



National Rifle Association Journal

Winter 2008

Volume LXXXVII

Number 3



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NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



by
Glynn
Alger

A Trustee's Dilemma

The National Rifle Association was created to promote Marksmanship in the United Kingdom and overseas. The original expectation was that the Open British Championships would be hosted by the Association around the country, not just Bisley. As such there was an implicit intention to own ranges nationwide. The NRA never achieved the ambition to host events around the country nor did it make provision to create a national range structure.

The modern day Association still exists under Royal Charter and has charitable status on the basis of those original aims. Over time, either because of circumstance or finance, the NRA has failed to meet those original objectives. Instead the National Rifle Association has chosen largely to focus on Bisley and, as a result in more cynical circles, is known as the 'Bisley Rifle Club'. It has to be said that Bisley is a fabulous asset. Contrary to popular opinion however, it is not owned by the NRA and its members do not have shares in it. The Association is a charity and as such it holds Bisley in trust for the promotion of rifle marksmanship as part of its national obligation.

In more recent times the NRA has started to try and fulfil some of its obligations away from Bisley by developing a national strategy. In the short term there has been more financial support for clubs trying to develop their ranges and much effort has been put into keeping civilians using military ranges. The medium and long-term strategies demand that the Association acts differently by working with others and not concentrating its resources exclusively at Bisley.

The Trustees now find themselves in a very difficult position. As you are all aware the NRA narrowly survived bankruptcy in recent years. We are close to paying off our debts. However, much of the debt repayment has been achieved through savings on infrastructure at Bisley which is in dire need of some attention. To create a world class shooting centre

Bisley needs a great deal of investment. Investment on a scale that far outstrips the income we can achieve through conventional use of the National Shooting Centre as at present.

Traditionally we would batten down the hatches and hope the problems will go away until the next crisis. This strategy, particularly in the current financial climate, can only result in one outcome - a return to large scale debt and possible demise of the Association.

The modern world demands we think differently. Efforts to attract more people to shoot at Bisley and spend more money have had little effect on the bottom line. Every time there is a price rise or any attempt to charge commercial rates for shooting or rents, fingers are pointed at the NRA for being profiteering and failing to support the sport. Membership is limited by our focus on Bisley, our failure to invest in regional ranges and truly to represent fullbore shooters. This has restricted our ability to recruit members and thus increase income and our standing in the world.

However, if the NRA does the right things at this point in time, there are great possibilities for target shooting. Those opportunities only exist if we are willing to work closely with the other target shooting bodies to create an inclusive and representative sport. Critical to this whole matter is Bisley, its ownership and use.

This is where the Trustees come under the most pressure to act in a traditional manner. The Trustees know that the best interests of the National Rifle Association lie in working with others, to meld all the elements of the sport into an organisation that delivers shooting in all of its forms from playground to podium. They know that to support shooting best, Bisley needs to be developed into a modern, fit for use facility, while retaining its essential charm. Unfortunately for them, most Trustees are also well known shooters and as such are offered opinions on the need to retain Bisley as it is, exclusive to shooters, particularly fullbore shooters.

It has to be said that, if we stay as we are, it is likely that the NRA will return to being a failing organisation, the 'Bisley Rifle Club'. The Trustees have an onerous responsibility to act on behalf of the Association nationally. Bisley is an important part of those considerations but not an exclusive one. It is important that members' views are considered when we can place all the facts before them. It is also important that during this process the Bisley members do not bring undue pressure to bear, through informal lobbying, in an effort to predetermine views within the Council that are not in the Association's wider national interest and responsibilities.

Good News?

In recent weeks a number of matters have arisen or progressed that have the potential to benefit the NRA

and shooting generally, if we are willing to do the right things and in some cases step outside our comfort zone. The issues that are core to the Association's future are:

- NATSS
- A Whole Sport Funding Bid
- Olympics
- Development

All of these matters are intrinsically linked in that during the course of the potential merger project (NATSS), we have had to interact with Sport England and UK Sport, who have funded Performance Matters to act as our consultants. During the course of this work, the national funding bodies have regularly received reports on our progress.

In June the NSRA, CPSA and NRA were asked to attend a meeting with Sport England, where we were informed that we could apply for national funding over the period 2009 - 2013 if we made a 'Whole Sport' bid. During the course of discussions it became obvious that one of the key reasons for this policy change was that the three national bodies were seen to act in concert through the merger project. It also became clear that if we made an appropriate bid we could receive funding which would benefit the whole of the sport of target shooting.

On the basis of the advice and support of Sport England, we have necessarily far reaching, long-term plans which demand that the shooting bodies work closely in concert. Assuming that we get funding, one of the key aims is to create a nationwide support facility by having professional regional agents in place across the country, who will advise and assist clubs and associations in the areas of getting access to funding, facilities development, lobbying at local level, national training and coaching in an effort to modernise the sport. Another key objective of Sport England is to create a national and a number of regional centres of excellence.

During the course of our discussions on the Whole Sport Plan, the issue of the suitability of Woolwich as the Olympic shooting venue arose, prompted by discussions post-Beijing regarding the suitability and cost of some venues. Sport England quite reasonably see the investment in Olympic shooting facilities at Bisley as the basis around which the National Centre of Excellence can be created, thus providing a crucial legacy going forward. They quite reasonably offered to assist us with our bid stating that the obviously close working relationship demonstrated by the three national bodies was a key factor.

Suffice it to say that were we to get the Olympics, any development at Bisley could be more expansive and the planning issues minimised.

Basically by looking at the needs of the whole sport through the NATSS project, we have the potential to

create an organisation, recognised by Government and national sports funding bodies, that could influence the standing of the sport nationally, politically and publicly. If we are seen as a sporting body with the correct aims, properly organised and delivering a mass appeal sport, we have the potential to draw down funding to promote the 'playground to the podium' approach. If we demonstrate that we are capable of working closely together, putting aside old prejudices, we put ourselves back in the running for the Olympics and what that all brings.

The NRA and the MoD

Regional Services

Negotiations are still ongoing with Defence Training Estates (DTE) in relation to the centralising of licensing of clubs to use MoD ranges and the introduction of regional booking services. We are awaiting a final draft Heads of Terms document from the MoD for the Trustees to consider, following which we hope to go live in time for the beginning of the 2009 season.

Regional Membership services are coming under increasing pressure as the impact of Muzzle Energy is reinterpreted on each range, having to negotiate understandings on a case by case basis. Despite having a national agreement, each range has the authority to make its own judgements based upon their interpretation of their Range Orders. In addition, interpretation of Range Orders themselves are another matter. In Scotland, for instance, they have recently carried out a Health and Safety audit and have decided that they have to have two Range Wardens on site when a range is used by civilians, increasing the cost of shooting on an MoD range. We are negotiating with DTE but it is Health and Safety that make life difficult.

Use of Bisley Ranges Agreement

The Association has reached an agreement on the short-term use of Bisley Ranges by the military. On this basis we have been paid by the MoD up until the end of July 2008 with an understanding on what they will pay for the rest of the year. Unfortunately, despite having been in negotiation for two years, we still have not started final discussions on a longer-term agreement.

Dechmont

Surveys have been completed at Dechmont. The indications are that if the hill is re-profiled to its original condition we can potentially go back to 300 metres, possibly more. The re-profiling would be carried out by a local company at no cost if they are allowed to take the scrapings away. The site is also large enough to accommodate both small-bore and clay disciplines, creating a multi-discipline facility next to Glasgow. This being the case, if the correct approvals are reached, the site could host most of the Commonwealth Games shooting.

At present the survey documents are with the Technical Advisory Section (RE) at Warminster for their considered view. It is preferred that the MoD certificate the site so that Reserves and Cadets can use the facilities.

Whitburn

The NRA has formally written to the DTE to officially notify them of our interest in the site, if it is intended to mothball or close the ranges.

Olympics

As most of you are aware, KPMG are currently looking into the feasibility of Woolwich as the Olympic shooting venue. As previously stated Sport England have offered to help with our bid to host the event. The MoD has expressed concerns regarding the use of Woolwich as the Olympic shooting venue as they have a current operational use for the site.

Recently, during a visit to Weymouth to meet with the Royal Yacht Association, we were told that in UK Sport discussions the view had been expressed that the venue was moving from Woolwich. However, in discussions with LOCOG they insisted that it was not moving from Woolwich and they were intent on doing everything to keep it there. The whole matter is very 'smoke and mirrors' at present.

Approaches have been made to ask about the process and our involvement. Latterly we have been informed that the first phase is to look at the viability of Woolwich before considering other options. However, we are informed that KPMG have been on site guided by a LOCOG official without our knowledge and permission.

The Association and its partner organisations are currently making representations to the Minister for Sport to ensure that the Government and the Olympic authorities are fully aware of the plans for Bisley.

Journal Editorial Advisory Panel

Robert Stafford has recently stood down from the JEAP after many years.

We should all like to thank him for his significant contribution to the production of the NRA Journal.

We should like to hear from any member who would be interested in joining the JEAP to help us. The sort of things you might be asked to do are: research, photography, checking facts, writing articles, reading proofs, and so on. There are also three JEAP meetings a year, which plan the content of each issue. Please note that this is voluntary work!

If you are interested please contact Karen Robertson (contact details on page 1) with a brief CV.

NRA Council and Committee Elections 2008

The 2008 Committee Election process is now complete and the following appointments announced.

Members of the Council (Board of Trustees) co-opted and re-elected Julian Hartwell to be their Vice-Chairman for a period of one year.

Members of the General Council approved the co-option of James Ragg to the Council (Board of Trustees) for a period of three years.

Members of the General Council re-elected James Watson as Chairman of the Membership Committee for a period of three years.

Members of the General Council co-opted Miss Jo Scrimshaw as Regional Representative for London & South-East until July 2009

Membership of the Council (Board of Trustees), General Council, their Committees and Sub-Committees are shown on pages 74 and 75 of this Journal.

NRA Elections

The following have been elected as Ordinary Members of the General Council to serve until 2011:

Mr JPS Bloomfield

Wg Cdr DP Calvert

Maj MG Farnan

Mr GMLN Gilpin

Flt Lt IW Robertson

Team Captaincies

The following are congratulated on their appointments as Captains for the following teams:

GB Woomera Team to Australia 2010

Loulou Brister

GB Australia Match at Bisley 2010

Martin Townsend

GB Palma Team to Australia 2011

John Webster

GB Under 25 Team to Australia 2011

James Lothian

GB Veterans Team to Australia 2011

Eric Stuart-Bamford

Nominations

Nominations are required for Captains for the following teams. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary General and received by 15 January 2009.

NRA Team to the Channel Islands 2010

GB Team to Canada 2011

Onwards and Upwards!

NOMINATIONS FOR THE NRA CHAIRMANSHIP

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

by Dick Horrocks, Vice-Chairman, General Council

Statement from NRA Chairman Mr BWD Richards

The following is a statement issued by Mr BWD Richards on 16 October 2008.

At this morning's Council meeting, with both regret and sadness, I informed the Trustees that when my term of office expires at the end of the General Council meeting in February 2009, I shall not be seeking re-election as Chairman of the Association. Those who have got to know me since I was elected will know that I have not reached this decision lightly but only after much consideration and analysis. Ultimately, I believe it is right for both the Association and me. You will want to know why I have made it. Many factors have influenced me but the most critical is that I have found myself unable fully to discharge my responsibilities within the time frame that I undertook to make myself available to the Association. As I look forward, if anything, I see the time commitment increasing rather than decreasing. Whether my lack of a target shooting background is relevant is probably a moot point. What I do know is that the Association cannot afford to have at its helm someone who has lingering doubts about his ability to give it everything it needs. The process leading to the election of my successor is underway and, in the meantime, I shall continue to serve the Association to the best of my ability. At the General Council meeting on February 23 this year, I said that it was an honour and a privilege to be elected as your Chairman. That was and remains the case. I am very sorry that I have felt it necessary to draw my Chairmanship to an earlier conclusion than I hoped would be the case when I embarked on it.

Nominations for the NRA Chairmanship

As many of you are already aware (and as reported above), Bill Richards has stated his intention to step down from the chairmanship in February 2009.

It falls to me as Vice-Chairman of the General Council to seek possible candidates for nomination, via our Secretary General, to the chairmanship not less than 14 days prior to the scheduled General Council meeting on Saturday 21 February 2009.

Since February 2008, the NRA Trustees' and General Council's direction and business have once again gathered momentum following the relinquishing of the chair by John Jackman in September 2007. If we are to maintain this, then ideally the post of Chairman should be filled as soon as possible and the next General Council meeting presents us with the first convenient date to do so. Given that our previous strategy of seeking external candidates led to a process

taking about six months in length, it is evident that our first attempt to fill the position must be from within our membership if we are to achieve this goal.

We intend to be proactive in our search for candidates and would like to request and secure all possible assistance in this matter. It is likely that a number of possible candidates within our membership would put themselves forward if they were personally approached. It is essential that names are identified as soon as possible so that personal approaches may be made.

Given that we have less than three months to seek firm nominations, I would ask all members to focus minds on this issue and if you have a suitable name, would you please approach him or her in the first instance or request that I do so. I may be contacted via telephone 01204 493757, by e-mail arichardhorrocks@hotmail.com or by mail via the Secretary General.

NRA Trustees

The NRA Council is at present short of its full complement of Trustees. It is able to (and would like to) co-opt two more Trustees to join it. Set out below is a list of the skills and attributes which the Council considers would be helpful to see demonstrated among the Trustees. The list is neither exhaustive nor a requirement but a guide for potential Trustees when deciding whether or not to submit their names for consideration. It should be noted that the current Chairman is a lawyer and so, too, is the current Vice-Chairman. Both of them will be leaving office in 2009, when the Council will be without a lawyer on it. Lawyers please come forward!

The NRA Council has six fixed meetings a year. Currently, they are held at Bisley. Its meetings are generally on Thursday mornings commencing at 08:30 and routinely last until lunchtime. In addition, there may be occasional ad hoc meetings and Trustees commonly become involved in aspects of the NRA's organisation to which their particular skills are suited. It is fair to say that preparation for and attendance at the six Trustee meetings a year would be seen as a bare minimum contribution by a Trustee and many of the current Trustees give much more of their time than that.

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee, please would you let Glynn Alger know and send him a brief CV for consideration by the Council.

An outline of skills which may be expected to be present on the Council can be found on the following page.

Outline of skills which may be expected to be present on the Council

Life skills and expertise

Target shooting, both technical and participation
Finance
Governance
Human Resources
Information technology
Legal
Business management
Change management
Insurance/Risk Management
Marketing
Media/PR/Publishing
Web Management
Policy formulation
Project management
Property management
Property development
Strategic/business planning
Training and staff development

Health and safety
Charities
Sports administration/management
Government/Public Service
Military
Member services/Customer Care

Teamwork skills

Ability to exercise judgment
Open minded as to solutions
Balances tact with candour
Working collectively

Nolan Report qualities (desired attributes)

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Honesty
Objectivity
Leadership
Accountability



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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by James Watson, Chairman of the Membership Committee

Much has happened within the Membership Department in 2008. A year ago, we had just heard that the MoD had imposed restrictions on the firearms we could use on their ranges. Much of the effort of the department has focused on the processes we have had to put in place for shooting to continue effectively in the UK. We have also taken on a new member of staff, Sarah Wells to help with processing the applications for certification. Despite the new requirements for shooting on MoD ranges, the Association continues to recruit new members, with current membership approaching 6,000.

Over the past three years, our strategy has been to remove the multiple tier system of membership based on geographical location. This year sees us realise that aspiration as we make the final transition to the new membership categories. These categories and how they map from 2008 is illustrated in the diagram below.

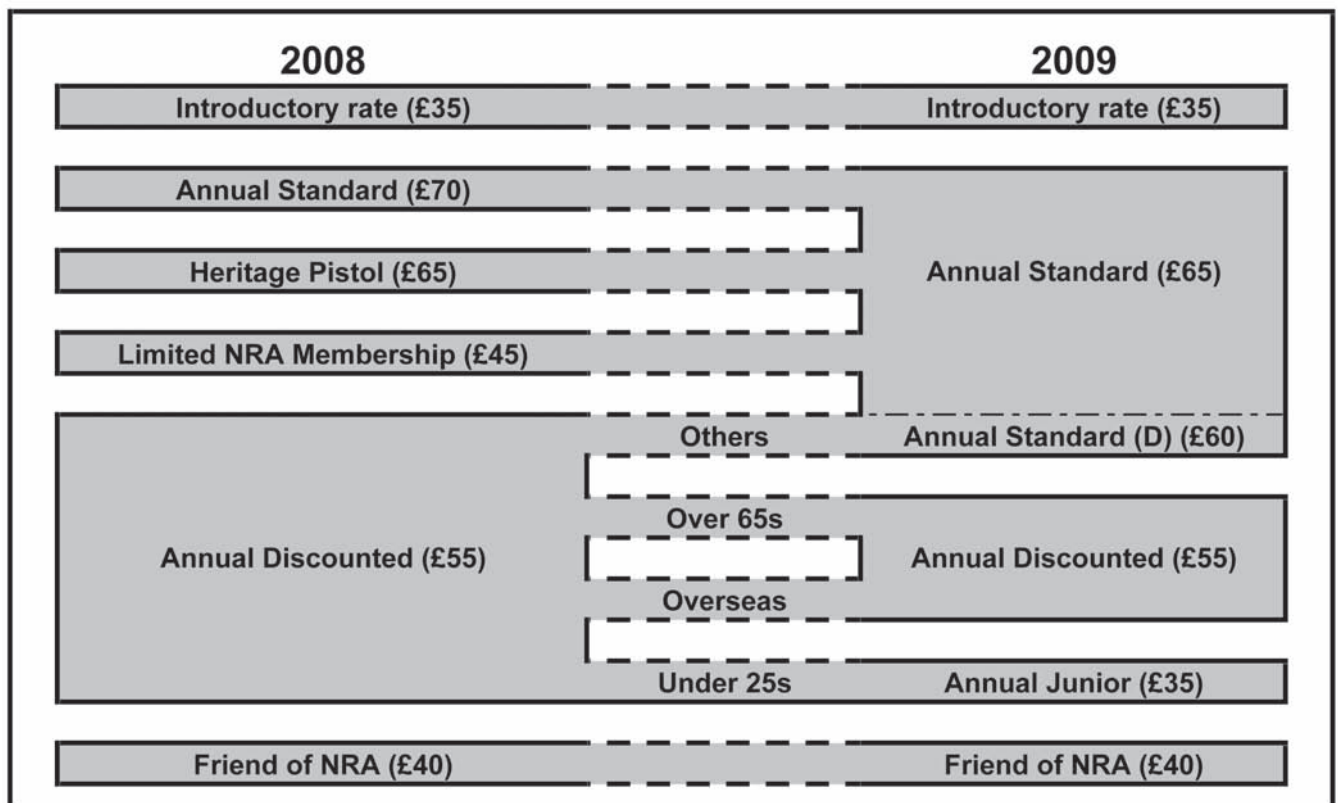
As you can see, we have maintained the introductory rate and, for the seventh consecutive year, we are able to reduce the Annual Standard membership rate into which the vast majority of members fall. To ease the transition, we will offer a one year discount on the Annual Standard rate to those previously on the Annual Discounted rate. Don't forget that if you pay by direct debit you can save a further £5 off all the rates.

My last article highlighted the need to recruit many more younger members to the Association - the youth of today is the future of our sport; with this in mind we have created a new Annual Junior membership category for under 25s. A reduced annual rate will also be available to those members living overseas or who are over 65.

Members may have read in the newsletter sent out with renewals that new Life memberships will not be offered after 1 January 2009. Whilst Life membership rates are being considered by Council for 2009, it would require a change to the Rules of the Association before the category is no longer offered. Therefore Life membership will continue to be offered at the rates set by Council for 2009. The rates will be published on the NRA website once they have been set.

It is likely that there will be an increase in capitation fees for 2009. This follows a long period of time where the rate has been static despite inflation and the increased costs of running the Association which have not been passed on to club members. Over recent years the NRA has taken on staff to assist the regions and administer the MoD requirements that have been placed upon us. Whilst the full cost of these has not been passed on (in truth none of this was passed on for the first year) there is a requirement that the fees charged to clubs contribute to this. The decision on the new fees will be made at the Trustees' December meeting and communicated to clubs as soon as possible.

We are constantly on the lookout for new members of the Membership Committee who can inject new ideas and energy into our Association. If you think you can help us to encourage the thousands of club members in the UK who are not individual members to support and join their National Governing Body, then we want to hear from you. All suggestions on any aspect of NRA membership are welcome - you can contact us by e-mailing memsec@nra.org.uk.



NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SHOOTING



by
*Martin
Farnan*

General

Communication with the Shooting Division

It would be appreciated if the main means of communication with the Shooting Division were by e-mail where possible. Response times will be shorter if e-mail is used, rather than letter or fax format. The relevant e-mail addresses are:

martin.farnan@nra.org.uk
brian.thomas@nra.org.uk
shootsec@nra.org.uk

Marksman's Calendar

The Marksman's Calendar is currently being compiled on the NRA and NSC websites. As usual I ask club secretaries to check this calendar carefully and let Karen Robertson have their own club fixtures list and details of any other club championships or meetings, whether to be held at Bisley or elsewhere, as quickly as possible, preferably by e-mail to karen@nra.org.uk. Please do not include minor events such as practice sessions. Details should be with Karen by the middle of January. Once your fixtures are listed on the website, please check all details are correct and that the e-mail link is directed to the correct person.

Please note that the Marksman's Calendar will no longer be provided as a printed insert in the Journal. However it is available in the same format by visiting the NRA website and clicking on the Calendar sub menu. For those members without internet access and who cannot get a friend or club member to print a copy for them, please contact Karen who will be happy to post a copy to you.

Please note that whilst contact e-mail addresses are hidden on the website-based calendar (to prevent spammers electronically harvesting your address), they will be visible on the downloadable printed

version. Please provide such contact details as you are happy to have made public.

Targets and Markers

Markers

As always you are reminded that markers are likely to remain in short supply, and that there is no guarantee that a marker or markers can be supplied on any particular day. Individuals and, in particular, Club Secretaries are therefore again advised to make alternative arrangements where possible.

Please have consideration for the marker who is marking your target. Where possible stand him down if your target will not be used, eg towards the end of a team shoot. Use Message 10 or Message 12 where appropriate. Even a few minutes respite as often as possible will probably improve the standard of marking on your target.

Use of Benches on Short Siberia

All shooters are reminded that the benches on Short Siberia are for bench rest shooting only, and are not there for the use of anyone who has not booked them. It is obligatory that all those who wish to use one or more benches at 100 yards must inform the Range Office accordingly when making the booking. An obligatory safety space of one additional target to the right hand side of the bench(es) being used will then be sterilised since the normal firing point is forward of the benches.

If there are few bookings at 100 yards on the day concerned, and the safety target would in all probability not have been used, no additional charge will be made. If, however, the range is busy then the shooter(s) booking the bench(es) will be required to pay for the additional safety target space in addition to the number of lanes used.

Shooting on Bisley Ranges

You are reminded that, as directed by the NRA Council (Board of Trustees), only the following may shoot on Bisley Ranges:

- full members of the NRA
- members of Clubs affiliated to the NRA who are shooting on official Club Bookings (*)
- those who have paid Meeting Membership
- those taking part in Guest or Corporate Days

(*) *Club Bookings are bookings made by an affiliated Club which have been advertised to and are open to all members of that Club.*

Booking In at the Range Office

Club secretaries and individuals are reminded that they must be in possession of their club or individual membership card when booking in at the Range Office. This will be particularly important in 2009 for the

reasons given. Failure to do so may entail a delay in processing your booking.

Safety

Range Safety

Despite repeated warnings, breaches of range safety continue to occur. You are reminded that the design of any particular range, and the associated Range Safety Certificate, are dependent on the type of shooting permitted on that range. Range users should take particular notice of the Range Regulations, published in the Range Office, which have been updated to take account of all recent changes, particularly in respect of High Muzzle Energy firearms and ammunition, and Certificates of Safety and Competence.

I emphasise paragraph 13 in particular, which explains the duties and the personal responsibilities of the Range Conducting Officer (RCO) who must sign in before shooting commences and sign out after shooting has finished. It will be the personal responsibility of the RCO to ensure that each member of his party is eligible to shoot under the new regulations. Any damage, breakages or poor firing points, together with the number of rounds fired, should be reported on the form when signing out.

Safe Shooting System (SSS)

The NRA SSS is designed to ensure, as far as we can, that all those shooting on our ranges:

- (a) can handle their firearm safely and competently,
- (b) can fire a group of sufficiently small diameter to ensure that their shots do not hit the range floor or escape over the top of the stop butt,
- (c) know the elevations on their sights at all distances at which they will be shooting.

All too often, however, individuals cannot comply with either (a) or (b), and most certainly do not demonstrate (c)! Indeed not too long ago the statement was made over the radio "I'm a Palma shot - I don't need to check my zero" - followed by five consecutive misses!

Please, before shooting at the beginning of the season, and especially after a layoff of some months, check your elevations and wind zero on the Zero Range, and at short range, before going to shoot at longer distances (and certainly before shooting on Stickledown).

Rifle Zeroing at the beginning of the Season

In accordance with the NRA Safe Shooting System (SSS) it is obligatory that all shooters using Military ranges or Bisley ranges must know the correct wind zero for their sights. They must also know the correct elevation settings for all distances at which they may be firing.

For these reasons all firers will, as from 1st January 2009, be required to check their wind zero and elevation settings on the Zero Range at the beginning of the shooting season, after a layoff of some months and after rebarrelling etc. This must be done before going to shoot at longer distances (and certainly before shooting on Stickledown).

Use of the Zero Range will therefore be allowed free of charge, for this purpose only, during the months January to April inclusive.

Certificates of Safety and Competences

You are reminded that all users of Bisley Ranges will be required to produce a Certificate of Safety and Competence, signed by their Club Chairman, with effect from 1 January 2009. This must be produced by individuals in the Range Office when signing for targets for individual use, or on the range if requested to do so by an NRA or NSC member of staff if more than one person is using a target. The RCO who 'signs-in' for a group or club booking will be certifying that all members of his group either have such certificates or, if not, will be supervised on a one-to-one basis, by someone who is so qualified.

Bracketing

It used to be (and may still be) a well known practice that, if a firer missed with a couple of shots and was unsure of his elevation, he would raise his sights by five minutes and fire again, then if still a miss lower his sights by ten minutes and fire again and so on until he eventually hit the target. This practice is potentially highly dangerous, and must not be done!

This adjustment of the elevation by five, ten, 15 or 20 minutes will eventually (sooner rather than later) mean that shots will strike the range floor or miss the top of the stop butt. In either case the resultant ricochet or free-flight bullet may fall outside the Range Danger Area with possible fatal consequences.

Safety Boards

All range users are reminded that the Safety Boards are placed on the ranges to ensure that no firers or any ricochet inducing objects are within the permitted minimum 200 mil safety space from other range users. It has been reported that some range users have been observed either reading these signs and then walking past them, or else ignoring them completely. Any firers found acting in this unsafe way, and thereby putting themselves and others at risk, will have their booking cancelled and will be asked to leave the range. It is also highly likely that disciplinary action will be taken.

Use of Stickledown Butt Zero in Low Season

It is anticipated that much greater use of the complex between 800 and 900 yards on Butt Zero will be made during Low Season. This mini-complex comprises turning targets, moving targets and a layout suitable

for steels/falling plates. The use of one or more of these options may preclude the use of others. Enquiries about which matches may be shot on this mini-complex should be made to Brian Thomas, the Assistant Director of Shooting. Please be aware that any shooting involving moving target practices must be cleared with the Range Office when making the booking since special arrangements will have to be made to brief the RCO who will be running the event.

Range Closure Dates

To allow for proper setting up, all ranges that will be used for the 2009 Phoenix Meeting (21 to 23 May 2009) will be closed to other users on the previous day, Wednesday 20 May 2009. Please take note.

The 140th Imperial Meeting will be held from Pre-Friday 10 July to Final Saturday 25 July 2009 (see below) preceded by CENTSAM. For this reason the annual de-leading of the butts, the Inter Counties Meeting and the obligatory services practice period will have to be held before this date. As a consequence there may be some disruption during this period but we will do our best to minimise this.

So that the Estate staff do not have to work excessive hours cutting grass on other days, it has been decided to continue the arrangements made in previous years, ie that there will again be no shooting on Mondays in late May and early June (as during the rest of the year). I am sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

Shooting Matters

Ammunition Prices

You will be aware that the prices of ammunition components have increased substantially over the past 12 months. This has affected the cost price of ammunition by a significant amount, and is likely to be reflected in the selling price in due course. For the time being the prices in the armoury will be held at their present levels while all possible alternatives are explored. It is likely, however, that the price of ammunition will have to be increased in the New Year.

Armoury Closure

In order to carry out 100% stock checks of both firearms and ammunition it will be necessary to close the Armoury completely for the period 9 to 13 February 2009. Please keep an eye on the Range Office Notice Board and on the NRA website for further details.

Use of other Shooters' Firearms

You are reminded that Section 15(1) of the Firearms Act allows full NRA members to use other shooters' firearms, but only of the types used by the NRA (target rifles, gallery rifles, muzzle loading pistols etc). This Section does not cover such firearms as Long Barrelled Revolvers (of any calibre), Section 1 Shotguns or Long

Range Pistols. Such firearms are permitted to be used only by the owner, and may not legally be given to any other person either to handle or 'have a go'.

The European Long Range Championships 2008

This Match was fired using RUAG ammunition, with a Sierra bullet in an RWS case, and was shot over the weekend 11 and 12 October with five teams competing. Match conditions were changed this year to allow practice and 800 yards on Saturday morning, followed by 900 and 1000 yards on Saturday afternoon. It was planned that Sunday morning would consist of 900 and 1000 yards only, with prize giving at lunchtime.

In the event, however, fog delayed the start on both days, though we were able to complete the Saturday programme. On Sunday we were only able to shoot at 1000 yards, and the Individual Final had to be cancelled, with the individual medals being awarded on the total score over the four distances shot. Results were as follows:

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | England | 7025.251x |
| 2 | Scotland | 6986.264x |
| 3 | Ireland | 6984.250x |
| 4 | Channel Islands | 6957.252x |
| 5 | Wales | 6927.242x |

In the Individual Championship, for the top scoring individual from each age group, the results were:

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|---------|
| 1 | Adam McCullough | Ireland | 595.23x |
| 2 | Henryk Golaszewski | Wales | 594.31x |
| 3 | Bill Rowland | England | 592.23x |

The Ages Match

This Match was fired over the weekend 27 and 28 October and seven teams competed. After a keenly contested competition the results were as follows:

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 25s to 35s | 5281.328x |
| 2 | 45s to 55s | 5268.309x |
| 3 | 35s to 45s | 5207.335x |
| 4 | 55s to 65s | 5181.271x |
| 5 | Under 25s | 5165.300x |
| 6 | Over 65s | 5122.285x |
| 7 | U25 Development (11 firers only) | 4701.202x |

In the Individual Championship, for the top scoring individual from each age group, the results were:

| | | | |
|---|---------------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | Jane Messer | 446.33x | 35 to 45s |
| 2 | James Watson | 446.28x | 25 to 35s |
| 3 | Paul Charlton | 445.39x | 45 to 55s |
| 4 | James Lothian | 444.26x | Under 25s |
| 5 | David Hossack | 441.24x | 55 to 65s |
| 6 | Jim Dunn | 439.26x | Over 65s |
| 7 | George Wright | 437.19x | U25 Dev |

The annual Fireworks Display, organised by Karen Robertson, was held on Saturday evening, which was by all accounts probably the best yet. The fireworks were by Dragon Fireworks and were organised by

Barry Desborough (from the Clays). A dinner and disco in the LMRA followed to which all age groups were invited.

Open Days 2009

The Home Office have been asked to agree two NRA Open Days at Bisley in 2009 on Saturday 2 May and Saturday 5 September. It is also planned that an Open Day will be held at Altcar on Saturday 29 August 2009. Please make a note of these dates which will be confirmed in the Spring Journal.

Change of County Eligibility

If any NRA member moves to a different county during a shooting year please remember that it is not permitted, under NRA Rules, to shoot for two counties in the same year. In the event that a member may be considered a resident in two counties then he should arrange with the two county team captains concerned for which county he wishes to shoot.

Imperial Meeting

Imperial Meeting Questionnaire

Thank you to all those competitors who completed the Questionnaire included in this year's squadding envelopes. The winner of the £50 voucher (drawn at random from all replies received) was Mr BT Wood from West Yorkshire.

Prize Lists

The Prize List CD has now been sent for duplication and should be ready for distribution by early December along with medals, bars and prize money. We would like to apologise for the delay which has been due to staff illness.

Dates for 2009

The 140th Imperial Meeting will be held from First Saturday 11 July to Final Saturday 25 July 2009. The Central Skill at Arms Meeting (CENTSAM) will be held under new conditions in 2009, starting with the NRA Individual squadded matches, Match 4 (Queen Mary) followed by Match 8 (Bisley Bullet, Sitting, Standing, Kinnaird, Stephens and Wantage) on Thursday 2 July. This will be followed by the TA Skill-at-Arms Meeting (TASAM) from Friday 3 to Sunday 5 July.

The Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC) will run from Sunday 5 to Wednesday 8 July, followed by the Methuen Cup. The NRA United Service and International SR Team matches will follow, probably on Thursday 9 July, followed by the Inter-Services FIBUA, Whitehead and Bargrave Deane on Friday 10 July on Pirbright ranges. The Inter Service Cadet Rifle Meeting and Schools Meetings will start on Friday 10 and Monday 13 July respectively.

These Services Meetings will then be followed by the normal Match Rifle (11 to 16 July) and Target Rifle (17 to 25 July) Meetings.

Range Conducting Officers (RCOs)

There is a continuing annual requirement to augment our Imperial Meeting RCOs, particularly this year. The Imperial Meeting cannot be run without competent RCOs, and I invite those of you who would like to be considered for this important position to contact me as soon as possible.

F Class World Championships

The F Class World Championships will be held from Sunday 26 July to Thursday 30 July 2009. Sunday 26 July will be a practice day for both individuals and teams, the Individual Championships will be held on Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 July and the Team Championships will be held on Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 July. Entry forms are currently available on the home page of the NRA website.

Programme

Other than the Service Rifle events as above, the programme of events for the 2009 Imperial Meeting will be broadly similar to that for 2008, with no radical changes proposed.

Entry Forms

Entry forms will be included in the Spring Journal, due for publication at the end of February 2009. This will again be in the form of an A3 folded form. Page 1 will be full personal details, block entries and financial summary, page 2 will be for entries to individual matches and aggregates, and pages 3 and 4 will be notes. Only pages 1 and 2 need be returned, meaning that the competitor may retain the notes.

All entry forms (other than the Schools' entry form which is sent to all eligible schools) will again be posted on the NRA website. Entries and payment for TR and MR events may be made online, and entry by this means is strongly recommended. It is possible that there may be a financial incentive to completing the entry form online.

Service Rifle

There will again be a number of radical changes next year, many of which are still to be finalised:

- the NRA SR Meeting will again be held as a stand-alone event, but will be compressed to a single day with Match 4 followed by Match 8 being held in the morning and again in the afternoon on Thursday 2 July,
- the NRA SR team matches will now be held on Pre-Friday on Pirbright ranges, and will not interfere with the ISCRM,
- civilian SR competitions may have to be spread over a three or four day period,
- civilian teams will be shooting their own Methuen Match on the afternoon of Final Saturday 25 July.

- the International Service Pistol match has been discontinued,

In the Services Meetings there will also be a large number of changes, including:

- the Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC) will start a day earlier than this year,
- the AOSC will again be open to unit teams, rather than to individual firers,
- the matches to be shot by all three services will be revised,
- the RN and RAF Skill-at-Arms Meetings will have to be re-programmed though it is hoped to still have a Tri-Service Queen's Medal Final,
- the Queen's Medal Final will probably be held on Wednesday 8 July
- the Methuen match will probably be held on Thursday 9 July.

