



# National Rifle Association Journal

Summer 2007

Volume LXXXVI

Number 2





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## CONTENTS

2	A Review from the Chairman
4	Membership Matters
5	Notes from the Secretary General
9	Notes from the Director of Shooting
12	Notes from the Managing Director of NSC
14	Notes from the Director of Training
15	Shooting Discipline Matters
16	Altcar Open Day
18	Forthcoming Tours
19	Aunts and Uncles
21	Mike Blythe - A Farewell and Thank You
22	Woodstock Rifle and Pistol Club
23	Ibis Rifle Club Open Meeting
24	Where There's a Will, There's a Way
26	A Disabled Shooter Enabled
29	T Rex - Reading the Small Print
30	NRA Real Estate Policy
34	Talking with Simon Fraser
36	RAFTRC Tour to South Africa
40	GB Under 19 Team to South Africa
45	Falklands War Lecture
46	Early International Travel
51	NRA Overseas Teams Fund
52	Obituaries
54	Letters
55	Trade Members
56	Members' Page

## ADVERTISERS INDEX

27	Big Red Shooting Company
15	Bisley Pavilion
ibc	Border Barrels
ibc	Centra
20	Churchleys Gun Shop
45	Norman Clark
39	Diverse Trading Company
bc	Edgar Brothers
29	ETSys Electronic Target Systems
12	A Ford
39	Haring
13	HPS Target Rifles Ltd
45	JH Steward (Bisley) Ltd
35	Andrew Tucker Target Sports
33	TWP Designs
ifc	Viking Arms
19	Zylab

Cover photo: Scenes from the Altcar Open Day by Karen Robertson.

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# A REVIEW BY THE CHAIRMAN

*by John Jackman*

Enclosed with this Journal are the Financial Statements of the Association for 2006 together with the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting on 15 June.



At the AGM I shall update members with any developments and shall take questions on the Financial Statements, this Review and my Report at the meeting. Written questions in advance are encouraged, whether or not you will be attending. I shall seek to cover all items of general interest at the Meeting.

## **Financial Statements for 2006**

I draw your particular attention to the Statement of the Chairman and the Report of the Trustees. This year, for the first time, the latter provides additional information about how the Association is governed, its objectives, strategies and achievements. This section will be updated each year.

The information serves to show the considerable task and responsibilities which the Trustees, with the Secretary General, take on and we should all be appreciative of this.

## **Finance and Membership**

As I have referred to before, the financial straits of the Association in the recent past have held us back in many ways. This has built up considerable frustrating pressures. Our head office staff under Glynn Alger (himself not employed on a full-time basis, but whose attention is nearly full-time for us) is gradually being built up, but it cannot do all we want to do for the future without more resources, ie income and, then, people.

The good news is that, provided we are careful and there are no setbacks, our medium term debt will be paid off, effectively, within two years. Thus the annual cost of repayment of £150,000 plus interest will become available for national development. Next year the Council can plan for this. My main concern has always been that everyone has needed to maintain faith and patience whilst we have been short of resources because of the debt, but in the confidence that much more will be achieved when the debt has been cleared.

Subscribing members of the Association have kept us going financially. All fullbore target shooting sportsmen and women should be prepared to subscribe to the Association in one category of membership or another. It is vital for our prosperity. There are historic reasons for apathy, but it is gradually being realised that there is less reason for this. When we merge with the other National Governing Bodies to form one NGB for target shooting sport, which in my view we must (from unity is strength – and it makes common sense!), the ambition must be to achieve the subscribing membership levels enjoyed by our friends in game shooting - the CA and BASC.

## **Chairmanship**

As I write this the General Council, acting as the representatives of our members and other stakeholders (other shooters and potential shooters), has not yet identified my replacement in September. By then I shall have served the maximum term of six years.

A working party under Julian Hartwell (Vice-Chairman of the Council), Richard Horrocks (Vice-Chairman of the General Council) supported by Paul Monaghan (Chairman of the Shooting Committee, Trustee and member of the General Council) and Charles Brooks (member of the General Council and former Vice-Chairman) are seeking a candidate to recommend for election by the General Council. I am seeking to effect introductions. A briefing note/advertisement is available on our website.

## **Charities Act 2006**

This Act, coming into force in stages over the next year, was launched as a Bill as long ago as 2002/03. It is far reaching. It is very important to us as Sport is now firmly identified as a Charitable activity for the Public Benefit. Rifle and Pistol Shooting had, however, been listed among eight other activities as not being *prima facie* Sports for purposes of the Act. For many months last year I devoted time to the Bill lobbying the Charity Commission, Sport England and Parliament to have that changed and for target shooting sport to be able to be recognised as Sport. I had the full backing of our three NATSS partners (ie including the Great Britain Target Shooting Federation, now known as British Shooting) in this. I want to pay especial thanks to the Member of Parliament for Woking, Humfrey Malins (a member of our General Council) as well as of Julian Smith of Farrer & Co, leading Charity Law solicitors, for their support, freely given. The final debate on the definition of Sport at the Report Stage in Parliament was dominated by reference to

target shooting sport and can be read in Hansard for 25 October 2006, covering 17 pages. I am pleased to report that we achieved our objectives and we are now in close touch with the policy makers in the Charity Commission who will prepare the Guidelines.

The Council has much work to do to take advantage of our potential new status and the enhancement of our image for accepted Public Benefit. I am told that the definition Public Benefit has, since 1601, been generally defined, if defined at all, by legal precedent. Parliament has delegated to the Charity Commission the role of defining Public Benefit. All Charities will have to prove that they provide Public Benefit and it can no longer be 'presumed'.

Charity status provides considerable benefit to us. Based on last year the tangible cash value has been measured at some £130,000 and the Council will seek to maximise the many other benefits as we go forward.

Underlying this the Council is reviewing how it allocates support and resources for the encouragement of target shooting, including the provision of subsidies and grants within the Guidelines which the Charity Commission will lay down. The basic rule is that help and support must be openly available to all (rather than a select few) and this will need some work on how we can best achieve this in our own circumstances.

Support for our Annual Prize Meeting has been a primary objective since 1859 as competitive rifle shooting was 'presumed' to be of Public Benefit. We have subsidised the Meeting over the years and shall continue to do so, as I said at the Spring General Meeting in 2005. However, the Council initiated a Review to look at all aspects of the Meeting, financial and otherwise, which is still ongoing.

### **Image**

From 2002 I have emphasised my view that our best PR is achieved by the way we conduct ourselves, as target shooting sportsmen and women. We have made much progress and there is a better understanding that we are responsible, public minded people enjoying a sport at which the UK excels in international competition.

Safe conduct on our ranges, as well as by our affiliated Clubs on other ranges, has always been part of the ethos of fullbore target rifle shooting. Breaches of safety and of laid down rules and regulations on the range are taken very seriously by the Council. In accordance with accepted best practice, findings of fault or breaches are reported in the Journal.

During the last year we have been considering the targetry we use. It is ongoing, but basic principles are that Classic shooting can be seen in context with

equipment, clothing and targetry matching the historic context in most cases. For modern shooting any target which has a military or enforcement agency humanoid image must be avoided for civilian shooting and the clothing and equipment must be consistent with the perceived public image of sport. Full consultation is ongoing, but much work has been done already and some new targetry will gradually be introduced. In doing so we will endeavour to ensure that all shooting disciplines and courses of firing including action shooting are accommodated.

### **The July Annual Prize Meeting**

Also taking into account our image, the name of the annual prize meeting has been under consideration for its better promotion, respect from the media and attraction to potential sponsors. This is particularly important in promoting fullbore long range target shooting globally, for example in India, which is staging the 2010 Commonwealth Games. The Council and the majority of the General Council have recognised that the formal name "Imperial Meeting" is inappropriate for these purposes. I made enquiries of our Museum staff which show that the name "Imperial Meeting" is not historic. Originally, our annual prize meeting was called Wimbledon Meeting, then Bisley Meeting for the first 50 years followed by 'nth' Annual Prize Meeting until 1996. However, the name "Imperial Meeting" has been the common conversational form with target shooters for very many years. I am told the first appearance was in about 1934, in the Marksman's Calendar, but alternated with Bisley Meeting and Annual Prize Meeting in it and various other publications in subsequent years with no consistency. I am sure it will be known as "Imperial Meeting" among target shooters for many years, but the Council has concluded that the formal name from 2008 should be "The British Open Fullbore Rifle Championships" – which is what it is - subtitled "Imperial Meeting" to recognise its common usage and to see how this new title works for better promotion in the future.

### **Upgrading of Bisley**

For the third time in 20 years the Council is seeking to encourage the development of the Bisley asset for the financial benefit of target shooting sport, UK wide. I must emphasise that it is the duty of the Trustees to maximise the benefit of the NRA estate as well as of its cash assets to this end. Our Secretary General, Glynn Alger, has been ensuring that this plan is widely known and why it is so important and I shall not repeat what he has been saying.

As Chairman, I am concerned that there will be much speculation and rumour as to what it will entail. The Council will seek to ensure that there is regular



updating and room for consultation with the General Council as your representatives and views of members direct to the office will continue to be welcome, of course. The website will report fact, so please use this as the primary source of information. At the moment, and for several months I expect, we shall be in the feasibility stage with the Town Planners before any suggested specific plans can be considered. Town Planning is key. We know that we must protect our legacy and conserve a general ambience for members, but it is also vital that we should seek to provide extra and better accommodation (whilst continuing to provide for all pockets), better facilities and new ranges, both at Bisley and in other parts of the UK.

Although most of the National Shooting Centre is an NRA asset, we shall, nevertheless, work with our future partners in the other Governing Bodies resident

at Bisley and forming the National Association of Target Shooting Sport (pro tem, NATSS).

### **NATSS**

I am pleased that we have been able to secure £150,000 of funding for a facilitator from the CCPR/Sport England sports promotion funds and Sport UK. This will allow us to move forward to the next stage, which is to establish how the target shooting sports can be brought together, at national governing body level, to secure the long term future of our sport. The response to the Secretary General's questionnaire in the last Journal showed there is overwhelming support for the concept of a merger from those who responded. It is hoped that work can start in May. Again, provision will be made to report progress and for review by the General Council on your behalf and details will be published on the NRA website as we go along.

## **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

*by James Watson, Chairman of the Membership Committee*

Membership continues to be a key part of the strategy for the National Rifle Association. We are very keen to increase the regional representation, not only with the Regional Manager but also within the makeup of the membership. There are many reasons for being an individual member, not least supporting the governing body that is working to keep your sport and increase participation throughout the country. The Open Day that was held at Bisley very recently was attended by well over 1,200 people, some of whom signed up to join – if you are a club member and not an individual member of the NRA you should also think about joining and supporting the future of your sport! In the regions, a successful Open Day was held for a second year running with increased numbers at Altcar.

The first year membership offer has been retained following the huge success last year (which attracted 724 new members in 2006). In 2007 new members can join the organisation for £35 for their first year. We are also continuing the move towards having a single subscription rate for all members regardless of where they live. The speed at which we are able to execute this strategy will depend upon the uptake of new members. The NRA has a goal to recruit more members than in 2006 – you can help us (and in doing so help yourselves) by encouraging fellow club members to join up. At nearly 5,300 members, we have already grown significantly in the past few years, we should be able to reach 10,000 within five years if we all get involved – it is your Association, so help us grow stronger!

The Membership Committee has launched a new initiative to encourage cadets and school leavers to join the NRA. A log book can be obtained from the NRA so that they can record their shooting activities (in all disciplines, but particularly TR). This log, together with a brief assessment, will then enable them to join the NRA as full members without requiring them to attend the Probationary Course (which is often a barrier due to cost for these youngsters). Any schoolmasters or cadet instructors interested in this initiative should contact the Membership Department.

The Membership Department is striving to improve efficiency for members. Many will have seen and used the online renewal process. We are intending to increase the facilities available to members online, so if you haven't already registered, please do so on the NRA website.

We are always interested in hearing the views of our members. Please feel free to send us any suggestions and comments either by post to the Membership Department or by e-mail to [memsec@nra.org.uk](mailto:memsec@nra.org.uk).

## NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



by  
Glynn  
Alger

### Shootings in Virginia

Following the recent tragic shooting in Virginia, in the United States, the telephone at the National Rifle Association here in the United Kingdom was 'red hot' on the following day.

The assumption by all the media was that we were one and the same as the NRA of America. So much so that one caller was very disappointed that we could not put someone on with an American accent who could be cross-examined on a radio breakfast show.

The one thing shooting needs to accept is that because of the immediacy of news in the modern world, events happening elsewhere do affect us here in the UK, even if we think they should not.

During the day in question, the National Rifle Association gave three radio interviews and one to television.

Our position was as follows:

*Question* – "As a gun lobby what do you think should happen following events in Virginia?"

*Answer* – "We are not a gun lobby we are a sporting lobby. The NRA of the UK is quite separate and distinct from the NRA of America. For historical and cultural reasons in the United States they retain the right to Bear Arms. After all it is written into their Constitution and millions of Americans are used to owning or possessing firearms. At the last count I understand there were 200 million firearms in general circulation in the USA, which at this stage would create enormous problems for the Government over there to introduce controls similar to the UK.

In the UK there has not been the same large scale ownership of firearms as in the United States. The reason for possession in this country has largely been associated with sport or in connection with a person's work. The National Rifle Association in the UK,

working with its sister sporting bodies, is focussed upon the needs of the sport shooter from club to international level up to and including the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and World Championships, not a general gun lobby based upon the right to carry or self-protection."

*Question* – "Do you feel gun control restrictions as seen in the UK would be beneficial in the United States?"

*Answer* – "As previously stated the conditions in the UK and America are different and there is no easy solution. In this country restrictions only work within the legally licensed community, which is law abiding, while we are seeing large scale increases in illegal gun use in the UK, largely focussed in inner city areas."

*Question* – "Why is gun crime increasing in this country?"

*Answer* – "Because the Government and the authorities mistakenly thought they would cure the problem of gun crime by taking away pistols from the licensed community, who were not part of the problem. Since that flawed decision we have seen a steady rise in gang related gun crime because there is no strategy for restricting the illegal importation of firearms, which is linked to organised crime, drugs and human trafficking."

*Question* – "The man who killed all the children at Dunblane was a license holder wasn't he?"

*Answer* – "That is a good question. Dunblane should not have happened if the authorities had acted appropriately. The police had been informed by the shooting community that Hamilton, in their view, should not hold a firearms certificate. They suspected Hamilton was involved in crime. Under normal conditions he should have had his firearms seized and his certificate revoked. I cannot understand why this was not the case.

Today the police have been given stricter guidance on what they should do and the risks of a recurrence are consequently reduced."

*Question* – "How could gun control be improved?"

*Answer* – "It probably doesn't need further adjustment because the licensed community are highly regulated in the UK. The problem here is that over recent years, with knee-jerk legislation and increased guidelines from the Home Office, the law has got so complex that even the police do not understand it. What chance does a license holder have? As a result law abiding citizens find themselves on the wrong side of the law because of a technical offence. The law needs to be simplified to reduce the current ambiguities that exist."

*End of interview.*

## **NRA Name Change?**

One of the realisations that have come out of the events following the shootings in Virginia is that a large proportion of the general public see the NRA in the UK as the same organisation as the NRA in America. Politically this causes us problems.

I recently viewed a website where people were asked for their comments on the Virginia shootings and gun control here in the UK. There is no doubt that the majority believe we are the same organisation as our American cousins and have the same motivations, even when informed otherwise.

The musings I witnessed were not for the faint hearted and left me in little doubt that as an organisation we are not liked or trusted purely on the basis of our name and because our president is Charlton Heston!

## **A Day in Politics**

Tony Blair to some extent has lost his authority over his Government but continues vainly to try and regain some of his reputation as a world leader. Like any wounded animal he can still be dangerous. He recently demonstrated his knowledge when talking about the need to control the access to guns by the young. In yet another sound bite or piece of spin he stated that he intended to introduce new legislation to introduce longer sentencing for 17 year olds who possess illegal firearms, failing to recognise that such law already existed for 18 year olds. Criminally, although commenting on the deaths of three young people, he failed to recognise that the victims and probably their assailants were under the age of 17 and would have been unaffected by his latest off-the-cuff proposal.

Television companies when visiting the scenes of the atrocities were informed by local youth that it was easy to get handguns if you knew the right people, the right people being gang members. The view expressed by those in the know was that children much younger than 17 were carrying guns in their own right or on behalf of others. The police acknowledge that in inner city areas gang culture is growing and one can assume so is access to guns. As commented upon in an earlier article, the police and other enforcement agencies admit they are unable to control this problem and they do not have a plan. This being the case, we can expect, at least in cities, to see a growth in organised crime and gun culture, not unlike that seen in the United States in the 1970s.

Based upon past experience, the legitimate licensed shooting community can expect that they will be victims of any new legislation and enforcement drive. This is because the authorities will need to demonstrate that they are doing something.

The shooting community needs to distance itself at every opportunity from being wrongly linked to this problem. Strategically the national bodies

can continue to comment about the lack of a link between crime and our sport and we can centrally resist inappropriate legislation. However, if we are to influence the debate both inside and outside Parliament we, the general shooting community, must be prepared to write to our MPs to state that we are involved in a legitimate, highly regulated sport, that we are not linked to criminal activity and pointing out the adverse effects legislation has had on the sport or will do in the future. The national bodies will do their bit you must be prepared to do yours.

## **A Little Knowledge is a Dangerous Thing**

During my time as a shooter I have been fortunate in that the firearms I have used have always been well maintained by gunsmiths and the ammunition supplied from a reputable commercial source.

I am aware, of course, that either to save money or to improve the performance of their equipment, people will tinker with their rifles and will handload ammunition. There is nothing wrong with this practice as long as the procedures are within the individuals' knowledge, experience and ability to carry out to the correct standards.

However, increasingly I am beginning to see examples where people are reaching well beyond their ability and making mistakes that could have dramatic consequences for themselves or others. If a rifle explodes, the NRA will investigate the cause. The reason for this is that we have a responsibility to those who use our ranges or MoD ranges under our auspices. We need to discover why a failure has occurred to safeguard the interests of the shooter concerned and others in the future. What we are finding is that not only is the number of incidents increasing, but that usually they are down to pilot error.

The main area of concern is handloading. People use cases too many times, they use old primers, overfill or underfill with powder, use the wrong powder, adjust the ammunition shape so it does not fit the chamber, I could go on. The best case scenario is that the round misfires; the worst it explodes the rifle, injuring the firer and others.

This activity has several potential outcomes for shooting associated with insurance, range safety certification and legislation. In my view the negligent handloader has a great potential to damage not only others, but the sport as a whole.

Insurers, at the present, have been ambivalent to handloading, including it within their cover and paying claims when they occur. However, if they begin to see an upturn in claims experience, premiums will go up or, rather than offering general coverage, they might only offer handloading at an additional high premium. If they start to see increased claims due to injuries sustained on the firing point or damage to rifles, they will demand to be privy to the outcome



of any enquiry. If that enquiry shows the individual concerned to be negligent or to have been deliberately pushing the envelope, they may well refuse to pay the claim or adjust downwards, almost certainly resulting in a court case exposing handloading in the public arena.

Safety certificates are issued on a range to ensure the correct conditions are in place to guarantee, as far as possible, public safety. If activities take place whereby rifles are regularly exploding on the firing point and individuals are either injured or put at risk; if this is proven to be due to negligence or by design the authorities are going to take action. In the case of the MoD this does not have to be an individual range. If they see an increase in incidents across all their ranges, they could set new conditions for use of handloads, ban handloads or ban civilian shooting till acceptable conditions are in place or the situation could be made permanent.

Another associated issue is that danger areas are set on the basis of data using commercial ammunition with known characteristics. If people who are handloading are overcharging rounds by accident or to increase accuracy, there is the potential that these rounds will not have the same characteristics as those for which the range is approved, thus jeopardising the safety certificate.

In relation to legislation as you may be aware the Government has already had a go at trying to restrict handloading via the Violent Crime Bill. If shooters are not careful, in that the current trend continues or gets worse, the next attempt at controlling handloading could come via Health and Safety followed by legislation.

For years shooters have rightly been proud of the safety record of the sport. For years shooters have been handloading safely. The National Rifle Association does not want to see this situation change, but those who handload must ensure the best materials, in the correct proportions are used to the highest standards.

The Association is about to publish guidance which will be available via the website, Journal and in Target Sports, to help everyone avoid the pitfalls.

My advice is if you do not have the necessary knowledge, experience and expertise and are trying to handload or gunsmith your rifle on the cheap, you are making a mistake.

## **General Notices**

### **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 15 June at 17:30 in the NRA Pavilion.

The Agenda is enclosed with this Journal.

The Financial Statements of the Association for the year ended 31 December 2006 are also enclosed with this Journal. If any member has any question on the Financial Statements or any question to put to the Chairman under Item 6, the Open Forum, please give prior notice by noon on 13 June addressed to the Secretary General.

### **NRA Bisley General Meeting**

The 2007 Bisley General Meeting will be held in the Umbrella Tent at 21:00 on Wednesday 25 July 2007.

### **Beating of Retreat**

All members are invited to attend the traditional ceremony of the Beating of Retreat. This will be held on the evening of Wednesday 11 July starting at 20:45 on the Exhibition Lawn.

