



National Rifle Association Journal

Summer 2009 Volume LXXXVIII Number 2



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Cover photo: Shooting at the Phoenix. Photo by Alan Keating.

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NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



by
Glynn
Alger

NSC Director of Shooting - A Statement from Robin Pizer, Chairman NRA

Martin Farnan resigned from his employment as National Shooting Director with the NSC on 1 May this year.

As most of you know, over the years Martin has played a key role in the organisation and running of the Imperial Meeting. In spite of his decision to resign as Shooting Director, we tried to retain his considerable experience and expertise to assist with this and possibly also next year's Imperial Meeting. Our solicitors drew up a contract to engage Martin's services for the 2009 Imperial Meeting. Unfortunately, whilst Martin initially indicated some interest in such an arrangement he ultimately decided not to accept this offer.

In the meantime, however, I am pleased to report that the team that has been assembled to manage this year's meeting have been making excellent progress and whilst they are, inevitably, on a learning curve, they are confident that this year's meeting will be a successful one.

The circumstances leading to Martin Farnan's decision to resign are such that we cannot exclude the possibility that we have not heard the end of the matter. We have received clear advice from the NRA's solicitors that we ought not to comment on the circumstances surrounding Martin's decision to resign for the time being so as to avoid any risk that we might prejudice the position of the NRA or indeed the NSC. We intend to adhere to the professional advice obtained and therefore are unable to comment further on this issue.

Olympics

As you are probably aware by now the Olympic Authorities, the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) and the London Organising Committee for the

Olympic Games (LOCOG) have not chosen Bisley as the Shooting Venue for 2012 as per the following previously released Press Release.

•••••

Introduction

British Shooting (BS), the joint voice of the Shooting Associations of Great Britain, has taken some time to consider the disappointing news that Bisley - against their advice - has not been chosen as the best option for the Olympic Shooting venue 2012.

In particular, it is clear to British Shooting that the statement from LOCOG and the ODA is, in our view, inaccurate.

Background

British Shooting supported Woolwich as an option when the Olympic bid was made on the understanding that the shooting events would take place at Bisley in 2012.

It is asserted that part of the reason the venue cannot change is that this would be in breach of contractual obligations made with the IOC. This is incorrect when you consider over 65% of the Athens venues were changed after the award of the Games. It also appears that the inability to change the shooting venue to Bisley does not apply to Barking, another suggested alternative, for some reason.

The recent KPMG report was originally commissioned post Beijing Olympics to consider the temporary venues on the basis of cost, feasibility and legacy. British Shooting is confident that in relation to Woolwich, Bisley is cheaper, offers the full facilities for the build-up test events, Olympics and Paralympics, is safer, more secure and offers near one hundred percent legacy - contrary to the unsupported assertions of LOCOG and the ODA.

Report Failings

Crucially, significant doubt surrounds the KPMG report. Key areas are blanked out on the basis that they are 'commercially sensitive'. In a meeting with the Olympic Minister it was put to her that, in relation to shooting, British Shooting was aware that an inaccurate figure of £60 million had been quoted from within ODA/LOCOG as the cost for building Bisley, exactly twice the figure estimated by our cost consultants. This £60m figure was not denied by her.

There are already a number of public concerns expressed through Parliament and the press about the aims and reliability of this report. Critically British Shooting have also been denied access to the details of the 70 page report that was submitted as justification for the decision to keep the shooting at Woolwich with Barking nominated as the back-up site. The lack of access to both the full KPMG report and the latest internal report from LOCOG/ODA means Bisley is

unable to challenge their findings and that the report must be treated with some suspicion.

The LOCOG and ODA press release refers to a feasibility study that had been carried out on Bisley. This is simply not true. When we eventually got them to the table in December 2008 they stated that if we were able to answer some key questions then they would enter into a feasibility study - with them paying half - the total cost of the study being some £200,000. The Shooting Associations agreed these terms. We answered all the questions asked of us in great detail making Bisley a strong contender in the bidding process - according to David Higgins of the ODA on 16 February 2009. The feasibility study never took place because the ODA never truly engaged with Bisley, which was possibly their intention from the outset.

A Level Playing Field?

To our surprise and concern we found that financial obligations to be imposed on BS would be different from any other sporting venue. Bisley was expected to contract to deliver the shooting venue at a defined cost, standard and time scales, taking all the risk if there was an overspend. In addition we were expected to pay for and speculate on the potential of getting the Games at a cost of £1.4 million.

Unsurprisingly, our partners in this venture, Sport England, South East England Development Agency and Surrey County Council were not willing to take the risk on this basis. It was a fundamentally different approach against the interests of our sport, for reasons unexplained and unsubstantiated.

The Detail

Cost

There are major inaccuracies in the LOCOG/ODA version of the costs.

The Bisley cost consultants, who are no strangers to the issues having worked on other Olympic projects, have estimated that the cost for building the Olympic Shooting venue to correct scale at Bisley will cost £28 to £30 million against a cost for Woolwich of £42 million.

The issue of accommodation is a red herring in that the ODA and LOCOG are fully aware that appropriate facilities for athletes would be available at both Surrey University (Olympic Training venue) and Holloway College (2012 Olympic Village for rowing) both within 10 to 15 minutes of Bisley.

Operational Complexity

Claims made by LOCOG/ODA are simply incorrect, and they were given clear explanations by British Shooting.

There are no issues over land ownership, and this has already been stated to LOCOG/ODA. The NRA

would provide the land held under freehold or leasing agreements with the MoD. This was confirmed by the MoD representative who attended the meeting at Canary Wharf on 16 February. The Olympic Shooting venue would be a stand-alone facility within its own security fence bordered on one side by Pirbright Army Training Camp and the National Shooting Centre on the other side both of which are secure areas in their own right.

The argument that there are numerous clubs to consider is yet again a smoke and mirrors argument in that only four leaseholders would be affected. These individuals have already been accommodated and subscribe fully to the plans proposed by the Shooting Associations.

As for a lead client to deliver the project, that was always going to be British Shooting. However, discussions never reached that point because the ODA wished to create a completely different delivery model at Bisley with the Shooting Associations taking all the risk rather than sharing it wholly or partly with the ODA.

Time and Reputation Risks

LOCOG/ODA had already been made aware of the following facts.

It is correct that to deliver at Bisley we would have to go through the same planning processes as any other project. The ODA are fully aware that we had negotiated understandings with Natural England, local authorities and SEEDA that meant our proposals were very deliverable if the ODA had engaged with them, which they had not.

The ODA were also aware that we had an agreement with the MoD to extend our lease to include the required land on the proviso that it was for the Olympics.

The delivery of the Olympic Venue in January 2012 was a specific requirement made by the ODA, not set on the basis of planning or build difficulties.

Conclusions

In recent times it has become increasingly obvious that shooting has been targeted for special attention. The evidence of this is as follows:

Despite being offered detailed proposals by British Shooting over three years ago which would allow the British Olympic pistol team to train in the UK the Government having announced their agreement to allow this to happen, then put in place such onerous conditions that the team still has to train in Switzerland.

The recent 75% cut in funding to the British Shooting Team using questionable justification.

The low levels of funding allocated to the sport to increase participation under the Government's

‘playground to podium’ project, having produced the most compelling business case compared with other sports as acknowledged by Sport England.

Finally the decision on not allowing the 2012 shooting to move to Bisley despite good evidence that the National Shooting Centre would provide the most cost effective, safe, secure and sustainable venue for the Games and for the future.

Legacy is at the heart of the Olympic ideal and has been stressed repeatedly by Lord Coe. It is entirely absent in any real terms from the approach by Government, ODA and LOCOG. We would expect by now to see unqualified support for our medal prospects at the London Games with a legacy for future success.

British Shooting is very concerned at this stage that all the information given to LOCOG/ODA has been ignored. It has not been reflected in the decision-making process and is inaccurately represented in the LOCOG/ODA press release.

British Shooting wish to make it crystal clear that they still wish to host the 2012 shooting at Bisley and are very willing to sit down in front of a Parliamentary Committee to put their case in full if required to do so.

•••••

Following this release as you can imagine there has been much comment and debate within the National Governing Bodies for shooting. The National Rifle Association felt duty bound to continue on behalf of the shooting community to press for answers as to why its bid to hold the Games had been rejected when it was thought by all involved that it had put in the best case covering the three key areas of cost, feasibility and legacy.

As a result of public response it became obvious that the NRA should continue its efforts to get the release of both the full KPMG report and the LOCOG report justifying the selection of Woolwich as against Bisley. It was felt the release of these documents was essential because without them we could not understand how Woolwich had been selected other than for political reasons. On this basis it was decided to exert more political pressure and to make an application under the Freedom of Information Act.

The NRA asked its members and clubs to write, using the press release information, to their MPs to indicate that Bisley had been unfairly treated during the assessment process to select the shooting venue for 2012. Based upon copy responses to the NRA it must be said that many have written and this has had an effect in that MPs are asking questions of the Government, in particular the Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell, who basically responds with standard trite answers that avoid the point.

Where we are presently is that the Olympic Authorities and the Government are refusing to release the full reports declaring them to be ‘commercially sensitive’, which the Association fears is just a ploy to avoid them having to release the real reason for denying Bisley the shooting in 2012. We now have to wait for a reaction to our application under the Freedom of Information Act. Another indication of the Government’s view was a recent refusal to accept a petition on the ‘Number 10’ website asking for the release of the said documents. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Olympic Authorities and this Government will do anything to try and avoid a straight answer to this issue.

Comment

As you are aware I come from what would be classed as an establishment background and naively it would seem have always believed that Government was about the ‘greater good’ and doing the right things, even if sometimes that conflicts with my personal opinions. I never have been a conspiracy theorist.

I am afraid that when you look at how the shooting community has been treated almost with disdain in terms of legislation, funding and most recently the Olympics one is left with the uncomfortable feeling that there is an unstated policy in Government that is against shooting sports, which disenfranchises over a million people that take part in a lawful and highly regulated activity to the extent that they are willing to do anything to ensure the sport does not succeed even on the Olympic stage.

This being the case I am not surprised by calls, led by the Sportsman’s Association, for shooters to boycott the Olympics 2012 by not helping to officiate or provide volunteers. I have had some of those who would normally be asked to undertake this duty, write to me and inform me they are refusing to take part in protest at the way shooting is being treated. All I can say is I understand why some have made this stand; it is a matter for individual conscience.

The NRA will not be giving up on the cause but given much more time the build will have started and it will be too late for shooting to get any legacy out of the Olympics, which was probably always the intention and the case for the authorities.

International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF)

One of the main reasons the Olympic authorities have been successful in winning the political battle over Woolwich has been the blind support for the venue from the ISSF.

The ISSF was approached very early by British Shooting in the debate when it became apparent that the Woolwich site had safety issues and that the scale of the shooting venue was not as large as usually expected to host test events, Olympics and Paralympics.

It became obvious very early on that ISSF was more concerned with its own status and relations with the International Olympic Committee and the LOCOG than it was in taking notice of the GB shooting organisations. In fact it is true to say that since quite early in this process the ISSF have almost refused to communicate with British Shooting or to hear their inconvenient messages

True they did come to London to look at the options. However, it became obvious that unless LOCOG wanted a change of venue the ISSF were not going to contradict them. The ISSF were asked to consider two other sites that would have offered a venue to the correct scale and would have given legacy after the event. They chose to support Woolwich because it is 'at the heart of the Games'.

They chose to ignore the fact that in terms of environmental issues and safety, open shooting ranges are not built in urban areas. They were seemingly unconcerned with the safety issues relating to the site. Equally, they were prepared to give a dispensation to Woolwich that means the normal test events that precede the Games, which are usually of a larger scale, will become an invitation event only.

The ISSF have convinced themselves that by having the shooting close to the Olympic Village the shooting will be successful, ignoring the fact that as far as British shooting is concerned it is likely to be a PR disaster.

The facts are that a minimum of £42 million will be spent on shooting ranges that will be built and then ripped down offering no long-term benefit to the sport. Local people will have to put up with the build, demolition, roads being closed, traffic chaos, restricted access to hospital services, excessive noise and local traders will be adversely affected when the Army are moved out to facilitate the shooting.

According to the ISSF's own experts there are still safety concerns over the site, the rifle and pistol ranges are too close to the Thames and will be affected by less than ideal wind conditions. Athletes are likely to experience some travelling difficulties.

There is evidence of local concern with the current proposals and now the potential for protests outside the site by GB shooters.

The ISSF have not done their homework properly. Eventually they might even realise that they have actively supported Woolwich which is designed not to give shooting a legacy of any sort in support of an anti-shooting agenda in the UK. Is this what an International Shooting Sport Federation should be doing, or should it have listened to its local representatives?

NATSS

There is much talk within the NRA regarding whether we should enter into full amalgamation with the NSRA

and the CPSA at present. Personally I believe that it is more about when we do rather than if we should, always assuming we have safeguarded fullbore shooting rights and Bisley. In fact following recent experience when you look at how shooting is being treated politically it will be essential over the next few years that we create the conditions within shooting that allow us to fight for our sport or otherwise watch as it is gradually disassembled before our eyes.

Shooting is a major sport in participation terms. However, we fight well below our weight politically because we are not 'joined up' in our approach.

NATSS was an attempt to address this problem, to speak with a single voice.

The NRA is signed up initially to a joint working approach with the other bodies on the basis that we have to show that we can work together properly in some key areas. It is essential that we do not blindly go forward with an 'it will be alright on the night' approach. This project is so essential to the sport that we need to get it right first time, if and when we choose to merge.

Commonwealth Games

It has recently been reported that an approach has been made to the Commonwealth Games Federation to change the rules for Fullbore Rifle Shooting at the 2010 Games in Delhi. The change applied for was for a move to the new ICFRA rules affecting optics, trigger and rifle weights. Fortunately the CGF rejected the application retaining the rules as per 2006.

The NRA has from the beginning expressed concern at the rule changes because of their effect of making the sport more technical and thus more expensive. By retaining 'lower-tech' rules, more competitors from a wider range of countries are able to take part, on a technically level playing field.

In the Commonwealth Games the number of countries competing is critical. If, for instance, the number taking part in fullbore events fell to the current levels competing in the world championships, long range rifle shooting would almost certainly be dropped from the programme. The current 'low-tech' rules allow for the widest possible involvement in the 'Friendly Games', ensuring that those with the best skills win medals not those with the deepest pockets.

Chairman's Prize – Free Entry

As some of you are aware the Chairman's Prize was introduced into the Imperial Meeting to give those that had not made it into the further stages of the Queen's and St George's the chance to compete and win on the last two days of the Meeting. The original ethos was for the entry to this competition to be free.