Full details will be available from the Army Rifle Association.

Target Rifle

It is planned that the Howard Wilkinson, on the morning of Final Saturday, will become self-marking. This will substantially reduce the entry fee.

Any further changes will be reported in the Spring Journal and full details will be contained in the 2009 Bisley Bible.

Schools Meeting

No major changes are expected but any changes will be reported in the Spring Journal and full details will be contained in the 2009 Bisley Bible.

Schools Veterans

It is understood that some members of Veterans teams may shoot only once a year, at this match. For this reason they may well not have been certified as 'Safe and Competent' in accordance with the NRA Safe Shooting Scheme. To comply with this scheme it will therefore be necessary for each Schools Veterans team captain to sign a certificate to the effect that "I certify that all members of my team have either been certified as safe and competent in accordance with the NRA Safe Shooting Scheme, or will be coached on a one-to-one basis by someone who is certified".

Match Rifle

No major changes are expected but any changes will be reported in the Spring Journal and full details will be contained in the 2009 Bisley Bible.

Gallery Rifle and Muzzle Loading Pistol

The programme of matches this year reverted to its more traditional format which was well received. This will be repeated next year though the meeting may be extended by one day to include Second Monday.

McQueen

The introduction of the 4" V bull again held the number of possibles to manageable levels, and allowed many more competitors to take part in this match. This will be continued next year. All scores will be recorded in the same way as for TR. Only equal top scores (ie only those scoring 50.10v, or those scoring 50.09v if no shooter scores 50.10v etc) will then shoot off on the afternoon of Second Thursday. If there is only one top score in any particular class then there will be no tie shoot in that class.

Trade Stands

If you plan to set up a trade stand during the Imperial Meeting please contact Brigitte Rushmore, the NSC Marketing Director, as soon as possible. Space is limited, and early application is advisable. Depending on numbers it is possible that these trade stands will revert to Bazaar Lines, running from the Fultons Block down towards the 500 yards firing point.

Imperial Meeting 2010 and 2011

For advance information the 2010 Imperial Meeting, the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the NRA, will run from 10 July to 24 July, and is likely to be followed by a 'mini-Palma' match on Sunday 25 July and the Australia Match on Monday 26 July. In 2011 the Imperial Meeting will run from 9 July to 23 July.

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NOTES FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NSC



*by
Jeremy
Staples*

NRA Open Day

The NRA Autumn Open Day took place on Saturday 13 September when a total of 1067 guests registered to shoot on our ranges. This time we used Short Siberia and had a minibus system to ferry guests to and from this range, which seemed to work very well. We had a lot of very positive feedback from members of the public and our thanks again go to all the NRA members and coaches who assist us on the day.

We have made the decision to limit the number of guests in future to reduce the queues and to ensure that all visitors enjoy as much shooting as possible on the day.

Imperial Meeting

Details of this year's Imperial Meeting will be reported elsewhere in the Journal.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all temporary staff and markers for their contribution to ensure that the main Meeting ran smoothly. I would also like to take this opportunity of formally thanking all the permanent staff for their huge efforts in the preparation and running of the Meeting. Many of the ground staff and target shed staff work extremely long hours from the beginning of June right the way through until the end of July (much of this work is unseen by members). Without their dedication the Meeting could not take place. In addition, immediately following the Imperial Meeting, Bisley hosts the HOG Rally and the NSRA Meeting, which means that August is almost as busy.

Short Siberia Road

Those who have used Short Siberia will have noticed that the road has now been dramatically improved. Following lengthy negotiations with Natural England they agreed that we could use a carboniferous limestone finish and this was laid by Brian Brimfield

immediately after the Imperial Meeting; it appears to be standing up to the traffic and bad weather.

Clock Tower

The NRA Chairman approved the Clocktower refurbishment during the course of the winter months. Recent investigations have revealed that one of the corners of the Clocktower's foundations needs underpinning first, shortly after which the re-cladding and re-furbishment can take place. We are hopeful that a small grant will be available from Guildford Borough Council.

Electronic Targets

Ongoing discussions have been taking place with Haring as to the problems we have experienced with the electronic targets. A mesh system which Haring have guaranteed will improve the reliability to 100% is being installed during November. Please look at the website to obtain an update on the electronic targets. There will be a range office target available by the hour.

Development

Many members kindly filled in a questionnaire during the Imperial Meeting in respect of the possible log cabin development at the rear of Century. We are in ongoing discussions with the Local Authority together with Natural England in respect of the likely planning on this area and we are still awaiting the results of the ecological survey.

As many of you will be aware this location is currently SSSI and SPA designated. We are also looking at a number of other sites on which log cabins could be constructed and this will hopefully move forward following further consultation with the local planning office.

As soon as we get some firm indication in respect of the likely planning situation we will announce this on our website and contact all members who have expressed an interest in cabins in the past.

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRAINING



*by
Phyllis
Farnan*

Probationary Training Course

A generic probationary programme is now available to all affiliated clubs to assist with the training of new members under the Safe Shooting Scheme. Probationary training should be carried out by suitably experienced trainers appointed by each club - ideally they should be Club Instructors or qualified Club Coaches. NRA courses are offered to assist clubs in the training of their instructors and coaches.

The NRA also runs probationary courses for its own members throughout the year at Bisley. Lessons are normally held at weekends, though individual mid-week training can also sometimes be arranged.

Hand Loading Course

Following the success of the Hand Loading Courses earlier this year, the NRA will be running another Hand Loading Course in February 2009. It is intended that this course will be held annually.

Skills Courses

TR Skills Courses are open to full members of the NRA, its affiliated clubs and to cadets. The course is designed to enhance individual knowledge and shooting skills. Courses are run twice a year (Spring and Autumn) at Bisley, but can also be run regionally by arrangement with the NRA. Separate skills courses are also being developed to provide training for target rifle and for other shooting disciplines. It is hoped that these new courses will be available during 2009 and more information will be given in the Spring Journal.

Club Instructor Course

The Club Instructor Course is open to members of the NRA, its affiliated clubs and to adults from the cadet forces. This course is designed for those who wish to assist with the training of new shooters at their club or unit. Candidates, who should have previously completed a NRA Skills Course, will be

assessed during the course. Courses are run twice a year (Spring and Autumn) at Bisley, but can also be run regionally by arrangement with the NRA. Like the Skills Course, the Club Instructor Course is also being revised and it is hoped that we will be able to offer Club Instructor training for other disciplines as well as target rifle during 2009.

Club Coach TR Course

The Club Coach TR Course is only open to individual NRA members; it is held in the autumn each year at Bisley but may also be run regionally. Candidates should have good instructional skills and should have previously completed the Club Instructor TR Course. Candidates with no formal teaching or instructor qualification should attend the Instructor Workshop before applying for the course. From 2008, in line with government legislation concerning the protection of children and vulnerable adults, a CRB check must also be completed before an NRA Club Coach TR qualification can be confirmed.

RCO Manual

The current NRA RCO Manual is Edition 3 dated August 2007. On renewal, RCOs will automatically receive a copy of this manual. The manual is also available for purchase from the NRA at a cost of £5.00 plus postage.

RCO Courses

The NRA Range Conducting Officer Course qualifies civilians to conduct live firing practices on military ranges. Clubs wishing to book military ranges must have members who are qualified as NRA RCOs.

The RCO Course is run regularly at Bisley and is also run regionally by arrangement with the NRA. The course consists of a standard series of lectures, followed by individual oral, practical and written assessments. All candidates receive a copy of the RCO manual for pre-course study.

The RCO Course covers the management of ranges for fullbore rifle shooting and gallery rifle. (By agreement with the NSRA the NRA course also includes small-bore ranges).

Any individual who holds a current military range management qualification may apply directly for an NRA RCO qualification. Contact the NRA for an application form and further details.

RCO Renewals

The RCO qualification is valid for six years but may be renewed on application to the NRA. A renewal form, which must be endorsed by the RCO's club secretary, is available from the NRA. All RCOs who qualified in 2003 will find that their qualification will run out in 2009. Please remember to apply for renewal before your current qualification lapses or you may have to retake the course.

RCO Endorsement Courses

These additional courses are only available to qualified RCOs:

The RCO (HME) course is run by the NRA and can be held at Bisley or regionally on request.

The British Sporting Rifle Club (BSRC) runs an Instructor Course for sporting rifle and the Muzzle Loading Association of Great Britain (MLAGB) runs the RCO Endorsement course for muzzle loading firearms.

RCO Assessors Training

This is open to NRA RCOs with at least five years experience of running ranges for their club who have good communication and instructional skills. Training is held at Bisley and trainee assessors will be required to assist on RCO Courses at Bisley during their training.

RCO Assessor Update Seminar

The annual update seminar for RCO Assessors will be held on Saturday 31 January 2009 at the National Shooting Centre, Bisley.

Bisley Course Dates for 2009 (Proposed)

Probationary courses

2009/1 begins 7 February

2009/2 begins 28 March

2009/3 begins 30 May

2009/4 begins 12 September

2009/5 begins 7 November

TR Skills and Club Instructor Courses

21 - 22 March

24 - 25 October

Wind Coaching Courses

Long course tba

17 July (Imperial Meeting Short Course)

Club Coach Course

14 - 15 November

Hand Loading Course

14 - 15 February

RCO Courses at Bisley

21 - 22 February

16 - 17 May

26 - 27 September

31 Oct - 1 November

RCO (HME) Courses

19 April

11 October

Instructor Workshop (*Methods of Instruction and Assessment for Coaches and Assessors*)

4 October

RCO Assessors' Update Seminar

31 January

The programme for all NRA training courses at Bisley in 2009 will be shown on the NRA website once all dates have been confirmed www.nra.org.uk

For further information on all training matters or to book a course contact the Director of Training e-mail: training@nra.org.uk or tel 01483 797777 ext 150.

For information concerning RCO Courses or renewals contact Maureen Peach (RCO Support) e-mail: maureen.peach@nra.org.uk or tel 01483 797777 ext 149.

NRA SHOOTING MENTORS (AUNTS AND UNCLES) SCHEME - IMPERIAL MEETING 2008

As ever, I am most grateful to all those who were so kind as to offer to help with this much respected scheme. The applications for an Aunt or an Uncle were more numerous than ever this year and I expect there to be even more next year once the MoD/NRA arrangement kicks in.

I am most especially grateful to Bruce Roth who is shouldering ever more of the burden as I move towards my sell-by date. Please read the article in the next Journal for details of changes which we hope will improve the existing organisational structure.

This year, I have not been aware of so many unwanted Aunts or Uncles as was the unhappy case last year, but even so I have been told that not all those who sought help through the Aunts and Uncles Scheme contacted their Aunt or Uncle in response to an initial message. Perhaps worse, a few - very few - made initial contact with their Aunt or Uncle and then failed to follow it up. I deplore such discourtesy as much as I regret the opportunities thus missed. The impact on the Aunts and Uncles concerned is not good.

The two Guides to the Meeting are available from the website (go to www.nra.org.uk and click on the **Competitions** sub menu then **Imperial Meeting 2008/2009** then **Imperial Meeting Information** and scroll down to select) and are, apparently, much appreciated. They are routinely updated in March or April and can contribute to a pleasant as well as a successful Bisley for all firers, whether newcomers or not.

Tim Elliott, Lark Hill, Haynes West End, Bedfordshire MK45 3RB

Telephone: 01234 740334

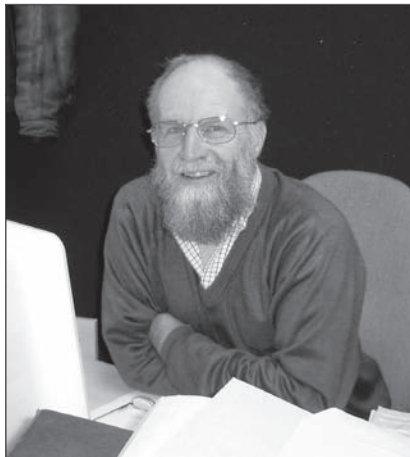
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NOTES FROM THE NRA FIREARMS LIAISON OFFICER

by
Roger Speak

Tel: 07528 037221
(Tuesdays and
Wednesdays only)



Carriage of firearms by airlines

I have been asked to highlight to members that Iberia Airlines are now charging extra to transport firearms as passenger baggage, whereas other airlines still carry firearms and related equipment as part of passengers' free checked baggage allowance. It is worth noting that certain airlines, notably British Airways, will carry firearms as an additional free sporting allowance. When booking airline tickets, always make sure that you advise the airline when you book that you will be carrying firearms as part of your baggage. This ensures that the appropriate secure systems are put in place at the airports for safe carriage of the firearms. Some airlines refuse to carry firearms, so you should make sure that your chosen airline is prepared to carry them for you. You should also note that if you change airlines during your flight or have a stopover, certain countries will impound your firearms as they do not allow privately held firearms on their soil. It is often very difficult to get your firearms back again. Dubai and Singapore are notable for this. Please carry out your own checks on this, as the NRA are unable to do this for you.

Stolen firearms

Members recently stayed at a hotel overnight whilst in transit between range and home. The car was securely locked in the main car park, under floodlights and with CCTV covering the car park. During the night, a number of cars in the car park were broken into at random and firearms stolen from our members' car. On being notified of the loss, local police seized all their remaining firearms and related equipment plus their Firearms Certificates. They are having considerable difficulty in getting their equipment back and are being threatened with revocation.

The advice given to us by some firearms departments is that if you stay in a hotel overnight when carrying firearms, when booking, make arrangements with the hotel manager, discretely, that you can keep the firearms in your hotel room. Hide them in the room and never leave them unattended. Take your meals in the room, do not go to the restaurant or bar, even for a few minutes.

If your firearms are seized by the police under similar conditions, there is little or nothing that the NRA can do for you at the time. Once you get back home, contact the NRA Firearms Liaison during the working week and we will discuss and see where we can help. If the police decide to revoke your certificate because of the theft, we can then put you in contact with our specialist solicitor who can consider whether your case is suitable for fighting. The solicitor can do nothing at the time of the theft. We have to wait until your local force consider what to do.

If the chances of winning the case are sufficient, then the NRA specialist insurance company will be contacted by the solicitor to see if they will cover the costs of fighting the case, provided that you are insured for this through the NRA. If, however, the solicitor and insurance consider your chances of winning are low, the insurance will decline to cover the costs.

Storage of firearms at the NRA armoury

May I highlight that if you live outside the UK permanently and store your firearms at the NRA armoury, then you must have at all times an up-to-date UK Temporary Visitors Firearms Permit or Shotgun Permit. If a current permit cannot be found for those firearms, the police may decide to seize the firearms and remove them from use. The new firearms licensing system in England and Wales makes it very easy for the police to search for the presence of a permit for your firearms.

To apply for an annual permit, please contact Firearms Liaison for advice and a copy of the application form. The permit currently costs £25 and has a maximum validity of 12 months. If you wish to add further firearms to the permit at a later time, this costs another £25 to re-issue.

Issue of UK Visitors Temporary Firearms/ Shotgun Permits

Please be aware that the issue of a permit normally takes six to eight weeks from the NRA receiving the forms from you, to us posting the completed permit back to you. As the system has been abused in the past, Surrey Police will not allow anyone to bypass the system by attempting to approach them direct to speed things up. All applications must be made through Firearms Liaison at the NRA who act as sponsors for the permits. Please do not attempt to phone Surrey Police as they cannot assist you and the system will be slowed even further. If you believe that you genuinely have a special case to have your permit processed quickly, then discuss it with me and we may be able to help. "I forgot to apply for my permit" is not a genuine reason!

Updating NRA Records

May I once again remind all members to ensure that their Shooting Database records are up-to-date, even if the NRA is not your primary club! It is a Firearms Act requirement that all clubs keep their records of members and all details of their firearms and FACs up-to-date. It also makes life so much easier for both you and for me when it comes to FAC renewal time!

NRA FIREWORKS DISPLAY

Photos by Alan Keating

Fireworks by Dragon Fireworks - www.dragonfireworks.co.uk

Next year's display will be on Saturday 24 October - put it in your diary now!



NOTES FROM THE NRA REGIONAL MANAGER

by Chris Webb



Ranges

Dechmont

Several years ago the NRA began looking at disused or redundant MoD ranges with a view to seeing if it would be feasible to reactivate them.

A desktop study was carried out on Dechmont Range, south of Glasgow, in February 2006 which confirmed previous findings which was that while parts of the range could be used for limited civilian shooting, a Full or Reduced Danger Area would not be possible. This would clearly not be acceptable to the MoD.

In June of this year an engineering survey was carried out on part of the old ranges and the results were extremely encouraging. It was very clear from this study that the ranges and the hill forming the backstop have in the past been carefully engineered. The consequence of many years of neglect has resulted in the carefully crafted construction being lost to erosion, soil deposition, rock fall and the extensive growth of vegetation.

Further examination of the terracing will have to take place to see if they were angled at the 56 degrees required by today's No Danger Area standards.

Our conclusion is that the re-construction of a rifle range to fire into Dechmont Hill appears possible by re-instating and improving the previously terraced slopes and reconstructing firing points to required levels. The mantlet, target frames, markers gallery and range floor will require little work to bring these back into use.

Our wish list is for the following: 300m rifle gallery range, a 50 lane small-bore range at 25 metres, 50 metres and 100 yards, clay ranges and provision for gallery rifle and muzzle loading firearms. Additionally we have to look at other facilities such as accommodation, clubhouse etc.

We will continue negotiations with the MoD to determine the most suitable location and size for the reconstruction of a combined NDA rifle range.

DTE Range News

If the MoD continues to close or restrict the use of its ranges at rate they are, it will mean that there will be

even less range space available for civilian clubs. This is very real threat to what we do. As a result the NRA is currently talking to Defence Training Estates about a number of ranges around the country with a view to leasing them.

Closed or Restricted Ranges

Tyddesley Wood Range is closed to civilian shooting for the foreseeable future. There is an ongoing dispute with the local farmer who owns land that forms part of the range. Currently the range is licensed for military use firing 5.56mm ball at 100m only.

Whittington Range also remains closed to all users until further notice. We have gone back to DTE restating that the offer to do the work required, free of charge, remains. DTE are to revisit their previous decision, which was not to accept our offer.

East Holme Range is currently closed to civilian clubs although I am led to believe that a decision in favour of reinstating civilian clubs will be forthcoming very soon. The decision to prohibit civilian clubs pending the results of an investigation was because the granulated rubber stop butt caught fire, three times. Please feel free to draw your own conclusions!

Langport Range has been restricted to 5.56mm ammunition only until further notice, due to range safety checks. The Range Danger Area trace was recently checked and it did not comply with current regulations.

Range Wardens

Earlier in the year one of the Scottish Clubs reported that they now had to pay for two wardens on a particular range. The cost relating to wardens was already eating into club's finances. The NRA complained about this to DTE and what follows is the official reply from Landmarc:

The subject of two wardens or one is as a result of formal Health and Safety risk assessments. These are carried out to comply with legislation and the protection of employees.

Landmarc already has one prosecution where they failed in their duties in this area to protect staff. The fact that they ended up with a seriously injured member of staff, the resultant fine and prosecution focusses the mind. The practices of previous years are in many cases no longer acceptable and are now prosecutable.

Unfortunately once the Warden's foot crosses the gate, Landmarc have to pay for a minimum of three hours. So even if he is there for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon that is six hours. Plus the gap between the two can count as continuous time. This is a direct carrying in of the MoD employment terms that the staff enjoy under TUPE (Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment). These conditions have no time limit.

Single time at £18 per hour is a low charge out rate for any company and includes insurance, administration time in taking the booking, preparing the invoice, vehicle time and fuels etc as well as NI contributions and pensions.

On Saturdays and Sundays Landmarc have to pay overtime rates to the staff, consequently NI and pension contributions go up as well. The charges are fair and reasonable and have been approved by the DTE.

NRA affiliated club members assisting wardens to cut costs

On the NRA's behalf, Landmarc brought up the subject of the two wardens at Castlelaw ranges and could a gun club member carry out the safety function of the second warden, with Landmarc's Directors. They said no, because Landmarc would then become liable for that gun club member which as a company they cannot accommodate. If the gun club member got injured, Landmarc could be prosecuted for failing to provide adequate training, (as he is not a trained warden) nor necessarily familiar with Landmarc procedures etc, etc.

You may have noticed that on some ranges in England and Wales you are now paying for extra wardens to be on duty. Unfortunately there is nothing that the NRA or DTE can do to stop this. HSE Rules!

Central Licensing

Earlier this month at a meeting between the NRA and DTE, the terms under which the NRA will take over the central licensing of clubs was agreed. We had hoped to have the complete package in place by 1 April 2009; however, a more realistic date will be 1 April 2010.

The NRA will undertake to provide DTE with the following information. This list will no doubt be subject to change:

- 1 Club name and NRA affiliation number.
- 2 Club Secretary's name.
- 3 Secretary's postal address, e-mail address and phone number.
- 4 List of current NRA Range Conducting Officers.
- 5 List of DTE ranges that the club is licensed or wishes to be licensed to use.
- 6 Club insurance policy number and renewal date.

Regional Representatives or Agents

The most important duty in connection with central licensing is that the Regional Representative or Agent will be expected to collate club range bookings in their region. Being the sensitive caring organisation that we are, we would not want to interfere with a long established relationship between a club and range booking office unless it is unavoidable. We also recognise that there will be costs incurred by our agents in carrying out their duties and they will be able to claim them back from the NRA.

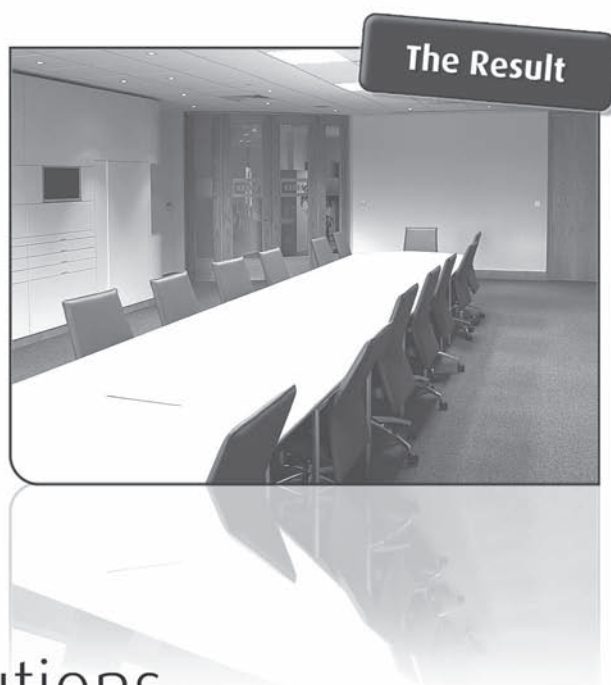
Other duties will include:

Liaising with local Range Administering Unit (range booking office).

Keeping clubs informed of local issues.

Dealing with local club issues.

I will be contacting all Regional Representatives and the members who have indicated that they were interested in acting as an Agent as soon as the fine detail has been worked out.



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FORTHCOMING TOURS

Great Britain Team to New Zealand 2010

The following have been selected for the Great Britain Team to New Zealand 2010:

Captain

GK Alexander GB, Ireland and Tyrone

Vice-Captain

JC Underwood GB, England and Surrey

Adjutant

NRJ Brasier GB, England and London

Head Coach

MK Townsend GB, Ireland and Hertfordshire

Coaches

MJJ Charlton GB, Scotland and London

MJ Ensor GB, England and Surrey

JH Messer GB, England and Sussex

Shooters

J Cload GB, England and Surrey

DC Crispin** England and Surrey

GMLN Gilpin GB, Ireland and Devon

ERT Jeens GB, Wales and London

RCT Jeens GB, Wales and London

ASH McCullough GB, Ireland and Ulster

RJ McQuillan GB, Ireland and Ulster

TA Ringer GB, England and Norfolk

DA Rose** England and Surrey

ANR Walker** Scotland and London

CJ Watson GB, Wales and Northants,
Leicestershire and Rutland

JA Watson GB, England and Northants,
Leicestershire and Rutland

AR Wilde* GB, England and Somerset

** New GB Cap

* First GB Tour

Shooters

Ian Dampney Somerset

John Ford Gloucestershire

William Hanley Northamptonshire

Henry Ives Suffolk

James Lawrie Scotland and Lincolnshire

Steve Postins Northamptonshire

Henry Sanders Northamptonshire

Bob Shaw Derbyshire

Isobel Stevenson Derbyshire

GB Palma Team to Australia 2011

It is with great honour that I have accepted the captaincy of the 2011 Great Britain Palma Team to Australia. I am delighted to announce that Martin Townsend will be Vice-Captain and James Watson Adjutant for the tour.

The Palma Match itself and preceding competitions will be taking place at the Belmont range in Brisbane, Australia in October 2011 with the tour expected to run for the first three weeks of October.

The final touring team will consist of a party of 26 people which includes coaches, firers and an armourer. There will not be a full pre-Palma tour in 2010 but a small group of coaches and firers will visit the range to experience the conditions and plan the details for the 2011 tour.

We intend to select a squad of approximately 50 shooters and 10 coaches so that a focussed training programme can begin at the beginning of the 2009 season. The squad will have a number of reserved development places (irrespective of age) for shooters who have not yet shot a Palma match, allowing for new talent to come through as well as building experience for future GB matches.

For information the training dates for 2009 are likely to be 9 - 10 May, 30 - 31 May and 10 - 11 October.

All applications are welcome from previous Palma shooters and coaches as well as individuals who have yet to shoot or coach in a Palma Match. Anyone interested in applying should please do so in writing with a CV and any relevant information to me (email preferred). Applications should be received by 28 February 2009.

John GM Webster

e-mail: webster@altimapartners.com

or John Webster c/o National Rifle Association,
National Shooting Centre, Bisley, Surrey, GU24 0PB

NRA Team to Channel Islands 2009

The following have been selected for the NRA Team to Channel Islands 2009:

Captain

James Bennett GB and Hereford and Worcester

Vice-Captain

John Tuffen Essex

Adjutant

Paul Johnson GB, England and Hereford and Worcester

Coaches

Dave Davies GB, Wales and Sussex

Michelle Barry Wales and Suffolk

GB Match Rifle Team to Australia 2010

I am greatly honoured to have been appointed Captain of this team.

The focal point of the tour will be the Australian Match Rifle Championships followed by the match for the Woomera Trophy, to be shot in Brisbane in April 2010. It is hoped to include an additional MR event before the championships.

At this stage I am unable to be specific about precise dates of the tour, the size of the team or the cost.

If you wish to be considered for the team please write to me no later than 15 December 2008. Please indicate whether your main interest is as coach or shooter, and state, in no more than 50 words what attributes you could bring to the team in addition to your shooting ability.

Loulou Brister

e-mail: bristerhandbag@aol.com

Southdown House, Tedfold Stud, Rowner Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9HU

GB World Championship Veterans' Team, Brisbane 2011

It is with great honour that I have accepted the nomination for Captaincy of the GB Veterans' Team to Australia 2011. This may appear to be a long way off but it is my intention to start building a team over the next two years with the intention of taking a winning team to Brisbane and one that will be a credit to Great Britain and the NRA.

Details of the tour are limited at present but it is expected to take place in October 2011 and for three weeks duration.

I would appreciate those of you that are eligible, 60 years young by September 2011 and interested in applying for this tour contacting me by e-mail or at the address below in writing with your personal details. I have every intention of making this a happy and first class team of competitive shooters capable of winning the Veterans' World Championship 2011.

Eric Stuart-Bamford

e-mail: eric@stuartbamford.co.uk

6 Langdale Close, Woking, GU21 4RS.

Notice to TR Competitors Travelling to Canada 2009 - 2012

Commencing in 2009 and running for a three year period, the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association will conduct a trial of the 2008 ICFRA TR Technical and Drug Rules during its national matches with a view to possible adoption as its official TR rules thereafter. Provincial bodies are likely to follow this lead.

The major equipment differences between ICFRA TR rules and current DCRA rules are:

- minimum allowable trigger weights lowered to 0.5 kg from 1.5 kg
- maximum allowable rifle weight raised to unlimited
- sighting systems involving front and rear lenses broadened.

In a nutshell, as examples, rifles which pass current Canadian or British rules (and most others) will conform. There is no requirement to change your existing equipment.

The 2008 ICFRA TR Technical Rules will be available at www.dcra.ca in the rules section along with an article in the Canadian Marksman Winter / Spring 2008 issue, page 10, on the subject.

The new ICFRA target system will NOT be used initially. It will be introduced after existing target stocks are depleted, probably after the trial is completed. Some provinces may introduce them sooner.

Questions can be directed to Roger Mullin, Chairman, Rulebook Committee, at roger.mullin@sympatico.ca

Norman Clark

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SHOOTING DISCIPLINE MATTERS

Classics

by Rae Wills

It was with a certain sadness that I handed over the post of Match Director to David Gregory (duly supported by Tricia in Stats) after the Imperial Historic Arms Meeting 2008, yet with a sense of relief. After some eight years a rest seemed more and more a good idea and I feel certainly a lot older than when I started. In those years there have been successes and failures. I was very pleased that 2008 seemed to be one of the successes; numbers increased, matches shot increased and everything ran smoothly - the radios were so quiet we were constantly checking to make sure they were still working.

But that last had little to do with me and it was a compliment to the excellence of all the ROs and staff, too numerous to list, to whom I once again give my sincere thanks. Through thick and thin, fair weather and foul, they have given so much time and support.

As the Meeting closed, and I was finally relaxing, I was ambushed outside Stats by a varied crew of our helpers, dragged inside, and presented with a magnificent certificate and a generous gift voucher. The certificate is now framed and proudly on display, and the voucher became a new clock radio, with an alarm loud enough to blast me out of bed on the darkest and foulest of mornings; funny how it is always such days when you are first detail, or an 08:00 briefing, never when the sun shines? Thank you one and all!

By the time this is in print, the Trafalgar Meeting will have been done and dusted, and thoughts turn to the coming year. A little time ago I wrote of the continuing financial pressures we were all feeling from rising prices; commercial ammunition is now £40 - £50 a hundred and next year the bank debacle will bite; my retirement income will certainly be down by a noticeable amount. Yet I am not too pessimistic, and although I may find myself using more those of my rifles that are cheapest to shoot, going shooting I will be!

No doubt about it, Historic Arms continue to grow, and I hope we will see more and more visitors from the Continent and abroad; perhaps a few from the other countries to equal the BDMP invasions? That however may also bring some problems, such as those from France. Over the past few years France Tir, the National Club in France, has introduced very comprehensive rules and conditions for military arms competitions, and this new discipline is growing in popularity but there are important differences.

Their military calibres (and once a military calibre it remains so practically for ever, even the now ancient 8mm Lebel) are strictly controlled; indeed for many years they were practically banned. The re-chambering of rifles for civilian cartridges allows easier purchase, often reducing the rifle to a category that only requires notification after purchase (like our shotgun system).

This practice is widespread and such converted arms are allowed under the French rules; most visitors will probably bring original calibres but if others arrive we will have to think how to accommodate them.

One current problem of these conversions will not however come to us. Recently there have been reports of blow-ups of Swedish 42b self-loaders re-chambered into 6.5 x 57. The cause is not fully understood but seems to be a combination of cartridges rupturing and some characteristics of the chamber - roughness, headspace etc. My French is at its very limits when reading of the results of the enquiries but the whole story is in the October edition of Cibles magazine.

It is clear that re-chambering a semi-automatic rifle is far more complicated than just re-cutting the chamber as you would for a bolt action, as the whole rhythm of the operating cycle can be changed, possibly setting up stresses not found in the original article. The smaller the calibre the greater the problem and the development of both the ML16 and the SA80 encountered similar problems, particularly when changing powders.

You will also meet other alterations to de-militarise the rifle, such as the removal of muzzle rings for grenade launching and bayonet lugs.

But the continent can be a happy hunting ground for the purchaser; how easy it is to bring your firearm home will depend on the category, the attitude of the local Préfet and the French dealer, and the co-operation of your constabulary. For example some I believe are quite happy for the foreign dealer to complete the sales details quoting his authority on your FAC just as if he was in the UK.

But do keep an eye on the calibres; some are not what they seem; 30-06 and .303 are often shortened versions so the military cartridge does not fit, and usually, but not always, followed by a "c" for "court", French for short. Other popular conversions are 30-284 Win for .30 calibres and 8-348 Win or 8x64 S for 8mm.

For a good look at the continental scene, the catalogue of Frankonia from Ensisheim near Mulhouse is a wonderful read, but have your hanky handy; some of the prices will bring tears to your eyes! But the quality is high, so black powder accessories, hard to get spares, and add on sights can be a good buy. Some historic

military items like cleaning kits and slings can be had for less than a tenner. The catalogue is often on sale at Newsagents in France for around €6, or you can get it from the Frankonia website.

If anyone is considering going to France or other continental countries to shoot, do not hesitate. With a European Firearms Pass all that is required is an invitation from the organiser or host, and if you require any help with local laws or French, I can always help.

Local laws can surprise; for example my favourite trap is do you know that in Holland all ammunition components, even empty cases, require a licence? So search the car for the empty that rolled under the seat before you go on that shopping trip!

Lastly, to return to the first item, good luck and best wishes to David and Tricia in the new job; if they have half the support and enjoyment I have had during the past years, they are in for a wonderful time.

F Class

by Paul Monaghan

F Class at the Imperial Meeting 2008

Entry numbers for both F Open and issued ammunition F Class this year did not show an increase over last year, which was a bit of a disappointment. There is no doubt that the success of the F Class League means that there are several F Class competitions over the summer vying for shooters' attention, also the Imperial Meeting is a bit daunting if you have never entered. This year was a complete test of the F Class shooter and his rifle and a more detailed report is on pages 53 and 53 of this Journal. In the F Open class David Kent won the Grand Aggregate for the second year running, which is quite an achievement, and Nick Hinchliffe won the issued ammunition F Class category. Scores were down this year reflecting the really tricky wind conditions during the first few days of the meeting - that small V bull seems really elusive on days when the wind is tricky. David Kent was 17 points down on his 2007 total (760 vs 777) and Nick Hinchliffe was 42 points down on Jim Scobie's score in 2007 (611 vs 653).

FCWC 2009

Entry forms and support information are now on the web and this has been well received by overseas competitors. There is certainly more guidance for entrants than in previous FCWCs and credit must go to Mik Maksimovic and Martin Farnan for preparing the documents. The full ICFRA rules for FCWC 2009 are soon to be available on the ICFRA website at www.icfra.com.

Over the years, travelling with firearms and ammunition has become more and more difficult.

We plan to offer international teams a dedicated volunteer liaison person from the F Class community, to help with basic logistics, especially once they arrive in the UK.

Although the rules were finalised only during 2007, it is becoming clear that F/TR or F restricted or whatever you call it, is growing fast. There were no plans to have an international team event for F restricted but there has been sufficient interest for a competition to be scheduled for teams of four. This will not be a full ICFRA event, but run as an NRA GB competition; a trophy will be provided. There is international agreement and support for this introduction. Following FCWC 2009 it may be that the F restricted international team competition becomes an ICFRA event.

Just to prevent any confusion, the rules for F restricted in the FCWC in 2009 are:

- An F Class restricted rifle is limited to .223 Remington or .308 Winchester calibre chambers.
- Chamber dimensions must conform to SAAMI or CIP dimensions.
- Ammunition may be commercially made or hand-loaded as defined in Rule F1.21 (F1.23 with these additions).
- There is no restriction on bullet weight.
- The restricted rifle class is limited to the use of an attached bipod or sling or both as front supports, optionally together with a rear bag which provides no positive mechanical means of returning the rifle to its precise point of aim for the next shot.
- The overall weight must not exceed 8.25kg including all attachments (such as, but not limited to, its sights and bipod, if any). Note: An attachment is defined as including any external object (other than the competitor, his sling (if any) and his apparel) which recoils (or partially recoils) with the rifle, or which is clamped, magnetically or viscously held, or in any other way joined to the rifle for each shot.

All other technical rules apply.