### **General Council Election Results 2007**

The following Ordinary Members have been elected unopposed to the General Council to serve until 2010:

JH Carmichael  
ARK Clayton  
M Maksimovic  
Mrs KD Robertson  
Miss AJ Welford

The following Ordinary Members have been elected unopposed to the General Council to serve until 2009:

GK Alexander  
EJ Gardener

The following Shooting Discipline and Regional Members were elected unopposed to the General Council to serve until 2010:

### **Shooting Discipline Members**

Target Rifle	Flt Lt IW Robertson
Muzzle Loading	D Spittals
F Class	Dr P Monaghan

### **Regional Members**

Eastern	DD Watt
Northern	MJM Black
Yorks/Humberside	Dr JD Warburton
North Western	DG Young
Wales	Martin Watkins

### **Team Captaincies**

We send our best wishes for success to:

Gary Alexander	NRA Team to Channel Islands
David Hossack	Kolapore, Bisley
Graham Nelson	Under 25 Team, Bisley
Flt Lt Dave Vick	GB Service Rifle Team, Bisley
Sgt Chris Webb	GB Service Pistol Team, Bisley

Martin Townsend	GB Palma Team to Canada
Ed Jeens	GB Under 25 Team to Canada
Mick Barr	GB Veterans Team to Canada

### **Nominations for Team Captaincies**

Nominations are requested for the following team captaincies by 31 July 2007:

2008 GB Kolapore Team - Friday 25 July

2008 GB Under 25 Team Match - Friday 25 July

### **Inter-Counties Meeting Prize Giver**

The Inter-Counties Meeting Prize Giver will be Mrs Sarah Goad JP.

### **Imperial Meeting Prize Givers**

ISCRM	Vice-Admiral Sir Tom Blackburn
	KCVO CB

TASAM	tbc
-------	-----

Ashburton	Major General NH Rollo CBE
-----------	----------------------------

Imperial	tbc
----------	-----

### **The Bisley Butts Appeal**

The Association wishes to acknowledge those listed below and all the anonymous donors who have made donations to the Bisley Butts Appeal since the publication of the last Journal.

J Alford	JE Arnold
JP Barry	J Briggs
GJP Carey	S Cheslyn-Curtis

AJ Chivers	BT Cochrane
DS Corker	PJF Croset
NA Davis	RE Ellis
SE Frost	M Harding
KJ Lewis	GM Mace
EY McDonald	JS Mitchell
SP O'Brien	D O'Hara
SP Osborn	JV Pepper
KM Pilcher	JD Pollard
KO Pugh	SJ Ridgewell
DF Robinson	OL Simmons
DA Smith	PR Smith
PA Stringer	DM Thomas
A Uhlig	JS Ulrich
Y Valderrama	JA Wilson
PF Wookey	

### **Closing of the Bisley Butts Appeal**

On behalf of the National Rifle Association I would once again like to thank all those people who kindly donated to the Bisley Butts Appeal following the disaster that occurred last August when due to a storm the butts were badly damaged. As a result of your generosity we have raised £24,820 to date.

As you are all aware the butts have been repaired in record time. We are however intending to do further work on Century Range to create a shelf in front of the butts to minimise the effects of such storms in the future. If you are of a mind to contribute to this work you have until 31 July 2007, which is the date the Appeal will be closed.

# **WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS AT BISLEY**

## **NOW AVAILABLE AT THE NRA OFFICES!**

### **PRICES:**

**ALL YEAR ACCESS: £20.00**

**IMPERIAL MEETING ACCESS (1 JULY TO 31 JULY): £10.00**

**WEEKEND ACCESS (FRIDAY TO MONDAY): £5.00 PER WEEKEND**

**SEE THE NRA WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS**

**WWW.NRA.ORG.UK**



# NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SHOOTING



*by  
Martin  
Farnan*

## Imperial Meeting

### Aunts and Uncles scheme

Anyone attending the Imperial Meeting may request the assistance of an experienced Aunt or Uncle. These volunteers will be happy to assist first timers or less experienced shooters by discussing the day's shooting, showing you how to complete your score sheet or wind graph, or giving any other help as required.

Those who would like such assistance should complete the relevant request box on the main Individual TR & MR Entry Form, and Tim Elliott, who administers the scheme, will then allocate you an Aunt or Uncle. He will then contact you, in due course, with full details of your allotted Aunt or Uncle. Further details can be found on page 19.

### 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:

- |   |                             |              |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Craig Stewart               | Index No 88  |
|   | (100% refund of entry fees) |              |
| 2 | Jonathan Taylor             | Index No 130 |
|   | (50% refund of entry fees)  |              |
| 3 | John Bellringer             | Index No 437 |
|   | (25% refund of entry fees)  |              |

These refunds apply to entry fees only and not to meeting membership, marker fees, sweepstakes or other payments made on the Individual Entry Form.

The winner of the Online Early Entry Draw for £100 was Trevor Horsfield Index No 170.

### Stats Personnel

There is a requirement for some new data entry personnel to enter scores made by competitors in the Imperial Meeting. Anyone with good keyboard skills

who will be available from 19 to 28 July and who would like to join the Stats team, should contact me as soon as possible.

## Changes

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

### Target Rifle

As referred to in the Spring Journal the conditions of the Champion of Champions Final have been changed so as to remove the previous inequity that a service competitor in this Final was unable to shoot in the Inter-Services Long Range match at the same time. The Champion of Champions will now be shot at one distance only, 600 yards, and will consist of 2ss + 15 to count. This will then allow any service competitors in this Final to get to Stickledown to compete in the Inter-Services Long Range, which will now start ten minutes later to ensure that sufficient time has been allowed for this move.

The Band, which will be playing the Queen's Prize winner from the range, will not be a military band this year. Instead it will be Premier Brass, a marching band of 25 mainly ex-military bandsmen.

### Match Rifle

I am delighted to say that Sierra (the Bulletsmitths) have agreed to award 500 bullets to each of the ten top scorers in MR Classes O and T in the Hopton MR Championship 2006. This had been in doubt due to change of personnel in the company. Efforts are continuing to have this sponsorship reinstated this year, and possibly extended to future years.

### F Class

For the avoidance of doubt please note the following in relation to F Class targets:

#### Short Range

Standard TR targets will be used at all distances from 300 to 600 yards. The solid white circle stuck in the centre of the TR V bull will count as the F Class V bull, scoring 6, with the remaining rings simply being valued one point less than for TR. This will apply whether the firer is using his own ammunition or the issued RG ammunition.

#### Long Range

The Palma target will be used at all distances from 800 to 1200 yards. The solid white circle stuck in the centre of the X ring will count as the F Class V bull, scoring 6, with the remaining rings simply being valued one point less than for TR. Scoring for F Class using issued ammunition will continue as for 2006. This will apply whether the firer is using his own ammunition or the issued RG ammunition.

## **F Class Score Sheets**

Mik Maksimovic has designed F Class score sheets which show the scoring regions as explained above. These are colour-coded by distance and will be available from the Range Office at 6p per sheet. 50% of any profits will be donated to the Overseas Teams Fund and will be earmarked for F Class teams only.

## **Sporting Rifle**

A new competition has been introduced this year, the Dewar Trophy, in memory of Mr FSH Forshall who, in 1914, scored a HPS in the Running Deer competition which had been introduced that year. The trophy will be awarded to the top scorer who has not won one of the other three top trophies awarded during the BSRC Championships in the same year.

## **Imperial Meeting Dates 2008 – 2010**

Advance notification is given that the dates of the Imperial Target Rifle Meetings from 2008 to 2010 are planned to be as follows:

2008 First Friday 18 to Final Saturday 26 July

2009 First Friday 17 to Final Saturday 25 July

2010 First Friday 16 to Final Saturday 24 July

It is planned that all other meetings, eg Service Rifle, Match Rifle, Schools etc will be on the same relative days as at present.

## **Ranges**

### **Eye Protection**

All muzzle loading pistol firers and gallery rifle firers are reminded of paragraph 29 in the Bisley Range Safety Regulations which state that the wearing of eye protection by firers and spectators on gallery rifle and pistol ranges is highly recommended at all times, and is obligatory when shooting at hard targets or where the competition rules require it.

### **Dress on the Ranges**

A new paragraph 230 has been added to the Bisley Bible this year defining what may be considered 'normal dress' on the ranges. This has been added to the NRA rules to avoid adverse publicity such as has been levelled at the NRA in the past due to shooters walking around Camp in full military DPM uniform, as if they were military personnel on duty. Where the weather conditions warrant it such items as waterproof DPM jackets or trousers are acceptable but full uniform should be worn only by military personnel who are on duty.

### **Mounting of Targets in the Butts**

You are reminded that the targets on Century range are retained in the wooden frame by three fixtures:

- a the top retaining block behind which the top of the target is inserted, and which prevents the target moving upwards;

- b the 'turnbuckles' which retain the feet of the target, and which prevent the target moving or falling downwards or outwards from the frame;
- c the 'stop blocks' which prevent the target moving to the left or the right.

If any of these safety features is missing, the target must not be used and the matter must be reported at once to the Range Office. In addition, once the target has been mounted and the turnbuckles turned to lock the feet of the target in place, the whole target should be tested by attempting to lift it upwards to confirm that it is securely retained by the fixtures mentioned above.

### **Movement on to and off the Firing Point**

When moving on or off the firing point, you are requested to have consideration for other firers and try not to disturb them. Do not place firearms onto the firing point unless you are about to commence shooting and only then when the RCO has given permission to do so.

### **Snail Bullet Trap**

If you intend to use the Snail Bullet Trap, which is on the right hand side of the Zero Range, you are reminded to read and comply with the printed instructions which are displayed alongside the trap. Large or expensive foresights should be removed to prevent damage, and the rifle must be firmly controlled when firing to ensure that the barrel does not recoil upwards.

### **Range Office Target and Marker Bookings**

Markers are now booked on Monday for weekend bookings. Please ensure that any changes for weekend bookings are given to the Range Office on Monday and not on Wednesdays as was previously done. The Range Office is open on Mondays for administration queries between 09:00 and 16:00.

### **Weekday Markers**

Club secretaries and individuals making bookings for targets on weekdays are reminded that markers can only be supplied 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, so club secretaries should be prepared to arrange their own markers, particularly if a large number of targets has 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 (eg wind or



other extreme weather, or fire in the danger area), all markers which have been booked by the NRA on behalf of any club or individual must still be paid for by the club for the duty for which they were booked. Not to do so would be effectively breaking a contract with the markers concerned.

### **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.

### **The 2007 Ages Match**

As already announced in the Spring Journal another Ages Match will be held over the weekend 27 and 28 October 2007. Teams will be of 12 firers and the match conditions will be a Queen's II on Saturday afternoon followed by a reduced Palma course (900 and 1000 yards only) on the Sunday morning. The age brackets will again be:

- 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 as soon as possible giving their full name, contact details, date of birth and whether you would be prepared to Captain or be an officer of the appropriate Ages team.

Your age group will be determined by your age on the days of the match.

Captains will be appointed by the NRA and will then contact all those whom they wish to invite to join their team. This has become an extremely popular end of season event and you are encouraged to attend. There will be dinners on the Saturday evening (one for the oldies and one for the youngsters) preceded by the now traditional Dragon Fireworks Display on Stickledown range.

### **RCO Renewals**

All NRA qualified RCOs are again reminded that this NRA 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 Maureen Peach on ext 149. 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. This also applies for a period of up to two years after leaving the forces. Please note that this also applies to Cadet Force Officers who hold the CRCQ qualification. Again full details are available from Maureen on ext 149.

### **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 or schools. The reason is that whereas clubs and schools pay a 'per capita' charge associations do not, and only pay 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. If any RCO signs in but does not then comply with the Bisley Range Safety Regulations he, and possibly his club, may be banned from the ranges for a period of time.

#### **Signing In to Record Use of Firearms**

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 regulation by use of a computerised database, the terminal being situated in the Range Office. This has loaded into memory your details and those of your firearms. Everything is menu driven and the keypads are available at all times when the Range Office is open.

Those NRA members who will be competing in the Imperial Meeting should, at least once during the time they are here at Bisley, go to the Range Office and record the fact that they shot here in July this year. There is an additional box labelled "Imperial Meeting 2007" which should be used.

This will then keep our records up-to-date and will be of help to you in recording the use of your firearms. It is important that you use each of your firearms at least once each year, otherwise the police may take a view on your continued requirement for any firearm which has not been used.

## NOTES FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BISLEY



by  
*Jeremy  
Staples*

### NRA Open Day

Once again we hosted an Open Day on Saturday 5 May when we had a total of 1277 guests registered to shoot on our ranges. The pre-booking arrangements worked very well and there was less queueing to register. We have had very positive feedback from a number of our visitors who all seemed to enjoy their day at Bisley. A number of guests have expressed serious interest in joining the NRA.

We could not hold such a successful day without the help of all the NRA volunteers and I should like to thank you all for your assistance once again.

The next Open Day is on Saturday 8 September and we will again be asking members to volunteer to help us coach and co-ordinate the day. Please contact Sarah Bunch by telephone on 01483 799609 or by e-mail at [commdir@nra.org.uk](mailto:commdir@nra.org.uk) if you are able to help.

### Electronic Targets

We have experienced some further difficulties with the electronic targets due to interference of the wireless

links. We believe this has now been resolved and are getting very positive feedback from members. Targets are available at short notice either by the hour or half day. Please contact the Range Office on 01483 797777 ext 152.

### Imperial Meeting

We will be having on-site security for the duration of the Imperial Meeting. There will be a 24 hour emergency telephone number available. We are also installing temporary mobile showers and toilets for the markers to reduce the pressure on the existing ablution facilities.

### Staff

We will be very sorry to lose Michael Blythe, the Financial Manager who is retiring at the end of May. Mike has been a great help to me and other members of the staff over a number of years. I am pleased to welcome Mike's replacement, Bruce Pollard, who joined us in mid-April and is looking forward to taking over the financial reins of the NRA and the NSC.

I am also pleased to welcome Sean Knight, who has joined the Estates team and Charlie Hancock to the team at the NCSC. We wish Ken Chandler and Kyle Scott both a long and happy retirement and thank them for all their help.

### The Former Bisley Gun Club



The NRA has recently taken a surrender of this property and is now offering it to members or clubs on a full repairing and insuring term of up to 21 years. The property comprises a clubhouse building with a total floor area of 966 square feet. There is a kitchen of approximately 73 square feet together with separate male and female toilets.

We are currently putting together an information pack which should be ready by the end of May 2007 and we will be looking for serious expressions of interest by noon on Friday 29 June.

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### Imperial Meeting 2007

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**Thursday July 26th AM only - Century 600x**

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# NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRAINING



by  
*Phyllis  
Farnan*

The Easter holiday period was again a popular time for target rifle training courses with four regional courses taking place. Forty-one candidates attended Skills Courses and twelve completed NRA Club Instructor Courses. The Wind Coaching Course, which was run at this time in previous years, has been postponed until 23 and 24 June.

## **RCO Courses**

Regional RCO Courses continue to be very popular and they can be run throughout the year. Any club wishing to book a regional RCO Course for their members is asked to contact Maureen Peach on ext 149 to make the necessary arrangements.

Dates for RCO Courses in 2007 are shown in the summary below. RCO Course fees for 2007 are: Bisley course: £100, Regional course: £50.

## **Renewal of RCO Qualifications**

All RCOs who qualified in 2001 will be due to renew their qualification this year. The documents required for this revalidation are:

Two recent passport photographs (name on back), your old photo ID card, confirmation from your club chairman or secretary that you have run ranges for your club during the past 12 months, a specimen signature in black ink, and your current postal details.

The renewal fee is £25. All documentation together with the renewal fee should be sent to the NRA marked for the attention of Maureen Peach. Please allow three to four weeks for renewals to be processed.

## **Probationary Members' Courses**

Course 2007/3 will start on Saturday 2 June. No courses will be run during the very busy summer competition period but three further courses have been planned for the autumn. Individual tuition can be provided mid-week (Tuesday – Friday) but at least one week's notice will be required.

## **Skills Courses**

These are designed to improve individual knowledge and skills for new shooters. NRA Club and Regional Coaches can run Skills Courses by arrangement with the NRA. A TR Skills Course will be held at Bisley on the 10-11 November. The course fee is £120 for NRA members and £140 for non-members. Regional fees are: £20 per person (£15 for cadets). In addition the Club or Regional coach's subsistence and travelling expenses must also be paid, as these are not included in the regional course fee.

## **Club Instructor Courses**

A course for NRA members and members of affiliated clubs will take place at Bisley on 10 and 11 November. The course fee is £120 for NRA members and £140 for non-members. Regional courses can also be run by arrangement with the NRA.

## **NRA Club Coach Course**

A Club Coach Course will be held on 6 and 7 October. This course is only open to NRA members who have completed the Club Instructor Course or hold an equivalent qualification. The course fee is £120. The Club Coach qualification is valid for five years but may be renewed.

## **Wind Coaching Course**

A Wind Coaching Course will be held on the evening of 23 June and all day 24 June. Course fee is £75. Please contact the Director of Training for details and an application form.

The usual short Wind Course will be held on 14 July for the benefit of those attending the Imperial Meeting. Course fee: £5 for Class O and T and £10 for class A and X. Proceeds from the short course will go to the OTF and further details will be given in competitors' envelopes.

For further information concerning any of the NRA courses please contact the Director of Training on 01483 797777 ext 150, or e-mail [training@nra.org.uk](mailto:training@nra.org.uk)

## **Timetable for Courses at Bisley for the remainder of 2007**

Probationary Course 2007/4 begins 1 September  
Probationary Course 2007/5 begins 13 October  
Probationary Course 2007/6 begins 17 November

## **RCO Courses (weekend)**

29 - 30 September  
3 - 4 November

## **TR Skills & Club Instructor Courses (weekend)**

10 - 11 November

## **Club Coach Course (weekend)**

6 - 7 October

## **Wind Coaching Courses**

23 - 24 June  
20 July (short course)



# SHOOTING DISCIPLINE MATTERS

## Classic Arms

by Rae Wills

The NRA Percussion Revolver Championship has for the past few years become part of the Imperial Historic Arms Meeting and, although the entry has been only a few, they have included some of the best shots in the UK.

However, it is different from many other such events, requiring all round ability, as it not only requires precision target shooting, but also timed rapid fire and snap targets. In all it is a chance to fire a mixture of practices and, even if you do not aspire to win, a very enjoyable shoot.

As last year there will be two details, but after consulting with the regular entrants, the first detail will be on Friday afternoon, so that those who can arrive early will still have the other two days free for the main events. The second detail will be on Sunday morning.

There is one important change to the conditions in that, in all practices, the revolver may be cocked with the free hand; this includes the Ambidextrous and Surrenden. This has been done to avoid any safety problems with perhaps the less practised struggling to get their thumb over the high hammer of a Rogers and Spencer or similar.

So no excuses! Come have a go! Full details are on the NRA website or from the NRA Office.

Looking around the ranges on any day, Historic Arms are always to be seen, and form a quite considerable proportion of shooting done at Bisley. The more active are probably members of one of the specialist clubs such as the Historical Breechloading Smallarms Association or the Lee Enfield Rifle Association, but I suspect there are many other purely recreational shooters, with whom we have no contact.

So you out there, what do you want? Do you fume with frustration in silence? Do let me know! I often put in a plea like this, and the silence is stunning; I get a call on a need or problem perhaps three times a year, if I am lucky, but you cannot complain if you do not take up the invitation.

But I am not saying I can always wave a magic wand and all will be done. There are often very good reasons why something cannot be done, but at least you will have an explanation, and perhaps better understand the complexities of running the ranges.

As reported last time, FESAC, the European Federation of Collectors Club is now fully rejuvenated under the able Chairmanship of Stephen Petroni of Malta, and goes from strength to strength, putting our case to the EEC and advising different countries on problems.

It now looks as if the EEC cut off date for the definition of an Antique Arm will be confirmed as 1900; this does not mean that each country cannot apply its own definition and date, but they cannot use EEC Regulation as an excuse for imposing an earlier date.

Matters are not helped by the huge variation in local laws; most will know military calibres are severely restricted in France, but do you know in Holland all cartridges, cases and bullets (except a round lead ball), empty or separate, are totally prohibited? So if you are travelling to Holland on an ordinary holiday, do check the car for the odd empty case rolling around the glove box.

Many years ago, coming back from the USA, I had to change planes at Schiphol and forgot I had a box of bullets in my pocket when going for a meal; passing Customs they were most understanding and let me keep them, but being escorted onto Business Class by three heavily armed Border Police certainly impressed the other passengers!

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at

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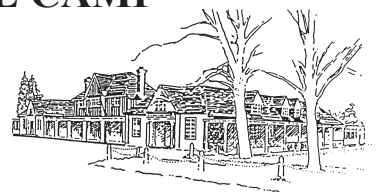
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# OPEN DAY RECRUITS NEW SHOOTERS

*by David Young, North West Regional Representative*

The second Open Day at Altcar on Easter Saturday recruited new members to shooting. Clubs who have so long bemoaned the lack of new blood into the sport were delighted with the scale of public enthusiasm.

Ten years ago attempts were made to have an Open Day at Altcar but this was blocked by the authorities. The success of the recent twice-a-year Open Days at Bisley persuaded the NRA to try again in 2006. This time the Home Office and Merseyside Police supported the application and 2007 was the second Altcar Open Day. Merseyside Firearms Licensing Sergeant Parker spent most of the day touring the event and chatting to visitors and shooters; public access to firearms is naturally a police worry but he said that it was a clearly well organised event and it did not cause them any concerns.

