-Gibb

The season got underway on Sunday 21 March with the testing of the new electronic systems; apart from a few minor teething problems, all was well and most of the squad experienced the future of fullbore shooting at Bisley.

The end of March saw the NRA team in France for the bi-annual match against Clermont. The result over the two days was a win for the NRA A team with top individual score from the two shoots coming from Simon Aldhouse with 1193. The return match will be in mid October.

The season's international matches started earlier this month with the Italian Grand Prix in Tolmezzo, which will be followed a month later by the Swiss Grand Prix in Thun. Results will be posted to the squad website at [www.gb300m.com](http://www.gb300m.com).

### STOP PRESS

#### Italian Gold for Aldhouse

Simon Aldhouse won the prone section of the Italian Grand Prix in the first of the Europa Cup events in Tolmezzo, Italy, to claim the first international gold medal in his 300 metres career. He and Roberto Facheris of Italy, ended level with 598 out of 600 - a score that equalled his personal best - but Aldhouse had a perfect 200 in his final 20 shots to beat the Italian on countback.

#### Results from the NRA 300 Metres Championships held on 15 and 16 May

##### Standard/TR Rifle 60 shots prone

1 M Pugsley	96	94	97	98	100	99	584
2 J Musso	96	97	98	94	96	96	577
3 A Campbell	96	95	93	96	95	98	573

##### Free Rifle 60 shots prone

1 A Campbell	97	97	99	100	100	99	592
2 S Aldhouse	98	97	99	97	99	98	588
3 G Hawarth	97	99	100	98	97	97	588

Prone Aggregate	Std	Free	Total
1 A Campbell	573	592	1165
2 M Pugsley	584	578	1162
3 J Musso	577	575	1152



Simon Aldhouse wins Gold in Italy.

### Gallery Rifle and Pistol

#### Gallery Rifle at the NSRA August Meeting

Those who shoot Gallery Rifle will be interested to note that during the Miniature Rifle part of the first weekend (14/15 August) there are precision matches (prone and standing) for which centre-fire gallery rifles are eligible.

This year there is also a special award for the traditional Rook and Rabbit rifle alongside the well-established courses for Target, Sporting and Schutzen (offhand target) rifles in various datelined matches.

Details are in the current edition of the Rifleman or from the NSRA on request.

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## REGIONAL MATTERS

### Eastern Region

by Guy Bartle

Glyn Barnett has finally beaten his Thetford Range hoodoo to win the Norfolk County Rifle Association open fullbore rifle meeting.

Having been dogged by below-par performances at one or other of the 300, 500 and 600 yards distances in previous years, the double Queen's Prize winner was finally able to keep it all together to wrest the trophy from his close friend and rival, Ant Ringer.

The overcast sky offered little in the way of wind to put off the competitors, with the occasional swirl doing just enough to push the unwary out of the bullseye. Five shooters put all ten shots into the middle at 300 yards, with Nick Haley and Doug Keeble from Suffolk scoring 50.4 and 50.5 respectively. East Rudham farmer Ringer went into third with a 50.6, while Barnett's 50.7 just edged Lincolnshire's Brian Hayes - with the same score - into second by dint of a better finishing string of shots.

At 500 yards, another six possibles were attained. Haley got his second with a 50.3, while Longham's Ed Wood made up for a slow start with a 50.6. Barnett ended up in a four shot countback for third after both he and Les King of Essex made 50.7. A similar situation occurred for the top two positions between

Ringer and Ron Large, the former's 50.8 with a four V bull finish capturing the laurels from the man from Essex.

Haley, Barnett and Ringer all went into the 600 yards range with no points dropped. As the clouds parted and introduced the first real wind of the day some extra spice was added to the event as Ringer and Barnett were squadded together on the same target and sharing a total of 100 and 14 V bulls. The ability to see exactly what the other was scoring - and then to have to match it themselves - added to the pressure on the pair. Ringer was the first to make an error, squirting his third shot into the inner after two successive V bulls. The advantage swung back his way when Barnett dropped his sixth into the inner - but while the latter had a couple of ordinary bull fives in his tally, Ringer had been keeping to the central V bull. He looked to be on his way to retaining the title he won last year, until he popped his very last shot out for a 48.7. With Haley having a torrid time of it, Barnett's 49.7 gave him the crown. He did not win the 600 yards range prize though - Wood blindsided them both and scored the only 50, containing seven V bulls.

Ringer's aggregate of 148.21 put him second behind Barnett's 149.21, with Wood finishing third scoring 147.18.

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## MEDICAL SERVICES AT BISLEY CAMP

by Nick Jeffs

As many of you know, my colleagues and I have for some years been providing an emergency medical service, during the Imperial Meeting. This service is intended mainly to stabilise seriously ill people before their transfer to hospital. However, we have also provided advice and treated minor ailments and injuries. One of the things that hampered our work has been the lack of a place to examine patients. In response to our requests, a first aid post is being created at the back of the Fulton's block. This will enable us to see and treat patients in privacy rather than on the committee room table of the North London! It will also give us a place to store emergency equipment.

The medical service on Camp is not meant to provide a free and convenient second opinion on long standing ailments. The doctors who provide it are trained in the resuscitation of seriously ill patients. They are not trained in General Practice, physiotherapy or psychiatry! However, as a service to shooters, we will avoid sending people for a long wait in the local Accident and Emergency department if we can. We are able to dispense simple drugs and issue private prescriptions which will be honoured at the chemist in Bisley village. Any drugs issued on Camp will be charged at cost; private prescriptions are charged by the chemist. If you are attending the Meeting, remember to bring an adequate supply of your regular prescription medicines. You would be *amazed* at the price of some of the asthma inhalers, for example.

We are looking for volunteers to spread the load and broaden our area of expertise. If you would like to help, please get in touch with me via the NRA. You must have your own medical indemnity cover and they must be informed that you are undertaking this sort of work. General Practitioners and A&E doctors would be particularly welcome.

Stay well!



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302: eyeshield combined sideshield £20  
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342: clip-on individual colour filters £19

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3-colour push-fit filter set £32



**373:**  
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# INTRODUCING GLYNN ALGER - NRA SECRETARY GENERAL

by Tony de Launay

It may be something of a change to find someone without a military background in this role, the equivalent of the traditional Association Secretary's post. We have had RAF, Army and Navy ranks but never before a policeman.

Glynn Alger served with the Surrey Police for some 30 years, during that time achieving the rank of Superintendent. Among his duties over the years were operational firearms and certain security matters – of which one cannot write! Age 52, he now steps into a very different pair of shoes.

He is no stranger to Bisley. Quite apart from the fact that the national shooting headquarters lay in his patch, he held the security brief for the 2002 Commonwealth Games, masterminding and implementing the stringent security requirements that surrounded the event. That it was complicated was obvious, but his sympathetic approach certainly contributed to making the pistol and rifle shooting events such a memorable success.

He has an empathy with the lot of the target shooting civilian, indeed as a policeman he is among those members of the police force that understand and sympathise with our sporting shooting. "In reality it is one of the safest sports of all because of the discipline required and imposed to eliminate the potential dangers that it embraces" he comments.

All of which makes him a powerful ally to have in post as Secretary General. So what are his priorities? "My brief is clear. I will be concentrating hard on building up the services offered by the NRA to our members and affiliates. We have to increase the numbers who come to sports shooting across all the disciplines". Does that mean those disciplines may need to change to help themselves? "Yes – some of the more recent disciplines have the potential to be among the most popular sporting activities in the country. It is an entirely open and almost ageless sport".



He immediately identifies the need to offer a clear and constructive structure for youth membership. "We have to promote a path for those leaving school or the cadet force to continue their activity through the early years in which they are earning their living or going through further education. If we can do that we stand a much better chance of broadening our membership base for the future. In particular we need to examine our own structures to provide more support outside Bisley, whether through action from the centre or by helping those at county or regional level to deal with local issues themselves".

It is a substantial agenda by any measurement. He realises that sporting shooting has become a touch introspective after the battering that it has received in recent years, and that a more open face will be necessary with the media. "We coined the term High Touch in my previous existence", he said. "It simply means that you achieve more if you meet face to face". That is something he will be doing and encouraging in the months to come. He is looking forward to meeting the members.

---

## NRA Aunts and Uncles Scheme – July 2004

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, county, association, club, school or unit shooting TR or F Class who would like help during the Imperial Meeting. It is **not** restricted to less experienced firers and novices. Indeed, an increasing number of experienced shots are availing themselves of the scheme.

If anyone would like to have an Aunt or an Uncle to help over shooting matters exclusively, do please get in touch with me preferably by e-mail.

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. If 2003 is

anything to go by, and despite the increasing number of groups who now run their own schemes, I am going to need all the help I can get.

Finally, I have completely revised the annually updated Guide for First-timers at Bisley, creating a version for cadet or school shooters and one for others. If anyone would like a copy, then please let me know. Copies sent by e-mail come from me and hard copy versions come from the NRA; both are free.

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Mobile: 07932 706171  
E-mail: tje@easynet.co.uk



# ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND PRINCIPAL COMMITTEES 2003/2004

**by Ordinary, Regional and Discipline Members of the General Council  
from 1 September 2003 to 31 March 2004**

No of meetings	General Council 2	Shooting 2	Membership 3	
Bailie HRM	1	x	2	(R)
Barnard GV	2	2	3	(R)
Bartle GD	1	x	0	(R)
Belither S	0	x	x	(O)
Bellringer JEM	0	0	x	(D)
Bennett ID	2	x	3	(O)
Bloomfield JPS	1	x	x	(O)
Brooks CM*	2	x	x	(O)
Calvert DP	2	1	x	(O)
Campbell-Smith AR	0	0	x	(D)
Carmichael JH	1	2	x	(O)
Clarke G	1	x	x	(O)
Coley PR	1	x	0	(R)
Fyfe NCM	0	x	0	(R)
Gray PS	0	x	0	(R)
Horrocks AR	2	1	0	(O)
Hunter P	1	1	x	(D)
James S	2	x	x	(O)
Jeffs NG*	0	x	3	(O)
Kidner TLW	0	x	0	(R)
Kynoch JM	0	2	2	(D)
Law CD	2	x	3	(R)
McAllister JA	0	x	x	(O)
Monaghan P	1	1	x	(D)
O'Brien CS*	2	2	0	(R)
Oliver-Bellasis CAJ*	2	x	x	(O)
Player G	0	0	x	(D)
Quilliam PF	1	1	0	(R)
Robertson KD	2	x	3	(O)
Shirra Gibb I	2	1	x	(D)
Thompson JMA	2	x	x	(O)
Walton MWT*	2	x	x	(O)
Watson J	2	x	0	(O)
Wills RHF	1	2	x	(D)
Young DG	0	x	3	(R)

\* = Members of the Council (Board of Trustees). The Council meet at least eight to nine times per annum and its members are expected to attend all or most of such meetings. In addition, Trustees give attendance at other times for formal decisions.

x = not a member of that committee

(O) = Ordinary Member  
(R) = Regional Member  
(D) = Discipline Member

# NRA OPEN DAY SATURDAY 1 MAY

by Phyllis Farnan

Under Home Office regulations the NRA may apply for permission to run up to two Open Days each year. NRA Open Days, which can only be run at Bisley, allow members of the public to turn up on the day and, after registration, they are able to try a variety of different disciplines and learn more about target shooting under one-to-one safety supervision. It is a great opportunity to raise awareness amongst non-shooters, so that they gain a better general understanding of what target shooting is all about. They can also learn a little about the history of the NRA and ultimately they may be encouraged to join a club, thus bringing more people into the shooting sports.

This year it was decided to try to run one Open Day in May and a second Open Day in September. The National Shooting Centre made a deliberate decision to 'go local' with the first of these two days and try to raise awareness of the NRA and Bisley within the immediate area. Therefore, in the weeks beforehand, a press release was published in 'What's On in Woking' and a leaflet drop to all homes in the Woking area via the community newspaper was arranged. Posters were also displayed in local shops and businesses. NRA members were informed through the NRA Journal, the membership e-mail system and flyers. Clubhouses at Bisley were asked to display notices about the Open Day.

Much thought and preparation was given to try to make the day a unique experience for people. So it was with some despondency that we watched and listened to the gloomy weather forecasts during the preceding week. On cue the promised rain and storms arrived and threatened a wash out. However, Saturday morning dawned overcast, but dry and as the doors opened at 9.00am a steady trickle of guests arrived.

The numbers of visitors grew steadily throughout the day so that by the end 398 members of the public had registered to shoot. Many families brought children with them and although some were too young to shoot

on Melville or Century, they were able to take part in the Open Day air rifle, laser clay and archery events.

After registration in the main NRA Offices, guests were able follow the yellow signs around camp to the different venues. On Century Range the visitors could try a variety of fullbore rifles; they could choose between a telescopic sniper rifle firing at a McQueen castle target or modern target rifles at 300 yards or they could go back in time with the Lee Enfield Rifle Association and the Historical Breechloading Shooters Association. Several guests who had war-time or National Service experience expressed their delight at being able to see and try a Lee Enfield again. The display tent at the back of the range also proved to be a very popular attraction.

On Melville Range visitors could experience the fun of firing the muzzle loading black powder pistols, .22" gallery rifles and .22" target rifles. We are grateful to the members of the Brighton Rifle and Pistol Club who provided most of the coaches for this range. Melville was busy all day with many guests buying more tickets for extra shoots.

Winans Range was used for air rifle and was very popular especially with the younger shooters. This range was set up at short notice as we had originally expected to have one of the NSRA portable air ranges. Our thanks go to Les Gay and the NRA coaches who were drafted in and who managed this event so successfully.

The Shotgun Range and the NCSC Pavilion proved to be a great attraction with many guests, while both young and old were able to have fun with the laser clays. The Bisley Bowmen, who ran the archery event on Exhibition Lawn, reported record numbers and they continued long after the ranges had closed for the day as many guests continued to queue to 'have a go'. The NRA Museum and the display of NRA silver trophies were also popular with many visitors.

Although the intention had been to target the local community on this Open Day, a glance at the registration forms shows that many guests travelled considerable distances. We attracted visitors not only from all over Surrey but also from Hampshire, Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Buckinghamshire Hertfordshire, West Sussex, Gloucestershire, London, Kent, Staffordshire, Yorkshire, Wales and Scotland.

The next Open Day will be on Saturday 4 September when we will do it all again; we are currently planning to have even more activities available, so please make a note of the date, tell your friends and acquaintances and help to make the next Open Day an even bigger success.

Right: Scenes from the NRA Open Day. (Photos: Karen Robertson)

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## CLAY PIGEON PROSPECTS AT WELLINGTON COLLEGE

A new initiative at Wellington College is the opportunity for all second year boys to do some clay pigeon shooting. Throughout the Michaelmas and Lent terms, a group of ten boys each week are taken to Bisley to learn how to handle a shotgun and to do some DTL and Trap shooting with NCSC coaches David Dale and Ian White. Under the auspices of the Combined Cadet Force, the students have an initiation shoot, learning safety rules and basic principles on their first visit and, a week later on their final training visit, they learn to shoot further disciplines. Most boys are very keen and easily fill vacant places so that they visit for a third or more shoots.

For those who were particularly keen and successful, it is proposed that they will join the college clay shooting team for a weekly visit during the summer term and further coaching to higher levels of the sport.

The Master in Charge of Shooting at Wellington College, who is more used to being on Century and Stickledown Ranges said, "the opportunity to taste this sport and experience the atmosphere on Bisley Common which encompasses all shooting disciplines



is one that I believe every teenager should experience. The benefits and effects for them in later life will enormously enhance the quality of their leisure time. In the meantime it is my ambition to see that all students have the opportunity to experience shotgun and target rifle shooting during their time at Wellington College."

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## IBIS RIFLE CLUB 2004 OPEN PRIZE MEETING

April seems an early start for a competitive fullbore meeting, but Ibis has organised such a shoot for the last nine years. The meet for 2004 was held on 3 April, and a total of 40 entrants supported the Club's view that an early start to the shooting year is a valuable way of blowing those cobwebs away from both shooter and equipment.

The course of fire includes a Queens II shoot in the morning, followed by a long range afternoon at 1000 and 1100 yards. This seems to be the attraction for many entrants who would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience an 1100 yards shoot.

The meeting is organised by Bill Rowland, and though all was as smooth as usual this year, complaints were voiced as to the choice of weather. Competitors have often been fortunate in past years, but Saturday saw a strong wind, though the forecast heavy rain did not materialise. Range officers had a demanding task at the long range shoots, especially at 1100 yards where the eight firing points were stretched over a long distance and the wind made verbal communication very difficult.

The prizegiving was held in the Ibis Hut in the evening, and what a selection was available! But it was not only the top scorers in each of the three competitions who received rewards as Bill provided prizes for entrants at various intervals right to the bottom of the list. So congratulations to all those who received something, but especially to the principal winners who were:

Short Range:	M Shaw	R Shouler	D Luckman
Long Range:	D Luckman	R Shouler	C Painting
Aggregate:	D Luckman	R Shouler	C Painting

A sumptuous meal, provisioned and prepared mainly by Bill (yes, he cooks as well as he organises) was partaken by many in the evening. All in all a busy, long and worthwhile day at Bisley Camp.

See you next year!



# QUANTIFYING PERFORMANCE

by Finbarr O'Sullivan

If you were to take the scorebooks of the people who were selected for the GB Palma team in 2003, you would have some pretty illustrious shooting records. But if you went around Bisley with the scorebooks and asked people to eyeball the scorecards and rank the people based on their previous, say, one year's worth of scorecards you would end up with as many different answers for ranking order as people you had asked.

Imagine the difficulty of the team selector in deciding on a squad of limited numbers from a field of many more firers, many of whom could reasonably expect a place. Imagine the disappointment of being the one who came closest but was dropped from such a team. Surely from scorebook comparison alone (assuming other things being equal, such as past team performance, how stress affects your shooting etc) you would be forgiven for feeling that you deserved a place as much as the last one in.

Simon Belither wrote about such difficulties in the Spring 2004 Journal. What we set out to investigate in this article is the possibility of quantifying a shooter's performance as an aid to team selection. Of course, other less easily quantifiable factors, eg amount of previous team shooting experience, performance under pressure, are very important, but in a lot of team selections these other considerations may not be clear cut. A quantifiable indicator of recent performance would make it easier in some circumstances for a team selector to convince someone who hadn't quite made the team that there was a justifiable reason for the decision. You can't argue with the numbers.

To look for such an indicator we have used scorecards from nine cadets from Stamford School. Mik Maksimovic was the team selector for the Stamford School 2003 Ashburton team and it fell to him to pick a team of eight. For the purposes of the investigation this is not as good an example as it might be because it would have been better illustrated by having to pick a team of eight from a field of, say, 16. However, we hope at least to be able to show that a quantitative analysis based on grouping statistics can be a helpful aid for team selectors.

The other drawback is that for each cadet we did not have that many scoresheets available at the time. Again, for the purposes of illustrating the technique it will hopefully be sufficient to illustrate the approach.

To perform the analysis we use *eScoreBook* software from [www.bluebarnacle.com](http://www.bluebarnacle.com). We set up the nine cadets in the system and then entered their scoresheets for a number of previous shoots taken over the period of interest (in this case some practice days before the Ashburton).

Having entered all the plots, together with the wind and elevation for each recorded shot, we are in a position to start comparing the shooters.

## Backplot

The software can be used to calculate grouping statistics either for a single scorecard or for a set of scorecards selected according to a range of search criteria, and can be used to compare many firers. For the purposes of this analysis we are going to use all the scorecards for each competitor (with the exception of the Ashburton itself of course) rather than restrict ourselves to a subset.

The statistics are calculated not on the recorded fall of shot but on the backplot. The backplot is a technique where you keep track of the corrected wind and elevation for each shot and then calculate the average corrected wind and average corrected elevation for the shoot. Then you replot the shots where they would have fallen if you had had these averages on the gun at the time and assuming all other things are equal, such as human error. This helps to eliminate the effect of mistakes in wind coaching and elevation changes on the appearance of the plot. To illustrate this, we plot a real example shoot. The plot is shown in Figure 1 and the backplot is shown in Figure 3.