In the recent past the arrangements for the event have been downgraded and a charge made for entry, which has effectively crushed interest in taking part, thus

creating an environment where it would be easy to justify dropping the competition. It was always the stated intention of the Council to retain this event in its original form by raising the funding from elsewhere in the programme to enable the widest possible level of competition on the final day of the Imperial Meeting.

The new Chairman Robin Pizer, with wide support, has challenged the current position with regard to the event, believing that the original ethos was correct to give as many people as possible the chance to compete at Bisley after the Grand Aggregate has finished. As a result it has been decided to reconsider the conditions for the match and to make entry to it free again this year.

General Notices

Bisley General Meeting

The 2009 Bisley General Meeting will be held in the Umbrella Tent at 21:00 on Wednesday 22 July.

NRA General Council Elections

Ordinary Members

The following have been re-elected unopposed:

Gary Alexander

Charles Brooks

John Gardener

Prof Dick Horrocks

James Watson

Regional Members

The following have been re-elected unopposed:

Mrs Iris Bennett West Midlands

Pete Coley South West

Martin Watkins Wales

The following have been elected unopposed:

Guy Larcombe Southern

Miss Jo Scrimshaw Greater London & South East

Shooting Discipline Members

The following have been re-elected unopposed:

Paul Hunter Practical Rifle

John Kynoch Sporting Rifle

The following has been elected unopposed:

Peter Hobson F Class

Imperial Meeting 2009 – Prize Givers

ISCRM

Air Vice Marshal Richard F Garwood CBE DSC MA
RAF – Air Officer Commanding 22 (Training Group)

TASAM

Lt Gen Nick Parker CBE – Commander Regional Forces

Ashburton

Lt Gen Nick Parker CBE – Commander Regional Forces

Imperial Meeting

Major Phil Packer AGC (RMP)

Team Captaincies

We send our best wishes for success to:

Robin Pizer Kolapore, Bisley

Richard Stearn Under 25 Team, Bisley

Nominations for Team Captaincies

Nominations are required for Captains for the following teams. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary General and received by 31 August 2009:

2010 GB Kolapore Team - Friday 23 July

2010 GB Under 25 Team Match - Friday 23 July

We have also just received an invitation from the NRA of America to send a team to the following match:

World Long Range Historical Rifle Shooting Championships in Raton, USA - July 2010.

Please send nominations for a Captain for this match to the Secretary General to be received by 31 July 2009 in view of the short timescale involved.

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NOTES FROM THE SHOOTING DIVISION

Contact with the Shooting Division

Contact with the Shooting Division should be made by e-mail whenever possible.

Please send your e-mails to:

shootingdivision@nra.org.uk

Imperial Meeting

Certificates of Safety and Competence

Please remember to bring your Certificate of Safety and Competence with you to the Imperial Meeting. You will not be able to collect your squadding cards without one!

There will be assessors available to assess shooters who have forgotten their card but this will be subject to staff availability and will cost £15. If you are a full NRA member the cost is £10.

Team captains must ensure that all team members have certificates or are coached on a one-to-one basis by the holder of a certificate.

Entry Forms

All Entry Forms are available for download online.

Target Rifle

Ammunition for the Imperial Meeting and NRA events before the Meeting

Most of the RWS ammunition to be used in the Target Rifle events at the 2009 Imperial Meeting has been delivered. For those of you who are unaware of the specification, we can advise that it is a Sierra Matchking 155gr bullet loaded in an RWS case to a maximum overall length of 2.800" and has a mean muzzle velocity under standard conditions of 2920 ft/sec. Trials including pressure tests at the Proof House, dimensional checks, chronograph checks and firing under match conditions from a representative selection of rifles have been conducted. The first large-scale use of this ammunition was during the Inter-Counties weekend 13 - 14 June. RWS Ammunition can be purchased from the Armoury.

Club secretaries are reminded that orders for ammunition will only be accepted if made in writing. Arrangements may, of course, be made verbally or by telephone but must be confirmed in writing before the order will be processed.

Compliance with Rule 150

The NRA has accepted advice that, since the part of a Sierra bullet that engages the rifling is shorter than the corresponding dimension on an RG bullet, chambers that complied with Rule 150 in respect of clearance

between the bullet and the rifling will still comply notwithstanding the change in ammunition for 2009. Therefore, there is no requirement for barrels already certified as compliant to be re-tested. Barrels which have not been certified, will have to be tested as before; the test will be carried out using a dummy round assembled from RWS supplied components.

Enforcement of Rules 150, 233-235, 239, 240 and 247-249 in Target Rifle events

The technical nature of many of the restrictions under the above rules is such that non-compliance cannot be detected by simple observation. Competitors are reminded that it is their personal responsibility to ensure the compliance of their equipment with the Rules and to present it for inspection when required (Rule 282 and others). It is intended that, during the 2009 Imperial Meeting, a system of equipment control under the supervision of the Shooting Committee will be implemented. This will involve the randomised selection of a number of competitors, on completion of their detail, for a check of their rifle and equipment for compliance with the Rules. Measures will be taken to minimise the disruption and inconvenience caused. Full details of the process to be followed will be published in advance of the Meeting on the website. Details will also be found in squadding envelopes and published on the notice board.

Extra Tie Shots

We believe that the commercial ammunition being issued for the 2009 Imperial Meeting will be extremely consistent and accurate. As a consequence, it is anticipated that scores may be higher than has previously been the norm. In order to reduce the number and size of tie-shoots, the Shooting Committee has decided that, for 2009 only, Target Rifle competitors making a highest possible score of 50.10 will fire five extra tie shots immediately in accordance with rule 481. Please note that this does not apply to competitions where the HPS is greater than 50. Based on the results of the 2009 Imperial Meeting, a decision will be taken on whether to reduce the size of the V bull for 2010.

The Chairman's Prize

Following discussion at Shooting Committee, it has been recommended to the Trustees that the subsequent stages of the Chairman's Prize should be free to enter in 2009, the cost being borne by the Meeting budget. It is hoped that this will encourage greater participation by those competitors winning a place in the shoulder-to-shoulder events comprising the second stage of the Chairman's Prize. Please disregard the information given on page 6 of the Spring Journal.

Ammunition Issuers

We have recently been informed that the military are able to provide us with ammunition issuers for the

TR and F Class part of the Imperial Meeting. This means that we will not need competitor ammunition issuers this year.

Schools

Captains of teams competing in the Schools Veterans must certify on the team register that all team members have Certificates of Safety and Competence or are coached on a one-to-one basis by the holder of a certificate.

Match Rifle

Please remember that, in all MR competitions including those competitors using RWS ammunition (in the RWS Aggregate) all competitors must supply their own ammunition. No ammunition will be available on the firing point but will be available from the Range Office.

High Muzzle Energy (HME) Firearms

All Match Rifle, Sporting Rifle and F Class competitors shooting HME firearms must zero their rifles before collecting their squadding cards. If your rifle and ammunition combination produce a muzzle energy (ME) exceeding 4,500 Joules (3,319 ft lbs) then you must follow the special zeroing procedure. Please refer to the NRA website or the Range Office for full instructions on this zeroing procedure. The rifle must be zeroed on each day it is used unless this is part of a continuous period of training or competition, such as the Imperial Meeting. Zeroing may be done either at 200 yards or metres under the supervision of a specially trained RCO (HME) or on the Bisley Zero Range.

Prize List Books 2007 and 2008

A limited run of Prize List books for 2007 and 2008 have been produced and are available from Karen Robertson or from Front Counter during the Imperial Meeting. Each book will cost £12.50 (plus post and packing if required) and will be sold on a first come first served basis. Copies have been reserved for all those who returned the order forms sent out with the Prize List CDs. Order forms for this year's Prize List books will be included in Imperial Meeting squadding envelopes.

Shooting Mentors (Aunts and Uncles) Scheme

All those attending the Imperial Meeting may request the assistance of an experienced shooter who will be happy to assist them. This may take the form of discussing the day's shooting, or how to complete your score sheet or wind graph. Any competitor who would like such assistance should complete the relevant request box on the main Individual TR & MR Entry Form or contact squadding@nra.org.uk, and Tim Elliott or Bruce Roth, who administer the scheme, will then allocate the competitor concerned a Mentor.

Early Entry Draws

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

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Alex Cargill Thompson | Comp No 14 |
| | (100% refund of entry fees) | |
| 2 | Harry Ball | Comp No 212 |
| | (50% refund of entry fees) | |
| 3 | Julian Hilton-Johnson | Comp No 60 |
| | (25% refund of entry fees) | |

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

The winner of the £100 Online Early Entry Draw was Matthew Robson of Dollar Academy.

General News

F Class World Championships 2009

The F Class World Championships will be held immediately following the 2009 Imperial Meeting, the programme being as follows:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Sun 26 July | Individual and Team Practice |
| Mon 27 July | Individual Championship starts |
| Tue 28 July | Individual Championship ends |
| Wed 29 July | Team Championships start |
| Thur 30 July | Team Championships end |

John Gardener will be the Match Director for the Championships and will be assisted by Karen Robertson.

Spring Action Weekend and Phoenix 2009

Spring Action Weekend took place at the end of March, attended by a record number of competitors. We also enjoyed a very successful Phoenix weekend, headline sponsored by Midway UK. Over 580 people entered Phoenix 09 competing in a total of 2907 events, breaking our highest ever event entry record. A fantastic achievement and thanks are due to the great many people who help to make this, the second largest NRA Meeting, a very successful event, much enjoyed by all.

.300 Whisper Cartridge

Within Gallery Rifle and Pistol, the question of whether the .300 Whisper cartridge qualifies for use in Gallery Rifle Centrefire (GRCF) events has been raised. The GR&P Committee has considered this and ruled that .300 Whisper does NOT qualify under the current rules. However, this question has highlighted some broader issues with the current definition of GRCF - the Committee will therefore be reviewing the definition as part of its end-of-year rule review with the aim of making and announcing changes in plenty of time for the start of the 2010 competition season.

The 2009 Ages Match

As already announced in the Spring Journal the Ages Match will be held over the weekend 24 - 25 October 2009. Teams will be of 12 firers, and the match conditions will be a Queen's II on Saturday afternoon followed by a reduced Palma course (900 and 1000 yards only) on the Sunday morning. The age brackets will be:

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

Those who wish to be considered for the appropriate team, dependent on age, should write to Karen Robertson, as soon as possible giving their full name, contact details, date of birth and whether you would be prepared to shoot, coach or be an officer of the appropriate Ages team.

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

Range Office

Target and Marker Bookings

Markers are now booked on Mondays for weekend bookings. Please ensure that any changes for weekend bookings are given to the Range Office on Mondays and not on Wednesdays as was previously done. The Range Office is open on Mondays for administration queries between 09:00 and 16:00. The best way to make contact with the Range Office is via e-mail – the phone lines are usually busy and although you can leave a message for the office to ring you back, an e-mail will be dealt with even faster – range.office@nra.org.uk.

Weekday Markers

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

Payment of Markers

If shooting has to be curtailed or cancelled for any reason outside the NRA's control (eg wind or other extreme weather, or fire in the danger area), all markers which have been booked by the NRA on behalf of any club or individual must still be paid for by the club for the duty for which they were booked. Not to do so would be effectively breaking a contract with the markers concerned.

NRA Open Days

The next NRA Open Day will be Saturday 5 September 2009. The online booking facility at www.nra.org.uk is now open. There will be a limit on tickets so please register early to avoid disappointment.

Safety Warning

Enfield Rifle Actions Converted to 7.62 Calibre from .303 or made as 7.62 mm.

Enfield actions of the No 4 and No 5 type were originally designed to fire the British .303 service cartridges of the day.

Many of these actions have been subsequently converted from .303 to 7.62 mm. Whilst a few selected actions may be stronger than others, most are not suitable for use in this calibre other than under certain conditions.

The 7.62 mm Cartridge that they were intended to use was the 144-grain NATO cartridge with a bullet diameter of .3075".

It is unsafe to fire these rifles with the 155 grain Radway Green cartridge or any other commercial cartridges using the 155 grain or heavier bullet which has a diameter of .3083" or larger.

Firing these latter cartridges can ultimately lead to catastrophic failure of the bolt lugs and bolt body that could lead to serious injury. This risk is considerably increased if the chamber or cartridge gets wet or is oiled prior to firing.

The NRA will not accept responsibility for any accident or injury to persons or property caused by anyone using any 7.62 / .308 Win ammunition supplied by them in these converted actions.

The actions/rifles involved may fall under the following descriptions, but there may also be other names or descriptions used: SMLE Conversion, Enfield Conversion, No 4 Conversion, No 5 Conversion, Parker Hale T4, Whitaker Special, Enfield Envoy and Enfield Enforcer.

You have been warned.

NOTES FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NSC



by
Jeremy
Staples

NRA Open Day

The NRA Open Day took place on Saturday 2 May and a total of 943 guests registered to shoot on the ranges. The decision had been made to restrict the numbers to reduce the queues and allow the guests to enjoy more shooting. This seemed to have been a great success and we have had very positive feedback from a large number of those that visited Bisley.

Thanks are again due to all the members that helped out on the day, without you it would be impossible to run such a successful event. Your help is very much appreciated.

The next Open Day is on Saturday 5 September and we will again be asking members to volunteer to coach and co-ordinate the day. If you are able to help please contact Brigitte Rushmore on either telephone number 01483 798800 or by e-mail at brigitte@nra.org.uk

Clock Tower

You may have noticed that there is now scaffolding surrounding the Clock Tower and that both the cladding and clock have been removed.

The clock is currently being refurbished and all the work should be completed by the end of June this year.

Electronic Targets

We are still encountering some difficulties with the electronic targets but for the most part they are working successfully. If you have not already tried one we would urge you to do so. Please contact the Range Office to arrange a booking.

Chalet Development Plans

As a result of the work carried out in respect of the potential Olympic venue being at Bisley the chalet development plans were put on hold. Now that the decision has been made, we will be resurrecting the chalet development during the course of the next

two to three months with a view to possibly having a number completed by Easter next year.

Imperial Meeting Security

Following the success of the last two years' site security during the Imperial Meeting we will again be employing two night staff with security dogs to ensure that all our members and markers have a safe and relaxing meeting and the number of problems are reduced to a minimum.

Staff

Dave and Jenny Hollington retired from their role with the NSC at the end of March. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their many years of hard work and support. Dave and Jenny will continue to run their Snack Bar at Bisley.

.....