Attendance was nearly 200 registered visitors, a 50% increase on 2006. Volunteers were coaching and peering through spotting scopes much of the day but it was a rewarding experience. Most lanes were at capacity all day and we need to persuade more clubs to be involved next year. Having seen the wide range of shooting on offer from last year, a lot had invited friends and family groups. There had been fair coverage in the local press but Glynn Alger, NRA Secretary General, said they would be seeking more local radio coverage now the event was firmly established.

Held at the superbly manicured Altcar Ranges on the Formby coast the event attracted visitors from all over the North West. City of Salford Shooting Club, based 40 miles from Altcar, organised the .22" prone rifle shooting at 100 yards; their membership secretary Grantham Fidler discovered one father and son who had also travelled from Salford to be there unaware of the club on their doorstep. Visitors had travelled widely. The largest number, 95, came from the coastal strip from Liverpool up to Southport. Greater Manchester conurbation was next with 24% of visitors with the area between generating the bulk of the remainder. Even so,

ten parties had travelled over 60 miles – one from as far as Bristol.

The Altcar Open Day was operated directly by the clubs in the North West region. There were 15 involved this year and they provided a total of 70 volunteers. It sounds like a high ratio of volunteers to visitors but at Altcar, like so many outdoor ranges, it is not just coaches that are needed. Shifts had to be shared out for gate duty, car park, lookouts and range conducting officers and everyone was, in fact, very busy.

Steve Sargent, a .22 rifleman, volunteered for butt duty – when he came back he said he was so grateful to have the opportunity as he always wondered how it was done; hmmm . . . any more at home like you?

Steve Donaldson of 101 Rifle Club, based at Altcar, coached F Class and did not leave anything to chance in attracting new members. Although the NRA puts a club finder in every welcome pack Steve was not leaving matter to chance and gave out his club visiting card as he chaperoned potential recruits through the event! Since then two of these prospects have joined and a further three are interested.

Dealing with a wide range of ages and ability it can sometimes be difficult to get the visitors shots on the target even at short ranges. Tawd Vale Field Target Club put on a superb course of fire for air rifles in the wooded area adjoining the River Alt. Visitor, Arlene Lancaster, was having difficulty steadying the telescopic sights long enough to see the small metal bird drop down target at 30 yards away and wondered whether she could aim at something larger – a stag perhaps!

Six NRA staff had travelled from Bisley bringing rifles and ammunition. This, together with rifles provided by local clubs, meant that a full range of shooting was available. On A Range ten lanes were operated for .22 and .357 carbines together with black powder pistol. On B Range another ten targets for .223", .303", 7.62mm and F Class. Archery and laser clays fired across C Range. Visitors then returned to Altcar's 'Club Row' to take the walk to Field Target Air Rifle, Altcar Clay Pigeon Club and .22" rimfire rifle on K Range. With ammunition being sold at just over cost, the NRA recoups the range hire and other costs from the visitor registration fee; ideally, to break even in the future, about 400 visitors are needed. But this is not about the money; the NRA sees this as an important component in the strategy of developing shooting in the regions.

Could more be done? Coupled with greater promotion and advertising we will need to increase capacity across the spectrum of shooting events. If any clubs not currently involved are interested in promoting shooting membership and the wider benefit of public awareness please contact David Young, North West Region Elected Representative on 0161 793 0737 or e-mail to [northwest@nra.org.uk](mailto:northwest@nra.org.uk)



A future member watching Dad shoot!

*(All photos: Karen Robertson)*







## FORTHCOMING TOURS

### Great Britain Team to South Africa 2008

The following have been selected to represent Great Britain in South Africa in 2008:

#### *Captain*

Steven Thomas GB, England, Hertfordshire

#### *Vice-Captain*

David Dyson GB, England, Yorkshire

#### *Main Coach*

Martin Townsend GB, Ireland, Hertfordshire

#### *Adjutant*

James Lewis GB, England, Norfolk

#### *Shooters*

Nigel Ball GB, England, Norfolk  
Matt Charlton GB, Scotland, London  
Ed Compton GB, England, Sussex  
Ian Davison England, Yorkshire  
Matt Ensor England, Surrey  
George Gilpin Ireland, Devon  
Ed Jeens Wales, London  
Adam McCullough Ireland, Ulster  
Jane Messer GB, CG, England, Sussex  
Marcus O'Leary Hampshire  
Parag Patel GB, CG, England, Surrey  
Toby Raincock GB, England, Surrey  
Rick Shouler GB, England, Nottinghamshire  
Paul Sykes England, Sussex  
Jon Underwood GB, England, Surrey  
Chris Watson Wales, Northants/Leics/Rutland

#### *Reserves*

Gary Alexander GB, Ireland, Tyrone  
Kelvin Ramsey GB, England, Surrey  
David Richards GB, England, Hampshire  
Mark Shaw Nottinghamshire  
Alex Woodward GB, CG, Wales, London

### Great Britain F Class Team 2009

The NRA Council has honoured me with the Captaincy of the 2009 GB team to the F Class World Championships at Bisley.

I am pleased that Peter Wilson has kindly agreed to be my Vice-Captain and that Mik Maksimovic has accepted the position of Adjutant for which I am most grateful. I am also pleased to announce that David Kent has agreed to be the team Treasurer. The appointment of wind coaches will be announced at a later date.

I am determined to build a GB team comprised of the very best F Class shooters in the UK and, to identify those, an F Class National League has been established; a series of open competitions at ranges around the UK to facilitate wider participation from regional members.

All interested F Class shooters seeking a place on the GB team should, in the first instance, participate in the selection process which will involve competing in the F Class National League matches. For further details of the dates and venues see <http://www.freewebs.com/fclassuk/calendar.htm>

Team selection for the World Championships in 2009 will be based on selecting only those members who have distinguished themselves by achieving the highest positions in the F Class National League in 2007 and 2008.

Any queries may be addressed to me by e-mail at [desparr@yahoo.com](mailto:desparr@yahoo.com).

*Des Parr*

### NRA Team to the Channel Islands 2008

NRA Council has been so kind as to honour me with the captaincy of the National Rifle Association tour to the Channel Islands 2008, which will take place over a week centred on the late May Bank Holiday weekend.

My intention is to take a mixture of those with limited or no international experience and some possessing knowledge and skills that can be passed onto the team. Youth is likely to be well represented but those who are more seasoned should also apply.

We will be satisfied with the tour if we return with everyone having learned and developed in some way, and with all team members together with our hosts having enjoyed the trip and some close but friendly competition.

To that end, I invite applications with a brief shooting CV plus a few words about what you think you may bring to the team, to either [mjjcharlton@gmail.com](mailto:mjjcharlton@gmail.com) or Matthew Charlton, 111a Queenstown Road, London SW8 3RH. Closing date is Second Friday of the Imperial Meeting but earlier applications will be of great benefit in allowing me to get to know you and to observe form.

*Matthew Charlton*



## NRA AUNTS AND UNCLES SCHEME SUMMER 2007 - CHANGES

On page 14 of the last Journal, you will have read that the system has evolved so as to keep pace with advancing technology. There is now a box on the entry form for you to tick if you would like to have an Aunt or an Uncle.

In other words, the emphasis has moved away from **my** taking the initiative and making the first contact, to **you**, the competitor, requesting help (which latter has in fact been possible for well over a decade).

Let me remind you about what is on offer and that there is no cost involved. An Aunt or Uncle is available, should you wish, to help you with any matters concerned with your shooting and to advise you about any aspect of the Imperial Meeting. As a bonus, you will often meet new people and be introduced to a (new) clubhouse.

All Aunts and Uncles are very experienced and competent TR shots of all ages and come from all over the UK. The vast majority have in fact achieved international honours at various levels and all are carefully selected by me for their patience and kindness as well as for their knowledge. It is virtually always the case, too, that a match is found between competitor and Aunt or Uncle so that any special requests can be met.

You may have inadvertently submitted your entry without ticking the relevant box. That does not matter: just send me an email and I will take it from there.

Finally, remember that there are guides to the Imperial Meeting available for downloading from the website: go to [www.nra.org.uk](http://www.nra.org.uk) home page and click on Events - Flagship Events - Imperial Meeting 2007 and select the guide you want as highlighted in the text beside and below the picture of the 2006 Queen's Prize winner. By the time you read this, the 2007 guides will be in place.


Tim Elliott

Lark Hill, Haynes West End, Bedfordshire. Tel: 01234 740334 E-mail: [tje@easynet.co.uk](mailto:tje@easynet.co.uk)

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## MIKE BLYTHE – A FAREWELL AND THANK YOU



NRA Financial Manager Mike Blythe retires from his post in June of this year after some sixteen years in the financial hot seat. During this time he has seen two major recoveries in NRA fortunes from the threshold of financial disaster and has witnessed a multitude of changes in the administration and organisation of the Association.

In December 1990 the NRA called on Mike to step into the Association's vacant accountant seat on a temporary basis. Three days per week on a self-employed basis turned into full time employment within four years. "My brief was to stop the organisation and its trustees from repeating the mistakes of the past. The management team turned around that first crisis and that was a moment of some satisfaction", he observes with characteristic quiet reflection.

With a belief that money had to be earned first before it could be spent, based on his previous experiences of management accounting in private industry, he was dismayed that the second crisis was, in many ways, attributable to the reverse of that philosophy. Suffice it to say that he is delighted that the second

recovery post the 2002 Commonwealth Games should have been made so smoothly over the past four years and the NRA now has the option of repaying all the bank debt if it was thought appropriate.

"I have sometimes felt that some in our membership have a capacity for misunderstanding what is done on their behalf. What they should appreciate is that many, many hours are given free of charge by a smallish number of volunteers acting on their behalf, for which too little recognition is forthcoming".

In his sixteen years he sees the decision of the Charity Commissioners to discontinue their pursuit of disallowing charitable status as a major achievement for the organisation. Second to that he sees the creation of the National Shooting Centre and the consequential organisational changes as vital for the future. He feels that what we have now is what it always should have been.

A final comment from the man himself. "I have always enjoyed my work here - the staff and membership have invariably been friendly. The Accounts Department has always tried its best to help members and to unravel problems. Thank you all for your support and encouragement along the way. Also special thanks should go to Margaret Gilder who has helped me the whole time".

We are grateful, Mike, for your hard work in testing times and less than perfect organisational structures. Your contribution, so much of which has been quietly done behind the scenes, has been much appreciated. Now you will have the chance to reverse the declining trend in your golf handicap in the summer months - free of shooting pains! However, before you have all the time to yourself you will be assisting in the hand over to your successor one day per week from June. We shall look forward to seeing you around for a while.

### **Bruce Pollard**

With Mike's retirement we welcome Bruce Pollard as the new Financial Manager. After qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 1981 with London accountants PKF, Bruce joined the family business as Finance Director of a company supplying materials in the Arts and Crafts industry.

From 1990 to 1993 he took an extended sabbatical in Florida, where he continued his accounting role on a contract basis to broaden his financial experience. Returning to the family business he continued until this year when he made the decision to accept a new challenge, joining the NRA with effect from 16 April.

"From the brief introduction that I have had in just a week, I can see that one of our primary targets must be to build on the moves to improve our cash flow management", he said. "It is in all our interests to ensure that we have the ability to manage our invoicing efficiently, to avoid disputes and generate swift settlement".

Banking the cash is essential: we wish him the best of luck with his new role.



# THE WOODSTOCK RIFLE AND PISTOL CLUB

*by M Ballard and P Jewes*

The Woodstock Rifle and Pistol Club originally started in 1972 as the shooting section of "The Woodstock Club", the sports and social club of the Sittingbourne Research Centre in NW Kent owned by Shell Research Ltd. When Shell Research closed the research centre in 1994 the shooting section continued under its original name, although post-Dunblane it no longer shoots pistol. Until 1999 its shooting activities were mostly confined to conventional small-bore prone rifle, one evening per week at a 25 yards range situated in the leisure centre owned by the Borough Council.

From the beginning, a number of club members have also shot fullbore target rifle, principally at Bisley as members of various other clubs. However, in 1999 due to increased interest from the members, a fullbore target rifle section was inaugurated. Currently, the section has 16 members and its membership is drawn from both the small-bore section and directly from contacts met through shoots at Bisley. We have matches with other clubs, shoot in the Kent Astor County Championship and have a number of practice shoots during the year, both short and long range. In 2006 the club entered a team in the London and Middlesex League for the first time and won Division Three. We also enter one or two teams each year in the Catastrophe Shoot, originally organised by the National Westminster Bank Rifle Club. This competition is shot at 900, 1000 and 1100 yards during the first Sunday of the small-bore meeting in August and is the only chance our club gets to shoot TR at 1100 yards. The club holds its championship shoot (Queens II conditions) in the autumn at Bisley.

The fullbore section has recently started a newsletter, which is published after each shoot and has photos, members' shooting scores and a "for sale" section. This year we have also introduced a club calendar with photographs of members taken through the year and no, we didn't copy the Women's Institute, we are all fully clothed!

The section has the usual mix of experienced and fairly new shooters, and we are always trying to ensure we encourage and coach the newer shooters as much as possible. Two of our recent recruits, father and son George and Paul Ballard have become very keen and become individual members of the NRA so they can have the opportunity to shoot more often at Bisley. At the other end of the experience scale, we have Don Hazelton who we think probably began his shooting career with the Lee Metford! Our newer members (and some of the more experienced ones) have benefited enormously from Don's coaching and freely given advice.

2006 saw two of the club's shoots take place on days of quite extreme weather. The first was 13 August, the day of the Catastrophe match at Bisley, which really lived up to its name last year. The first two distances (900 and 1000) were shot in difficult conditions with a fishtailing wind and increasingly heavy rain during the afternoon: not conditions that are conducive to good scoring. I was the last to get down on the firing point at 1100 yards. The sky, which had become more and more overcast, was now a deep threatening purplish black. I looked up at the club captain (Valerie, my wife) who was acting as RCO to ask for "message one" when an enormous lightning flash split the sky just behind her. I don't mind shooting in all sorts of rotten conditions but lying down in the middle of a torrential thunder storm with a piece of wet steel in my hands is not my idea of fun. As discretion got the better part of valour, I grabbed my rifle and sprinted back to our motor caravan as the rain started. About ten minutes later, in a lull in the weather, I accompanied two of our new members Paul and George, who have not been shooting fullbore very long, to the Zero Range but the torrential rain restarted and began to flood the range in front of the targets. The noise of the rain on the iron roof was deafening but we managed to get two rifles zeroed until rescued by Valerie and Michelle



You can try praying to the rifle God if you think it will help.



Its nice to be covered up, but I can't get to sleep with all this noise going on.



(Paul's wife) in our vehicles. We declined tea in the Army Target Rifle Club and did not even submit our scores to the competition organiser but left for home through flooded roads, which was just as well as the heavy rain continued until 21:00 and made many of the local roads impassable as well as causing enormous damage to the ranges.

The second shoot that tested our wet weather technique was our last shoot of the year in November. It had rained hard the previous day and overnight, so Century was already pretty soggy when we arrived. We decided not to shoot at 300 yards as it had begun to pour down and it began to look as if canoes rather than waders would be required to reach the firing point. When we did start shooting at 500 yards, one moment we had bright sunshine, next we were bombarded by hailstones followed by thunder and lightning so that the Range Office temporarily called a cessation in shooting on safety grounds. After half an hour the weather had improved sufficiently to start shooting again and one of our lucky shooters (Valerie) found she was shooting at the end of a rainbow. It was strange that no one went forward to try and retrieve the pot of gold! After it had stopped raining, the drainage ditches were absolutely full and running like torrents.

Paul and I tried to play Pooh sticks either side of a culvert in the 500 yards firing point drainage ditch, a strange diversion for grown men, but waiting one's turn to shoot was never particularly exciting.

As with many clubs, we are always looking for new members. If you are interested in shooting target rifle with a friendly and informal club please contact the NRA who will be able to give you our full details.



No Phil, I am not playing Pooh sticks again, you keep cheating.

## **IBIS RIFLE CLUB OPEN MEETING – SATURDAY 14 APRIL 2007**

*by Frank Harriss*

### **Epsom Schoolboy beats established shots!**

There was very high scoring in the short range competition of the Ibis Open on Saturday 14 April. With fine weather and light winds, not many points were dropped over the Queens II shoot, though no-one went clear. Out of forty competitors, the winner was schoolboy David Nuthall with 149.20, narrowly beating Andrew Wilde with 149.19, Roger Mason with 149.15 and Dick Rosling with 149.14. David is Captain of Shooting at Epsom College, though he is no stranger to top competition as he has recently toured with the GB Under 19 Team to South Africa and he has been selected for the Athelings' visit to Canada this August. There were fourteen Epsomians in the competition which showed the strength of shooting at their school which has won the Ashburton frequently over the past few years.

In the afternoon, thirty-six competitors partook of the Ibis speciality – two and ten at 1000 and 1100 yards. The winds were trickier and some of the marking was poor, though mitigated by the alertness of CRO David Stevens and his assistants. David Nuthall managed the only possible at 1000 but Peter Griggs, Ibis shooting captain, was quietly chasing with three off on overall aggregate after the 1000 yards stage. Peter dropped only a further three at 1100 to win the long range competition with 96.9 and the overall competition with 244.30. He must have been pleased with the new barrel he was "shooting in" at the time! Other placings at long range were Dick Rosling with 95.10 followed by James Bullock with 94.10. Dick was second overall with 244.24 and Roger Mason followed with 243.21. That there were ten scores of 46 or more at 1100 yards shows that this range is quite possible with iron sights and today's marksmen, rifles and ammunition (any ammunition was allowed, but issue was JHC and this was used by the winner).

A jovial Prizegiving followed in the Clubhouse garden with the prizes modestly presented by Peter Griggs and with James Postle, the Epsom Master i/c, doing a clever job of ensuring that those under 18 did not choose bottles! The whole day had been expertly organised once again by Bill Rowland who provided a really excellent dinner for those who stayed on in the evening. Many thanks to Bill and please look out for the date of our shoot in early April next year. We cannot guarantee such fine weather but we can promise good shooting, tough competition and splendid food!

# WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY OR SO YOU RECKON YOU HAVE A PROBLEM?

*by Tim Elliott*

If we think that we, in the UK, are hard done by when it comes to rifle ranges in the provinces (there today and gone tomorrow as rules and regulations evolve and safety areas are no longer safe), then, perhaps, we should think again.

I propose to tell you a tale which will put our own difficulties in the shade. It is a tale of success followed by gut-wrenching shock and then it relates just how determination, initiative and imagination managed to cause a phoenix to arise from what, at first sight, seemed to be some pretty conclusive ashes. It takes place in remote rural southern France.

Once upon a time a rifle range was created with much hard toil. It had all mod cons. It went back to 600 metres, but with firing points (admittedly a bit stony, but good quality shooting mats took care of that) also in yards at the critical distances. In the butts there were twelve frames for four- and six-foot targets behind a mantlet (a stop butt was not required) and with a trench for the markers (I have butt marked there). Bisley targets were used with all the paraphernalia for correctly marking and scoring them. Removable blue and yellow wind flags lined the range. The club that so laboriously and carefully built all this took its name from its radio call-sign, "Mike", and was called Groupe Mike; its Chairman is an NRA Life Member, Philippe Mullot, known, no doubt, to many of my readers.

For three years, Groupe Mike invited teams from the UK to go and compete there, the RAFTRC, the English Twenty Club, the South London Rifle Club among them. The occasions were a combination of F Class (but with muzzle brakes permitted) and TR

disciplines, and also of firing an amazing selection of other weapons. The hospitality was as inimitable as it was unforgettable.

Then, one morning, the club turned up to shoot to find that, overnight and without notification, the military authorities had bulldozed in the whole target trench and destroyed the target holders. A new Officer Commanding at the base concerned had decided that it all constituted a hazard . . . And an OC has complete control over a given training area.

And that was that. Or was it?

No target trench meant no butt marking, and no butt marking meant no single-shot firing. And, anyway, civilians were suddenly no longer welcome. The full saga of how Groupe Mike managed to recover access to the training area is for another place and another time. I will confine myself here to saying that it was a matter of persuading the Ministry in Paris to require the OC to reverse his decision. You should just try that with our MoD . . .

However, as always, in such situations, there had to be a face saver built into the order. The result was that Groupe Mike was awarded a formal lease with a new longish term of use of the facility, but was not permitted to start digging again, which, even if positive to some extent, left the original problem of target marking unaddressed.

I wrote at the beginning of "determination, initiative and imagination". Groupe Mike, under Philippe Mullot and his successor Pierre Monteil (both Bisley familiars), were to need every ounce of these over the next couple of years, and, even now, four years down the line, it is still very much work in progress.



Bastille Day 2006 in the LMRA: the author with Philippe Mullot and Patrick Grégorio.



The old range in action at 300x.





The varied F-Class targets are set up.

Two objectives had to be met, one of them urgently for highly recognisable financial reasons.

F Class firers (the discipline is very popular in France) constitute the majority of the club membership (and therefore income) and a system had to be created on one of the two ranges now available to the Club for them to practise. Fortunately, the wooden target frames had survived the cataclysm, and so that was one problem solved. It was relatively straightforward to create a facility going back to 1000 yards and beyond. It was inevitably imperfect, because of the impossibility of having butt markers, but the firers have, with great equanimity, accepted the requirement thus imposed: they fire five shots, hop into cars and go and look and patch out. At times, there has to be a bit of intra-range radio control when other ranges are in use, but it all runs very smoothly. I watched two details of ten firers at work.