Proposed rule change for the Imperial Meeting 2009

There may be F Class shooters for the FCWC who may wish to acclimatise themselves by shooting part or all of the Imperial Meeting. The problem is that they will be using hand-loaded ammunition and therefore it is proposed to change the rules for issued ammunition F Class to allow hand-loaded ammunition. Other rules will remain as for 2008. Whether this rule change stays in force in following years will be a matter for the F Class community to decide after the World Championships.

REGIONAL MATTERS

South-West Region Champion of Champions

Could all club secretaries of clubs in the South-West region please forward the names of their club champions for 2008 to the South-West Regional Representative, Peter Coley, for entry in the heat for the Champion of Champions. Closing date for nominations is 28 February 2009. Peter can be contacted by e-mail at southwest@nra.org.uk or by post c/o the NRA.

Cadets shoot for Gloucestershire

Following their successes in the V Club Long Range Match prior to the 2008 ISCRM, and repeating their 2007 victory, Gloucestershire ACF had several members shooting in the Imperial Meeting. Their impressive results led to selection for Gloucestershire teams in the County Short Range Senior match and also the County Long Range match.

Callum Livingstone, who was the highest individual scorer in the V Club event with 97.11 at 900 and 1000 yards, was also the highest scorer in the Gloucestershire team at long range with 95.8. Jake Turley who had been in the victorious Gloucestershire ACF team scored 92.3 for the county and thus contributed to an average score across the team of 47 per shooter per distance.

What was also notable was that all shooting members of the Gloucestershire County long range team were either current or immediate past members of cadet organisations. This is a good sign for the future of Gloucestershire shooting when a number of young shooters are earning themselves places in the county team.

Furthermore, in the County Short Range Senior Match half of the Gloucestershire team were from the ranks of cadets or were immediate past members. The number taking part, and shooting well, in the Imperial Meeting this year made it possible for the County Captain to pick a completely different long range team from the short range team thus giving the maximum opportunity for introducing these young shooters to county competition.

Certainly their contributions enabled Gloucestershire to achieve county team placings as high as any in recent years and the County Association hopes that cadet shooting will prosper in the future!

John Deane

County Captain

Richardson Lodge, Bisley Camp

Tel: 07525 333023

E-mail: jrdeane@netcomuk.co.uk



Back Row from left: Cpl Jake Turley (18), Arthur Clarke, SI Natalie Berry (25), Cpl Callum Livingstone (17)
Front Row from left: Sgt Shaun Fahy (18) and Sgt Sebastian Altus

GLoucestershire GOING FOR GOLD

The Gloucestershire Army Cadet Force B Team was triumphant yet again winning the National V-Bull Club Shield for the second year running. The Competition consisted of two shoots at 900yards with the team scoring 373 out of 400 points. The team Cpl Jake Turley (18) from Stroud, Cpl Callum Livingstone (17) from Dursley, Sgt Shaun Fahy (18) from Stonehouse and Sgt Sebastian Altus (17) from Stroud were ecstatic to win again, with Callum Livingstone winning Top Individual with 97 out of 100 points. The team coach SI Natalie Berry from Cheltenham commented 'They were amazing especially as the last time they shot at this distance was at this competition last year when they won the shield for the first time. I'm very

proud of them'. Arthur Clarke who designed the new Lynx Sights on the Cadet Target Rifle presented the gold medals and team shield to the team and coach, was very impressed not only by the score but by the team work put in by all members.

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CLASSIC RIFLE TAKES STARRING ROLE IN FILM

Britain's core infantry weapon for two World Wars, the Lee Enfield rifle, is the subject of a unique specialist DVD that aims to be a new reference point for enthusiasts.

The DVD, which took 15 years to research and two years to produce, has been put together by a three-strong team which make up Tommy Atkins Media.

Led by Larry Clarke-Smith, the 100-minute DVD has been filmed by cameraman Brendan Taylor and produced by Roger Ordish.

It gives a fascinating insight into the bolt action rifle that was one of the finest battle weapons ever produced.

Reliable, robust and providing a 10-shot magazine when most of its European contemporaries could only provide five, the rifle was first produced in 1895 and was used by various armies right up until the first Gulf War.

The DVD features Martin Farnan, Director of Shooting with the National Rifle Association, and well known rifle expert John Hutchins; it has been made in full consultation with the National Rifle Association and with Peter Laidler of the Infantry Weapons Collection, HQ Land Warfare Centre, Warminster.

In addition to the history of the rifle, there are comments on its predecessors and derivatives. Experts fire and comment on the SMLE (Short Magazine Lee Enfield) and there are scenes featured that have never, or very rarely, been seen before.

These include:

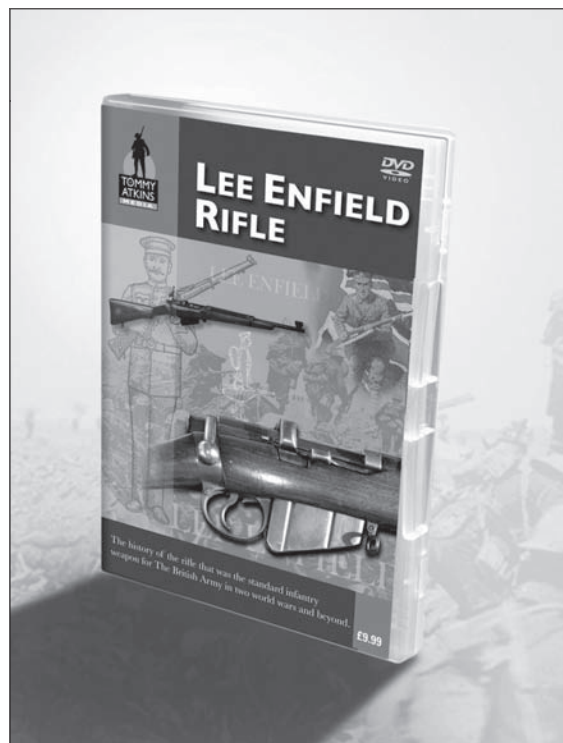
- The first Lee Enfield 1895 model
- A Lee Enfield found at Saddam Hussein's palace
- A Turkish production Mauser barrel with a Lee Enfield bolt action
- A hyperscope – an accessory that enabled the soldier to fire his rifle without putting his head above the parapet
- Rifles found off the coast of Dunkirk after years in the sea

It explains how the quality of the earliest war version of the SMLE enabled British troops to hold their own despite being heavily outnumbered by Germans and how in 1944 it was adapted to produce a lighter and smaller version so that it would be easier for troops to carry in the heat of the jungle.

Larry said: "The Lee Enfield rifle has fascinated me because it is British and it was a core weapon that has been in action for such a long time. There has never been another rifle like it. This DVD is a reference point that has been put together not by us, but by experts in their field. I'm delighted that we have already had a lot of interest in it, not just in Britain, but also abroad including as far afield as Australia."

Tommy Atkins Media is now working on the next two DVDs that will be available shortly - 'Sten Gun & Other Submachine Guns' and 'Bren Gun & Other Light Machine Guns'.

The Lee Enfield Rifle is available for sale at £9.99 plus £1.95 p&p worldwide and can be ordered through www.tommyatkinsmedia.co.uk or by phone 07983 955490.



Tommy Atkins Media Ltd, PO Box 201, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 9AR.

AMMUNITION FOR USE IN THE 2009 IMPERIAL MEETING

by Iain Robertson, Chairman TR Sub-Committee

Throughout 2008, NSC staff and your representatives on the Shooting Committee have been investigating possible alternate sources of supply of ammunition for use in the Target Rifle events of the Imperial Meeting. Significant progress has been made, and we are close to a decision.

Considerations of security of supply and reliability of delivery have led to sources outside Western Europe being discounted. Evaluation has thus concentrated on Western European commercial suppliers of 155 grain 7.62 target ammunition. These are HPS, Lapua, RG and RUAG, a large Swiss conglomerate owning well-known brands such as RWS and Norma. Practical evaluation has consisted of test firing at short range from the NRA test rig, comparative evaluation at Bisley under the direction of the TR Sub-Committee, use of RUAG ammunition by all participants in the European Long Range Championships and use of HPS ammunition by all participants in the NRA Ages Match.

The comparative evaluation involved four competent shooters firing a test group of ten rounds of each brand of ammunition from a target rifle at each of 300 and 600 yards. Resource constraints prevented long range testing at this time. External variables were minimised as far as possible, and the shooters did not know which brand they were firing at any time (loading was done for them, so they never had a close look at the ammunition). The paper target centre was changed for each group, and analysis was simply a matter of laying out all the test groups in a suitable pattern on the floor and making a visual comparison. The best performance, by a small but noticeable margin, came from the ammunition provided by RUAG. There was little to choose between the products from HPS and Lapua. All three were noticeably better than RG, except that one shooter, using a much older barrel than the others, produced his best result using RG. This evaluation effectively eliminated RG from consideration. Additionally, Lapua ammunition is significantly more expensive than the other brands, and would have had to have shown a very large performance advantage to be seriously considered further.

The products from RUAG and HPS are similar. Both use the Sierra Palma 155gr bullet. Both use high quality cases – RWS manufactured at the assembly plant for RUAG, and MEN bought in for HPS. HPS use commercially-available powder, while RUAG make their own powder and have several to choose from. In order to seek out possible incompatibilities with as wide a range of rifles as possible, arrangements were made to fire the two brands in a significant competition.

RUAG ammunition was used in the European Long Range Championship, shot by Home International teams at distances of 800, 900 and 1000 yards. It was quite clear from the recovered score diagrams that the ammunition was entirely satisfactory at 800 and 900 yards, but showed significant enlargement of groups in most rifles at 1000 yards. RUAG are in the process of reconfiguring their powder load to increase muzzle velocity and thus improve long range performance.

HPS ammunition was used in the Ages Match, shot by selected teams, including many international competitors, at distances of 300 to 1000 yards. Short range performance was satisfactory. The performance at 1000 yards showed enlarged groups in some rifles.

Although the testing has not been scientifically rigorous (we can't afford the time or resources to work through all the variables), all the indications are that RUAG ammunition does chamber in a wide range of rifles used by Association members, does not generate excessive pressure, and may give superior results in most conditions when compared with possible alternatives. HPS ammunition is of course well-known to many of us. It showed marginally poorer performance in comparative tests at short range, but did not lose performance as badly at 1000 yards.

The TR Sub-Committee is in the process of organising further trials firing, at 300 and 1000 yards, for the weekend 6 and 7 December. It is hoped that a decision for 2009 will be taken at the Council meeting on 12 December. Thereafter, we will continue working to develop a set of specific, measurable and achievable criteria for supply of ammunition in the longer term.

THE AMSTEIN MEMORIAL TROPHY

Unfortunately the Amstein Memorial Trophy has gone missing. It is a silver salver and was last won by the Surrey team in 2007.

If you know where this trophy might be please contact Karen Robertson by e-mail on karen@nra.org.uk or telephone 01483 797777 ext 146 or by post at the NRA and she will pass on your information to the match organisers.

A small photo is shown on the right to give you an idea of the trophy's shape although we apologise for the poor quality of the photo.



NATSS – A PERSONAL VIEW

by Charles F Young

As a shooter who lives far away from Bisley, though a Life Member with over 50 years of TR shooting under my belt, I and many like me who cannot shoot frequently (or at all) at Bisley usually try to keep our heads out of the politics of the NRA. I believe it is better that those most affected are enabled to effect the decisions that most determine the future destiny of the NRA. Sadly, from what I have seen recently, this gift may be being stolen from under the Members' noses. The simple fact is this – the NRA belongs to (as in is owned by) the members 'for the time being'. No-one else, neither individual nor body, has any right to set about interfering with the ownership of the NRA, without first seeking and obtaining a clear mandate from the members so to do. Sadly, it appears that a few individuals have come to the conclusion that they know best what is good for the members and appear to have set in motion a train of events which will, if unchecked, lead to the outright amalgamation of the NRA, NSRA and CPSA under one body, headed by (presumably) those driving this project and with a self-declared objective of compelling all "target shooters" to have to join and subscribe, as a pre-condition to participation in their sports.

So, how did this all come to pass? In fact, that is not proving easy to establish and getting meaningful information has been like sucking blood from a block of granite. Basically, we are all too simple and don't deserve to be told. We are to tug our forelocks and let this clique of self-appointed power-grabbers hijack our Association and amalgamate it with two others, with them gaining control of the new body, presumably at higher salaries than they get now. Well now, I for one am not entirely happy about this.

I suggest all those with internet access set about the NRA and NSRA websites, download all NATSS documents as soon as possible and study them very carefully. Try to read between the lines, as much of it is double-speak. Then, read this article again. You may be less critical of me the second time around and, indeed, you may even come to share some of my thinking.

It is indicative of the ignorance and naivety of some of the NATSS proponents that there was ever any start to the process. I mean, most of us probably know full well that there are good reasons for NRA, NSRA and CPSA existing as independent bodies. There is no natural reason why they should be amalgamated, any more than it's a good idea to amalgamate Lawn Tennis, Badminton and Squash. They all use rackets and we shooters all use guns. So what? Indeed, when NATSS toured the countryside spreading its message, "amalgamation" was never mentioned as such. It was all just about feeding in the propaganda the so-called benefits of "Common Vision, Common

Voice". But, we shooters have always had those. There are numerous bodies past and present that we can all turn to, to present a common front and we do. But, in recent correspondence between myself and Mr John Perry (who withdrew from writing to me and who handed over to Mr John Jackman), eventually it was blurted out that the basic objective was indeed outright amalgamation. By 10 September 2008 my e-mails were sufficiently searching that Mr Jackman wrote *"In conclusion, I do not offer to and shall not correspond with you further on this matter, but questions on the statements made in the Performance Matters bulletins and the Steering Group Press Releases will be answered by the Steering Group through John Perry, either direct or in future published bulletins."* In other words, "Stop asking difficult questions - we'll tell you what we think you need to know, when we think you need to know it." Disgusting.

Now, you may ask, "What is 'Performance Matters' and who is Mr John Perry? Find out. Google both and see what you come up with.

First, start by asking this: **"Who and on what authority from within the NRA, invited consultants to set about an agenda that wipes out the NRA, NSRA and CPSA and sets up a new amalgamated body?"** The people who did this should stand up and be counted. There should be a list of their names available to us all. After all, we own the NRA and these people have no authority to try to negotiate it out of our ownership without our prior consent.

Second, Mr Jackman told me that *"All three main National Governing Bodies (CPSA, NRA and NSRA) contribute towards John Perry's salary"*. Really? Even if that is true and it may not quite be, are we are being asked to pay for the salary of our executioner? What else is the NRA paying for? Did you spot that £150,000 is being spent on the consultant's fees? Wow that's the price of a nice club range somewhere.

Drip drip drip . . . is the process by which this insidious campaign is being pressed. I urge all NRA members to read all the NATSS propaganda, the so-called newsletters. Ask yourselves if you were given a chance to have your say. Consider the August Update, which slips in the little gem of an objective *"A Working Party of the NATSS Steering Group was facilitated by Performance Matters in the same month to consider the full implications of a one-member, one fee membership scheme where all shooters join one National Governing Body. Performance Matters feel strongly that this approach will allow target shooting to generate significantly higher levels of membership income, which will allow it to achieve more of those objectives you set for us at the recent Regional workshops."*

And there we have the basic ambition of this proposed new body, a one member, one fee membership scheme where all shooters join one National Governing Body. In other words, if you want to shoot fullbore, small-bore or clay target, you must join the new body and pay. It is patently clear that this is an attempt to put into effect an ambition expressed by one of the founders to compel all those involved in target shooting to pay towards this new body, the NATSS or successor, probably making individual participation conditional on that payment. Remember what they said "... *this approach will allow target shooting to generate significantly higher levels of membership income*". Now ask, who is going to pay these significantly higher levels of membership income? Surely, should not one of the benefits of amalgamation be efficiency, leading to members paying less? Lower fees would mean more members. That's a fact and we should not forget that at least 90% of members of NRA affiliated clubs are not individual members of the NRA. Is there an ambition to compel them all to join up to this new body and pay for it? Why would any club shooter in some far-away area, who never shoots at Bisley, want to pay another fee, basically for no benefit? What for? In two words, 'they won't'.

So, I have a message for "Performance Matters". You have NO idea what you are talking about! In my opinion, it won't happen. Compulsion to pay for yet another governing body, two-thirds of whose activities are nothing to do with us, is not on the list of probables and if attempts are made to force it, then large numbers of shooters will go away, seek other ways to take part, become independent and shoot on. Or as happened in 1988/9 in the NSRA when targetry was radically changed, a lot of folk didn't like it and simply decided they'd had enough and quit. Well now, we all know we cannot afford to let anything like that happen to us.

What the proposers of this grandiose scheme seem to have forgotten (or never knew in the first place) is that the NRA, the NSRA and the CPSA were founded and evolved for perfectly good reasons, just as gorillas, chimpanzees and orang-utans evolved separately for perfectly good reasons; thus, even though all are recognisably primates, any attempt to amalgamate them would be doomed to fail. Evolution should never be disregarded. We survive because we are fit to survive. The NRA, NSRA and CPSA have passed the "fitness test" of evolution - so far. Our sole objective should be to do what it takes to maintain the survivals of our three distinct species, not to create some unnatural mutant monster.

Now then, I am certainly not saying all is well in these three bodies - far from it. I have little enough information about the finances of the NSRA and CPSA but I do know it is very much easier for both of those to create shooting venues for their members than it is for the NRA and fullbore. We all have different things

to worry about and to work on. That is why we have evolved as we currently are. Why should I have any say in the affairs of the CPSA, or their members in the affairs of the NRA? Why should the financially sound NRA amalgamate with any less-sound bodies? It would be close to immoral.

Though I consider myself to be a dyed-in-the-wool fullbore rifle shooter first and foremost, I reckon to shoot more 12 bore cartridges in a year than fullbore rifle cartridges on ranges and at least 50 times as many .22LRs through my small-bore target rifle, in the various small-bore leagues I take part in, so don't let anyone accuse me of being a narrow-minded fullbore snob or bigot. In fact, just treat me as an old shooter, with a great fondness for the NRA - despite its terrible failings and mistakes over the decades. I see the NRA less as an Association, more as an Institution. And by the way, what is the NRA an "Association" of anyway? Consider that.

Now look at the NRA website and read very carefully the "Aims, Objectives and Strategy of the NRA" passed by NRA Council on 15 December 2005.

1 AIM and OBJECTIVES

- a) The National Rifle Association (NRA) aims to become, or become part of, the governing body for the sport of all lawful target shooting throughout the United Kingdom.

2 STRATEGIES

In furtherance of these objectives the NRA will:

- b) Strive to reach agreement with the NSRA and CPSA for the creation of a single National governing body for all lawful forms of target shooting.

Did you know that as long ago as that there were people plotting the amalgamation of the NRA, NSRA and CPSA and all without the members ever being allowed to have their say in the matter? I didn't then but I certainly do now and I don't like it.

I don't like what is being done; I don't like how it is being done; I don't like who is doing it; I don't like the employment of ignorant self-styled external experts to determine the future of my sport; I don't like being misled and talked down to, especially by people who have no history of involvement in my sport. So, as I see it, the current creeping and insidious introduction of this amalgamation ambition has nothing to commend itself to me. No-one has yet demonstrated any benefit that isn't already able to be achieved by existing bodies speaking for all shooting disciplines (there are so many ...) and no-one has been able to point out any actual benefit. All it would achieve would be to prevent choice. Join the new body or don't shoot. That's their ambition. Is it yours? Oh yes and there would be an Emperor in overall charge of a small board *"It should have a small, competency based Board led by someone*

of appropriate stature and experience (not necessarily from shooting)." Now then, I wonder who has his eye on that job? No prizes.

It's our NRA and it's about time we were all consulted in detail about these proposals, given full and truthful information (not least about the finances of the NSRA and CPSA) and given plenty of opportunity to consider and discuss the whole thing. The future of our NRA and our sport is at stake, no less and the sooner the wrong people stop monkeying about with my NRA, the better.

Monkeys are brighter than many give them credit for

Reply from Glynn Alger, NRA Secretary General

The reason why the National Rifle Association with others are considering a potential merger is because in many ways it seems to make sense.

When you look at the environment in which we exist we tend to blame the Government for all our ills. The reality is that because the sport in the UK is so disparate there is no single voice speaking to the authorities, in consequence the messages are mixed and carry little weight.

Shooters for years have reasoned that the sport needs to act as one with many quoting the example of the NRA of America.

NATSS has not attempted to proceed without considering the views of the members. The NRA held its own survey of members 18 months ago and found that of those who replied 95% were in favour of forming a single national body. Since then we have had the benefit of surveys and forums run by Performance Matters on the sport's behalf which have indicated wide support for creating a merged body.

Despite these positive indications, the Associations have not rushed things preferring to make sure that a merger is feasible in structural and financial terms, while ensuring it is an organisation the members will support. To this end any proposals will need to get past the 'Boards' first before being taken to the members for a simple vote. Basically we will not see the creation of a single national body unless the proposal is attractive enough to gain mass support from the members of each of the three organisations. Even then we are likely to see the formation of an interim body, consisting of a Trustee board below which sit the three Shooting Councils who will ensure it is business as usual. Any further move towards a closer merger would only take place if it is feasible and achievable.

If we did come together and began to speak with a single voice we would have the potential for the first time to deliver the types of service that many shooters

want of a good national body, in that it represents their interests with the politicians and presents itself properly to the wider public and media. In this way for the first time we have a real chance to protect our sport. We might also be doing something that gives shooters a reason to join. Past evidence indicates if we cannot achieve this our sport and hobby will be incrementally dismantled and over time outlawed.

Since we have entered upon this process we have seen some notable successes:

- On more than one occasion the joint bodies have been mentioned in positive terms in Parliament.
- We have been recognised as an appropriate body to receive consideration for Government sports funding.
- We are able more easily to speak to politicians who will support our cause.

I believe if it is achievable it would be a benefit to the sport to create an organisation that:

- Protects our sport
- Makes it easier to get into the sport
- Seeks to broaden the appeal of shooting
- Creates and draws down enough funding to promote and support the sport nationally

This idea is so simple I hope a monkey would see the sense in supporting it.

Onwards and Upwards

.....

THANK YOU

The winning Great Britain Palma Team are delighted to have received the support of Bartlein Barrels and Ron Hilyard - the barrels being used to great success by some team members in the World Championships.



EUROPEAN BENCHREST CHAMPIONSHIPS – UMEA, SWEDEN

“LAISSEZ LA POUDRE POUR PARLER!”

The World Benchrest Championships are held every two years and, in between, we have the ‘Europeans’. There are twenty-odd countries in Europe but of course, they don’t all shoot benchrest so we usually end up with a dozen or so countries represented.

Unlike the ‘Worlds’, each country may send just one four-man team but individuals may also compete to become Champion of Europe and this year about 50 Scandinavians descended on Umea to take the numbers up to just over 80 shooters. Why so many Scandinavians? Well obviously access to the shoot is easy for them but the lack of ‘long’ shooting ranges means that there are few shooting competitions available to them. Yes, there are ‘running moose’ shoots and the like but benchrest is really the only ‘world’ discipline on offer. Military ranges are not available to civilian shooters.

Our UKBRA GB team was made up of two shooters from Diggle and two from Bisley. Umea is on Sweden’s east coast and only a couple of hundred miles below the Arctic Circle, so although it is located in a very pleasant scenic area, it is not so easy to get to from the UK. Two of us opted to drive and the Bisley half of the team went by air. However, there is no direct flight to Umea, so even this is not an easy option and involves hiring a car and driving the final 300 miles from Stockholm.

The problem of flying with firearms is even worse for benchresters who need mountains of reloading equipment plus heavy front-rests and back-bags stuffed with sand. Fortunately, we were able to transport the heavy stuff in the car and this included essential wind flags, which are bulky and awkward to take by air. Powder and primers can’t be taken on aircraft of course so it’s a case of buying them at the shoot if no-one drives there.

After a pleasant, if boring, sail from Newcastle to Bergen in Norway, we were faced with an 800 miles drive. There are no motorways in Scandinavia and most of the roads are what we would class as B roads, so we allowed three days. However, we easily covered over 400 miles in the first day so decided to make a small detour – via the Arctic Circle! I have toured Norway twice before and a visit to the Arctic has always been one of my ambitions. It was a great experience and in addition to some spectacular scenery we were able to see moose and reindeer in their natural habitat.

Umea is a stylish university town and the GB team were billeted in the Botnia Hotel with several other teams including the French and Spanish. The Botnia is part of the Best Western chain and is right on the banks of the large river that bisects the city. The tariff

included a free breakfast and evening meal – both help yourself style; you can imagine, we didn’t go hungry! Alcohol is another matter however and a bottle of beer costs a cool £5.00!

The Brattvaals benchrest range was built specially for the 2003 World Championships and is equipped with 28 very solid concrete benches, all under cover. Marquees were provided for reloading and cleaning. The lady from the farm, on which the range is situated, kept us well fed throughout the competition.

As always, the Championships open with two days of practice so that shooters can get used to the peculiar winds and fine-tune loads. The range is built in a cleared part of a dense forest and the surrounding trees greatly influence wind conditions; careful wind flag positioning is crucial, particularly at 200 metres.

The last Europeans were held in Spain in 2006 and the UK team came home with the bronze medal, so that was our objective for this year. As a benchrest nation, the UK is tiny compared to France, Germany, Italy and the Scandinavian countries. Our bronze was a real achievement. This year, the Russians sent a team and they should never be under-estimated, even though the discipline is relatively new to them.

Although we are primarily there to compete, the real pleasure of these events is renewing old acquaintances, making new friends, swapping yarns and taking a look at the latest accuracy gizmos sported by other nations. Many of the shooters were at the World Championships in Austria last year and we will no doubt meet up again at the next Europeans, also to be held in Austria in 2010.

Major benchrest competitions are staged over two distances – 100 and 200 metres - using two rifles – Light and Heavy Varmint. The Light Varmint rifles have an all-up weight of 10.5lbs and the Heavy, 13.5lbs. Thirty years ago, the heavy class rifles would certainly have an advantage, but with the advent of light-weight actions and stocks made from graphite or carbon-fibre, we can still use very heavy barrels on the light rifles. In reality, there is no difference in accuracy and 90% of shooters use the same gun in both classes. A handful use another rifle or maybe switch to a longer barrel, others may add weight to the butt, which makes the rifle ride the bags a little better.

Benchrest is all about group-shooting and a typical match involves a warm-up group and then five, 5-shot groups to count. A shooter’s groups are then added together and divided by five to give the average or ‘Agg’ as it is known. We then end up with a Light Varmint Agg and a Heavy Varmint Agg for the two distances and a Grand Agg for the whole shooting

match to determine the European Champion. Team scores are calculated by adding up the aggs of each team member.

Twenty-five of the 28 benches were used and, over the course of four days, each competitor moves to a different bench for each group to ensure that there is no bias. You do however shoot next to the same person for the whole period and I was fortunate to have the current European Champion, Frenchman Jean-Louis Espinet as my shooting buddy. Jean-Louis is affectionately known in international benchrest circles as the 'Pig Man' and shoots in a pink cap complete with ears and tail!

It's the middle of July and we are 200 miles below the Arctic Circle, the sky is a clear blue and temperatures are in the high seventies. Back in England, the Open Golf Championship is underway at Birkdale near Southport and it's cold and wet. How can this be? One evening, we cycled into Umea on the hotel bikes. The city was teeming with locals enjoying a drink or evening meal outdoors. At eleven o'clock it's still daylight - it never goes properly dark at this time of the year.

After two days of practice in idyllic conditions, the competition gets underway with the 100m Light Varmint Match but soon comes to a halt when someone shoots the electric motor which drives the moving backers – not once, but four times! At the dinner on the final evening, a Swedish shooter is presented with a piece of metal from the motor-casing – complete with his four shot-holes!

Jean-Louis is in good form in our first encounter but I manage to match him and we are both in the top three vying for the win – until I dollop with a half-inch group which plummets me down to eighth place. Jean-Louis keeps it together and goes on to victory. My eighth place is however the top GB placing.

On day two, I actually manage to beat the Pig Man but can only manage 21st place. The best GB performance falls to Bisley's Steve Newman, again with eighth place. The GB team is now lying in fifth place in the overall standings.

On day three, the targets are moved back to 200m. This is where it gets serious. At 100m, quarter-inch groups are the norm but at 200m it's not difficult to shoot a two-inch group – if the wind catches you out! And yes, the wind is tricky - never really wild but prone to sudden switches and this can do more damage than a strong wind in one direction. It's critical to watch the flags and not pull the trigger at the wrong time. Only seven minutes are allowed to shoot your group and after four or five sighters, half of that will have elapsed. If you are waiting for a condition to return and it doesn't, there is no alternative but to aim-off – a risky strategy which can easily go wrong.

I can manage no better than 33rd place but this is still four places better than the Pig Man so I don't feel too bad. Bisley's Kevin Phipps is the top Brit with a magnificent seventh place and small 7mm group as well. This group will not be beaten at 200m and is equal to one-eighth MOA!

We can now get the first of the aggs – for Light Varmint at 100/200m. I'm surprised by my 13th place after such a poor showing at 200m. Obviously a lot of others shot much worse. Kevin and Steve are in 29th and 30th place.

We have to be on range for 08:00 each day, which means getting up at 06:00 and the strain is beginning to tell! It's the final day and we are five millimetres behind the Fins for the bronze medal position – surely too much to catch up. In the final 200m Heavy Varmint Match, some relays are shot in heavy rain – the first we have seen all week and there are some horrendous groups.

The Pig Man looks across at me just before we start our competition and pronounces "Laissez la poudre pour parler!" and informs me that these words (let the powder speak) were uttered by a French general on the final morning of a particularly bloody battle with the English!

Kevin Phipps is again the top GB shooter with 17th place. I can manage no better than 20th and the Pig Man comes in tenth. My Heavy Varmint Agg is a respectable 14th however and my Grand Agg for the whole competition gives me a satisfying 12th place. Not bad against the whole of Europe. The other Brits were 25th (Steve Newman), 30th (Kevin Phipps) and 49th (Martin Miles).

The overall winner, and the new European Benchrest Champion is Igor Zhukov of Russia. Igor's final agg was just 0.288 MOA for his total of twenty groups fired. Unfortunately, Russia didn't figure in the team result – one of their team was disqualified on day one for shooting after the cease fire command – regarded as a safety violation and he and another Russian team member went home at the end of day three after a lacklustre shoot!

Sweden won the Team Shoot and Great Britain finished fourth in the end, missing out on the bronze medal by just half a millimetre to Finland!

Yes, I managed to beat the Pig Man, who finished in 27th place but it was of little consolation as he looked down on me from the podium as a silver medal was hung around his neck as part of the second place French Team.

Finally, if you want to try benchrest, get along to Diggle or Bisley - a full calendar of shoots can be found on the UK Benchrest website at www.ukbra.co.uk

EUROPEAN BENCHREST CHAMPIONSHIPS



Steve Newman put his new Stolle rifle to good use with a fine eighth place at 100 metres.



My shooting buddy the Pig Man; Jean-Louis Espinet studies the appropriately named 'wailing wall' where targets are hung after being measured.



This is where you spend most time at a benchrest competition – in the reloading tent.



GB Team member Martin Miles gets in some serious practice.



Kevin Phipps receives his 200 metres 'small group' medal from Herve du Plessis, President of the European Benchrest Shooting Federation.



The GB Team – from left, Vince Bottomley, Steve Newman, Kevin Phipps & Martin Miles.

UPDATE FROM BRIGITTE RUSHMORE, MARKETING DIRECTOR, NSC

Well, I did say I wanted a challenge!

Since producing the Marketing Plan for the NSC Board in May which set out strategies to increase revenue from corporate events, sponsorship, and hiring out Bisley's facilities, who would have believed that our economy would have been shaken to its core?

We know now that the fallout from the volatile world economy has had very far-reaching outcomes. In particular, it has made all businesses, both large and small, consider and re-consider any monies that they may have had available to spend on corporate entertaining and sponsorships. So it's more important than ever to make sure that all our marketing efforts are measured to check their effectiveness.

We have now put together a number of sponsorship packages, specifically for the NRA 2009 Open Days and the 2009 Phoenix Meeting. These are both high profile events and as such attract excellent media coverage. Packages range from £100 to £1500 and offer sponsors a range of great benefits offering them the opportunity to see a real return on their investment.

Over the past six months we have carried out a huge number of activities as part of the Marketing Plan to promote the NSC as a unique venue for team building and corporate events. These have ranged from building databases of companies to whom we can post

and e-mail information; inserts, adverts and editorial in key magazines; and taking stands at business-to-business exhibitions.

Slowly but surely bookings are resulting from these activities and, indeed, in troubled times, marketing activity will continue to play a vital role in promoting the NSC.

Currently, we are allocated 40 Guest Days by the Home Office which we use for corporate events. Each time these are used by companies for corporate and team-building events, it's an opportunity for the NSC to promote target rifle and pistol shooting to a wider audience. Increasingly, guests are seeing what an exciting and competitive sport shooting can be and it provides us with a great chance to promote membership of the NRA.

In order to continue this very effective way of promoting shooting to non-shooters, we are applying to the Home Office to increase the number of Guest Days for 2009. We hope they will see that we take our responsibilities very seriously and that we are also very serious about promoting shooting as a sport for all.

If you would like to book a corporate event, or would like details on the sponsorship packages, please contact me on 01483 798816 or e-mail Brigitte@nra.org.uk



offers a **unique shooting** experience for corporate events where you can . . .

- **build effective team relationships**
- **entertain clients**
- **reward staff**

Guests can try their hand at shooting:

| |
|--|
| Target Rifle |
| Clay Target Gallery Rifle |
| Running Deer or Boar Black Powder Pistol |

Packages start from as little at £47 per person exc VAT, and better still we can offer **discounts to NRA members*** for events held during

December, January and February:

6 - 11 people **£50 discount**

12 - 19 people **£75 discount**

20+ people **£100 discount**

Contact Brigitte Rushmore, Marketing Director, on 01483 798816
or e-mail Brigitte@nra.org.uk for further details

*The discount is applied to the total booking and is not available for the clay target shooting package. The discount voucher may be redeemed against any NRA/NSC product or service.

TERRITORIAL ARMY SKILL AT ARMS MEETING

The Third Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (3 PWRR), the South East's only Territorial Army Infantry Battalion whose HQ is based in Canterbury, have upheld its reputation as the country's premier TA marksmanship unit at the annual Skill at Arms Meeting (TASAM). The 3 PWRR 'Tigers' shooting team retained the unit championship title from 2007 and won a host of other team trophies and individual medals. In addition, Private Nick Simmons of HQ Company won the prestigious Queen's Medal as the competition's overall top shot.

Held at Bisley and Pirbright Ranges in Surrey, TASAM is the most important competition in the TA shooting calendar with over 40 team trophies and individual medals up for contention. The eight-strong shooting teams took part in up to 13 different team and individual shoots with rifles, pistols and machine-guns over the three days of competition. The team's shooting skills were tested to the full against 200 of the country's top shots from the Territorial Army and its team members were drawn from each of the Battalion's five companies across the south east including Canterbury, Rochester, Farnham, Brighton and Portsmouth.

Private Simmons, 27, from Marden who has been in the TA for 10 years, not only took away the prestigious Queen's Medal but also won the the TA Rifle Association's (TARA) Gold Jewel, the Civil Service Rifles Cup and the Yorkshire Volunteers Cup as well as a couple of silver medals.

Four of the team members – Corporal Dominic Virjee of C Company in Rochester, Lance Corporal Oliver Soord-Gurney and Private Kyle Bond of D Company in Portsmouth, and Private Natascha Litherland of A Company in Farnham – all achieved a high enough individual score to become members of the elite TA50 for the first time – the top fifty shots in the 33,500-strong Territorial Army. The TA50 Medal

was presented to each soldier in the TA50 with those entering the illustrious hall of fame for a second or subsequent time, receiving a date bar for their medal. All eight members of the 3 PWRR team plus its two reserves were allowed to shoot as individuals and qualified for the TA50 this year making up 20% of this year's privileged members.