UPDATE FROM BRIGITTE RUSHMORE, MARKETING DIRECTOR

I just wanted to say a huge thank you on behalf of the NRA and NSC to all the volunteers who helped make the May Open Day the success it was. We had the added bonus of great weather, but, at a time when we know everyone is watching how they spend their money, we were delighted that the event sold out almost three weeks before the deadline. With nearly 1000 visitors who had the opportunity to try over 15 different shooting disciplines, the feedback has been really encouraging with many who have been to Open Days several times in the past, saying this was the best Open Day yet. Evaluation forms have been sent to all the online bookers and we have already received over 100 replies and nearly all of that feedback is positive – so again, thank you to everyone who contributed to this success.

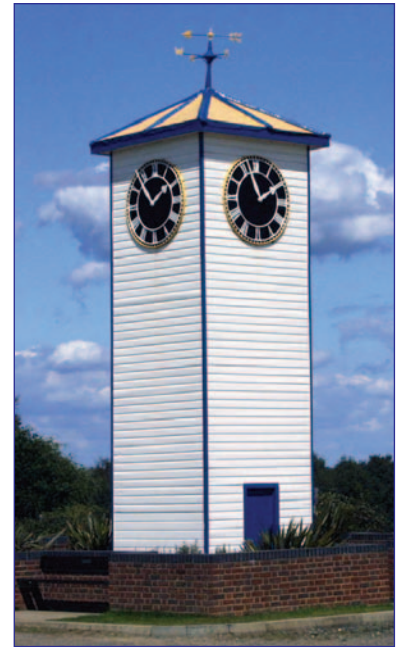
Of course, coming up very shortly is the jewel in the NRA's crown, the Imperial Meeting and in addition to our regular sponsors, I am delighted to confirm that at the time of going to press new companies including Imperial Security Products, Haering, William Evans, Midway UK and RUAG have all added their support to the Meeting by taking up sponsorships.

There are still sponsorship opportunities available for the 2009 and 2010 Imperial Meetings. The NRA Imperial Meeting is internationally famous, attracting thousands of competitors each year from over 30 countries worldwide. With packages starting from as little as £100 there are opportunities to link your company, product or service with the NRA's most prestigious target rifle shooting event which in turn will increase awareness and profile of your company, product or service. For further details contact brigitte@nra.org.uk or telephone 01483 798816.



BISLEY CLOCK TOWER APPEAL

**CURRENT DONATIONS
£8387.00**



A big thank you to all those who have donated to the Clock Tower Appeal so far - if you haven't yet there's still time to donate and every little helps!

The Clock Tower is the most famous landmark on Bisley Common. Dating back to our Wimbledon days, this iconic tower has stood overlooking the ranges since the NRA moved here in 1890.

The original Clock Tower was rebuilt in its current form in 1934 and is now in urgent need of renovation. The clock itself needs major restoration and the tower requires serious structural repair involving underpinning and re-cladding. This is expected to cost in the region of £25,000.

The NRA Council has approved the launch of an appeal to members and shooters alike to help fund this necessary work to bring the Clock Tower back to its former glory.

In the event that the proceeds of this appeal exceed the cost of this renovation, the excess funds will be used for the ongoing costs of the upkeep of the Clock Tower and other historic artefacts.

This is where you as members come in. We are asking for donations, no matter how small or large, to assist the funding. As a tangible mark of your generosity, it is envisaged that a small token, which could be worn with pride, will be presented.

For donations in excess of:

£25.00

£100.00

£500.00

£1000.00

Title

Friend of the Clock Tower

Steward of the Clock Tower

Keeper of the Clock Tower

Patron of the Clock Tower

All donations of whatever size, particularly in these difficult financial times, would be gratefully accepted. Donations may be made online via our secure payment facility at www.nra.org.uk or by post to the address below.

For further details please contact clocktower@nra.org.uk

NRA Clock Tower Appeal

National Rifle Association, National Shooting Centre, Bisley, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey GU24 0PB

Charity Registered Number: 219858

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRAINING



*by
Phyllis
Farnan*

Spring 2009 has been a very busy time for the Training Department with a noticeable increase in requests for both regional and Bisley training courses. In response, additional training provision has been arranged but this will have a knock-on effect for some of the Bisley courses previously advertised.

A new Club Instructor (General Skills) course was introduced in April and following the success of the pilot course, a second course will be held in September. Eventually, it will be available as a regional course, but while it is still being developed the course will only be offered at Bisley.

The Club Instructor (Target Rifle) and TR Skills courses also continue to be popular. So far this year, two Bisley courses and four regional courses have been held.

Additional probationary training courses will now be held in July and the autumn in response to the increased numbers of probationary members who have joined the NRA.

Three additional RCO courses at Bisley have also been arranged for the coming months in response to the sustained demand for this qualification course.

Dates for training courses at Bisley for the remainder of 2009 are given at the end of these notes. NB some course dates published in the Spring Journal have been changed to allow for additional courses to be added to the 2009 Bisley training programme.

Safe Shooting System

Additional copies of the NRA Probationary Training Manual (price £5) and the Instructor pack (Price £10) are available from the Training Department.

Under the Safe Shooting System, clubs which use MoD ranges must either use the NRA probationary training course or submit a copy of their own training scheme to the NRA for accreditation.

Clubs should retain detailed records of all training provision for a period of at least 12 months, as this may be required for audit purposes.

RCO Courses

Bookings are now being taken for RCO courses at Bisley in August and September. To apply for a place on a RCO course or arrange a regional course for your club members, please contact Maureen Peach on 01483 797777 ext 149. Please note: Regional RCO courses must be arranged through the NRA; clubs cannot book courses directly with Assessors.

RCO (HME) Courses

The next course will take place at Bisley on 11 October. Course fees are £30 for Bisley courses and £15 for regional courses. Successful candidates will receive a replacement photo ID card.

Renewal of RCO Qualifications

RCOs who qualified in 2003 are due to renew their qualification this year. A renewal form is available. The documents required for revalidation are: a recent passport photograph (name on back), your old photo ID card, confirmation from your club chairman or secretary that you have run ranges for your club during the last 12 months, a specimen signature in black ink, and your current postal details.

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

From 2010, it is likely that RCOs who are requesting a second or a third renewal of their RCO qualification will be required to attend a one day RCO update and assessment test. Further details of this procedure will be given in the Winter Journal.

Probationary Members' Courses

This year, additional Probationary courses will be held during July and the autumn. The course which consists of five training sessions is normally run on Saturdays and Sundays, but individual tuition can also be provided mid-week (Tuesday – Friday).

Target Rifle Skills Courses

These courses are designed to enhance the individual knowledge and skills of new shooters. NRA Club and Regional Coaches can run TR Skills courses by arrangement with the NRA. The next TR Skills course will be held at Bisley on the 24 - 25 October. The course fee is £120 for NRA members and £140 for non-members. Regional fees are £20 per person (£15 for cadets) but please note that the coach's subsistence and travelling expenses must also be paid, as these are not included in the regional course fee.

Club Instructor Courses

The Club Instructor course trains experienced shooters to carry out probationary / novice training and assessment within their own clubs under the NRA Safe Shooting System. The NRA now offers two types of Club Instructor courses:

- 1 The Club Instructor (TR) course: This course focuses on training with target rifles only. The next Club Instructor (TR) course will be held at Bisley on 24 - 25 October. The course fee is £120 for NRA members and £140 for non-members. Regional courses can be run by arrangement with the NRA
- 2 The Club Instructor (General Skills) course includes training with gallery rifle, telescope sighted rifles and historic iron sighted rifles. The next Club Instructor (General Skills) course will be held at Bisley on 19 - 20 September. The course fee is £85 per person.

NRA Club Coach (TR) Course

A Club Coach (TR) course will be held on 14 - 15 November. This course is only open to individual NRA members who have completed the Club Instructor (TR) course or hold an equivalent qualification. Candidates must also attend an Instructor's workshop unless they have a teaching qualification. The Club Coach course fee is £120. The club coach qualification is valid for five years.

The Instructor's Workshop, which covers methods of instruction and assessment, will be held on Sunday 4 October. The fee is £25. This workshop is primarily for trainee Assessor and Club Coach candidates.

Wind Reading Course

The annual short wind reading course will be held on Friday 17 July, for the benefit of those taking part in the Imperial TR Meeting. Fee: £5 for Class O and T and £10 for class A and X. Proceeds to the OTF and further details will be found in competitors' envelopes.

Training Calendar for Courses at Bisley for the Remainder of 2009

Probationary Course 2009/4

12 September, 3 October, 10 October, 17 October and 14 November

Probationary Course 2009/4a

4 October, 18 October, 8 November, 15 November and 22 November

Probationary Course 2009/5

7 November, 21 November, 28 November, 29 November and 12 December

RCO Courses

22 - 23 August

26 - 27 September

31 Oct - 1 November

5 - 6 December

RCO (HME) Course

11 October

Club Instructor (General Skills) Course

19 - 20 September

Club Instructor (TR) Course

24 - 25 October

TR Skills Course

24 - 25 October

Club Coach Course

14 - 15 November

Instructor's Workshop

4 October

Wind Reading Course

17 July (short course)

For further information about any NRA training courses or to request an application form please contact the Director of Training on tel 01483 797777 ext 150 or e-mail training@nra.org.uk.

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SHOOTING DISCIPLINE MATTERS

Classics

by Rae Wills

This nearly became a one liner “your correspondent is indisposed” or similar. The great plan was for two of us to go away the last weekend in April to visit friends in Holland, get a chance to shoot pistol (9mm Beretta, and following the theme of their collection, a Colt Python), on to the Ciney Militaria Show in Belgium, to do a bit of shopping and come home.

All done, except by the last morning I had a raging sore throat that soon was a crippling chesty cough which put me in bed for most of the next three days.

Anyway, now feeling passably human, I am slowly returning to the world, and managed to get to another successful NRA Open Day on Saturday 2 May. Many thanks to all who supported the Classics shoot and exhibition. I find it always a most satisfying day, and the thanks of the public shows those who oppose all we do do not have the universal support they claim.

In my last article I raised the question of how we deal with possible new historic classes, now we have accepted rolling cut-off dates post-1946. This obviously struck a chord as very soon I had two e-mails in reply. Only two you may say? Yes, but in all the years I have been writing here I have practically never had even one reply, so two was an avalanche!

Andrew Claxton, from the North, wondered if we could do something equivalent to the “Transitional” classes for sporting rifle. Certainly a good point, and he also wonders if the low cost of some of these rifles could encourage more shooters. As this is not my field, advice from experts or BSRC members would be welcome.

Jim Hallam, who in many ways is the author of my fate, was as usual short and to the point; enough already and we must do a root and branch re-structuring with common rules. Whilst I am no believer in change for change’s sake, the more I consider this proposition, the more I like it (but only as a starting point, not as a blueprint).

This is what he actually said:

“Surely we have enough classes already - what we need is for everyone to be singing from the same set of rules now. Also if we are going to do anything, the logical stage is to re-structure the existing big meetings so that they become manageable - possibly by adding a new “Standing Meeting” which would give people more opportunity to shoot whilst spreading the load.”

There is only one part of this I do not immediately endorse - increasing the number of meetings. On the face of it, more small events look attractive. Small

meetings normally give lower entry fees; no need for expensive programmes, front office or stats staff.

But the costs of getting to Bisley and of accommodation is such that many already only come to one meeting. So transferring a match to another meeting would only remove that event from their grasp and so be counter productive.

Even for myself, one of the spoilt Southerners close to Bisley, fitting in extra events is difficult; I missed the St George’s again this year. So what about the needs of those out in the regions? Have you the right mix of Bisley and regional events?

However, it does give rise to many questions, such as after 20 or so years do the present datelines fit the type of shooting we want to do? How do we structure further post-1946 classes? Does the mix of matches at the two main events (IHAM and Trafalgar) suit our needs? Do the smaller club events such as the St George’s and the 1910 have a place in this plan?

The main events, especially the Trafalgar, must be fully costed so any changes must not increase costs, rather the reverse. So could there be more matches for mixed classes, chosen by potential performance rather than dateline? And where is the balance between the desirability of a match in say Historic terms, when the income is not sufficient to pay its way.

Sometimes this is not obvious. For example, the McQueen is for many a “Flagship” event; yet it is very greedy on resources, two castles needing at least three markers and an RCO and scorer at the firing point. Yet an event without it? Never, I hope!

But if I look at the too many management disasters that have passed my way in the last few decades, most resulted from the brief being firmly based on the presumption that as much change as possible is the best and must be achieved at all costs; so rule one of one, if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!

So where do we go from here? Well this is the chance for all to get involved; over the summer put your ideas on paper, and send them in to me (rae@wills0.demon.co.uk) or c/o the NRA. Come and talk to me anytime you see me at Bisley. Raise the topic at your club meetings.

A meeting, long overdue, of the Classics Sub-Committee to discuss this and other matters will take place this year, and experience seems to be that the Friday before the Trafalgar is the only time most can attend, so that is the provisional date.

See you at the Imperial Historic Arms Meeting 2009!

Metric Matters

by Ian Shirra-Gibb

Record Start to Season - 600 for Tony Lincoln

A page of history was turned in British 300m shooting over the weekend of 21 to 22 March when Bedfordshire's Tony Lincoln raised the UK 60 Shot prone record to the perfect 600!

Tony was shooting in the NRA "A" team in Clermont (France), and having shot an equal British and local range record of 599 on the Saturday went on to the perfect performance the following morning.

The result is even more amazing in that having had a problem getting his rifle and ammo combination to work in training, he took up the offer of a fellow team member to borrow his rifle for the competition.

The British men's prone record (shot by the late Malcolm Cooper) has stood since the 1986 World Championships in Sweden, and although equalled in training has never been beaten in competition.

Tony helped the NRA "A" team to the closest win in the event history having tied on X bulls first before a last string count back.



Mary being presented with her gold medal.

was also one point over her personal competition best.

This confirms a place in the circuit final in Pilzen in September and a team place at the European ISSF Shooting Championship in Osijek during mid-July.



Tony Lincoln.

Following his trophy and medal haul, he was presented with a magnum of Champagne by the match director at the farewell lunch.

This bodes well for Tony in this year's European events.

GB Gold in Weimar

Britain's Mary Pearse secured the first British Women's 300m Prone Gold at the recent Weimar Lapua European Cup.

Her superb performance on the day gave her an impressive 598 ex 600 to beat Italian Barbara Alviti by one point.

This equals the current European record and the British record which she now shares with her daughter. This



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Civilian Service Rifle

by Steve Beard

This year the NRA Civilian Methuen Team Match will take place on Century range on 25 July 2009.

Until 2008 (as with the other service rifle events) the Methuen was run by the military with civilians shooting alongside them. Unfortunately with cuts in the military budget this is no longer the case. As a consequence this year we are breaking new ground and running the civilian event ourselves.