A rather scary marking system, avoiding this vehicular to-ing and fro-ing was tried on one occasion, but rapidly abandoned when some ricochet angles were recalculated (the club has several NRA qualified RCOs). High-tech wi-fi cameras were tried and, although escaping unscathed from the experience, proved to be unreliable. Electronic targetry was, of course, too expensive.

The second objective was more intractable until a leap of imagination came to the rescue. For TR a butt-marker-less system was required. The solution, although perhaps not ideal, is amazingly simple, accurate and efficient. At 600 yards, say, a target is set up (on a different range, not dissimilar in contouring to Blair Atholl and some seven kilometres by road away from the F Class firers) and next to it is placed another identical target frame with elastic cords stretched across precisely-measured one-minute intervals (see photo). This had to be made with great precision and the first version collapsed under the not-inconsiderable strain. A second version, expertly built by a club member cabinet maker, has stood the test



The TR target system.

of time. Thus, the firer aims at the exposed target but the bullet, with the sights off-set laterally the required number of minutes, strikes through the ancillary grid-target. The spotter, also acting as coach, alongside the firer can, thanks to an appropriately coloured and placed bit of stop butt or mound and using the grid, spot the precise location of the shot and plot it on to a score diagram. Up to three firers, with one, two or three spotters, may reasonably use the one set of targets and a second grid-target to the other side will soon double that number. A similar system for long range is under construction. Needless to say, the spotter's scope has to be a good one, but even with a standard x22 magnification the spotter can cope. Oh, and it all works in the rain.

The upside is that TR firers can train for Bisley, where they come routinely if, latterly and unsurprisingly, in fewer numbers. The downside is that the Groupe Mike can no longer hold the competitions and matches which had become so important a part of their annual programme but even that is under review.

But whichever way up you look at it, it is quite some achievement.



The author congratulates a young firer on his first 600 yards possible (50.8) on 2 February 2007.

# A DISABLED SHOOTER ENABLED

*by Bob Galfskiy*

As a diabetic with heart, balance and mobility problems, I consider myself extremely fortunate not yet to be confined to a wheelchair and to be enabled to continue my lifelong hobby and sport of shooting by the kind help of my friends in Waverley District Rifle Club (<http://www.waverley-district-rifle-club.org.uk>) in particular Jerry Neave, Honorary Treasurer and one of my co-founders of the Club, without whom it would rarely be possible for me to enjoy (at least on alternate Saturdays, weather permitting!) the sport I love.

However, not all disabled shooters, current or lapsed, belong to such a club as ours. I am sure that there are many shooters out there with a wealth of experience gained over many years, forced by circumstances to retire disabled, who feel no longer able to participate in their sport for practical reasons, but from whom many new shooters entering the sport could learn and receive a great deal of valuable guidance. Equally important are those disabled people who have never fired a shot, but who might consider taking up one of the shooting disciplines as an interest if they could be tempted to give it a try.

The solution to the mobility issue would seem to me to require the availability of two resources:

- 1 A moderate amount of capital outlay
- 2 The desire and determination of NRA/NSC members and management to put the requisite measures in place.

Glynn Alger's suggestions in the Spring Journal that funds could be raised by building some sort of retail complex on NSC land at first seemed abhorrent, but after careful consideration I now believe that if it saves our membership fees and target hire charges from spiralling ever upwards the idea could have something going for it. Increasing revenue for the benefit of the shooting sports by building facilities which will attract people here who may never have considered the possibility of taking up shooting as a hobby, sounds to me like a very good idea.

If we can get Mum to bring the kids for a day out to do the weekly shop along with a well-earned dose of retail therapy and have lunch in a picturesque setting, assuming that the kids will be able to see some shooting going on, I am sure the reaction would be "Mummy, look over there - those people are shooting guns - can we have a go?" The seeds will have been sown and some well-placed advertising inside as a follow-up would do the trick.

The attraction of new blood into the shooting world, at the same time as improving shooting's image in the public eye by showing visitors to the site some forms of shooting in action could be even more effective than the NRA Open Days. I believe the Open Days, although undoubtedly very popular amongst those attending, appear mainly to attract those people who already have

some interest in shooting, perhaps through a familial connection or a friend being a participant in one or more of the disciplines at Bisley or elsewhere. In addition, there are normally only two each year.

Bringing visitors to the possible "Bisley Mall and Entertainment Centre" on a daily basis throughout the year could bring revenue to the NRA/NSC but, more importantly, could show the visitors and their families (including the disabled) a little of what we do. I suggest that of prime necessity in achieving this goal of bringing new blood to the shooting sports involves allowing them to see some shooting in action and this is where the problems really begin. How do we build a retail complex where the visitors can look out of the window and see some form of shooting going on? I doubt very much if this would ever be a viable proposition. Impossible in fact.

Perhaps, though, we could take a leaf out of Lord Montague of Beaulieu's book. He had similar problems to our own, with some visitors wishing to look around the National Motor Museum, others the Abbey and Palace, others visiting to practise clay-shooting or archery, or visit the gardens etc all of which are spread out over a large part of the New Forest. His solution was virtually to bring the whole complex to the visitor. In 1974 Lord Montague built an overhead monorail system to take visitors around, not just to the Motor Museum but to other areas which may have been of interest to them and which they may not have bothered with had they not been taken past or through them on the monorail. So successful was this idea that in 2005 plans were put in place to build a narrow gauge steam light railway system.

I am not suggesting an overhead monorail, nor a narrow gauge railway system for Bisley, either of which would cost millions to build and would disfigure the general area of the ranges and spoil the atmosphere which we all love so much about Bisley. Far from it - I believe we could introduce a (possibly solar-powered?) road-train to take visitors around chosen parts of the camp. The road-train's circuit could be laid out so as to pass those ranges where shooting sports of more interest to spectators can be seen taking place, in a circuit which would include whichever location is decided to be the most appropriate site for the 'Bisley Mall' to be built - a location which would have the least detrimental affect on the Camp and which would by necessity have to be acceptable to the Planning Department.

The road-train driver would be in radio contact with the Range Office in case of any emergency and would monitor the vehicle's entry and exit doors to ensure that children (or adults, for that matter) didn't jump out and run across the Ranges.

In the due course of events, having virtually brought some of the more spectator-friendly shooting events to the attention of the visitors, our membership would



grow, bringing more people into shooting and improving the public image of the shooting sports whilst bringing in buckets full of money.

I should like to see some of this money being spent on putting measures in place to help the disabled shooter. I suggest that we build a secure disabled person's electric buggy park from which disabled NRA/NSC Members could rent personal transport for carrying themselves and their equipment around the camp by the hour or the half day, bringing it back after shooting and plugging it back in for re-charging.

What would be required? We would need to start with a building. It would need to be secure. It would need to have a power supply and transformer with cables which could be plugged into the buggies to charge the batteries after use. It would need a burglar-proof electrically powered door or double-doors, through which the disabled shooter could exit and re-enter in a buggy, perhaps by swiping a card through a card-reader. It would require an emergency exit and emergency lights in case the mains power failed. The size of the building (let's call it the garage) would have to be decided according to the available site. In my opinion the garage should be situated as close to the Range Office as possible and would require a disabled car park immediately adjacent to it, in which only Blue Badge holders would be permitted to park their cars. The garage entrance and exit would require a paved or metalled path leading to the road, of a suitable width and load-bearing capacity to suit the buggies. Planning permission would need to be sought, but councils are fairly considerate in matters relating to disabled access so it should not be an insurmountable problem.

I suggest that the garage be built of a similar brick to the NRA HQ and possibly as an adjoining structure with a secure roof, so that it fits in with the ambience of the area. This would reduce the overall cost by removing the necessity for at least one of the walls to be built. The roof could be equipped with banks of solar cells to help provide current for charging the batteries of the buggies. If the garage adjoined the Range Office it could share its entrance with the markers' entry. It may be possible that a disabled person, having booked a buggy in advance and signed in at the Range Office, could proceed directly into the garage to collect a buggy and if necessary, leave their wheelchair in the buggy's parking space. In case of any problem anyone might encounter inside the garage there could be a push-button alarm or communication device at each buggy station to summon help from within the Range Office. Range Maintenance Staff could be given training in the servicing and maintenance of the buggies and be on call in the event of any problem. The swipe-card used by the disabled scheme-member to gain access to the garage could also be utilised for enabling the buggy's drive system, much the same as an ignition key, to restrict the use of buggies to those who need to use them.

I should like to assure members that I am not simple enough to believe that this system would not have its teething troubles, mechanical breakdowns or abusers,

but I feel sure that it could constitute the basis of a good idea which would evolve into a useful addition to the facilities. If a Bisley Mall proves to be the only way this is going to happen then some of the revenue must surely go towards projects of benefit to NRA members, present and future, young and not so young, able bodied and disabled.

The excellent NRA disabled badge system which allows drivers to bring their cars onto the ranges, at least when the surface is considered not to be too boggy, is a great help. On those occasions when I am given a lift to Bisley by a friend with a car, which is usually only possible at meetings of Waverley District Rifle Club thanks to the help of my friends and fellow members, I can bring my gear right up to the firing point.

As I said at the start of this article I regard myself as being particularly fortunate in not yet being confined to a wheelchair, although I am a diabetic and the progressive deterioration of the nervous system caused by this condition has already wreaked havoc with my balance mechanism and caused the amputation of part of one foot. As a member of the NRA Shooting Club I am no longer likely to be able to attend a shoot because of the problems facing me in having to collect my rifle from the LMRA dungeon and drag it around Century or up over the hill, or both. My energy levels simply do not allow it. In my opinion this gives me more of an insight into the plight of the disabled shooting sportsperson than most NRA members. For example, in the event that I wish to visit the Zero Range on my own I have to take a train from

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Southampton to Brookwood, changing at Basingstoke, hire a taxi to the Range Office to sign in and buy my Zero Card, then walk down the road to the LMRA Armoury where I store my rifle and its very heavy, waterproof case, drag it up the steps and then haul it to the range. Fortunately the Pelicase is equipped with wheels at one end, so I only need to support half its weight while I pull it along on the metallised road surface. In my other hand I carry my shooting mat and my range bag in which I carry the other accoutrements I require, such as ammunition, score book, packed lunch, bottle of water, etc. The short walk up to the Zero Range is too much for me in one go, so I break the journey by sitting down at Jenny's, but even so, by the time I enter the Zero Range I am puffing and panting and my pulse rate is too fast for accurate shooting, so there goes another hour catching my breath before trying to re-assemble the vandalised target frame, put up my target, assemble my rifle and get prepared. After a sweep-down of the rubber surface I can lie down and start shooting once I've regained my relaxed state of equilibrium. Then I can be happily engaged in what I love to do.

Then, of course, I need to do it in reverse, clean my rifle, lug it down to the dungeon and lock it away, then telephone for a taxi to pick me up and take me to Brookwood Station and then home again to Southampton.

"Why doesn't the silly old fool find a club nearer his home?" I hear you ask. The answer to that is that there are no long-distance shooting facilities in my area which do not require train and taxi journeys, just the same as a trip to Bisley.

Wondrous changes would be made to my ability to use more than just the Zero Range on my own, during the week or at weekends, by being able to hire a buggy of some sort from near the Range Office, capable of carrying

a cased rifle, mat, range bag, spotting telescope and stand, packed lunch, etc. I am heartened by how easily I would be able to get over the hill to an electronically marked Range Office Target on Stickledown, now and then, or to shoot with the NRA Shooting Club. I could also visit Century virtually any day I could afford the train and taxi fare.

"Why doesn't he buy his own buggy?" I hear the reader ask, which seems a logical question. Well, I would like to have my own, but how could I drive it from Southampton and where would I recharge its battery, how could I drive it all the way back or where could I park it safely at Bisley if I left it there or if it broke down? Disabled people like me or those worse off than I am in their ability to enjoy a day's shooting would gain immeasurable benefits from this buggy system. Many disabled people are able to drive themselves from home to Bisley using modified vehicles in which they may carry (or even sit in) a wheelchair and bring all their shooting equipment. Perhaps their vehicle even has a hydraulic lift to help them in and out. Such vehicles are made available to disabled drivers on the higher rate of mobility allowance under the Motability scheme. They, too, may prefer to transfer to an electric buggy when access by car is difficult or manoeuvring in a wheelchair on the ranges is not possible.

Not all disabled people have necessarily considered the possibility of taking up shooting as a hobby. Many are unlikely to wish to, but there may be those who would do so if they were enabled.

Perhaps if these buggy measures could be put in place we would be able to do some disabled people a huge service by bringing them, their families and their friends into the world of shooting, which I truly believe is a necessity for the NRA/NSC.

## NRA SHOOTING CLUB – HELP NEEDED

The NRA Shooting Club desperately needs more people to help run the club days. The club is thriving and achieving its aim of providing somewhere for both new and existing members to practice and meet other like-minded people. However NRA staff are finding it increasingly difficult to get time off work to run the club days so we need more members to become actively involved. If we can get a pool of volunteers, that would reduce the load on everyone.

### **What would a volunteer have to do?**

Not that much really! Collect the kit, sign for the range(s), sign for firearms and ammunition, get to the range and let people shoot and collect payment. Full and comprehensive instructions will be given.

### **Who are we looking for?**

Anyone with an RCO qualification preferably, however years of experience will also be taken into account. If you have a coaching qualification and willing to use it, please let us know as well.

### **Who does the bookings?**

Chris Webb will be taking over the organisation of the Shooting Club days from Heather to give her a break. Bookings and communications will still be administered from the NRA Offices.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Chris Webb by e-mail at [regman@nra.org.uk](mailto:regman@nra.org.uk) or telephone 01483 797777 ext 156.



## T REX - READING THE SMALL PRINT



### To Chair or Not to Chair

Apropos of nothing at all I happened to notice that the Association is seeking a new Chairman. I think we may rest assured that the masculine may be read as the feminine but funny, is it not, how some of these things touch a nerve. I have no doubt that there may be some who think that the object of this search should be a Chair.

Well call me old fashioned possums, but I have always felt that to be called a chair is to be referred to as some sort of inanimate object of a wooden or other manufacture. Now, I know plenty of people who readily fit that handle, but I don't like it and it does not fit with the job description, which implies that a degree of activity is required.

Call me old fashioned but the term Chairman when used for either sex, or even Chairwoman if you wish where the person is female, is good enough for me, one of the original dinosaurs. That, and I do not particularly relish being sat on; perish the thought.

### Terra Defecta in Absentia

I do like announcements that have the stamp of authority about them. So I was at first intrigued, then mystified and finally fell about cackling in a dinosauric way, at the strictures in the last issue on failures to report defects in the firing points. In short, a special recording form is to be introduced because nobody has complained properly, thus preventing the inspector from inspecting.

I wondered, in my self-indulgent manner, whether the inspector undertakes his own inspection from time to time as any golf-course green-keeper might do? Alternatively, and commendably, it might just be (inspection en passant having been carried out) that the firing points are already in very good nick rendering it (logically) impossible to report non-existent defects.

Take an accolade mowers and groundspersons, if so. I must go and erect my own sign with the legend "Beware of the Notice" in order to prevent injury or consternation caused by my carelessly walking into it.

### Ruling Lines

I also do like to trawl through all those things with little black vertical lines against them in the Bisley Bible. Stand up the rules committee. I commend to all and sundry the first sentence of rule 444 in the latest edition. It is a distinct distinction deserving of an explanation of distinctive clarification.

While on this sort of point, rule 230 caught my eye in the section on Dress and Aids to Shooting. What is "normal street dress"? Hoodies all round perhaps? Anyone else got any favourites that we might dissect?

I smell cake baking at the back of the cave. Time for a cup of Cycad tea and Jurassic sponge.

Toodle Pip,

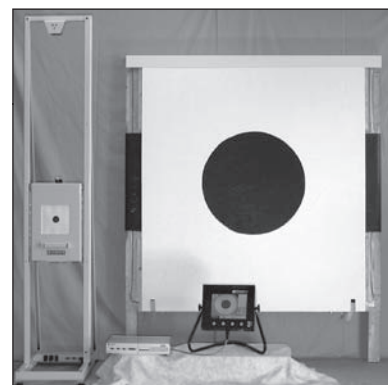
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# NRA REAL ESTATE POLICY

(adopted 26 April 2007)

## Introduction

This policy statement, which covers all uses of real estate and forms of tenure at Bisley, has been adopted by the Council of the National Rifle Association ("NRA"). It is designed to assist the National Shooting Centre Limited ("NSC") in the execution of its real estate obligations set out in the Agreement made between NRA and NSC dated 28 April 2005. It is also designed to help members, tenants and prospective tenants at Bisley understand better the aims of the NRA in relation to its real estate and to clarify their own rights and obligations.

This policy relates to the occupation and use of all buildings and land at Bisley by third parties and provides guidance for development.

In applying this policy the NRA and NSC will comply with existing contractual arrangements.

## Constraints and Restrictions

Favourable inheritance has endowed the NRA with a significant land holding at Bisley. The land is subject to many constraints and restrictions such as: -

- i) Planning - it is within the Green Belt and part is also a Conservation Area.
- ii) Environmental - Natural England are closely involved with the management of the land and certain areas are Sites of Special Scientific Interest. In addition members and visitors like, and wish to see maintained, the unique ambience of the site.
- iii) Physical - there are areas of restricted access because of danger areas and the possibility of unexploded munitions.
- iv) Ownership - the NRA is itself a long-term lessee/tenant of the MOD for significant areas, principally the ranges.
- v) Charity law – the NRA Council has to observe the restrictions imposed by law in respect of charities which own land.

## Principal Objectives

The NRA wishes: -

- 1 To ensure a regular opportunity to review the use of land and to provide the potential to maximise the use of land as operational requirements and economic conditions dictate.
- 2 To provide as much accommodation as possible to meet the various demands of shooters with the view to maximising the use of the ranges and for the encouragement of target shooting. The NRA will therefore seek to provide reasonable availability of leases, seasonal lets

and daily accommodation (particularly for accommodating major shooting events) with a view to providing accommodation to suit all "pockets".

- 3 To manage its real estate on a commercial basis in a fair and open manner between various competing interests to generate income for the advancement of the obligations of the NRA as a national Charity.
- 4 To produce a Bisley Estate Master Plan. This will become the benchmark for all new development at Bisley.

## Types of User

The NRA recognises the following types of real estate user at Bisley and the definitions apply throughout this document:

- 1 Individual - an individual member or members of the NRA (providing they are related to each other and do not exceed four in number).
- 2 Club - a club approved by the Home Office which is also an affiliated member of the NRA (constituting a trust, partnership or other form of unincorporated body or corporate entity) which exists for the principal purpose of providing facilities for its members who wish to shoot on the ranges at Bisley, a military or cadet unit, the police or any other organisation which is recognised as a club for this purpose by the NRA.
- 3 Business - a person or business which provides goods and/or services for the purpose of commercial gain.
- 4 Visitor – a person or business which uses any part of the premises on a temporary or occasional basis.

## Policy Statement

### A Leases

- 1 All leases are to be negotiated at arm's length on an 'open market' basis – ie the best commercial terms.
- 2 The NRA's appointed surveyors are to provide advice to the Trustees on such terms as are required to satisfy Charity Law.
- 3 No freeholds are to be sold.
- 4 Leases to Individuals are to be in the name of the Individual and to be for the personal use of the Individual in connection with target shooting at Bisley.



- 5 Leases to Clubs are to be in the legal name of the Club (or where the Club is not a legal entity then in the name of the trustees) and to be for the use of the members of the club in connection with target shooting at Bisley.
  - 6 Leases to Businesses are to be for the sole use of the Business as specified in the lease and, where specified in the lease, are not to compete with another Business.
  - 7 Assignment, sub-letting or sharing of premises during the term will normally be permitted subject to the tenant first offering to surrender the lease to the NRA.
  - 8 No lease is to be for more than 21 years.
  - 9 No enfranchisement rights (ie rights to buy the freehold or obtain a long term lease) are to be created.
  - 10 No renewal rights are to be created in new leases except as mentioned in paragraph 13.
  - 11 The NRA will make every effort to agree terms for Club tenants to take new leases at the expiry of their leases, so long as the Club has complied with the terms of its original lease and otherwise proved an acceptable tenant to the NRA.
  - 12 Where Individuals hold existing leases of ground on which they have at their own expense within the previous 21 years prior to the expiration of the original lease term constructed the building, at the expiration of the original lease term the tenant will be offered a further lease of the building (but not necessarily the whole of the original plot) for up to 21 years at the open market rent for the land and building on a full repairing and insuring basis. No further renewal rights will exist after the end of the second lease.
  - 13 Where new buildings are to be constructed in the future the NRA will undertake the building work itself (or through a contractor employed by it) so that it retains control of the project. The NRA may fund this work itself, in which case the building will be let at the open market rent for the land and building and there will be no renewal rights. However the work may be funded by an Individual (by payment of a premium), in which case such Individual will be offered a 21 year lease at a ground rent on a full repairing and insuring basis. At the expiration of this lease the tenant will be offered a further lease of the building (but not necessarily the whole of the original plot) for up to 21 years at the open market rent for the land and building on a full repairing and insuring basis. This is to ensure that the tenant, whilst still actively participating in target shooting, will have some security of tenure on buildings he has paid a premium for. No further renewal rights will exist after the end of the second lease.
  - 14 There is to be no right to compensation on lease expiry. Accordingly, prospective tenants must take into consideration any premium, building costs, improvements and rentals payable over the period of the lease. At the end of the lease the tenant shall surrender the buildings to the NRA without compensation.
  - 15 All leases are to include a landlord's break clause for redevelopment, but subject to compensation payable to the tenant. Leases for 21 years should normally also have a two way break clause at the end of years 7 and 14 without compensation (except where the landlord breaks a ground lease in which case compensation will be payable to the tenant).
  - 16 All proposed alterations and improvements are to require prior approval by NSC.
  - 17 All rents are to be subject to regular (upward only) review provisions as set out in the standard lease.
  - 18 All leases are to contain full repairing and insuring obligations on the tenant. Where the building is owned by the NRA it would be normal for the NRA to insure the building and recover the cost from the tenant. This may be the preferred option in any event.
  - 19 The NRA's legal fees are to be paid by the tenant (except where the Landlord and Tenant Act precludes this). This will be a specific requirement of the lease.
  - 20 Tenants are to be responsible for direct outgoings including, as applicable, electricity, gas, water, drainage and shared general services (such as roads, refuse etc).
  - 21 Tenants are to be responsible for Council Tax and Uniform Business Rate or similar as appropriate.
  - 22 Arrangements made with Visitors should not cause undue inconvenience or nuisance to tenants generally.
  - 23 All Individual and Club tenants must be and remain individual or affiliated members of the NRA (as appropriate).
- B Seasonal Lets – Huts and Caravan sites**
- 1 All lets of less than 12 months (and on terms which would not allow them to extend to more than 12 months) are for the NSC to manage for the NRA, without reference to the Council.
  - 2 Seasonal lets (formerly referred to as annual lets) are available for the periods 1 March to 30

November in accordance with the Local Council Licence and planning permission for caravans and Council Tax as regards huts.