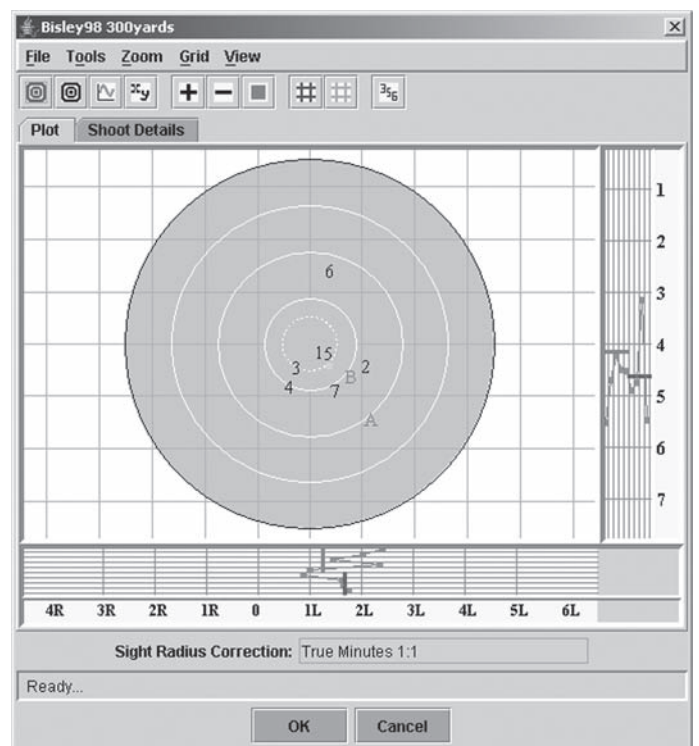


Figure 1 Fall of Shot

The screenshot shows the Bisley98 300yards software interface with a table of wind and elevation data for nine cadets. The table has columns for cadet names (A, B, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) and a 'Score' column. The 'Wind' column shows values like 1.25L, 1.25L, 1.25L, 1.25L, 1.25L, 1.25L, 1.25L, 1.25L, 1.25L. The 'Elev.' column shows values like 4.0, 4.0, 4.0, 4.0, 4.0, 4.0, 4.5, 4.5, 4.5. The 'Call' column shows values like ok, ok, ok, ok, ok, ok, ok, ok, ok. The 'Value' column shows values like 3, 4, V, 4, 5, 4, V, 4, 4. The 'Score' column shows a total score of 31.

	A	B	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Score
Wind	1.25L	1.25L	1.25L	1.25L	1.25L	1.25L	1.25L	1.25L	1.25L	31
Elev.	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	
Call	ok	ok	ok	ok	ok	ok	ok	ok	ok	V
Value	3	4	V	4	5	4	V	4	4	2

Figure 2 Wind and Elevation for Figure 1

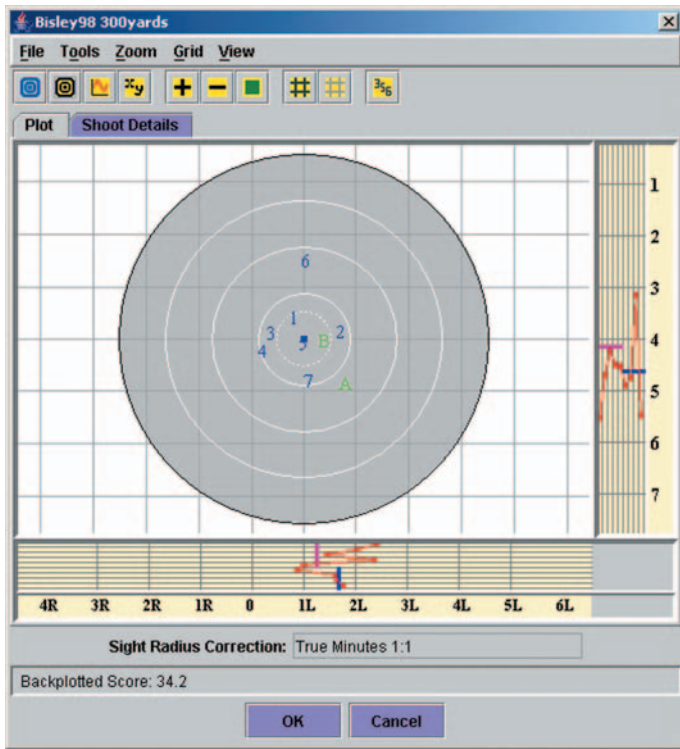


Figure 3 Backplot

When we plot the backplot for this shoot we see that the score has increased from the 31.2 to a 34.2 when assuming it had been shot on the average *corrected* wind and elevation (**not** the average of the wind and elevation that was applied on the gun).

All the grouping statistics calculated by the software use the backplotted co-ordinates.

### Quick Comparison

We can first look at the data for some of our nine cadets. We use the software to produce superposition plots of all the shoots in the sets. We show below the superposition plots of about 11 shoots each from Spencer, Robert, Richard and Charlotte. All shoots were either at 300 or 500 yards but we have chosen to superposition them all as though they were shot at 500 yards; ie the coordinates in minutes from the centre of the target are used.

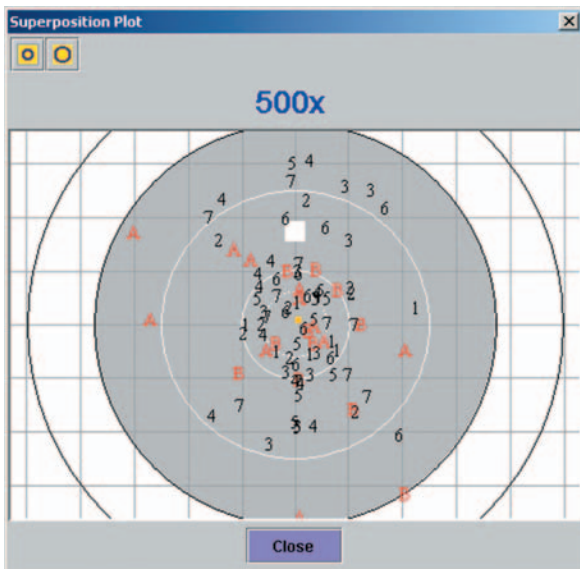


Figure 4 Superposition Plot for Spencer

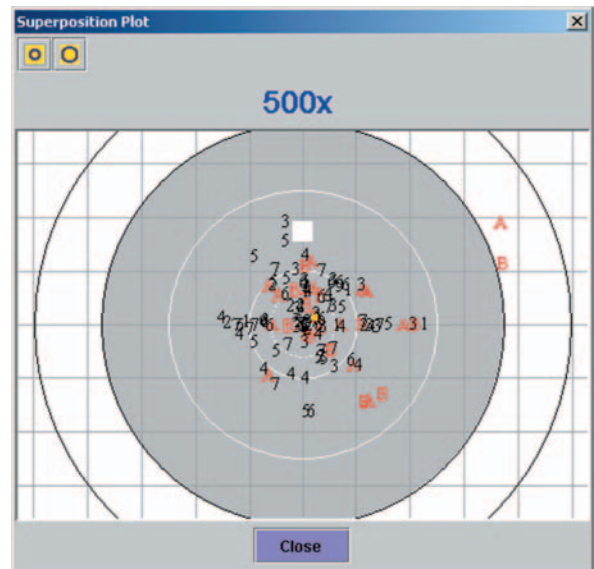


Figure 6 Superposition Plot for Richard

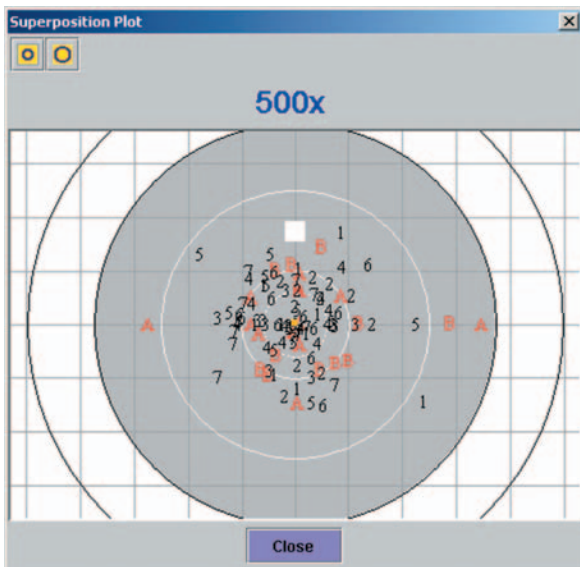


Figure 5 Superposition Plot for Robert

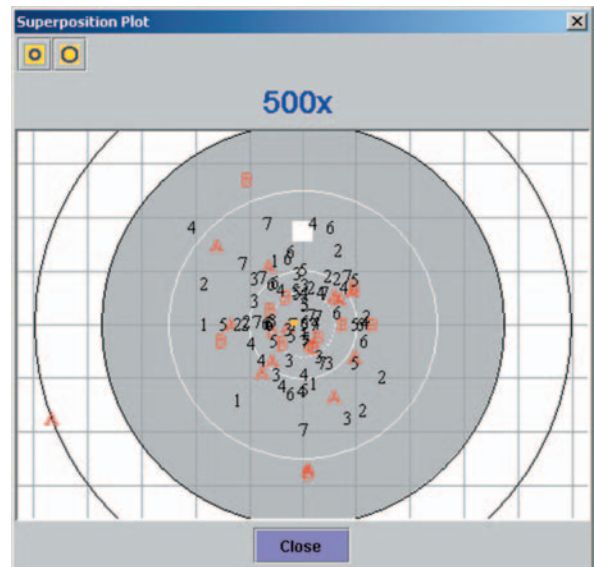


Figure 7 Superposition Plot for Charlotte



We can see that, compared to the other three, Spencer has a tendency to occasional wild high and low shots. Charlotte seems to be less prone to this but does not hold as good elevation as Richard and Robert. However, choosing between Richard and Robert, by eyeballing the plots like this, is not so easy.

### Graphical Comparison

We can go further now and attempt to see how these shooters compare in terms of their grouping statistics. The software allows us to calculate 12 different grouping statistics

- **SDH** Standard Deviation in Horizontal Distribution of Backplotted Group
- **SDV** Standard Deviation in Vertical Distribution of Backplotted Group
- **SDR** Standard Deviation in Radial Distribution of Backplotted Group
- **MHD** Mean Horizontal Deviation
- **MVD** Mean Vertical Deviation
- **ES** Extreme Spread Between Pairs
- **EHD** Extreme Horizontal Dispersion
- **EVD** Extreme Vertical Dispersion
- **DIAG** Diagonal
- **MGR** Mean Group Radius
- **ASD** Average Sighter Distance from MPI
- **CA** Cone Angle Subtended by Covering Circle

The comparisons for the SD in the horizontal and vertical distribution are shown below; one point represents the statistic for one shoot and curves are shown for the four shooters we are using as an example:

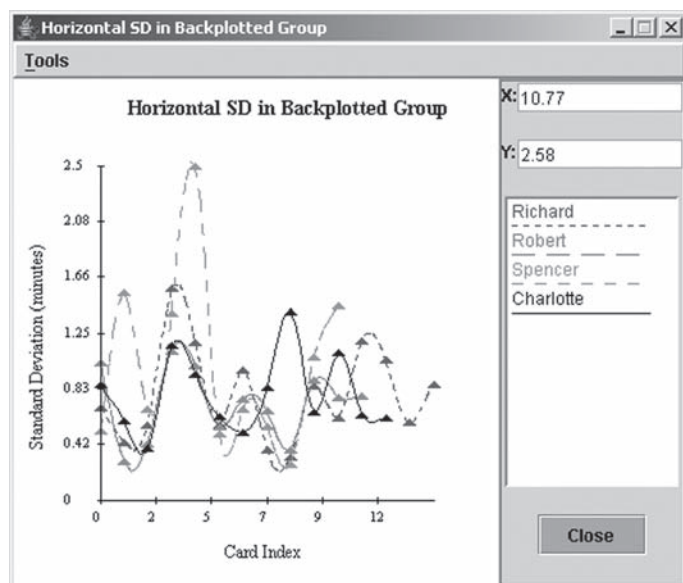


Figure 8 Horizontal SD Comparison for four of the Cadets

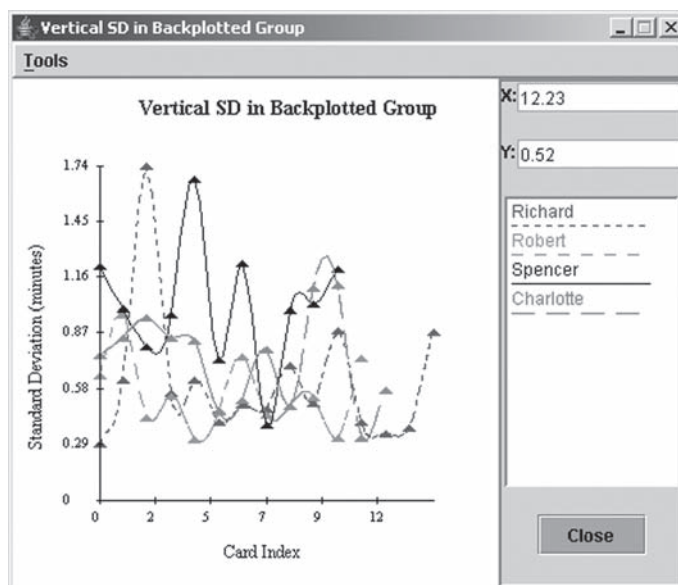


Figure 9 Vertical SD Comparison for four of the Cadets

Examining the horizontal curves there is little to choose between them apart from three particularly loose shoots by Spencer. The others all sit around a SD of 0.8. However the vertical SD curves are more separated and we can see, in particular, that Robert is clearly much more consistent and with a distinctly lower vertical SD than the others.

Interestingly, this is not the impression you get from eyeballing the superposition plots above. By eyeballing the superposition plots you get the impression that Richard holds a tighter group than Robert, but these vertical SD plots show you the opposite.

From these SD curves you would say that Richard is almost as good as Robert but one bad shoot in particular appears with an SD of 1.74, plus a couple of cheeky high ones are seen around 0.87.

### Performance Indices

Investigating the other indicators graphically is informative but does not really give us a clear cut comparison. In order to try to combine these various grouping statistics we propose creating combined indices to see if they can tell us anything. We define two indices: the first based on the combined product of the terms, and the second based on the sum of the terms. If we calculate the average of a given indicator over the set of cards for a given competitor, let us say from the vertical SD curve for Robert above, we can obtain a single number for that grouping statistic for him. If we do the same for the other 11 statistics available we obtain for each shooter a set of 12 numbers which we combine into a product index and a sum index, as defined below.

We can use the software to run a comparison between selected firers and produce these numbers as shown in figure 10.

Firer	SDR	SDH	SDV	MHD	MVD	EXS	EHD	EVD	DIAG	MGR	ASD	CCA	NMS	% V	#Rds	#C	Prod	Log(P)	Sum
Robert	0.94	0.72	0.55	0.58	0.46	2.77	2.33	1.73	3	0.82	1.06	3.25	0.9	22.62	108	12	10.31	2.33	19.3
Richard	1.05	0.78	0.62	0.63	0.51	2.93	2.44	1.9	3.24	0.93	1	3.56	0.91	29.52	135	15	26.05	3.26	20.69
Nick	1.04	0.79	0.62	0.66	0.51	2.94	2.38	2.05	3.24	0.94	1.03	3.35	0.89	22.08	99	11	29.35	3.38	20.68
Owen	1.09	0.67	0.81	0.51	0.68	3.1	2.26	2.46	3.47	0.98	1.1	3.65	0.88	12.24	63	7	55.19	4.01	21.93
Charlotte	1.11	0.79	0.73	0.62	0.59	3.05	2.64	2.4	3.64	0.98	1.27	3.69	0.86	19.78	117	13	89.21	4.49	22.68
Sam	1.23	0.9	0.82	0.77	0.68	3.39	2.8	2.67	3.92	1.12	1.33	4.17	0.79	12.7	81	9	377.9	5.93	25.08
Samuel	1.24	0.9	0.83	0.71	0.67	3.56	2.88	2.77	4.06	1.07	1.37	4.7	0.85	16.88	99	11	414.05	6.03	25.95
Spencer	1.47	1.01	1.01	0.82	0.84	4.19	3.17	3.3	4.72	1.31	1.55	5.04	0.8	11.69	99	11	2736.15	7.91	29.68
Luke	1.65	1.44	1.07	1.14	0.56	4.96	4.69	2.5	5.44	1.4	1.78	6.5	0.81	5.71	45	5	7158.02	8.88	34.04

Figure 10 Summary Statistics for All Cadets (Before Ashburton)

In Figure 10 we show the averages of the various grouping statistics taken over the scoresheet sets for each firer. Also displayed is the average normalised score and the percentage V bulls in the set. The total number of rounds and number of scoresheets in the set is also given for each shooter. (The total number of rounds is a convenient way to keep track of barrel count for an individual user of the software, as sets of scoresheets may be selected based on rifle for example).

We have also calculated our product (P) and sum (S) indices defined as follows:

$$P = \text{SDR.SDH.SDV.MHD.MVD.EXS.EHD.DIAG.MGR.ASD.CCA} \cdot (1.0/\text{NMS})$$

$$S = \text{SDR} + \text{SDH} + \text{SDV} + \text{MHD} + \text{MVD} + \text{EXS} + \text{EHD} + \text{DIAG} + \text{MGR} + \text{ASD} + \text{CCA} + (1.0/\text{NMS})$$

The normalised score is inverted because it is the only statistic of the set which is directly proportional to the quality of the set of scoresheets. The others are inversely proportional to the quality - ie the better the set of cards the lower the statistic.

First we notice that when we sort in descending order of Product Index, the SDR (which is the Standard Deviation (SD) in the radial distribution of the backplotted group and is calculated from the SD in the vertical and the SD in the horizontal distribution from  $\text{SQRT}(\text{SDH} \cdot \text{SDH} + \text{SDV} \cdot \text{SDV})$ ) is also in the same order and so is the Sum Index. So we seem to be seeing similar qualitative information in all three indicators. To see which is more interesting let's plot them out. (With the current version of the software (3.0.6) you need to export the data to a .csv file and read it into Excel to do this.)