The courses of fire, or practices as they are known, are staying the same as is the timetable.

Each team will be designated two adjacent lanes for the duration of the match with two team members shooting at a time. Coaching is allowed by the team captain and other team members.

The entry form and all the data you will need can be found in a single document on the NRA website along with all the other Imperial entry forms, but to whet your appetite here is a brief summary.

Each team consists of six shooting team members and (although not essential it is preferred) one non-shooting team captain. Clubs/ Associations may enter two teams providing range space is available.

There are only two classes of rifle "Practical Optic" and "Historic". Full details of each of the classes are included with the entry form. There is a perpetual

trophy for the winning team in each class and seven medals for the team and captain.

The match itself will consist of five Service Rifle Practices shot from 100, 200 and 300 yards. Each practice will require ten rounds with an additional two sighting rounds for the first practice at 300 yards.

The total number of rounds required will be 52 per team member (excluding re-shoots). The maximum number of teams for 2009 will be 11, limited by the number of lanes available.

If entering two teams please send a separate cheque and entry form per team.

In addition to the entry fee there will be a further cash payment of £10 per team on the day to go toward the "Help for Heroes" fund, this being a modest means of acquiring the volunteer range staff.

It is also the responsibility of each team to supply two personnel as butt markers. If you don't have volunteers these may be hired from the NRA - telephone 01483 797777 ext 152 (Range Office).

Please send the entry form and entry fee to: Civilian Methuen 2009, 52 Roping Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 4BE.

Or if you need more information you can e-mail me at steven.beard3@btopenworld.com

CERTIFICATES OF SAFETY AND COMPETENCE

All users of Bisley ranges are reminded that they must either be in possession of a current Certificate of Safety and Competence or else will have to shoot under the one-to-one supervision of the holder of such a certificate. This is a result of the agreement between the NRA and the MoD which requires all civilian shooters on MoD ranges to have been assessed as being safe and competent in the use of the firearms concerned. This requirement also applies to Bisley ranges since these are leased from the MoD and also use the MoD Pirbright Range Danger Area.

Normal Daily Use of Bisley

All individuals who intend to shoot on their own must produce their Certificate of Safety and Competence to the NSC Range Office staff before they may sign in. Similarly, if an RCO is signing in as RCO of a group, he must first check that all members of his group have their certificates with them. When he signs in he will be certifying that he has confirmed that this is the case. Anyone found not to have a certificate may be asked to cease shooting.

Imperial Meeting

Competitors at the Imperial Meeting may only collect their squadding cards on production of their Certificates of Safety and Competence. Squadding cards will not be issued without one. In the case of overseas competitors the relevant certificate must have been signed by their own National Governing Body or by their Club or Association Chairman. See NRA website www.nra.org.uk for full details.

REMEMBER - CARRY YOUR CERTIFICATE WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES!

REGIONAL MATTERS

IRISH (SPLIT) OPEN 2009 - A TALE OF TWO HALVES

by Richard Bailie

The Irish Open on 16 and 17 May was unusual in a couple of ways. Firstly, it wasn't on the May Bank Holiday weekend, Ballykinler being unavailable that weekend, and secondly it was only partly in Ballykinler!

A few days before the match, organizers Hazel Mackintosh and Trevor Steele were advised that the range would not be available on Saturday 16 May, due to military requirements. Since a fair number were coming from England, some two solid days of telephoning by Hazel secured us the use of Magilligan Range at the opposite end of the province in Co Derry, and involving a very long drive for some coming from the South.

Saturday morning 08:00 at Magilligan saw us outside the camp at the 300 yards range - the only one we could use for the day. Some novel thinking led to us shooting the first match - the Ballykinler Tankard (2 & 15) - followed by a swap round of shooters and butt markers for the second detail. There were still two further shoots at 300 yards so the first - the Championship 300 (2 & 7) - was shot together with the second - the Royal Ulster Rifles Cup (10 to count with no sighters) - to make the two scores out of 19 rounds.

The weather? Need you ask! Wet, windy and cold, with some heavy showers treating the second detail of the morning shoot after a fairly benign start for the first detail. We got our revenge later.

The morning session was broken for an hour while we watched a civil defence exercise take place, with helicopters gracing the locality. We started again at 12:30 and carried through with our 2 & 17 exercise in two details, though by this time the wind had increased substantially, so that at just over 4 minutes (at 300!) at least one whole target face (with sackcloth backing)

was ripped untimely from its frame, and left on the floor of the butts.

In the Ballykinler (Magilligan?) Tankard, Michael Latimer cleared the field with a 74.13, with David Calvert on 74.9 and Trevor Steele with 73.9, during shoots with a wind bracket of 1.5 to 3.5 minutes right. Ross McQuillan edged out Trevor Steele on countback to win the URA Tankard with a 49.7, and the Championship 300 was won by Adam McCullough with the only 35.

Shooting finished at 16:00 and, after a short briefing by Trevor on the drill for Sunday and a long drive home for most, it meant that most people had had at least 12 hours in the saddle by the time they got home.

With much less difficulty than expected, Sunday morning's access to Ballykinler was very smooth and shooting got off to a good start at a respectable 09:15. The weather was the same though, wet and windy, with the occasional glimpse of sunshine. Doing our now familiar exercise of 2 & 17 for the Championship 500 followed by the Royal Irish Fusiliers Trophy, and with reasonably steady winds at 2 - 2.5 minutes left, there was an increase in the number of possibles to seven with Trevor Steele leading on 35.6 and Chris Slator and David Calvert hard on his heels with 35.5. However at this point some cross fires appeared, because the target number boards had all been repainted with white backing and thin black numbering - not alternate colours as previously. Hmm!

For the URA Tankard, Ross McQuillan took first prize with 49.7 counting out Trevor Steele who was having a good day. But looking further down the prize list, there was Holly McCullough counting ahead of her brother Adam, both with 49.4. Watch out for your little sister Adam!



Wet, windy and cold Magilligan Range.



A Lee Enfield in the Classic Rifle class at Ballykinler.



Bit windy at Ballykinler!

After the second detail it was decided to fall straight back to 600 for the first detail of another set of 2 & 17 - for the Championship 600 and the Mourne Trophy. Garnett Faulkner won with one of the three possibles, in absolutely foul conditions (think horizontal rain in your face and scope) while the Mourne Trophy was quietly snaffled by David Calvert on 50.8 just one V ahead of Gary Alexander, Ross McQuillan and Colin Hughes all on 50.7.

The second detail, after lunch, was a lot easier and in nice spring sunshine!

This boded well for the Final, in which there were 12 TR places and two each for F Class Open and F Class TR. A Classic Rifle Final was also shot alongside.

The Final was held in really quite pleasant conditions with 75s coming from Alwyn McLean, Ross McQuillan and Martin Millar. However, for the second time in three years, it was the steady shooting of Ross McQuillan that did the trick to win the Irish Open Championship, just one point and two Vs ahead of David Calvert, who



And Ross McQuillan wins again!

in turn was just six Vs ahead of George Gilpin - last years winner. Gary Alexander was top A Class in sixth place, two points behind, and Michael Latimer top O in seventh place, one point behind that.

Top Tyro, unsurprisingly, was Holly McCullough who was also the highest placed Cadet.

The F Class winner was John Donaldson, F/TR winner T Wotherspoon and the Classic Rifle winner was William Latimer, (Michaels Dad), seven points ahead of Tommy Robb.

Overall, a very enjoyable Meeting, and many thanks to the organisers for their fast footwork and remarkably quick stats on the range by Charlie Cooper. Hopefully next year it will all be in one place again!

Oh and if any of you were thinking of taking up F Class TR (ie F Class restricted to issued ammo) take heart that the Championship 300 was won with a 31.1 but I'm not going to embarrass the winner.

Well OK then, it was David Cumming.

RECENT RESULTS FROM YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE

Success for Huddersfield in the Bingham Shield

Huddersfield was successful once again in this end-of-seasons inter-clubs match and extended their winning streak to five straight wins. Shot at Strensall over 300 and 600 yards, Huddersfield started strongly at the first range to establish a lead that Leeds were unable to recover at the longer range. There were many fine scores in both teams with the top scorers on the day being Jon Swash (Huddersfield) 149.20 and Mark Silson (Leeds) 148.26.

Simon Dench is Yorkshire Champion 2008

After putting in strong performances at both the Yorkshire Spring and Autumn meetings Simon Dench was crowned Yorkshire Champion for 2008, the third time he has won the title, 25 years after last winning. Simon added a solid 149.22 in September to his 170.18 from June to finish just three V bulls ahead of fellow Huddersfield member Steve Robinson who had been neck and neck with Simon from the start.

Colin Goad of Huddersfield won the Spring meeting with a score of 173.21 closely followed by John Stevens of Leeds on 172.24. In September Bill Flentje of Altcar won the Autumn meeting with the only full score of 150.26 ahead of Dench and Robinson on 149s. Ken Rathbone of Huddersfield won the Bill Norman trophy for top F Class in the championship and Ken Firth won the O Class prize.

Yorkshire Youngsters on form in Canada

Two young Yorkshire shooters, Chelsea Edwards and Georgie Ogden who toured Canada with the UK Cadet team (Athelings) last year capped a successful DCRA Meeting by shooting in the Governor General's Final where Georgie finished in 21st place and Chelsea in 42nd.

Georgie won the trophy for the highest placed cadet in the final, a notable "double" having achieved the same accolade as the highest placed cadet in the Queens Final at Bisley in 2007.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by James Watson, Chairman of the Membership Committee

Over the past few years the Membership Committee has spent much of its efforts working through the strategy of consolidating membership categories and reducing the cost of annual membership. In doing so we have made the structure much simpler, creating a structure to represent a national governing body, rather than the Bisley-centric model with regional members that was in place before, and reduced the cost of annual membership by over 30%. As a result of these combined measures the membership has grown by about 50% from approximately 4000 to over 6000 today. Whilst we will continue to look at how we can improve efficiency and reduce the fees further, we are currently re-evaluating our strategy. This year we are focussing our efforts on youth.

I have mentioned before that we were introducing a cadet handbook that would allow those currently shooting with schools and cadet units to record their training. This would allow them to prove their competence, so avoiding the cost and time of attending a full probationary course (since their training would cover this) and helping them with a smooth transition to shooting outside their units as members of the NRA. Anyone interested in this scheme (particularly adult instructors who may have youngsters who would benefit) should get in touch with Karen Robertson at the NRA.

Working alongside this scheme the NRA has for a number of years offered a school leavers programme whereby those leaving school can apply for three years free membership of the NRA. We are happy to announce that under a new initiative we are going to be able to extend this to allow anyone who is still under 21 to apply for a three year free junior membership.

This should help those who want to remain in the sport to do so as full members of the NRA at a time when cost may be a factor in them leaving the sport.

Another programme we are starting is aimed at helping both university clubs and individuals who perhaps don't have a club other than their university. This scheme will work in two ways; matching up clubs who are looking to take on new young members as well as putting experienced individuals who want to volunteer help and advice to university clubs in touch with universities that are looking for assistance. Many of the problems that universities face is a lack of experienced shooters and a lack of consistency of club members due to the three year or so turnover of students. If anyone reading this is interested in either of these schemes please can they contact Heather in the Membership Department. All clubs should have received a form requesting information about themselves and their interest in being involved sent to them with their renewal receipt.

Finally some members may have noticed that the membership fees for life membership have been changed considerably this year. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly we have reduced the number of bands of fees to simplify administration. Secondly we have currently over 900 life members who are essentially all paid up and, as running costs rise, annual fees will no longer contribute to funding the NRA's existence. In setting the new rates, Council has been mindful of the apparent errors in former years in setting rates that, with the passage of time, now appear inappropriately low, and not to rely overly upon actuarial assumptions that, as many pension funds are now finding to their cost, can prove to be very wide of the mark.

JENNY AND DAVE RETIRE

At last after about 25 years Jenny and myself have decided to retire from our work for the NRA. We have really enjoyed ourselves at Bisley and have made many friends over the years, sadly though we have lost a few as well due to the passage of time. I would like to thank Jeremy Staples and Amanda Vaughan for their help while they have been here. I would also like to thank all the members of staff as well. They have been great to work with. I think the greatest change we have seen has been in the expectations of the members, they seemed to expect more of a home from home today although with the infrastructure of Bisley that is very difficult to achieve, however that is the charm of the Camp. Although we have retired we shall still be very involved with Bisley and look forward to seeing all our old friends.

Right: The NRA presented Jenny and Dave with a tree to commemorate their many years of service.



FORTHCOMING TOURS

NRA Team to Channel Islands 2010

I am honoured and delighted to have been elected by the NRA Council as Captain of the 2010 NRA Channel Islands team.

It is my intention to select a strong and diversely balanced team from all of the four home countries from applicants who have not toured with a GB team and who now wish to further develop their shooting careers. The provisional tour dates are 19 to 26 May 2010 which will include both individual and team matches in Guernsey and Jersey.

If you would like to apply for a place in this team please forward to me your shooting curriculum vitae and full contact details by 28 August 2009. To encourage younger shooters to apply I intend to keep individual costs as low as possible via fundraising activities and I will announce the team in September 2009 to enable a good lead time for these activities.

If I don't know you please seek me out and introduce yourself to me during the 2009 Imperial Meeting. I can normally be found via the NLRC and am widely known as CJ.

Please send your application to me either by e-mail at cjohnston@btopenworld.com or by post to 'Sunwayes', 56 Guildford Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1LX.

Colin Johnston

Great Britain Rifle Team to Canada 2011

It is with honour and great pleasure that I have accepted the captaincy of the 2011 Great Britain Rifle Team to Canada. I am delighted to announce that John Warburton will be Vice-Captain and Donald Anderson the Adjutant for the tour.

The main criteria for selection will be that the team is capable of winning both the Commonwealth and Canada matches in Ottawa. The intention is therefore to take a strong team leavened with a number of experienced shooters with previous international experience. This should however be seen as a positive encouragement for previously uncapped shooters and coaches who have a good record of team shooting (at county and national level) to apply. Far more weight will be placed on team performance than individual success.

The provisional dates for the tour are 9 to 29 August 2011 (14 working days); though so far in advance this may be subject to adjustment. This will include shooting a provincial Prize Meeting followed by the DCRA Championships in Ottawa. Applications for selection should be made to me either by e-mail or in writing (see below) by 21 November 2009. The team will be selected as soon as possible thereafter in order

to allow for as much time as possible to raise the funds needed for the tour.

David Richards

e-mail: dfpr@nildram.co.uk or post c/o NRA.