- 3 Seasonal lets do not carry renewal rights, but, so far as possible, renewal will be available so long as the tenant is an Individual member and active in shooting and the site is not required for another purpose.
- 4 Without commitment, endeavours will be made for any seasonal tenant (and qualifying former leaseholder), for whom renewal is not available, to be offered an alternative seasonal let.
- 5 Tenants of seasonal let huts may apply to make improvements, but must remember that the tenancies are not renewable by right. At the request of a tenant and at the recommendation of NSC the Council may authorise improvements at the expense of the NRA, subject to an increase in annual rental and subject to the prevailing Bisley Estate Master Plan.
- 6 Seasonal lets of huts and caravan sites are only available to Individuals.

## **Process/implementation issues**

### **A Leases**

- 1 NSC is to manage the Bisley Estate on behalf of the NRA applying normal commercial principles and conforming with:
    - (a) existing contractual arrangements
    - (b) charity law
    - (c) property law.
  - 2 All real estate matters are to be under the day-to-day control of NSC.
  - 3 Except where rights of renewal apply, all new leases are to be widely advertised by appropriate media. Where it is proposed to let to an Individual or Club, advertising will be to the shooting community through the Journal and the NRA/NSC websites. Where it is proposed to let to a Business, advertising will be through all appropriate media. Marketing will be by informal tender. New leases of existing buildings will be advertised at a guide rent. The highest bid in excess of this figure will normally be accepted but without obligation on the NRA to accept the best or indeed any tender.
  - 4 Wording excluding the provisions of Sections 24 to 28 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 shall be included in all relevant leases.
  - 5 NSC will negotiate terms for leases with the prospective tenant and present agreed Heads of Terms to the Council for approval together with appropriate advice from the NRA's surveyor.
- When the Council's approval has been obtained the NRA solicitors will be appointed. In the interests of consistency and fairness the lease will be in standard form (which will be provided to the potential tenant at the outset) and variations will be for special cause only. Heads of Terms once agreed will not be renegotiable.
- 6 The NRA will in good faith look to conclude the documentation of all transactions within eight weeks of approval by the Council and will expect prospective tenants to do likewise.
  - 7 All Council approvals will expire three months from the date of the Council's decision unless specifically renewed.
  - 8 All transactions remain subject to contract until formal legal documents have been entered into.
  - 9 The expression "best commercial terms" will take into account where there is a planning condition or restriction imposed by the NRA which affects values.
  - 10 Where property is let to Individuals, occasional sharing by family and guests is permitted, but if in doubt as to whether regular guests would infringe the terms of the lease the opinion of the Managing Director of NSC should be sought. He will seek to ensure that the facility for guests does not abuse the permitted use of the property or the level of rent payable. Provision can be made for assignment to another member of the NRA.
  - 11 NSC can negotiate leases for periods of less than 21 years provided it maximizes the economic benefit in the long-term interests of the NRA. Normally, leases will be for a minimum of seven years, but tenancies for shorter periods may be applied in special circumstances (eg the age of a tenant or other short-term requirement) provided that an open market rent is receivable. In this event NSC can let property subject to Assured Shorthold Tenancies at market rent and for periods of up to three years at a time. Assured Shorthold Tenancies are only suitable for lettings to Individuals who intend to occupy on a full time basis.
  - 12 All existing contractual commitments will be honoured. Evidence of any previous undertaking made by an officer of the Association will be taken into consideration and, where appropriate, account, without prejudice or any commitment. This is notwithstanding the lack of adherence to the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989 (which provides that there is no contract unless in writing in a proper and countersigned form). Evidence of an agreement in addition to the Lease is to be produced by the tenant to NSC



at least six months in advance of expiry of an existing lease. The Council will not necessarily have a record. Where a lease is renewed, subject always to contractual rights, the principles of the Council policy will be applied.

- 13 Any premium will be treated as rent paid in advance and accounted for as prepaid income rather than capital.
- 14 Alterations and improvements require prior written consent. Subject to this, alterations and improvements to a property can be left out of account for rent review purposes (not relevant to ground lease rents). Additionally compensation will be paid at the end of a lease if there has been enhancement of value to the NRA and agreement to pay compensation is reached before the alterations and/or improvements are carried out.
- 15 Normally rent reviews are three-yearly on an 'inflation' basis interspersed with reviews on an 'open market' basis, as set out in the Standard Lease.
- 16 Rent reviews are to be conducted in a timely manner. In the event of unwarranted delay NSC is expected to refer the review to an independent surveyor for settlement in accordance with the terms of the lease.
- 17 NSC is to ensure that obligations contained in leases are observed and performed in a proper and timely manner and is to take enforcement action in the event of persistent default. They are also to serve all relevant notices in a timely manner.
- 18 The Council wishes to try to ensure that all those who already have accommodation at Bisley have the opportunity to continue to do so whilst they are actively shooting or active in membership.

19 Where a lease is coming to its end, the tenant will ordinarily be consulted no later than six months before expiry. This should include service of formal notice under the Landlord and Tenant Act in appropriate cases.

20 In the case of an Individual where a lease is not being renewed (for reasons other than the default of the tenant), the NRA will endeavour to make arrangements for suitable alternative accommodation for the tenant.

## **B Seasonal and Caravan Lets**

- 1 The long established procedure based on waiting lists for, separately, caravan sites and huts maintained by NSC, which is available to prospective tenants on demand, will continue. As Individuals reach the top of the list the next available site will be offered. Individuals who decline such an offer remain at the top of the respective waiting list until their preferred site is available or they change their request. Once a site is accepted and occupied it may not be changed without consent except by rejoining the waiting list at the bottom.
- 2 A registration fee of £50, by way of deposit deductible from the first payment of rent, is required for an Individual to be placed on either waiting list.
- 3 Any Individual who loses his or her site because it is not renewed (other than because of the default of the Individual) will be placed at the top of his or her chosen waiting list(s).
- 4 Seasonal Caravan Sites and Huts are subject to annual rent reviews.
- 5 It is the intention to renew Seasonal Lets each year unless the site is needed for other purposes. Normally, this should be foreseen from the Bisley Estate Master Plan.



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# SIMON FRASER

*Talking With Tony de Launay*

Derby Lodge is the home of both the Territorial Army Rifle Association and the Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting; it is that red brick bungalow opposite the railway carriage at Bisley. It of course takes someone to run any organisation, and that man is Simon Fraser (Maj Retd). I interrupted him on May Day.

The unmistakable bushy red eyebrows reached skywards as I asked how life had projected him into the vital role of looking after the future of rifle shooting. "Failing to achieve a satisfactory result in my chemistry A level", was the enigmatic answer. "I had set my ambitions on becoming a doctor; I had the place reserved at Bart's Hospital, but I blew it on my chemistry result".

Words from a friend suggested to him the Army might provide a good three year career path during which to reconsider his future. "I had an interview at lunchtime on a Friday, and was signing on at Pirbright Barracks on the Saturday afternoon. In the space of 24 hours I had discovered and joined the Coldstream Guards".

A broken foot caused him to be back-platoonned during his short-service commission training at Mons, but this had its silver lining when he became the senior under-officer at the end of the training period. "I never for one minute thought that the career would stick, but it did".

We turned back the clock slightly from Mons. "I first picked up an air rifle at the age of seven. I was fortunate enough to captain the Rugby School VIII and then I became involved with shooting in the Army". Fast forwarding the timepiece, in 1970 when the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn Coldstream Guards provided the Bisley duty contingent, he persuaded his superiors to enter a team that he trained and led, achieving high competition standards. He then converted to become a regular soldier.

His Army career went on to span 24 years, the bulk of which was spent as a Coldstreamer but with the spells on the Staff and with the Scots Guards. Travel took him to Denmark, Norway, Kenya, Cyprus, Belize, Canada and Northern Ireland (four tours). It also took him to the country that he found, in equal measure, both the most beautiful and distressing – Zimbabwe.

"We Brits were sent out as part of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force to assist the process of independence. It was a role in which we could, literally, affect the process of life or death. We had to assist the task of bringing the erstwhile terrorists in from the bush. It was a matter of gaining their trust and providing safe havens in a society that was not universally well-disposed to their participation in a fledgling democratic process. It was a life full of contradiction, but we just got on with it".



It was diplomacy cut through with practical reality. The Maoist inspired collection of today's political leaders had to be fed and watered as did their families and comrades and the local populations. Water pipelines gradually replaced jerry-cans; roads and food convoys replaced air-drops of food. "The RAF did a magnificent job throughout this time", he said, "and we learned how to provide and organise the life-giving facilities that we take for granted in the UK".

When he visited again some eight years later he found that part of the infrastructure still working. The British contribution was fondly remembered and preferred by the citizens. "That it is in free-fall destruction now is clear confirmation that absolute power corrupts absolutely", he observed. "We eventually brought in some 20,000 from the bush. The population are the most friendly, proud and realistic of people. It is a disaster".

In 1992 the first tranche of the Options for Change programme cut through the military. A year later Simon found himself heading for civvy street, a job-hunting prospect that he did not relish. "I saw the role of Secretary to the Joint Committee of TARA and CCRS advertised and went for it. It is now near enough 14 years on and I believe that we have moved from strength to strength. Much more importantly we have a system for which other countries would give their eye-teeth. Did you know that in the years from 2000 to 2005, 74% of the people that shot for GB Rifle teams had a cadet background?"

Other statistics and facts followed. Starting with the Inter-Services Cadet Rifle Meeting, since before Simon's time the capacity 125 team limit had always been reached. Spaces are allocated 25 to the Navy and 50 each to Army and Air Force. Qualifying shoots are held in districts where the number of teams exceed the district allocation.



"The military value the cadet system and remain keen to ensure that the cadet units are supported and encouraged. It is one route for recruitment into the services. They are equally keen to see shooting well up the agenda. We have seen an increase in the number of cadets from single service units qualifying for places in the cadet rifle teams. Up to 50% of some of the British Cadet Rifle Team (the Athelings) cadets came from those units in recent years. We sponsor up to 24 cadets with fully subsidised entries for the Imperial Meeting, 18 of whom are from single service units, allowing those that might not otherwise be able to afford it to compete at top level".

He explains that there are three main cadet teams. The Athelings participate in the "exchange" matches with the Royal Canadian Cadets, a practice that has been in existence since 1928 although the first match was in 1910. Matches are shot at Bisley and Ottawa. Members of the team must be under 19, in the cadet system (CCF or single service units) and holders of British passports.

The GB Under 19 Team participates against South African Under 19s, being under 19 and a holder of a British passport are the requirements. It is a highly valued exchange which the South Africa Bisley Union has recognised through Simon's election as an Honorary SABU Vice-President.

The third team is the UK Cadet Rifle Team to the Jersey Open Meeting, and is open to those under 19, in the cadet system but not necessarily with a British passport. It is normally a younger team than the other two and shoots against a Channel Islands team (Jersey and Guernsey). All three teams are administered through CCRS.

"I like to think that we are doing what we can to safeguard the future of British shooting. Last year there were 220 cadets shooting the Grand Aggregate – about 20% of all entries. If you look at British Rifle Teams the average age has steadily been getting younger, the reverse of just about all the other countries shooting target rifle".

Thoughts of lunch and other appointments bring the conversation to a close, but there is one thing that Simon insists should be added, "We owe a great debt of gratitude to all those volunteers around the country without whom the cadet system would not function. Without the support of the men and women who look after the single service units and the schools cadet forces, and without the enthusiasm of the cadets themselves, we too would be staring at an ever aging shooting population".

And that is simply a statement of cold fact. We should not allow the good work done by Simon and his colleagues ever to be wasted.

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# YET ANOTHER RAFTRC TOUR TO SOUTH AFRICA . . .

*by Rob Douglas*

It seemed that the shooting season had only just finished, and Christmas was only just yesterday but it was time for the RAFTRC to go on tour again. The destination was South Africa. Arriving in Cape Town, and travelling along the Garden Route before turning north for Bloemfontain and the SABU Championships. Meanwhile three club members would depart later and travel directly to Bloemfontain, competing in the Free State championship before the main party arrived.

We reached Cape Town on the morning of Thursday 15 March, which gave us two full days for acclimatisation and orientation (ie adjusting to a climate of warm sunshine, a diet of large steaks and red wine and a seat by the pool with a stunning view). On Saturday we went for a friendly shoot with the Western Cape Rifle Club. They use a military range a couple of miles from the shore and about 40 miles north of Cape Town. The range faces more or less south, so Table Mountain appears as a gigantic stop-butt on the horizon. The day started with a stiffish breeze that increased as time passed, so that for the final shoot at 900 metres, 10 shots on the paper was quite an achievement. We proved that everything worked, renewed friendships and were reminded that shooting in South Africa is a major challenge.

Small parties from the Club have toured the Garden Route in the past, so we had some idea of where we were going next. A nightstop in George allowed visits to the cheetah farm and Cango caves. The next day saw some frantic text messages – in briefing the move to Tsitsikamma National Park the manager had said “if you come to the bungee jump off the bridge you’ve gone too far”. Unfortunately in the 13 years since the manager was last on the Garden route, the bungee jumpers had moved one bridge to the west. Everybody eventually found the Park, and enjoyed the spectacular surf breaking almost at the door of the accommodation. More adventurous souls went canopy-gliding, a perfectly safe and harmless activity that involves sliding down a steel rope slung through the tree canopy while using your hand as a brake. Comedy moment of the day was when Jim Bryant (aged 77) broke roommate Steve East’s nose. Surprisingly it wasn’t anything to do with either of them snoring but was due to the fact that Jim doesn’t like mosquitoes and Steve had temporarily forgotten that glass doors can be transparent!

After such exertions we needed a break. Three nights at the truly luxurious Woodall Country House allowed us to visit Addo Elephant Park, and do very little in great comfort. Thus prepared, we sent the non-shooters home while the team travelled north for the main event.

Meanwhile Jim Lindsay, Mick Silver and Rob Douglas travelled direct to Bloem. They were under orders to sort the admin for the whole team. Thus ensued the hunt for Peter Bramley to retrieve Dave Calvert’s kit and Chris Hockley’s ammo, but the hunt was in vain. Back to the hotel to sort the complex accommodation plot. Our base was the Southern Sun hotel in the centre of Bloem, possibly the best hotel in South Africa that week. A Russian ballet company was staying in the same hotel, which improved the scenery no end. The only worry was for our more elderly members of the team to have a funny turn at the sight of all those scantily clad girls in the pool.

Dragged away from the fascinating pastime of ornithology, Jim, Mick and Rob headed out to the range for a morning’s practice followed by an afternoon’s pairs match. The 300 metres practice starting at 10:30 was a relaxing introduction to find a base zero and try to work out what on earth the wind does in Bloem. Jim and Mick decided to pair up and try to work out one end of the rifle from the other while Steven Thomas, next years GB Captain to South Africa, and Rob shot together. The afternoon saw Jim and Mick pair up whilst Rob found a worthy partner in Terry Trigg from Alice Springs, Australia. With a difficult wind at 600 and 800 metres, the youngster and the Aussie got the better of the experienced pair, but lagged behind the locals.

The following day saw the individual matches of the Free State Champs. Rob claimed to be suffering



Whreeeeeeee! Chris Hockley goes canopy gliding.





The Royal Air Force Target Rifle Club Team to South Africa 2007.

(Photos: Conrad Steele-Benny, David Calvert, Brian Jones, Karen Robertson)



Anna Calvert shooting at Cape Town.



What a stunning danger area!



Trevor Hayter - winner of the State Presidents with a score of 300 ex 300.



Steve East shoots, Iain Robertson coaches and Chris Fopp wishes they'd hurry up!



In the aim at Bloemfontein.



Brigadier 'Mac' Alexander in action.



Breakfast/coffee/lunch/tea time!



from an overdose of Poweraid and was not at all well, but Jim and Mick fought to get the wind right and struggled through the days shooting to return mid afternoon. It was at this point the rest of the team turned up in dribs and drabs telling tales of the past week like the fantastic game reserve, Iain Robertson getting off speeding tickets, Brian Jones not getting off speeding tickets and how Mr and Mrs East (Steve East and Dave Cole) were checked into the honeymoon suite at Addo. This was also the day in which we learned that Steven Thomas (next year's GB Team Captain) managed to reverse his hire car into the only concrete bollard on the range!

The SABU Championships have been cut by one day from past years, but retain the same events. Very early starts became a feature. Brigadier Mac Alexander was absent from range officer duties on the first Saturday, as he was elsewhere conducting his last parachute jump ever, so a willing understudy took over the reins and began proceedings with the Scottish Sword being held at 300 and 900 metres in the morning and the Dewar Shield for teams of six being held over 300 and 600 metres in the afternoon. This was a settling-in day, as the Grand Agg did not start till the Monday so it gave the team a chance to get those all-important zeros for the coming week. The team performance in the Scottish Sword reflected this with some distinctively average scores. However all change in the afternoon with David Calvert scoring 97.7 and Mick with a 97.6.

That evening the team had their first dinner as a full team. RAF and friends enjoyed a lovely meal in the Butcher's Grill. This was no ordinary meal, it just happened to be Mick Silver and David Calvert's birthdays over the weekend. Vast quantities of food and drink followed by a 50-something cake for the birthday boys.

Sunday was the only day off at Bloemfontein. Most enjoyed a long lie in followed by lazing by the pool soaking up the sun, enjoying the scenery or shopping in the nearby Mimosa Mall. Dave Cole took to buying jewellery, picking out sets of earrings for the girls and finding a brooch for his wife. When shown the brooch he asked the price, 150,000 Rand, which saw Dave running for the first time in years. You can take the manager out of the bank . . .

Monday morning was the first day of the Champs proper. The opening ceremony was a swift affair, with morning prayers and a welcome followed by a speech by Brigadier Alexander. This was done without notes and gave us touring shooters a great insight into the history of the Champs from the Chief Range Officer's viewpoint. The day held six shoots, with the Free State Cup 300, 500 and 600 metres in the morning followed by the Hamilton team match in the afternoon again at 300, 500 and 600 metres. Conditions for the day, and indeed for the week, were dead calm in the morning

with the wind picking up and fishtailing from behind, which made things a little difficult. This saw Dave Calvert and Mick heading the pack in the morning and it got better that afternoon with Steve East dropping one for a 104.9.

Tuesday brought another two individual matches followed by a long range team match. The morning had the Dalrymple Cup over 300 and 600 metres followed by the Dave Smith Cup at 900 metres. The afternoon had the Rhodes over 800 and 900 metres. The Dalrymple Cup produced another high scorer with Mick scoring 105.9. The Dave Smith Cup saw Steve East heading the RAF with a 49.1; the afternoon saw the Captain leading by example with Neil Moxon scoring 94.7. Tuesday also brought the first thunderstorms during the day while at the range. It was a spectacular sight watching the lightning come down while plotting, however when the lightning started striking the ground behind the butts all chaos ensued. Dave Cole had just lain down as Brigadier Alexander advised those not shooting to take refuge. The range cleared and the targets were removed from the frames while he was shooting; to top it off someone started to drive in front of the firing point. The towel was thrown in - we retired for the evening to relax and prepare for another day.

Wednesday was the hardest day of the Champs so far with four individual shoots and a team match over a Palma course of fire in the afternoon. The morning had the first stage of the State President's at 300, 500 and 600 metres, then the Municipal Cup at 800 metres. The team did well with Mick, Steve and Dave all scoring a 103 with reasonable V bulls. It was a great feeling for the entire team to make the cut for the second stage of the State President's! The long range was a different story with the entire team struggling - some with as low a score as 19.

The afternoon saw the RAF drafting in some friends to make up numbers and creating an All Comers team to take on the South Africans allowing them to practise in preparation for the Palma in Canada this summer. Most of the team shot in the low to mid 90s rising to a commendable 98.7 for Mick and our friend John Pugsley shot a 97.11. Wednesday also saw the continuation of just finishing shooting for the day before the heavens opened and another thunderstorm lurked over the range. Wednesday night saw the naming of the teams ceremony in which each team for the Friday shoots would be read out. Our intrepid captain and glamorous assistant, Neil Moxon and Julie Ouston, took a great deal of time and effort in trying to pick the team, however they ended up naming the entire squad and decided to pick the team on the day.