We can see that the Product Index (P) is highly sensitive and takes off in an exponential fashion as a shooter's performance gets worse: the worse the performance, the higher the product index. As this looks exponential, it makes more sense to replot it as a log plot and so we plot  $\ln(P)$  (log to the base e) as seen in Figure 12 which gives us a broadly linear relationship:

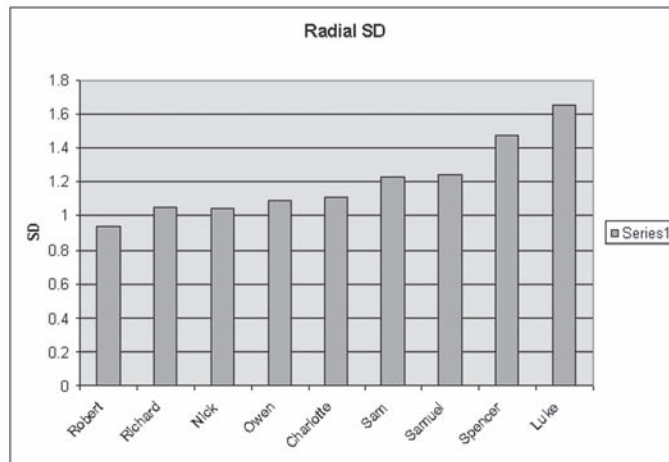


Figure 11 Comparison of Average Radial SD for All Cadets

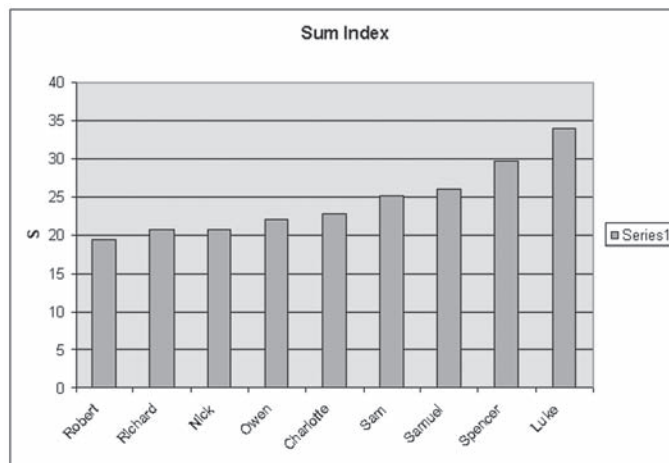


Figure 12 Comparison of Sum Index for All Cadets

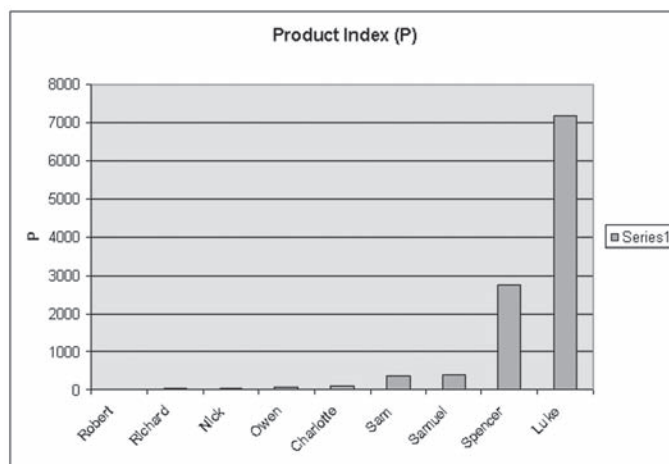


Figure 13 Comparison of Product Index (P) for All Cadets

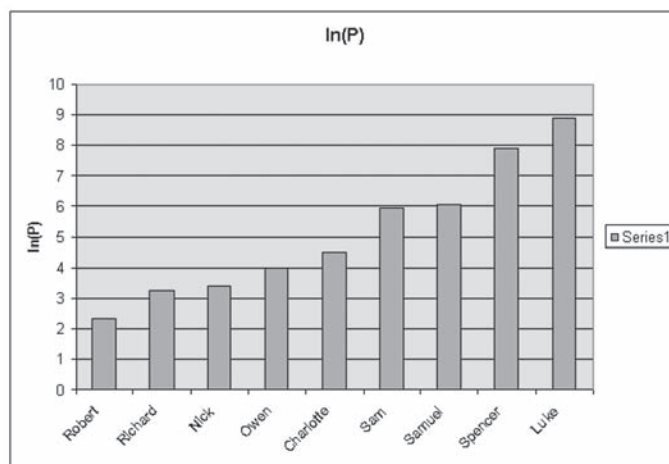


Figure 14 Comparison of Log(P) for All Cadets

The SDR and Sum Index plots above both show similar information, albeit on a different scale. However, the range between the best and worst performers is not strong.

If we take a look at the ln(P) plot however, the same linear relationship seen in the Sum Index and SDR is also now present but of greater interest is that there is a stronger separation between the best and worst performers in the group. The ln(P) (let's call it the LogP index) seems to have good potential as a numerical characterisation of performance. The lower the LogP index, the better the performance.

### The Ashburton

So how did they do in the Ashburton itself? Well, they won. But let's take a look at the tabulated results based solely on the two Ashburton ranges, 300 yards and 500 yards for each of the eight shooters in the team:

Shooter	SDR	SDH	SDV	MHD	MVD	EXSE	EHD	EVD	DIAM	GRASD	CCANMS	%V	#Rds	#C	Prod	Log(P)	Sum		
Charlotte	0.83	0.53	0.63	0.44	0.44	2.3	1.56	2.29	2.79	0.74	1.41	2.95	0.96	35.71	18	2	3.91	1.36	17.95
Robert	0.86	0.65	0.55	0.51	0.47	2.78	2.23	1.81	2.87	0.73	1.47	3.49	0.97	21.43	18	2	9.28	2.23	19.45
Samuel	0.97	0.75	0.59	0.55	0.5	3.06	2.58	1.82	3.2	0.86	0.83	3.25	0.87	35.71	18	2	14.41	2.67	20.1
Sam	1.02	0.62	0.79	0.5	0.63	2.73	1.98	2.56	3.28	0.91	0.79	3.1	0.86	7.14	18	2	18.5	2.92	20.07
Richard	1.08	0.91	0.58	0.75	0.43	3.24	3.03	2.16	3.72	0.96	1.21	3.73	0.93	28.57	18	2	68.19	4.22	22.88
Spencer	1.19	0.69	0.97	0.6	0.7	3.7	2.01	3.31	3.87	1.01	1.57	4.45	0.89	21.43	18	2	252.77	5.53	25.19
Owen	1.35	1.09	0.58	0.91	0.47	4.33	3.7	1.98	4.55	1.18	1.58	5.01	0.89	28.57	18	2	551.43	6.31	27.85
Nick	1.4	1.17	0.77	0.9	0.5	4.61	3.91	2.87	4.87	1.09	1.91	6.42	0.89	28.57	18	2	2163.06	7.68	31.56

Figure 15 Summary Statistics for Stamford School Ashburton Team

We plot below the LogP index for the eight team members taken over the two shoots comprising the Ashburton, at 300 yards and 500 yards. They performed quite differently from what would have been expected from the scorecard analysis alone. Charlotte put in a good performance with a 33.3, 34.2 and shot better than in the trial set of shoots; Samuel and Sam also pulled themselves up; Robert and Spencer performed as would have been predicted from their earlier scorecard analysis; but Nick, Owen and Richard did not perform to potential. You might

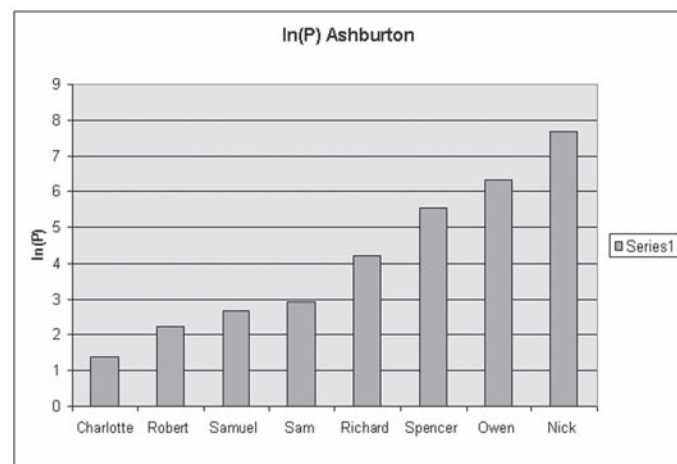


Figure 16 Comparison of Log(P) for Ashburton Team

be tempted to draw the conclusion from this that Charlotte and Richard thrive under pressure, Robert and Spencer are not really bothered by it, and Nick, Owen and Richard need to work on their match nerves.

### Summary

We have examined an admittedly minimal set of scoresheets in order to investigate whether numerical grouping statistics can be applied to produce indices to rank performance. Although we had only a limited number of shooters and scorecards available for this analysis, it is nevertheless clear enough that the performances of the shooters can indeed be ranked numerically in a meaningful way. We suggest that the best indicator to use is the LogP index when there is a reasonable spread in performance between the shooters being compared. In this case the LogP index gives a fairly linear relationship between performance and index value. It also has a greater sensitivity compared to the other linear indicators which also show the same qualitative information. However, if the set of shooters are very closely matched, the much more sensitive Product Index would perhaps be the better choice.

It would be very interesting to apply this technique to larger data sets for more shooters of varying ability and experience. This might allow us to calibrate the LogP index by associating numerical values to historical performances for a broad spectrum of shooter abilities; from GB team usual suspects, to novices.

We do not suggest that this technique is any more than a numerical ranking based on a historical set of scorecards. At best it can be an aid to team selectors, who have other considerations to take into account. Nonetheless it could be a welcome aid when it becomes difficult to decide between borderline cases, especially when trying to explain to prospective team candidates that they were not selected when their scorebook looks qualitatively like the other shooter who was selected.

From our limited scorecard data, Robert had a LogP of just over 2. In the Ashburton Charlotte beat this, making a respectable score and with a LogP index of just over 1.2.

The question is, how low can you go?

### Afterword and Acknowledgements

The software may of course be more simply used for a single user as a scoresheet database, together with the same analysis tools. It is also useful for producing bespoke scoresheets, which may appeal in particular to the F Class community who experiment with different target faces at different distances. You could set up your target patterns for, say, the Palma target face at 1100 yards if you were so inclined, or a 600 yards face at 1000 yards, and produce scoresheets with



correct minute grids. In addition to F Class you can also print scoresheets for regular Target Rifle, Match Rifle and ISSF target patterns. The software is pre-loaded with target patterns for Bisley98, ISSF, Australian, Canadian, USA and NSRA small-bore.

For open sights you can set up individual sight bases for different rifles and have the grids use the slightly different "rifle minutes" that occur when varying barrel lengths for a given backsight and use these grids for the scoresheets.

More detailed information is available from the website [www.bluebarnacle.com](http://www.bluebarnacle.com).

*The software was written by the author who takes full responsibility for all bugs and annoyances it contains. I would like to thank Mik Maksimovic and the Stamford School team for the loan of their scoresheets. I would also like to thank the many people who have made suggestions about improvements for the software, especially the early adopters whose patience and help finding bugs has been greatly appreciated. In particular I would like to thank Andrew Penfold, Mik Maksimovic, Howell Morley, Arnold Pitcher, Pete Campbell, Richard Hind, Philip de Voil, Fred James and Heather Webb in the UK; Andrew Powell and Bill MacFarlane in Australia; and Ian Cheeseman, Mid Tomkins and Joseph Kovac in the USA, who have used the software for team and coach selection for the US Young Eagles team.*

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## ANDREW PENFOLD - CHIEF NATIONAL COACH (TR)



Since my last article I have received a lot of positive feedback for which I am very grateful. I have tasked a few eminent shooters to produce an article on a piece of equipment they use, please don't be disappointed if I haven't asked you yet - I will! Of course a willing volunteer is better than ten pressed men (or women) . . .

In February we held a very successful Cadet Coaching course (details elsewhere); we also held a GBTSF Club Coach course and the following were successful in their efforts:

Jamie Cordery	Sparshot College RC	Heather Webb	Lloyds TSB RC
Guy Larcombe	Old Epsomians	Hugh Hamilton	Leicestershire FBR&PC

All produced and delivered confident lessons to another Advanced Skills course held at the end of March. On the same weekend Bill Richards held another successful wind coaching course which was well attended and received.

We are now entering the main shooting season when it proves difficult to get coaches. However, a full Winter programme is at an advanced stage of planning and the dates will be published on the NRA website as well as in the next Journal.

The syllabi for the respective courses are as follows:

### Basic Skills

Safety, Rules and Regulations  
Ballistics  
Four Principles of Marksmanship  
Kit and Equipment  
Position Building  
Theory of the Group  
Vernier Scales and Minutes of Angle  
Introduction to the Score Book  
Care and Cleaning  
Effects of Wind  
Butt Marking, Scoring and Messages  
Wet Weather Shooting

### Practical

Short Range Shooting

### Advanced Skills

Safety, Rules and Regulations  
Self Coaching  
Position Building  
Mental Aspects: Preparation for Competitive Shooting  
Wind Graphs  
Elevation Graphs  
Analysing the Scorebook  
Competitive Shooting: Using Sighters Correctly, Trigger Weighing  
Wind: Topography, Flags, Theories  
Team Shooting

### Practical

Zeroing a Rifle  
Self Coaching  
Long Range Shooting

I must emphasise that they are not set in stone and are constantly evolving. They must cater for all age groups and be progressive learning cycles. It is intended that they equip shooters with the ability to turn up and shoot with an air of confidence. The respective courses have now been tried and tested on both young people and adults and have worked - judging by the high scores and the number of youngsters achieving their NRA Marksman badges.

You may also note that the basic course can be realistically achieved by those completing their probationary course ensuring natural progression and achievable goals.

Once again I am open to logical and reasonable suggestions, however, it must meet the required criterion - to be able to complete the courses over two weekends with a fair mixture of practical and theoretical shooting. This does not mean that the courses have to be at weekends, they can be broken down into separate lessons and delivered over a longer period - perhaps evenings at a Rifle Club, School or Cadet Unit, however, this must be by a Club Coach in order that we can achieve a standard.

With the advent of computers the majority of these lessons are on PowerPoint presentations and it is my intention to ensure that we have a unified standard, thus ensuring whichever course you attend I can guarantee you will receive the same syllabus. I hear a sigh of despair and a fear that it will simply be a tape recording - far from it, it is merely intended to ensure uniformity; individual instructors and coaches will deliver the courses in their own personal style.

I wish you all a good shooting season and look forward to seeing you on the courses to come.

# NRA CADET COACHING COURSE

by Andrew Penfold

Once again we prepared for the NRA Cadet Coaching Course at Godalming. The difference this time was that the course was 50% oversubscribed by the closing date.

I had the unenviable task of using the red pen - one of the other coaches had suggested a blindfold and pin - however, every unit got a percentage of their requested places. Luckily we had operated a reserve which meant that the two last minute vacant places were filled by Elizabeth College Guernsey at 7pm the evening before they were due to travel!

The Surrey ACF weekend training centre was tested to its limits - 57 students, 10 directing staff and a couple of chefs.

Work started immediately on the Friday evening when the course participants were split into their respective syndicates. Saturday was spent in the classroom and the highlight of the day had to be Jo Hossack (*GM*), Captain of the GB U25 World Champions, who kindly flew down from Edinburgh to give an enthralling talk about her short but incredible shooting career. It certainly lit a few fires - hopefully about shooting. We were doubly grateful as it was Valentine's Day; she returned to Edinburgh in time for her dinner date with her boyfriend Adam.

Sunday morning was spent with the coaches being put through their paces putting the Skills

Enhancement Course students into the prone position, a time consuming yet important activity.

The Advanced Course were preparing to "break out", Mik Maksimovic had designed a very practical, yet demanding course for them to complete. After checking their kit and positions it was off to the Zero Range at Bisley; time was also spent on Stickledown looking at wind flags and discussing wind flags, as well as a quick walk around the ranges. It was a useful exercise for these young people trying to break down any fear or mystique about long range shooting as for many it was to be their first time.

All members of the course were relieved that we were moving out to Stoney Castle ranges on Monday morning. We spent valuable time at 300 yards zeroing and getting the cadets used to the L81 A1 rifle, as well as getting the coaches used to their allocated cadets whom they had never met before.

The Advanced Course had to prepare and coach themselves - quite a novelty for most of them, though they all took to it like ducks to water, which was quite useful because on Tuesday it rained!

Later Major Simon Fraser, Secretary of CCRS spoke to the junior members of the course, advising them how to go about getting selected for the respective junior tours abroad.



Another successful NRA Cadet Coaching Course.

(Photo: Andrew Penfold)



Tuesday was another landmark – when we split the course in two: Marc Jackson led the Enhancement Course on Stoney Castle, whilst Mik and his team of coaches went to Stickle-down. The Advanced Course were deposited on Stickle-down to sort themselves out whilst the instructors availed themselves of the facilities of the LMRA. At an appropriate time they returned as the range staff for the course long range challenge - trigger weighing, scramble boards, everything they would find when taking part in an open competition. The cadets rose to the challenge, even when the heavens opened no one was dispirited; they simply packed away their kit having achieved an awful lot.

We were delighted that Charles Oliver-Bellasis, Chairman of the National Shooting Centre, joined us for supper and afterwards presented the certificates and badges to all the successful candidates.

The course concluded on Wednesday with a shoot at 600 yards.

Once again I am eternally grateful to all my staff, to the staff at Surrey ACF for their unstinting hospitality, particularly Captain Brendon Cooney and his team of chefs for looking after us so royally.

## BRADFIELD COLLEGE



### SCHOOL SHOOTING COACH

A School Shooting Coach is required as soon as possible to replace Jake Buchanan who has been forced to retire prematurely on health grounds.

The College has a long and very strong tradition in both small-bore and fullbore shooting, and is looking for an experienced and well-qualified coach in both disciplines.

Located just eight miles west of Reading, the School has its own miniature range in the grounds. Fullbore shooting takes place during the summer term at Bisley where we both practice and compete in a number of Schools' competitions including the July Schools' Meeting.

If you would be interested in hearing about this rewarding post of the College Shooting Coach, please contact

Captain David Stocks, RMR

Tel: 0118 9744312

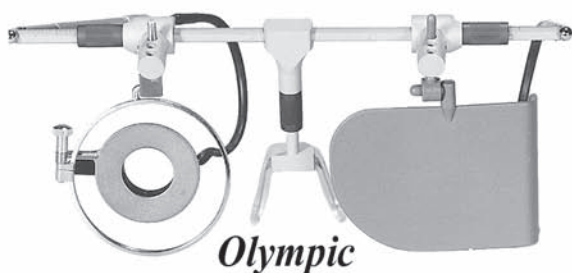
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# THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FULLBORE RIFLE ASSOCIATIONS (ICFRA) - WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT INTENDS TO DO

*by Dick Horrocks, NRA (GB) representative and ICFRA Vice-President*

While ICFRA is (or should be) a well understood body by NRA Council and General Council members, there is still some general ignorance and misunderstanding among members of the NRA and NRA affiliated clubs about what it is and what it does. This short article will hopefully both educate and resolve any doubts as to its true role in supporting and indeed driving forward fullbore rifle shooting as a sport that merits, and now has, world stature.

## **What is ICFRA and why do we need it?**

The international fullbore rifle shooting community was, until recently, not integrated in any comprehensive way that would ensure its having a world voice and presence. On the other hand, the small-bore and 300m rifle communities have been represented for many years by the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF), the body that oversees all international competition rules, including the Olympic Games, for these disciplines. Prior to the formation of ICFRA on 1 January 2002, the only formal international body overseeing fullbore rifle shooting was the Commonwealth Shooting Federation or CSF, which, of course, includes only Commonwealth countries. It has a major function in providing rules and match conditions for Commonwealth events, most significantly the Commonwealth Games. However, it goes without saying that a number of other significant fullbore rifle countries, including the USA and certain EU countries, are excluded from this.

ISSF not only provides a set of formal rules that govern all international competitions falling within its sphere, but also provides a formal world presence to which major event organisers and host governments must give credibility. Shooting sports are increasingly coming under political pressure and are bearing the ever increasing regulatory restrictions set by politicians across the world who see its participants as soft targets for satisfying electorate demands for reductions in armed crime and illegal international arms trading. In this climate the ISSF provides a shooting voice. No such voice has existed for fullbore rifle shooting prior to the formation of ICFRA.

Contrary to some beliefs in certain parts of the fullbore rifle community, ICFRA has not been created to replace or take over existing national and Commonwealth fullbore interests. Instead it has the aim of bringing them together to create not only a synergy by association but, more importantly, to present a world voice to which its member

associations may turn for support and advice. It is the opinion of many within the ICFRA umbrella that without this voice, the future of fullbore rifle shooting would be more precarious even than many of its present participants believe it to be.

As a consequence of concerns of this nature during the late 1990s, it was unanimously agreed by participants at the 1999 Long Range Rifle Championships for the Palma Trophy that a single world body was both desirable and essential for the future of the sport. As a consequence, ICFRA was established on 1 January 2002. It was agreed that Palma Council rules would then pass to ICFRA immediate upon its formation and hopefully well before the next planned championships in 2003. Also, prior to this date, NRA (GB) took the decision that it would pass to ICFRA at that time any of its then current responsibilities for providing technical rules for international events. Principally, this included its responsibility for providing technical rules for Commonwealth country competitions organised by the Commonwealth Shooting Federation or CSF.

ICFRA's vision is that:

Fullbore rifle shooting is a well-established international competitive shooting sport with world-wide recognition.

The aims of ICFRA are:

- 1 To contribute to safe and responsible firearms ownership;
- 2 To encourage and promote the interests of the sport worldwide;
- 3 To standardise and formulate the arrangements and rules for major international fullbore rifle competitions;
- 4 To act as the overarching controlling authority for designated international matches, or the advisory (rules) authority for the fullbore rifle shooting events of multi-discipline competitions;
- 5 To act as a cohesive international body to ensure the continuation of the sport is not adversely affected by firearms legislation worldwide and any form of attack on the sport; and
- 6 To enhance the contributions this sport makes to the enjoyment and quality of life of its participants.