GB World Championships Veterans' Team Brisbane 2011

2011 may seem a long way off but I'm sure all will agree preparation and planning has to be a vital aspect of all successful touring teams of whatever title. To this end I would appreciate any qualified target rifle shooter considering applying for a place in the GB Veterans Team to Brisbane in 2011 to contact me in the near future with a shooting CV. I intend to take a winning and happy team to Australia in 2011 and will be selecting the team later this year. My contact details are below.

Eric Stuart-Bamford

6 Langdale Close
Woking
Surrey, GU21 4RS

e-mail: eric@stuartbamford.co.uk

Provisional Future Target Rifle Touring Programme

For the future the broad intent is for GB to tour in Canada and one other overseas destination in every year. Touring teams may also visit nations other than the primary destination at the Captain's discretion. An outline plan has been approved as follows:

2010	Canada
2010	New Zealand
2011	Canada
2011	Australia (Palma & associated events)
2012	Canada (<i>plus USA?</i>)
2012	South Africa (<i>plus other African nations?</i>)
2013	Canada (<i>plus USA?</i>)
2013	West Indies
2014	Canada (<i>plus USA?</i>)
2014	South Africa (<i>plus other African nations?</i>)
2015	USA (Palma & associated events) (<i>plus Canada?</i>)
2015	New Zealand
2016	Canada (<i>plus USA?</i>)
2016	South Africa (<i>plus other African nations?</i>)
2017	Canada (<i>plus USA?</i>)
2017	Australia
2018	Canada (<i>plus USA?</i>)
2018	South Africa (<i>plus other African nations?</i>)
2019	Canada (<i>plus USA?</i>)
2019	Palma (<i>location tbc</i>)

The above plan may be subject to change should circumstances require it such as when the Home Countries teams tour together.

McQUEEN REALLY IS FOR EVERYONE

by Martin Camp

The McQueen is no longer the simple “side show” it used to be in the old days. It is now a really comprehensive competition within the main Imperial Meeting with categories to suit most shooters. These categories are really hotly contested with extremely high standards achieved.

For those who know nothing about the McQueen it is basically a Snap Shooting Practice over 300 yards where a target will appear ten times at any one of seven windows for three seconds with target away times between 10 and 20 seconds. The windows are set within and on a green canvas castle. You also get two sighters before you start. Don't have the impression that this is fast and furious, it is in fact a precision shoot with ample time. Well that all sounds pretty simple – but read on . . .

The competition starts on First Monday with the final on Second Thursday. There are six individual classes, a pairs match as well as aggregate matches. I don't intend to go into detail on the classes as they are all in the Bisley Bible, but in brief:

McQueen Precision

This is with the issued sniper rifles on the firing point using issued ammo, there simply can't be a fairer competition. Point to note - the winner of this competition wins the Entente Cordiale Gold Challenge Cup presented in 1908 by the Heidsieck Champagne Family - it is the only gold NRA cup and its value is £380,000.

McQueen Target

Any Target Rifle using any 7.62 ammunition, issued or handloads. Rifles will be loaded single shot.

McQueen Classic

Any Historic Sniper Rifle up to 1945 – ie No 4T etc with any ammunition.

McQueen Sporting

Any Sporting Rifle which preserves the ethos of the sporting scenario. The target used will be a fox

appearing at the window. Any ammunition including handloads.

McQueen Open

Any other Sniper Rifle – any ammunition – rounds must be magazine fed.

McQueen Any Rifle

Literally as it says – any rifle and any ammunition including handloads.

Naturally all ammunition including handloads, must comply with the current Bisley safety regulations.

You can see by the above options, it really is open to all, although an Optic Sight is required. Obviously a match rifle and F Class would be ideally suited as would most sporting rifles and if you don't have one of these you can use the rifles issued on the firing point.

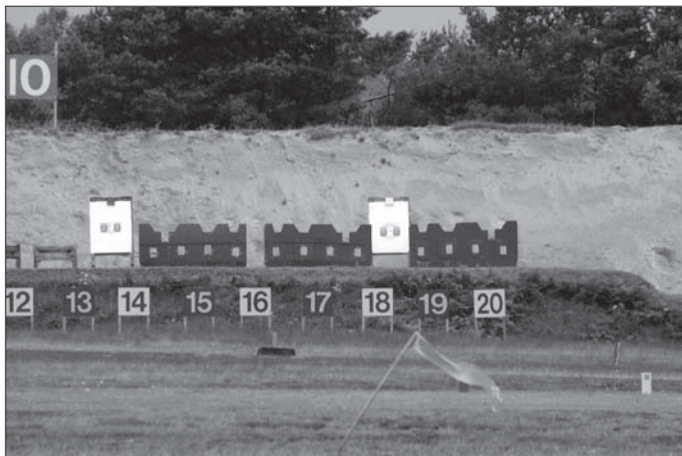
So why should I come and have a go at the McQueen?

This falls really into two groups, those taking part in the Imperial Meeting's other events who take time out and book themselves in for a couple of details and those whose Imperial Meeting is the McQueen and who can spend anything from a day or two to the whole time just shooting this competition. There are advantages, if you are a keen shot and enjoy the Bisley ambience but find that pressures of work etc mean that you can't take part for the whole meeting - McQueen is ideal. You can come down for the day or, as many do, the second week from Monday to Thursday. Last year the cost was £7 per go with issued ammunition and of course you can have as many goes as you choose to have. You may even fire one type of rifle in one shoot and then switch to another. Although be warned, it is moreish when you find yourself chasing just that one extra point!

The firing point at Butt 10 is set up to make it as convivial as possible. Set back from the firing point is a caravan, a large gazebo, a couple of six foot tables and about 15 chairs. Cars can be parked approximately 25 yards away. This is done so that when not actually firing you can sit around and chat to like-minded shooters about the world and the universe. A further advantage, which few competitors admit to, as there is no “report time” you just turn up when you are ready, some competitors find they are not ready until about 10:30 after a cholesterol busting breakfast from Jenny's – this of course has nothing to do with perhaps a little too long in the Surrey the previous night.

Apart from the prizes and trophies for each match – HPS Crosses are awarded in each class and all you have to do is get 10 shots in the six inch bull. Winners





of the various competitions, apart from Classic, tend to get a lot more in the four inch V bull.

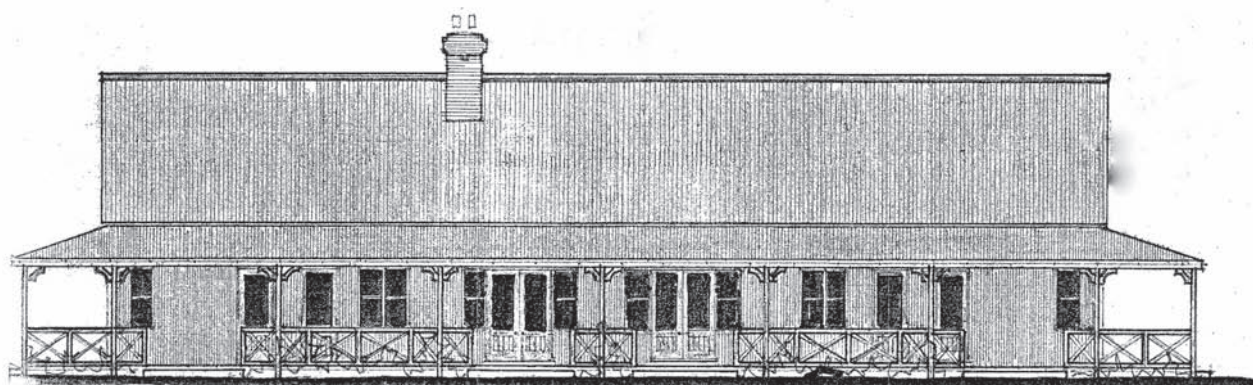
The way it all works is via a “stacking system” you simply come along, purchase a card which in turn is put at the bottom of your particular pile. One detail before your detail, you are given the nod to start getting your kit together, you are then called on to the firing point for your own shoot. You have your two sighters marked by spotting discs, when all three

firers are ready you fire the match. Spotting discs will then be displayed on your target and the score is then telephoned back and entered on your card, followed by normal safety precautions. Should you hit a “possible” and wish to keep your target as a memento it can be picked up at lunchtime or the end of the day. Clearly with this system it is difficult to say how long it will take you, the best would be about 30 minutes or, with a large queue, an hour. However you can check with the RCO beforehand.

I would encourage you all to come and have a go - you will find it quite addictive. Those that like to load their own ammunition have a chance to use it in a top competition; if not you can use the rifles and ammunition supplied. The McQueen used to be called “Sniper Comp” – it is in fact a precision shooting competition with a complete cross section of the shooters you might find at Bisley.

I know that clubs run their own McQueen competitions but if you want to win the “Cup Final” then this is the place to be.

We look forward to seeing you.



FRONT ELEVATION

NEW CLUB WITH ACCOMMODATION IN BISLEY CAMP

A new club has obtained planning permission for the conversion of one of the remaining ‘character’ buildings to provide up to ten private, self-contained rooms and suites, plus access to a luxury clubroom area with large open fireplace.

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(Thanks to Jon Underwood for allowing HPS to use his photo and successes in our advertising.)

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EVERYBODY GOES TO SOUTH AFRICA!

About three years ago the South African Bisley Union invited the rest of the shooting world to help them celebrate their 80th anniversary. Teams from all four Home Countries, the Channel Islands, Great Britain Under 19s, Devon and Old Guildfordians descended on Bloemfontein in March this year. It is believed that this was the first time all four Home Countries have competed against each other outside of the United Kingdom. A selection of short reports (in alphabetical order) and photographs follow.

ENGLAND

by Tom Rylands

Captain	Tom Rylands
Vice-Captain	Andrew Lothian
Adjutant	Derek Lowe
Main Coach	Nick Tremlett
Coaches	Matthew Ensor David Richards Bill Richards
Shooters	Mary Boston David Dyson Holly Foster James Lothian Jane Messer Stuart O'Brien Parag Patel Stephen Penrose David Rose Paul Sykes Jon Underwood John Webster James Watson Andrew Wilde Alex Williams Stuart Young

The England team tour to South Africa started with a rather eventful journey involving some live rounds in hand baggage, a very blonde girl and lots of police! Nevertheless, we made it to the picturesque surroundings of Nottingham Road hoping we had not incurred too many speeding fines on the way up. After a day of R and R where some of the more adventurous went canopy touring, it was straight to the range. With 600 yards (or possibly more like 586 yards) set on a dam raised above a lake it was a beautiful setting although the off-roading trip to the butts proved a little too much for our vans as James Watson discovered. The shooting was wonderfully relaxed and we had scarcely had one detail before there was a mandatory cake break at the clubhouse and the Captain's 7:00 starts to the day were promptly vetoed after the first morning. The shooting gave us a chance to iron out the schoolboy errors of which there were plenty (wrong-set rear sights, cross-shots, elevations based

on a different barrel and coaches looking at the wrong target were but a few). Despite this, the team was very successful in the team match against Nottingham Road and, over prizegiving and a few beers, the captain was reunited with his Cheshire Cheese presented by Nottingham Road, the said cheese miraculously not having been confiscated by HM Customs at Heathrow but stolen by team conspiracy! David Rose was also awarded the 'cross eyed bang stick' for his efforts on the wrong target and was required to do a blind victory lap of the room.

So then it was on to Bloemfontein to start the South African Championships. The late party arrived to join us, albeit one with Pimms-soaked kit after having been commissioned by a thirsty team to fill his luggage space usefully. However the ammo did not arrive to join us as it was stuck in Johannesburg although, on assurances that we would receive it the next day, the team shot the first day with the Nottingham Road PMP ammo.

The team battled the heat and fickle winds, fuelled by Parag Patel's lunchtime 'specials' and lots of water. The first competition was the Orange Free State which Parag won with David Luckman coming third. This was followed by the South African 80th Anniversary Championship which was aptly won by the South Africans before we headed into the main competition. Much shooting was done and the prayers on the range meant that wake ups were around 05:00 as the individual competitions kicked off. On the Saturday, Matty Ensor, forgetting his coach's hat, showed us all how it was done, mastering the winds to win the Scottish Sword with Parag and Jon Underwood coming second and third respectively. A night of celebration ensued with a night of steak and Springbok shots in the Bloemfontein clubs with the stragglers being heard in the pool in the early hours. A good job there was no shooting on Sunday!

After a few days of individual shooting it was the day of the RSA International and as the winds died, so did the light making it hard to know how best to use the allotted time. The USA surged ahead and pulled off a convincing win, although a miss by their last firer left them a mere three points clear; there were a few tense moments when we realised that both England and South Africa were 31 off. It was a tremendous moment on count up to find that we had 20 more V bulls, placing us second.



With more individual successes, hopes were high of a good performance in the Protea. Another early start and Stage II of the State President's was followed by a final exhortation, over lunch, before processing out in convoy to the range. The match was close, England leading after 300 metres, the Americans pulling ahead after 600 and finally, in an exceptional shoot at 900, the South Africans nicking it on V bulls from USA, with England only four points behind in third place.

Heads were not down for too long however. It was a great match and particularly special to have all the Home Nations competing against the likes of South Africa and USA.

The Final Day! The Home Nations dominated with David Calvert winning the South African

Championship and our own Main Coach, Nick Tremlett taking the State President's prize with a masterly long range performance.

I am sure I speak for all when I say how memorable this tour has been; a wonderful opportunity for all Home Nations to field teams and encourage youngsters, and at the same time enjoy the "Africa Experience".

There are so many people to thank for making the whole thing possible, amongst our own teams and many South Africans, that it is difficult to start singling anyone out.

Nevertheless, I would like to express my thanks to all those many people. It was a huge honour to Captain my country and a fantastic team.

ONE FOR ALL

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AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL GUNSHOP

IRELAND

by David Calvert

Captain	David Calvert
Vice-Captain	Alwyn McLean
Adjutant	Karen Robertson
Main Coach	Martin Townsend
Shooters	Gary Alexander Donald Anderson Anna Calvert Peter Calvert Paul Charlton David Cumming John Erskine Garnett Faulkner Chris Fitzpatrick George Gilpin Lynne Johnson Adam McCullough Ross McQuillan Martin Millar Tony Mitchell Chris Slator
Under 25 Team	Jack Alexander Jonathan Fitzsimons Tyrone Gibson Rebecca Laird Michael Latimer Rowan McIlveen Rebecca Molloy Sam Monaghan Dannica O'Kelly James Redman Helen Taylor

Having attended the South African championships at Bloemfontein for each of the last twelve years, and enjoyed every visit, I was delighted to have the opportunity to introduce as many Irish shooters as

possible to both South African shooting and the whole team touring experience.