Thursday at the range is a long day with five shoots. The Jack Mitchley was first at 300 metres in almost dead calm wind followed by the Kings Norton Cup



at 600 metres. The President's Cup was next on the list at 600 and 800 metres with the Colonel R Bodley rounding the day off at 900 metres. The Jack Mitchley was successful with Dave Calvert scoring 50.8 leading to a tie shoot, in which he eventually came third. The Kings Norton saw Neil Moxon and Brian Jones dropping only a point, which led to a mediocre President's Cup where the highest RAFTRC shooter was four off with Mick and Dave leading the way; the Colonel R Bodley was not much better.

That evening was the Protea dinner where each of the team captains are invited to say a few words and make a presentation. In true RAF Officer style Neil, ably assisted by Iain Robertson, Jim Lindsay and Mick Silver, took centre stage. Up to this point each captain had had a short speech, Neil on the other hand took an age, putting some of the younger members of the audience to sleep. There were RAF gizzits to many South Africans who make a tour run so much smoother. Mick Silver also presented an RAF Ensign to Brigadier Alexander using his smartest RAF Regiment drill.

Friday saw the final full day of shooting with the State President's second stage and the International match. The State President's mirrors the Queen's, so there was a 2 and 10 at 300, 500 and 600 metres in the morning and a 300, 600 and 900 metres as a team.

This saw seven club members going through to the final - Steve East, Chris Hockley, Dave Calvert, Julie Ouston, Neil Moxon, Mick Silver, Jim Lindsay and Iain Robertson. Of note was Iain Robertson lying 15<sup>th</sup> having only dropped six points.

Saturday afternoon was the final of the State President's and the Prizegiving. This gave the team a well-earned lie in and a chance to pick up those last minute presents and get rid of the last of their Rand. This also included Jim Bryant catching up on some medical treatment for sunburn which he got while sunbathing with the ballet dancers. The shooting was not as successful as the team hoped for and no team members made the top ten. Overall Dave Calvert came second in the Bramley Chain and was the third placed serving person at the Champs. The last night was a chance to unwind in the Beef Baron and to go out and sample the nightlife of Bloemfontein or catch up on some sleep lost on the 07:00 starts.

Overall a successful tour which would not have been the same without the organisation of Iain Robertson the Tour Manager, Jim Lindsay the Commandant and the fearless Captain Neil Moxon. Particular thanks have to go to the long list of South Africans without whom the tour would not have happened. It was a great experience for all. It was all over in a flash, but the memories will last for a long time.



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# GREAT BRITAIN UNDER 19 TEAM TO SOUTH AFRICA

*by the team*

## **Commandant:**

Freddie Grounds      Gresham's School

## **Adjutant:**

Simon B Fraser      CCRS

## **Lady Officer:**

Jennifer Hutton      formerly Durham University

## **Team Members:**

Tom Cook	Gloucestershire ACF
Tom Drysdale	1932 (Blackhall) Sqn ATC
Holly Foster	formerly Gresham's School
James Lothian	formerly Epsom College
David Nuthall	Epsom College
James Purdy	formerly Gresham's School
Chris Redburn	formerly Wellington College
Stuart Young	City of Salford Rifle Club

We assembled on Thursday 15 March at Derby Lodge for three days of shooting and final briefings after a long and quiet winter season. This re-acquaint with the range was all too short and soon it was time to pack the final bits and pieces before heading to Heathrow for our 19:55 flight to Johannesburg. Check-in was trouble free despite the rifles and ammunition. After the 10½ hours flight, arrival was slightly more complicated but thanks to SABU's preparations we got to the other side of customs to a very warm welcome from Deon Burger and Willem and Natie du Plooy on what was said to be a cool South African morning - we were melting. After a relaxing lunch we were dispersed to the families who had kindly offered to put us up, a more than pleasant eleventh hour solution following the collapse of the intended plan. That evening we had a sumptuous welcome braai in Pretoria hosted by Deon and Jeanette Burger. Much was consumed and we all got to know one another better but were soon ready for sleep.

In the morning Theresé Lauterbach collected and led us to the Magaliesburg Canopy tour, a system of zip lines across a gorge; the longest was 160m across. The trip was enjoyed by all, even those not so keen on heights. Freddie discovered a trampoline and was watched (and filmed) with much trepidation as he attempted various stunts, the least of which was a (reasonably) successful somersault. Next we honed our bartering skills at the curio market at Hartbeespoort and then briefly visited a traditional South African village with a glorious vocal welcome. In the evening we entertained Therese and those of our host families able to come, at the local all-you-can-eat Tuscan Restaurant. They did not make much profit from our party!

Wednesday required a prompt start for the team, indeed early for Chris R and Tom D who went with their hosts, Christo and Sonia Lauterbach, to watch the

High School girls play netball en-route to the Burger's ready for our five hours journey to Bloemfontein. The journey went smoothly, with only one panic toilet break, until lunch time when at 14:00 James P realised (once prompted) that it was in fact his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday! On arriving at the General De Wet ranges we unpacked and settled in before going to the Waterfront in Bloemfontein for dinner and to celebrate James' day. A few amazing cocktails were consumed, including some in jam jars and teapots.

Next day having been entertained by two blokes turning up at the boys block to unlock one of the doors, with two buckets of unmarked keys (none of which opened up Stuart's room), shooting started with a couple of practice shoots at 300 metres. Conditions on the range were very hot and the wind combined with mirage confused everyone. Jen got her first V bull but subsequent shots went the way of the 'pear'. After an excellent lunch we competed in the Free State Pairs Competition in tricky conditions. The late afternoon introduced us to our first dust storm, described by Iris Smith, an Irish ex-pat, as the 'worst they had had in quite some time', which sent everyone running for shelter. Jen declined Simon's invitation to explore the local supermarket in Bloem' so she could get a good sleep. On the shopping expedition, Tom C declared to one and all that he liked the smell of babies!

Next day started with Tom C emerging from the showers smelling of baby and pronouncing that his skin really *did* feel softer. Shoots at 300, 600, 800 and 900 metres saw the team starting to get the hang of the wind, although 900 proved interesting with James L getting three random misses mid-shoot. With the improved shooting came serious burning with Dave's legs looking like pork scratchings. However, at the end of shooting for the day, the team retired to do yet more sunbathing and have a game of cricket with Freddie's makeshift bat that was full of nails and had the tendency to splinter when hit by our ball, made of litter - certainly a good use of electrical tape! It became a thoroughly sporty afternoon culminating in a very dusty game of football with the butt markers. We cleaned up and had a quick snooze before Prizegiving where Holly and Chris picked up several Big Five mugs between them.

Saturday required another early start ready for shooting the Scottish Sword, the SABU warm up competition. Most shot well at 300 metres but 900 that day was not as successful with many excuses, bad butt markers, creepy crawlies and the wind just not being on our side. Stu was top shot finishing seventh. In the afternoon we had a team match practice before Stu, Tom, Tom and Chris opted for a Fat Tuesday meal that included a 600g steak - all valiantly finished them

and even Holly managed to polish off a 400g steak! We then attempted to take on the SA Junior team at bowling but they soundly beat us as we found it difficult to bend having eaten so much.

As there is no shooting on the Sabbath, Sunday was for R and R starting with a lie in. Still full after Saturday night's steakfest we headed to a mall in Bloemfontein for a couple of hours of retail therapy while Simon did the washing. Freddie bought the team a cricket set and a Twister set. Jen and Holly found some spectacular mug-of-the-day headwear. Tom C decided he did not want to try the biltong, because it looked too much like dog chews! The rest of the afternoon was spent at Mazelspoort where we swam, sunbathed, slept, played cricket and Twister and read books, oh, and used the water slides! The team and Jen all managed to collect several friction burns whilst they tried different combinations and styles of descent.

Monday started with the SABU Opening Ceremony at 07:00, followed by the first shoot of the Grand Aggregate, the Free State Cup. Chris led the team with 100.7 and he and Tom D collected their first Merits. In the afternoon we shot a team match alongside the Hamilton Cup with Chris coaching and Tom C making a 50.10 at 500 metres. In the evening we held our team party at a local Portuguese restaurant where a great variety of seafood was eaten.

Next morning we awoke to find several of the team struggling to keep last night's meal down. We battled through the morning's shooting with Holly leading in both the Dalrymple and Dave Smith where she picked up a Merit, before launching into our last practice match in the afternoon interspersed with us running into the bush every few minutes. Mug of the Day was awarded to James L who managed to break a chair whilst coaching Tom D – luckily it was his last shot as much giggling followed at the sight of James sitting on the floor surrounded by bits of chair. An ill Stu and Tom C passed on the trip to the Spur restaurant for supper, where Jen drank gallons of recovery tea and the team felt marginally better after some good steaks.

After what seemed like a long night fragmented by some spectacular thunderstorms and with some still trying to overcome illness, we were awoken early by Simon; someone commented 'he should be fitted with a snooze button' or 'maybe just an off button'. Today's shooting consisted of 2 and 7 in the State President's First Stage at 3, 5 and 600 metres. Holly, Chris and Stu all won Merits but top shot was Freddie finishing 41<sup>st</sup> also with a Merit. A hurried early lunch was eaten before shooting the Municipal in which James Purdy won a Merit, followed by the first of the two matches against the SA Juniors, the International Long Range due to be 2 and 15 but reduced to 10 to count at 800 and 900 metres. The wind was tricky and the scores poor so there was a glum atmosphere until,

to our surprise, we discovered that we had won by nine points. The atmosphere soon lightened and we began to celebrate our first win. The celebrations were cut short to accommodate the 2½ hour prize giving. Members of the team made several appearances for individual prizes (mostly those still in the B Class), then the team was awarded their Long Range medals. Eventually it was over and we escaped to celebrate before heading to bed, ready for another early start and long day's shooting.

Next day James P realised that the aftersun he had applied to his trigger hand the evening before had stained his hand an amusing shade of bright orange. This did not stop him making top score and finishing seventh in the Jack Mitchley at 300 metres, collecting another Merit along with Tom C. Others did not find it so easy, one cross-firing the first sighter with a 900 metres elevation, concentration? At 600 metres in the Kings Norton, Holly shot a possible, but her trigger failed, however she batted her eyelids and the range officer decided to just pass her trigger at the final attempt. She and Tom D won Merits. Stu made top score and won a Merit in the President's Cup at 600 and 800 metres before David came into his own at 900 metres, finishing ninth and along with Tom D won a Merit. Upon returning to the van we discovered the skull of a poor dead Hartebeest had found its way into the trailer (thank you SA U25's). With Freddie and Simon attending the SABU function in the evening, 'mummy Jen' took the team to Bloemfontein for a quick meal followed by an early night before the most important day of the tour.

The second stage of the State President's - 2 and 10 at 3, 5, and 600 metres - proved different, it had been threatening to rain all day with lightning on the horizon; it finally did for the second detail at 500 metres. Chris was our highest scorer. At lunchtime there was a quick drying out of bedding before the Junior Protea Match. Holly having taken her rifle out of the bedding, knocked her foresight gently then panicked when she saw it wasn't vertical, only for Chris to point out that one leg of the rifle was sitting on a book! She and one of the SA Juniors both still had trigger problems so Simon had to do some urgent adjustment. After 300 metres we were six points down which rose to nine after 600, however we came back at 900 to finish within three points of the South Africans. Holly and Stu made top score with 146 each but the high gun of the match was Andre du Toit who scored 149. In the evening we teamed up with the South African Juniors at the Protea dinner and had a most enjoyable time even with Holly being set up to make a somewhat astonishing statement to Christo, in Afrikaans, which she did not understand.

Saturday morning and we were all up to pack and give Simon another ton of washing for the launderette before the final of the State President's with Holly,



David, Chris, Stu and Freddie shooting and the rest of us supporting. Scores at long range were not classic in very hot conditions. Chris achieved the best score finishing on 275. Then it was back to sort rifles before the main Prizegiving, followed by our braai with the South African Juniors amidst an awesome thunderstorm. We introduced the South Africans to Twister and Jen demonstrated belly dancing.

April Fools' Day started with Tom D's rapid leap out of bed; he had never been seen to get out so quickly. This was caused by finding a plastic bug that had been placed on his pillow. This aided a prompt start as we began our touring; we had 600km to travel south to the Karoo National Park. We arrived at our fantastic chalets with stunning scenery in time to see the sun set behind the mountains before eating dinner in the Park restaurant, during which the lightning conductor pole was struck. The evening was finished with a game of tactical Twister invented by members of the team.

For many it was a voluntary early start and a 10km hike around very picturesque mountains while the lazier team members opted for a lie in. In the afternoon we went on a game drive and spotted mountain zebra, ostrich, tortoise, hartebeest, kudu, springbok, klipspringer, baboons and eland, but we never saw the elusive rhino, although we did see its droppings! In the evening Cedric cooked a braai before a night game drive which was cancelled for the second group due to the bad weather.

After breakfast we drove to the massive Meiringspoort waterfall within its beautiful mountain pass and then on to the Cango Caves where we opted for the adventure tour and some very small tunnels were negotiated - the smallest was 27cm in diameter which even Man Mountain Freddie Grounds managed to negotiate, Mug of the Day ears and all! Stu and Tom C had to rescue Holly, floundering about in a vertical tunnel, and many "flattering" photos were taken. Next it was the Ostrich Farm, where in attempting to ride an ostrich, Tom D proved quite gifted while Chris failed miserably. The last stop in Oudtshoorn was the Crocodile and Cheetah Park where some stroked lions and cheetahs. A terrified Tom C jumped a mile when the cheetah turned around; meanwhile Freddie fascinated the meerkats with his ears. Finally it was on to George to supper where Stu demolished a 700g steak and half of Tom C's as well.

We left the Backpackers' hostel at 07:30 for breakfast by the coast in a restaurant in the old train at Mossel Bay. Some of us went paddling before we drove to the bridge where the more suicidal members of the team decided to do a bungee jump. Having survived we drove to Cape Agulhas, the southern-most point in Africa, where the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans meet, and scaled the lighthouse before moving on to Cedric and Bets' house in Kleinbaai.

Thursday and we were up bright and early for the journey to Cape Town. Table Mountain was first with three members of the team using the cable car while the rest chose to walk up and enjoy the views. At the top we all had breakfast and spent time in the curio shop before the sirens went and we had to evacuate due to strong winds. In the afternoon we toured the coast around Cape Town and Simon's Town where we were astonished to find penguins living in Africa. This was followed by a session shopping on the Waterfront before we had another excellent supper in the City Grill.

Stu and Tom C rose early planning to go crayfishing but the weather was too windy. In the morning we had a 4 x 4 drive along the beach to the lighthouse on Danger Point where we learnt the history of the sinking of HMS Birkenhead in 1852. All the women and children were saved, the first instance of putting the women and children first. All went up the lighthouse despite some nervousness. In the afternoon Freddie went for a three-hour walk whilst most of the rest had a belly-dancing lesson from Jen. Freddie returned with many shells to the girls' delight. A group flew Cedric's kite before the cords wound round a building, resulting in a three-quarters of an hour battle to recover it. The evening was spent at a restaurant in Gansbaai with good food but the delay of 45 minutes in producing six ice creams and the non-appearance of two pancakes did not go down well!

Saturday morning was quiet as the shark viewing and crayfishing trips were again aborted. Lunch was a good braai on John de Havilland's farm after a nerve jangling drive to the house set in acres of land. We lazed the afternoon away on the porch, eating far too much before heading home to prepare for a night out on the town. We started at a sports establishment in town where everyone had a good laugh at the karaoke videos. Thence we moved to a club called Stables, where an awesome evening was had by all on the dance floor, some with many memories, others with very few.

Easter Sunday, Jen and Chris, the shark divers and Stu and Tom C again woke early hoping that this would be their lucky day. Fishing was off but after some start stop confusion the shark hunters were off for their encounter with Jaws. It proved a great success with two great whites coming to the cage. The water was freezing. The rest of the team spent the morning at the beach, showing off their rugby skills, crab racing and, for the intrepid, paddling. The afternoon was spent in Hermanus, shopping, relaxing and enjoying refreshments either at a perfect table overlooking the sea front or in a side street admiring the local sights. After a drive up the mountain to view the town and coast from above it was time for another excellent Cattle Barron dinner before heading home.

We woke to find the weather had finally calmed enough for crayfishing however everyone wanted

to do the vineyard tour so we left Cedric to fish and, led by Bets, set out for Stellenbosch, stopping for another incredibly enjoyable petrol station forecourt brunch. On reaching Spiers we had a short wait before the wine tasting so most did a quick review of the other attractions before seeking liquid. The brief introduction to the wine and the tasting was enjoyed by most with some amusing facial expressions coming from Tom C, the self confessed wine hater. This and certain team members' 'professionalism' provided much amusement to the other international samplers. We headed for Franschhoek, a very picturesque town, for a brief wander in the street. Then it was back to Kleinbaai via the mountain pass to prepare for dinner. Holly received a shock when turning to find a crayfish perched on her shoulder after Cedric's successful day on the sea. When ready we set off for Hennies Pub and Grill in Stanford for a final SA dinner. Despite the copious quantities of steak consumed on tour the team were faithful to the last with Tom C, Stu, Tom D and Freddie all having 700g Espetadas, more would have had them but the supply ran out! After dinner it was back home for the presentation of SABU medals with appropriate Merits to the team, and with a few words of thanks, presents to Cedric and Bets, followed by a final game of poker and a panic pack.

Everyone managed their packing and we left on time for Cape Town, stopping en-route for an excellent full English breakfast in the mountains at the Houwhoek Coffee shop with croissants galore. Dave, when asked how he wanted his egg done, replied 'medium rare' which somewhat confused the waitress. After saying a final thank you and goodbye to Cedric and

Bets the check-in at Cape Town went smoothly with our luggage checked through to London. We were soon in Johannesburg and met by the Burger family with our equipment, which, after a little negotiation, Simon managed to get checked in while everyone else waited. Final goodbyes and we were through Passport Control and into the Duty Free shops with a couple of hours to fill. Following further extra checks, fortunately abbreviated for us as those involved recognised Simon, we were aboard and on our way home. Freddie had the flight Captain read out a welcome message to the GB U19s. The long night in a very full aircraft deprived most of much sleep.

Wednesday, Heathrow, baggage unloading delay and a slightly difficult Customs lady notwithstanding, we were back in Britain. Rifles sorted, kit repacked, goodbyes said, the team went their own ways at the end of a memorable tour. Finally, to everyone who, in whatever way they contributed, made it all possible a very big Thank You.

#### **Match results:**

##### **International Junior Long Range Match** (2 and 10 at 800 and 900 metres)

Great Britain Under 19	525.25
South African Juniors	516.21

##### **Junior International Protea** (2 and 10 at 300, 600 and 900 metres)

South African Juniors	858.63
Great Britain Under 19	855.55

## **60 YEARS OF FULLBORE OR THE MEMOIRS OF A RIFLEMAN**



To assist the NRA in raising funds to help the young into the sport, John Hissey has written this account of his experiences covering the years from 1938 right up to today complete with many photographs of past times.

As the Chairman says in his Foreword "Memoirs of members are rare" and "add to the recorded history of our Association". It tells of starting with a .22 at Prep school before WW2, then with a SMLE at Public School followed by service with the Grenadier Guards and Sandhurst as well as his experiences of two years in Kenya. The booklet is full of amusing events which have improved with the telling at the bar over the years. .303 is fired from Lee-Enfields and a Bren; 7.62 from Target and Match Rifles.

Please support the Fund by purchasing this booklet which is available from the NRA for £5 or from John himself who will be happy to sign your copy.

e-mail [john@hissey.net](mailto:john@hissey.net)



# THE H JONES MEMORIAL TROPHY AND THE FALKLANDS WAR



Twenty-five years ago Britain fought a war 8,000 miles away in the sub-antarctic Falkland Islands. In June that war is being commemorated by a number of National events both in the UK and in the Falkland Islands

David Cooper, a member of Hampshire RA and an England and GB past team member, was a member of the Parachute Regiment at that time. He was present at most of the battles on the Islands and directly involved in the battles of Goose Green and Wireless Ridge, the former when his Battalion was outnumbered by a ratio of 3:1.

In memory of his Commanding Officer and friend, who was killed at the battle of Goose Green, and who was an enthusiastic supporter of target shooting within his Battalion, David asked his Battalion (2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment) to donate the H Jones Memorial Trophy to the Inter-Counties Meeting.

To raise money to assist the Great Britain Veterans Rifle Team to Canada in August he will deliver an illustrated lecture of a personal account of that war in the Army Clubhouse at 21:00 on the evening of Saturday 16 June (the day of the H Jones Match).

This lecture will be preceded by a dinner in the clubhouse at 19:00, the cost of the meal and the lecture being £25.00. It is hoped that those who may have dinner engagements elsewhere will attend the lecture after their meal, for a minimum entry fee of £10.00.

For tickets, please contact David Hossack through the NRA together with a cheque for the correct amount made payable to GB Veterans Rifle Team, Canada 2007 together with a stamped and self addressed envelope for the return of your tickets. Tickets may be available at the door, depending upon available space, but as this event is expected to be particularly well subscribed, you are advised to pre-book.