A further prime aim of ICFRA is that it should be a minimal cost and bureaucratic organisation with membership fee levels set at previous Palma Council member levels for full members. A full member is defined as a fullbore rifle association that has submitted formal teams to at least one Palma or Long Range Rifle Championship prior to 2002 or any ICFRA-organised fullbore rifle championship subsequent to that date. Affiliate member status is open to any national association that has not participated in a former Long Range Rifle Championship or a subsequent ICFRA-organised event.

### **What has ICFRA done?**

During 2002 an interim constitution was agreed between members of the former Palma Council. A structure including a Council and committees representing the recognised fullbore disciplines was defined and temporarily constituted. During late 2002, Colin Cheshire was nominated and elected to be the Secretary General of ICFRA (an unpaid post) with the DCRA of Canada acting as the national association that would offer treasury facilities.

During July 2003 at Bisley ICFRA took full responsibility for rules provision for the World Long Range Rifle Championships hosted by the NRA (GB). At this time the first sequence of ICFRA Committee meetings took place culminating in the first ICFRA Council Meeting. The principal business carried out was formally to revise the interim Constitution and adopt the final version, along with formal recognition of the majority of the planned Committees and their immediate decisions which would enable the next four year cycle to commence.

With regard to planned World Championships, whereas formally only the Long Range Rifle Championships had taken place, now the ground was laid for each identified discipline (Long Range, Target Rifle, Match Rifle and F Class Rifle) to hold World Championships. For example, the next World F Class Rifle Championship will take place in South Africa in 2005 and the World Long Range Rifle and Veterans' TR Championships will occur in Canada in 2007.

### **ICFRA and Commonwealth Games Events**

There has been much concern by the smaller Commonwealth Games participating fullbore rifle countries in particular, that ICFRA was attempting to take over and dictate the rules and conditions for CG events which have been and continue to be the responsibility of CSF. As a result of these concerns the following have been agreed:

The Commonwealth Games Federation agreed with ICFRA that CSF should use ICFRA technical rules for all its fullbore events in the manner that ISSF provides technical rules for other shooting disciplines.

That CSF continue to be fully responsible for match conditions and organisation of Commonwealth fullbore events.

The ICFRA Constitution was amended to ensure that Commonwealth countries have a direct say and vote (not via any regional or composite association, for instance the NRA (GB) will not be able to vote on matters relating to Commonwealth Games but England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland representatives will) in Commonwealth matters including technical rules specifically for Commonwealth events.

Non-Commonwealth countries have no vote on Commonwealth matters in the ICFRA Council or General Assembly.

A special category of Affiliate membership was agreed (defined by the Constitution as follows: "Upon nomination by a Full member, the ICFRA Council may decide, by majority vote, to grant Associate membership to organisations and/or federations of other international shooting associations having a common but specific fullbore interest". As a consequence, CSF has been offered such membership, with a vote on Commonwealth matters.

ICFRA has constituted its own Commonwealth Committee (ICFRA CC) to which all Commonwealth countries within ICFRA may nominate their own representatives. These representatives have since elected their committee chairman, Sandy Peden, who has full responsibility to work with CSF to progress Commonwealth fullbore business and interests relating to ICFRA and its responsibilities. The ICFRA CC has subsequently (late 2003/early 2004) thoroughly revised the former NRA (GB) rules as they have related to the Commonwealth and has offered them to the CSF for comment.

I am pleased to state that all fullbore rifle participating Commonwealth countries are now ICFRA members, either Full or Affiliate.

In conclusion, as the ICFRA representative on NRA (GB) General Council and as elected ICFRA Vice-President for the next four years, it is my opinion that the establishment of ICFRA has been long overdue and will provide a firm base worldwide for the promotion of World Championships in **all** fullbore rifle disciplines. I hope that this short article helps to explain what ICFRA is and that it has dispelled any concerns that we have created an additional bureaucracy that is intent on usurping presently established fullbore rifle associations. It should, as stated above, add synergy to fullbore rifle shooting and assist all member associations to work together and with respective national sports organisations to assure the future of the sport.

# THE THREE ELCHO SHIELDS

by Rosemary Meldrum

The match for the Elcho Shield is the oldest and most prestigious long range rifle contest in the world, but its origins and those of the shield are less well-known.

The Volunteer Force was formed in 1859 in response to the fear of a French invasion. It started in a small way with informal groups and rifle clubs, but such was the enthusiasm that the government authorised the Lord Lieutenants of each county to organise local Corps. Thousands flocked to join - partly because, as there were no drill sergeants, the main concern was rifle shooting and people were keen to participate in this new sport. There were virtually no rules about danger areas, and it was easy to find suitable sites for target practice.

In the late summer of 1859, leaders of the Volunteer movement attended the Hythe School of Musketry, and while there, resolved to further the aims of the Volunteer Movement and rifle shooting by forming a national association. This would be for "the encouragement of Volunteer Rifle Corps and the promotion of rifle shooting throughout Great Britain." Their ideas accorded with those of the London Rifle Brigade and a successful joint meeting, with the object of forming a National Rifle Association, was held in November. Then Lord Elcho, an enthusiastic protagonist of the scheme and a keen Volunteer, wrote to the Times on 9 December, setting out the aims of the new Association and the plans to hold a great annual National Meeting for rifle shooting. The first of these would be in July 1860.

Lord Elcho himself determined to give a prize "for annual competition as an encouragement to international small-bore shooting, and also that my name might be perpetuated in connection with the Association and the Volunteers, and thus it will be, long after I have left this sublunary scene, when otherwise all personal remembrance of one's work would be forgotten." With this in mind he persuaded his friend George Frederick Watts to design a suitable trophy. Watts was a well-known and popular artist who had painted many fine portraits, but was perhaps better known for his sickly allegorical and historical scenes. He showed frequently at the Royal Academy, and was seldom without a sketch book in his hand, while his sculpture of a huge horse and rider gave him the nickname of "England's Michelangelo".

Watts decided that the trophy would be an iron shield six feet high, and Lord Elcho wrote to him on 14 January 1860 saying "I wish to leave the conception as well as the drawing of our shield entirely to yourself". Watts drew the figures and scenes for subjects suggested by Lord Elcho, as well as Britannia, and the medallion head of Victoria. It is not known whether he was responsible for the detailed

decoration. The shape of the Shield was designed by the son of a Mr Cayley, who was MP for the North Riding of Yorkshire from 1832 to 1862. The model for the Englishman at the base of the Shield was a young man called Reginald Cholmondeley, an amateur artist and assistant to Watts. The model for the Scotsman is unknown. The project was entrusted to Elkington and Co, who employed a Frenchman or Belgian by the name of Mainfroid to do the work. The shield was to be executed in *repousse* - the design being pushed out from the back - while the bands delineating the different areas of the burnished shield were to be gilded.

Thus the prize. But though its design seems to have been well underway by the spring of 1860 there was no suitable contest for which it could be awarded. Then in August 1861 - after the second Wimbledon Meeting - and on the eve of the second great rifle meeting in Montrose, the following letter appeared in the Montrose and Brechin Review, on 2 August 1861 and in the Edinburgh Courant on 30 July 1861.

## *A Challenge*

*Sir - On behalf of eleven volunteers of all Scotland, I am requested to challenge eleven volunteers of all England to shoot a match for two hundred guineas, on the following conditions, viz:*

*10 shots at 700 yards*

*10 shots at 800 yards*

*10 shots at 900 yards*

*with any description of rifle; without any artificial rest or telescopic sight. To be shot for at such time and place as the umpires may appoint.*

*I am prepared to nominate an umpire on the acceptance of this challenge by England.*

*The two umpires nominated may select a third to determine all questions that may arise. - I am etc.*

*Robert Taylor*

*Hon Sec Angus and Mearns Rifle Association, and Scottish Rifle Gathering*

Robert Taylor ran large and successful rifle meetings on the links of Montrose, which were combined with Highland Games, side-shows, floral arches and flags, open hours for the public houses, cricket and golf matches, a military review, civic balls, banquets and receptions to create a gala week for between 30 - 50,000 people with special trains arriving from as far away as Edinburgh and Glasgow. He must have been a well-known local figure, but so far nothing has been discovered of the eleven challengers whom he represented. Were any of the Rosses - keen exponents of long range shooting, or, indeed, Lord Elcho himself involved?



We do not know how much notice was taken of the challenge at the 1861 Montrose meeting, but certainly nothing seems to have happened until it was brought to the notice of the Editor of the Volunteer Service Gazette. He wrote on 7 September deprecating that the challenge had not been sent to him in the first place rather than to "some provincial papers", but otherwise he took up the idea with enthusiasm, and hoped there would be a match that year. Within a few weeks Lord Bury (England) and Captain Horatio Ross (Scotland) had been appointed Captains, and it was only accepted with reluctance that it would take a little time to agree the conditions and rules. These were completed by December 1861. The match was now to be an annual event, at 800, 900, and 1000 yards, while the question of a large money prize was dropped. The first contest would be at the Wimbledon Meeting of 1862.

Lord Bury was the thirty-year-old son of the Earl of Albemarle, and treasurer of the Royal Household. He was a fine shot who had tied for the Queen's Prize with Private Jopling in 1861. Horatio Ross was sixty-one, and the Grand Old Man of Scottish shooting. He was a superlative sporting shot, possibly only surpassed in his lifetime as a deer-stalker by his son Edward. He had a 1400 yards range on his estate at Netherley in Kincardineshire, and had shot with great success at distances up to 1800 yards using targets on boats moored in the Montrose basin. Horatio Ross had initially discouraged the idea of the match, as he felt that it would be difficult or impossible to find eleven worthy Scottish representatives. The final number agreed upon was, of course, eight.

Lord Elcho, when he heard of the proposed match, promptly offered the Shield as a prize. It would appear that though designed in outline, work on the shield had not yet begun, and this was going to take two or three years to complete. In the first rules, the names of the winners each year were to be engraved on the Shield, but this did not happen and instead the background areas are diaper (diamond) patterns of thistles or roses. The back of the shield, being rough and later leather-lined is quite unsuitable. Perhaps a smooth lining had been envisaged but was not practical. Each member of the winning team was to receive a small silver shield engraved with the names of the winners paid for by the losing side.

The first match was held on 9 July 1862, and attracted a great deal of interest. The English firers wore the red cross of St George, and the Scots the blue saltire of St Andrew on their arms, a custom still adhered to. Diagrams of the English targets were published in the Volunteer Service Gazette, showing all but the last few shots fired. Lord Bury who had made the top score for England at 800 and 900 yards, began disastrously at 1000 yards with eight misses and a ricochet in his first nine shots. It was found that a piece of lead had lodged in one of the grooves of the barrel and he was

permitted to finish with another rifle. His problems however made no difference to the result: England won by 166 points. In spite of this they had to be content at the prize-giving with a drawing of the design for the Shield "Lady Elcho tendered the drawing very gracefully, but assured the victors that Scotland had failed because it was only a sketch. The Scottish eight were reserving their efforts till the actual shield was made."

In 1863 with Lord Elcho and four members of the Ross family in the Scottish team, Scotland were again beaten, but had reduced the lead to 83 points. Although a model of the Shield was displayed in the Exhibition tent, the English Eight were only given the small silver individual shields.

By 1864, the match was considered as important as the Boat Race, or the Eton v Harrow match at Lords, and Scotland were the victors by 25 points. Though the Shield was still a plaster model it was substantial enough for the Scots to carry off in triumph. The Eight were also given small shields engraved with team names and scores. Two, those won by Wilken and Maxwell, still exist.

The design of the plaster model is rather different from that of the finished Shield but resembles the drawing published in the Illustrated London News in 1865. The crown is flatter with fewer arches. The Queen's head is heavier, and in an oval, not a circle. On the model, the wording on the garter is in Roman lettering, while on the finished shield Gothic is used. There are various other minor differences, the most



The plaster model of the Elcho Shield hanging in Parliament House, Edinburgh. (All photos: Rosemary A Meldrum)

important of which is that Bruce's spider is missing. The whole is coloured a dark dull grey. It would appear that though Watts had designed the Shield roughly in 1860, the design was not finalised until much later, as so much detail was changed between 1863 (the first model) and 1865 when the Shield was finished.

At the beginning of November 1864, the plaster shield was presented to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh in Parliament Square before a jubilant crowd. It was then hung in Parliament House. If the metal shield had not been finished before the next Wimbledon Meeting, the model would doubtless have gone South to be re-presented. In fact, it was two years later, in the Autumn of 1866 that Horatio Ross wrote to the Faculty of Advocates "offering to present to the Faculty the model of the Elcho Challenge Shield now hanging in the lobby of the Parliament House". This offer was accepted and they returned thanks to Mr Ross. The model remains there to this day, hanging over a doorway in the Box corridor.

In 1865 the iron Shield was finally finished and ready to be presented to the winners - England. It was a

magnificent sight. Burnished till it shone like silver and with the bands delineating the hexagonal area at the top of the shield and the sides, bright with gold. A trophy worthy of the match and Lord Elcho's wishes. He wrote "I paid them [Elkington] £500 for it, but they said it was worth £1500, and I believe it, as the work was most difficult and laborious, and no finer specimen of modern repousse metal work is to be seen." This then, is the trophy which is competed for each July, though now it has lost its colour and is a worn shadow of its former glory. In spite of the rule that the Shield "shall be kept in some conspicuous place in the country representing the winning team," England did nothing after their wins in 1865, 67, or 68. It was not until 20 August 1870, that the Lord Mayor of London received the Shield for the first time.

How then, apart from the inadequate written descriptions of the design, do we know what the Shield originally looked like? It was in 1879, when Lord Elcho left the active command of his regiment - the London Scottish, - that "They asked me what I should like to have as a remembrance of our long and happy connection. They proposed a dirk, but I mildly



The drawing of the Elcho Shield published in the Illustrated London News 8 July 1865.



The actual Elcho Shield as competed for today.



suggested an electro copy of the Elcho Shield, which I said I had always intended to give myself, intending to place it over the dining-room sideboard at Gosford, where, as they readily adopted my suggestion, said memorial presentation copy of my Shield is now happily located." Today, the Shield shining behind glass, and in an ornate carved frame, forms the centrepiece of the back of a sideboard some fifteen feet wide and twelve high. This is the third and last copy of the Elcho Shield, and the only one now that resembles what Lord Elcho and GF Watts envisaged.

I am most grateful to Lady Wemyss for allowing me to see the Elcho sideboard and to read Lord Elcho's memoirs. I should also like to thank Ted Molyneux and Dick Ellis of the NRA Museum, the curator of the Watts Gallery, Dr Robin Pizer and William Meldrum, all of whom helped in various ways.

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The electro copy of the Elcho Shield set in the back of the sideboard at Gosford, East Lothian.



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# THE ENGLAND TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA 2004

by Dick Horrocks and Robin Baker (team diarist)

<b>Captain</b>	Dick Horrocks	Lancashire
<b>Vice-Captain</b>	David Taylor	Lancashire
<b>Adjutant</b>	David Dyson	Yorkshire
<b>Coaches</b>	Dom Harvey	Surrey
	David Allen	Yorkshire
<b>Shooters</b>	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
	Nigel Penn	Northants, Leics & Rutland
	Hamish Pollock	Hampshire
	Alistair Speirs	Northumberland
	John Stevens	Yorkshire
	Steve Thomas	Hertfordshire
<b>Reserves (travelling)</b>	Jon Kent	Surrey
	Lucy Mace	London

Two years ago the English Twenty Club was invited to send an England Rifle Team to tour South Africa and compete against the South African Team at Bloemfontein in the Protea Match. I had the honour of being elected to captain this first England team and preparations started at the end of 2002. By October of that year, the team selection had yielded a team representative of all areas of the country and covering a range of ages. The team included five under 25s, which more than offset the three over 60s members. With a Lancashire Captain and Vice-Captain (Dave Taylor), a Yorkshire Adjutant (Dave Dyson), main coaches from Surrey (Dom Harvey) and Hertfordshire (Dick Winney) and a Treasurer (Steve Thomas) also from Hertfordshire, at least the management represented a fair North-South balance. The advent of e-mail and the internet eases the challenge of putting together and organising a team. With various e-boffins, notably John Stevens and Toby Coleridge, the still-live website was set up to publicise our activities and give our sponsors exposure.

During 2003 the team had a number of intensive training weekends culminating in a three-way Australia-course match between England South Africa 2004, GB Canada and USA 2004 and GB Kenya and Namibia 2004 on Sunday 14 September at Bisley. England finished 23 points behind GB Canada's 2357.280 and GB Kenya were 30 points behind England. Top scorer was Robin Baker on 198.23 followed by Dani Foulston on 197.16 using the Captain's rifle after hers broke down at 600 yards (she scored 100.6 at 900/1000 yards!). The team was starting to come together well and it was hoped that the

approaching winter break would not cause undue loss of form. With a final training session over the weekend 6 and 7 March to blow away cobwebs and sort out last minute problems, we congregated at Bisley on Friday 19 March.

## Cape Town

Departure from Heathrow via Bisley was by no means as trouble-free as hoped for. Some anxious moments arose when two most northerly members were stuck in a series of motorway jams and didn't know if they could extricate themselves in time for the flight. Note that during this time, our normally calm Adjutant was in danger of spontaneously igniting – the exact converse of his normal activities in a prominent Yorkshire Fire Brigade. We arranged that they would go directly to Heathrow; in fact they arrived before the rest of us as our coach driver took the scenic route, appeared to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown, got lost, and showed us most of Surrey (twice). The usual slow check through customs ensued when the check-in, security and customs personnel each had their own interpretation of the procedures before we took off for the overnight flight to Cape Town where we planned to rest and prepare for about five days prior to travelling to Bloemfontein.

The next day we landed in Cape Town and thanks to the hard work by Anita at SABU, our South African FACs were waiting for us; we quickly cleared through customs and were greeted by Syd Goslin. We picked up our six vans, and had our first experience of driving in convoy with our beloved Adjutant in his red van in the lead – he led from the front, as usual, although always seemed to think he was attending a fire call! We settled in at the Cape Western Suites just below Table Mountain. Lunch beckoned and then a large party (organised by our unofficial entertainments manager, Dom) went to watch the Australian Brumbies beat the local Stormers team in a Super 12s rugby match, much to the disappointment of the very partisan home crowd.

Following an invitation from Syd Goslin of the Western Cape Rifle Club and his friends, on Sunday 21 March, a very early morning party went fishing (6.00 am!) and caught two (small) sharks, two octopi and a large number of rather bony fish (some of which we later ate for supper in the hotel). At this stage, the professional tourists soon identified themselves with George Cann, Lucy Mace and the Adj apparently game for anything. Most of the others had a more leisurely day taking the cable car up Table Mountain and then relaxing on the beach.

The next day saw our first shoot of the tour. This was an informal team match (2 & 7 at 300m, 600m and 800m) against Western Cape Rifle Club using issued PMP ammunition – a rude introduction to local conditions with difficult, rapidly changing, winds and the need to shoot fast. The range is close to the coast and on sandy



soil, which in the sun offers an almost pure white, blinding surrounding. We divided into two teams, both of which were beaten by the local teams. Our top scorer was Dick Horrocks with 99.8, followed by Chris and Lucy with 99.6 and 99.2 respectively; the teams' results were Western Cape 1076.70, Western Cape Invitation 1062.54, England Red 1055.60, England White 1045.48 and GB Under 25 1031.58. The match was followed by a welcome meal in the clubhouse with good food and good company set against a magnificent backdrop of a South African sky.

After an evening of wound-licking following our defeat by the Western Cape, those of more eclectic leanings (which turned out to be the majority!) opted to spend Tuesday 23 March on a wine tasting tour in the Stellenbosch region. A great deal of wine was sampled, and not much found its way into the spittoon – not quite the correct way to go about it!