The 3 PWRR team was also crowned winners of the Wessex Regiment Cup (for snap shooting), the Falling Plates Competition and the Simpson Challenge Cup (Parachute Regular Cup) and took home silver in the Pistol Team Match, the Yorkshire Volunteers Cup, the Mullens Trophy, the TARA Trophy, the Rifle Team Match, the Daily Telegraph Cup, the Quartet Cup, the Pistol Match, the Volongdis, the China Cup and the Section Match. Five other individual awards went to Private Barry of A Company based in Farnham and Private Bond of D Company based in Portsmouth. Five members of the team (along with three firers from 7 RIFLES) were chosen to represent 4th Division in the later Divisional Match which they won.

Team Captain Staff Sergeant John Chapman said, "We are delighted with our performance at this year's TASAM, in particular with Private Simmons winning the coveted Queen's Medal as well as the team retaining the unit championship title. With so many awards this year, it just goes to show the depth of skill we have at 3 PWRR. Shooting is a core skill every soldier must have and we look forward to next year with confidence."

The trophies were presented by Commander Regional Forces Lieutenant General Nick Parker.

Major Peter Cottrell, previously captain of the 3 PWRR shooting team, and who is now fulfilling a commitment with the Regular Army on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS), compounded the TASAM result the following week by winning the Regular Army Queen's Medal: a double victory for 'The Tigers'.



Private Nick Simmons being carried by his colleagues, as is tradition, having won his Queen's Medal.



The triumphant 3 PWRR Shooting Team with trophies.

SCENES FROM THE SCHOOLS MEETING

Photos by Alan Keating, Bruce Roth and Colin Scoles.



SCHOOLS' MEETING 2008

by Soupie

The Schools' Meeting started on the Sunday with an afternoon of administration. Rifles had to be stored in the Armoury with forms and tags and discs to sort out. Next came the collection of the envelopes with Phyllis Farnan - calm as ever as shooting coaches had forgotten entries or changed nominal roles. Many teams were based over at Pirbright but the sentries were expecting the rabble of CCFs, after the rather military ACF and ATC units had left, so all went smoothly.

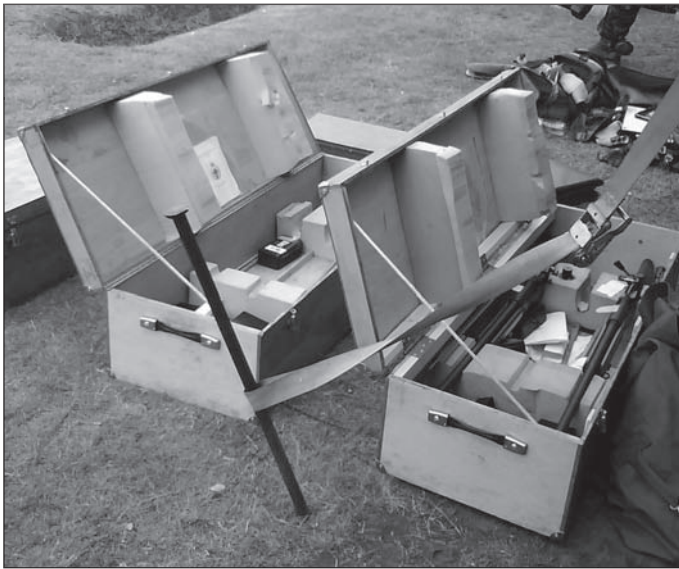
The shooting started on Monday with many teams getting out the new sights for the first time. There was twice the time at 300 yards to get some zeros and sort out the basic organisation needed. It was pleasing to see the ranges so full; there were over 50 schools involved in the CTR competitions but sadly there were less than a dozen schools in the GP competitions. Campbell College beat Oratory in the Marling with Ampleforth a close third. The Oratory put two teams into the Schools' Snapshooting (as did Sedbergh) and won both Gold and Silver medals. U/O P Inwood won the Marlborough Cup (Oratory again) but it was good to see Sgt Pocock of St John's and Sgt C Brook of Sedbergh joint second. The Financial Times was won by Sgt A Coupland (Oratory) with Sgt K Hohenberg (Oratory) in second and Sgt G Ogden (Sedbergh) in third. The day got hotter and hotter out on Century as the CTR teams moved back to 500 and 600 yards. The highlight of the day was 'Dangerous' Dave of the Army Air Corps (TA) driving his ammo truck into a ditch. He tried to persuade some cadets to help him out but their officers decided it wasn't a wise idea and so he had to find the range-rigging crew to get them to tow him out. The Cadet Monday Aggregate showed that the Canadian Cadets could shoot the CTR which would make the Rex Goddard an interesting match. The Surrey Rifle Association decided to put on some evening entertainment for the cadets and so advertised a Quiz Night. I don't think they quite expected it to be the success that it turned out to be with over two hundred cadets competing. Since the committee took over the running of the club after the problems of last summer the Surrey has become one big success story and deservedly so.

Tuesday looked to be just as hot a day with many schools doing a little too much shooting as the scores did not show much improvement on the previous day. The Wellington, Iveagh and Victoria competitions were spread over the two days yet there were not as many possibles as one might have expected. WO2 D Purcell from Stamford won the Tuesday Aggregate with a 102.12. One memorable aspect of the day was the attempts by the shooting coaches to push the rules to the limit. First of all it was the 'sniper' jacket that never was. One school had sewn DPM padding to their jackets (as if that would make any real difference) but the Range Officers were looking for service issue sniper

jackets which could have been issued by their CCFs but they didn't know what they looked like. Schools that had been issued with them realised quickly how useless a baggy sniper jacket would have been and so did not use them. Next saw one school have to replace all the sights that had not been issued but were absolutely identical to the issued one (so how did the well known Scottish Range Officer notice?). Then came a complaint from a well-known shooting school about the jackets being used by the school next to them. They had a neat fold to make them less baggy but that alerted the Range Officers to the jackets used by the school that complained. Their jackets had been so heavily tailored that the epaulettes were almost behind the neck of the shooter and a clear line of stitching could be seen where the material had been removed from the shoulders. Tony Clayton was his usual diplomatic self and made sure the drama didn't turn into a crisis. Tony has been Chief Range Officer for many years now and was himself a schoolmaster (his team won the Ashburton due to his expert coaching) so knows the tricks of the trade.

Wednesday saw the teams start to gain confidence and the scores started to improve. Cdt R Johnson of Gresham's narrowly missed out on the Wednesday Aggregate on V bulls. It is good to see Gresham's really competing in this competition and their coach Freddie Grounds deserves congratulations for this. The Rex Goddard Stage I was shot in the morning and the Canadians won by eleven points. Three of the Canadians scored possibles with the CTR yet the Athelings didn't manage one. The scores were 777.62 against 766.45. The wind became trickier as the day went on and by the evening the results of the three distances were known. U/O P Inwood of the Oratory School won the Wellington after an exciting tie shoot. The Iveagh was won by Sgt M Choquette of the Canadian Cadets (and so got to fire the cannon). The Victoria Tankard was won by PO M Creber of Elizabeth College after a tie shoot against WO2 D Purcell of Stamford. It was interesting to see all the various things that the shooting coaches have devised over the years to make their jobs easier. The Oratory have their 'coffins' to make sure their rifles don't get knocked around and there are the usual rifle racks to store the rifles on the range. The whole of Century range looked like a tented village with all the gazeboes that had been put up to keep the sun and the rain off the equipment (and the cadets?).

In the evenings there were several smaller competitions for the cadets to have a go at. The Canadians enjoyed the Gallery Rifle competition with Sgt D Adams winning by six points against his team mate WO Rogowski. In the team match St John's beat Tonbridge by only eight points. Winchester College put in two teams with their RAF team beating their Army team



The Oratory Coffins!

(quite normal in shooting). There was a Clay match which was won by C Emmens of the Canadian Cadets with Cpl G Dench of Langley School second and Cpl J Parker of Winchester third. The Air Pistol matches also had a reasonable entry with JCpl D Rowell of Exeter School beating off the very close competition from Wells Cathedral School who won the team match.

Thursday started with the Scottish schools marching on. This time the piper was Fraser Stewart of Dollar Academy. There was a little rain but nothing that was going to cause anyone any real problems. There were twenty four shooters in the Reserve competition which ended in a tie shoot with two cadets on 48.3. This was resolved 24 to 23 with Cpl Rivett-Carnac the eventual winner. The morning saw shooting at 300 and 600 yards so that there would not only be more space for the many parents and friends who came to support after lunch but also for the Schools Veterans to shoot their match at 500 yards. In the end that match was by far the closest affair of the day with the Old Epsomians and the Old Wellingtonians tied on points and V bulls which required a count-back of all five team members' last and second last shots to put the OEs ahead. The Green Howards Country Life competition is for the highest scoring team at 500 yards and it was won by just one point by Cheltenham College with Dollar second. There were Pairs and Fours (Closed and Open) as well as the team of eight competitions to shoot for. Dollar Academy won the pairs by a clear five points over Elizabeth College. The Closed Fours is for a team not entering the Ashburton and it was pleasing to see Charterhouse winning. Elizabeth College beat Wellington College in the Open Fours by eleven points. The last few years have seen little change at the top end of the results for the Ashburton but this year Marlborough were missing from the top few places as they had lost nearly every one of last year's VIII. The scores were separated by quite a large margin with the winners, Epsom College, on 790, Dollar in second on 779 and Oratory in third on 766. Cheltenham were next on 756 and then things settled down a bit with

the scores being all within a few points of each other. The shooting did not stop when the last shot of the Ashburton was over for there was the Spencer-Mellish to shoot. The conditions were getting tricky and it looked like it was to start raining again. Mitchell of The Oratory showed everyone how to shoot with a superb 50.4. His nearest rivals were five shooters with 48 so he had won by quite a margin.

Next we had the awarding of the Schools' Hundred badges and the Prizegiving along with many schools getting their rifles ready to hand back to DSG. With so many competitions going on, which school can confidently say it is the best shooting school? Well there is the School's Aggregate and Cadet Champion at Arms that puts all the big competitions together and the winner there was very clear. The Oratory School won with a score of 1414 with Campbell College second on 1326 and Ampleforth third on 1267. The top two places in the Cadet Champion at Arms were from Oratory with Sgt G Ogden a close third.

There were forty-two schools on the prize list with several big names from the past missing - Eton, Harrow, Sevenoaks and Bradfield didn't enter and Charterhouse were unable to raise an eight but brought a winning fours team. The reason for the schools not entering is simple . . . the competition is far too far into the Schools' holidays. Most schools have broken up by 1 July and, as the competition doesn't have to be tied in to the Imperial Meeting, why not move it earlier. I was told the reason is to try and keep the cadets coming to the Imperial Meeting but those who want to shoot that will do so anyway.

Postscript from the Director of Shooting

Not quite true as the Schools Meeting does not have to be tied in to the Imperial Meeting - however it does have to be tied into CENTSAM. Ammunition (including storage and delivery), Milforce accommodation, messing and many other services are all part of the military support package which is included in CENTSAM.



The Ashburton and Pairs results board.

MATCH RIFLE 2008

by Colin Hayes

The HME emergency over the winter, resolved by the NRA just in time for the start of the new season, led many of us to approach this year's Hopton with considerable misgivings. After all, we had seen our sport come close to being ruled out of court. Would the new zeroing requirements for all of us generating 4500J or more create havoc with the programme on the first morning? Would random interventions and testing take place through the Imperial Meeting, leading to disqualifications, or even to a cease-fire? We need not have worried so much. All those who had to zero in accordance with the new rules clearly had done so either on the Friday or first thing on Saturday. In the event the Whitehead started on time and the entire Meeting progressed as though there had never been a cloud in the sky. For that, and for all those people who had made it possible, we must be profoundly grateful.

The weather smiled on us too, giving no hint of the shocking non-summer that was to come. It was cool and gusty on the Friday before the Hopton began, and bone-sappingly cold for the Whitehead on the Saturday morning; but thereafter a mild Atlantic airstream set in, the wind from the left for almost the whole Meeting; it warmed up, there was only a brief shower or two, and we were never too hot for comfort. With refurbished firing-points, good squadding and excellent marking, all this made for a happy Meeting.

The Any Rifle Extras on the Friday provided the usual practice, not that it was of much value to those of us who shot at 1200 yards in a gusting 15-minute wind. LouLou Brister showed her mettle early on with a possible at 1000; Rob Lygoe won 1100 with 74; and Mike Baillie-Hamilton won 1200 with 72. However, Angus McLeod's consistency over the three distances won him the Aggregate with 218.

So to the Hopton on that chilly Saturday morning, cold enough to make a mess of some people's elevations. The tigers were quickly into their stride, Mike Baillie-Hamilton taking the Whitehead with 149.18 on Vs from Dave Calvert and Nick Tremlett; Paul Monahan, Julian Peck and a few others just behind on 148. Had we known it at the time, this top echelon was to remain almost unchanged throughout the Hopton and the rest of us could have gone home, but for the love of our sport and the not-so-small matter of entry fees. The Halford was Paul Monaghan's turn with 145.18 from Nick Hinchliffe's 144 and Mike Baillie-Hamilton's 143. Paul won the Saturday Aggregate to top the leader-board with 293; but Mike Baillie-Hamilton and Nick Tremlett were only a point behind. Nick's V-count was lower than those of his main rivals, but the bulls were squeezing in, another pattern that was not to change.

Come Sunday and the Cottesloe in bright and gentle conditions, an event where the leaders hope not to drop more than a point or two, but many others have a chance of making the ton. John Pugsley's 100.16 was good enough to edge out Ted Hobbs by a single V; David Hossack, shooting in his first Hopton, made a fine 99.15 to come third. The Wimbledon, shot in similar but slightly trickier conditions, threw up a most popular winner in the person of Wilf Wright, one of two Aussies who had come to Bisley as individual competitors. Wilf's 97.13 was good enough to steal this lovely trophy on Vs from a bunch of other 97s, and helped him on his way to a very solid top-twenty finish in the Hopton. But it was business as usual in the Armourers; Nick Tremlett got his paws on some silver at last with a brilliant 99.11, just ahead of a fine Irish 98 from Mike Wentges, with Mike Baillie-Hamilton hanging in there on 97. Paul Monaghan's 92 and John Pugsley's 91 lost them valuable ground, and this was the point at which the Hopton order was effectively settled. Sunday night saw Nick already four points clear of Mike, with Paul a further three behind.

The Edge can often be a make-or-break event with 200 points to shoot for at 1100 and 1200 yards, but nothing much changed this time. The wind was tricky again at 1200, but Nick Tremlett's 192.20 edged out Paul Monaghan on 191.22 and Will Meldrum on 191.19, while Mike B-H lost a bit of ground with 189.19. Thus Nick went into the Albert on Tuesday with a seven-point cushion over Mike and eight points over Paul. Mindful no doubt of his near-calamity in the Albert last year, Nick dug in and shot an excellent 219.29; he must have been trying hard because his V-count was the best for the first and only time! It wasn't quite good enough to win this blue-riband event with its magnificent rose-bowl; Mike Baillie-Hamilton triumphed with a splendid 220.26, and the evergreen John Knight came home third with the best of the 218s.

Congratulations therefore to Nick for back-to-back Hopton victories, making four in total. His 997.108 was just shy of the magic 1000 (which he alone has achieved), six points clear of Mike's dogged 991.114, and twelve ahead of Paul's 985.111. The V-count is too close for me to labour the point any further! Julian Peck came fourth and John Pugsley fifth. The top twenty, a theoretical (but only theoretical) indicator for the Elcho, contained nine English, five Scots, three Welsh, two Irish, and one Aussie. Nick won most of the Aggregates too, of course; but Rob Lygoe dropped only a point at 1000 yards to win the Councillors, and Hamish Hunter's accounting skills secured the Weekend Selection. Mr J Robbins won the Ogden and the valuable Tyro prize, and MJ Spencer won the Henry Mellish for under-25s.

In other events a Sussex team of the usual four 'dark horses' shot a blinder to win the FW Jones by no fewer than sixteen points. The Five Nations was sadly reduced to four once again, as our Normandy friends could no longer raise the numbers. The criteria for team-selection will need to be reviewed: is this a 'fun event' where we give non-Elcho shooters a chance to represent their country, or do we go for broke? LouLou was in no doubt; she entered half her Elcho team and Wales duly won! In the Pairs, a formidable duo of Jim McAllister and Will Meldrum made 196 to win by eight points; and Jim followed up in the Any Rifle 1200 yards with a stunning 100.17.

So to the Elcho. These days this is hardly the leisurely affair of plus-twos and strawberries that some would have you believe. It is a long haul of unrelenting hard work. The match is now anyone's, the winning margin usually in single figures around a total of 1700. No sighting shots are allowed. Atmospherics enter the equation. Calculations of wind and elevation are lengthy. The tension is extraordinary, the premium on every shot acute for both coaches and shooters - especially on those first shots by each shooter at each distance when you know that even a magpie can lose the match. At 1200 yards on a summer afternoon the Stickledown wind is often fickle. Tactics enter the equation too: do we wait, in the hope of a calmer patch, or crack on?

This year's match was a classic. Scotland got away to a flier at 1000 yards with two possibles from their first pair, but gremlins soon struck in the shape of a crossfire and some loose bedding, costing at least a dozen points. Ireland shot best and led England by a point, with Wales and then Scotland seemingly already out of it. At 1100 Ireland and England matched each other shot for shot with Ireland the better on Vs; but Scotland fought back hard, won the distance handsomely and reduced their deficit to single figures. Wales lost ground. Going into 1200 yards Ireland still led by a point plus six Vs, with Scotland nine points behind England. Typically, the wind was a bitch, with innumerable small but very rapid shifts in strength and angle. Scotland's coaches were on form, and after the first pairs down, had reduced their deficit to five. Game on. Again Ireland and England went shot for shot, and again the gremlins struck Scotland with a second clear target, effectively killing their challenge. Despite that, they won this distance too, whilst Wales, too late, shot a stonker as well. Everyone finished before England, leaving them to win or lose the match. A brilliant rapid-fire 74 from John Pugsley put them on terms. Nick Tremlett in his first year as Captain, was last down. Neither he nor his coaches knew that he needed a 70 to win. He dropped five in his first ten. But cometh the hour, cometh the man. The rest went in and England, despite not winning any of the distances, took the shield on the last shot by a single

point. Of such drama is the Elcho made, and may it always be so.

| | 1000x | 1100x | 1200x | Total |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| England | 585.65 | 560.40 | 547.31 | 1692.136 |
| Ireland | 586.65 | 560.46 | 545.29 | 1691.140 |
| Scotland | 570.55 | 566.39 | 547.35 | 1683.129 |
| Wales | 571.59 | 540.35 | 544.42 | 1655.136 |

Top scores for each country:

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------|--------|
| Mike Baillie-Hamilton | Scotland | 220.23 |
| Pete Campbell | Ireland | 219.23 |
| John Pugsley | England | 218.25 |
| LouLou Brister | Wales | 216.24 |

The Humphry was a repetition in miniature of the Elcho. Thanks to Oxford's resurgence this is now a quality event, not least because each side recruits a coaching set-up that would grace the Woomera Match. After 1100 yards Cambridge led by two, Rosanne Furniss having shone for Cambridge with 75.13 at 1000 yards. At 1200 Cambridge were scrambling, but Oxford's last man down - a backgunner using Galilean sights - missed with his first two to count. Presuming a mechanical breakdown (it was later found that his six-hole peep had fractionally slipped!), he switched to a front-gun he had never used before and made a heroic 60. It was just not enough and Cambridge, like England before them, won by a point. The students' combined score of 1671.144 would have defeated at least one of the Elcho teams. Another finish of high drama, it concluded a Meeting of wonderful sport.

| | 1000x | 1100x | 1200x | Total |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Cambridge | 291.38 | 286.25 | 259.11 | 836.74 |
| Oxford | 285.29 | 290.29 | 260.12 | 835.70 |

Top scores:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|--------|
| Rosanne Furniss | Cambridge | 215.24 |
| Cai Marshall | Oxford | 211.22 |



Phew! Nick Tremlett - a happy captain.



Hopefully Nigel Ball remembered to remove the scope before winning the Grand.



Impoverished student Gaz Morris couldn't afford a razor before coaching Cambridge University in the FW Jones.



The Elcho Captains draw for targets.



Serious Elcho preparation for John Knight and Paul Monaghan!



It's OK Nick you only need to get your last seven shots in . . .



. . . and there's only most of Bisley watching you do it!



Second by a single point but still happy - the Ireland team.



The victorious England team. (Photos: Alan Keating and John Knight)

TARGET RIFLE

The Daily Jottings of Tony de Launay

We are back again, the full team (that is to say my journalistic colleague T Rex, whoever he or she may be, and myself) assembled in the command centre agog with expectation and bursting with enthusiasm, to bring you the day by day account of the Target Rifle part of the 139th Imperial Meeting

Friday 18 July

Well it was a funny old day, not like summer at all, overcast attempts at mizzle (a cross between mist and drizzle if you had not worked that out), and altogether uninspiring in the feel of it. A little brightness came into it at midday when I was shown a message from New Zealand. A lady who emigrated there after many early years of being taken to Bisley by her parents (not that I think there was any real link between emigration and being subjected to association with some of the denizens of the Common) said how reading the online diary brought back all the happy memories. So Nicola, many thanks for your kind words and I shall just keep plugging along.

As the squirrels were having their early morning cough in the oak tree above the command centre, determined and hardy souls were shaking off the excesses of the Veterans' many reunions of the night before and joining together in the Astor Trophy match. The result was a stunning victory by our friends in the North, the City of Newcastle Rifle Club. I know that this will have brought real and deserved delight to Keith Pugh and his colleagues. They were two points ahead of OGRE (Old Greshams etc) with Huddersfield third.

Filtering through during the day came the news that Old Epsomians had won the Veterans' First and Third team matches the previous evening, but the Second teams had gone to Old Malvernians. That did not stop Epsom winning the aggregate and the Lucas.

Today for individual distraction we had the Hutton (900 yards) and the Century, shot in reverse order 600 and 500 yards. The winds had been from the left front all day, relatively steady but with the usual hole or Bisley puff. Six or so minutes at 900, they were less strong at 600 than they seemed to be at 500. All I discovered was that I am sure my zero is wrong. I had the privilege of being on the 7pm detail of the Century 500 yards when sane people would normally be thinking of "chercher le diner". It was OK to start with as the clouds moved higher and the mizzle moved away but about 15 minutes into the shoot it all got rather dark as evening elbowed late daylight out of the way.

And for our added distraction Farnborough produced the Red Arrows low and out of the clouds and a frightening beast in the form of an American B1 - or

so someone said. An RAF shooter confirmed that to the best of his belief it was not a Spitfire. It was a very noisy, very mean and very purposeful machine that shook the kidneys as it turned up the wick over Stickledown.

Overseas shooters took the first three places in the Admiral Hutton (900 yards). Top of the 49 scores of 50 was Canadian Jim Paton with a not quite pluperfect 50.9. His supporting cast consisted of James Corbett and Rob Sandlant from Australia each with 50.8, James finishing with seven centrals to four from Rob. The Century produced 34 scores of 100 in breezes that suggested that it should have been less likely: credit to the shooters. The Friday Agg had seven scores of 150 with Devon vet John Pugsley the best (23v), followed by Steve Penrose (Stock Exchange) on 22 and James Watson (Uppingham Vets) on 21.

Saturday 19 July

And now for Saturday's weather. As 8.30 and the first details of the day approached it started to rain in quite a spiteful way, driving up the ranges from front left and into faces and barrels, borne on a stiff (approaching ferocious) wind. It was not a nice welcome to the firing point for the early birds. The first detail got hammered by the stuff. Thereafter it stopped and the rest of the day was sunny in patches and a strong driving wind from 1 around to 3 o'clock. It played havoc with scores in all the competitions. The 10 shot Donegall produced 34 scores of 50 in the morning compared with 127 last year, a measure of the difference in conditions.

Horror stories abounded from the Lovell (1000 yards). I was feeling quite smug with only one point lost after the first five shots. That turned into a further nine lost in the next five including a visit to the right hand extremity for a hit value 1 as the wind zipped from 9 left on my gun to a required 16. I had given it an extra two left because the strength had upped but it was the sudden turn in direction across the range that did for me and everyone else caught in the aim at the same moment.

It was up and down and back and forth in split seconds. It was the same down on Century for the opening of the Grand Aggregate, the Telegraph Challenge Cup. The owners of scores of 72 or more were looking a little smug. There were indeed some maximum 75s in the Telegraph, won by David Armstrong of Old Guildfordians with 75.10. He was followed by Lindsey Peden of NLRC on 75.9 and David Calvert of the RAFTRC (inspired no doubt by the restored Avro Vulcan in what might be its last flying display if further funds are not found to keep it airworthy) with 75.8.

Over on the Stickledown hill, where both Vulcan and B1 scorched the grass with their low passes towards Farnborough, the Lovell was passed into safe Australian hands with a 49.6 from Mark Buchanan. Peter Jory of Guernsey on 49.5 and Chris Heales of OGRE on 49.4 followed him home. Calvert (173.20) annexed the Saturday Aggregate by two points from Richard Benest of Jersey (171.19) and Nigel Ball the ex-sailor (170.22).

Sunday 20 July

Awake to the sounds of the wind trying to blow all the leaves off the oak tree. Down on the firing points the target number pegs looked vulnerable to a North Westerly blustering straight up the range; a real eyewaterer. And it was shifting either side of the flag poles, and it was very cold.

None of this boded well for the day and that was soon made apparent when the scores started to be compared in the gunrooms. Tales of woe and disbelief as magpies nested in many score diagrams. At 600 yards in the Alexandra 45 was greeted with relief by many. Despite that there were some details that might just be said to have had it not easy but a touch easier than others. That will always be the case, but not everyone at the top of the lists comes from the easier details.

Five scores of 50.7 tied for the Alexandra: Greg Perron (Canada), Ross McQuillan (Ulster), Paul Charlton (Stock Exchange), Simon Shouler (Langar) and Richard MacMillan (East of Scotland). The tie went to Simon Shouler with a 25.4, one V ahead of Paul Charlton. There were just 12 scores of 50 altogether. It is pointless comparing these with last year because the conditions are so different.

Back on Stickledown, entertained by the passing flying from Farnborough again during the day, the Duke of Cambridge struggled on. Six minute changes were recorded as the headwinds flicked left and right. There were peaks and troughs as the day progressed but none of it was easy. Eventually 12 scores of 50 were made with Paul Kent (Old Epsomians) and John Pugsley (Exonia & Tiverton) tied on 50.8, the tie going to Paul.

Finally, the Daily Mail showed 20 scores of 75 with an outright winner in the form of Tim Clarke (Central Bankers) with 13 Vs followed by Keith Trowbridge (RAFTRC) and Nigel Ball (Stock Exchange) with 12 and 10 Vs respectively. It is not being unkind to anyone to record the fact that the wind did die down for the later details but then the light was not brilliant in the early evening either. Anyway I have no idea who was in which detail among the clever 20.

I am not going to go into any great detail of the aggregates, but Ross McQuillan won the Sunday, David Calvert the Weekend and Nick Mace of Guernsey the Clementi Smith. What may interest

you more was the state of the Grand. There David Armstrong (246.29) was just 4 Vs ahead of Nick Mace. Sarah Jane Binder was third (245.30) with McQuillan fourth 4 Vs behind her, and Lucy Mace fifth one more V behind him. Six scores of 244 followed to complete the first eleven places.

Monday 21 July

First the weather. The day dawned cold and clear. In fact the cold was noticeable during the night, but dawn brought a few high clouds and then a relatively clear sky of summer blue. It also brought the next instalment of the battering head-on fish-tail wind that had caused everyone so much trouble. The Times did not escape the icy North-West blast and there were ever more improbable tales of the corrected wind needed to escape the magpie that flew into the scorebook during their stay at 300 yards. The angle was fine on either side of the flag post, punctuated by some sudden surges and swings back and forth. Common yelps of a five minute change or more from left to right or back again were heard.

Nevertheless it was down to Simon Shouler again to show everyone the way home with the only 50.10 on the range, the first time for a long time that I can remember an outright winner. A fine performance in very difficult conditions, with an unbreakable tie for second place between Adam Jory of Guernsey and Scotland's Sarah Rennie (recently returned from Australia). Both of them slipped their last shot into the ordinary bullseye to miss out on a tie-shoot.

The wind persisted all day but seemed to be a little calmer later as a glorious evening approached.

In the Corporation: the other half of the Shouler duo, Richard (Langar) won with the only 49 on the range, albeit a touch sparing in the V department (3). Matt Charlton (Old Guildfordians) with 48.5 and Jon Cload (Surrey RA) 48.4 followed. The "last X in" tumbled to 46.2 and Tyros needed 42.2. Quite a demolition job by the elements, with the qualifying hit for the Donaldson Memorial final being 133.5.

It was great to see Tracy Fitzsimons (Manchester) heading the prize list in the Wimbledon with 50.8. Well deserved. The nearest next bests were Richard Vary (NLRC) on 50.6 and Chris Watson (Uppingham Vets) on 50.5.

Richard Shouler (146.11), Bill Baker (the Australian - ATSC - 145.10) and Nick Mace (Guernsey - 144.16) headed the Monday Agg, but the Grand threw up some changes. Nick Mace led by an enormous three points with 390.41 (49 Times, 49 Wim, 46 Corp). David Calvert (RAFTRC, 49, 48, 46) followed. Nigel Ball and Bill Baker were on 387.46 and 386.35 respectively, Jane Messer on 385.34 and five others on 384 something. It was more spread in the top ten than for some time. You know what? All that wind was rather fun in an odd sort of way.



The Corporation gets underway.

(Photo: Alan Keating)



"Who needs petrol?" - Nick Hinchliffe and John Webster find a great way to beat the credit crunch!

(Photo: Tony de Launay)



Size isn't everything!

(Photo: Alan Keating)



The Canadian Cadets having a great time.

(Photo: Alan Keating)



Mick Silver looks rather happy with the results of the Inter-Services.

(Photo: Mike Gregory)



Health and Safety rule



"No-one ever tells me anything!" - the Chairman of the Shooting Committee tries in vain to find out what's going on.

(Photo: Alan Keating)



Ammunition issuing wasn't the most exciting job.

(Photo: Alan Keating)



Assistant Century CR his energy levels.



number 35648278(b).
(Photo: Colin Scoles)



A very popular young lady!
(Photo: Tony de Launay)



Simon Shouler - winner of the Times.

(Photo: Tony de Launay)



"So we meet again!" Nigel Ball and Glyn Barnett after yet another tie shoot!
(Photo: Tony de Launay)



"Oh come on I'm not that bad a coach!" - Brian Cudby wonders where the rest of his team has gone.
(Photo: Alan Keating)



The Gurkhas put on several displays - at least we hope this one was a display!
(Photo: Alan Keating)



O Peter Turner boosts
(Photo: Alan Keating)



Butt Oil?! No we don't know either . . .
(Photo: Chris Hoyle)



Gresham's School dress up for the Parting Shot.
(Photo: Colin Scoles)

Tuesday 22 July

What a difference a day makes. It was double duvet cold again last night but we awoke to blue skies with very high puffs of cloud like grubby cotton wool. But the main change was the gentleness of the light breeze. It still headed up the range, it was warmer and it still switched from side to side.

The St George's First Stage was the only item on the card, fifteen shots at the unforgiving 300 yards bullseye. The wind played cat and mouse with infinite subtlety, now agreeing with the mirage and now not. At times it seemed that when the two did agree the carry was in the opposite direction. Baffling. A total of 31 firers managed 75 with Nigel Ball and Glyn Barnett tied on 75.12, subsequently decided in favour of Barnett. This was one of five tie shoots to occupy the pair during the Meeting. Ed Wood was third, counting out a very fine first ever possible by tyro Louise Rylands, 19, a student from Bristol University and member of Manchester Rifle Club. She beat father Tom hands down.

All this meant no change to the order at the top of the Grand. David Calvert pulled back one point on Nick Mace who held his lead but with a two point margin. Ball, Baker, Wilde and Messer followed - like a firm of solicitors. Seven points covered the top ten with three matches to go and 230 points at stake. The test now was not perhaps of who could tune their skills and luck in outrageous winds, but rather of holding it all together as the pressure built. It made for an engaging finish.

Wednesday 23 July

We had a much more inviting menu to contemplate today, which would lead us to the last shoot in the Grand Aggregate and would also decide the 300 to shoot in the second stage of the Queen's Prize. But first the weather.

Almost everyone today was awarded the DFC, that is to say the dead flat calm. At 8am nothing stirred under a grey and static sky. It became an oppressive overcast, leaden and humid with the sun breaking through in patches as the day wore on. Towards afternoon the sky became a little clearer with a gentle fishtail air current from behind the shooters. When it was overcast and hot it was humid and horrid, depending of course on your tolerance levels.

If ever there was a morning for making a possible at 900 yards in the Conan Doyle this was it and 97 were included in the list. For the fourth time in this meeting Messrs Glyn Barnett and Nigel Ball shot off together with the result going again to Barnett.

Down on Century the Queen's Prize got underway. This was a new lot of ammunition numbered 156 if my records are correct. It has been difficult to make any direct comparison with last year's batches because of the very difficult conditions this year, but the St

George's cut was 72 in much more equable conditions than Monday and earlier. There were many reports of unexplained odd shots in Queen's I although, as will always happen, the shooters on real form seemed to pass these oddities by.

Three tied for the Queen's First Stage: Toby Raincock of Old Epsomians, defending winner James Lewis of ATSC, and Tracy Fitzsimons of Manchester all on 105.16. Raincock took the tie. The cut for a place in the Second Stage 300 was 102.7 finishing 33.3 at 600 yards. Mace held on to his Grand lead of two points ahead of Ball.

Every so often we reach a personal landmark that means a great deal to us. One such landmark was reached by Carol Painting of the Pumas Rifle Club, who celebrated her 50th consecutive appearance in the First Stage of the Queen's Prize. She qualified for the Second Stage with 104 and eventually also for the Final. Many congratulations to her.

Thursday 24 July

The story was of course the final knockings of the Grand Aggregate. You will recall, dear reader, that Nick Mace of Guernsey held a two points lead over Nigel Ball (the sailor turned tax adviser) at the end of Wednesday's events. In fact the lead was worth just one point because of Ball's superior V count. If Nick was to lose a point he was OK; two points and he was not, if you see what I mean. David Calvert lurked just behind, and it was he that got the early 08:00 detail in the Prince of Wales, not that it made a great deal of difference as it turned out. The wind continued to drizzle in from behind the shooters flicking left and right as the mood took it and as the day warmed up swiftly it was all rather hard work.

Calvert dropped one point to finish 690.73. Both Ball and Mace were squadded on the 11:50 detail, the last of the event and on which your scribe squatted as well. It was nasty in that it was very hot, the light was changing and the winds kept up their indecisive swinging back and forth. You had to work hard. At one point I recorded a switch from 1 left to 3 right, and even then it resulted in a down wind wart, just out at 9 o'clock.

Ball scored 74.10: Mace unluckily hit 72.7. That was it. The top three each had 690 with Ball on 91 centrals, Mace on 80 and Calvert 73. A somewhat pink Ball was overjoyed and for once temporarily tongue tied. Mace took defeat with great good presence and grace. As they say, unhelpfully, stuff happens. Jane Messer (687.76) was ahead of Andrew Wilde (685.82) and David Luckman (685.74) to complete the first half-dozen. The top As were Bill Baker (ATSC) and Lucy Mace, spouse of the runner up.

In the National Match that afternoon, England had a substantial win over the other home nations with Nick Brasier (England) and David Calvert (Ireland)

recording the only 105s on the range. It just showed how difficult that wind had been.

Friday 25 July

The weather forecast had us believe that it might deteriorate in the afternoon but that was not the case. It remained hot, humid and sunny throughout and we arrived at one of those lovely Bisley evenings when it is enough to sit out in the rays of the waning sun and simply watch the world go by. Ah, such limited aspirations.