*Norman Clark*

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# EARLY INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

by Tony de Launay

*Sometimes we seem to forget that travel was a lot more difficult in days gone by. For our early international touring teams there were no jet airliners or bullet trains, just the good old steamship and charabanc. So it was, 70 years ago.*

*What follows is an account of the famous 1937/38 tour by the GB Rifle Team to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. It is not the official account, but a personal one, taken from the private letters home of the late Lt Col REW "Johnny" Johnson OBE TD – "Thin Johnny".*

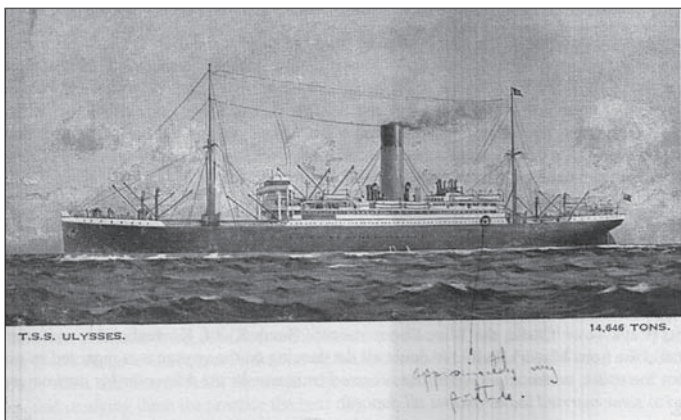
*Each letter, on arrival with his wife Patricia, was lovingly abstracted and typed up and then circulated around friends and relations. In her covering notes towards the end of the tour she exclaims, with justifiable pride, that her typing has improved no end. Incidentally, the trip had an initial hurdle to pass: Johnny had only just got married to Patricia, and was very much in two minds as to whether he should take up the invitation to be a member of the team. On hearing of his dilemma Pat had no hesitation whatsoever: go and make the most of the opportunity.*

*I am very grateful to Johnny's daughter, Penny, for access to the papers which made for some fascinating reading.*

## Outward Bound

The team of 15 left Liverpool at 6.20pm on Saturday 16 October on TSS Ulysses (14,646 tons). From the following morning when they discovered that salt water won't lather, and through the rest of the many days travelling, the subject of bathing (both swimming and ablutions) is frequently reported in his diary. There were occasional more sombre items. He records that on the following Monday in the afternoon at 7 bells there was a funeral on the after well deck of a passenger (travelling alone) who died of heart failure during the night - it was rather grim to see the corpse slide over the side and everything was rather quiet that night.

Tuesday 17 October: dancing in the evening. It was, he recorded, very easy to finish a step in the scuppers.



TSS Ulysses and Cabin Identification!

The ship's swimming pool was rigged, to be filled on the Thursday. More dancing "We young men are very popular and there are a number of very passable dancers among the ladies".

On Thursday, after deck games and bathing (swimming), there was a visit ashore at Las Palmas. The cathedral and sherry at 5 old pence a glass proved interesting and the town was swarming with soldiers "This is where Franco started the insurrection".

The team then seems to have settled into a routine, with deck games in the morning and bathing before breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. The weather was getting hotter and hotter. There were no games between 2.00pm and 4.00pm - when the ship rested - but there was more dancing each night after dinner. Time was also spent on washing socks and ironing collars, and on boat drill. Porpoises, flying fish and sharks plus a Scrounge or Scavange Hunt in which three pairs of shooters managed to find "... a bowler hat, a 1912 penny and a fountain pen filler ...".

Entries for Tuesday 26 October contain proud references to success both in ironing a shirt and on the daily gamble on nautical miles sailed. "I had more luck on the Tote today and shared 28/- with another member of the team". A note of disapproval is sounded when "Jimmy Milne was very late for dinner. Dancing was more pleasant tonight on account of the breeze - only 78° in the shade at midnight".

The next day the ship crossed the Equator. Shades of modern health and safety commissars "The Blue Funnel line does not have any official celebrations for fear of accidents and horse-play, but this did not stop the team from indulging in the latter, one member being thrown into the pool before breakfast, still in his pyjamas". There was a sing-song with the ladies in the bar after dinner.

In the next few days the weather turned grey and cool with a nasty headwind. Laundry skills were honed and "I and my partner (an elderly married lady) got knocked out of the Deck Quoits doubles. Another dance this evening - there are always too many girls". What would the ship have done without the team? "As a perfect little gentleman I get practically no rest the whole evening", was the cry.

On 1 November the dance was in fancy dress. "I went as a horse marine: one of the chaps went as a geisha girl. One of the cases brought on board when the team sailed was opened and found to contain all the ingredients for cocktails, which were swapped with the Chief Steward for champagne", and the party went with a bang.

As the voyage wore on some of the events seem to have grown a little duller: the deck games lost their novelty



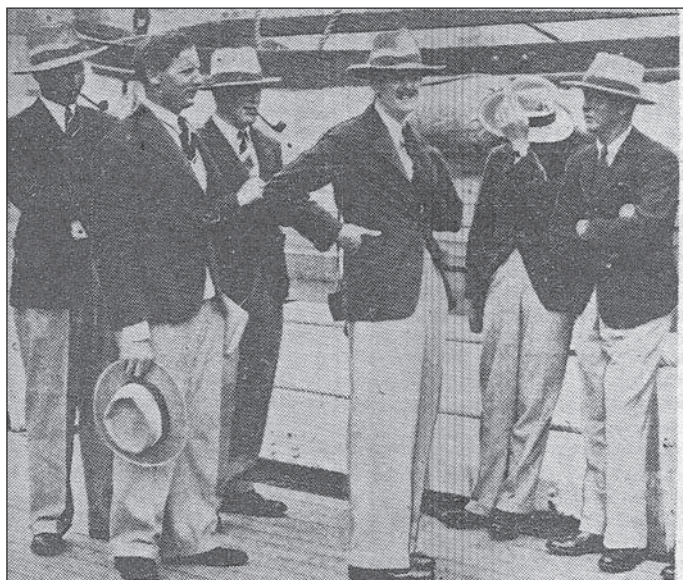
and as the ship approached Cape Town the swimming pool was dismantled. Notwithstanding that, on 3 November "At about 10.00pm we organised a wild hunt round the ship following Robin Fulton who has a hunting horn with him". That night and the first part of the journey concluded with Johnny playing his mouth-organ and impromptu reels and a Paul Jones outside the bar. The ship docked at 4.30pm on 4 November, a day ahead of schedule after three weeks and three days at sea. Judging by the amount of bathing and dancing, the team arrived well washed and fit!

### South Africa

A swarm of photographers and the media greeted the team. The first shore leave for three weeks included a free visit to the Alhambra, "... a very posh cinema (they call them Bioscopes)", and getting lost in the docks on the return to the ship. The next day, 5 November, on going ashore Johnny tripped over a horseshoe. This promptly went into his luggage. For two days the team visited local sights (Cape Town Castle, the Wine Depot at Paarl, Bain's Kloof, Kirstenbosch), and even found time to attend the Lord Mayor's Ball. No doubt all the dancing on the voyage was regarded as excellent practice for the event. "We were first received en masse by the Mayor in his parlour and then introduced to some married ladies and we all danced".

Johnny found places where his father had been in the Boer War and made contact with his cousin Roderick.

He also bumped into a fellow member of the London Rifle Brigade with whom he had served in 1928. After this short break the team packed up and departed by



MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH RIFLE TEAM ARRIVE.  
Members of the British Rifle team, who arrived in Capetown on Friday on a tour of the Union before going on to Australia. The team is due in Johannesburg to-morrow afternoon. On the extreme left is Mr. D. L. Birney, who won the King's Gold and Silver Medals at the English Bisley this year.

REWJ and team members strike a pose on board ship.

train at 9.30pm for Johannesburg via Bloemfontein, across the Great Karoo, arriving at 6.20pm on 9 November. There he was greeted by variety of friends and relatives including "Uncle Hugo and my cousin Sven. Aunt Olga, Bush and Oswin". After the dinner the team returned to the mundane matters of unpacking the rifles, and readying them for practice the next day.

Conditions were nasty on 10 November. A very strong wind off the mine dumps blew fine dust into everything. The country was suffering a severe drought and the weather was getting very hot. The team practised at 200 and 500 yards, returning to the City Hall for a formal lunch in team uniform, and back to the range in the afternoon. Various further contacts were made with friends of the family and another LRB member. "I also phoned Uncle Ted to suggest a meeting in Pretoria, but he didn't think it possible as Esther's two children had just got ill with diphtheria".

Rifle practice seems to have taken second place to a morning visit to the Van Ryn Deep gold mine on 11 November, dropping 2000 feet in under 60 seconds, and seeing gold ingots being cast, valued at £7000 each. It was back on the range after lunch for ten bulls at 900 yards and six bulls and an inner at 1000. His pleas for an extra three shots to try for a 99 were turned down on grounds of lack of time. The evening was spent with family friends at a country club.

The return journey to the hotel took him past a house which his father had occupied as a dangerous outpost in the Boer War. On the following day his diary recorded a reminder of the difficulties of the age: one of the children suffering from diphtheria had died, and the other was very ill.

On 12 November the team travelled by car to their first match, in Pretoria. This was won although Johnny did not shoot well by his own standards. A Mayoral lunch was followed by a visit to a local museum and the house of Paul Kruger. In the evening sherry at the Governor General's residence preceded dinner with friends.

On the following day the match against Transvaal was shot. A good start by GB was overhauled by the hosts through superior wind coaching at the long ranges and they won by two points. Sunday 14 November relates "No rest for the wicked: up early and off to see a war-dance display at the Rose Deep Mine compound". The team sat for nearly three hours in the boiling sun on hard benches. Packing was followed by a train journey to Durban with a short delay for shopping in Johannesburg where he had only time "... to get my hair cut and to get to Kodak's twice".

The journey to Durban took them through many places with familiar names: Newcastle, Glencoe, Ladysmith,

Colenso and Pietermaritzburg. At the last named the railway came suddenly over the edge of the plateau above the city "... and it really was a wonderful sight - we were about 1000 feet above the bottom of the valley and it was a very clear day and the scenery was beautiful - wooded slopes and the railway wound in and out in an amazing way. We dropped 1,100 feet in about fifteen minutes". The team arrived at Durban at about 6.00pm. Unfortunately the horseshoe that was found at Cape Town had been mislaid at Pretoria "... so we have no mascot now".

The first day in Durban (16 November) was devoted to sightseeing. This included the local military HQ, a sugar factory and the Royal Durban Light Infantry (at which cap badges were swapped with one Col Butler Porter). "They have got a place which the HAC would envy. The Regiment is in very close touch with the city authorities: it is the only unit in Durban which makes it very easy of course and is very wealthy. We met an old man called Borain who won a thing called the Golden Penny at Bisley in 1902 the year Dad won the King's. He produced a cutting out of a paper recording this and there was Dad's name and Robin Fulton's father and grandfather". Dinner was followed by "Bulldog Drummond Escapes" at the cinema.

The next day there was a match against Natal (seven to count at 200, 500 and 600 yards). "The Athlone range was notable for the lack of a stop-butt as they shot out to sea, and the sun was behind and above the targets all morning. Conditions were difficult and we were out of our depth quickly, eventually losing by 16 points - bad show". That afternoon the team visited Pietermaritzberg, "... through beautiful country, green with banana plantations, sugar-canes, bamboos and all other sorts of trees and things. One tree which they are very fond of in towns is the Jackaranda which has blue flowers which come out before the leaves". The weather was getting hotter and hotter with temperatures of 105° in the shade.

A second match against Natal under the same conditions took place on the afternoon of 18 November at Pietermaritzberg's Carabiniers range. Despite feeling unwell Johnny managed second highest GB score in a match that ended with scores between the teams tied. GB lost on count out having the lower 600 yards score. The team doctor Charlie Seward examined the aching rifleman and "... got some linament and rubbed me on the affected parts and also gave me some stuff to drink. It is so bitter that when I took a drink of water as a chaser after the dose it tasted sweet".

That night, feeling slightly better, he boarded a train for Bloemfontein arriving at 7.30pm on 19 November. He sat out the match against the Orange Free State (won by GB by 26 points) now feeling ever worse. "I was very glad to hear that we could attend the dinner,

given in honour of ourselves and the Rhodesian team, in Blazers as the Rhodesians hadn't all got dinner jackets". For the next two days the illness persisted until on 23 November he was sent to the local hospital where the doctors suspected a touch of "... enteric (against which I was inoculated). As I was inoculated all it amounts to, apparently, is that there may be a sort of fight going on inside me which should blow over soon".

The GB team, meanwhile, had lost the match against South Africa by 30 points, being placed third behind Southern Rhodesia. The course of fire was seven shots to count at 200, 500, 600, 900 and 1000 yards. On 27 November he left hospital, and after spectating on the range until the advent of a massive storm, travelled by train to Cape Town via Kimberley and the Hex River mountains. There he met up with the team again to find the boat to Australia (the *Ascanius*) was running one day late. Sightseeing included a trip up Table Mountain (cost 9/6d return). To celebrate his return to full health, and by way of some consolation for missing the test against South Africa, he made top score against Cape Western in a handsome victory for GB.

The following days, 2 and 3 December, were taken up with greasing and packing the rifles, and with relaxation. Thanks to the friends of one of the team members, who owned the St James's Hotel at the St James holiday resort, the night out was one of unstinted luxury. The hotel was "... a really slap up place. After bathing we got into evening dress and had the most luscious dinner, beautiful undercut and everything first class, after which we attended a dance in aid of the local hospital". The team boarded the *Ascanius* on 5 December and, in refurbished and altogether more salubrious surroundings than the *Ulysses*, sailed to their next port of call, Durban (where coaling was to take place).

Tuesday 8 December and "... Coal on the upper deck and coal dust everywhere and no baths available as we are in harbour and harbour water is not nice to bath in". On board with the team were also the Springbok team to the Empire Games. This resulted in a lot of training going on all over the open spaces of the ship, but "The Springboks are not allowed in the bar so there's a fair amount of room in there". This seems a positive silver lining to the tedium of a further 12 days on the ocean, even though the ship eventually left only a little behind schedule.

As the voyage wore on the routine of tote, deck games and dances took hold. Some of the *Ulysses* passengers were also on board. "I found that we still had with us the terrible Scot, as well as at least six others". The ship rolled considerably and the weather was poor, but despite this the Springbok marathon runner one morning managed 150 circuits of the deck. A fancy



dress party on 18 December heralded the appearance of REWJ clad in laurel wreath, bed-sheet and sandals “... borrowed from one of the girls...”, as a Roman Senator. Bathing and golf took the party on to Freemantle where they set foot on Australian soil on 22 December.

### Australia

Immediately the team hit an unexpected snag. “Apparently dinner in this country runs from 6.00 or 6.30 to about 7.30 - a most queer business. The pubs in West Australia close at 9.00pm but they open at 9.00am and are open all day. Here in Adelaide they apparently close at 6.00pm having been open for 12 hours on end”. Even sightseeing did not make up for this reversal. “We left at 9.00am in a charabanc: there was not enough knee room. We did 180 miles and only saw one rabbit”.

After the marvels of the massive water distribution system serving Coolgardie, Calgoorlie and Boulder City it was a relief to realise it was now Christmas Eve. Without any practice the team shot (and lost) their first match on 24 December against Western Australia at the Swanburne range. There was one shot on the wrong target (not REWJ), some concern over gun troubles, and difficulty with the Australian circular aiming mark compared with the normal tin hat variety.

Christmas Day saw flights in a six seater Dragon Rapide after breakfast, over Perth and Freemantle, fresh strawberries and cold beer, not to mention raucous carols into the evening. Then the team started the long train trek across Australia on the longest piece of straight track in the world, 330 miles without a kink. Numerous train (and railway gauge) changes later the team arrived in Adelaide at 12.45pm on 28 December. A visit to the home of an

Australian senator followed by a visit to a winery where they sampled imitation Riesling and Hock “... very creditable imitations too”, set the scene for their match against South Australia at Port Adelaide which was won by 43 points. The evening was a smoke social, with “... some good entertainers, singers and a conjuror and lots of beer”.

And so to the next part of the trip, by motor coach for Melbourne, via the Murray District, Renmark and Mildura and train to Melbourne. On 3 January Don Bradman was seen, caught in the slips off Gregory, making 35 for South Australia against Victoria at MCG. Receptions and visits to watch tennis practice and to see the racecourse preceded shooting practice and a match (on 7 January) against two Victoria teams, in which the GB team were heavily beaten. And thence to Tasmania, crossing on “... that floating sink, the Largs Bay” to land at Burnie. “Very English scenery. I learnt a new song, Waltzing Matilda, an Australian folk song”. Crossing the River Jordan and travelling through the village of Jericho, the team arrived in Hobart.

After tea, sherry, dinner and (inevitably) dancing on 11 January the team lost their match with Tasmania on the following day. It was the first time in the tour that Johnny’s score had been below the team average - noted somewhat ruefully in the diary. Overnight boat returned them to the Australian mainland and to the worst part of the trip up to date. The coach trip to Sydney was a nightmare. “All the luggage on top of the bus had been thoroughly soaked in a downpour and there was a narrow escape when the bus jumped out of gear and free-wheeled towards a precipice. Stout efforts from driver and a team member on the handbrake saved the day”. The team walked to the bottom of the hill - after safely negotiating lunch.

### Empire Match, Anzac Range, Liverpool, Nr Sydney, Australia, 14 and 15 February 1938

#### Great Britain

Captain: Cmdr DS Swanston

Adjutant: JL Milne

	First day			Second day			
	300	500	600	800	900	1000	Total
RD Greig	49	49	48	48	47	45	286
EAF Widdrington	45	45	47	48	49	50	284
REW Johnson	44	49	47	49	48	47	284
AJ Andrews	46	48	48	49	47	46	284
LE Hoddle	48	49	49	47	48	43	284
CW Seward	45	49	48	50	46	45	283
NW McCaw	48	45	48	50	44	44	279
PRT Garnett	46	43	43	48	47	49	276
	<b>371</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>2260</b>
Australia	377	382	369	382	375	352	2237
New Zealand	376	373	372	381	376	348	2226
South Africa	374	382	363	388	358	343	2208

Sightseeing and cultural viewing in Canberra and Sydney preceded the journey to Brisbane by a circuitous route. "A cyclone up north had washed away the line on the main route". This was yet another long train journey - some 28 hours on the train on the hottest day of the year with no restaurant car. There were only lightning visits to the platforms at stops to snatch a bite to eat, on a rickety 3'6" gauge line. They arrived at Brisbane at 11.40pm on 21 January and were straight into a match against Country Districts (winners to their own surprise) and Queensland. Then it was back to Sydney and the Anzac Range for serious practice.

On 28 January team bathing at Newcastle nearly ended in disaster when members of the team got into difficulties in the "... fearful current and undertow. It was quite an exciting five minutes. Two very strong swimmers went out with lines attached to their backs and just hauled them in. Garnett, Fulton and Seward and two strange young women were all rescued. After the bathe we had a reception in the Town Hall (the Mayor was quite the worst speaker I have ever heard and that is saying a good deal after all the speeches we've had in this country). There was a dinner at 7.00pm at which there were 19 speeches and 'for he's a jolly good fellow' was sung six times. This constitutes a record for this team as we've never had more than 10 speeches before and we all hope we shall never have so many again".

The Empire Match meeting started on 1 February with the members of the team competing for their places in a trial. Johnny was second top score at short range and well down the list at long. Through the days until the Empire Match the team members competed in the various individual matches, including the Australian King's Prize - interspersed with sailing and bathing. On 14 February the Empire Match commenced. After a shaky start the GB team pulled their socks up to be two points down at the end of the first day. At 800 yards on the second day the team of eight started "... with a marvellous score dropping only 11 points at that range to go five points up. At 900 we added another point and at 1000 we simply galloped away picking up no less than 17 points".

Johnny was as usual the last of the team to fire and had purposely gone down to fire without knowing the state of the score. "I'd had enough of knowing when the match depended on my last shot in South Africa. On I went again by myself and when I still had two shots to fire I heard some muttering behind and said to Jimmy 'from what I hear behind I don't think I need to fire these two'. His reply was 'shut up and go on - don't take any notice' at which we both laughed". Johnny finished at 1000 yards with four bulls in a row - the team would still have won had he missed with all four shots. Thus the Empire Match was won with a record score.

The next two days were taken up with relaxation and packing and the team sailed for New Zealand at 5.00pm on 17 February on the SS Auretea on the last leg of their tour. They were accompanied by athletes from New Zealand and South Africa returning from the Empire Games. The sides of the ship were festooned with streamers and bunting.

## **New Zealand**

The very palatial boat arrived in Wellington on 21 February to pitch the team straight into practice and the Waiarapa Rifle Meeting at Trentham on 23 February, including an international match. This was lost, with the GB team not shooting well. This was, effectively, the end of the shooting but time remained until 1 March for winding down and preparing for the long sea voyage back via the Panama Canal. Johnny and two others went to stay for a few days at Tongariro at 3,700 feet above sea level and decided to attack Mount Ruahaku (9,000 feet). Hiring boots and extra thick socks they reached 7000 feet at midday when Johnny gave in to the evil fitting boots and returned. The other two made it to 9,000 feet and the edge of the extinct volcano via the glacier! They returned exhausted.