Wednesday 24 March was the last day in Cape Town and the team split into groups for various activities. The professional tourist group opted again to be “on the road” at 6.00am to experience swimming with great white sharks (where Dave Dyson gave them more than they bargained for – we are currently awaiting a writ from the World Wildlife Fund for having a negative impact on South African aquatic life!). Others visited a bespoke jewellers for a tutorial in diamond quality and generally to embarrass Alistair who was seeking to have an engagement ring designed. This was followed by touring down to the Cape of Good Hope taking in the jackass penguins on the south coast. Those not wishing to understand the secrets of diamonds or have a desire to be attacked by baboons at the Cape, played golf. Our final evening in Cape Town was a team dinner at the Waterfront with seven guests from the Western Cape Rifle Club. To break with previous nightly habits and to set the pace for the hard work ahead, the team were ordered to bed early for the first time . . . that the team doctor was running short of Imodium, which he related to an excess of good living rather than the water, was a major determining factor here!

### **Across the Karoo**

We planned to drive the 1000km or so to Bloemfontein across the Karoo Desert stopping at a bushcamp on the way and so at 8.30am the next morning we drove approximately 500km to Ko Ka Tsara Bushcamp near Beaufort West. As usual we were led in “Yorkshire fire engine style” from the front by the Adj who was rarely seen on the same side of the horizon as the rest of the convoy. It was during this drive that certain vans assumed names reflecting their contents and mode of driving . . . the lead van became known as the Chuckle Bus (a consequence of its tendency towards spontaneous random actions). Behind was the Bristol City Bus and the Love Bus (no prizes for associating the names with their occupants), followed by the Saga Bus and the Doom-and-Gloom Buses which were kept up to speed by the trailing Sunshine Bus containing the Captain and Vice-Captain in sheepdog mode. After a swim at the

camp, there was a game drive in the evening - more drive than game but great fun. The camp turned out to be under new management and the team “tested the system” that evening and in doing so two dining tables were upset during the evening meal (even the Captain had to admit that this was more because of faulty table design than loss of team discipline!).

The next day the convoy hit the road again, with a promise from the Adj that he would attempt to remain on the same horizon side as everyone else, and across the Karoo we sped for another 500+km to our base for the next 12 days or so, the Palm Lodge in Bloemfontein. The evening witnessed frenetic activity as ammunition had to be drawn from our handloading supplier (luckily only a few hundred yards down the road) as well as water and victuals for the next day.

### **Bloemfontein**

For anyone wishing to enter the SABU Championships, there is the opportunity to shoot in the Free State Championships at the General de Wet range for the two days immediately before. Firing in these matches not only gets one into an early morning start frame of mind but schools one quickly into South African shooting; for instance, typically four ranges are fired one after the other falling back to longer ranges under the full exposure of the African sun. High factor sun cream and at least two or three litres of water each are essential for survival. And so, the next morning, Saturday 27 March, saw us drive the 20km to the range for the Individual Free State matches starting with short range (2 & 10 at 300m and 2 & 11 at 600m) and followed by long range (2 & 10 at 800m and 2 & 11 at 900m). Nigel Ball came second in the short range, first in the long range and first in the aggregate - the first time the Free State Championship has been won by an outsider (does this explain why the trophy appeared not to be available for presentation?). Other notable performances were Lucy who came third, first, and second in the respective sections of the ladies competitions with Susie coming third in the long range. Dick Horrocks came third in the Veterans Aggregate. This was probably the hottest day of the tour with temperatures above 35°C and light swirling winds – a good day to prepare us for what might follow.

As is typical in South Africa, the next day being a Sunday was a day of rest and so the team could relax. One party (containing most of the professional tourist squad) went off to see the very large hole in the ground at Kimberley, passing some of de Beers' diamond mines on the way back where other holes were probably being created. Others caught up with their sleep, chilled out around the pool, or visited Naval Hill in Bloemfontein.

Back into action the next day for the Free State Pairs Match under Queens II conditions, the squad was divided into pairs with suitable names for this self-coached match. Our top pair was Poets Corner (Steve and Toby), followed by the Yorkshire Puddings (John Stevens and Dave Dyson) with 144.14 and 144.13, and Pat-a-cake (George and Robin) with 143.15 and 145.11

in third place. Apart from the fact that our top pair didn't win, we never did discover the overall results; like the absence of Nigel's trophy, this remains a mystery still! In the afternoon, we collected our score sheets for the SABU Championships starting the next day and under coaches orders went to the 200m range to check zeros. One aspect of the SABU Meeting is the need to pass through Weapons Control, which usually means a long queue. However, as a special attraction for the team, mother nature ensured that while waiting we could witness a spectacular thunder storm. The same storm later in the evening delayed a small group attending the RAF team's party for over an hour while half inch hailstones rained down and the Bloemfontein roads turned into rivers. The forecast indicated that more storms would follow the next day and locals said (as is often the case when tourists are in earshot) "It's not usually like this at this time of the year!" These storms were to herald a week of almost English weather conditions except that the winds were frequently more changeable than at home.

Very early on Tuesday 30 March (6.15am) we left for the range and the SABU Opening Ceremony (The Raising of the Flags) at 7.00am. After prayers and welcomes, national and provincial flags were raised after a special parachuting event from a low-flying plane hovering in threatening clouds during which the South African and other flags were carried by descending paratroopers. We fired the Scottish Sword match (2 & 10 at 300m and 900m) in mixed rainy conditions; this first individual shoot is not in the Grand. It was won by David Dodds with 100.13; our top scorer was John Stevens with 98.08. During the afternoon, the first national and international team events of the SABU meeting were held. Of prime importance to England was the RSA International Match against South Africa (2 & 15 at 800m and 900m) for teams of 12, which we treated as a dress rehearsal for the later Protea match. The South Africans gave notice of what we could expect and scored 1752.148 to our 1715.121. Our top scorer was Nigel Ball with 148.13, our only score that was actually above the South African average of 146. Again, as seen in the Western Cape, wind changes were continuously happening and both coaches and firers had to react quickly.

The SABU meeting is unusual in having almost two full days of team club matches prior to the start of the Grand. This enabled us to enter three English Twenty teams each of one coach, acting as captain, plus six shooters. This provided ideal training for each of our coaches and respective target squads. On Wednesday 31 March in the Hamilton Cup (Queen's I conditions) Dom's team did best with 621.59 (top scorers Alistair with 105.11 and John Stevens with 105.12) and came third to Baviaanspoort with 626.64 (ex 630). In the Rhodes Cup (2 & 10 at 800m and 900m) David Taylor's team did best with 570.46 (top scorer Hamish with 99.11) but failed to make the top three.

All Fools' Day beckoned us once again to the range for a final team shoot, the Dewar Shield (2 & 10 at 300m and

600m) and the start of the Grand after lunch. In the Dewar, again Dom's team was our best with 583.50 and came third to Witwatersrand A with 586.46. The Grand started in the afternoon with the Free State Cup (Queen's I conditions), which was won by Nick Mace from the Channel Islands with 105.13. Doug came second with 105.10 and Chris was fourth with 105.8. After the day's events and back in Bloemfontein, we were treated to a demonstration by our Adjutant of how a fire engine should be driven and our red van ended up between two tanks on low loaders in the middle of what looked like a convoy of the entire South African defence force, complete with police outriders. However, they escaped without being locked up and did manage to find a place to eat without bars on the window!

Friday witnessed a continuation of the cooler, overcast weather experienced all week, with moderate to fresh winds. The competitions were the Dalrymple (2 & 10 at 300m and 2 & 11 at 600m) won by Dave Lubbe with 105.11 (our top scorer was Nigel Ball, fourth with 104.6), the Municipal (2 & 10 at 800m) won by H Gerber with 50.4 (our top scorer was Hamish, 14th with 49.2), and the Dave Smith (2 & 10 at 900m) shot with a rising wind and won by Alex Langley of the Channel Islands team with 50.4 (our top scorer was Nigel Penn with 48.5). The daily aggregate was won by Hamish with 200.11.

The next day was the start of the State President's match with the First Stage (Queens I conditions) won by David Dodds with 105.15. Our top scorer was Nigel Ball who came 20th with 105.9. This was followed in the afternoon by the Kings Norton match (2 & 10 at 600m) won by AP Moller with 50.5. Our top scorer was Jon Kent who came 12th with 50.3. The final shoot was the Col R Bodley (2 & 10 at 900m), which was won by Dom with 50.5 (were we to see a trophy at last? . . . sadly no, this was missing at the Prizegiving!). Pete came eighth in the daily aggregate, and David Taylor came second in Class B. In the evening we held a braai at the Palm Lodge, jointly with the England Under 21 team. The Captain made presentations to Eddie Stigant and Deon Burger who had been particularly helpful to us both at the Cape and in preparing for our visit during the previous 18 months. Eddie was to be our chief adversary since he captained the forthcoming South African Protea team.

Sunday morning (at 6.00am again!) with the indomitable Lucy in the lead, a game drive was undertaken (doesn't she ever sleep?) and then back home for breakfast with a late afternoon hunting party organised for a few self-styled white hunters. George was to the fore here bagging at least one four-legged quarry for his host's pot.

After over 18 months planning, we were now entering the final week of the tour and matches. Monday 5 April dawned with pleasantly and comparatively cool weather. The day started with the Jack Mitchley (2 & 10 at 300m) won by JH Grobler with 50.9. Susie (also 50.9) came second after a tie shoot. This was followed by the Presidents (2 & 10 at 600 and 800m) won by JG du Toit with 99.10. Pete was fifth with 99.7. This was the last





Dick Winney and Dave Taylor coach at 800 metres, Western Cape.



All three coaches at 900 metres in the Protea Match.



Our first view of the Cape Western Suites with Table Mountain.



On Safari? Or is it the African Keystone Cops!



With apologies to the Romans but they did provide England's first real infrastructure!



shoot in the Grand, which was won yet again by David Calvert by four clear points. Our top scorer was Pete in sixth place, with Alistair in 18th place. In the competitions concurrent with the Grand, Pete was second in the Under 25, Jon Kent was second in the Under 19 and Tracy was third in the Ladies Championship. Steve was third in Class A of the 600 Metres Aggregate and Dick Winney was third in Class B. In the Short Range Aggregate Dave Dyson was third, and in the Long Range Aggregate Pete was second in Class A and Dom was second in Class B. The team for the Protea Match was announced in the afternoon, followed by a serious team tactical discussion. After this the official team photograph in full No 1s was to be taken. However, at the approaching hour, the Captain and Vice-Captain became aware of an unnatural silence and a photographer facing a number of empty chairs. Suddenly the team appeared (obviously taking their cue from a previous team meeting which the Captain had conducted in his bathrobe) for the unofficial version. The photographer was fairly nonplussed but did gain the extra business!

The next day, the State Presidents Second Stage (Queens II conditions) started under easy conditions that became progressively harder as the day heated up. This stage was won by J Bruwar with 150.20, and our top scorer was Steve who was placed 12th with 149.13. Fifteen of the squad made it through to the final of 142 shooters.

The Protea Match, the culmination of the tour, took place in the afternoon. The weather was very hot and quite still at the start, but the thunderstorm that might have been to our advantage never materialized. Unfortunately, England failed to start well at 300 metres, trailing by nine points as we moved to 600 metres. Again, the South Africans shot very steadily and increased their lead finishing with an impressive eight points off at 900 metres. At least our gap of 31 points was less than that of 37 points in the RSA match a week earlier.

However, unlike the seniors, the England Under 21 team won their match against the South African Under 21 team. This was followed by the Protea dinner attended by all the South African and overseas teams, with speeches by the various captains.

The final Wednesday (7 April) arrived with a much welcome rest in the morning with some packing required prior to our departure the next day. The final of the State Presidents (2 & 15 at 800m and 900m) was held in the afternoon. The conditions were very hot and apparently still, but in fact there was enough movement to keep everyone twiddling frantically. The State Presidents trophy was won by Andries Moller with 299.24; David Calvert was second with 298.42. Our top scorer was Steve Thomas, with 293.23. The RSA Championship (Grand Aggregate plus State Presidents II and III) was won yet again by David Calvert who also won the Bramley Chain. Our top scorer in the Championship was Pete who came tenth. The day ended with a final dinner for all the UK based teams at the Beef Baron where

four of our team members (Jon, Pete, Toby and Dom) successfully took on the challenge of eating 1kg steaks, leaving their names immortalised on a wall plaque to be mounted in their honour.

Thursday 8 April saw us drive in convoy to Johannesburg International Airport. The drive was not without incident, and the transport manager and the team map reader were both sacked by common consent. However, we did reach the correct destination after a brief visit to Johannesburg's other airport (courtesy of the Adj!). The journey home was uneventful apart from a rather tedious passage through customs at Heathrow. The team disbanded at Bisley after an excellent and most enjoyable tour, even if we didn't manage to lift much loot.

### **Final thoughts**

Any team that is going to beat South Africa on its home ground is going to have to shoot quickly and coach extremely straight. Ammunition is of crucial importance since each South African will have handloads tuned to his own rifle and the range. In our case, the intention was that the team would be supplied with a single batch of locally handloaded ammunition for the entire shoot. However and in spite of preparations that started over a year ago, it turned out that some components were still held up in SA customs after several months. The result was two different types of case, which then had to be reloaded during the competitions. With returned convertible sighters this created something of a nightmare for the ammunition squad (George, Toby and Pete) who had to keep all the various batches separate. However, they coped extremely well and no-one suffered from a mixed batch and on the whole, the ammunition performed well.

The angular size of the bull is smaller than the equivalent Bisley target at all ranges except for 500 metres. This is partially offset by the advantages of handloaded ammunition and the fact that the wind has less effect at the high altitude, but it meant that 300 metres and 600 metres were particularly testing.

One particular aspect of the competition was the high percentage of overseas competitors, who must have made up about 30% of the total entry. In addition to the senior England team and the Under 21 team, there were Under 25 and Under 19 GB teams, an RAF team and a Channel Islands team as well as small teams from Australia, New Zealand and Germany and many individual overseas competitors. The organisers are very aware that this support is essential for the South African Championships and are keen to assist any overseas visitors.

On a final note, may I thank all members of the team for being so manageable and for obviously enjoying the tour. Thanks also to all the assistance of SABU staff and representatives as well as our many sponsors.

Visit the website at

[www.englishrifleteam.org.uk](http://www.englishrifleteam.org.uk)



# GREAT BRITAIN UNDER 25 RIFLE TEAM TO SOUTH AFRICA 2004

by Graham Nelson and Richard Jeens

<b>Captain</b>	Erica McMullan	GBU25, Ireland, Ulster
<b>Vice-Captain</b>	Kitty Jack	GBU25, Scotland, Kent
<b>Adjutant</b>	Paul Sykes	GBU25, London
	Robert Clarke	Lincolnshire
	Deborah Fenn	GB, Suffolk
	James Headon	East of Scotland
	Henry Jeens	Wales, Gloucs
	Richard Jeens	GBU25, Wales, Gloucs
	Graham Nelson	Northumberland
	Richard Stewart	GBU25, Norfolk
	Paul Wheeler	GBU25
	Alex Woodward	Wales, London

The team convened at the Surrey Clubhouse on 20 March to the bitter smell of coffee, the sweet smell of frying bacon, and the eclectic music of Paul W. Despite a full night of 'professional' preparation by the London contingent we left Bisley ahead of schedule. Having failed to convince the check-in staff that a rearsight was not actually a dangerous weapon, much repacking was required, however, firearms clearance was greatly assisted by Shiv from Securicor who was also very helpful on our return.

Once aboard the plane Jeens Jnr immediately set upon impressing the air hostesses in order to get his blazer hung up in a proper locker. The rest of the flight in cattle class passed without incident except for Bob being mistaken for a 12 year-old by aircrew bar staff, much to his own dismay (and our amusement). Day two dawned artificially at 33000 feet and we landed safely at Cape Town International Airport following a nutritious breakfast of yellow rubber and pink goo. Having passed through firearms control without collecting our proper permits and with Bob's kit falling through a hole in his bag which had been kindly created by SAA, we were met by Garry from Western Cape Bisley Union.

Afyer checking in to Breakwater Lodge, we immediately headed up Table Mountain. The views were fantastic. This was also our first experience of the varied South African wildlife as we were introduced to an overgrown guinea pig called the Rock Hyrax. Weighing in at an impressive 6kgs and at 18 inches in length we met this little fellow beneath our dinner tables at the restaurant, where it successfully managed to frighten all of the girls and gain a full plate of chips for its own consumption. For the descent, eight of the boys wisely chose to take the "gentle" stroll back down to the base. After competitive sprints and 'restorative' fag breaks, we emerged onto the lower road 1½ hours later after a deceptively steep descent only to dice with death on the road back to Cape Town. Ever economical, Paul Sykes decided to save us 30p each by hiring a ten seated

rickshaw which displayed evidence of having been a minibus in a previous life. By the end of our perilous journey we still could not work out whether the erratic nature of our journey was due to mechanical irregularity or to the fact that the driver was texting his wife while rolling a cigarette all at the same time as holding the nearside wing mirror in place.

Day 3 presented us with our first practice match, hosted by Western Province Bisley Union. Their baking hot shooting range outside Cape Town pitted us against the English and our hosts. Conditions, our recent arrival and England's shameless borrowing of wind calls led to a thorough drubbing by the locals. Nonetheless it was an excellent experience and much needed reality check for our team, which had beaten the England team at Bisley the weekend before departure. Particular thanks must also go to those who treated us to food and drink after the match.

James Headon's experience of Cape Town – this was his third year in a row – was revealed as he found a Waterfront restaurant capable of taking our combined U25 and England party at short notice. The social side of shooting continued well into the evening.

The next 2½ days were spent on various excursions around the Cape before our flight to Bloemfontein on Day 6. Five of the team decided to visit Robben Island with its lime quarry, work yards, solitary confinement cells and censoring office. The rest of the team took the more leisurely approach to foreign tours by not bothering to disembark at the Cape of Good Hope. Instead they drove five times around the traffic circle to allow everyone to get a photo of the sign. At Cape Point Deborah was chased by an amorous baboon while James sealed a Mug of the Day victory by using his rubbish bin as a dirty laundry receptacle which was then duly emptied by the cleaner.

The team also visited the Two Oceans Aquarium, the gem museum, and the Waterfront shops. A full day's excursion was made to the Winelands. We saw, sipped and, for some, swallowed heartily at the Spiers, Fairview and Boschendale vineyards. Our guides excelled in showing us not only the wines but also the settings – including the road which formed Mandela's long walk to freedom. A final dinner at the Green Dolphin café concluded our time in Cape Town.

Our internal flight to Bloemfontein was made on the afternoon of Day 6. Duly mindful of the importance of recreational activities we packed the team football carefully into a big cardboard box before wrapping it in "fragile" tape. After paying the two Rand extra handling charge we moved through to airside where we were wished a "supa-dupa" flight before boarding our soapbox airplane and clipping into the pedals at our feet, 'Chicken Run' style.





- 1 The Great Britain Under 25 Rifle Team to South Africa 2004.
- 2 At the top of Table Mountain, Cape Town.
- 3 A tough training session in the Winelands region.
- 4 The South African Defence Force descend with the South African flag . . .
- 5 . . . and luckily manage not to land on any spectators, vehicles or flagpoles!
- 6 Male bonding in progress.
- 7 The four Under 25 teams.

*(Photos: (1,2,3,6,7) Under 25 team, (4) Conrad Steele-Benny and (5) Peter Medhurst)*





Having collected the rifles off the baggage retrieval belt we carefully dropped the "fragile" box in front of SAA staff before playing cricket with it in the car park. We arrived at City Lodge by 6pm in our newly collected Condors; in their infinite wisdom the hire company gave Erica (female and blonde) the slowest, most underpowered, bus.

Day 7, a practice day, began two hours early on the ranges as Erica had cleverly packed the range instructions in the luggage being driven up by the England team. However, minor obstacles passed, we got our first view of the Bloemfontein complex and her fickle winds as we quickly learned that changes, although less pronounced, had a habit of occurring whilst the firer was in the aim. That evening the Australian U25 team joined us for dinner and engaged in some wistful reminiscing over 'that' drop goal and we received some equally entertaining Pommie bashing in return.