Kolapore and Junior Kolapore in the morning: GB did not by any manner of means have it all their own way. They, Canada and Jersey were level pegging after 300 yards on six off, in the winds that had persisted for the last four days, from over the heels and away down the range towards the butts. At 500 yards Jersey again matched the GB score of 391 but with fewer centrals while Canada conceded four points on 387.

No doubt a stiff talking to was administered by the languid Steve Thomas to his GB team because they pulled themselves together in the tricky winds to post another 394 at 600 for 1179.154. Jersey faded with the result that they and Canada finished level on 1172, Canada taking the place on centrals. A good close fought battle.

We moved on to the Second Stage of the St George's. Of the four 150s Glyn Barnett was the best by two centrals from Mike Black from Newcastle and Mike Fugeman of Windsor (17) with Zainal Abidin Md Zain of Malaysia fourth (16). The cut for the last place was 146.18 with the final two places going to J Green (ATRC) and Angelika Uhlig of BDMP Germany.

And so to the Second Stage of the Queens Prize - hot dusty and windy. The cut was 146.18, leaving six people to shoot for the 100th place. There were nine scores of 150 of which the top three were Zainal of Malaysia with 24 centrals, Gray Robertson of Wurgabup (Australia) on 23, and Reg Roberts of Horsham on 21.

As previously mentioned, Glyn Barnett and Nigel Ball had been having their own private tie shoot battle, four in all. In the evening Nigel managed to redress the balance in one of the contests, the Gurkha Appeal, by 25.5 to 25.4. However, Ball fans should look away now. Barnett v Ball (Conan Doyle - Barnett; Monday Aggregate - Barnett; St George's I - Barnett; Gurkha Appeal - Ball).

Saturday 26 July

It was a blistering hot day, humid again with a fickle wind heading up the ranges, flicking left and right and sometimes veering to three o'clock and strengthening considerably.

First the St George's, where Glyn Barnett headed the pair of 150s, by three central bullseyes from Andrew Tompson of Wellingburians. Sedgemoor's Andy

Luckman upheld the family name with 149.21 to take third ahead of six others. That gave Barnett all three stages of the match - a unique achievement!

The Mackinnon had the English in a real pickle, finishing the 900 yards element no less than five points behind Scotland and two behind Ireland. Was this to be the upset that the Celtic fringe and others have been working for? Simon Belither, like the languid Thomas in the Kolapore, must have roasted his charges in the interval: no sweet biscuits and bananas at half-time. Gird your loins and pull up your socks, there is a match to be won. If he did say that then clearly it worked with the English pulling back all five points to level the score and win with an uncomfortably small cushion of 9 central bullseyes - by the skin of their teeth. That is how matches should be fought. Commiserations to the Scots but a notable English recovery.

And so to the Queen's Prize Final. Nine scores of 150 were carried forward, the best with 24 centrals by Zainal of Malaysia. The afternoon presented with a gentle headwind that seemed initially predominant from the left. However, it was moving a bit and required some careful attention. That is what it got, from a lot of competitors. The board after 900 was rather crowded at the top with Rob Sandlant of Australia leading on 224.31. Zainal, David Luckman, Andrew Le Cheminant and Chris Watson were one central behind with a block of others on 223.

During the break the wind suddenly switched and increased dramatically, to come from three o'clock, but as the final range started it subsided to settle between one and two o'clock. Gradually the board turned over the top runners. At one moment Zainal, then Gray Robertson, David Luckman, Mark Buchanan, David Richards of Old Marlburians, and others cycled through as the wind started to snatch points away in the long trail home to the fifteenth shot.

The forecast then settled. Zainal had finished on 294 with 36 centrals. Nine others joined him at that points total but behind on centrals. Only Jane Messer had yet to finish; her points dropped remained obstinately at three off as her final string crept towards the fifteenth. At around her tenth and thirteenth the winds seemed to pitch a series of curve balls at her (an American expression I believe that indicates a nasty swirling deceiver) and she dropped two more points. Her last two shots were taken consecutively because her partner had finished, having converted his sighters. Her fourteenth was a central, poising her on five off compared to Zainal's six, but with two fewer centrals than Zainal. Her last shot had to be a bullseye to go one point better and take Her Majesty's Prize. To tie on points with an inner would not be enough.

She fired, flicked back a stray strand of hair and looked through her scope. It was almost the last shot to go down the range. It lodged at two o'clock - in the inner.



Zainal Abidin Md Zain in action.

(Photo: Tony de Launay)



Jane Messer looks thrilled with her performance.

(Photo: Tony de Launay)



Zainal is congratulated by his coach Sandy Peden.

(Photo: John Knight)



"And this is how I did it!"

(Photo: John Knight)



Brigadier General Raymond Romses and NRA Chairman Bill Richards congratulate the winner.

(Photo: John Knight)



Zainal is carried from the range in the traditional manner.

(Photo: John Knight)



The traditional evening entertainment at Canada House.

(Photo: Alan Keating)



David Calvert entertains Zainal at the RAFSAA Clubhouse.

(Photo: Mike Gregory)

The Prize was Zainal's after taking the second stage as well. An overjoyed Malaysian manager hugged his man. The 47 year old police sergeant wiped away the odd tear to a superb round of applause.

Imperial Reflections

The weather contrast between the first and second halves of the 2008 Imperial Meeting could not have been greater. Howling headwinds in the period from Saturday to Monday caused a degree of chaos among the scores. Thereafter there were less powerful but rather more subtle breezes from behind the shooters switching back to less powerful and equally subtle headwinds from Wednesday onwards - if I remember it right. The first part was a test for those that read wind, gripped tightest and rode their luck. The second part of the meeting was a real test for shooters with mirage reading experience. No doubt someone will disagree with me.

A few years ago it was admitted that the ammunition was not up to expectations. Possibly as a result last year saw a vast improvement. As I recorded in the diary at the time I heard not one whinge in 2007. Sadly this year the comments were rather more frequent and, in many cases, pungent.

Before anyone steps in to attribute any problems to the weather, I have discounted anything before the second Tuesday on the basis that wild winds blow bullets side to side and up and down. In fact I did not hear any moans before Tuesday, I suspect for exactly that reason. From then on the nub of the remarks was that there were far too many mysterious flyers. Of course there were competitors that managed well. Someone has to win the Grand and there is always a hard core of maximums made. For some reason those lucky few escape what hits the rest.

It might be tempting to turn to the Conan Doyle and point out 97 maximum 50s at 900 yards. But if ever there was a 50 sitting on a plate it was in that competition. The fact of the matter is that too many people made too many comments of the same sort, about unexplained shots out of the group - way out in some cases.

We need also to remember that we are now very much more into a normal customer relationship, untouched by military provisioning. Blind reliance on figures of merit has never been, in my view, a true reflection of ammunition quality. So please, listen to the customer's comments, accept them at face value and take account of what he or she says.

Apart from all that, a commendation must go to those who dealt very promptly with two problems on site 6, the aggressive wasps and their nest in the ablutions, and the loose and equally aggressive manhole cover. Each was dealt with within an hour or so of being reported. It proves that if you do report something you are likely to have it dealt with. Thank you maintenance.

I again enjoyed meeting all the old (and getting older) chums. If we had nothing to bring us to what my friend in the USA refers to as the holy ground, and nothing to gossip about, we would probably find ourselves pushing a supermarket trolley under the direction of her indoors.

So, as the great cartridge of time blows its primer of destiny towards the central circle of infinity, and the adjustable foresight of steel jostles with the eagle eye of decrepitude, the tie shoot of eternity is decided between Barnett and Ball in the pits of adjudication. And so we say farewell to Imperial 2008. See you next year.

Some Facts from Grand Aggregate Competitions

Possibles and Winning (and Tie Shoot) Scores, Max scores & % of Entries

| Competition | Yards | HPS | Entry | Score | No | Tie | HPSs 08 | HPSs 07 | 08 % |
|-------------------|-----------|--------|-------|--------|----|------|------------|------------|---------|
| Alexandra | 600 | 50.10 | 1083 | 50.7 | 5 | 25.4 | 12 | 77 | 1.1 |
| Conan Doyle | 900 | 50.10 | 1038 | 50.8 | 3 | 25.5 | 97 | 43 | 9.3 |
| Corporation | 1000 | 50.10 | 1048 | 49.3 | 1 | - | 0 | 40 | 0.0 |
| Daily Mail | 500 | 75.15 | 1078 | 75.13 | 1 | - | 22 | 97 | 2.0 |
| Daily Telegraph | 500 | 75.15 | 1084 | 75.10 | 1 | - | 4 | 83 | 0.4 |
| Duke of Cambridge | 900 | 50.10 | 1069 | 50.8 | 2 | 25.4 | 12 | 41 | 1.1 |
| Prince of Wales | 600 | 75.15 | 1042 | 75.11 | 4 | 25.5 | 30 | 31 | 2.9 |
| Queen's I | 3, 5, 600 | 105.21 | 1116 | 105.16 | 3 | 25.5 | 26 | 26 | 2.3 |
| St George's I | 300 | 75.15 | 1016 | 75.12 | 2 | 25.3 | 31 | 69 | 3.1 |
| Times | 300 | 50.10 | 1062 | 50.10 | 1 | - | 39 | 204 | 3.6 |
| Wimbledon | 600 | 50.10 | 1061 | 50.8 | 1 | 25.4 | 11 | 159 | 1.0 |

IMPERIAL MEETING PHOTOS

Alan Keating has created a Flickr page containing thousands of Bisley photos. To see his photos of the Imperial Meeting click on the link on the NRA website under Imperial Meeting 2008.

The following stats show the visits made to his Imperial Meeting photo collection during July and August.

| Date | Hits | Date | Hits |
|------------|------|------------|------|
| 12/07/2008 | 34 | 02/08/2008 | 312 |
| 13/07/2008 | 7 | 03/08/2008 | 693 |
| 14/07/2008 | 0 | 04/08/2008 | 704 |
| 15/07/2008 | 8 | 05/08/2008 | 289 |
| 16/07/2008 | 2 | 06/08/2008 | 185 |
| 17/07/2008 | 13 | 07/08/2008 | 110 |
| 18/07/2008 | 33 | 08/08/2008 | 138 |
| 19/07/2008 | 3 | 09/08/2008 | 102 |
| 20/07/2008 | 19 | 10/08/2008 | 248 |
| 21/07/2008 | 7 | 11/08/2008 | 263 |
| 22/07/2008 | 211 | 12/08/2008 | 274 |
| 23/07/2008 | 548 | 13/08/2008 | 233 |
| 24/07/2008 | 1460 | 14/08/2008 | 262 |
| 25/07/2008 | 982 | 15/08/2008 | 297 |
| 26/07/2008 | 1002 | 16/08/2008 | 63 |
| 27/07/2008 | 1497 | 17/08/2008 | 104 |
| 28/07/2008 | 1374 | 18/08/2008 | 174 |
| 29/07/2008 | 893 | 19/08/2008 | 146 |
| 30/07/2008 | 1537 | 20/08/2008 | 200 |
| 31/07/2008 | 774 | 21/08/2008 | 179 |
| 01/08/2008 | 2330 | 22/08/2008 | 199 |

THE CORPORATION INSURANCE

by Bruce Roth

This was my fourth year of running the Corporation Insurance and it raised £250 for the OTF. For those who don't know what it is, it is for the lowest score in the Corporation without a miss, crossfire, shot out of turn, late arrival on the firing point or any other penalty. The results this year were as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|-----|
| 1 | James Bryson | OWTRC | £50 |
| | 1 2 3 1 2 3 3 3 4 5 | 27.0 | |
| 2 | Victoria Carter | Canadian Cadets | £30 |
| | 1 3 3 3 1 3 V 2 2 5 | 28.1 | |
| 3 | Dylan Adams | Canadian Cadets | £20 |
| | 3 3 2 2 3 1 5 3 4 4 | 30.0 | |

Lord Swansea ran this insurance for a very long time and so I get to hear all sorts of amusing stories as I go around the clubs and receptions selling tickets. My favourite is the story of Luke Winkworth (OWTRC) who rushed to the North London with his ticket after having scored an amazing 24.0 only to be told that it was called the Corporation Insurance for a reason - Luke had just shot the Lovell!

I hope next year to have a sponsor for the insurance that will cover the prizes and possibly some help with selling the tickets.

RUNNING DEER AND SPORTING RIFLE 2008

by Bob Maddison

With all electronic targets, timing for the Running Deer Singles was similar to that with manual marking but was noticeably faster on the Doubles. Hence the range wasn't stretched for the British Running Deer Championship that attracted 14 entries. Up to 20 could have been accommodated. The Championships, as usual, turned out to be a struggle between the four leading competitors with Alan Harvey taking the Singles (176), John Kynoch the Doubles (171), and Alan Harvey the aggregate of the first series of Singles and Doubles (176).

The Unlimiteds, always an important feature of this event, attracted a good entry with the ranges busy most of the four days. Overall, there were 57 entries for the Running Deer and 47 entries for the Standing Boar. The Running Deer mechanism was new this year and caused a minor glitch late on the first day resulting in some potential shooters having to be turned away. However, this was cured by the supplier's engineer and worked impeccably for the next five days. The NRA medals for the best aggregate of two series on each two day period were won by Alan Harvey and Alistair Buchan. The Standing Boar event was only introduced formally two years ago and is now well established. Again using electronic targets turn round was fast. A lot of prone shooters opted to give this event a try as it looks easier than the Running Deer. Appearances are deceptive! The McQueen shooters who are used to a four seconds target appearance had difficulty coping with the unstable free standing position. As we use an "own start" handicap (for a small cash prize) many were estimating a score in the 70s and upwards only to score in the 20s with several shots missing the "pig" altogether. Even experienced hunters, unused to shooting at sporting targets like this, were chastened.

The Dewar Cup, awarded to the shooter with the best 10 shot series in the Unlimiteds or the Championships who has not won one of the main trophies, went to Steve Wallis with a score of 46, his worst shots 4.0 and 4.3 beating John Maddison with 4.0 and 4.0 and Alistair Bullen with a 3.9.

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F CLASS AT THE IMPERIAL MEETING 2008

by Paul Monaghan

The F Class 2008 Imperial Meeting started gently. The weather was mild and the warm-up shoots on Friday and Saturday gave everyone a chance to get settled and gave no hint of the mayhem to come. Shooters from all over Europe came for the week of F Class competition and it was good to see a strong contingent from France this year (although we missed the ever cheerful Philippe Personne). International competitions in F Class have migrated to long ranges and so this was a fantastic opportunity for competing at a wider variety of ranges. Interestingly the shorter ranges prove just as difficult as the longer ranges, and keeping everything in the small F Class V bull at 300 yards proved to be a challenge beyond the majority of shooters.

Sunday was reasonably uneventful, but it all went haywire on Monday. The wind was strong and coming straight down the ranges and switched fast from left to right - fast enough to catch everyone out. It was one of those winds that change whilst you squeeze the trigger. Scores were frankly dreadful in some of the competitions. This really could have been a cause for major moaning and whining but the wind kept it up all day, so for once it really was the same for everyone. The weather on Tuesday was just as bad and scores were equally depressed - like some of the shooters. By now the pecking order was starting to settle down and David Kent was showing his form again. He led the pack with Peter Hobson just one point adrift. The top ten was an interesting mix of nationalities. In addition to England there were shooters representing Germany (Wolfgang Scholze), Republic of Ireland (Liam Fenlon), the Netherlands (Marco Plug), Scotland (Des Parr), and Wales (Ted Hobbs).

The wind had had its fun, and on Wednesday the flags were virtually motionless. In fact for the Imperial Meeting 2008, the weather gave us a fantastic challenge for F Class shooting. Two days of some of the most difficult wind seen for a number of years in July and then a settled period allowing those who had got their rifle and ammunition working to perfection to nail the V bull.

When the dust (at the back of Century) had settled, David Kent had done it again. As last year he took the Open F Class Grand Aggregate with a total of 760 points. In fact, the top ten places had changed little from earlier in the week. In second place just ten points behind was Wolfgang Scholze followed by Liam Fenlon on 742. The top ten was completed by Hobson (736), Wright (730), Plug (727), Hobbs (726), Medhurst (719), Jennings (714) and Knackstedt (713).

The issued ammunition F Class Grand Aggregate was won by Nick Hinchliffe from last year's winner, Jim

Scobie. Nick has a lot of experience with TR shooting and wind reading at Bisley but he got a bit of help from Jim's rifle not shooting quite as well as he would have liked.

Early Friday morning saw the F Class International Match shot at 900 and 1000 yards - four shooters per team, 2 plus 15 to count. Teams from Scotland, Republic of Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Germany and France fought it out with a wind that seemed benign, but caused plenty of shots outside the 5 ring. The wind continued to trouble the coaches at 1,000 yards and all teams had their fair share of 4s and even 3s. However at the end it was England who took the gold medals with the Republic of Ireland in second place followed by Scotland and Germany.

The Queen's and St George's finals were shot on the Friday; this year for the first time they were held at long distance on Stickledown. David Kent made it a clean sweep by winning both finals. Most impressive.

On Thursday evening there was the regular meeting of F Class shooters to discuss things F Class. There were few comments about the Imperial Meeting format, which is a good thing - except there will need to be a few changes for next year. In particular there will be a number of shooters entering the Imperial Meeting as a warm-up for the World Championships taking place immediately after the Imperial Meeting. There is a difference between the GB F issued ammunition class and the ICFRA F restricted class which allows handloads; it is likely that handloads will be allowed in what was the issued ammunition class. Then there was (yet again) the discussion about scoring V=6 or 5.V. This is one aspect of F Class shooting that seems settled and then suddenly is back on the agenda. I guess we'll make up our minds one day!



You don't need all the fancy gear!



Sixth place went to Marco Plug.



At least Victor Hanna appeared to be enjoying himself!



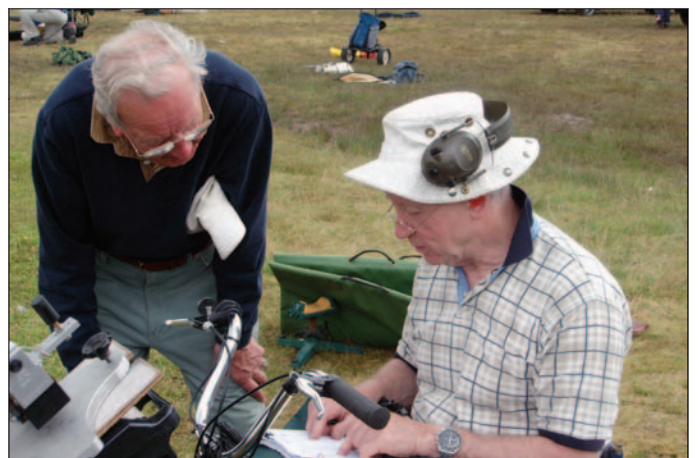
Grand Agg winner David Kent gets set up for another win.



Liam Fenlon waits for Tony Williamson to get ready.



Wolfgang Scholze from Germany.



John Campbell shows Jo Wright his '4'.



Darren Stewart tries to get the wind right.



Natalie Valentin from France.

(Photos: Paul Monaghan)

THE BIG BOYS - DIARY OF A F CLASS TYRO

by John Gardener

I shoot with the big boys now, or so they tell me. I last shot the Imperial Meeting in 1985. I was always an average shot, sometimes having a good day and getting 49 (V bulls were a thing of the future). I was, of course, subsidised by the Royal Navy, to whom I shall always be grateful for allowing me seven weeks out of the office, with pay, to shoot. We got our accommodation here (tents) and food for free but unfortunately we had to pay for our own beer.

So my F Class career started in the bar of the London and Middlesex when I bragged about getting V bulls with my number five at 900 yards. It's true, Hamish Tucker was there and he didn't believe his ears either! Anyway, in conversation with Mik Maksimovic, I said that I was going to put a 'scope on my number five and shoot F Class. Mik offered to lend me a FTR in .308 so I accepted and put in my entry for the 2008 Imperial.

About six weeks before the Meeting I still hadn't fired a shot in practice so I rang Mik and asked him where my rifle was. "Oh, I've lent that to someone else, you can borrow my old 6.5." An urgent, begging e-mail and a visit to Karen Robertson (on my knees, supplicating) and my entry was changed from FTR to F.

At Hutton minus eight days I found myself on the 1000 yards firing point getting a long range zero, when Mik arrived, gave me some match ammo and coached me into a 49.8, sighters converted! The butterflies were beginning to churn already and I was like an excited schoolboy. I had by now ordered 'Not more reloading kit?' she said, begged some decent powder, got Mik to moly more bullets (thank you Tina) and was eagerly awaiting the first shoot in the Admiral Hutton.

A week later and I found myself tenth (F Class) in the Hutton out of about thirty. 'Fairly very chuffed' I put in the remarks column on my plot sheet - 47.3 with one over the top and one underneath. I won't tell you who I beat but the clue is he asked for his rifle back!

Imagine this dilemma
For such was poor old Miks
At 900 in the Hutton
Thinks he's chucking bricks

Inner left inner right
Sometimes up or down
Was it grimace, smile or grin
No, just a grumpy frown.

And as I lay beside him
Shooting, holding aim
I prayed to God most fervently
That I'd not do the same.

Mik's is the gun I'm using
Borrowed for the meet
Whacking vees and five bulls
(seemed like easy meat)

We hadn't had a wager
I was far too scared to bet
In any case I'm well aware
We've hardly started yet.

But 'though I love him dearly,
And shan't mock him any more
It was a lovely feeling
To get a better score.

Donegall next, 49.8 after dropping the first - Mik told me that he had called a Trustees meeting and that top of the agenda was the banning of NSC staff from shooting the Meeting. He blamed a mixed batch of ammo - a tyro's mistake I said. I shall probably live to regret that particular remark, especially as Jeremy Staples, my boss had advised me that it would probably be politically incorrect and professional suicide to beat a Trustee again.

Well, after the Lord Mayor's Show as they say . . . sixth in the Donegall then last but one in the Daily Telegraph. I misread the wind completely and went from one side to the other of the inner - lovely elevation though! The Daily Mail went a little better; I kept a wind plot and lost one for elevation. The decision to convert V, 4 sighters turned out to be a good one so another tenth place.

Having bet Mik a pint on the Corporation, I was keen to do well. The wind was fishtailing and caught all three of us on my target a number of times, me mostly! My one V bull was called as a '?' because it went before I was ready. Result 36 with a 2 to finish (put one left on, should have been one right!) I know what Mik will call me when I buy him the pint I must have lost that morning. Eleven pm and I was like an excited tyro at the stats board. Look for my name in the Corporation . . . 17th? Seven-bloody-teenth? Thank you Lord (thank you Mik, look what your gun and ammo did for me again.) So much for the early night, and serious preparations for the St George's tomorrow. To be honest, despite being disappointed with my score over the hill that morning, after seeing the results, to be a third of the way down my particular prize list gave me a feeling of modest satisfaction and a fervent prayer to my God that he keep me steadfast tomorrow. I have never made it through to a second stage, what a dream that would be, and if I did, I didn't have enough ammunition to complete the competitions I had entered for the rest of the Meeting.

I had to look in the mirror and tell myself to 'get real'; in truth I couldn't see it happening. Still, the others might do a Mik and come out with the wrong ammo! Ah, chance would be a fine thing . . . perhaps I should pray for that instead?

In 1977, my first year at Bisley, John Saunders was nominated as my 'Sea Daddy'. That's not as evil as it sounds, he was merely nominated as the more experienced shooter who would guide me through the intricacies of TR shooting. At the appointed time I met him in the City Rifle Club. "Get me a pint while I check your plotting book," he said. After studying the book, a few moments later he said "My glass is empty." Six pints later he said, as he closed my score book with a bang, "Go away and learn to read the wind." I wish I had listened, because in the St George's I got a 1/4" elevation 69 . . . say la vee!

So, Queen's I 300 yards, no wind to speak of, 35.5 and 500 yards to come at midday. And as it turned out, with the wind from behind if I hadn't put one over the top I would have finished with 34 but I did so - 33.4 - no need to worry about having enough ammunition for the Second Stage now. The 600 yards Queen's to go at half past three - fingers crossed that I'll at least finish with a decent one. Well what a prat I turned out to be, I converted a V sighter, kept less than 1/4 minute elevation and, after missing the shot of my companion because I lost concentration, I repeated my mistake in the Corporation by winding off half a minute instead of on, and then in idiotic confusion wound off another half to hit 3, 2 for shots five and six. I managed to recover to an upwind 5 but by then of course it was too late. I could say that I did that deliberately because I didn't have enough ammunition

for the Second Stage but in truth, given the chance I'd have shot the Second Stage with a blunderbuss!

In summary, on one hand a sad tale of tyro's mistakes, a very steep learning curve and some very happy memories. I now have another set of 'salty tales' about shooting. I had forgotten just how much fun competition shooting is and how much good company there is on the firing point. So, to all those who found me alongside them, thank you for putting up with me. To my work colleagues, a big thank you for allowing me time out of the office to compete, a special thanks to my wife, who has encouraged me throughout, and not moaned at the addition to those essential reloading bits, and a very special thanks to Mik Maksimovic for the loan of his gun, his help and encouragement and for turning me into an 'effer'.

No-one likes getting older, the stark reality is that we all do, and as our physical abilities decline we have to look for help in continuing our chosen pastime. Shooting F Class has given my shooting career a boost, and I have new goals to reach. Yes, it looks easy with a front and back rest, but the skills required in hitting those reduced scoring areas are just as exacting as those required in target rifle as I found to my cost. Would I go through it all again? You bet, after all, I was lucky enough not to come last in anything, close, once, but not last. Now, where is that advanced reloading DVD?

Postscript

I ended two thirds of the way down the Queen's First Stage list and not at the bottom where I truly deserved to be. So perhaps my God was smiling on me but telling me not to get cocky? I don't know, but I do know it was fun and there is always next year.

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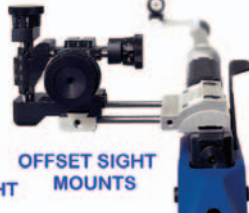
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ICFRA - THE SAGA CONTINUES

In response to the ICFRA articles in the Summer Journal, a number of detailed replies have been received. Those from Tony Loughnan, Richard van Lingen and Deon Burger have been reproduced in full as requested by the respective authors. Dick Horrocks has produced a single reply that addresses the issues raised in all three letters.

Further views may also be found in the Letters section on pages 85 to 86.

The Editor reserves the right to edit any further correspondence on this subject in order to conserve space and enable readers to follow more easily the views being presented.

**From Tony Loughnan
President of ICFRA**

Introduction

This note has been prepared in response to the discussion paper by Dick Horrocks [*published in the Summer Journal*], which he was kind enough to forward to me. I hope that it will assist in helping the debate in Great Britain to be informed and balanced.

Like Dick, I must make it clear that these are my own personal views and are independent of my role as ICFRA President. However as chairman of the TR Committee from the inception of ICFRA until last year, and as a continuing member of that committee, I believe I can provide useful background about the rules that Dick is highlighting.

ICFRA's Role

Dick has quoted the aims of ICFRA in his paper. There are two considerations which should be kept in mind when debating the rifle issues. They are:

- That the constituent NRAs that form ICFRA are autonomous bodies and ICFRA cannot and does not want to interfere in any way in their business
- ICFRA's TR and other rules only apply to matches under its control (basically the various World Championships and the Australia Match) and have no standing in competitions run by constituent NRA's - however a condition of running an ICFRA Match is that associated lead-up matches must also be run under the same rules and this could affect a decision to seek such matches.

Changes to TR Rifle Rules

As noted in Dick's paper, an aim of ICFRA is to standardise rules for designated international matches. This is spelt out further under the Functions of the Confederation thus:

Compile, promulgate and maintain International Fullbore Shooting Rules and Regulations containing all rules, regulations, minimum standards and guidelines, and amendments thereof, agreed to by the ICFRA Council, preferably by consensus. The main emphasis of these rules and regulations will be to standardise the rules for all international matches under ICFRA jurisdiction, and to enable shooters to compete

internationally with the minimum of inconvenience caused by minor and troublesome differences in national rules.

The ICFRA TR Committee therefore started from the point of view of seeking to bring the best of the various rules around the world together. It debated many issues and finalised all but a few at the TR Committee meeting at Ottawa last year. The last few have recently been voted on. The ICFRA General Assembly overwhelmingly approved the recommendations of the TR committee - including all three (optics, trigger pull and rifle weight) that are now being raised again.

The following could be helpful when considering these three rules:

Optics

I remember the Palma Council meeting at Raton in 1992 when the Eagle Eye debate was first held and the comment by Mid Tompkins that "we are trying to find out who are the best shooters - not who has the best eyes". I heartily endorse that principle. Eagle Eyes were eventually approved for the Palma Match and I understand used by many in 1999 and since.

New Zealand and other countries have allowed the use of Eagle Eyes and other optical devices such as variable diopters for many years. The adoption of these by the ICFRA TR Committee was in accordance with its brief to write a standard set of rules and was approved by a very large majority.

Following the GB investigation into optics, Dick Horrocks asked for and was given special leave to address the TR Committee on this subject at Ottawa and did so very clearly. The committee listened attentively and carefully considered his submission but was not swayed by it and confirmed its strong approval of the use of Eagle Eyes, variable diopters, etc.

At that point a motion was put to allow the use of Eagle Eyes concurrently with variable diopters and this passed as well. The crucial point in this approval is that Eagle Eyes are limited to a maximum curvature of 0.5 diopter (minimum 2m focal length) and the sight radius under ICFRA rules is limited to a maximum of 1.2m and therefore no form of telescope can be formed.

Trigger Pull

The committee also supported a minimum 0.5kg trigger pull by a good majority. Once again this was nothing new. The USA rules do not have a minimum pull but do have a requirement for a safe trigger. New Zealand changed from 1.5kg to 0.5kg many years ago with absolutely no resulting safety issues.

Once the committee came to the view that safety is not compromised by a lower trigger pull the vote for 0.5kg was assured. The general opinion of the committee was that there is no direct advantage in the lower pull provided you have a good match trigger. However many triggers lose their consistency and sensitivity as their pull approaches 1kg and are a disadvantage to the firer. Lowering the pull was thus seen as a levelling of

the playing field for those who could not afford match triggers. The other reason for getting rid of the 1.5kg pull was the disservice we do to the unfortunate shooter whose trigger pull reduces during a shoot. Not only does he have to struggle to shoot well he then gets a draconian penalty and is treated as if he was a criminal.

The issues with cadets that get referred to are issues with training them to control where their rifles are pointing and the disservice that is being done to them by making them shoot with poor triggers. The cost argument is spurious when the cost of a decent trigger is compared to the total cost of shooting. It is also difficult to sell in countries where NRAs and their members are nowhere as affluent as those making the case.

Further to that, cadets do not shoot ICFRA matches for which these rules are written and there is nothing stopping GB NRA setting whatever trigger pull it believes is appropriate for their use.

Rifle Weight

As a tall person I have spent a shooting career cutting bits off rifles to get down to the weight limit which has changed over the years. A standard H&H rifle with an adjustable butt plate had to be drilled and shaved so I could shoot at Ottawa last year.

The TR committee debated and approved removing the weight limit before and at Ottawa, and I believe came to the view that there was no advantage in more weight but there is currently some discrimination against tall people and that there was no reason to limit the weight at all. It is self-limiting - if you can hold it up you can shoot it.

After Ottawa there was a move to reconsider this matter which the TR committee did at length. Eventually they voted to leave the rule as it is.

Summary

In my opinion both the "Standard Target Rifle" and the "iron sights" concepts are myths that died many years ago. Many countries have for many years been using corrective optics and light triggers and turning a blind eye to overall weight limits.

Compared to when I started in the .303 days we now have match ammunition, and everyone can have very good equipment and use sighting aids and at last the playing field is as level as it can get. More importantly we can all enjoy our shooting more and the competition has at last come down to finding Mid's "best shooters". Long may it last!

*From Richard van Lingen
(originally to Dick Horrocks)*

I am bitterly disappointed by the standard of response to my Open Letter. Alger (or his ghost writer) has seen fit to leave my questions unanswered, repeat his original unfounded anti-ICFRA accusations, twist my words and make several claims that are patently untrue. Clearly he has a closed mind, making a detailed reply pointless! You, in turn, have tried to justify his (the NRA's?) stance with an interesting history but some rather hairy statements, conclusions and suggested actions!

The GB NRA has long defended issued ammunition with the untenable "level playing fields" argument. You have

now extended this thinking to your so-called "Standard" Target Rifle. There can be no disputing that, for best results, ammunition needs to be matched to a rifle's barrel and chamber. All chambers and barrel dimensions are not the same and issued "standard" ammunition will invariably perform better in some rifles than others. This nullifies the level playing fields presumption.

Turning to your so-called "Standard" TR Rifle, I suggest that a good starting point is the dictionary definition of "standard". The Pocket Oxford defines it thus: "object, quality, or measure serving as a basis, example, or principle to which others conform or by which others are judged." Are you honestly suggesting that rifles now permitted under GB NRA Rules conform to this definition? It is an unarguable fact that your association has been a leader in allowing design innovations that deviate significantly from any such norm! You must have a copy of Reynolds and Fulton's Target Rifle Shooting. Have a look at Plates 12 to 15. These pictures are of true Standard Rifles. Note that there are no adjustable cheek-pieces, adjustable butt plates, thumbhole stocks, bloop tubes, etc. There are certainly no space-age metal stocks, with infinite adjustments, like the System Gemini. The truth is that you no longer have a standard rifle! This, in fact, is good, because as with issued ammunition, your claimed level playing field with a standard rifle is a myth - a total fallacy! Even more than .308 barrels and chambers differ from one another, people come in a great variety of sizes, arm and neck lengths, thin or fat faces etc. The old standard stock was a compromise, based on a non-existent average person. Anyone who came close to that size has an obvious advantage - the rifle fitted! All others had to contort themselves to some degree to shoot with one of these rifles. Common sense then led to the adjustments on modern rifles which allow a shooter to make his rifle fit. Your contention that the ICFRA rule changes create a significantly and unacceptable "new animal" are really quite laughable. I comment on your concerns in some detail, particularly where you deviate from fact.

Firstly though, I would like to make a point that Alger, as a non-shooter, is unaware of and that you, knowing better, have conveniently ignored. We have already reached the point of diminishing returns as far as .308 accuracy improvements are concerned. We already have a half-minute rifle, available to all, except possibly your cadets. Be honest and tell me how much improvement could conceivably be gained from a rifle heavier than 6.5kg, a 500g trigger and improved sight optics that really only benefit shooters with eyesight defects? Then relate this to the size of our bulls. Even the tighter ICFRA targets have a bull not much smaller than 2 minutes of angle. There is thus a significant margin for error, or slightly inferior accuracy. As you well know, the primary skill element in TR shooting is ability to read the wind. Holding, aim and trigger-release are basic skills that anyone can learn to a reasonable level of proficiency, fairly quickly. Does this not make a nonsense of your "ICFRA TR Rifle" fears?

In his excellent letter to you, Deon has seen trigger weight and the ICFRA sight optics revisions as essentially non-issues. I agree with regard to trigger pressure. If read with an open mind, what Deon and I have written should

allay your fears, even if you retain the 1.5kg trigger for general domestic GB use. However I disagree with Deon on sight optics. The fact that both you and Alger refer pointedly to the "Optical Sights Working Group" tests and survey indicates differently. As I wrote to Alger, this issue is a real red rag to me. Your research was so full of holes that, frankly, it should be an embarrassment to you and your association, not something to boast about! You even refer to "trials", which never took place!

Let me dissect the NRA research effort in detail. Firstly, your "Expert" was one of two well-known GB shooter/optometrists, Gary Alexander. The other, Richard Hind, agrees essentially with ICFRA! Gary's BSc (Hons) MCOptom is an impressive qualification, which makes it surprising that he sees fit to gainsay basic laws of physics! Ranged against Gary's opinion are equally qualified optometrists in Canada, New Zealand and South Africa and my own son, who is a specialist ophthalmologist.