A further expedition to walk up Tongariro from a base camp hut was defeated by miserable weather and some soaked riflemen were reduced to drying their socks in the oven in the hut prior to cooking their evening meal! The return walk to the Chateau where they were staying was every bit as wet and "We got back to the Chateau in two and three-quarter hours - hot baths, dry clothes - tea and toast - then billiards and snooker until dinner". The team had by now broken up with some members having returned home via the USA. The remainder boarded RMS Akaroa on 1 March for the voyage home. Not too surprisingly the diary stops here, but not before he is able to record that he had been announced as top of the tour averages. "So I haven't wasted my time from a shooting point of view, have I?"

The estimated date of docking at Southampton was 5 April, some five and a half months after leaving from the UK. It had been the trip of a lifetime, carefully recorded in letters home redolent with the enjoyment of the tour - warts and all. It was a remarkable trip, with a most satisfying outcome personally and as a team.

Once again I am grateful to Penny Delos, Johnny's daughter, for the loan of the papers from which this version of the tour has been produced and to Patricia for transcribing it, all those 70 years ago. I am also truly grateful to Johnny, both for his remarkable account and for all the good work that he later put into cadet shooting using his own experiences and skills for the benefit of others.



# NRA OVERSEAS TEAMS FUND

Year ending 31/12/06

15 months ended 31/12/05

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO GB AND OTHER TEAMS

GBRT Australia 05	0.00	10,000.00
NRA team to Channel Isles 06 (05)	2,600.00	2,700.00
300m 05 (04)	0	618.33
GB F Class	0.00	4,000.00
GBRT South Africa 06	10000.00	0.00
GBRT Canada 06	7,000.00	0.00
GB Historical	3,500.00	0.00
U25 Australia	0.00	5,400.00
Total Contributions to Teams	23,100.00	22,718.33
less Sports Council Grants received	0.00	0.00
CONTRIBUTIONS BY OTF	23,100.00	22,718.33

## INCOME FOR THE YEAR

Donations			
MR Australia 2004	610.71	0.00	
South Africa 2006	1,000.00	0.00	
Namibia/Kenya 2004	0.00	1,103.00	
GB F Class	0.00	708.66	
No-Vee insurance	0.00	248.13	
2006 Imperial competitions TR	3,460.00	3,441.00	
2006 Imperial competitions MR	351.00	492.00	
V Bull	979.00	988.00	
Gift aid claim	0.00	902.56	
Other donations	212.00	69.00	
	6,612.71		7,952.35
Supporters Clubs			
Freddy Payne 100 Club	6,000.00	6,000.00	
OTF swindle(net)	2,800.00	2,325.00	
Albert swindle	1,280.00	0.00	
Share of fireworks surplus	668.00	680.00	
Golf day	2,761.53	2,241.00	
Cookbook (net)	892.50	2,791.58	
Bullet Ball	0.00	443.50	
	14,402.03		14,481.08
Interest			
Interest on Gilts	1,853.44	3,489.27	
Loss on redemption	0.00	-83.76	
Tax reclaim	0.00	97.62	
COIF interest	4,647.23	5,342.43	
Bank & other interest	0.00	45.31	
	6,500.67		8,890.87
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	27,515.41		31,324.30

## Less Expenditure

Contributions by OTF to GB & other teams	23,100.00	22,718.33
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<b>SURPLUS FOR YEAR</b>	4,415.41	8,605.97
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Unrealised (loss) profit on investments in period	-1120.00	-312.00
Reserves at 1/1/06	133552.86	125258.89

<b>RESERVES AT 31/12/2006</b>	136,848.27	133,552.86
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## Represented by:-

Investments at market valuation (Gilts)	26022.00	27142.00
COIF Deposit account	104697.95	99493.00
Business Premium account	2603.42	2133.51
Owing by (to) NRA general funds	3524.90	4207.35
Debtors	0.00	577.00
Creditors	0.00	0.00
Net Assets at 31/12/2006	136,848.27	133,552.86

## Reserves at 31/12/2006

TR	116,768.82	116,768.82
Juniors & U25	2,103.00	1,103.00
General	17,976.45	15,681.04
	136,848.27	133,552.86

## OBITUARIES

### Don Nockles

We are sad to report the news that Don died on 17 December 2006 at the age of 86



Don was born in Hanworth, Middlesex in 1920, the second of four children. He enlisted in the Royal Scots Guards in 1937 at the age of 17 lying about his date of birth by one year. He spent the war years in Egypt as a Desert Rat (including going missing in Tobruk for a while) and in Italy he was awarded the African star and Italy star medal. In 1955 he transferred to the RAOC where he took his commission. It was during his time with the RAOC that he took up competitive shooting and started to compete at Bisley.

He achieved much in his short shooting career including three appearances in the Queen's Final, finishing 14<sup>th</sup> in 1957, as well as the Army Eight and the winning National team of 1960 when he achieved the highest score on the team and the match.

Don left the Army in 1961, sadly having to give up his shooting career. He returned to Bisley in 1970 when his brother Charles asked if he would like to work as a Range Officer. The following year he joined his brother in the Stats Office. For the next 25 years Don reigned supreme in the Stats Office seeing the department through 'steam stats', working long into the night with many staff, both civilian and military, prize lists hand prepared, typed on manual typewriters and duplicated on a very temperamental machine, and through two trials of computer systems with varying degrees of success. The stats team shrank in size and moved to a smaller area, into the old Medals Office.

Don and his wife Betty moved to Lanzarote in the middle 1980s, but Don would always return to the UK in July to take up his role as Chief Stats Officer. In 1996, Don decided to retire and his daughter Sharon took up the role that she continues to this day.

Don's health began to deteriorate and he was finally diagnosed with Alzheimer's; he was cared for by his wife until 2004 when they returned to the UK and Don moved into a care home.

Don was a much loved and familiar character around the ranges for over 30 years. He will be sadly missed by all, especially by his wife and children.

There will be a scattering of ashes on Stickledown Range on 14 July to lay him to rest in his favourite place.

*Sharon Crabb*

### Peter Grimes

Peter Grimes sadly passed away on Friday 20 April 2007 at the age of 73 following some years struggling with Alzheimer's disease. Peter was a member of the Stock Exchange Rifle Club for over 50 years and the London and Middlesex Rifle Association for almost forty years. During the 1960s he was a regular shooter for the County of London.



He edited the first SERC newsletter, for five or six years in the late fifties and his first shooting post was as .22 captain, from 1966 to 1970.

After that he took on the captaincy of the fullbore section at Bisley, his main love. This was a role he held from 1972 to 1989 - the longest stint of fullbore captain that SERC have had, or ever will have. Interestingly it was during his time as fullbore captain that he won the small-bore championship in 1973. As fullbore captain Peter was known for always having time for new members and always willing to provide them with coaching.

In 1980 Peter donated a lovely trophy, the Grimes Cup, to the club to be shot for in the fullbore championship. This is awarded to the highest score at long range. In its inaugural year Peter came first, a fitting outcome. He won it again in 1982.

In September 1984 the club put together a team of shooters to visit SSV Schmidhausen in Germany and as fullbore captain Peter was there. They had a very convivial time, with much imbibing in the evenings. One evening SERC put on some entertainment for the German team - they had rehearsed some songs to present to them. The German team loved it but after the songs were finished, Peter had not! Not satisfied that enough had been done he got up from his chair and gave a full five minute rendition of Nelly Dean - to a totally stunned German audience. Of course the Brits all joined in with the chorus lines.

In 1988 SERC organised a fullbore tour of Australia. Of course Peter was up for this as well. I would not say that Peter was a fair weather shooter but he was never that keen on shooting in the rain. One member of the touring party records:

"We had one lot in one mini-van and the second van-load, including Micky, Trevor and Peter flew in a week later. We met up somewhere in New South Wales in the middle of a thunderstorm - it had been raining solidly for weeks. When Peter saw what the weather was like, he, as Stock Team Captain, engineered a mutiny in the second bus. The first bus with the serious shooters left to go south to find the very waterlogged ranges - Peter,



Micky and Trevor and the other mutineers disappeared into the rain with the intention of finding somewhere - *anywhere* - where there was no rain and they could lie on a beach all day long drinking cocktails and ogling the local talent."

In 1990 Peter was awarded life membership of SERC as gratitude for his work for the club. However, that did not slow him down. From 1992 to 1999 he took on the post as membership secretary and in 1999 a further honour, he became a Vice-President of the club.

After that came, perhaps, his greatest feat - the history of the Stock Exchange Rifle Club from 1901 to 1968. Peter, somehow, pieced together from a myriad of sources the history of the club since its formation in 1901. The preface states:

Peter Grimes created the base document for this history using a DOS based 286 computer, with NO spell checking. During the editing of this document we found very few mistakes. Peter is a one finger typist and worked over a period of some three years to put this document together. Truly a labour of love. Special thanks were given in the book to his wife, Shirley, for her patience during the three years Peter spent in the upstairs room typing away.

On your behalf I would like to thank Peter for all he did for shooting and the SERC in particular. He will always be remembered.

*Brian Cudby*

## **Paul T Howson**

Paul, who had just celebrated his sixtieth birthday, died at home on Friday 2 March, in the care of his wife Christine and children Jason and Sarah, following a long and determined fight against prostate cancer.

Paul was fully committed to the sport of target shooting, which he started in 1968 as a member of Workington R&PC. He had a couple of years travelling weekly to shoot then decided, with others doing the same, to form a club in his home town, and in 1971 he became a founder member of Whitehaven R&PC, its Secretary, and later Chairman.

Paul's drive and determination ensured the club thrived, eventually offering members small-bore indoor, and fullbore outdoor facilities and competitions. He always found time to help the members with their shooting problems, be it coaching, administrative or technical. His club closed in 2000 as a direct result of the Dunblane tragedy and the subsequent 1997 Firearms Act; he joined Low Mill Ranges, a local club, to continue shooting.

Paul's primary interest was competitive pistol shooting, achieving a high proficiency in fullbore, muzzle loaders, small-bore and air pistol, representing his county in the last two over some years. His favourite discipline was undoubtedly fullbore pistol which developed fully after



a visit to the Anno Domini Meeting in 1984 at Bisley. Paul shot at many venues over the years but the annual pilgrimage to Bisley with his friends was the highpoint of his shooting year. He was in his element standing on the line for the 1500, his favourite, and Bianchi, to name but two events and sitting in his "Flying Machine" for the long range events, continuing until pistols were banned in 1997.

Not one to give up, Paul invested in Gallery Rifles, Muzzle Loading Pistols and Long Barrel Pistols to continue his chosen sport. Starting with Phoenix 1997 Paul continued his Bisley visits until 2006, missing 2004 due to his illness. During his years at Anno Domini and Phoenix he had some notable successes especially in the long range events where he won place medals and set some record scores. Shooters staying at the Inns of Court site during those years would be more likely to remember Paul and his friends for their famous barbecue dinners, rather than any shooting successes.

Paul loved the Bisley experience and it was no surprise when he told me, and his other friends who accompanied him all those years, that he wanted his ashes scattered on the Bisley Ranges. This final favour for a special person is to be carried out during the Phoenix 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting.

Over the years Paul acquired many friends in the shooting community. To them he will be remembered for his willingness to help others by the application of his engineering skills and knowledge, his straight no nonsense approach to problems and the vigorous defence of his sport.

Paul was a long time colleague and personal friend who will be missed by all who knew him, and especially by those who could call him friend.

*Tom Gregg*

## **Terry Jackson**

It is with great sadness that we announce the news that Terry Jackson, Secretary of the Stourport on Severn Rifle and Pistol Club, passed away on Friday 20 April 2007 aged 64 years.

Terry had been Club Secretary for the past 24 years. Even through various illnesses forcing early retirement, he always turned up for duty continually trying to balance his shooting with the role of his secretarial duties. Terry's wife Jill continually placed him under house arrest when he was unwell but Terry always managed to escape twice a week to get to the range.

He was a tower of strength to all of us and will be sadly missed by all shooters who knew him. Our hearts and sympathy go to his wife Jill at this sad time.

To Terry - a true soldier of life "Last round, last man". God Bless!

*Nigel Locke*

## LETTERS

### Bisley Camp Development

*From Roger Mason*

I view with some trepidation the thought expressed in the last Journal with regard to the development of Bisley Camp. We must look forward and not let the existing state of affairs continue; with this I agree. However, the thought that the Camp might be developed by people or organisations having no knowledge of or interest in shooting fills me with dismay. Once financial return becomes the prime object, money will rule the development and continued running of the Camp, not the interest of shooting. How long before a hotel operator, or a client, objects to being wakened on a Sunday at 8am by gunshots? How secure will any "built in" provision be in preventing modern laws and rights curtailing our activities? No, the development of the Camp must be in the hands of shooters or shooting interests. (I deplore previous attempts to rent, develop or lease property on the Camp to public outsiders).

The past development of the Camp, prior to the introduction of caravans, has been mainly by individuals or clubs obtaining leases from the NRA and building their own huts or club houses. The character of the Camp has in no small way been evolved by sometimes idiosyncratic individual ideas, and to a great extent by the influence of the clubs. The financing of this has been almost entirely out of the hands of the NRA, though the NRA is now clawing back to itself the real estate thus provided. Private leases contained clauses that would state in so many words that buildings would either so revert or be demolished by the leaseholder at the end of the lease. It was understood that these leases would normally be renewed with the leaseholder on termination. More recent leases continue this policy, but with more draconian clauses, and no gentlemen's agreement on renewal. The result has been lawyers advising prospective new leaseholders not to touch such arrangements with a barge pole. Communication, and decisions on lease termination, have been slow, delayed, and perhaps discovered months later by the leaseholder. I speak with personal experience.

The NRA should be encouraging members to invest in the Camp within the framework of a properly thought out development plan, under terms that are fair to both parties. Members will be only too pleased so to do if they can see that they are benefiting the Camp as well as themselves, and do not fear legal action as the first result of a disagreement, rather than a face-to-face discussion to sort things out. Squeezing every penny out of leaseholders, ignoring past agreements because they are not legally binding in courts of law and threatening or even taking legal action, is not the way to maximise the return on the asset of the Camp. It will be maximised, and thus the Charity Commissioners will be happy, if members feel encouraged and secure in that they can take up leases, on terms on which their legal advisors will not pour such scorn.

The clubs, both large and small, such an integral part of the Camp, should also be encouraged and supported

in their efforts by the NRA, and again, not plagued by threats of non-renewal, and the possibility of legal action (which we would all pay for!). Perhaps clubs other than the LMRA would then be interested in developing the more up-to-date accommodation which we are told is so desperately needed. Development paid for by members of the NRA with the NRA gaining rent, set at a level which will encourage such a development, and not at someone's "market value" to maximise the NRA's short-term profit, should be the aim.

If the NRA continue to try to maximise, without thought, the profit out of the Camp, they will depress the potential of the membership to take the financial risk of development, and thus end up minimising the profit. The NRA is obviously unable to raise any money for massive Camp improvement. The Camp development plan, talked about now for some time, should be produced, with consultation, and then the clubs and the individual membership, should first be consulted on the possibility of raising the finance to execute it.

On the other hand, is the possibility of an outsider coming in and handing over a pot of gold to produce and execute a development plan, a pot the members are prepared to take? I say we are not!

### A Reply from the Secretary General

*I am glad that Roger agrees with the need to develop Bisley. The confusing thing for me is the failure to acknowledge that if we stick to a pure shooting development there is no money to put in the bank and there is no ongoing income, because shooting on its own does not make money. The proposal is to make the most of the non-shooting pound to improve conditions for shooters at Bisley and support development of the sport nationally.*

*No developer, either external or internal to the organisation, would find it financially viable to develop Bisley under the conditions outlined by Roger. I know this to be true because I have asked over the past three years. The only other option would be for the Association to bankroll the scheme by borrowing several millions. If we were to do this, how do we pay the money back? We cannot keep going to the members.*

*The other issue is that past attempts at this have shown we do not have the skills, capacity, capability or the will to run such a development wholly from within the Association. The key will be for the NRA strictly to manage the project to maximise the return to the Association, thus allowing the current rundown facilities and buildings to be maintained and modernised to today's standards. Looking at how Bisley is being treated currently, it is effectively suffering creeping vandalism to its facilities, which have heritage status. This is being brought about by lack of investment.*

*As for the new Real Estate Policy, this is being introduced to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and on the same basis, paying a market rent. As a charity we are duty bound to do this, ensuring that we are representing the interests of all 5000+ members openly, not just the few. We cannot afford to do actual or perceived private deals to the benefit of*



individuals against the interests of the wider membership. In recent years the new Council has sought to ensure that all property transactions are dealt with and completed as openly and transparently as possible.

Despite predictions that the current lease conditions would lead to no members wishing to rent property at Bisley, we are

currently having no trouble getting people to take on existing or proposed new properties on site at market rent.

The Association stands by its intention to provide accommodation to suit all pockets but everyone must be prepared to pay a fair price for that provision.

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## MEMBERS' PAGE

### A tale from Bloemfontein . . .

A well-known international shooter happily set off with two fellow shooters on his first trip to the South African Championships. After a pleasant journey he reached Bloemfontein and immediately visited the ranges to have a look around, collect his ammunition and check his rifle.

All was well, but he thought his trigger was feeling a little bit light and that he should make a slight adjustment to ensure that it would pick up the weight when all those 50s started rolling in! Little did he know that this would be the start of a series of unfortunate mishaps and incidents that would keep his travelling companions entertained every single day of the entire trip!

### Friday

Trigger too light – trigger made heavier.

### Saturday

Trigger now too heavy causing points to be lost. Trigger refuses to adjust to be lighter. Changed to spare trigger.

Sunday - Day off.

### Monday

New trigger too light so made heavier. Offered guidance about reading the wind at 900m. Advice not required as he had "shot all over the world on more difficult ranges than this". Score achieved: 37.1.

### Tuesday

Fired someone else's ammo resulting in a broken extractor. Had to get up after each shot and rod out each case, despite this he scored 55 ex 55. Now the trigger wouldn't pick up the weight, it had completely seized up. The Range Officer allowed him some time to sort things out. The trigger was unfixable in a short period of time so he put back the old heavy trigger. After the next shoot, he decides to have another fiddle with the trigger to lighten it and in the process loses the bedding screws! Luckily, a South African armourer on the range had some spare bedding screws and gives them to him. Off for another shoot, still with the heavy trigger, an extractor tool and his new screws and manages to get another 50! This time, there was no problem picking up the weight!

### Wednesday

During lunchtime he purchases a second-hand trigger from another competitor and fits it. It feels good, so off he goes to have another go at 900m. After the ninth shot to count, he discovers that he didn't bring enough ammo to the firing point so he gets up and runs back to the vehicle, approx 100 yards away, to collect another round. Amazingly, it was a V bull!

Thursday - uneventful

Friday - uneventful

### Saturday - State President's Final

Arrived at the range in good time. However 25 minutes before the start of the Final, he discovers that his contact lens (which he cannot shoot without) is still in the hotel room (20 minutes drive away). Off we go back to the hotel at top speed. Luckily the final has been delayed and we arrive back as everyone is settling down. He rushes up to his firing point to find that his squadding is wrong and he's with a right hander and there's no room for him to lie down. After a further delay and rearrangement by the range officer, the shoot begins. He didn't win!

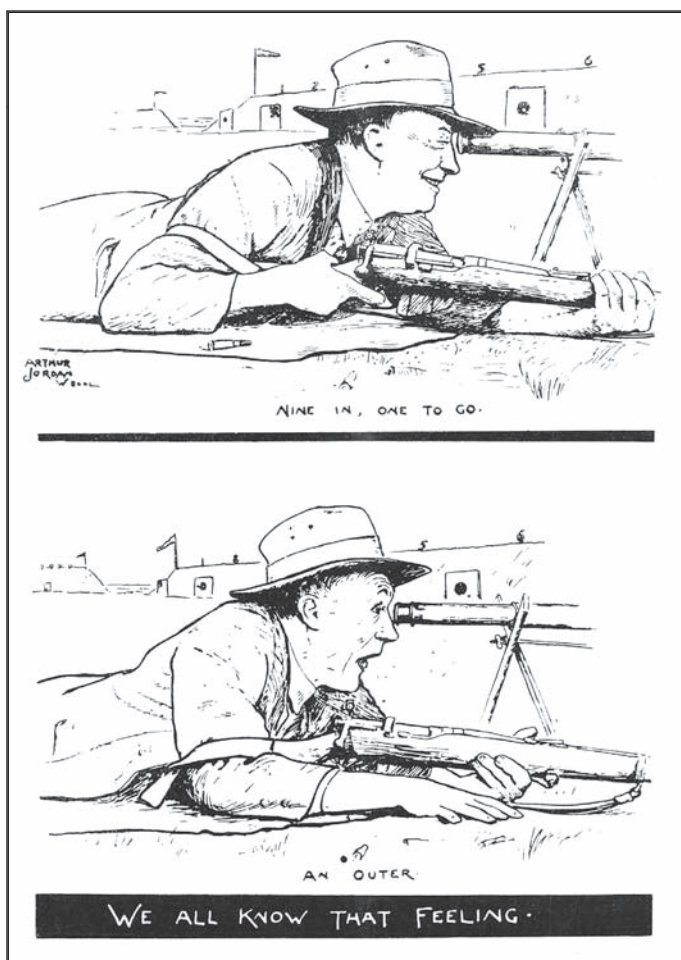
The moral of the story . . .

- Don't fiddle with your trigger, get a professional
- Always carry spare ammo
- Don't fire at 900m unless the wind is right
- Get laser eye correction!

---

### From a 1936 NRA Journal

Always watch the flags!





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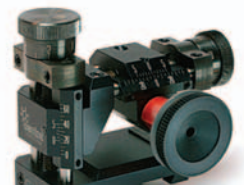
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