Day 8 was the Free State Open. The conditions were slightly easier than the previous day, and scores reflected this with Erica impressively winning the Ladies Open Class with 199.12 ex 210 as well as the Ladies Short Range (with Debs a close second) and second in the Ladies Long Range. Rob Clarke came third in the B Class Aggregate winning the B Class Short Range Aggregate with 100.8 ex 105. At the same time Richard Jeens came second in the B Class Aggregate with 194.13. Rich Stewart came third in the Open Class Short Range Aggregate with 103.14. The winners were serenaded to "Stand up for the Champions" as all the other competitors applauded their achievements.

Day 9, Sunday, meant a day off from the shooting with some well needed relaxation. Erica, Graham, James, and the brothers Jeens went to Kimberley. As well as the 'Big Hole' itself, the Museum took the visitor back to the early age of prospecting and even allowed one to have a go at finding diamonds in the broken up stone. Our departure was delayed by James (our resident geologist) deciding to buy some stones from the shop (we did point out that he could pick up loads from the ground). The journey home was made more interesting by a complete lack of awareness of fuel levels by Erica and then by her wanton destruction of a poor innocent road bird. A strong and successful bid for Mug of the Day despite Henry's best efforts to persuade us that he did all of his wind coaching using the flowers!

Day 10, Monday, saw the team divide into pairs to compete in the Free State Pairs match. Scores were variable and even our leading couple of Erica and Kitty could not match the locals. Long range in the afternoon saw a dramatic change in the weather and a ferocious thunderstorm, which thankfully only properly arrived after shooting had finished.

Day 11 marked the opening of the SABU Championships. The opening ceremony included the delivery of each country's flags by parachutists of the SA Defence Force (less the Union Jack). The Scottish Sword match

provided an excellent warm up shoot and scores were again solid with five members of the team in the top 40; Henry finished sixth. The weather was again overcast with rumbling thunder in the surrounding hills. Patches of sunshine up and down the range made for difficulties with sight pictures and inconsistent mirage.

Our first International Match took place in the afternoon (2 & 15 at 800m and 900m). GB Red contained Erica, Paul Sykes, Paul Wheeler and Richard Jeens, coached by Richard Stewart. GB Blue contained Graham, Deborah, Alex and Henry, coached by Kitty. After 800 metres the Red team were slightly ahead of the South Africans with the Blues a little behind ahead of the Australians. These positions were not to change after 900 metres but the gap between the Springboks and the Blues closed to just two points. GB Red won with 584.42 followed by SA with 572.47, GB Blue with 570.38 and Australia with 554.28. The victory put us all in a good mood for both the Junior Teams Reception at the range and our joint reception with the RAF at Reyneke Park. Presentations were made to and received from the South African and Australian teams.

On Day 12 we shot the Rhodes Cup match. We split into two teams of six, with the two coaches for each team having to shoot as well. This proved enjoyable but hard work. Those opposing teams able to present one coach benefitted from continuity on the still tricky wind conditions. The light was again variable, and heavy patchy cloud delivered rain in places, for the benefit of anyone feeling homesick!

Thursday marked the start of the Thomas Theron Grand Aggregate. Following the Dewar team match in the morning, the Free State Cup individual match (Queen's I conditions) provided some interesting wind at 600 metres. Erica was placed 19th with a 104.8. Some members of the team were learning to their cost that sometimes the best policy was to leave the sights alone and just get on with it.

Day 2 of the Grand was to be a busy one with four details to shoot. The morning consisted of the Dalrymple Cup (2 & 10 at 300m and 2 & 11 at 600m) with Paul W and Graham being placed seventh and twentieth respectively with 103s. Long range in the afternoon provided challenging conditions in the Municipal match (2 & 10 at 800m) and the Dave Smith Cup (2 & 10 at 900m). Richard Jeens was placed twelfth at 800 metres with 49.2, and 24th at 900 metres with 47.4. After this full day's shooting the Grand was beginning to take shape with several of the team in the top 50 and Graham temporarily leading the way.

Saturday, Day 15 of the tour, was again to be a strenuous one with no fewer than five shoots. The First Stage of the State President's (Queen's I) was followed by the Kings Norton at 600 metres and the Col Bodley Memorial at 900 metres. Richard Jeens was placed sixth in the State President's with a 105.12. Paul Sykes, however, made his bid for Mug of the Day by dropping his last to count

at 600 metres (104.13 and 26th). In the afternoon in the Kings Norton there were several high scores with Debs required to tie shoot with a 50.5; she came second. Back at 900 metres Rich Stewart came in 17th with a very tidy 49.1 in a detail with a wind bracket of 2½ right to 3 left. This left him just three off for the day (11th) and now the team's top firer in the Grand. Gallingly the second detail had a much easier time of it. That evening the U19s and the U25s went out for dinner before meeting up with some of the RAF and England team members in Barba's Club. Sunday was a day for rest and shopping.

Monday, Kitty's birthday, was the last day of the Grand and our last chance to impress before team selection. There were only two matches: the Jack Mitchley (2 & 10 at 300m) and the President's Cup (2 & 10 at 600m and 800m). Paul Wheeler returned a 50.8 with four other possibles also posted at 300 metres. The general consensus decided that 600 metres was harder than 800 metres with patchy cloud and fish tailing wind. Paul Sykes shot very well at 600 metres for a 50.4 whilst back at 800 metres Henry Jeens shot an excellent 50.4 in the second, far steadier, detail. Rich S was again consistently good with a 49.3 to make himself top team member at fourteenth in the Grand Aggregate and third placed Under 25 in the Grand.

Tuesday provided the Second Stage of the State President's and the U25 Protea Match. Conditions did not appear to be too difficult until 600 metres, but scores appeared to be a little disappointing with Paul Sykes top scoring within the team on 147.9.

For the U25 Match (2 & 10 at 300m, 600m and 900m) we again entered two teams with the Red team unchanged and James replacing Deborah in the Blue team. After a relatively easy 300 metres, South Africa were just in front with three points dropped; GB Red were on four off. It proved very tricky at 600 metres but some patient coaching from GB Red secured a two point lead going into the final range. Despite some solid shooting from Alex and Henry, GB Blue struggled with a disappointing 300 metres and 600 metres which only realistically left them in touch with Australia. Calmer conditions prevailed at 900 metres and all four U25 teams shot well. Unfortunately GB Blue had left themselves too much to do so finished fourth. GB Red, however, posted the second highest target score on the range with 590.69, finishing nine points clear of South Africa. This was as high as the South African Protea team average and better than any England target. Paul Sykes tied for the highest individual score on the range.

The match was an excellent occasion and was very tight all the way through. Afterwards hearty congratulations were exchanged before a mass photograph of all the participants together. It was nice to see that six months of training (sometimes in the most difficult conditions) had paid off.

The matches were followed by the official dinner at which all teams were present. Awards and thanks were

made to many but in particular to Anita at SABU, Deon Burger as International Liaison, Syd Gosling from Western Province and General Alexander, ever in control of the ranges.

The State President's Final on Wednesday concluded the shooting. The team had eight of its members shooting with the other four in support roles as the day threatened to be the hottest day of the entire meeting. With a low cut, some members felt that they were not really in the running. It proved difficult at 800 metres with Henry and Erica scoring good 74s but with most other members scoring solid 72s and 73s. Back to 900 metres the wind settled and both Paul Sykes and Rich Stewart shot 75s.

Andries Moller eventually emerged the winner with a very impressive 299 with David Calvert one point behind. Closest was Erica in tenth place on 294.26.

The British teams had booked out the Beef Baron in its entirety for the night, and the team also used it for the purpose of celebrating Deborah's birthday. Dom Harvey was good to his word after his target was beaten by Rich Stewart's and so the evening began with his alcoholic generosity. After the meal, the slightly less aged moved onto a late bar to continue the socialising.

Thursday morning faltered slowly towards our departure for the game reserves with Paul Wheeler sleeping on the reception couch and Bob rubbing his own sore neck - a product of having used Rich Stewart's scope stand as a pillow the previous night. We moved out to drive to Pretoria, where Richard van Lingen kindly agreed to store our rifles and kit before our flight home. Before moving on to Umlani Private Game Reserve on the Friday afternoon in time for the evening game drive, Woody felt it prudent to leave his number ones for safe keeping at the Pretoria Holiday Inn.

We spent the next 2½ days on game drives getting up at 5:30am to see the vast array of wild animals including elephants, white rhino, giraffes, wildebeest, zebra, hundreds of colourful birds and innumerable impala. The highlight of the drives must have been the sighting of the pair of dominant male lions out in the bush as they awoke for a night's hunting. Thanks to our guides Joe and Shadrach, we were able to get 10 metres away from these magnificent beasts. We also had the breathtaking experience of seeing an entire breeding herd of elephants pass us as we stopped above the river. One regret was that we could not cap our "Big Five" with the elusive leopard. Still, one needs something as an excuse to come back!

After our game drives we spent some time driving through the Kruger before driving back to Johannesburg. Having talked our way out of £5000 of excess baggage charges, we safely arrived back in the UK to reflect on an enjoyable and successful tour.

Many thanks to Erica, Kitty and Paul for all their work and to the plethora of people who have helped, supported and sponsored us.



# GREAT BRITAIN UNDER 19 RIFLE TEAM TO SOUTH AFRICA 2004

by James Postle



The two teams after the match.

(Photos: Peter Medhurst)

<b>Commandant</b>	James Postle	Epsom College
<b>Adjutant</b>	Simon Fraser	CCRS
<b>Armourer</b>	Peter Medhurst	CCRS
<b>Lady Officer</b>	Clare Huxter	Southampton University
<b>Team</b>	Jonathan Borland	Dollar Academy
	Alex Hoyle	Sedbergh School
	Katie Hullah	Greshams School
	Edward Jeens	formerly Marlborough College
	Robert Nelson	formerly Stamford School
	Oliver Russell	formerly RGS Guildford
	Sandy Walker	Framlingham College
	Edward Welford	formerly Wellington College

This proved to be the most successful GB Under 19 team to have competed at Bloemfontein, winning both the Long Range and the Junior Protea Matches against the South African Under 19 team. The SA team proved to be, as ever, a strong and competitive one, and both matches were close contests. In the Junior Protea, the match was all square after 300 and 600 metres and at 900 metres with the last four firing it remained level. As the wind got up, their last two firers struggled as ours finished first. The Simon Fraser trophy was regained for only the second time in seven years.

The team exhibited an excellent attitude throughout the shooting and touring phases of the trip, knowing when to focus and how to relax as well! We should all like to thank those who made our experiences in South Africa happy and memorable ones.



James Postle, Clare Huxter and the Under 19 team.



The team in action.

# SPRING INTO ACTION WEEKEND

by Fred James, Match Director Spring Into Action

If you do not know what happens at the smaller Action Weekends held at Bisley, this may give you some insight into what you are missing.

The weekend of 27 and 28 March saw the second Spring Into Action Weekend. There was very strong support for the event with over 144 competitors prepared to brave the weather entering a total of 283 competitions over the two days. The National Shooting Centre pulled out all the stops and had the ranges ready for Friday to allow the Range Officers to shoot their cards in advance, thus enabling them to concentrate fully on the weekend's activities. Sue and Jane ran the front counter in their usual efficient style and sold a new range of Phoenix clothing and shower-proof products. The money raised will go towards the RO's night out at the Phoenix Meeting.

Stats was again run by Charles Murton with help from Chris Farr; special thanks are due to Charles for again volunteering to help with new computer programming and making the stats work.

New gas barbecues had been purchased and were well stocked; Café Melville was run by Christine Lowe who provided a fine fare of hot food to both staff and competitors alike.

Stuart Haxton (CRO) and the range crews on Melville did a fantastic job in running the shoots on time. These, together with the rest of the 1500 shoots, proved to be very popular and were heavily subscribed. John Robinson quickly got to grips with the practicalities and timing of the .22 rubber plate shooting: a shoot involving a course of fire held at six stages requiring a total of 120 rounds of ammunition. Each stage is shot four times with the best three being put towards the total score. David Holt and Richard Schofield ran the 25m and 50m which was open to the GBCF, GRSB and Long Barrelled Pistol.

Classic Rifles were located on Stickledown and were looked after by David Shepperd (CRO) and Neil McPheason who did a great job in getting a large

number of shooters through in difficult conditions. David of the BBC RC has been a great help in developing this increasingly popular event; we are looking forward to revising the course of fire for the next 90m shoot in order to cut down waiting time for competitors. We are leaning towards having four prone sighted shots followed by each competitor being allocated two targets firing at the prone and sitting stage on the first detail and then kneeling and standing on the second detail. We hope the increased turnover will free up time and space for more entries and re-entries.

For the first time, we were able to run a course of fire for 12-bore shotgun firing solid slug on Stickledown butt zero with 30m turning targets. Our thanks go to Andy Duffy of the Metropolitan Police Shooting Club who enthusiastically ran this shoot. Although the entries on this occasion were relatively low due to the late decision to run this competition, we hope to build on this with the next shoot being planned for Friday 27 and Saturday 28 August 2004 during the Gallery Rifle and Pistol Championships.

Jim Carter ran the McQueen helped by Howard Dixon. Jim was a valiant last minute volunteer standing in for Ken Shorthouse who was unfortunately ill. We wish Ken a speedy recovery and trust he will be fit for the next meeting.

For the first time we were visited by the Midland RC of Eire who brought over a team of some twenty two competitors. They donated a splendid Irish pewter cup and other prizes to the first, second and third placed competitors in the F Class competition which was won by Liam Jennings. Entering the F Class 90m Class, and the McQueen, John Paul, Captain of the Midland RC of Eire, said his team had had a great time and they will be back for future events.

The next event will be held on 28 and 29 August - entry forms are available now from Fred James at the NRA.



A rarely seen flock of brass bandits in their natural habitat at Melville range.



Three of the competitors in the 1500 competition scoring their third stage match. (Photos: Fred James)



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# LET THEM EAT CAKE - THE ENTENTE CORDIALE MATCH 2004

by Finbarr O'Sullivan

On Saturday 17 April 2004 Oxford University Rifle Club (OURC) and the Tir National de Versailles (TNV) took part in a friendly fullbore rifle competition at Versailles. Organised by Franquelin de Castro and Finbarr O'Sullivan, the competition was named the Entente Cordiale Match and was recognised as an official event in the Entente Cordiale centenary celebrations being held throughout 2004.

The OURC team of five arrived in Paris on the Friday night ready for an early start. Saturday began well with breakfast in Versailles for the OURC team in a small café near the range. The patron apologised that, because of a problem with the baker, there were no croissants or bread. To the delight of everyone he told us he had only cake, which seemed very appropriate for a café in Versailles.

After large portions of chocolate cake swimming in crème anglaise, the Oxford team proceeded to the range. The TNV had its 150th birthday in 2003 and its premises are right next to the Chateau de Versailles hidden in some woods. The club is well provided for with many different disciplines on offer from 300m fullbore to 10m air pistol and air rifle.

We began with an initial practice session for Oxford to sort out their elevations and get used to the electronic marking. None of the visitors had ever fired 300m with these ISSF targets before so it was a bit of shock to find that the bull is not much larger than a minute in diameter. Everyone shot two series of two convertible sighters and 15 to count, and given that the targets were ISSF (bull scoring 10) this gave an HPS of 300. On recommendation from TNV, the OURC were using .308 Norma Match with non-Moly 168 grains Sierra MK which proved to shoot very tightly indeed.

The TNV fielded a very strong team, including three Gendarmes, one of whom had been French National Champion. However, despite being hampered by a

lack of mirage bands the Oxford team put in a creditable performance and one of them, Adam McCullough, achieved the second highest score overall dropping only three points. M Beaudoin was the highest scorer on the day dropping only two points, so it was closely fought at the individual level.

The scores were as follows, OURC losing by an average of a little over 10 points per person:

TNV		Oxford	
Beaudoin	298.18	McCullough	297.16
Berlara	296.12	O'Sullivan	289.10
Taranoff	293.08	Hebbes	284.04
Bonnez	291.11	Padbury	280.07
Deloume	283.07	Dee	266.02
Boussaingault	281.06	Jarritt	264.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>1742.62</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1680.41</b>

The TNV very kindly took the team to lunch at a local restaurant and in the afternoon the Oxford team were occupied with pistol shooting. They were presented with a range of pistols to try, including a .45 Glock, a 9mm Glock, a .357 Magnum revolver and an array of .22 pistols. Captured on video was an amusing short sequence showing McCullough's reaction to firing the first round through the .45 Glock. As there is now a generation of shooters coming through in the UK since the pistol ban, we can try to capture the essence of it here for you . . . BANG!

At the end of a great afternoon the TNV presented medals to the teams and to the highest scorers in each. OURC in return presented a fine pewter tankard to the President of the TNV engraved with text mentioning the Entente Cordiale Match. Both the TNV and OURC hope that this will now become an annual event shooting for the trophy that OURC presented.

A dinner was thrown for both teams in Paris in the evening in a posh flat in the 16th arrondissement



Jon Jarritt tries out a 9mm Glock.

(Photo: Adam McCullough)



OURC Captain Stephen Hebbes presents the Entente Cordiale Trophy to Franquelin de Castro.

(Photo: Chris Padbury)





Top scorers Beaudoin, McCullough and Berlara in the TNV Trophy room. *(Photo: Chris Padbury)*

giving the OURC team a chance to practise their French, which they did with mixed results. The team turned out in their striped half-blue jackets to a dinner of boeuf bourguignon accompanied by Gigondas; rather a lot of Gigondas in fact. On the opening of the ninth bottle one of the Gendarmes was heard to utter "Oh là là là!" before promptly pouring herself a large glass. A colourful cheeseboard of mimolette,

roquefort, tomme de savoie and a chevre preceded the appearance of a 40-year old single malt and a 40-year old Armagnac which went down very well. The appearance of the port decanter wasn't really necessary, but, for students, was inevitable to complete an evening of Edwardian-style decadence, the only ingredients lacking were large cigars and dancing girls.

On the Sunday morning the Oxford team had a spot of trouble waking up in time for a tour of the British Ambassador's Residence before departing for the UK, having had a legendary weekend.

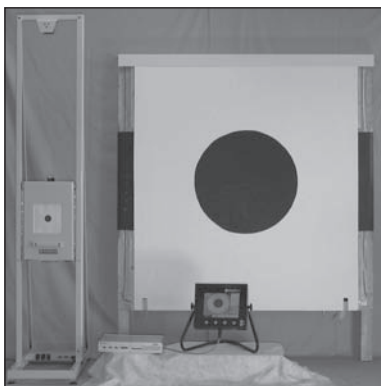


Left to right: Franquelin de Castro with the TNV Team Boussaingault, Beaudoin, Berlara and Bonneze. *(Photo: Chris Padbury)*



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UK County Open Championship Meetings



# SPRING GENERAL MEETING - 27 MARCH 2004

## Speech by John Jackman, Chairman

Good evening and thank you for coming

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

On my left:

Simon Dixon. Simon has kindly taken on the honorary role of Acting Secretary to the Council since Bob Fishwick left last December.

Colin O'Brien who is Chairman of the Shooting Committee and is also a Trustee, elected last September.

Martin Farnan who is Director of Shooting at Bisley, but also provides support to the Secretary General for the NRA's regional ranges and clubs.

Michael Blythe - our Finance Manager.

On my right:

Charles Brooks who is a Trustee and Vice Chairman of the General Council, elected last September.

Jeremy Staples who is the Managing Director of Bisley and of National Shooting Centre Limited.

Julian Hartwell who was appointed an independent Trustee last September. Julian is a solicitor with special knowledge of Property Law and Charity Law, which are both so important to us.

Nick Jeffs who you know as Chairman of the Membership Committee and a Trustee.

*The notice of the Meeting published in the Winter edition of the Journal was taken as read.*

This evening, the meeting will be in two parts.

Firstly, I shall deal with the accounts and finances and take questions. This is the primary purpose of the Spring General Meeting.

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

## Financial Position

### Year Ended 30 September 2003

As I have indicated in my Statement with the Annual Accounts we have had a very significant year which has been something of a watershed.

I refer you all to page 6 of the Accounts where the consolidated results of the year ended 30 September 2003 are summarised. You will see that the net increase in funds of £337,031 is reflected in the formal Audited Accounts on page 9, supported, in turn, by the notes which follow on pages 10 to 16.