Essentially, the Working Group set out to prove that a lens in the backsight, in conjunction with a foresight Eagle Eye, would create a simple telescope, which would give an unfair advantage to the user. This hypothesis is simply impossible, given the maximum permitted foresight lens strength and the maximum sight radius. As Deon pointed out, the focal point would be somewhere behind the shooter's head! The test involved just four middle-aged men, only two of whom are regular TR shooters! There was no representative of the older shooters, who would benefit from the aids, or the youth group, whom they averred could exploit the aids to unfair advantage. Regarding the latter, they assumed that a slightly enlarged, but not totally sharp, sight picture would allow more precise aiming, with no attempt whatsoever at proving this perception. The test consisted of the four just looking at a target through the sights of four rifles, in fixed rests, with different lens combinations. The first was irrelevant, with a Match Rifle Galilean system incorporating a foresight lens stronger than permitted under ICFRA or GB TR rules (this was indeed a simple telescope, as the focal point of the front lens was in front of the rear lens). The second rifle had a +0.5 diopter foresight lens, which they correctly found to give a larger but slightly blurred image. The third had a similar front Eagle Eye lens, but with a negative lens (-0.25 or -0.50) in the rear sight, which they claimed gave a clear picture of both aiming mark and foresight element. This is where they erred. Gary should have recognised from his refraction tests for spectacles that the human eye has an amazing ability to adjust itself to give the best possible focus, which unfortunately, because of strain, can only be held for a short period if the correction is wrong. As the light rays through a 0.5 diopter lens only converge to a focal point at 2 metres, it is physically impossible for any lens, negative or positive, used in the rear sight to give a sharp picture of both foresight element and aiming mark! They gave no thought whatsoever to proving their supposition with actual shooting trials! The fourth rifle had an Eagle Eye in combination with a variable diopter. Actual shooting tests in SA satisfied us that this combination is almost impossible to handle, as outlined by Deon. Both the Eagle Eye and the variable diopter were legal in GB and the less-than-2X magnification of either had been fully

accepted by your shooters. The addition of a suitable rear lens, in combination with an Eagle Eye can, at best, have minimal effect on this magnification. It saddens me to say that the Group was therefore dishonest in claiming that this small magnification was a "telescopic sight effect". This conclusion and wording was deliberately designed to turn uninformed GB shooters against the ICFRA proposal! The Group then made their proposal, followed by a questionnaire strongly biased towards their viewpoint. So, in reality, the GB research consisted of the views of only two middle-aged TR shooters, followed by the unenlightened perceptions of various groups, who had never actually looked through the combination, never mind trying it under actual shooting conditions. For both of you to claim this as true research, only conducted by your NRA, is an insult to those countries, like SA, where actual and fairly extensive range trials were conducted with both 0.3 and 0.5 diopter Eagle Eyes in conjunction with various rear corrective lenses!

Strangely enough, your GB NRA Rules were changed between 2004 and 2005 from "no rearsight lens in conjunction with a foresight lens" to (quote): "A non-magnifying lens, for the correction of astigmatism only, may be used in conjunction with a magnifying lens in the foresight. Permission to use such a lens, supported by a current optometrist's prescription, must be obtained in advance from the Director of Shooting." I commented on this at the time. Firstly, there is no such thing as a non-magnifying correction for astigmatism. The necessary cylindrical correction must have either positive or negative power, but in a specific single plane. Secondly, without an optometrist, with his test equipment, on the range, how can ROs control these lenses? They obviously can't! A member of an official GB team in SA, with the required D of S certification, openly told me that his rearsight lens was what we commonly call a "shooting lens", ie correction for astigmatism plus a positive half-diopter to bring the point of focus closer to the foresight. This is precisely what the ICFRA rule is designed to allow! As a telescopic effect is impossible, as shown above, what other reason would a shooter have for adding a rear lens in combination with his Eagle Eye?

Let's now turn to the rifle weight issue. Firstly, there is no question that the current 6.5kg limit had to be revised. As I pointed out, universally approved off the shelf components, when bolted together, can result in a rifle that exceeds this limit. In my case, with a standard Millennium action and a standard 30" Krieger barrel, with a short light aluminium bloop tube, fitted into a McMillan fibreglass stock, I had to jettison the length-adjustment section of the butt assembly and drill multiple holes to lighten what was left. I then had to exchange my excellent RPA Trakker sight for a lower-quality but lighter aluminium one and still have to remove the bipod rest whilst shooting!

As you are aware, because of the strong GB feelings against the removal of a weight limit, expressed to me at Connaught, I referred this matter back to the ICFRA TR Committee, officially on behalf of SABU. As an interim measure the SABU rule was amended to 7.5kg. With GB support, a limit of 7.5 or 8kg might have found acceptance, but that was not to be! That said, this would only have satisfied the perception in GB that use of a

heavier rifle could be an advantage. The reality of the matter is that the unlimited weight specification is self-governing - a shooter will only use a rifle that he can comfortably hold through the course of a long shoot. The ICFRA TRC and the Council are both satisfied that no improved rifle accuracy will result from use of a rifle heavier than 6.5kg. The GB NRA would need to prove conclusively that this is not so for the decision to be reviewed in 2011. I am willing to bet that GB will win the 2011 Palma, with members using their current rifles. Your talk of an "ICFRA Rifle" has no foundation whatsoever! Certainly, the SA Team will only change their rifles by putting back the bits removed to get them down to 6.5kg!

I truly suggest that you live with the weight rule until 2011. In the unlikely event of the Americans arriving with super-heavy barrels and excelling with them you can then ask for the rule to be reviewed. As Deon mentioned, SA would then be quite likely to support a limit of 7.5 or 8kg.

I think you should ask yourselves the question: "Can only GB be right and the rest of the fullbore world have it wrong?" Your repeated plea in respect of your Juniors is now wearing a bit thin. They are certainly better off than Juniors in other TR countries! We have recently conducted the SA Championships under the new SABU Rules, based on the ICFRA ones. There was not a single bleat from or on behalf of Junior shooters. Incidentally, as Deon pointed out, Steve Thomas' GB Team, with their 6.5kg rifles with 1.5kg triggers, thumped our best in both International Matches - the first time we have lost to GB at home! So much for your shooters being at a disadvantage!

Come on Dick, if the NRA really wants a TR Standard Rifle class, then do it properly by reverting to the totally non-adjustable original stocks. It could find limited appeal, similar to the .303 Historic Rifle. But please do not artificially differentiate your current Palma rifles from those in the rest of the world, because of three ICFRA rules, which will not make one iota of difference to the competitive situation of your shooters, both Senior and Junior! The situation of GB touring teams will not be compromised in any way, as opposed to those of visiting teams and individuals to Bisley. If there is one thing that creates an unfair situation for visitors it is your insistence on forcing all competitors to use issued ammunition!

From Deon Burger

With reference to the NRA/ICFRA 'saga' as previously reported in the Spring and Summer 2008 Journals, what follows is an edited and shortened version of a personal letter I wrote to Professor Richard Horrocks, and now submit for publication as agreed with him. I stress that many of my comments stem not only from his article, but also Mr Alger's sweeping statements, and thus request the Editor to publish my response in full, as important context may otherwise be lost.

I must also add my own disclaimer at this stage, viz that although I am serving in the South African Bisley Union (SABU) Rules Committee again, I had no hand in the ICFRA rules exercise, nor do any of my comments in this

letter in any way bind that committee or SABU.

I am, however, much saddened by what should have been a healthy NRA of GB and ICFRA debate, but is now sensationally referred to as "ICFRA - the saga continues" in the Summer 2008 Journal. I am even more saddened by the, at times, low level of "debating" from the NRA's side on the matters in contention, in spite of Prof Horrocks' valiant efforts to plaster over some of the obvious cracks in a more reasoned manner.

Systematic thinkers surely cannot be happy with such selective and, at times, illogical arguments as currently presented in your Journal? A few salient aspects from my past spring to mind:

- From a short course in 'Logical Argument': an example of how not to engage in such argument is the 'straw puppet approach'. One builds a false image of your opponent's viewpoints and then sets about vigorously demolishing it. If you are dealing with a largely uninformed audience, this may well succeed and prevent the opponent's true views of ever being heard and evaluated properly. There is much in the Journal's vehement criticism of the ICFRA decisions that reminds one of this.
- From a lecture on the role of propaganda: "The most dangerous thing about propaganda is when one starts believing your own propaganda". If the writers all believe what they've written about the ICFRA rules in the Journal, this danger also faces the NRA.
- And then recently: "Nothing is more dangerous than an idea - only one idea". The NRA has gone that route on a few occasions that I can recall and had to back down nearly every time.

Of course, in the spirit of democracy, the NRA's right to have its own opinion and stand up for it must be respected - it is the way in which it is done that bothers one. Furthermore, I do not necessarily agree that the contentious three new ICFRA rules should necessarily be cast in concrete, but for different reasons than those mooted by the NRA and the Journal. I admit freely that I, too, am a traditionalist and would have preferred some of these rules not to change, but cannot yet moot (and will not fabricate) any scientific reasons for my few misgivings. However, the way in which the NRA is framing its objections may well obscure what is, to my mind, the only question mark about the new ICFRA rules, in fact only the rifle weight one. I return to this below.

Let me try to limit my unhappiness about the NRA's, specifically the Journal's, arguments to some main points (many were raised in passing by the two writers).

Through personal interaction with NRA friends, it is clear that many NRA members seem to think that ICFRA consists of a full-time (even expensive) bureaucracy such as some other international sports have, and should therefore be informing all NRAs' members directly of its activities. The 'founding fathers' of ICFRA expressly forbid this (to the point that it was written into the constitution), ensuring that ICFRA is a low-cost organisation with no full-time staff or own offices, consisting primarily of the representatives of

its member bodies. Meetings are mostly conducted in cyberspace, with face-to-face meetings generally held only every four years at a Palma Match. It is thus the duty of a member body's representatives in the ICFRA Council and committees to brief fully their own Councils and membership, not directly ICFRA's. There has been little or no evidence of this in the Journal, other than Prof Horrocks' initial article on the formation of ICFRA. If NRA members thus do not have the full information to judge both sides of the story, it is a failing of the NRA's representatives in ICFRA, not ICFRA itself.

Mr Alger's writings in his two missives on the subject are beyond the pale! I cannot understand how an official of a respected NRA, that openly writes about its valiant efforts to convince the British politicians, public and media that it is overseeing at National level an internationally-recognised sport, can deride its international body in such a manner, in writing in a public document, and whilst conveying numerous bits of misinformation. In the previous Journal, he makes several errors and commits amazing mental gymnastics. When Richard van Lingen points out several of these inaccuracies, Mr Alger cannot find the good grace to admit these mistakes and then say "but...". One cannot have a reasoned debate in such a manner.

Prof Horrock's article is a more reasonably-written and even noble effort at damage control, but I also have to disagree with several of its findings and conclusions.

There are three major errors in both articles.

Young shooters

Both writers either claim or imply that the major reason for having so many young shooters is the adherence to the standard rifle concept (that has so suddenly been rediscovered). In the Spring Journal, it was also claimed that other NRAs have lost young shooters because of switching to handloading. As I have been and remain passionately involved in what we in SABU call 'junior development', including the junior exchange agreement between the CCRS/NRA and SABU, these statements are like waving a red rag to a bull.

The reality is that the NRA has so many young shooters mainly because of its state-sponsored cadet system, which amongst other things supports TR shooting. Few other NRAs (still) have this privilege. Even when we had a cadet system in South Africa, it only supported small-bore rifle shooting, but at least it was a bit easier to convert small-bore recruits to TR. Yet we battle on and are currently gaining more juniors thanks to the renewed efforts of our current Development Committee and new SA Junior Team manager. Juniors must be fully integrated into senior clubs and everything done for them must be done by ourselves - there is no CCRS.

Most other NRAs were forced to switch to handloads - or at least allowing shooters the option of handloading - because of the loss of (usually free) defence force supplied TR ammo and not because we had a great love of handloads and moved to handloading in the spirit of what ICFRA is now accused. We lost members in general, not just juniors, because of this. Many of us simply cannot afford to carry on with the sport if we did not have the cheaper option of handloading (assuming

that one has or can make the time and there is thus no opportunity cost of this time).

The differences from the British situation are obvious. We envy you your cadet situation, wish we could have it as well, and hope that it may continue - but that it has much to do with the standard rifle doctrine, I seriously doubt.

Playing the Commonwealth Games card

Given that previous tensions existed in this respect, but were resolved, this effort to exploit differing organisational structures and voting strengths can but serve to divide our sport internationally. Do you propose that a rogue version of our sport be practised in Commonwealth events?

I do hope the smaller TR countries can continue to attend the Games' TR events and do not believe the so-called ICFRA-rifle will disadvantage them, but Games at such a level are not Saturday afternoon club shoots either.

The standard rifle concept

Frankly, this is what academics would call a theoretical construct and little more! By Prof Horrocks' own admission, the NRA has no such official policy in place. I well remember the days when the NRA's and NRA-based (like SABU's) rules contained a number of provisions to ensure such standard rifles. Those are long gone!

Other than possibly the USA and Germany, no country has possibly done more to develop new and expensive actions, stocks and accessories than GB has, to a level that most of us in the rest of the TR world can never afford, irrespective of TR or ICFRA rules. To blame ICFRA rules (much less optics ones) for escalating cost when it has been with you for so long is a bit much. Richard van Lingen factually made this point in a different way, but Mr Alger chose to ignore it. It is also the technical developments in, amongst others, GB that contributed to rifle weights pushing the 6.5kg weight limit.

I bow to Prof Horrocks' superior knowledge of ISSF rifles and rules, even found it mildly interesting, but - frankly - also confusing. If I had to compare anything to TR shooting, it would be the .22 prone rifle (of which I do have experience). He admits that the standard rifle concept did not fly. The ISSF 300m rifle is a specialised one for a very specific purpose, being to shoot at 300m only, and in my opinion a poor comparison to our rifles.

I next turn to a few lesser points.

Teams to and from GB

I have competed against many of them, at home and abroad, from 1993 until 2006, and generally found them the best equipped and financed teams around (good luck to them!). They have never been daunted by competing under rules other than the NRA's and have generally been victorious. Thus the mooted prospect of being disadvantaged now by the mythical 'ICFRA rifle' seems rather remote, especially when the ICFRA approach is largely determined by its remit to reconcile the previously irritating differences between various NRAs' rules. The contrary is rather the case. Some of our Palma team shooters came back from Canada (2007) saying that we can never beat GB Palma teams unless all candidates for the SA Palma team obtained SCATT

machines to train on. Well, then few of us will make it. Should we lobby the NRA to champion for 'standard methods of training' as well as 'standard rifles', so as not to disadvantage the rest of us?

As far as foreigners coming to Bisley are concerned, both Prof Horrocks and Mr Alger entirely miss Richard's point about a Bisley rifle (which he just inserted into his rebuttal briefly, but following on specifically from equally brief comments about handloading). It has nothing to do with the rules now disputed, but everything with your issued ammo rule, where many of us have had to endure everything from very good to downright bad ammo (I also saw Tony de Launay's comments after your recent Imperial Meeting). British shooters' chambers are also generally set up for issued ammo, mainly RG, whereas in hand loading countries, we adapt the ammo to the rifle, not vice versa. A leading British expert summarised it well in a comment to David Dodds, Peter Bramley and I in 2002: "What the NRA does to foreign competitors in the Imperial Meeting with its ammunition rule is downright disgusting!" Don't cast stones when living in a glass house.

There is another mistake made in the Journal, seemingly a belief that only the NRA can (and did) consult - even have? - "experts" and gunsmiths and was the only NRA actually to conduct trials on some of the aspects etc. This is just simply rubbish. Others do have experts, gunsmiths and the ability to conduct tests as well. The fact that we may have done our tests differently doesn't mean we did not do them at all.

Let's now consider the three disputed ICFRA rules.

Trigger pressure

In my opinion this is a non-issue.

The apparent threat that the MoD (inspired by the NRA?) won't allow trigger pressures less than 1.5kg on MoD ranges is really strange. You have allowed NSRA shooters on Century Range for years with a minimum trigger pressure of 50 grams only. You allow F Class to use lighter triggers - your rule for the Imperial Meeting states: 'Any safe trigger weight (ie the rifle must not fire when the bolt is cycled rapidly)'. Why has this never been a problem, but will be when the TR shooters are allowed a lighter trigger?

Palma 1995 (I was there) was fired under the NZRA 500g trigger rule. Whether the GB team actually reduced their trigger pressures I don't know (although anecdotal evidence suggests very few teams reduced their triggers accordingly), but guess who won? I suspect the 1992 Palma in the USA was fired under a similar rule. SABU adopted most of the ICFRA TR rules late last year and thus we were already on the lighter trigger rule at this year's SA Open Championships, where international matches were won by, guess who, GB! Many shooters in South Africa have not reduced trigger pressures - the real benefit of the new rule is just that one does not have to worry whether rain (or one of our dust storms) has inadvertently caused the trigger pressure to change below 1.5kg. Regarding cost, I believe GB shooters who shoot internationally (yes, also their juniors; I've seen their rifles out of stocks) have such good quality trigger mechanisms already that competing internationally under the new ICFRA rule will not cost them an extra

cent. By now, there should be very few of the older trigger mechanisms (such as the Musgrave one), that could not safely adjust down to 500g, left - should this be the NRA's actual fear.

You refer to the advent of the 1.5kg trigger, but fail to mention that in .303 days, trigger pressures were much more. I can also recall an initial minimum of 4 lbs (at least in GB and SA) when 7.62 mm TR rifles were introduced. Other countries have allowed the 500g trigger pressure for many years, with no incident, whereas I have seen inadvertent shots being discharged (downrange luckily) with 1.5kg triggers.

This then brings us to what I believe the NRA's expert gunsmiths and the Journal should answer: What is it (technically, in physics, etc) that categorically makes the 1.5kg trigger safe, as safe as the earlier heavier pressures, but makes 1kg or 500g unsafe? FACTS please gentlemen, not sweeping statements or conjecture.

As already stated, this rule in itself does NOT change the so-called standard rifle concept or makes our sport more expensive for most. It may have other implications.

Personally, I do not like a light trigger! I am still a fairly fast shooter and like to get a firm grip on the trigger whilst in the aim. Neither have I noticed that any of my SA team mates who have made triggers lighter under the new rule are shooting any faster; possibly the contrary. This new rule may well police itself.

Unrestricted rear sight with Eagle Eye

This is probably the second non-issue.

As stated above, the NRA was not the only one to do trials or who can consult experts. How do your experts counter the opinion of other optics experts that the point of clear focus provided by the so-called "telescope" built through this concession is actually behind the shooter's head? I am informed that excellent papers on sight optics, prepared by amongst others Dr Mullin of the DCRA and Tony Loughnan of NRANZ, and differing from the NRA viewpoint, were respectively sent to the NRA challenging its research and distributed within ICFRA. Why were they not provided to and published in the Journal, so that NRA members could evaluate all the points of view?

I need to digress for a moment, but this is crucial: most shooters do not like using the diopter rear sight, because of its cost (Eagle Eyes are much cheaper) and the difficulty of using it correctly all the time - the smallest head position error induces a major flyer on the target. Thus, returning to the issue of field trials: to give a diopter and Eagle Eye combination the best chance of success, experienced diopter users had to be found. The trials conducted in SA used shooters like Hannes Bruwer (top 10, 2007 World Individual Champs in Canada), Richard van Lingen and I who are all regular variable diopter users. The test was done with both 0.5 and 0.3 diopter Eagle Eyes.

The majority opinion was that it was near-impossible to get a proper sight picture with this combination. I was the only one to disagree partially. I managed to find a combination that could provide a fair (and of course a slightly larger) sight picture. However I also found that I had to aim for too long and eventually strain my

eyes before getting a picture that I would be more or less comfortable to fire with. Our conclusion was thus that the old restriction could be scrapped, not to benefit anyone, but because it served no purpose! The new situation would also police itself.

The few SA shooters who have, since the adoption of the ICFRA rule, experimented with this combination are not shooting better than they were capable of before and most of them are now much slower shooters, because of the time taken to be happy with the sight picture. When they try to speed up, flyers appear. Thus, I believe our original conclusions were correct, this combination offers no significant benefit to shooters and will thus also not lead to a costly rush to obtain it and so outperform others.

If we are proven wrong, and the NRA can factually prove that a significant sight benefit can indeed be obtained easily and to the detriment of others, you could have a valid case for reconsideration of this new rule. However, then ICFRA would revert to EE plus unrestricted single rear lens - a combination that is effectively already permitted in the UK - not Mr Alger's ramblings against Eagle Eyes (which ICFRA never instituted in the first place). Personally, I think this ICFRA concession will also prove to be a dead horse and thus not support your theories either.

The real issue – the rifle weight!

This, really, is the only place where your standard rifle concept may have a glimmering of truth, but then some more factual questions have to be answered.

Is it really a proven fact that heavier rifles will always, consistently, benefit shooters who use such rifles? How exactly does this work? Merely through weight, irrespective of how it's added? If so, there are several quite inexpensive ways of adding such weight. Or is it proven that heavier barrels in general, or maybe some manufacturers in particular, will bestow this benefit? What are they? Why does it work that way? How much evidence is there around the world of this? Or does it work in other ways, eg heavier - and more expensive - actions?

These - and possibly more permutations - are not mere spurious questions! If the NRA wants to lay claim to superior knowledge, expertise etc, these are the real issues and facts to be put on the table, not the current "arguments". If you can convince others on this front, you may well gain their support. I do not believe in space guns that only a few can afford and think they can buy bulls with. (I've never seen such efforts succeed in any case.)

When the new ICFRA rule in this respect came out, there were concerns that the mere perception that a heavier rifle really confers a benefit may indeed cause many shooters to go to greater expense, or conclude that they cannot afford it and should therefore leave the sport. On this front, one can therefore partially share NRA concerns as well, although the arguments in the Journal do not mention this aspect, but seem to state categorically that heavier rifle = much better shooting.

So far, I've heard no talk in SA of shooters rushing off to buy heavier equipment, barrels etc and thus there is also

no real current cost increase on this front. Many of us will not do so, nor quit the game easily. And again, the GB team at our championships were clearly not fazed by this development either, thus that fear also falls away on another front.

In conclusion, I partially agree with your proposal at the end of your article that you need to interact with other NRAs on this issue, but I hope that it will be on the real core issue(s) only, and by presenting scientific and other hard facts, not emotional and theoretical conjecture. Do not discount the allies that you may then find in other NRAs, rather than seemingly bargaining on bluster and misinformation. One just cannot see that "winning friends and influencing people"! Or is your real concern not so much these three rules, but mostly a fear of "where will it lead to next"? Then put that on the table for a proper debate. Most of all, the NRA Journal that I admire and always look forward to, should not be used in the current debate's propagandistic manner, nor the rank and file NRA members misinformed in this way. (Yes, I know, it's your Journal, but this comes from an admirer - and someone who at home and abroad has often supported the NRA, sometimes to his own detriment.)

From Dick Horrocks

Vice-Chairman of ICFRA

I have had a number of replies to my article in the summer edition of the Journal and they fall into two groups. Firstly were those from UK members who generally are very supportive of my article and the current NRA position - most of these were verbal comments and so do not appear in this edition. However, the other group of replies was from overseas members and these are reproduced in this edition alongside this reply - these support the current ICFRA TR technical rule changes and disagree with the UK position regarding its adherence to a "standard rifle" concept. I have attempted to present a composite answer here which I hope provides adequate responses to respective respondents' comments. However and on a point of clarification, I must emphasise that throughout my previous article I used the term "standard rifle" within inverted commas to distinguish the concept from the formal definition of Standard Rifle as defined by ISSF. Within my article I also attempted to give an overview of the 40 year history of the target rifle from an NRA and personal view which I hope TR shooters younger and more recent to the sport than myself found useful. In addition and in regard to the recently accepted ICFRA TR technical rules, I also stated what I believe to be the GB NRA position which is one that I personally subscribe to. I thank all respondents who have in some cases constructed most detailed replies and hope that my comments below, while amplifying views stated in my previous article have also attempted to answer and in some cases agree with respondents' statements.

The "standard rifle" argument

As correctly pointed out by Richard van Lingen, the original ISSF Standard Rifle was in fact a very basic rifle defined by overall weight, trigger weight and limitations on stock adjustment and this extended into the early

1970 period. Since that time, as previously discussed, the ISSF definition for .22LR has changed including increased weight and use of adjustable cheek-pieces to a level that is not far off the current NRA TR definition including an overall 6.5kg weight maximum. As also pointed out by Richard, the GB NRA TR definition has not excluded fully adjustable stocks, loosely termed by many as "space gun" stocks. As long as the overall rifle weight and limitations on butt-plate curvature are adhered to, then these are legal. However, whether or not these multi-component, almost infinitely adjustable stocks are more effective than more conventional stocks with little or no adjustments is left to the individual shooter and his or her pocket to decide - the trade will always find means of generating new products that may tempt even the most thrifty and conservative of shooters to invest in, while working within the current rules! Interestingly, casual observation around the ranges shows that many top TR shooters of all nationalities still use quite simple equipment and their scores suggest that simplicity often reaps rewards while minimising potential problems of technology failures! As mentioned in my article, the Shooting Committee agreed to invite all competitors at this year's Imperial Meeting to complete a description of their respective rifles and the outcome of this will demonstrate, hopefully, that more simply configured rifles produce similar results to those having more complex designs.

In the defence of the ICFRA TR rule changes, the ICFRA President, Tony Loughnan of New Zealand has produced an objective response and reasons for opening up the TR definition beyond the previously more constricted definition. His reply is supported and enlarged upon by both Richard van Lingen and Deon Burger. No doubt all TR shooters would agree with Tony that any attempts to simplify rules are laudable and Richard as a significant member of the ICFRA International Rules Review Group (IRRG) will obviously support this view. However it is possible that by simplifying rules in an incremental way we may cause unplanned developments and unintended consequences to arise.

Both Tony and Deon state that adherence to the concept of a "standard rifle" is out of date and plainly illogical and this view, in my opinion, begs the question of whether or not the use of a fairly simple rifle having acceptable levels of accuracy with respect to the targets used is a sensible aspiration or not. One thing is certain when studying price lists of small-bore and 300m rifles from the world's major manufacturers, Standard Rifles are cheaper than the so-called "match" or "free rifles" and this has been and continues to be a major deciding factor within GB NRA. Thus by maintaining a tightly defined rifle, costs can be minimised as much as possible, a factor that is important to the average club shooter, the newcomer and the experienced shooter alike. It is interesting that Deon Burger makes the point that many South Africans cannot afford the rifles currently being purchased by many GB shots and yet continues to criticise the GB NRA stand with regard to adopting a most probably cheaper rifle.

Deon states that the concept is a theoretical construct and I, as a fellow academic, agree with him. It is in fact a model and as such is not perfect but does allow a given

direction in rifle design to be defined. So where is the current ICFRA direction taking us? In criticising the adherence to this "standard rifle" concept, there has been no attempt to define what an ICFRA-approved TR rifle might wish to become or indeed what levels of accuracy we are attempting to achieve? If the answer is "ultimate accuracy" then we are truly entering the "free" or "no holds barred" rifle era - I shall return to this later.

Optical sight aids

With regard to the current and new ICFR optical aids rule, it can be rightly argued that this introduces a minimum need to police lens characteristics in contrast to more complex definitions that are more difficult to control. The present GB NRA Rules 234 and 235 and definition of lenses is rarely if ever policed to my knowledge and would be difficult to do so. It can be justifiably argued that the simpler ICFRA rules have the advantage. On optical grounds, Richard's criticisms of the recent GB NRA are valid although the current (2008) version has removed the "non-magnifying" descriptor from any single rearsight lens definition and replaced it by a prescription lens similar to that used by the competitor in everyday use. Nevertheless, I personally consider that there are still problems with these rules since while Rule 234 states that spectacles may be worn, this is not qualified by "as might be designed for everyday use" or some similar wording; I use varifocals for everyday use but have shooting glass lenses prescribed for astigmatism alone, which as Richard points out have a magnifying property.

With regard to Richard's and Deon's criticisms of the NRA Shooting Committee's reliance on the outcome of the Optical Working Group's recent work I have some sympathy. Much research can often be described as being "full of holes" in that variables and processes may be chosen for study by one research group which are in conflict with those chosen by another. In my own academic discipline, there is often considerable disagreement about which parameters should be selected and fixed or varied when investigating a given problem; this can provide as much healthy scientific debate as the results themselves. At least the Group published its findings and these, to my knowledge are the only recent trials whose results have been published in a widely available document. Deon mentions that other research undertaken in both Canada and New Zealand should have been made known to the Group - it wasn't to my knowledge. I now find that a paper has been written by Roger Mullin of Canada and that Richard van Lingen undertook an analysis in 2006 of over 70 South African shooters in order to gain an idea of the optical aids used and perceived advantages gained by doing so. It would be of interest to review all the data available, both informally and formally obtained, and then present a considered set of conclusions for the benefit of all TR shooters. However, with regard to the GB work, I would prefer the Group itself to respond to these criticisms.

Trigger weight

While accepting the logic behind ICFRA's decision to allow a trigger weight minimum of 0.5kg and Tony's, Richard's and Deon's defence of this, the GB NRA Shooting Committee has been clear since 2000 to my

knowledge, that this limit cannot be supported in GB NRA-hosted events because of safety concerns. Deon asks “where is the evidence that 0.5kg is unsafe?” or words to that effect. The Shooting Committee and NRA consider that for TR, a major reason is that in the UK we operate many ranges in an echelon shooting mode plus the possibility that current TR triggers designed for 1.5kg may be reduced by their owners to unsafe levels in order to achieve the reduced limit. I personally consider that lighter triggers enable some shooters to make more rapid trigger releases and that the whole trigger release cycle is eased with a reduced trigger as evidenced by the traditional use of “free” triggers in three-position rifle shooting. The combination of a lighter trigger and unlimited rifle weight also ensures that any slight errors in release and hold have less effect when the firer has the greater inertia of a heavier rifle to overcome compared to that of a lighter rifle.

Overall weight and heavy barrels

Like the optical sights issue, so the overall weight debate has a number of varying views and whatever the views of the “any weight” school, I still subscribe to the current GB NRA 6.5kg maximum weight restriction. At a personal level, with my build (6ft 1”, 13 stone 4 lbs), a 6kg rifle is just about right - both my rifles are just below 6kg; to a 10 stone cadet, then 5 to 5.5kg is probably fine. My small-bore rifle is just over 6.5kg and I find this to be at my personal comfort limit. However, someone much heavier than me will find the ISSF 8kg maximum (and maybe even heavier) comfortable and without wishing to resurrect the recent issues discussed within the ICFRA TR Committee regarding the weight issue, one fact I think is true, heavier rifles tend to be more expensive than lighter rifles, as evidenced by the Standard versus Match rifle price differences mentioned above.

I, like Richard, will be interested to see what the US team members bring to the World Long Range Championships in Australia in 2011 in terms of heavy barrels and overall rifle designs and weights! Maybe then, we shall see whether or not TR equipment has extended beyond the intentions of the ICFRA Council at the time. It could be, however, that with the increasing cost of fuel and air travel, weight limitations will be influenced in a positive way, ie downwards!

Ammunition

I did not introduce the subject of the NRA’s issued ammunition policy and use of RG ammunition during the Imperial Meeting into my article but since both Richard and Deon have raised it I shall respond. While I agree wholeheartedly with you that for the best accuracy ammunition needs to be matched to a given rifle chamber, this assumes that all competitors have or wish to access the knowledge and equipment required to be able to tailor their ammunition, notwithstanding the additional associated resources required! It is interesting to note that away from Bisley, handloading for TR or use of good commercial ammunition (eg HPS) is more often than not the norm across the UK. Furthermore, and in agreement with Deon, handloading is the logical alternative when issued ammunition is not available and commercial ammunition is too expensive. Like many shooters away from Bisley, I handload in order to

produce a quality round at an economic and affordable cost; the annual County of Lancaster Open Meeting, for example, always allows “any ammunition” with the proviso of a 155gns maximum bullet being mandatory. However, the NRA policy of issued ammo still prevails during the Imperial Meeting. Now that the previous NRA/MoD contract has terminated, the NRA Trustees are overseeing a tendering process at the present time to decide the choice of future Imperial Meeting ammunition suppliers. My personal experience of competitions in the UK where good commercial ammunition has been issued to all competitors is that ammunition quality is rarely discussed because of the acceptable results obtained on our current targets. On these grounds, the “issued ammunition” policy should be acceptable to most competitors, provided quality ammunition is issued at an affordable cost. I accept the view that the absence of affordable ammunition has caused other NRAs to move to allow handloaded ammunition at their respective national competitions.

Young shooters

Richard’s and Deon’s comments that GB juniors are better off than those in other TR-shooting countries do require challenging. In the UK there are different types of junior. At Bisley one generally sees the best in terms of shooting ability and these tend to be those straight out of public school cadet corps, the universities or younger members of established shooting families; they also tend to come from the better-off section of society and so can afford, or are supported, in their TR shooting. Without them, the next generation of TR shooters would be very lean indeed. However, across the UK, and this is the concern of regional TR shooters including myself, the local cadet forces outnumber the public school numbers several fold but rarely do their members either get to Bisley or, more importantly, continue shooting once they leave the cadets. In the North West of England we organise the annual cadet meeting where over 100 youngsters compete. We have been training their trainers and so standards are increasing. However, capturing these cadets when they leave is like catching the wind. The major factors (apart from competing against all the distractions that post 16-18 year olds have on offer) are: identifying a convenient club, the UK firearms regulations which make possessing and keeping a rifle difficult and expensive (and impossible if they live in rented accommodation even with parents), travelling to ranges and cost of equipment. While cost of equipment could be seen as a relatively minor issue since the others are already very difficult to surmount, it will feature should a youngster, having crossed the other hurdles, reach the final one!

Effect of incremental changes to TR specifications

As stated in my article, with ICFRA having moved forward with incremental changes to rifle specifications without an overall plan or goal, unintended consequences can result and some of these suggested included:

- 1 The need for GB shooters to have “ICFRA” or “Palma” rifles when touring abroad
- 2 The problems of GB hosting future world TR matches

- 3 The need for overseas shooters visiting GB to have GB NRA-approved rifles
- 4 The possible impact of the rule changes on Commonwealth Games shooting and the CSF.

Some of these may not be problems, since with regard to (1) some GB shooters already have rifles which adhere to ICFRA technical rules whatever changes occur while others will stay with their GB NRA TR rifles and under (4) the same will happen for squad members shooting for their respective countries during Commonwealth Games matches. However, I still consider that raising these has promoted thought and discussion outside ICFRA circles although I have been criticised for doing so. Furthermore, GB NRA will have to come to decisions regarding items (2) and (3) although the former is not an immediate problem!

Finally, I should like to return to the possible need for a theoretical model of what the ideal TR rifle should be and, therefore, to what aim ICFRA and its component associations should aspire. Generally in prone target rifle shooting, the opposite of any "standard rifle" model has been that of the "free" or match rifle and it may be argued that the current ICFRA TR definition is becoming close to this. As stated already, in ISSF "free" or "match" rifle disciplines both for small-bore and 300m, the maximum weight is 8kg and trigger weight is not specified other than being safe. In ISSF competition, the addition of lenses to iron sights is prohibited. Thus the free rifle is not truly free in that constraints are imposed. In fact,

the new ICFRA TR definition has gone far beyond the ISSF definition in the area of maximum weight and use of lenses and so one might ask the question "Are ICFRA and its member NRAs now moving towards a more truly free prone rifle for fullbore shooting?" If this is the case, then perhaps this should be a stated goal so that everyone is clear on which model or ideal we are striving to achieve. However, if a truly free rifle is to be aimed for then why should we stay with a 155 grains bullet or even the 7.62 mm round for that matter? Extending the definition would create a TR rifle which was essentially an F Class rifle without a telescope and held without a rest but via a sling! F/TR or F (unrestricted), to use the ICFRA definition, restricts the calibre to 7.62mm/.308 but any bullet may be used and so the precedent has been set for moving away from a 155 grains bullet. Interestingly, F Class still operates a maximum weight limit.