From the start, two years ago, it was my intention to take all who wished and were able to attend, and actively to encourage the young and less experienced who might benefit most from such a tour. The result was a team of 32, of which over one-third were under 25. Although many of the full team had not toured abroad before, approximately half had competed in South Africa in the past and the team included a significant core of expertise to guide the less experienced.

Pre-tour training consisted of one wet, windy and cool weekend in October, in stark contrast to the dry, hot weather in Bloemfontein, with its interesting and challenging wind. Nevertheless, this training weekend proved to be a useful exercise in team drills, briefings, equipment checks and 'team bonding', though the limited practice did mean that we had 'to hit the ground running' on arrival at Bloemfontein five months later.

Whilst a handful of the team took a few days' holiday in South Africa either before or after the championships, the majority travelled for the core two weeks in Bloemfontein, with just one free day before the start of competition. With the total potential shooting over all team and individual matches amounting to the equivalent of three Bisley 'Grand Aggregates' per shooter, we made an early decision to limit the number of days involved in team matches from eight to six, by entering just one of the three club matches for teams of six. This freed up two afternoons during the second week and marginally reduced the number of team meetings required! With the large overall team size, and the complexity of integrating twelve, eight and six (U25) strong teams, communication was especially important and meetings were planned for every second day during the first week and on a couple of occasions during the final week prior to the major team matches.



SCOTLAND

by Alan Haggerty and Allan Mabon

Policy on selection and structure of the various teams was adapted to suit abilities and performance, in addition to taking into account the wishes of the embedded U25 members. Thus, in the second international match, two of those qualified to represent the U25s were integrated into the full National team of twelve, whilst, in the final Protea Match, all eleven members of the U25 group operated together and supported each other to provide another closely fought match against the South Africans. The full team of over 30 was blessed with at least nine experienced 'target coaches' in addition to our dedicated central coach. However, as these potential coaches also comprised our most accomplished 'gun platforms', we opted for a 'coach and shoot' policy to achieve the best team results. Whilst this put an extra burden on the coaches, they all coped admirably and this policy undoubtedly contributed to the team's outstanding performance.

Day one on the ranges was the Free State Pairs match and each Ireland pair consisted of one experienced and one less experienced shooter, with the former acting as mentor, both on the day of competition and beyond, while experience was gained. Further dedicated team training and coaching took place during the club team match on the first Saturday into which we entered five teams of six.

The first day Pairs match was followed by one day of Free State individual competition, then into the 80th Anniversary individual and team matches. Our eight strong team, under the captaincy of Donald Anderson, acquitted itself well taking medals for third place. Meanwhile, the full twelve strong National team, and the six strong U25 team, both set high standards that were to be maintained throughout the series of matches that followed. The full National team finished consistently ahead of Wales, Scotland and the Channel Islands, effectively leaving the 'world class' teams from USA, South Africa and England to fight amongst each other for the top three places. The U25 team came tantalisingly close to victory against the South Africans, with just two points separating the teams in the International match. All members of the Ireland team can be justly proud of both team performances and the significant number of individual personal bests and high achievements.

Overall, from a Captain's perspective, this was a challenging, demanding and satisfying tour, meeting the original aims and raising further the standard of shooting amongst those who represent Ireland. I am indebted to my hard working management team and to all the team members who helped make the tour such a success. A big thank you also to all within SABU who made us so welcome, and especially to Chairman Bernand De Beer, Syd Goslin and team, for their considerable efforts in staging an excellent Championship; I sincerely hope that the exercise can be repeated in four years' time!

Captain	Allan Mabon
Vice-Captain	Hamish Hunter
Adjutant	Dot Dallas
Shooters	Samantha Adamson Alan Haggerty David Hossack Jo Hossack Tim Kidner Cameron Lamont Emma Lamont Bruce Logan Alastair Marr Angus McLeod Alice Ogilvie Lindsay Peden Sarah Rennie Iain Robertson Bruce Roth Natalie Sarafilovic Richard Scott Ian Shaw Mark Wrigley

The main body of the team left from Glasgow and Heathrow on 14 March, the Glasgow party going via Dubai while Heathrow check-in was enlivened by a compatriot on another team trying to smuggle three empty cases through the scanners. Next afternoon we were in Sin City where some succumbed to the lure of the casinos. Any lingering jetlag was then compounded by three days of 05:30 alarm calls as we scoured the Pilanesburg Game Reserve for wild animals to be digitally photographed. If we eventually appeared blasé about 'just another rhino or giraffe', that was a pose, our animal encounters being pure dead brilliant. (Glaswegian for 'great'.)

Thursday 19 March saw us heading for Mongena and Piet Joubert Range where we had an engagement with the shottists of Gauteng North - after some preliminary work on Natalie's foresight and a day's practice during which Hamish's rifle suffered the first of its breakdowns. The match itself saw us finish 34 points adrift and wondering about the performance of the otherwise excellent PMP ammunition at 300 metres. Top scorer in the match was JJ Bruwer with 174.16 ex 175, Ian Shaw being our top man with 173.21. Later a reception was held, gifts were exchanged and some mercifully short speeches made.

Sunday afforded a day of rest before Monday's drive to Bloemfontein in the course of which we caught up with the remaining members of the team. At full strength that evening, we celebrated with a team dinner.



The Irish and Welsh teams visited Cape Town.



Bored with so many 150.30s, Jon Underwood decides to try the reverse supine position to give the other teams a chance!



"Now where's that Scottish appendectomy?" Parag Patel awaits his next patient . . . Alan Haggerty nowhere to be seen!



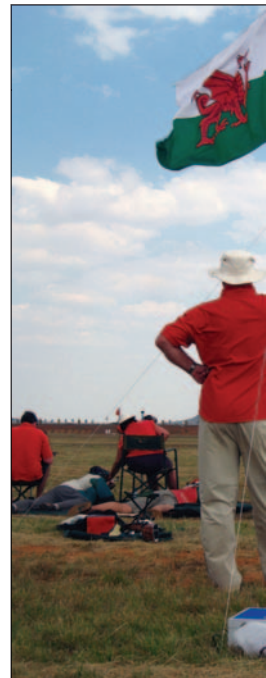
The Ireland team in action.



Who's been a naughty boy then? James Watson obviously has!



The Irish Captain introduces the new team kit.



Russ Jackson, Wales Adj progress whilst making



Bill Richards learns all about these new-fangled computer things.



Here be dragons!



There were three Welshmen and an Irishman . . . the Jeens brothers and Gary Alexander share a joke!



utant, watches team
sure the flag is steady.



A very brave antelope wanders across a range with hundreds of hungry and accurate shooters!



Is there something we should be told? Keith Pugh - shooting for Devon - came third in the Free State Ladies Prize!



Nick Tremlett's bearer party wonder how far is it to the nearest bar . . .



David Calvert won the South African Championship and Nick Tremlett won the State President's.



. . . and come up with a better solution!

The serious work of the tour began next morning with the Free State Meeting. Immediately, however, several team members suffered blown primers, Alan Haggerty twice having his extractor spring mullahed. A spare supplied by Ireland also went west before a Bic lighter was cannibalised for a part which made the problem go away. The closest we came to a brush with success during these two days was fifth place for Tim and Angus in the Pairs Match. An unexpected accomplishment was revealed at prizegiving, however, when a 'Mrs K Pugh' took third place in the Ladies' Match!

And so into the Anniversary Matches with tricky winds producing many plaintiff pleas for sympathy and Hamish now suffering from the primer problem, a piece of his bolt head absenting itself and bringing about the rifle's demise. The short range part of the two-stage Anniversary Match was hardly propitious, Scotland dropping 21 points at 300 metres to South Africa's three, and indeed next day, at the end of the match, we found ourselves in an unenviable sixth place. In Saturday's Scottish Sword, Tim was our top performer in tenth place. With a day to ourselves on Sunday, twelve of us went to gaze into the Big Hole at Kimberley in the hope of stumbling upon a new Kohinoor.

Monday, diamondless and another Queen's I. In a gentle breeze moving between ½ left and 1 right all morning, top Scot was Ian on 105.13 with three others also on 105. Hamish continued his destructive rampage by breaking his borrowed gun. Old Guildfordians had a remarkable three off for a team of six in the afternoon before all the overseas teams hosted the locals in the Lettie Fouche School. Start times were getting earlier now and long days in the heat taking their toll. The Captain therefore decided to withdraw Tuesday afternoon's teams of six in order to ensure everyone was fit for Wednesday's RSA International Match. In the event this was reduced in scale after the preceding individual matches, in which Tim tied for the Municipal, ran late. An unexplained



If you think midges are a problem in Scotland . . .

miss was sustained and we again finished in sixth place, two points behind Wales. Alan appeared to be suffering from a stomach upset but still managed 74.9 at 800 metres (next day he was hospitalised, diagnosed with appendicitis and had the offending organ removed.) Hamish, one of the original 1979 donor team, presented the Scottish Sword to Matt Ensor, this year's winner, at the interim post-shoot prizegiving.

Thursday's five individual shoots completed the Grand, our top performer being Tim in 43rd place on 644.57. Tim also won his tie-shoot for the Municipal, ensuring that at least one Scot lifted a trophy. On Friday, after Stage 2 of the State President's, more than half the team qualified for Saturday's Final before lining up for the Protea Match. Alas, previous form prevailed and again we occupied sixth spot, though only three points separated us from Wales and Ireland. Next day Ian Shaw headed our lists in both the State President's Final and the SA Championship at the Meeting's conclusion.

If little was won, a great deal was nevertheless learned and we intend to put that to good use in forthcoming Home International Matches. We also had a most enjoyable time and for that sincerely thank South Africa and our SABU hosts.



Anyone got another rifle I could break . . . I mean borrow?

WALES

by Chris Hockley

Captain

LouLou Brister

Manager

Chris Hockley

Shooters

Andrew Burgess
David Davies
Carys Dee
Jim Dunn
Paul Gray

Henryk Golaszewski
Al Haley
Clare Huxter
Russ Jackson
Richard Jeens
Ed Jeens
Henry Jeens
John Llewellyn
Colin Waldron
Stephanie Ward
Tom Ward
Martin Watkins
Chris Watson

The Welsh Rifle Association selected a team of 20 which, due to work commitments for some members, had to split into the long “fun” tour and the short shooting only tour. It divided equally 10 and 10 in fact with one partner, Judith Hawkins and Lisa Jeens, joining each party. The long tour started in Cape Town where Syd Goslin and the Western Cape shottists welcomed us to a warm up shoot and some great hospitality. Of course without the full team it was hardly surprising that we were narrowly beaten by Western Cape but at least we did beat Ireland who complained that they had a much weakened team on the long “fun” tour.

The exploits along the Garden Route included some excellent golf for the Captain LouLou Brister and the Team Manager Chris Hockley, Cango Caves, the cheetah and lion sanctuary, the elephant orphanage, ziplining in the forest of the Tsitsikamma National Park and spectacular wildlife, including lion and huge numbers of elephant in Addo and Schotia Parks at the end of the Garden Route before heading off to Bloemfontein.

But all good things come to an end and the rear party were already settled in to Palm Lodge in Bloemfontein together with the Devon Dozen before the fun tour group joined them.

The Free State Championship was a great warm-up where we made up pairs of those who had not been to SA before and those who had. Learning the range, the lighter flags and winds and rapidly changing angles, proved a good learning experience for all. Next it was the two day 80th Championship shoot and a little Welsh success with Chris Watson coming out top in the first stage of the individual was a great start. In the team event, we were still getting used to conditions, the ammunition and a new coaching and team organisation on the firing point. Nevertheless, we were pleased to beat both Scotland and the Channel Islands, but disappointed to let Ireland make it one all.

The SABU Meeting started as usual with the formal flag raising ceremony on the following Monday and

having handed our flag in to the office as instructed, we had a mere five minutes to work out how to tie it on to the ropes for LouLou to do the hoisting. The considerable faff of tying the flag the right way up inevitably meant that our flag was the one that twisted and stopped halfway up!

In the RSA International Invitation match, Wales had a disappointing performance although still fifth out of seven; we had hoped the new team drills would have produced better results. There was much debate: should we ditch the new system and go back to the old? Eventually after considerable head scratching we decided to stick with the new system having put so much effort into its development and training and, after all, the final match, the Protea, was hardly the time to change. And the faith was repaid with a cracking start at 300 yards – something Wales does not do very often! However, one of the coaches, Dave Davies, was suffering with ‘digestive problems’ but with his target dropping just two points, he seemed to be coping OK. However 600 yards did not go well; the wind seemed to be playing tricks on us and there were unexplained wide shots. The deficit widened and our lead over Ireland evaporated. At shot 7 to count and still having not dropped a point, Carys Dee’s firing pin managed to pierce a primer and was blown back into the bolt. The call for a spare rifle was made and she was duly given Chris Watson’s spare. By the time we had worked out that Carys then needed a 3 minute different wind zero, we had lost three points. Dave Davies was still firm that he was OK to carry on at 900, after the inevitable trip to the loo of course. At 900 we had the line of flags to our left, a perfect position for the very light wind that was nearly straight down the range. There was little happening and things were going well with few points dropped until suddenly there was a major commotion on the point - Dave Davies had fainted midway through coaching Tom Ward. There was an immediate call for a doctor and Parag and Johnny Ahrens came to the rescue. Hospital was required, but the show had to go on as they say! Martin Watkins and Clare Huxter were despatched to take him to hospital and he finally got onto a saline drip some three hours later having been first sent to the most dodgy national hospital in Bloemfontein - but that’s another story! Still Dave had just coached Carys to a 147 before passing out, her three dropped points with Chris Watson’s spare rifle. Tom Ward deserves a mention here as he was the one who was halfway through his shoot when Dave passed out and it was 25 minutes later when he let his next shot go with a new coach and plotter! Steph Ward, also deserves a mention on achieving her first 150 in a major team match. Indeed the three juniors of Carys, Tom and Steph performed exceptionally well in this major match. And the result, well, much closer up behind England, USA and SA, but damn it all, Ireland beat us into fifth place again by just three points!



The team set off from sunny Bisley . . .



. . . and arrive in a wet South Africa!



Hard work on the range.



Relaxation at a team braai.



The lighthouse at Cape Agulhas.



Jake and the flume!



The Great Britain and South Africa teams after the match.



At the SABU Prizeginving.