Both 2002 and 2003 carried significant shooting events namely the Commonwealth Games and the World Long Range Championships, respectively, which both had the effect of inflating our income and expenses,

fortunately without creating a net financial burden, especially after receipt of sponsorship.

Taking year on year, the key reasons for the material increase in the operating surplus were derived from both exceptional items and recurring items. The following are the key points:

**Delay in management recruitment** - I mentioned last year that the delay in recruitment of senior managers would create an apparent cost benefit both in salaries costs and associated overheads. I have thanked last year all those who helped in keeping everything moving, especially those who gave of their time voluntarily. If you look at the figures for Central Overheads year on year you will see the saving of £146,000. We hope that over £50,000 will be an ongoing saving.

**Interest on the Bank Loan** - The cost saving year on year was £28,000 and we expect a further saving in the coming year.

**Estate Income** - Some of the income from the estate reflected a non-recurring catch up as leases were sorted out and was worth about £20,000.

**Other Income** - "Other Income" includes a legacy from the estate of the late Len Baron of Dorking Rifle Club of some £13,000. We hope to identify a suitable asset purchase to recognise this generous bequest.

**Clay Range** - Lastly, I am pleased to report that the Clay Range has produced a profit of about £27,000 which represents a turnaround of about £44,000 compared with last year. Our thanks and congratulations go to Sarah Bunch and her staff, particularly Barry, David and Laura for this achievement. The current year is progressing well and we hope for an even better result.

All these benefits have enabled us to improve our balance sheet. At the foot of page 6 you will see that, after modest capital expenditure on new and replacement equipment, our liquidity, expressed as net current assets, is up from £119,456 in 2002 to £370,474 in 2003.

With a strong cash flow we have repaid a further £100,000 of our bank loan in February, since the Accounts were published, to total £300,000 repaid so far this current year.

## The Current Year

Once again, our target operating surplus is £200,000 for the year ending 30 September 2004. As I have said in my Statement with the Accounts we expect it to be a tough target to achieve. Having further reduced individual membership fees and range charges at Bisley, it will be important to increase range usage

compared with last year, also clay profits and commercial income, for example from corporate guest days. We shall do our best.

There is no room for complacency.

Our plans include further, even if modest, improvements at Bisley including a new loudspeaker system and further electronic and moving targets.

The Zero Range at Bisley has been a problem. It is there for zeroing rifles in the prone position, only, and not ideally suited to 'blowing off', for example. A Snail Bullet Trap for 'blowing off' is being installed and I want to take this opportunity to thank Norman Clark of Norman Clark Gunsmiths for his generous sponsorship of this facility.

At last, we are now proceeding with the Short Siberia trackway and car park at 300 yards alongside Century. It has been two years in the preparation and planning. The land is a SSSI and that has only been the beginning. Anyway, the project is now in hand. We hope that the improved facility will provide not only greater convenience to our short range shooters, but also increased activity and security with the closure of the gate from Queen's Road in due course, except for emergencies.

I am pleased to announce and we are very grateful that this project is being sponsored by Peter Hobson's company, Hobson Industries Limited. The new track will be known as Hobsons Way by way of recognition of his generosity with a gift of £30,000. *Applause.*

An extra three targets are being installed for use at 200 yards on Short Siberia and a storage facility is being installed by the International Long Range Pistol Shooting Association to enable firearms to be secured during temporary absence from the range at the east end of Century. We are very grateful to the Committee and members for their donation of £5,000.

I should also like to recognise and congratulate the initiatives taken by our 300 metres squad. You will see that the 300 metres range on Century has been improved with up-to-date firing point protection and electronic target systems using a new Norwegian system to international standard. Their equipment has been financed following an appeal and the sale of equipment bequeathed by the family of the late Richard Danik, one of the squad. Full details are in the Spring Journal, but it is worth going to see for yourself.

I think we all know that electronic targets are becoming increasingly the need for the way forward with obtaining butt markers an increasing problem. Fortunately, the potential cost is coming down.

I am still hopeful of appointing a volunteer Director of Appeals and Sponsorship to assist us in raising funds for what appears to be an unlimited wish list

for repaying the balance of our debt; the regions; Bisley and our teams going overseas. For the latter we need, in any event, to thank Chris Hockley and his Team Finance Sub-Committee for the work they do in raising and allocating funds.

As reported by my predecessors, grants from the Sports Councils have been much reducing or drying up. Our charitable status and its considerable tax benefits is now our main source of government support. We are otherwise very much on our own and must recognise that we must sort things out for ourselves. That is not to say that we shall not continue to seek Sports Council support whenever we see a possible window of opportunity.

Our almost universally accepted short-term priority is to repay our remaining debt. I must be cautious in forecasting the outturn for this year, nevertheless we shall do our best to continue to reduce some prices to members further, at least in real terms, at the end of this year.

All our prices for accommodation, membership and ranges charges have come down in real terms, with some in actual terms, since they were increased at the end of 2001 and we intend to continue in this way.

Having expressed caution, however, we can do more than was possible a year ago. For example, whilst always looking out for cost and expenses efficiencies, we are going to increase our financial commitment to the membership services function. Also a few months ago we reported that we are once again able to consider applications for financial support to clubs who want to improve their facilities.

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

*Thank you.*

I take this opportunity to extend our thanks to Michael Blythe. He has witnessed some awful financial circumstances over recent years, but kept a steady head to ensure that our accounts have been kept in order. Thank you. *Applause.*

I now move on to some general points.

### **Secretary General and Membership**

I have already written to you all to inform you that we needed to make a change.

Most importantly, we need a manager to take forward our membership development plans and service to clubs and members away from Bisley in particular. I am hopeful that we shall have a new Secretary General in place soon.

You have read that the Membership Committee has been considering a development plan for the future. It is proving to be a very difficult task, but one which will need steady persistence. It is hampered by our lack of resources and the complexities of shooters' requirements. However, I do want to take this



opportunity to thank on your behalf those regional members of the General Council who are becoming more involved than in the past and who will be able to work with a Secretary General, whose primary management task is membership.

Belonging to the NRA is to support the Governing Body for the privilege of participating in fullbore target shooting which is for those already keen, an obvious benefit, in practice.

The income from membership is also for providing for achieving our Charter objectives of encouraging marksmanship, particularly among the young, for example. This is why some of the membership income has always gone into the facilities at Bisley and needs to, for the foreseeable future. The NRA has always needed Bisley in order to function. I make no excuse for emphasising that every committed fullbore shooter should be a full or associated member of the NRA.

We are not looking for more income from membership fees in the foreseeable future, so the more members we have on our membership registers, the less each will need to pay.

### **Progress of Change**

In the last few months I have become increasingly aware that there has been quite rightly a sense of relief that we are over the financial worst. This has brought out frustration and released many pent up wishes of members who would like this or that to be done in a different way, or even to go back to some so-called 'normal'. The fact is that we shall only have a future and progress if we manage our affairs in a different way. While we are in this process of change we must accept that we can only work within the art of the possible and that change takes time to settle down. Unfortunately, we have lost some momentum by needing to change the key role of Secretary General and this means that there will be an inevitable delay in considering our medium term plan.

The new Board of Trustees, the Council, was elected only last September and has been settling down to a new role. I take this opportunity to thank the members who have taken on this sometimes onerous and certainly, responsible, role involving personal risk. I do not want the Trustees to be seen as some remote body. Their task is to be objective and to avoid reflecting on their own shooting disciplines and prejudices. Without prejudice to their absolute discretion in the matters of governance and management of the Association, they generally restrict themselves to the reserved functions which were listed last year of which control of finance is the most important. The Trustees largely follow the recommendations of Bisley management, that is National Shooting Centre Limited and of the General Council and its Committees, whilst co-ordinating a

budget plan, developing a long term strategy for the Association and taking initiatives for consideration.

Most matters of interest to members are therefore dealt with in practice by the General Council, whom you elect to represent your personal interests, shooting disciplines and regions. The voluntary support which members of the General Council, its Committees and Shooting Discipline Sub-Committees is the life blood of our future. We, as a sport, are not alone in needing enormous volunteer support and I do hope that members will continue to come forward to help with the work.

In turn, we are asking our Bisley management to work to new ways and targets under the leadership of Jeremy Staples. We owe it to him and to them to give them as much support as possible and respect that they are there to serve us as best they can within the resources available.

As some of you who are participating know, this weekend we are holding the second Spring into Action Weekend and I am pleased to say that entries are up at 123. We thank our shooting and range staff and particularly Fred James for enabling this meeting to develop.

Away from Bisley we have the new challenge of ranges being managed for the MoD by Landmarc, a commercial company. We are very aware of some of the impositions which are being made. Our policy is to press, at all times, for a better deal for our clubs and to build up a good working relationship as time goes on. The difficulty is that Landmarc/MoD have their own paymasters, tight budgets, new employment and health and safety considerations. This is the way it is with many sports and activities in the current political, regulatory and economic environment. The reality is that we shall have to accept the changed circumstances, but must find ways to working to new patterns. Joint club conference planning and, perhaps, ways for individual members to join in might be found.

### **Firearms Legislation**

Since last year we have been faced with the prospect of a Firearms Legislation Consultative paper. The Home Secretary has unfortunately disbanded the Firearms Consultative Committee although some of its members, including our friends, are being treated as one of the informal focus groups which the Home Secretary has apparently approached in the name of combating gun crime.

We shall keep close watch on developments with the help of our MPs who are on our General Council, the British Shooting Sports Council and other shooting bodies with whom I am in direct contact. In particular, for target rifle and pistol we have a common interest with the NSRA. Their Chairman and I have already written to the Minister of State to set out our position

and interest in any proposals which might come forward - at any time. We shall use the website as the best means of communicating any matters of interest.

There has been some misunderstanding in the past as to our political role with firearms. Put simply, as a Charity, we cannot lobby for firearms, per se, but we do have a duty to protect the equipment which is needed for fulfilling our Charter objectives and that means the equipment we use now. If anything, we shall try to obtain concessions for target pistol, particularly if the Government is taking its bid for the Olympic Games seriously and accepts our argument that we cannot present ourselves to the International Olympic Committee as able to run pistol events in 2012 if we have had no experience since the Commonwealth Games in 2002.

Of practical necessity, my comments have been slightly formal. The nature of our Association is that we are very diverse in our activities. We have many different items of equipment and courses of fire. Then there are the desires of those who aspire to shoot internationally - so important to our public image and standing - and those who just want to enjoy a sport. We must co-operate and support each other.

Accordingly, you may well have questions and comments for us about your own interests and please do not hesitate to make them today.

Thank you.

I shall now be happy to take questions.

*The following topics were raised by members present:*

### **On the Financial Statements:**

#### **Loans to Clubs**

Q. Why are loans made to clubs interest free, particularly in view of the Association's own borrowings?

A. Loans are made to Affiliated Clubs for improvements of facilities. The Council believes that the Association now has the resources to continue to give this financial support. *(The questioner stated that in her opinion the NRA should impose an interest charge of the same level as the charge we have to pay on our borrowings.)*

#### **Net gain on disposal of fixed asset property**

Q. What was this "gain"?

A. The sum of £1,000 was the proceeds from the sale of the clay target high tower which had been previously written off. The Association had been compensated by the gift of Cottesloe Lodge to the Association.

### **General Questions:**

#### **Encouragement of new target shooters**

Q. Should not more efforts be made to provide membership opportunities to the Territorial Army, Cadet Forces and Scout Groups and the young, generally? Hopefully say, through the National

Coach, suitably qualified shooters can be persuaded to be available to help with guidance and training?

A. Whilst there are already a number of schemes and the probationary courses are full, nevertheless, it is intended that the Association should develop more ways for pro-active recruitment.

#### **Charges for use of "multi-distance" targets at Bisley**

Q. The Spring Journal indicates, by a given example, that the new charge will be made for falling back from 600 yards to 900 yards. Is this correct?

A. The example is in error, there will be no charge for falling back from Century to Stickledown nor from morning to afternoon.

#### **Standardisation of leases at Bisley**

Q. There have been a number of lease renewals in the last year involving much negotiation. Are efforts being made to ensure fairness?

A. Every effort is being made to ensure fairness and consistency. A new and standard form of lease, taking into account all factors of change, is nearly ready for future use.

#### **Advertising on the new Membership Card**

Q. Is it fair to single out one particular establishment at Bisley to sponsor the new card and thereby appear to endorse it?

A. Other clubs were given the opportunity and there will be an open opportunity for this sponsorship, each year.

*There being no more questions, the Chairman closed the meeting.*

## **R**ANGE **O**FFICE **T**ARGETS

### **Targets available by the hour at weekends**

- £6 per hour (including marker) •
- Century and Stickledown •
- All year round! •

*(subject to availability)*

Slots may be booked on the day or by telephone during the preceding week

Call the Range Office to book  
or to check which distances are available

**Call 01483 797777 ext 152  
or 0845 130 7620 ext 152**



## OBITUARIES

### **Michael Threlfall Heathcote (GC, SC)**

Michael was born on 14 June 1914 at Apsley House, Disley, Cheshire; his father was a physician and surgeon. He attended Trent College, Nottingham for his educative years where his love for target rifle shooting developed. He was a member of the cadet rifle team to Bisley for a number of years.



After college, Michael joined the Westminster Bank and with his adventurous spirit it was not long before he applied to the Standard Bank of South Africa which he joined in 1939 in Cape Town. After three years he applied, and was transferred to, the same bank in Southern Rhodesia. Michael's love for target rifle shooting grew and it was not long before he was chosen to represent his country at Bisley in 1950. He represented Rhodesia further in 1955, 1960 and 1965 and it was in that year that the Rhodesian team achieved the unique honour of winning all the major international team events against the Mother Country and the British Commonwealth; this included, of course, the Kolapore, Mackinnon and Overseas.

He developed a strong interest in local government and was involved on a number of parliamentary and local government committees.

At the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Rhodesia in 1965 and because of his strong belief in just government, Michael decided to leave his beloved Rhodesia and return to England. His passion for rifle shooting took him to Bisley where he became a regular member of the Surrey Rifle Association which soon earned him a cap in the Great Britain rifle team. Michael soon joined the North London Rifle Club and in his later years did a fantastic job as Captain and was elected as a Vice-President of the club.

His shooting history was awesome and after his return to England he won the Grand Aggregate Gold Cross in 1971, the Silver Cross in 1975, shot four times in the Kolapore and the National, once in the Mackinnon and was a member of the Palma team to Canada and the USA in 1976. Individually he shot in the Queen's Final five times, coming third in 1972, finished in the top fifty of the Grand Aggregate six times and finished in the top twenty-five of the St George's twice.

In his later years his health caused him to retire from shooting but his love of steam locomotives took him to the Bluebell Railway where he could sometimes be seen at the age of eighty clambering up a signal tower to renovate and to paint. He also worked for the Children's

Hope Foundation for four days a week until he died on 28 March 2004.

Michael was very supportive of all who shared his love of and enthusiasm for our sport. He regularly visited the NLRC each year and was present at last year's Palma Match; his happy and enthusiastic demeanour will be very much missed.

*HR Heathcote and Martin Townsend*

### **Albert Maylor QMSI RM Retd**

Following a short illness, Albert (aged 88) passed away peacefully on 14 November 2003 at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

Albert was born in Devonport, Plymouth. His father was in the Black and Tans and with two brothers joining the Merchant Navy, it was perhaps not surprising that Albert chose a similar path, joining HM Royal Marines in 1932.



In 1935 Albert was part of the Royal Marine detachment aboard HMS Rodney when it completed its Spring Cruise to the Caribbean; on its return to the UK the ship was visited by King George V and Queen Mary in August at Cowes. Albert later apparently alleged that the deterioration of his hearing was all due to the use of the Rodney's 16" guns for Royal Salutes as firing practices weren't conducted wearing any ear defenders in the good old days!

In 1936 he witnessed the Fleet Review at Spithead and later that same year was a member of the Royal Marine detachment detailed to escort and protect Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia into exile, much of it spent in the UK because of the Italian War in Africa.

In 1939 he was posted to the equally famous HMS Edinburgh which served as escort during World War Two for the North Atlantic convoys; Albert subsequently received the Russian Convoy Medal. Later, on escort duty during the Russian Convoys, HMS Edinburgh was torpedoed by a U-boat on 2 May 1942, when it was allegedly carrying £45 million in gold bullion.

Promoted to Corporal in 1938, Albert was promoted again in 1941 to Sergeant and was posted to ITCRM Lymington as a weapons instructor.

A career Royal Marine for 28 years, Albert achieved the rank of QMSI, retiring in 1960, whilst serving for the second time at ITCRM Lymington.

Albert was a natural but fiercely competitive sportsman, a quiet, modest but proud man who hid his sporting lights under a bushel. A fact perhaps known only to his family, close friends and colleagues, he excelled at many sports; as well as shooting he enjoyed boxing, cricket, swimming, tennis, water polo, snooker and billiards.

However, Albert was first and foremost a very fine rifle and pistol shooter, winning many awards and trophies in a sporting career spanning five decades, as well as being instrumental in setting up various shooting clubs during his time in the Royal Marines, both at home and overseas. As a service shooter and later as a civilian, he accumulated an amazing collection of trophies, badges, medals, bars and shooting memorabilia exceeding 600 items.

He first came to notice in 1946, after a number of successes in Service Rifle events for the Royal Marines; as a result of this he was selected to be a member of the Great Britain Team for the World Rifle Championships in Stockholm in 1947.

Albert won a bronze medal in Stockholm, and as a memento, his competitor tabard No 173, together with the team photograph and his score book has pride of place at his home in Exmouth. In that year he also gained his first King's 100 badge.

After retiring in 1960 he was appointed as the RSM of the CCRS Shooting Club at St Paul's School, London. Some of the names of those St Paul's schoolboys are still well known today in Bisley circles and they are no doubt grateful to Albert for his guiding hand in their shooting careers.

Albert subsequently returned to Devon in 1961 to take up a civilian post at ITCRM Lymington, surely a touch of déjà vu. However events took a further turn in 1964, when Major Tom Anstey approached Albert about a vacancy that would be occurring at Bisley Camp that he thought would suit him.

In 1965, Albert, together with his wife Doris, took up the post of Secretary and Club Steward of the LMRA. They enjoyed a successful partnership together there until 1970, when they decided to return to their native Devon to go into the guest house business, finally retiring for good in 1976.

He shot for Devon throughout the 60s and 70s, and in the latter period his shooting entered a renaissance; many of his individual successes occurred during this period, which also included successes in small-bore rifle shooting as a member of the DCSRA.

Albert was elected Captain of Devon in 1972 and again in 1977 when he led them to success in the County Championship Short Range Senior event for the first time at the Imperial Meeting.

He was selected as a Reserve for the Mackinnon in 1963, his first representative selection for England, which would lead to four other appearances in that event and one appearance in the Kolapore in 1969. His individual successes included two Grand Aggregate crosses, three

St George's crosses and four King's or Queen's Hundred badges.

Albert continued shooting until the late 80s before his eyesight started to become a problem and he announced his retirement from shooting. The English Twenty Club honoured him with captaincy of the Mackinnon in 1990 for his services to England and shooting.

Albert is survived by his wife Doris, herself a no mean target rifle shooter. They had lived in Exmouth since 1941 and were married for 63 years. Albert also leaves a son and daughter as well as a brother in New Zealand.

He will be sadly missed by his family and friends.

*Brian Cambray*

### **Leon Herbert Ovenden**

Leon was born in Ostend in 1931 to a British father and a Belgian mother and went to live in England in 1939. He went to boarding school in Chelmsford where he took up rifle shooting. At the age of 18, he returned to Belgium where he finished his education at a high school in Ghent.



Leon was a member of a shooting club in Ostend as well as being a member of the NRA, and he was a regular visitor to Bisley for the Imperial Meeting where he reached the Queen's Final twice. A great friend of the Royal Air Force Target Rifle Club, he was also a regular member of the Belgian team who would visit Bisley every October to compete in the RAFTRC Championships.