Currently, I believe it is the position of the GB NRA that to move towards this free prone rifle model, while simplifying the TR rules, is making the sport more complex and expensive in terms of equipment. In contrast, staying with a "standard rifle" concept, however flawed, enables rifles of acceptable accuracy to be designed at an affordable cost. This is in no way to prevent the sport developing in terms of equipment improvements or marksmanship as shown by the significant improvements in both the intrinsic accuracy of the TR rifle alongside developments in shooting technique demonstrated at both individual and team levels during the last 30 years or so.

Congratulations James "Jumbo" Lewis



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BRITISH CADET RIFLE TEAM TO CANADA 2008 – THE ATHELINGS

by Julia Adamson

Commandant

Lt Col PJN Knowles Sedbergh School CCF

Adjutant

Capt J Adamson Dollar Academy CCF

Armourer

WO1 (SSI) JT Jones Sedbergh School

Cadets

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Cpl JRO Boyd | Cheltenham College |
| FS TMJ Burgess | Tonbridge School |
| CSgt T Duhré | Dollar Academy |
| LCpl CL Edwards | Derbyshire ACF |
| WO1 HWR Gilbert | Oratory School |
| Cpl SHJ Harley | Epsom College |
| Sgt SKC Hunter | Epsom College |
| LCpl ER Johnson | Gresham's School |
| Sjt HL Landrum | Dorset ACF |
| FS CT Leyden | 2390 (Belfast RA) Sqn ATC |
| Cpl CA Mandella | Gloucestershire ACF |
| Cpl GJF Ogden | Sedbergh School |
| Cpl SJ Pym | 126 (Derby) Sqn ATC |
| Cpl NR Rothwell | Derbyshire ACF |
| Cpl KE Simpson | Dollar Academy |
| Sgt DG Slaughter | Middx & NW London ACF |
| Cpl WF Stewart | Epsom College |
| Sgt AJC Wilson | Wellington College |

Non-Travelling Reserves

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Cdt GW Davies | Gresham's School |
| SUO CJ Mitchell | Oratory School |

Any former Atheling will recall the sense of excitement that comes when the group prepares for the journey to Canada. Our team had managed to squeeze in two or three days at home to make their final preparations but rifle packing, weighing, repacking, reweighing and, for some, repacking and reweighing yet again were still required. The reward for these efforts was the issue of the Athelings hat by Colonel Suffield Jones. Even the original sceptics were pretty pleased with their appearance in the famous fedoras; the distinctive appearance of the team at Heathrow the following morning prompted numerous questions from fellow travellers. Being asked whether we were off to the Olympics in Beijing whilst checking in to Air Canada did cause a few chortles but the enthusiasm was greatly appreciated and the interest in shooting quite remarkable. Many people wished the team every success for the tour and numerous brochures were handed out.

The accommodation in Connaught Base in Canada was in permanent tents which are very comfortable if a little airy at night. It is odd to be kept awake by crickets at dusk and woken by coyotes at dawn, and

very annoying if you happen to have a groundhog burrowing under your tent, but the food, friendliness and hospitality are beyond compare.

The next few days were spent enjoying our liaison officer Major Tweten's "List of Exciting Ways of Getting Soaked" and then trying to get dried out again. In Ottawa, a team photo call in front of the Parliament building was followed by a "Duck Tour" of the city. As our amphibious craft gracefully left the river, it promptly shunted a saloon car. The damage was less than the crunch suggested but the driver was rather shaken by being run over by a ship. Saturday was White Water Rafting Day. After a wet summer, high water levels created some awesome conditions on the Ottawa River. An alarmingly brief practice of "Get Downs" "Hard Lefts" and "Easies", prompted the Athelings to click into team survival mode and a series of heart-stopping rapids culminated with the monstrous Coliseum Falls. Three powered rescue boats hovered in the eddy to scoop up unfortunate capsized victims before they were swept at 30mph towards a series of large rocks. Sam Hunter and Cormac bailed out but survived for the next day's soaking.

The "Montreal Soaking" was a jet boat expedition to the Lachine Rapids on the St Lawrence River where more walls of water cascaded over the boat and the passengers. Dried off, we visited the 1976 Olympic Stadium, a very futuristic architectural structure, and its neighbouring Biodome which gave us an excellent glimpse of the different climatic zones of Canada and their indigenous animals. We also enjoyed an evening Downtown and visits to Mont Royal and the magnificent church of St Joseph. Old Fort Henry was our next port of call where student volunteers, dressed in period uniforms, demonstrated 19th century drill with the Snider Enfield rifles and the Fort's cannons. The volunteers were surrounded by our British rifle enthusiasts and delighted to have so many knowledgeable questions.

Tuesday's wet event was a trip to sandy North Beach on Lake Ontario. The Athelings tumbled out of the coach and ran into a vast expanse of sparklingly fresh, clear water. Sam Hunter tested his Blackberry for waterproofing and found it wanting, but swimming and beach games were the order of the day. Team command tasks to build the highest human pyramid in the water, bury Tim and scoop out a sand Ferrari were completed with the tremendous enthusiasm and good humour which were to become the continuing hallmarks of our tour. Back at the Trenton RCAF Museum a serving Canadian Hercules pilot was our guide and Tim Burgess, recently exhumed from his sandy grave, was in his element conversing and sharing information with the flight buffs.

Brilliant sunshine warmed us as we entered Wonderland theme park on Wednesday. Major Tweten, encouraged

by Mr Jones, sent us to the Water Park to enjoy rides, flumes and fountains and another thorough soaking before an afternoon of spin drying on fast rides and tumble drying on the mighty Behemoth roller coaster. This was, in fact, good training for the lift in the CN Tower! We were astonished at the sheer scale of the CN Tower on our next day's tour to Toronto. A speedy 58-second climb and we were 351 metres up. After a few initial nerves, most of us were lying down on the Glass Floor, which offered a brilliant view directly down to the tower base. A few more adventurous souls also paid to visit the Sky Pod, the highest man-made observatory at 1465ft above the ground. It was only a short walk to the Roger's Centre the home of the Toronto Blue Jays.

Friday was the finale to the Tweten "Shrink the Athelings" strategy but it started dryly with yet another beautiful day in Toronto and a glorious drive to Niagara-on-the-Lake, a picturesque town with magnificent floral displays and quaint old shops. At Fort George, a British fortification, which once defended the straights against the United States, students in authentic traditional costumes brought the garrison to life. At Niagara Falls that afternoon, the intrepid Major led his polythene-poncho-clad crew behind the falls through a series of tunnels and onto a platform. The noise and close proximity of millions of gallons of water cascading in front of us was mesmerising and we were sprayed by clouds of mist from the torrents. For the Maid of the Mist boat trip, we donned teal blue ponchos and powered up stream into the Horseshoe Falls to within 75 metres of the raging torrent. Surrounded by rainbows and overwhelmed by the sheer force of the downpour, we were almost unaware that we were being given yet another soaking! Later that evening, we watched a spectacular fireworks display over the Falls which marked the end of a most wonderfully wet and relaxing Canadian holiday.

An early start back at Connaught was a shock to the system. Naomi, Chris and David had already shot with the C12s on previous visits to Canada, but for the rest the fitting out session took some time. When everyone, including the legendary John Carol and Ian Purdie, worked closely with us on a 100 yards application shoot, we were rapidly finding the bull. The Athelings shot four times during the course of the day and one third of the scores were possibles. The competition to convert both sighters and shoot clean had five winners but Stephen's V bull count put him right at the top.

The competitions started in earnest on Tuesday and the Aggregate was great reading for the BCRT with David, Angus and Sam being chased closely by Will, Georgie, James, Cormac and Katy. On Wednesday, of the 54 scores recorded by Athelings at 3, 5 and 600 yards, 19 were possibles and 18 one off. The two Sam's and Tarni provided extra excitement at the end of the day by having to shoot off against each other. Sam Hunter was the victor for the Gerry Ouellette. A young Canadian pipped David in the shoot off for the Alain Marion and, despite possibles from five of the Athelings in the Gil

Boa, a fantastic 50.9 from one of the Canadian Cadets won the match.

The Rex Goddard Stage 2 Match on Thursday was started in perfectly still, sunny conditions. We were all aware that at 500 yards, with so little breeze, the match was a head to head of shooting skills. Coaches Ed and Angus kept in close touch with Head Coach Katy. Twelve firers dropped six points over the first distance. Moving back to 600 the flags began to pick up and the coaches really began to get their teeth into making up the twelve points we needed. After great shooting, most noticeably from Steven and Sam Hunter who went clean at both ranges, we finished the match aware that we were incredibly close. In the end our 825.70 was a clear win for Stage 2, but a point short of an overall win.

Our Athelings were frequent medal winners at the prize giving, the highlight of which was carrying David into the hall on the Grand Aggregate winner's chair.

Our DCRA Meeting started on Saturday as Friday's Ottawa Regiment was rained off. We had three pre-grand shoots, the Gooderham at 500 yards and 900 metres followed by the 900 metres Army and Navy Veterans. The weather remained fairly calm on Alpha range and Cormac, Georgie and Katy popped in 75s. Next door, on Charlie Range, Connaught was testing the mettle of our midday shooters and by the afternoon a 42 was treated with admiration, and 68s raised cheers. Stickledown in a storm seemed easier to coach than the fishtail winds off the Ottawa River.

Sunday's four matches were short range: the Tilton at 300 metres and 600 yards brought possibles for Henry, Naomi, Katy, David and William, but James' duo led the pack, especially when he topped up his tally with a third possible in the Macdougall at 500 yards after lunch. The Athelings are a very competitive bunch, and as the afternoon progressed, dropped shots and converted sighters became the topic of conversation. By this time, we had heard about the HPS crosses and everyone was keen to add at least a couple to their luggage home.

Monday's weather was changeable and those who shot the Norman Beckett at 800 metres in the latter part of the day had a very tricky match. The Athelings continued to show their strength at short range with possibles for Georgie, David, Sam Harley and Will and doubles from Ed and Sam Hunter.

The Tuesday Letson Match is 2 and 7s at short range - something that cadets practice constantly, so everyone set out in a very positive frame of mind. Katy scored a 104 with Sam Harley, Georgie and Angus on 103 and Chris 102. It was quite tricky at 600 yards as the winds rose for the afternoon and weary warriors struggled back into the shed after their battle in the Alexander of Tunis at 900 metres again later in the afternoon.

Sam Harley was our top scorer in the President's on Wednesday afternoon with 147.15, but Chelsea, Georgie and David also scored 147 with Naomi, Angus and



The Athelings and their haul.



Cadets in action at Connaught.



Marshmallow cook up.



Tarni going the wrong way!



The team outside the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

Tim just behind on 146. Cormac triumphed with a 49.1 at 800 metres. Wednesday evening's task was to prepare for the Faraday match to be shot the next afternoon. Late in the evening, the decisions about shooters, coaches and running orders were made and Will Stewart (captain for the match) was satisfied that we were as prepared as possible for the most important match on any Athelings tour.

The Faraday Match is shot at 300, 500 and 600 yards. Nine of the Athelings shot 98 or 99s in the DCRA matches in the morning and we had five other possibles but we knew that we were going to have to be superb in the afternoon to beat a very determined Canadian team. The Athelings were on top form, with Chelsea, Stephen, Sam Hunter, Cormac, Katy and Angus shooting 103 or 104s. The team had been concentrating hard on getting zeros right, converting sighters and searching for high V bull counts and they scored in all areas, beating the Canadians by 11 points and 12 V bulls - a great feeling to do well.

The Under 25 Long Range Match on Friday was truly a coaches challenge and they had one of the toughest jobs yet as the wind on the range was incredibly difficult to read. The Canadian experience at long range in Connaught put them a very impressive 27 points ahead at the end. Some fantastic coaching from the opposition gained three, seemingly impossible, possibles and some very high aggregates. That night's team feast was an "All you can eat" Chinese meal; the NRT and BCRT did their best to eat it all.

Six Athelings qualified to shoot in the Governor General's Final on Saturday but they had the Under 25 Short Range Match to win first. One of the team pointed out to Katy, Sam Harley, Angus, David, Chelsea and Georgie that, at home, you shoot the Mackinnon in the morning and Queen's Final in the afternoon, so it was good practice. Despite all the efforts though, the match was lost by a very narrow margin.

We were delighted how often we were represented at the DCRA Prizegiving. Nobody could match the 29

times that Marius de Champlain walked to the dais to be presented with F Class awards but Katy Simpson made a good attempt by winning the Otter, the Cadet Junior Open Target Rifle Championships, the Russel B Potter Cup, the Strachan Trophy and being part of the winning Faraday, Gordon Highlanders, Major of Bagshot and Victoria Rifles Teams. Katy also added the Jim Waller Trophy, for top Atheling in the MacDonald Stewart Grand Aggregate, to her haul. Sam Hunter was third in the Senior/Junior pairs, Sam Harley won the Cadet Short Range, Will Stewart won the Harrison, Cdt Berry (NRT) and Sam Harley paired up to win the United Empire Trophy and Georgina Ogden was the highest placed cadet in the Governor General's Final winning the Bond Trophy. The final Athelings prize was the Suffield-Jones Trophy for the most successful coach in the Faraday. Sam Harley and Katy Simpson were tied when we examined the plots but Sam, Head Coach on the day, won the tie breaker.

Our final Canada prize was a trip to Algonquin Provincial Park for three days camping and canoeing. The Athelings took to the whole Davy Crocket business like loons to water and made fairly straight progress. Our guides Tara, Gordon and Smithy revealed the tardis qualities of the equipment they had brought. Enough food to feed the 5000 twice over had been vacuum packed, dehydrated and zip bagged into tiny nooks and crannies and an entire camping shop full of clever gadgets unfolded and exploded to become chairs, tables, ovens, pots and tool kits. Pulleys to haul food up trees at night to "discourage" the bears and hammocks to test the hardiest campers were all revealed whilst the weaker mortals put up tents and collected firewood. We enjoyed three wonderfully relaxing and playful days in fabulous surroundings before, all too soon, we were sailing back to civilisation. Nature could not have provided us with a more spectacular journey downstream. The early morning mist was still on the lake even as the sun rose and we paddled through the haze in silence - every one of the team appreciating that they had been part of a particularly special Canadian tour.



Colonel Sainsbury with Sam.



Katy receives one of many prizes.



David on a High Chair!

THANKS A LOT

by John Gardener



Well I did have it off in the meeting
At the club house, just by the range
It's been such a long time since I did it
With spectators it felt rather strange

Some people joined in and some didn't
Some paid for the pleasure it gave
Some called me rude names and made comments
And others just said I was brave

The Missus is pleased, nay delighted
She hated the hairs on my face
Now my amateur hacks with a razor
Leave scratches and spots in their place

The aftershave burns me like crazy
And make me cry out with the pain
But for the jingle of cash in the bucket
I'd do it all over again

And now I've been shorn and denuded
I don't care if you call me a clot
There's over a grand in the kitty
So I just want to say, thanks a lot.



"Beat me in the Hutton with my own rifle will you?" Mik Maksimovic gets his own back!

There are some lovely, generous people in the world of shooting. I have been privileged to meet many such people since I came to work at Bisley in 2005. From lending you their favourite gun "Go on, have a go, it's a great gun" to chucking money into a bucket, while they watch some old fool subject himself to having his beard and head shaved by anyone who wanted to have a go. Well, thanks to those lovely, generous people there is over £1300 in the envelope and there are promises of more to come. The Disabled Police Officer's Association of Northern Ireland are I know, grateful for every pound they get, and when I eventually send the cheque I shall tell them how grateful that I am, to all those who joined in the fun and contributed, for giving me the chance to 'front' your donations. It was great fun and leaves me with the thought, what next? Wing walking is out, the nanny state has seen to that, Eric Stuart Bamford beat me to the parachute jump, and there is no way you'll get me up a bungee tower (I have trouble going up a step ladder)! So, any *sensible* ideas for next year's 'stunt' will be welcome.



John begins to wonder whether Fred's skills with a razor match his skills as an armorer.



Peter Hobson gets stuck in.

Photos by Andy Duffy

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ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND PRINCIPAL COMMITTEES 2007/2008

**by Elected Ordinary, Regional and Shooting Discipline Members of the General Council
From 1 September 2007 to 31 August 2008**

| No of meetings | General Council 3 | Shooting 2 | Membership 2 | |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----|
| Alexander GK | 3 | x | 2 | (O) |
| Bailie HRM | 3 | x | x | (R) |
| Barnard GV | 3 | 2 | x | (R) |
| Bennett ID | 3 | x | x | (O) |
| Black MJ | 1 | x | x | (R) |
| Bloomfield JPS | 2 | x | x | (O) |
| Boston MZJ | 1 | x | x | (O) |
| Brooks CM | 2 | x | x | (O) |
| Calvert DP | 2 | 2 | x | (O) |
| Cargill Thompson A | 3 | 2 | x | (D) |
| Carmichael JH | 2 | 2 | x | (O) |
| Clayton ARK | 3 | x | x | (O) |
| Coley PR | 1 | x | x | (R) |
| East SJ | 1 | x | x | (R) |
| Gardener EJ | 3 | x | x | (O) |
| Horrocks AR | 3 | 1 | x | (O) |
| Hunter P | 0 | 0 | x | (D) |
| Kidner TLW | 2 | x | x | (R) |
| Kynoch JM | 2 | 1 | x | (D) |
| Law CD | 3 | x | x | (R) |
| Maksimovic M | 2 | x | 1 | (O) |
| Monaghan P* | 2 | 2 | x | (D) |
| Murton C* | 3 | 1 | 0 | (D) |
| Rankin J | 0 | x | 0 | (O) |
| Robertson IW | 3 | 1 | x | (O) |
| Robertson KD | 3 | x | 2 | (O) |
| Shirra Gibb I | 3 | 2 | x | (D) |
| Spittles D | 0 | 0 | x | (D) |
| Warburton JD | 3 | x | x | (R) |
| Watkins MP | 2 | x | x | (R) |
| Watson JA* | 3 | x | 2 | (O) |
| Watt DD | 3 | x | x | (R) |
| Welford A | 2 | x | x | (O) |
| Wills RHF | 3 | 2 | x | (D) |
| Young DG* | 3 | x | x | (R) |

* = Members of the Council (Board of Trustees). The Council meet at least 7 to 8 times per annum and its members are expected to attend all or most of such meetings. In addition, Trustees give attendance at other times for formal decisions.

x = not a member of that committee

(O) = Ordinary Member

(R) = Regional Member

(D) = Shooting Discipline Member

NRA COUNCIL AND GENERAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Council (Board of Trustees)

| | |
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| Mr BWD Richards | <i>Chairman</i> |
| Mr JEM Hartwell | <i>Vice-Chairman (Co-opted)</i> |
| Mr MJC Haszlakiewicz | <i>Treasurer</i> |
| Mr M Maksimovic | <i>Elected</i> |
| Dr P Monaghan | <i>Chairman Shooting Committee</i> |
| Mr CJ Murton | <i>Elected</i> |
| Mr JC Ragg | <i>Co-opted</i> |
| Mr JA Watson | <i>Chairman Membership Committee</i> |
| Mr DG Young | <i>Elected</i> |
| <i>In attendance</i> | |
| Mr GWJ Alger | <i>Secretary</i> |

Audit Committee

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
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| Mr DG Young | |

Remuneration Committee

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
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| Mr DG Young | |

Investment Committee

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
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The General Council

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| Mr GV Barnard | <i>Regional - East Midlands</i> | |
| Mrs ID Bennett | <i>Regional - West Midlands</i> | |
| Mr MJM Black | <i>Regional - Northern</i> | |
| Mr JPS Bloomfield | <i>Elected</i> | |
| Mr T Bobbett | <i>CPSA</i> | |
| Col (Ret'd) WGC Bowles | <i>Ministry of Defence</i> | |
| Mr CM Brooks | <i>Elected</i> | |
| Flt Lt DP Calvert | <i>Elected</i> | |
| Dr AMW Cargill Thompson | <i>Discipline - Match Rifle</i> | |
| Mr JH Carmichael | <i>Elected</i> | |
| Lt Col ARK Clayton | <i>Elected</i> | |
| Mr PR Coley | <i>Regional - South Western</i> | |
| Cdr IG Danbury | <i>Royal Naval/Royal Marines Rifle Association</i> | |
| <i>Vacant</i> | <i>Regional - Southern</i> | |
| Maj MG Farnan | <i>Elected</i> | |
| Mr CN Farr | <i>Co-opted</i> | |
| Mr EJ Gardener | <i>Elected</i> | |
| Mr GMLN Gilpin | <i>Elected</i> | |

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Mr MD Jones MP
Mr J Kapoor
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Mr DE Spittles
Dr JD Warburton
Mr MP Watkins
Mr JA Watson
Mr DD Watt
Miss AJ Welford
Mr RHF Wills
Mr DG Young

Muzzle Loaders Association of Great Britain
Welsh Target Shooting Federation
Army Rifle Association
Discipline - Practical Rifle
Co-opted
Co-opted
Regional - Scotland
Discipline - Sporting Rifle
Royal Naval Reserve Rifle Association
Scottish Target Shooting Federation
Elected
Co-opted
Jersey Rifle Association
Guernsey Rifle Association
Discipline - F Class
Discipline - Gallery Rifle & Pistol
National Small-bore Rifle Association
Royal Air Force Small Arms Association
Territorial Army Rifle Association
Discipline - Target Rifle/Elected
Elected
English Target Shooting Federation
Regional - London & SE
Discipline - 300 Metres
Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting
Royal Auxiliary Air Force
Target Shooting Committee
Discipline - Muzzle Loading
Regional - Yorks/Humberside
Regional - Wales
Elected
Regional - Eastern
Elected
Discipline - Classic Arms
Regional - North Western

Committees of the General Council

Shooting Committee

| | | |
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| Lt Col L Holley | | |
| Prof AR Horrocks | | |
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| Flt Lt IW Robertson | <i>Target Rifle/Elected</i> | |
| Dr AMW Cargill Thompson | <i>Match Rifle</i> | |
| Mr CJ Murton | <i>Gallery Rifle & Pistol</i> | |
| Mr JM Kynoch | <i>Sporting Rifle</i> | |

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|----------------------|---------------------------------|
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| Mr P Hunter | <i>Practical Rifle</i> |
| Mr I Shirra-Gibb | <i>300 Metres</i> |
| Mr RHF Wills | <i>Classic Arms</i> |
| <i>In attendance</i> | |
| Maj MG Farnan | <i>NSC Director of Shooting</i> |
| Mr GWJ Alger | <i>NRA Secretary General</i> |

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| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
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| Dr JDS Langley | |
| Mr GAE Larcombe | |
| Mr RJ McQuillan | |
| <i>In attendance</i> | |
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| Mr JMB Baillie-Hamilton | |
| Mr MK Townsend | |
| Mr CN Tremlett | |
| Mr AR Campbell-Smith | |
| Mr JM Kynoch | |
| <i>In attendance</i> | |
| Maj MG Farnan | <i>NSC Director of Shooting</i> |
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F Class Sub-Committee

| | |
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| Mr D Kent | |
| Dr P Monaghan | |
| Mr D Parr | |
| Mr D Stewart | |

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| Mr J Robinson | |
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Representatives invited from:

Historical Breechloading Smallarms Association
Vintage Arms Association
Muzzle Loaders Association of Great Britain
Arms and Armour Society

Other Co-opted members by invitation

Any Member of the NRA with an interest is invited to request an invitation to attend.

Schools Sub-Committee

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| Maj MG Farnan | <i>Co-opted</i> |
| Capt PJ Farnan | <i>Co-opted</i> |
| Mr JP Hakim | <i>St Johns</i> |

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| Lt Col VF McLean | <i>Ampleforth</i> |
| Maj SJ Pattinson | <i>Co-opted</i> |
| Maj AR Penfold | <i>Tonbridge</i> |
| Mr O Shepherd | <i>CCF Association</i> |
| Capt CA Stewart | <i>Dollar Academy</i> |
| Brig JR Smales | <i>Chairman CCRS</i> |
| Lt Col NS Suffield-Jones | <i>Athelings</i> |
| Capt NE Topham | <i>Oratory</i> |
| <i>In attendance</i> | |
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Teams Finance Sub-Committee

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|----------------------|---------------------------------|
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| Mr RM Hodgins | |
| Mr JDI Hossack | |
| Mr RCT Jeens | |
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| Mr RWH Stafford | <i>Secretary</i> |
| Mr CN Tremlett | |
| Miss AJ Welford | |
| <i>In attendance</i> | |
| Mr GWJ Alger | <i>NRA Secretary General</i> |
| Maj MG Farnan | <i>NSC Director of Shooting</i> |

Membership Committee

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mr JA Watson | <i>Chairman</i> |
| Mr GK Alexander | |
| Miss F Hinson | <i>Co-opted</i> |
| Miss S Lohmann | <i>Co-opted</i> |
| Mr M Maksimovic | |
| Mrs KD Robertson | |
| <i>In attendance</i> | |
| Mr CDR Webb | <i>Regional Manager</i> |
| Mrs HL Webb | <i>Membership Secretary</i> |
| Mr GWJ Alger | <i>Secretary</i> |

Disciplinary Committee

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Mr JM Holmes | <i>Chairman</i> |
| Mr HRM Bailie | |
| Mr CM Brooks | |
| Flt Lt DP Calvert | |
| Mr DGF Evans | |
| Miss MF Gooden | |
| Mr CN McEachran | |
| Mr RM Mott | |
| Flt Lt IW Robertson | |
| Mr RHF Wills | |

Bisley Facilities Advisory Group

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Mr RHF Wills | <i>Chairman</i> |
| Mr HRM Bailie | |
| Mrs ID Bennett | |
| Mr I Shirra-Gibb | |
| Mr ND Anderson | |

NB The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of General Council and the Treasurer are all ex-officio members of all committees of the General Council.

NIGEL BALL

Talking With Tony de Launay

Some say that he was hewn from the keel of HMS Victory. Others say that he was discovered terrorising the bilges. But when all is said and done he is known simply as Nigel Ball the sailor. Indeed this description is enshrined in a song sung with gusto once a year in the Surrey Rifle Association by Dominic Harvey - perhaps you may have heard it. With that rather poor Clarkesque introduction let me present the not inconsiderable and smiling frame of one of Great Britain's most solid and dependable shots.

His father was in the RAF, ending his service stationed at Hullavington in Wiltshire before moving on to Westinghouse Brake and Signal at Chippenham. There he was a trade union member and shop steward (with whom it is possible that I crossed swords in the early 1970s). So there is no sea in Nigel's blood, more a link with the air and an inherited argumentative streak.

Nigel displayed extraordinary savvy from a very early age. When most youths of 16 were starting to develop considerable skill at being unable to take any form of decision, or to concentrate on anything other than developing testosterone fuelled anti-social habits, Nigel would have you believe that he had cracked the system. "I decided that there was an opportunity to develop a career enhancing set of skills by joining the Navy as an engineering apprentice. I could develop a trade on the fast track and do something that I liked and get paid for it".

He commenced his service in 1973 just before his 17th birthday, later qualifying as an Aircraft Artificer (1st Class). In modern terms that is Chief Petty Officer, the rank at which his career terminated after 23 years in 1996. In fact he was at one time the youngest rated Chief in the Royal Navy.

He saw service in HMSs Hermes, Illustrious and Andromeda amongst others and visited most parts of the globe. Indeed it led to the proud ownership of one of those masterful military understatements on his personal log - CPO Ball utilises the services of the Royal Navy to transport his testicles to various regions of the world.

If this is a reflection of a combative persona, then it may explain his contribution to shooting, a sport that he embraced from the earliest days of an air rifle to more significant recent achievements. The Navy gave him the opportunity and he took it. "We had a choice of six sports at which we could contribute to the Cock Trophy, contested between Naval Divisions. I was no good at rugby and went for shooting. Target rifle was one of the various different categories of firearms that we had to cover in the Championship at Arms".



That early air rifle experience paid off and, having shot service rifle for just five years, he won the Queen's Medal for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines in 1981 at the age of 24. Liking the TR discipline he shot his first Bisley Imperial Meeting in 1977, using a Lee-Enfield LA39. He now has 17 Queen's Final badges including the Silver Medal and eight appearances in the top 25 of the St George's. In 2007 he was second in the Grand Aggregate, and this year took the title. He completed his Big Five set with a Palma victory as part of the GB team in 2003 to add to National, Mackinnon, Kolapore and Australia Match badges.

This is all the more remarkable when you consider his attempts to find a more modern make of rifle in his early days. He recalls looking for advice; fellow Naval hand John Saunders recommended a Swing, and that started his successes. "I suppose that I must have looked quite young in those days. While being coached by Bill Richards he suggested that I should try for the Athelings British Cadet Rifle Team. That was a bit odd, because I was 28 at the time".

Life in the Navy was not without its moments of notoriety. On his second visit to the Gulf on HMS Andromeda he wangled a cross ship visit to their relief, HMS Brazen, on the pretext of briefing his opposite number. Nigel was detained in conversation in the Chiefs' mess. Several tinctures later CPO Ball staggered onto deck to find an empty ocean - Andromeda had sailed without him. After a flurry of terse signals a helicopter was despatched to retrieve the absent mariner. A hot carpeting awaited on return to his own ship, saved by his own importance.

Aside from the Naval adventures he has a distinctly human side. One of his two daughters developed

serious kidney disease at the age of 16 that would have left her in need of dialysis for the rest of her life. Nigel donated her one of his own. It is one of his proudest scars.

After leaving the Navy in 1996 he joined Gresham's School to take over from John Rowley as master in charge of shooting. In his spare time he taught maths. Like a number of schools Gresham's felt that it was a waste of time to shoot the Ashburton with the Cadet GP Rifle. This had been brought into use on the withdrawal of the Cadet Target Rifle for checks and refurbishment. But in the one year from 1996 to 2002 in which they did contest the event with the CTR, his team came fourth.

At this point a new love, Lesley Johnson, entered his life. She was to become his second wife but at the time they were forced to decide on the direction of their own careers. "We had a bet with each other to determine where we would end up. If her annual salary increase was better than mine, I would move with her - or vice-versa". Nigel lost as the glass ceiling fell in, and he moved south following Lesley. This time he took up a post with the Inland Revenue for another career at the public's expense. Since then he has moved to a firm of accountants where he dispenses taxation advice.

Within shooting he is noted for his consistency, both as a team gun platform and as a tigerish individual competitor. He also spent six years as a member of the NRA Council. "It was full of the incessant politics of the time. The endless bickering between deep seated factions, rather than concentrating on future development, was not attractive, and so I decided to stand down".

He believes that Bisley has to develop the amenities on offer, otherwise supporters in the form of wives

and girlfriends, and new shooters, will not be drawn to the sport. "Unless more cadets and young shooters can see a future with modern facilities we will not progress". He also believes that younger shooters can help attract future talent by taking up careers in teaching, thus encouraging pupils towards a long association with a sport that is all-age friendly.

He laments the lack of attention given to the sport by the media. "As a nation, in the small backyard of this sport, we do very well, but publicity is not our strong point. We do not get the proper exposure for what we do achieve. We lag far behind the importance of football and cricket, or golf and rugby, in the perception of the newspaper editors. The NRA has to look at this as part of its future planning".

We draw the conversation to a close with a memory of a Canadian moment on one of his many tours overseas. On a white water rafting trip certain members of the GB team were accorded guard boat duties on the basis of their size and strength. Arriving first down a final section of lively rapids the crew was called upon to act when a Japanese lady tourist was washed overboard from another boat, clearly struggling and in some danger.

The British guards power-paddled to her rescue, surging forward like some rubber dragon boat. Yorkshire's David Dyson, then a fireman by trade, with one hand heaved the sodden stranger clear of the water and threw her bodily into the raft to the amazement of everyone watching. At which point CPO Ball decided that Yorkshire's finest deserved an even better challenge - and leapt overboard himself. What our fireman said is not recorded.

Nigel's is a character packed with good humour. It makes him fun to have around. Time to splice the mainbrace.

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T REX - FUMING IN THE AFTERSHOCK

The Chairman's Prize

I am probably not alone in being guilty of failing to pick up the implications of the announcement made on page 6 of the Spring Journal - dropped in under a general heading 'Target Rifle' - about the change to the conditions for this event. I immediately declare an interest in that, to my surprise and initial pleasure, I qualified for the O class final. Let me say now that even if dinosaurs had been excluded I would have written these words.

The origin and purpose of the competition was to encourage and reward those in classes O and T, the bedrock and the future of our sport, by offering an opportunity to win a free place in their own final at the end of the Imperial Meeting, complementing the opportunities already offered to those qualifying for the second stage of the Queen's Prize and the finals of other matches.

The decision to meld the competition with the Queen's Consolation and the Howard Wilkinson for logistical reasons was one thing. The decision to require entry fees of c£50.00 was quite another, albeit that a £6 refund was made to take account of a reduction in the course of fire.

Whatever the agendas and the reasons for the decision, and it appears mainly to be one of knocking costs out of the Meeting, it was not - in my humble opinion - in keeping with the concept of the prize. In class O just 23 of the possible 75 took up their places. In class T an even more miserable 13 appeared on the list. In both cases this is less than half of those participating in the previous years of the Prize being shot.

It is one of the more expensive badges that will adorn the trophy annex in the cave. I very much hope that elsewhere in this Journal readers might find at least some acknowledgement that it was a clumsy move, and an indication of a more positive approach for the future. It might be of particular interest to the eleven Canadian cadets and all those others that found themselves unable or unwilling to take up their places, most probably thanks to the imposition of this ballistical windfall tax.

For the first time in some 40 years of shooting in rifle events at the Bisley Meeting I feel the need to express a 'Tut' or even a left and right barrel 'Tut, tut'.

Congratulations

Now I hit the "Nice Guy" button. Congratulations are in order for Carol Painting who, in July this year, celebrated her 50th consecutive appearance in the first round of the Queen's Prize, rifle shooting's blue riband event. A former England captain in the annual National Match, and next year's Mackinnon captain, she was also a member of last year's victorious British



veterans' team at the rifle World Championships at Ottawa, Canada.

Carol first shot in the Queen's at the annual Bisley Rifle Meeting in 1959 and had, until this year, been among the final 100 competitors on six occasions, her sixth success being in 2005 after a gap of 30 years. But that was until this year when she added her seventh badge. Take a bow, Carol.

Blunderbuss

Listening to the "Today" programme at 07:15 on the Beeb on 1 July, those paying careful attention would have caught David Taylor, MP for NW Leicestershire, venting his spleen. His target - the Government's somewhat inept removal of the 10% tax rate band, the social consequences of so doing, and the subsequent manoeuvrings to paper over the cracks and keep Labour MPs on side. It was, he suggested, "... as useful as a blunderbuss at Bisley ...".

Quite a compliment really. He clearly knows his stuff.

That Ammunition

Come to think of it, David Taylor might not have been totally right judging by the wails from many respected souls during July. My late mother always used to say to her two offspring, "If you cannot think of anything nice to say, do not say anything". So quiet I shall remain. Another vintage batch?

Icfrasaurus

The many words written about ICFRA, both for and against, must be seen against what was the original purpose of that body - at least, the purpose described to me by the then Secretary General of ICFRA. The situation was that the South Africa Bisley Union believed that the existence of civilian shooting was coming under threatening examination by RSA politicians - a familiar story with which we undoubtedly had considerable sympathy.

SABU believed that the existence of a worldwide governing body, to which they could belong, would enable them to show that fullbore target shooting was a bona-fide international sport with a formal world

championship. Southern and Northern hemisphere countries supported this idea. Thus ICFRA came about and formed up to help their RSA colleagues.

All such organisations, once created, find it very difficult to do nothing. Like a 1980's management that finds it impossible to sit on its hands during an industrial dispute, and like the European Community, it feels duty bound to do something, like intervening or setting rules and regulations. However, on the international scene life is not the same in every country. What may be acceptable in technical and legal terms in one country may not be acceptable in another.

So, IcfraSaurus, please resist tinkering. Give a bit more thought to safeguarding the future: youth will not be attracted by the complexity and cost of gadgetry. Youth enjoys an affordable challenge on a simple level sporting playing field - or am I being a dinosaur?