GREAT BRITAIN UNDER 19 TEAM 2009 IN SOUTH AFRICA

by the GB Under 19 Team 2009

Staff	Julia Adamson
	Simon Fraser
	Barry Graham
Shooters	Cormac Leyden (Captain)
	Ewan McConnell (Coach)
	Henry Gilbert (Coach)
	Sam Hunter
	Gareth Davies
	Jake Turley
	Tarni Duhre
	Chris Mitchell

The 2009 Great Britain Under 19 Team were a well-formed group, six of them having been Athelings or reserves to Canada in August 2008. Maple Taste marked the start of a good humoured and hard working tour with many rewards.

It was somewhat of a shock to arrive in Johannesburg in a hail and rainstorm having only packed our "hot gear" but the Braai hosted by Jeanette and Deon Burger in Pretoria that afternoon was a warm welcome, and the first of many events we enjoyed with our South African hosts over the next three weeks.

Elize Burger led us through a marvellous combination of daring acts and cultural experiences over the next two days. We braved the zip wires over the Magaliesburg Gorge with enthusiasm before visiting the Lesedi Cultural Village where we learned about the languages and cultures of different South African regions. The next day was spent in Glen Afric Game Reserve. We enjoyed a delicious lunch full of surprising South African flavours and, of course, fabulous meat. Glen Afric is the film location for the ITV series "Wild at Heart" and the game there is so friendly that the animals practically strike a pose when they see a camera so our game drive was very entertaining.

The following twelve days were a blur of shooting and social events. Gareth and Sam were our top pair in the Free State laying down their marker with a pair of possibles on their first South African shoot. Sam went on to be our highest scorer in the 80th Anniversary competitions and the team won both the Short and Long Range matches against the South Africa Juniors. The reward was a day off beginning with a cricket match against the butt markers then lunch and waterslides at Mazelspoort.

By the start of the SABU Championships, we were all fairly acclimatised to the heat and the amount of water you had to drink to see the target. We also realised how hard it is to do well in the aggregate matches. The possible you shot at 300 metres was worth not a jot if you could not win the mirage battle in the second half of the competition at 600 or 800 metres!

On Wednesday we shot the RSA Junior International Long Range event. We were six points behind at 800 metres and, despite making up some ground at the start of the 900 metres range, we lost the match by 13 points.

Shooting five times on the following day was a challenge. The conditions in the two 600 metres shoots were so different but Ewan McConnell managed to shoot a possible in the Kings Norton which earned him a nice medal at the end of the week.

Friday's Junior Protea International Match was a real cliffhanger. We carried forward a lead from 300 metres, were matched at 600 metres, and the lead swung from team to team through out the 900 metres shoot. Our coaches Henry and Ewan started us off brilliantly with a possible and 49, but the match slipped from our hands and we lost by six points. It was a great contest which we celebrated that evening at the Protea Dinner.

Our last day on the range was spent for most as proud spectators of Gareth and Sam, finalists in State President's Stage III and congratulating Ewan McConnell who pipped them both to come first in the Junior Aggregate.

During the following eight days we were hosted by Cedric and Bets Van der Vyver and the extent of their generosity in terms of time, hospitality and entertainment are beyond measure. In their care we rode ostriches, stroked baby cheetahs, wriggled through caves, swam with Great White Sharks, tasted Cape wines, ate vast quantities of fantastic food, and visited Cape Agulhas, Table Mountain, Kleinbaai, Walker Bay and many other spectacular and unforgettable locations.

The 2009 SABU Championships marked the twelfth visit to Bloemfontein by a GB Under 19 team and the eleventh led by Major Simon Fraser. It was wonderful to see many of his former Under 19s shooting so successfully within the national squads. The expertise Simon has gained, and the friendships he has established over the years, eased every aspect of our tour and we extend our thanks to him and the many others who made our South African visit so special.

SOUTH AFRICA 2009 - AN UNDER 25's PERSPECTIVE

by Sam Monaghan

Sam Monaghan was one of the first young shooters to benefit from the Young Shooters' Fund. He was recently part of the Ireland team competing in South Africa.

The opportunity to travel to South Africa as an Under 25 with one of the largest Irish teams ever to tour was something not to be missed. I had heard so much from Major Fraser at CCRS about South Africa that I now felt ready for the experience.

Nothing however could have been further from the truth. The heat, though thought not to be especially hot this year, the intensity of the shooting programme, the fast changing wind and conflicting mirage at long range was something for which I was not totally prepared. The first couple of days, be it the water, the long journey or something else, found me feeling far from well, but the support and understanding from the team pulled me through and thankfully sent me on my way to shoot well and for the first time in the international matches. The opportunity to shoot for Ireland in an international competition abroad is one of my proudest moments to date!

I have always been allergic to early mornings, but coupled with as many as up to six shoots a day in heat, and the evening receptions that went on for hours with free beer, left only time for sleep (and maybe some more beer). My word how those South Africans can talk, but they were very hospitable and friendly to shoot with. The Under 25 matches were great fun and for many of us this was our first taste of gamesmanship!

I learnt an immense amount from the senior members of the team, who were always willing to help the less experienced. All of which will stand me in good stead for my future shooting. I made many friends from home and abroad including Ty Cooper the American U25 - although, annoyed that he beat me in the Grand Aggregate, I am not ashamed as he already shoots for their Palma Squad. I learnt the need, when not shooting, to stay in the shade, drink copious amounts of water, and slap on lots of sun block. The need to prepare, keep the rifle covered and out of the dust when not shooting, and for future years to take a thick mat to take the pain out of those unforgiving firing points.

The opportunity and experience was something I will never forget! I am proud of my achieving 47th place in the Grand Aggregate and coming second in the Under 25 Grand Aggregate, but feel that my greatest achievement was that I managed to dodge wearing the team 'prat hat'! Now I am back in Bisley it is good to be home, and I'm looking to work on the new skills and knowledge I have acquired. However earning enough money to keep myself shooting and my training for my future career as a police officer must be my main aim.

I would wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the support from Karen Robertson, David Calvert and Alwyn McLean to name but a few from the team. I must also not forget all the help I have received in my cadet shooting as a single service cadet, from the Army Cadet Force, Major Simon Fraser of CCRS who works and fights extremely hard for the development of young shooters, and, of late, Lt Col Frank Cox of Bunhill Rifle Club whose constant hard work and support has been instrumental (for me and many others) in my shooting development and my future shooting career.

Finally I am very grateful for the help I have received from the Young Shooters Fund which has enabled me to buy an excellent competitive rifle, helping in the time-critical transition from cadets and schooling to career. A time in which the sport loses many talented young shooters because support is withdrawn instantly and costs rise abruptly and so a big thank you to all who have donated to this Fund.

Take away any one of these foundation stones and I would not be shooting at Bisley today.



SECURING YOUR FIREARMS WHILST TRAVELLING

from Jeff Hide, Knights Solicitors

In July 2008 two prominent and well-respected members of the NRA had their estate car broken into whilst away from home on a weekend of shooting competitions in the North of England. They stayed at a hotel that had CCTV and good lighting in the car park. They had taken handguns, ammunition and removable parts of other rifles into the hotel leaving only those larger rifles concealed in the boot of the car, which was itself fitted with an immobiliser. Stolen from their car in the early hours by four masked persons were the rifles that had been concealed in accordance with the Home Office Guidance to Police.

In September 2008 their local police force revoked their certificates and these revocations were appealed.

On 8 April 2009 the case was heard before the Crown Court. However, whilst at the court awaiting the calling of the case, through their legal representatives, the appellants served on the respondent police force legal representatives the full grounds for the Appeal supported by legal argument and numerous character witnesses four of whom were at court. The Appellants were very confident of succeeding in their appeals.

Their objective was to recover their firearm certificates. The police had opposed the appeals even suggesting a short time before the hearing that the appeals should be withdrawn but at court saw the sense in a compromise whereby they agreed to the court making an Order for them, the police, to reinstate the certificates within 14 days upon the appellants agreeing to review their future arrangements for the transit of firearms and ammunition. An amicable agreement on costs was also reached.

It is clear that despite the appellants following the standard advice upon security of firearms and ammunition in transit and overnight away from home, thieves were able to smash the windows of the car and steal firearms.

The Firearms Act 1968 requires certificate holders to take reasonable precautions as to the security of firearms and ammunition when not secured at home in the approved cabinet. What is "reasonable" is a matter for the opinion of each police force although quite detailed advice is contained in the relevant police and Home Office publications. In this case the police claimed that the advice had not been followed whilst the appellants insisted that it had been followed.

The compromise at court was sensible and, for the merits of that case, an acceptable way out of the polarised positions each side held, thus avoiding the additional cost and time of a drawn out hearing.

What this case does show is that where the legislation requires such "reasonable precautions" police may

well view any situation where guns are stolen from a parked and unattended car as NOT having had reasonable precautions taken and then revoke the loser's certificates leaving the holder with no guns, possible prosecution for breach of certificate conditions and no certificate. The only resolution to the problem is to apply much higher security in the vehicle or keeping all the firearms and ammunition with them personally.

The merits of this case were not tested in this particular court case as a sensible resolution was found. Whilst the law does not require absolute security, this police approach to the subject means that the loss of firearms, whatever precautions are taken, is likely to result in certificate revocation. So, preventing such loss by ALL possible means is the only safe way to proceed. The current advice from the 2000 Home Office document led to a difference in interpretation by the police on one hand and the appellants on the other and its application did not prevent the theft of these guns and ammunition.

Police had suggested that physical means of securing guns to the chassis or body of the car is reasonable or taking them into the hotel. Anything less, they considered, was not reasonable. Of course the case of *R -v- Chelmsford Crown Court (ex parte Farrer)* 2000 makes it impossible in law for certificate holders to leave their firearms and ammunition in hotels even if secure means are provided unless only that holder has access to them and that is an unlikely situation. Enquiries of hotels in the area concerned resulted in none having such facilities and none wishing to have firearms taken into their premises anyway given the choice. So, for the future more diligent enquiries are suggested as to overnight stay locations prior to selection and higher physical security fitted in vehicles used for the transit or unattended overnight storage to prevent thefts.

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THE IBIS OPEN 2009 – FANTASTIC WIN FOR ANDREW WILDE!

by Frank Harriss

As competitors collected their cards and called in for a drink at the Clubhouse the night before the shoot, the rain poured down outside. Could the forecast of a fine day to follow really be true?

Well the forecasters got it right! It was cold to start with on Saturday 18 May but the sun came through from the start and it warmed up. At 300 yards, then, it was fairly easy. The issue ammunition was HPS, though a few competitors used their own. Subsequent stats revealed that the majority of the 37 contestants had scored 48 or over. At 500, the wind just needed watching but here 49 was needed to be really competitive. At 600, we were tucked under the trees on range 19 with a right-hand wind, so scores were even higher, with seven 50s.

The winner was Andrew Wilde (of Somerset and the L&M) who dropped three shots – three shots out of the V that is, two of them at 300 and one at 600: 150.27, a great score! Second was Richard Shaw with 149.15, counting out the Ibis captain Peter Griggs with 149.14. There was one 148 and eight 147s. We were pleased to welcome seven pupils from Greshams School and the top scorer was Roland Johnson with 145.13.

After many had had lunch in the Ibis clubhouse, we were in action again at long range, but back to the old format of 1000 and 1100 yards this year. The wind was fairly steady from 3 o'clock throughout the afternoon and it was now sunny and warm. There were just the occasional gusts and gaps in the wind to keep us on our toes and many had otherwise good score-lines marred by a magpie or worse! Jonathan Jobling made the highest score at 1000 with 47.4, closely followed by our own Russ Jackson with 47.3. At 1100, Harry Ball of Aberdeen University scored an amazing 48.5 but unfortunately he had had troubles at 1000. The next best score was 46.4 from, guess who, Andrew Wilde and this, together with a steady 44.1 at 1000, was enough to hand him the long range competition as well. Second was Mark Harold Shaw, also with 90.5, but being counted out on range scores. Third was Carol Painting, seldom absent from our prize lists, who scored a very steady 89.6 with 45.4 at 1100. So the beast of 1100 had certainly been tamed this year!

Even innumerate readers will have had no difficulty in working out the winner of the Aggregate. Andrew scored 240.32 and received the cup at the very jovial prizegiving. Second was Carol Painting from Pumas RC with 236.21 and third Dick Rosling from Nottingham with 234.22 counting out Stephen Maris by one V bull. The top under-19 was Roland Johnson of Greshams with 227.13 and he received one

of the four HPS vouchers kindly presented by John Carmichael. The top prize winners in the short range, long range and aggregate competitions were invited to select a prize in kind from an excellent selection, including HPS vouchers, and then there were 'spot prizes' further down the list to give everyone a chance. The prizegiving was conducted by the Ibis Captain, Peter Griggs who thanked especially Bill Rowland for organising the competition once again, and also David Stevens, the CRO, and his assistants Brian Hulatt and Eddie Young.

Most of the competitors then stayed on for the usual excellent dinner, where Bill Rowland showed his skills as a chef to good advantage. Once again, Bill masterminded the whole event and we are very grateful to him.

This combination of good food and good shooting in a modern clubhouse with friendly atmosphere characterises the Club. We still have room for members, so please look on our website www.ibisrifleclub.co.uk for further details if you are interested.

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PROPELLANTS

by Bob Maddison

With more rifle shooters taking an interest in reloading their own ammunition, this is a good time to try to understand some of the technical processes that go on when the cartridge is fired. Although I will mention Black Powder, this note is all about modern smokeless "nitro" propellants. The subject was raised with the publication and implementation of the Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005 (MSERs). Let me say from the outset that smokeless propellants, unlike Black Powder (or Gunpowder) or its modern equivalents, do NOT have to be kept in a partitioned wooden box, nor does the typical reloader need to have an Explosives Certificate to purchase, store and use modern smokeless powders. Nevertheless, they are still subject to the Control of Explosives Regulations 1991 (COERs). However, the HSE, in the COERs, granted a dispensation for shooters who reload their own ammunition by exempting up to 5kg of smokeless powder from the full requirement of those regulations. That 5kg must include a small allowance for the explosive content of any primers held. It does not include any assembled ammunition held under the provisions of the Firearms Acts. It is important to note that if you exceed this 5kg limit without an Explosives Certificate, not only are you breaking the law, but any relevant insurance policies will probably be void. It is also important to know that this exemption only applies to the holder of a relevant FAC or SGC. Because the dealer from whom you buy your supplies almost certainly does have an Explosives Certificate, he is required under the COERs to keep a record of the sale of his stock. Hence, unless you are already known to the dealer, he is entitled to ask for your authority to purchase any powder or primers; namely your FAC or SGC. The sale of primers was further controlled under the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.