He represented both Belgium and Continental Europe twice each in the Kolapore and he often helped the Dutch team with their wind reading and plotting. He also shot for the Continental Palma team in the Palma Matches held in Raton, America in 1992 and Bloemfontein, South Africa in 1999 but had to give up shooting in 2001 after he was taken ill with cancer.

Leon died on 2 February 2004 leaving his wife Lea. He will be greatly missed by his many friends around the world.

*Lea Ovenden*

### **Ronald Bedeman**

Ronald Bedeman of the Phillipines died on 31 March 2003. He had been a member of the Marylebone Pistol Club in London, England from 1980 and a Life member of the NRA for many years. He competed in numerous team competitions including international events. He won several cups and medals and was an enthusiastic shooter. He is survived by his wife Miguela (Angie) and his three children, Michelle 9 years old, Harry 7 and Melanie 6 and we send our deepest sympathy to them.

*Larry Elwood*



## Leslie John Dyer

Leslie John Dyer (or just Les as he preferred to be known) was born in 1936 in London. He made South London his home for much of his life and settled down with his wife Sue in Morden, Surrey for many years until selling up and moving to West Sussex in September 1997 to live in Bognor Regis.



He started his career as an apprentice electrical technician with Haines and Shepherd and worked on a number of contracts where his skills were in demand. He travelled widely, and later worked in Riyadh, Dubai and the Sudan with the firm of Lebihan Contracts.

Les got called up for National Service and joined the East Surrey Regiment. He made Corporal with the East Surreys and would sometimes recollect on his days as a Bren gunner. Some of his service with the regiment would take him to what was then West Germany. It seems that his appetite for the shooting sports was awakened by his military experience at that time. His other passion for fast cars also occupied much of his time, and in particular his once owned Jaguar XK150 sports car, which he often mentioned in conversation.

In the early 1960s, he became a member of Wandsworth Small-Bore Rifle and Pistol Club and enjoyed many Saturday afternoons shooting his .22" pistol on the outside range with his shooting friends. He would later join the Wandsworth Fullbore Rifle Club shooting regularly at Bisley with and for the Club. In January 1970 he was encouraged to join the NRA.

He was later a founder member of the Metropolitan Fullbore Pistol Club in 1972, and in 1992 he helped to inaugurate the '92 Association and was the Club's Training Officer until the end. His lifelong experience in gun safety on and off the range was invaluable to a number of new participants to the sport of target shooting and it will be difficult to replace him.

Les was very well read on all military matters and he made his speciality World Wars One and Two. He was an avid battlefield tour fan and would make regular visits to the World War One battlefields in Europe with his friends. It was often said that he not only enjoyed the tour programme, but also the beers and cuisine of the region visited!

Les's sudden and untimely death on 2 March came as a terrible shock to all who knew him, particularly as there was no indication of potential illness. Les was a good clubman and a loyal friend. He is survived by his wife Sue and we all join in offering her our most sincere condolences on her sad loss.

## Jim (AJ) Thompson

Jim's main sport was rifle shooting, however, as his physique showed, he was a rugby man in his youth. He grew up in Cambridgeshire, attending Soham Grammar School simply because the Grammar School in Ely was for girls only. It was through the Cadets that he became interested in the RAF, and for much of the war was a Flight Lieutenant Navigator. He remained loyal to the RAF joining the local aircrew branch wherever he worked.

After the war he worked in the Inland Revenue, based in London. He and his wife Elizabeth were members of the Inland Revenue Rifle Club, shooting in the range beneath Somerset House. For many years Jim was Treasurer of that Club and, living in Buckinghamshire, he then joined Burnham Rifle and Pistol Club. During the 1950s Jim and Elizabeth were both top flight small-bore rifle shooters.

In 1975 the opportunity came to transfer to Dorset with a senior role in the Excise, keeping an eye on all the local breweries. This suited Jim's passion for real ale! He soon became Treasurer of Dorchester Rifle and Pistol Club, and when Ted Green gave up organising the Dorset County Fullbore Association Jim took that on as well. He became renowned for the efficiency of the shoots he organised at Mere before it closed, and then at Bisley.

To those who knew Jim it was a bit of a surprise to find that he was rather shy, particularly with those he did not know well. In shooting matters he was outgoing, seeking to get involved in a variety of events. He took the opportunity to join the shooting matches in the twinning between Louviers and Weymouth, and the experiences there led him to set up the Dorchester Bayeux shooting matches in association with Yves Collet, the Treasurer of the Bayeux Shooting Club. In his own relatively quiet way Jim was extremely proud to be made an Honorary Life Member of the Bayeux Shooting Club. He was quietly pleased to see the way his French shooting friends learned from the competitions and upgraded their equipment and techniques. Jim's last visit to Bayeux was in 2000 and after that time he became increasingly frustrated with the restrictions on his personal mobility.

His other sporting interest, supporting Bridport Football Club, combined with treks to away matches, finding the best Chinese takeaway, and the local real ale became the stuff of legends with his shooting friends. Jim had been President of Dorchester Rifle and Pistol Club for just over five years when he died.

Our sympathies go to Elizabeth and his sons Martin and Chris.

*Richard F Burden*

## LETTERS

*From Richard van Lingen*

### **F Class**

I today received my copy of the latest Journal. I was sad to read of the death of Charles Trotter. He looked extremely frail at the Imperial Prizegiving. I was thankful that I had an opportunity then to chat to him for a while. I wonder how many members realise that, within the last nine months we have lost probably the two best all-round (fullbore/smallbore) shooters the world has ever known. My friendship with both Andrew and Charles goes back more than forty years. I will miss them, but they will both be remembered for their achievements on the range and their lovely personalities.

Sadly, on a different topic, it seems that some important shooters are quickly forgotten. I read with interest, amusement and some anger, the letter from Graham King on F Class, together with the reply from Paul Monaghan. The name "Farquarson" was not mentioned by either!

Graham wrote: "I am therefore horrified by the attempt of some Old School target shooters to hijack F Class by proposing a 7.62 RG Class. There is no such class in the World Championships." He closes off with the extremely arrogant statement: "If it's 'scoped target rifle you're after, stay away!"

Hello there, Graham, it's time for a short history lesson! The "F" in F Class is today generally accepted as standing for "Free". However, initially it stood for "Farquarson". I quote from an article I wrote last year for "Range", a South African glossy shooting magazine:

"F Class: This originated in Canada and the "F" originally stood for "Farquarson". George Farquarson had the idea that elderly, or infirm, shooters could be kept in the game if permitted a rested target rifle and optical sights. The concept also appealed to the accuracy nuts, who look upon it as a form of prone benchrest. Now, any calibre is permitted, up to 8mm. Farquarson's desire was to keep the F Class competitors shooting alongside TR, on the same targets, but this was not testing enough for the really serious shooters and a group in Australia developed a target with a half-minute bull's-eye (compared with the two-minute TR bull). This was also adopted by a club in the UK and some American shooters. The majority, however still wish to keep TR and F Class shooting together, so a compromise was adopted for the 2002 World Championships, held on the Connaught Ranges in Ottawa. The innermost (V bull) 1-moa (minute of angle) ring, used in TR only for counting out tied scores, was used as the F Class bull.

It was given the value of 6. To avoid confusion, scoring register-keeping was done the TR way, with V bulls shown as a "V". The stats computer then converted all the V's shot by F Class competitors to sixes."

So, in reality, Graham, if there was any "hijacking", it was the other way around!

As a member of both the ICFRA Palma and World Championships and TR Committees, I shall fight to my dying day to keep the TR and F Class link alive. Fullbore, overall, is declining worldwide, mainly because all governments favour gun control and make it as difficult as possible for us to conduct our sport. It is our duty to avoid splintering the sport. "Stay away" comments really make me bristle! In my opinion there should be two sub-classes within F Class. One would be the anything goes version favoured by Graham, but with strict rules to ensure a fair contest. The skill element would be a combination of calibre choice, load development, shooting technique and wind-reading ability. Their programme would embrace both their own matches on the half-minute bull, and shooting alongside TR in major championships such as the Bisley Imperial Meeting. For the latter, the DCRA scoring proved sufficient to make the matches a true test of skill. The alternative of using the TR bull will lead to interminable tie-shoots on 10 V possibles, as the skill level advances. The second sub-class would be restricted to the TR calibre and bullet-weight rule. This would allow TR shooters to move to F Class with their existing rifles and equipment. The only additions would be a telescopic sight and a suitable rest or bipod. The Canadian experiment with a TRO Class (sling-supported TR rifle with a 'scope sight) failed because most of the shooters with failing eyesight were the elderly, who also had a holding problem. I live in a country where handloads have been the norm for quite a number of years. Our ammunition rules have now been adopted for the Palma and all other World Championships. The proposed 7.62 RG Class relates to the contract between the UK NRA and the British MOD. This still has a number of years to run. After that, I am confident that the NRA will follow the rest of the fullbore world, with shooters' choice of handloads or factory 7.62 or .308 ammo, using any bullet up to a maximum nominal 155 grains.

Incidentally, as a TR and ISSF small-bore and 300 metres shooter of 55 years standing, I don't think that I could ever convert to F Class. Throughout my career it has been drummed into me that taking a deadrest is cheating. I say this tongue-in-cheek, otherwise Paul Monaghan might refuse to buy me a beer on the North London verandah in July!



*From Enrico Celotti*

### **Membership Matters**

We received and went through the interesting article that Nick Jeffs put in the recent NRA Journal about membership issues and the NRA wishes for the future. Although we understand that they are Nick's views only, we share much of them mostly concerning the future and strategic perspectives of the NRA, its scope and actions.

The new photocards are more than welcome because the technology opens wider perspectives in terms of automatic access control, security, prepaid services stored into it, history and attendance etc.

We fully agree on the strategic principle behind a comprehensive database of shooters of all fullbore interests and disciplines. We think the database should contain a field for e-mail addresses in order to be able to easily distribute any NRA news via e-mail much cheaper, faster and up-to-date than a printed Journal. There is currently available and cheap software which allows for bulk personalised e-mail broadcasts (assuming that a majority of the members have access nowadays to e-mail which should be easy to fathom through a quick statistic into our current members database).

A light newsletter more frequently issued will better serve the members in informing about events, debates and issues, leaving the role of the "happened" to the Journal. Advertising for sponsors via e-news will become a more frequent and cheaper vehicle, encouraging them to use the media, with the NRA possibly benefitting (recouping costs) from it.

The NRA representing all fullbore shooting matters and interests is a great and ambitious idea and proposal. We guess it will meet some internal and external resistance, and the implementation of it will require a great deal of material effort within the NRA if representation is to be effective, comprehensive and able to make a dent both in decisional circuits and in public relations for the benefit of the sport.

Away from Bisley, in an ideal world I should very much welcome the idea of more formalised cross-range usage with all NRA members being able to use any negotiated range on the days an affiliated club is having a shoot. Not all of these are matters for membership, but an NRA credit card that is accepted everywhere may help to bring more shooters in as full members.

Reducing costs too is a matter we feel in need of consideration. Let us assume that shooters with ambition tend to stay in the rimfire disciplines especially as it is more actively sponsored as an Olympic discipline. To take people - especially the young ones - into fullbore, they have to find it financially viable. Kit and gear do not cost much more than small-bore, and a big part of it can be recycled.

There is nothing much we can do on ammo prices but something could be done with ranges fees. The Range Office Target is a very good way forward but markers remain an issue which we feel is getting worse.

What about exploring electronic targets for some of the lines - say ten - on Century like those just installed on the 300 metres range? It will save the marker costs, availability and skills (I am afraid the last one we got on the ROT was not very good) and such lines can become permanent ROTs available on demand and at any time - understandably at a suitable charge but with no or minimal cancellation fees which can also mitigate weather concerns. (*Editor's note: see next page for further information regarding this suggestion.*)

An NRA Clubhouse would be a great idea for all those members and small clubs who do not have a place to hide when the weather hits hard and it would act as a focal and meeting point for many.

Regarding the 200 Metres Associate Membership, whilst we greatly appreciate Nick moving to metric and leaving the unfathomable yards behind, we feel it is a bit contradictory with the previous statements. If the NRA want to become representative of all fullbore ways and disciplines and get out of the formal target rifle concept, one full membership category should cover everyone's taste without distinction.

*From Jim Hallam*

The Spring Journal included reference to several items of particular concern to me. I do hope that my comments might be of interest. They are not to be taken as being critical, but are submitted in order to be constructive.

### **Membership Matters**

I am concerned that it seems that the Membership Department is intending to produce a database. I understand the intention but believe that what we really need is for the major target shooting organisations to come together into one organisation with the various disciplines running their own activities under this umbrella. Thus the NRA would deal with FB TR (and some other aspects), the NSRA with SB TR, the MLAGB and HBSA with their specialist areas etc. Under a British Target Shooting Federation(?) banner providing common administrative functions such as membership we would have a more cost-effective structure without the various organisations losing their autonomy - one of the sacred cows of the shooting sports which ensures that we are politically weak.

I believe that all who shoot at artificial targets with licenceable firearms should be required to be registered with that body which would provide the single Secretariat and bona fides for the licence process. This is not a new idea - it works in other countries, so why not here? After all it is only really

an extension of the current structure of the NRA Council, but giving real authority to the separate disciplines.

### **Marksman's Calendar**

I remain convinced that the NRA should act as prime mover in organising a meeting with major target shooting organisations to settle an Annual Calendar of fixed dates for major Open Meetings, in order to (a) cut down clashes and conflicts (b) facilitate forward planning, especially for club shoots and (c) to enable better-balanced shooting programmes for the various disciplines, for example, trying to avoid three Gallery Rifle Championships in the same month.

Additionally, this could possibly allow us to arrange Regional Championships under the NRA banner, possibly by some form of co-operative arrangement with County Associations or other National bodies etc.

### **T Rex Jottings**

Although tongue in cheek the last section "T Ram for T Rex " mirrors a major part of a suggestion which I made a number of years ago.

The core of the idea was to (a) get rid of cars (b) ease transport problems (c) integrate Short Siberia into the complex for major Open Meetings and, in particular (d) involve an outside agency to do the work for us, all the while attracting more (paying) visitors to the Camp . . . preferably with Lottery Funding.

My idea was to invite a large local model railway organisation who ran a very successful miniature gauge railway but were on the point of losing their premises (and who now are settled at a local garden centre) to set up the largest miniature railway layout in the country on our Camp.

The layout would run from Time Limit to Short Siberia with sidings, stations and so on. The payoff would be the requirement for the organisation to provide a service at all major meetings.

I remain convinced that there is mileage in this idea, enhancing our public image and going a long way towards integrating Bisley more into the community and we know that this can attract funding.

### **F Class letters**

I understand Mr King's problem but believe that he is barking up the wrong tree. I agree with Mr Monaghan that there is a need for matches and opportunities for those who like 'Formula 1' equipment but on the other hand I do think that there is also a need for 'OAP TR', ie provision for those whose visual acuity has waned to be able to shoot on what they think is a level playing field. I have not been able to find anyone who has seen the results of properly conducted experiments to compare the scoring potential of the same rifle(s) fitted with (a) iron sights (b) eagle eyes and (c) optical sighting systems. I would be intrigued to discover whether any hoary old chestnuts were proved justified or dispelled.

However, for those who are either just getting older or do not want to go down the ever-increasingly expensive route of rifle and ammunition development, I do wish that we could consider some form of cheap Standard Target Rifle which would be the natural successor of the old SR(b) class. I am not trying to turn the clock back but I believe that we would find that many shooters might come back onto the firing points during Meetings which allowed or admitted that class of firearm.

## **ELECTRONIC TARGETS**

Bisley users will be aware that we are increasingly experiencing difficulties attracting enough markers to meet shooters requirements. Unfortunately we see this as a long-term problem following changes in the law and competition from other local employers.

The National Shooting Centre is putting together a small working party, chaired by the Managing Director of the National Shooting Centre, to investigate the possibility of trialing a number of electronic targets in the first instance before possible wider use in the longer term. NSC is looking for keen volunteers with relevant skills (such as previous use of such targets, computing (hardware and software) and financial evaluation) to assist with this project.

Please contact Jeremy Staples, Managing Director of the National Shooting Centre, if you would be interested in participating in this review.

01483 797777 ext 133

[jeremy.staples@nra.org.uk](mailto:jeremy.staples@nra.org.uk)



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## MEMBERS' PAGE

### An F Class Tale

Roger Wood writes:

I arrived at the picturesque and friendly Nottingham Road Rifle Club, *en route* to the South African Championships. I had emptied the sand from my butt-bag to save weight, in the confident expectation of finding the odd ton or two of dry sand in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Wrong - it was raining.

Arriving late in the evening the day before we were due to shoot, the options were limited. By breakfast I had enlisted help from all possible sources. The hotel staff applied their ingenuity and dried a pan of sand between servings of bacon and eggs (tough on the latecomers, should have got out of bed earlier). One panful was not enough, but it was a start before we departed for the range.

At Nottingham Road the ladies served morning tea and sensed panic. They were quick to grasp the problem; the bag was removed from my agitated grip and I was told very firmly to go away.

With minutes to go to the first shot there was a call from the kitchen. "Roger - come feel this!" Ignoring the ribaldry from the rest of the team indulging their usual passion for misinterpretation and innuendo, I hurried to the door, where I was presented with a plump and firm butt-bag and strict instructions not to get it wet.

To Linda Lumgair and Marie Badenhorst, many thanks for your sympathy and ingenuity; to the rest of my team I apologise for depriving you of your rice pudding!

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01483 797777 ext 138 [heather.webb@nra.org.uk](mailto:heather.webb@nra.org.uk)





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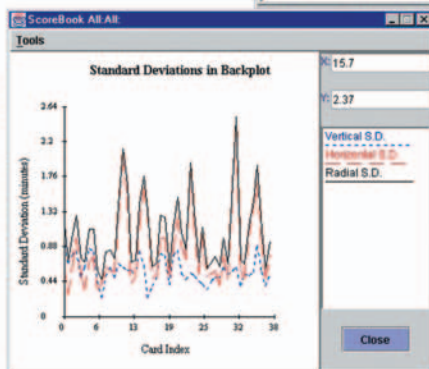
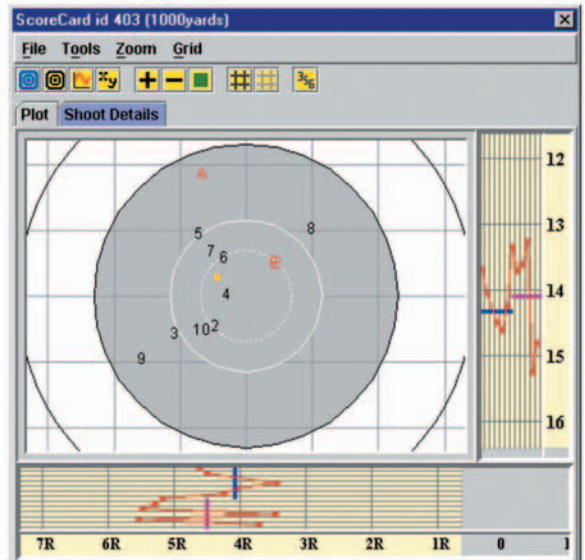
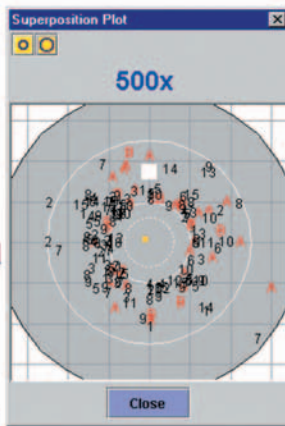
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2001	300	Donegall	14 Jul 2001	2 & 10	49.6
2001	300	Times	16 Jul 2001	2 & 10	48.4
2001	300	George's 1	17 Jul 2001	2 & 15	74.10
2001	300	Queens 1	18 Jul 2001	2 & 7	32.3
2001	300	Howard Wilkinson	21 Jul 2001	2 & 10	50.7

Current Firer: O'Connell, Tamsin

1000yds

Date	Ball Type	Ball Weight	Ball Thrust	Case Type	Case Wt.	Primer Type	Powder Type	Powder Wt.	Barrel Type	Barrel Length	Barrel Twist	Avg. Velocity	Velocity Spd.

A	B	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Score	

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