Wordplay

I was taken by the tribute on radio to the late humorous writer Alan Coren. Among his many one-liners

he defined Advocaat as 'a Dutch drink made from lawyers'. That set me wondering. Is Stickledown the soft feathery substance on the back of a fish? Is target an instruction for resurfacing Hobson's Way? Would Maple Acre be the result of dropping a tin of Canadian syrup on your foot? What did Marjorie Foster? Do second sighters see further into the future?

In fact this could be your post Christmas lunch game. E-mail your own efforts based on shooting terms and places to the editor and we will see if there is something worth printing in the next issue.

Hibernation

The season of goodwill approaches and I must head for the cave to install some of this cut-price lagging that is the Government's answer to my carboniferous footprint problem. I hope that you have an enjoyable break and that we may have the opportunity to glower again at each other come the Spring. I will set the alarm clock.

Toodle Pip.

T Rex

THE ATHELINGS CENTENARY

The first recorded visit to Canada of a British Cadet Rifle Team, later known as the Athelings, took place in 1910. The Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting intends to mark the Centenary in 2010 in the following ways:

- A dinner for all former Athelings to be held in the Bisley Pavilion on 17 July 2010 (Middle Saturday), to which a number of official guests will be invited.
- The provision of trophies for an "Athelings Centenary Aggregate", the conditions for which will be published in due course by the NRA.
- The publication of an historical record of the first one hundred years of the cadet rifle team exchange with Canada. This will include those accounts of the origin and the early years up to World War Two which have survived, together with recollections and photographs of teams since 1951, the year of the first post-war visit.

Further Details

The Dinner

This is being organised by Nigel Suffield-Jones (Hon Organiser of the Athelings since 1995). Arrangements will be circulated to all members of the Athelings Association (see below) early in 2010, and after that can be obtained from the General Secretary CCRS at Derby Lodge.

The Historical Record

The production of this record in a suitable form is being coordinated and edited by Rex Goddard (Hon Organiser 1970 - 1994). Anyone interested in contributing to this publication, whether or not you are a former Atheling, is invited to contact Rex Goddard, c/o Derby Lodge or direct by e-mail to reji.goddard@btinternet.com. Highlights of your Canadian tour, short recollections of particular incidents or personalities, outstanding successes at Connaught, with photographs to illustrate any of these, are examples of what is sought. Please do not initially send material for publication - just your contact details and a summary of the contribution you are able to make.

The Athelings Association

This was formed in 1998, following a proposal from Major Colin Grafton, Commandant of the 1997 Athelings and the present Chairman of the Association. All former Athelings and their officers are encouraged to join, in order to keep in touch with their own and the current teams, to receive information about Association events (at present, an annual Match and Barbecue during the Imperial Meeting) and to receive information about the Centenary and other future plans. If you would like to join you should apply to the General Secretary of CCRS at the address below.

Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting, Derby Lodge, Bisley Camp, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey GU24 0NY.

Tel: 01483 473095 e-mail: simon@taraccs.co.uk

THE EUROPEAN GALLERY RIFLE CHAMPIONSHIPS

by Alan Whittle

As I stood on the quayside at Fishguard waiting to board the ferry to Rosslare it was all too apparent why the aptly named Emerald Isle was so verdant. Peering through the drizzle it looked as if the sub-par weather we have been experiencing this summer would continue as we moved westwards towards the oncoming, rain-bearing, Atlantic fronts. Never mind, the die was cast and the UK National Gallery Rifle Team was en route to the first ever European Gallery Rifle Championships, to be held in Eire, at the Fermoy Rifle Club, County Cork on Friday 11 July 2008.

It has taken over ten years in the wake of the handgun ban for gallery rifle shooting to achieve formal international recognition, so how did it all start? The Phoenix Meeting, held each Whitsun Bank Holiday Weekend, was born in the aftermath of the 1997 legislation, with the established pistol events being shot with gallery rifles. These pistol calibre under-lever rifles were universally adopted, or almost so, with the Marlin Model 94 in .357" or .44" calibre being the most favoured option.

At first, UK shooters assumed they were alone in the gallery rifle world, until a small team of shooters from Germany were seen to be competing at the Phoenix Meeting. It did not take long for an informal invitation match to be arranged between a group of regular Phoenix shooters and a German team. Then a team from Eire, where pistols have been unavailable to civilian shooters for some years, joined in to make the Phoenix International into a triangular match. In recent years the match has become a firm favourite, with selection for shooting places on the UK Phoenix Team being formalised on identified criteria of performance and commitment. I have been fortunate enough to be included in the squad for the past three years although I have only shot in the match twice.

The UK Gallery Rifle Squad is selected each year on the basis of performance (in classified matches) and commitment. The squad members are then balloted to elect a team captain. This year Chris Farr was

elected as Captain and he invited Alec James to be his Adjutant to provide organisational support. Chris has captained previous Phoenix teams and his selection as UK Team Captain was just reward for his ten year commitment to gallery rifle shooting.

At the Phoenix Meeting on Monday 28 May 2008 the formally recognised NRA UK Gallery Rifle Team fielded two four-man teams, each with a shooting reserve, against two similar teams from Germany's Bund der Militär und Polizeischützen (BDMP) - the national shooting sport body of Germany - and an Irish Team from the Shooting Sports Association of Ireland (SSAI). The Phoenix Meeting International is now shot as two separate events, the Phoenix Cup and the Phoenix Trophy; I am pleased to report that the UK Gallery Rifle Team won both events.

Why then with silverware in the cabinet did I not feel confident about my trip to Ireland? Well it has been decided that each year three international matches would be held for gallery rifle, one in the UK at the established Phoenix Meeting, the Germany event in Leitmar in November and the Irish event at the Fermoy Rifle Club in July. It was also determined that each year one of these events would be designated the European Gallery Championships and Ireland would be the first country to host it. A lot then was resting on the five man squad from the UK comprising Touring Captain Taff Wilcox (from Cheshire), Jim Smith (from Derby), Stephen Lamb (from Brighton), Andy Lowe (from Surrey) and myself Alan Whittle (from Somerset). Was it too early for match nerves?

On driving off the ferry in Rosslare the weather took a turn for the better and apart from a few showers the day before the match we were blessed with bright, and occasionally sunny, conditions throughout the weekend. My spirits lifted, my first visit to the range at Fermoy for the team practice on the Thursday was very positive and enjoyable. With rifles zeroed for the local conditions we all turned in for an early night, well early by local standards anyway!

Friday afternoon was bright with light winds and the match was shot shoulder to shoulder in two heats using the standard "1500" course of fire. The hundred and fifty shot course of fire, comprises short range (10 and 15 metre) rapid fire stages with multi-position timed staged at 25 and 50 metres. Each shot can score a maximum 10 and thus the highest possible score is 1,500, hence the name.

Many of the shooters were known to each other, having been shooting together at previous international matches. The atmosphere was friendly but beneath the camaraderie it was apparent the intent of all was serious, the objective to bring home the cup. I drew



Charles Murton, Alan Whittle and Taff Willcox look on.

the second heat with the Captain so had to endure the agony of watching the efforts of the other half of the team. No disasters in round one, so the pressure mounted as I came to the shooting line, in between the two top Irish and German shooters. The Captain put in an excellent score and despite some shortcomings at 50 metres I put up a par performance to return a respectable aggregate. The score cards recovered to the stats office it became apparent after what seemed an interminable delay that we had, by not too great a margin, accomplished what we had set out to do. The UK National Gallery Rifle Team are the first European Gallery Rifle Champions. We relaxed and were not so early to bed!

Despite two of the German team returning personal best scores, the team from Ireland took second place, just 21 points (ex 6000) behind the UK with John Robinson posting a dream score, dropping only a single point in the whole match.

The overall scores were:

| United Kingdom | | Republic of Ireland | | Germany | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Steve Lamb | 1483 | Kieran Barry | 1473 | Bruno Blüße | 1474 |
| Jim Smith | 1473 | Michael Doherty | 1467 | Reto Grün | 1486 |
| Alan Whittle | 1481 | Pat Herlihy | 1468 | Frank Heymel | 1446 |
| Taff Wilcox | 1491 | John Robinson | 1499 | Torsten Riewe | 1482 |
| Team Score | 5928 | Team Score | 5907 | Team Score | 5888 |
| <i>Shooting Reserves</i> | | | | | |
| Andy Lowe | | Declan Byrne | | Dietmar Hönersch | |

The UK team was presented with medals and a Cup at a reception held on the Saturday night.

The annual match in Fermoy is open to individual shooters or teams of four shooters from any club. Although there is some administrative effort required in taking firearms and ammunition to Ireland I found the whole affair thoroughly excellent. The Irish are superb hosts and you can be sure of a warm welcome. Fermoy and the surrounding area is beautifully tranquil; the Fermoy Rifle Club ranges are undergoing continuous improvement as shooting sports experience an upturn and the return of pistol shooting disciplines. Next year it will be Germany's turn to host the European Championships, so if you want to have a chance of representing your country, enter some classified 1500 matches and get your averages up – good luck!

Around the world different rules apply to the ownership of firearms and one peculiarity in Ireland is that reloading is not permitted. To the connoisseur of the cartridge case this presented a golden opportunity to improve stocks. It became apparent that one such connoisseur was the Touring Captain of the UK team, Taff Wilcox, who probably exceeded the weight limit on the return journey ferry crossing due to the large sack of .38" special cases in the boot of the car. After the match Taff was seen with his arm around the range crew who were busily sweeping up the empties, "sure you've had a hard day lads, why don't I give you a hand and I'll clear all this brass up for you now", he was heard to say. From this occasion he has attracted the epithet "Captain Brass".

The UK Gallery Rifle Team will continue to grow and hopefully continue to enhance the reputation of UK shooting sports internationally. As you can appreciate, running a successful shooting team does have inherent costs; ideas for suitable sponsors are being sought. If anyone wishes to consider supporting the UK Gallery Rifle Team please contact the Team Captain Chris Farr via the NRA.



Steve Lamb (UK) and Frank Hymel (Germany) mark each others targets.



The UK Gallery Rifle Team at the prizegiving with the Chairman and Secretary of the Fermoy Rifle Club.

V BULL BONANZA - JON UNDERWOOD MAKES RECORD PERFECT SCORE

by Andrew Horton

For the first time in known records a fullbore target rifle shooter has scored a perfect individual score in a Queen's II course of fire. Jon Underwood (GM, SM, GC) shot three 50.10s in the Peek match of the Surrey Open on 20 September at Bisley. That, of course, makes an outstanding 150.30! Surrey Rifle Association member Jon used HPS ammunition in his RPA Quadlock Rifle, and had just returned fresh from the recent England Team tour to the USA.

He told me how he felt in the latter stages of the shoot: "By 600 yards it's safe to say I was getting a little excited by the prospect of scoring a complete HPS. The last shot went down, and I made sure I got it off quick. The wind conditions were fine so it was then just a case of waiting for the target to come back up. And there it was in the middle, another V. I think I just smiled quietly whilst the others on my target finished their shoots. I then took the card over to the Range Officer and handed it in, and others wanted to know what I had scored. I think that's the point at which I could not believe I had just shot the maximum possible score. I think the news got round quite quick, because by the time I got back to the Surrey Clubhouse they were telling me that it was the equivalent of scoring a hole in one at golf and I had to buy everyone a round of drinks! The other thought that occurred to me was how close I was to converting a bull 5 at 500 yards. If my second sighter had been a 5 or a V I probably would have converted both shots. Through some stroke of fate I wasn't allowed to!"

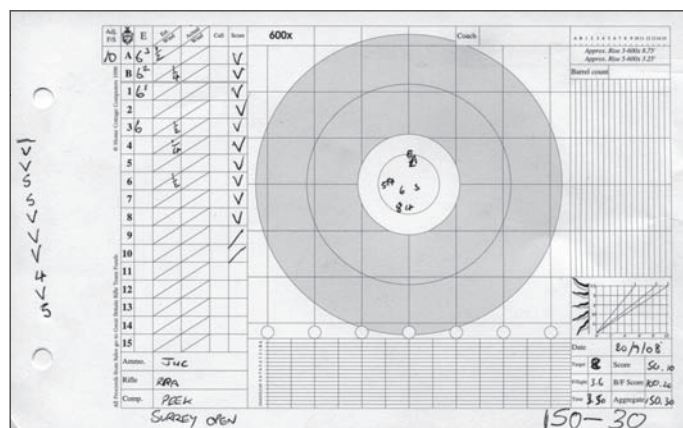
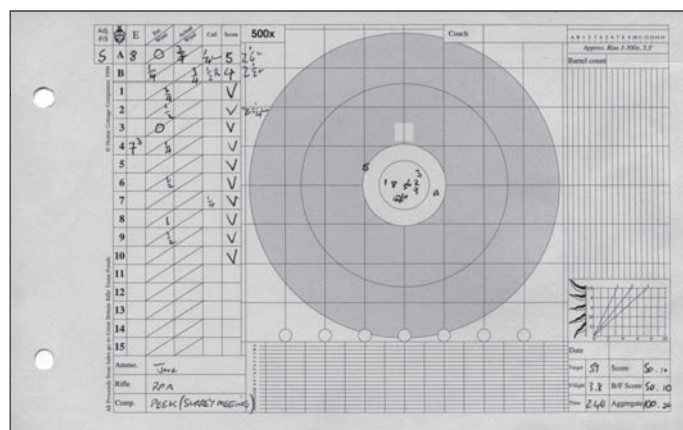
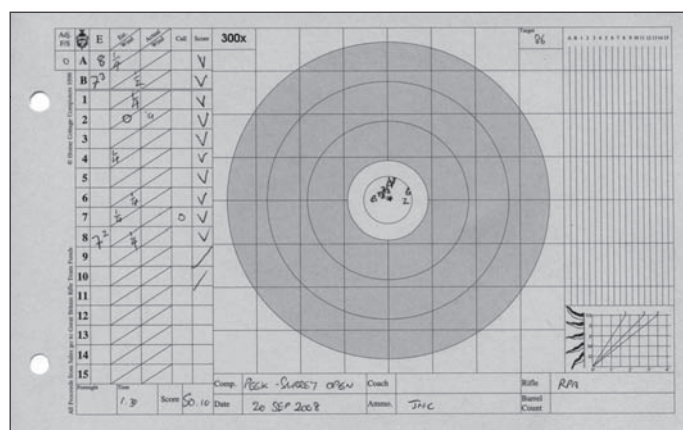
It is an achievement which stands up there with the best. Remember Parag Patel's 75.15 in the 2001 St George's First Stage? Or, how about Phil Bennison and James Paton's record 300.40s, to win the Queen's Prize (in 1998 and 2005 respectively)? Even recently, Nigel Ball shot an unbeatable 105.21 in a Queen's I course of fire in the City RC Open. The record score in the actual Queen's II event is 150.28, shot by Iain Robertson in the 2002 Imperial Meeting. Jon had all that on his shoulders as he fired his last few shots. But, in true champion style he didn't let it get to him:

"It wasn't like the excitement of winning the Grand or the Queen's - there was far more pressure on both those shoots

- and I hadn't got to the stage where the front sight of the rifle was dancing around uncontrollably! That's partly because I have shot a number of 50.10s before, partly because I was quite busy helping to organise the competition and running stats, and partly because of some things I learned in America, just watching how calm and methodical they are. It wasn't really until 600 yards that it began to sink in what was happening. Up until that point it was really just a normal shoot, ie another one that I wanted to do well in, particularly as it counted towards the County Championship."

Jon went on to win the event (as expected!) and also the County Championship.

He is now focussed on trying to get selected for the England Commonwealth Games team for Delhi in 2010, for which he is on the shortlist.



| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|------------------|---------|
| The Peek | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| J Underwood | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 300 Tgt- 86 at: 13:30 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 500 Tgt- 59 at: 14:40 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 600 Tgt- 8 at: 15:50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name _____ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Range | s | s | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Total | Witness |
| 300 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 50 ¹⁰ | EJH |
| 500 | 5 | 4 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 50 ¹⁰ | 200 |
| 600 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 50 ¹⁰ | 300 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | 150.30 | |
| Witness _____ Score Agreed _____ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

OBITUARIES

Geoff Hermges

When the Shooters' March formed up in Hyde Park for the protest against the pistol ban in 1997, Geoff Hermges took a slug from a hipflask and observed to his neighbour, "The last time I marched down here was at the funeral of George V". Geoff Hermges won a medal in the *Country Life* competition in 1936, shooting for University College School; and he came to Bisley for the next seventy years. When the late Lord Swansea launched upon his marksmanship career, it was Geoff Hermges who first gave him his shooting colours.

Geoff Hermges joined the Artists Rifles and, shooting for them, came away with a TARA medal in 1938. Wartime service then took him to Norway and then to Africa, first with the Gold Coast Rifles and then to East Africa, where he fought in the special forces campaign that reinstated the Emperor Haile Selassie on the throne of Abyssinia. It was an extraordinary affair populated by colourful characters: Gideon Force was led by Orde Wingate, and it was here that Geoff came to know Wilfred Thesiger and Laurens van der Post; it was in East Africa too that he met Evelyn Waugh. On a later peacetime visit the Emperor would present Geoff with a bottle of Royal Tej (a special Ethiopian mead) but in wartime, he had to rely on his own resources and live off the land: capturing an Italian field hospital afforded him the means of making ersatz gin and tonic.

At the end of the war Geoff went up to Cambridge to read anthropology. He was by nature far more an Oxford man, his many Dark Blue friends always insisted, and they explained the error in his choice of university in terms of boarding the wrong train under the influence of drink.

In 1946, when the Bisley Meeting recommenced, Geoff shot in the winning Cambridge revolver team for the Heslop Cup and, over the decades that followed, he shot rifle and pistol as a member of CURA, of the North London Rifle Club (of which he became a Trustee, retiring only in 2007) and of the Artists. In 1995 he shot in the British Lions tour of Australia. In 1997 Geoff Hermges fired the last shots of the last cartridge pistol match at the Imperial Meeting before the imposition of the handgun ban - they were bullseyes to finish. Geoff then shipped his pistols abroad as a founder member of the British Alpine Rifles; a couple of months later, he was on the firing line above the Lake of Thun for BAR's inaugural meeting in Switzerland. Geoff went on to buy himself a new Schmidt-Rubin rifle and SIG P210 pistol to add to his bulging Swiss gun cabinet (for he was also a connoisseur of fine arms, who had a collection of classics) and even at the age of 85, against serious opponents including one recent national pistol squad member, he won the *Winans* revolver match in Switzerland.

Geoff shot films as keenly as he shot firearms and his career as a film cameraman carried him from the Bay



Geoff Hermges with the last targets shot in the last cartridge pistol match of the last Imperial Meeting before the imposition of the handgun ban. He had bullseyes to finish.

of Bengal across Africa (where he spoke Swahili and several other languages) to the rainforests of the Amazon. Geoff was always diffident about his affairs but in bar conversation at Bisley his friends extracted occasional vignettes of this life: Geoff with Deborah Kerr and Stewart Grainger on the set of *King Solomon's Mines*; Geoff playing bridge with Omar Sharif between the scenes of *Lawrence of Arabia*; Geoff trailing man-eating tigers through the mangrove swamps of the Sundarbans and pulling old Sandhurst connections to avoid being apprehended as a spy during the Bangladesh crisis, when he slipped across from Pakistan into India at dead of night. Back in London, Geoff continued to teach photography into his eighties.

Geoff Hermges enjoyed a long and remarkable life, rich in its diversity. He himself was difficult to categorize. In style the perfect officer and gentleman, he was also profoundly unmilitarist. He was a Fabian socialist and a keen gambler, wise in the ways of the casino and the turf; a technically-gifted artist and lover of classical music and an uncompromising hardliner in the defence of the shooting sports; an epicurean of refined palate and a no-nonsense character who, even in his eighties, would not hesitate to tell abusive youths to get their feet off the seats on the London Underground.

The tragedy of Geoff's last years, as his eyes failed and his throat closed up in the wake of cancer, was that he was a young man trapped in an old man's body. But the wonder was that he remained, precisely, a young man to the end: *au fait* with the latest technology, rich in his interests. The great spectrum of his friends, young and old, at his funeral near Bath in the second week of this

year's Imperial Meeting, was testament to the way he himself had not aged.

Geoff was predeceased by his wife, Kitty. Kitty understood the importance of Bisley to Geoff and said that he must never be allowed to give up going there and he continued to do so into his last year. The character of Bisley itself was enriched by his life and the half-masted flag flying at the North London at this year's Imperial Meeting was an acknowledgement of the loss for us all.

Geoff Hermges' ashes will be spread in his beloved Africa. In appreciation of his life, at his funeral his friends were invited to make a donation to the African charity of their choice.

Richard Munday

**Joan MacGiffin
(nee Owens)
OBE**

Joan was active in the Ulster Rifle Association for more than 50 years and at the time of her death was the longest serving member of the club. Those years saw the URA change from a club with a few dozen fullbore rifle shooters and a small number of pistol shooters, to a club which has most shooting disciplines, including several fullbore disciplines, small-bore, black powder and pistol. She was the driving force behind the fullbore Open Meeting, which was at one time, fired in the evenings over a week on Divis Range, shooting one competition each evening with the final on Saturday. The Open then moved to a weekend at Ballykinler which, after the start of hostilities in 1969, became the venue for all the club shoots.

Her shooting career started on 1 June 1946 in the days when very few women did target shooting. She shot alongside her father in both the Home Guard Rifle Club (.22 target rifle and pistol) and the Ulster Rifle Association (fullbore rifle and pistol). In those days she fired both the old SR(a) - now classic rifle, and SR(b) - now target rifle. Her pistol shooting was often done with a Mk 6 Webley, hardly a ladies gun, but she achieved scores which surprised many of the male shooters. She will be remembered by many for the blue sailing trousers and jacket she wore in cold and wet weather, for the shooting box made from an old .303 liner painted in club colours and her box of pre-cut and oiled flannelette. She was a regular competitor at the Imperial Meeting where her



name appears on the Amazons, Imp and Alton and at times in the Queen's Hundred. Her name appears on URA trophies from 1948 to 1994.

Joan was secretary of the URA from before 1962 until 1993 and she steered the club through the 'troubles' when many amateur and professional politicians thought that all rifle clubs and ownership of firearms should be banned. She was a great believer in the formal coaching of beginners and, when the NRA started to run formal Coaching Courses, she took several club members with her, including myself and Martin Farnan. She then led the running of Coaching Courses in Northern Ireland, which has continued to the present day and has spread to other clubs and to the Cadet Forces, using some of the teaching material and ideas she pioneered. She was also involved in the setting up of the CSF(ED) Championships in their early days. Northern Ireland hosted the CSF(ED) Championships during the worst of the 'troubles' thanks to Joan's unique approach to getting all the help that was needed.

Joan went to the Commonwealth Games in 1978 as Shooting Team Manager and thereafter to several Games as Assistant Secretary to the team.

There were many other interesting aspects to Joan's life. She was a pupil of Northern Ireland's largest Grammar School, Methodist College, from where she entered the Civil Service and attained the rank of Principal Officer. This job included the organising of visits to Northern Ireland of Heads of State, high ranking politicians and especially the Royal Family. When the URA first obtained radios to use on the range, she decided to try them to control her staff at such visits and found it more efficient than depending on Police or Army to pass messages. She was awarded the OBE in 1987.

She was an expert orchid grower and gave talks to gardening clubs on the subject. She also enjoyed photographing wildlife and plants.

In 1991, Joan married a widower, Harry MacGiffin, for many years the URA Competition Secretary, who was also an English teacher and Shooting Master to RBAI CCF.

Joan was a superb administrator and often the voice of common sense and reason at the many meetings she attended on behalf of Northern Ireland shooters. She eventually relinquished all shooting matters in the late 1990s when Harry's health deteriorated. He died in 2001 and a few years later Joan's health began to fail. She spent the last few years in a retirement home in Belfast. As far as is known, she has no surviving close relatives.

Hazel Mackintosh

The NRA are sad to announce the deaths of Michael Bingley, Jim Brown, Eric Checkley, Jim Cleaver and Major Derek Hodson. Obituaries will appear in the Spring Journal.

LETTERS

The Bisley Camp Cookbook.

From Deborah Sabalot Deane and John Deane

We are very pleased to be able to report that the final stock of the Bisley Camp Cookbook has now been sold.

This little book was compiled as a fund raiser for the Overseas Team Fund in 2004 and we have been greatly helped by the efforts of many shooters and friends in selling just over a thousand copies. Those sales since July 2004 have raised just over £5500 for the funds of the Overseas Team Fund.

We should like to offer sincere thanks to all who helped selling and, of course, to all those who have purchased the Cookbook. We hope that you will have as much pleasure in reading the book and sampling its recipes as we had in compiling it.

ICFRA v NRA

From Robin Pizer

The spat between ICFRA and the NRA (Spring and Summer 2008 NRA Journals) is perhaps inevitable since the international community decided they did not wish to be governed by NRA rules. The answer for the UK is not to have two rifles, one for use in the UK and one overseas, but to use their rifle complying with NRA rules and beat the pants off the rest in competitions outside the UK. If UK competitors and teams cannot do this, then one must concede that the changed ICFRA rules do provide an advantage.

ICFRA should have taken more time before making their decision so allowing more experiments under controlled conditions to be done. This would have allowed those in the UK but also outside the UK to confirm or otherwise whether there was a real safety issue. ICFRA is being pushed in this direction partly because many countries have an ageing population of shooters who need Eagle Eye sights etc. No doubt before long Galilean sights, once commonly used by the MR fraternity will become the vogue. The NRA should not act like King Canute.

At first sight a standard rifle is appealing but equating this to a cheap rifle is no longer sensible. As Dick Horrocks has said a standard rifle never really caught on in 0.22. I started shooting when there was a massive war surplus of .303 rifles, ammunition and ranges. So my first second hand rifle was a No 4 which cost £10 and .303 ammunition cost 2d a round (less than 1p). There has been nearly a 100 fold increase in the cost of rifles and ammunition since. Inflation over the past 40 years has been more like a factor of 10 times. With 7.62mm there were attempts to keep some standardisation but they failed, as gunsmiths and shooters seeking an advantage gradually eroded the

idea. With small production runs, unit costs of rifles were bound to rocket. I doubt if the NRA of the 1970s ever really thought about this.

The consequences of this are that we have an expensive sport and are going to have to live with it. The problem for the UK is that the NRA is a charity and is now required to make sure that those on less than 60% of the average wage can take part if they so wish (as they did 50 years ago when it was a cheap sport). It may be that every shooter who can afford fullbore will have to support a shooter who cannot (think of the analogy with the Public Schools and the requirement that they benefit not just the children of parents who can afford the fees but others too).

The County of Gloucestershire Rifle Association is lucky in having a very successful ACF and two public schools that shoot, but Gloucestershire has lost its four fullbore ranges. CGRA's nearest range is at Tyddesley Wood where they are usually lucky enough to get one day's shooting a year. In 2008 Tyddesley Wood was closed. With little opportunity to shoot fullbore locally, it is not surprising that membership has collapsed from 150 ten years ago to 25 now.

What is needed is a strategic plan to resuscitate local shooting on ranges under our own control which can be implemented in stages over the next 20 years. It will cost millions of pounds and during this 20 years, rifles and ammunition will improve further as they have over the past 150 years so allowing ICFRA and the NRA to debate the niceties of what should be permitted in the years to come.

ICFRA

From David Calvert

I would like to thank Dick Horrocks for his excellent article in the Summer NRA Journal.

Basically, I found the article a most useful summary and interpretation of the issues concerning the future of our sport, in the context of the recent changes and proposed changes to the ICFRA TR Technical Rules. I felt he summarised fairly the pros, cons and consequences of these changes. As you know, as a member of the NRA Shooting Committee, I very much share his implied and actual concerns over the direction in which ICFRA is heading on optics, rifle and trigger weights, and support the third of his three options in the first instance. Indeed, I thought that such action had already been agreed by the Shooting Committee. It is important that all National shooting Associations, large and small, are aware of our concerns and the reasons for those concerns, and are encouraged to represent the views of their members to ICFRA.

In order to engage our membership in the debate and garner support for the proposed way ahead, I suspect we shall have to be more proactive in drawing their attention to the issues and their consequences; they should be encouraged to read Dick's previous article and respond with their views or, as a minimum, offer their support, or otherwise, for 'Option Three'. Perhaps we need a prompt to the membership by e-mail, highlighting the importance of the issues for the future of our sport and the urgent need for their views on their Association's proposed way ahead.

The Concept of a Standard Rifle

From DRV Parrish

Chairman ISSF Technical Committee

I read with interest the article in the Summer issue of the NRA Journal on "The Concept of a Standard Rifle" by Dick Horrocks. However there were some errors regarding the Standard Rifle on which I will make comment and you may wish to publish this in the next issue as there is often confusion on the terminology.

The ISSF 300 metre Standard Rifle is the only current Standard Rifle and was developed for use in the competition that was formerly for the Army Rifle. The weight limit for the 300 metre Standard Rifle only, was increased to 5.5 kg on request from some of the manufacturers. This change for the 300m Standard Rifle appeared in the 1985 Rule Book and the additional weight for the air rifle and small-bore Standard Rifle was not increased to 5.5 kg until the 1989 Rule Book. It is correct that that no set trigger is permitted and the weight limit remains at 1.5 kg

It was later proposed by the then Chairman of the Rifle Committee to limit the barrel length to less than fullbore shooters use. At that time I was a member of the Rifle Committee and proposed that if there was to be a limit on length then it should be 762 mm (30"). This was accepted and became the rule for both Standard Rifles from 1993.

In the 60s it was proposed that all should use the Standard Rifle for all small-bore events. The men would have none of this, however the women who had previously shot the Free Rifle, to put it plainly, "got stuck with it . . ."

The rules are updated every four years and this rifle remained in the Rule Book for 1993, but after representation by the women to use hook butt plates, palm rests etc, it was agreed that a rifle similar to the 50m small-bore Free Rifle should be allowed but with a maximum weight limit of 6.5 kg instead of a maximum weight limit of 8 kg. This appeared in the 1997 Rule Book as the 50m Sport Rifle. The small-bore Standard Rifle although they are still seen but rarely, no longer appears in the Rule Book as the specification is within that permitted with the 50m Rifle and 50m Sport Rifle.

The term Free Rifle originally referred to the 300m Rifle and the term "Free" was dropped from the 2001 Rule Book and is no longer used. You now have in the Rifle Rules: 300m Rifle; 300m Standard Rifle; 50m Rifle; 50m Sport Rifle and 10m Air Rifle.

FTR Rules

From Victor Hanna

Paul Monaghan invited comments on his F Class report in the Summer 2008 Journal regarding possible changes to the FTR rules for the possible use of handloads in FTR.

I feel that most FTR shooters have chosen FTR precisely to avoid this type of rule change. Those who wish to handload can do so in F Class, Any Rifle, or Match Rifle. F Class was intended as an alternative to TR but the many rule changes have made it a very different sport.

I welcome the change to bipod only for (F restricted) class but would urge you not to allow hand loading in FTR in 2009.

Summary Accounts

Please note that due to lack of space the Summary Accounts for the Great Britain teams to Canada in 2006 and 2007 and to South Africa in 2008 will be held over to the Spring Journal.

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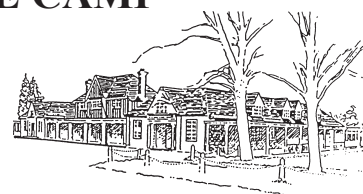
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MEMBERS PAGE

Tales from the Imperial Meeting

A very experienced and current TR top shot was shooting in the Match Rifle RG section at 1200 yards, when he managed to visit all parts of the target. In the space of seven shots he carded 5, V, 2, 1, 0, 4 and 3. He is going to take up painting by numbers.

A disappointing start for Paul Monaghan in the Any Rifle and Whitehead events caused him to comment during Saturdays lunch break "I'm just the Tim Henman of the Match Rifle world". However whatever he ate for lunch must have turned Paul into "Federer-Man" as he then went on to win the Halford and the Saturday Aggregate.

In the Match Rifle contest for the FW Jones event a Sussex team of four venerable gentlemen (Eric Adams, John Powell, David Friend and Alan Fitch) averaged a score of 70 each over the two distances. Their average age per person was one point better.

The strong rumours that both the Vulcan and the B1 use of full power had caused a number of squadding cards to be blown from the Stickledown firing point might, just possibly, be somewhat exaggerated. However the CRO on Stickledown is still looking for his hat.

A veteran shot in the wind-blown Lovell (1000 yards), who started with a mix of magpies and outers in the gale, eventually withdrew. It was because, he said, the last fiendish gust had lifted him clear of the ground while he was in the aim

A tale of an early morning Times. First sighter 12 o'clock hit scoring one. Much checking of ladder foresight (which had been checked three times prior to the start). Second sighter - another hit in the same place, but on the next door target. Much bemusement, followed by unscrewing and rescrewing of foresight. First on score bullseye on own target and copious relief.

'Virtute' led to 'ludo' when 14 year old Wellington College cadet, Andrew Brooker, volunteered to help out the Scotland team in the Combined Services v Home Nations match. He turned up to act in any capacity required, only to find himself asked to take a plotter's seat when one of the plotters did not turn up. Shortly before kick off it was found that the Scots were one shooter short. Having his rifle with him he had no hesitation in volunteering. So that is how he gained his first representative honour - and richly deserved too for his approach and attitude.

Patience led to recognition for Mike Fugeman of Windsor, who admits to being a senior citizen. He won his "Reserve Badge" for England in the National Match some 26 years ago. This year he was awarded his first full cap as a shooting member of the team. It eventually comes to them as waits, like a London bus.

Data Protection

by Nick Halford - Membership Department

When an NRA computer comes to the end of its life we are required to destroy the data held on its hard drive.

To strip the actual drive to pieces with screwdrivers fitted with security bits and remove the actual discs before we can destroy them takes around 45 minutes.

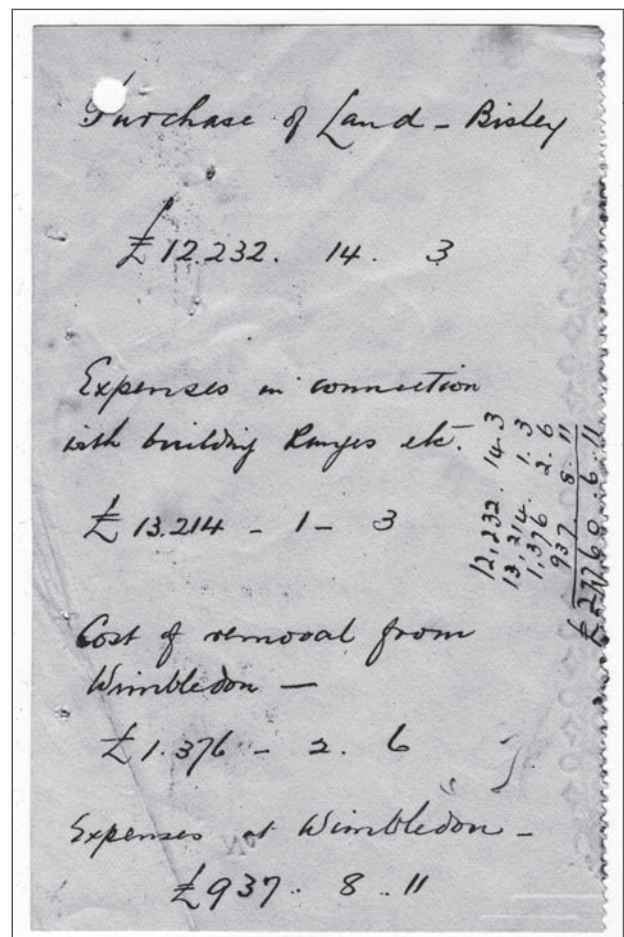
It is more cost-effective to take the hard drives down to the butt zero range which is ricochet safe and put two or three well placed rounds through them.

Today I used a .223!



A Little Piece of History

The cheque stub for the purchase of Bisley has recently been found in a box of papers and the reverse of the stub (which lists the costings) is reproduced below.



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