Although the cost of powders is very much lower in some countries, notably the USA, than it is here, never attempt to carry powders or primers on any aircraft, nor the Channel Tunnel nor on a cross channel ferry. Don't think you will get away with it either - with heightened security at ports and airports, it will be detected! There should be no problem with assembled ammunition, subject to very strict rules, but a few airlines will not allow even that. Attempt to board a plane with a pack of propellant in your suitcase and you are likely to spend a long time away from the range! It is possible to get a permit to carry powders on a ferry, but the paperwork is near impossible (why do you think imported powders are so expensive?) and will probably mean a commercial ferry not a passenger ferry.

As most of us now know, the HSE exemption only applies to powders and primers which are in Hazard

Type 3 (HT3) (NATO Class 1.3). The important point about HT3 explosives is that, as supplied, stored and used, they do not present a significant risk of mass explosion. This has led to the common belief that smokeless powder is not an "explosive" at all. That belief has been supported, erroneously, by the concept that smokeless powder will burn quietly in an open pile whilst a "true explosive" will detonate. Neither is strictly true. The standard way to dispose of surplus military explosive is to burn it in an open pile. This is always subject to the precaution that it must be assumed that it will detonate but, mostly, it will just burn quickly but quietly. Not so if there are any detonators or primers present; and each type of military explosive has its own rules for burning, a simple one being that "Cordtex" must not be burned whilst tightly rolled on a spool. There is also a limit to the size of each piece of explosive that can be burned in the pile, as well as to the pile itself. Some explosives such as those based on Nitro Glycerine cannot be burned safely at all.

So what is an explosive, and what makes a propellant relatively safe to handle? There are various descriptions given to the two main types of explosive: High and Low Explosives; Detonating and Deflagrating Explosives; and Primary and Secondary Explosives. None of these descriptions are strictly accurate without qualification. The most accurate are the terms Primary and Secondary Explosives. To understand these terms we need to consider their technical basis.

Any explosive must be self contained ie it must possess all the chemical components needed so that when burned (I use the term generically), there is a chemical reaction releasing large quantities of heat. When the explosive is a single unstable chemical substance, it is often referred to as a Primary Explosive. In its composition it has (usually) carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen, along with sufficient oxygen to convert these into their oxides generating a lot of heat and large volumes of gas or vapour. Such explosives are intrinsically unstable. The ideal explosive contains the relevant elements in the optimum proportions for complete combustion. Examples are TNT, RDX and Nitro Glycerine. Some do have an excess of oxygen and these benefit from the addition of small quantities of additional "fuel". An example is Ammonium Nitrate which is itself an explosive albeit a very inefficient one. Add a few percent of aluminium powder and you get "Ammonal" a very common WWI explosive. Add a few percent of fuel oil and you get the blasting explosive "ANFO". At the other end of the scale, Secondary Explosives consist of a mixture of chemicals which, on their own, are not explosive in any way, but when mixed together provide all the necessary chemical elements needed for an explosive.

The obvious Secondary Explosive is gunpowder which is a mixture of Potassium Nitrate (which has an excess of oxygen), charcoal (which burns up that oxygen), and sulphur (which also burns oxygen but is important as a type of "flux" to help the other components to mix intimately when ignited and thus burn more efficiently). Because this final intimate mixing must take place, gunpowder burns much more slowly than a Primary Explosive consisting of a single unstable chemical compound.

The reason why any explosive goes "bang" is that the gases and vapour produced at very high temperature, expand at the speed of sound. It is the pressure wave generated that causes the damage. No gas – no bang! (eg in the "themite" class of explosives that produce only heat).

So what is the difference between a detonation and a deflagration? By strict definition, a detonation will occur when the reaction front is driven by pressure alone. It will propagate at the speed of sound in the explosive. It is important to know that the speed of sound in a gas or vapour will increase with its temperature and, to a lesser extent, its pressure. Thus the hot gases in a rifle's chamber have a sound velocity very much greater than they would at ambient temperature. It is this fact that allows us to propel a bullet at a velocity up to three or four times the speed of sound in air. (In an air rifle, the pellet cannot leave the muzzle at more than the speed of sound in air (~320m/sec) unless the air is heated.) In a blasting

or military explosive, the typical speed of sound in the substance is about 5000 m/sec, sometimes as high as 7000 m/sec. Cordite, from which our smokeless propellant is derived, has a sound velocity of about 3000 m/sec. However, when formed into granules as a small arms propellant, the sound velocity is reduced even further. Thus the powder initially burns by transmitting its reaction front by heat, not pressure. It is just the same with Black Powder only in this case, the heat must first melt the sulphur and potassium nitrate to form an intimate mixture. This slows down the rate of reaction significantly unless the mixture is confined such as in a gun barrel. The increase in temperature and pressure helps the heat to progress faster and thus create a bigger "bang". Hence a small pile of gunpowder will burn quite slowly, a ton will burn very fast!

Although Nitro Cellulose, the main constituent of smokeless powder is a true Detonating Explosive, the act of breaking it down into small particles allows the rate of reaction to be controlled. It is easy to see that the rate of burning, short of an actual detonation, will be governed by three things: the flame temperature, the overpressure, and the particle size and shape. The latter is used to make powders with different burning speeds. Small spheres or flakes with a large surface area will burn fast initially, but slow down as the surface area is reduced. Small cylinders will burn more progressively, but small tubes or donuts will burn at a near constant rate until consumed (the surface area

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on the inside increases as they burn). These are used for the so called "progressive" powders.

Most smokeless propellants also contain two important ingredients. The first is a tiny amount of graphite to act as a lubricant and so improve flow when metering. The second ingredient is a stabiliser. This is most important. All explosives are unstable by definition. Thus they react constantly but hopefully very slowly. The rate of reaction increases if stored at a high temperature and also if the temperature is allowed to vary a lot ie day to night. In the UK this should not be too much a problem; nevertheless some reaction does take place. Not only does this reduce the potency of the powder a little, but could lead to an escalation of the reaction and the ignition of the powder. When the powder deteriorates very slowly, one of the decomposition products is nitric acid. Unfortunately, an acid environment will increase the rate of deterioration. To counteract this, the makers add a small amount of a neutralising chemical that "kills" the acid as it is formed. Badly stored or very old powder might have an "acid" smell signifying that the stabiliser is no longer effective. Such powder should not be used. It is as well to beware of using any powder of uncertain age or condition: it may not perform as expected and could be dangerous.

If particle size was all, then reloading would be easy. The particle size is only used to fine tune the burning rate. It is the degree of confinement that determines the over pressure and the temperature and it is these that make the difference between a safe and efficient load, a dangerous load, and an inefficient unpredictable load. Apart from the powder shape and size, it is its volume within the cartridge case and subsequently the rifle's chamber and barrel as the bullet accelerates that really determines the burning speed. For maximum "push", the powder should be fully burned before the bullet leaves the barrel. Ideally, the powder should burn fast initially to give the bullet good acceleration, and then continue to provide a powerful pressurised push until the pressure is relieved at the muzzle. However, as the bullet travels down the barrel, the volume available increases, pressure is reduced and the gases are being cooled, thus tending to reduce the pressure further. At the other end of the scale, too much pressure initially will cause even faster burning and even higher pressure until . . . ! Therefore, the type of powder and its initial volume within the cartridge case must be very carefully matched to the weight of the bullet and its fit in the mouth of the case and in the barrel. The most common cause of excessive pressure is that for some reason the bullet is obstructed. This could be that the case is too long causing the bullet to be pinched in the lead, or that there is an obstruction in the barrel which could be a previous misfired bullet (the result of an insufficiency of powder) or even excessive fouling due to incomplete charge combustion. A safe, accurate load is very finely balanced between

dangerous overpressure and erratic combustion of the propellant.

Thus reloading is not to be undertaken lightly. Having said that, shooting remains a very safe sport. Nor is there any evidence that home loaded ammunition is any more dangerous than factory loads although the potential is great. Nevertheless we all need to be aware of the signs of dangerous overpressure. I will not repeat them here as they are detailed in Appendix 14 of the Bisley Bible. Don't ever think that as you use only factory ammunition that this does not concern you: it is a fact that an experienced reloader will be more likely to spot those signs than someone who simply shoots factory ammunition, hoping that RG, Lapua or whoever have gotten it right for his rifle! Read Appendix 14.

Above all, do remember that all propellants are explosives and that under the wrong conditions will detonate almost as violently as TNT. Also, do remember that the present freedom from over regulation of small quantities of propellant is a valuable concession that must not be abused if we are to keep it. In some countries, if you reload, all your primers and propellants must by law be stored in a secure building remote from any dwelling house.

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T REX – A RED PENCIL DAY

Red Pencil

I have been taken seriously: I do not know whether to be incensed or amused. On balance I suppose that you must take it as an acknowledgement that you have arrived upon the scene when you feature as an individual item on the agenda of the Shooting Committee – not that one has gone out of one's way to seek such fame or illustrious company.

I gather that an item on the agenda of the January 2009 meeting was entitled "Reports In the Journal by Mr X". One will overlook for a moment the temerity of those that wish to expose the real me. It sought to put to the meeting the notion that individuals should not have the right to criticise the NRA or their staff in the Journal, except through the letters page.

However, the Committee is understood to have felt that, in their infinite wisdom, any red pencil was entirely a matter for the Editor. (I suppose it might just be that the Committee enjoys these scribblings – anything is possible in this strange world.)

A judicious, rational, neat and entirely proper side-step by the Committee, say I. Their footwork is reminiscent of that wonder try at Wembley scored against the English by Welsh wizard Scott Gibbs a few years ago, when he skipped through one of the best defences around. Indeed it hurts to remind myself of it.

I digress. Any suggestion that this or any other column deliberately sets out to criticise unjustly is, of course, nonsense. It may from time to time highlight legitimate issues for concern and suggest, in hindsight, that they could have been better handled or that sight of the proper objective has been lost. If it follows that lessons can, and should, be learned and explanations given it may suggest accordingly. The column may also award accolades.

My view is, and always has been over 40+ years, that we need and should support a strong organisation that is both pro-active in, and responsive to, changing times, to serve the membership. In these times of financial and legislative stringency that need has never been so great for a sports leisure organisation, whatever our historic links and dependencies.

I hope that the need for any further observations on certain issues has passed. I shall maintain a dignified silence in the hope that the approaching meteorite brings good news. No doubt if I am being unfair or inaccurate someone will whisper into my scaly ear.

A Chairman's Prize Accolade

I am immediately going to break my vow of silence. I am delighted to see that the Shooting Committee has decided to reinstate the original conditions for the Chairman's Prize Final in full. This means that it reverts to being a free entry for those qualifying as O and T finalists. Congratulations to the Committee for having had the courage and

good sense to take this step. I would take my cretaceous hat off to them if I had one. Have an accolade.

Icfrausaurus and the Under 25s

I was much taken by the England rugby hooker turned columnist Brian Moore's words in the Daily Telegraph sports' pages recently. His subject was the row between the FIA and the Formula One Teams' Association over budget caps. It makes our sport look like the small coppers at the bottom of a child's piggy bank. His posit was that if the participants do not like the way a governing body behaves then they should work within the rules to change it.

He also commented that any governing body has to be competent and look after the interests of the sport itself and not govern in its or somebody else's own interests. Those are all sound points. They may - or may not - have relevance to what follows.

Sadly, there is discontent between the representatives of some of the Under 25 world rifle teams and ICFRA. ICFRA is absolutely clear about the process that allows consideration and determination of rule changes for world championship events. The process requires that any changes to the rules are determined by the end of the first year following a championship, allowing the next three years to be a settled period for teams to bed down for the contest. That makes eminent sense. ICFRA is adamant that due process was followed in the case of the changes to conditions, in particular the size of the teams, for the Under 25 matches in 2011, all countries being consulted and involved in the process.

Among the variety of considerations facing the rulemakers were clashes with exams or the start of education year, general availability of sufficient numbers of skilled Under 25 shooters in some countries and, significantly, the cost to the national and personal shooting purse of larger teams of shooters, coaches, managers and so on. There is no doubt that some countries remain able to field larger teams. They have strength in depth and the financial wherewithal, even in these straightened times, to support those teams. But this does not apply to every country.

What does seem to me to be more worrying is that some of the Under 25s are unhappy that they will not be getting the sort of match that they think they deserve, and that they were never consulted direct. It does no good to disillusion those who are the future of the sport. As individuals they will probably only get one shot at an Under 25 world championship and it is a very attractive target for them.



Nor is it really clear to me, if the ICFRA due process was carried through as described, why all of this now seems to have come as a surprise to some groups. Why, if due process was followed, does it seem that the significance of the rule changes was missed by some of the national representatives?

So, whatever your views on the process and how it was carried out, perhaps we need a tad more consultation within nations to take into account Under 25 concerns. Perhaps ICFRA might also consider some additional way of ensuring that the feedback does reflect an inclusive response. Then again, ICFRA does have the right to think that, once any proposals start to be debated through their process, national members will understand what is going on and challenge where necessary.

I do not know the precise minutiae of what went on, or where or how. However, one would hope that the parties might be able to sort out the disagreement over 2011 with an appropriate compromise and start an early new discussion for 2015.

All this fence squatting is leaving marks upon my scaly personage.

Crystal Ball Time

My air rifle is a RWS (RUAG) product and the pellets from RWS seem very effective. I therefore live in high hopes. Given clement weather one can imagine that the new ammunition for the Bisley Meeting might well have an effect upon the medals office. Might they just run out of HPS crosses or have the suppliers been asked to up the quantity in anticipation? What an intriguing and positive thought.

No doubt the powers that be will have a very close eye on this. One can see commercial considerations locking horns with those that might call for a review of scoring rings should possibilities multiply to plague proportions. Inevitably there would be calls to reduce the size of the central bullseye, but that does not by itself reduce the numbers of scores of 50. Should anything be done until a couple of years' experience is under the belt? Watch this space for the possible coming debate once the outcome is clearer, and have your say through the letters column.

Smokin' Dave

It is not just authors that can be found among the shooting population. Word has also reached me of a new venture by my old chum and fellow lizard David Richards, gastro-gnome extraordinaire. He is branching out into the smoking business. The 'what?' I hear you cry.

Fear not, it is entirely edible. His speciality – venison. So, all being well, a good British counter-punch to the Parma Ham should be upon our deli counters in the not too distant future. I relish the idea of some free sighters.

A'Dongling We Shall Go

Those of you with an eagle eye (not the dreaded Eagle Eye), may have noticed the recent media reports and correspondence about the problems of Broadband coverage in some areas of the country, including patches

not unadjacent to London. There is a silver lining. A Cretaceous Dongle has been unearthed.

This small lozenge shaped piece of compacted science has given a new lease of life to correspondents far and wide – the emphasis being on 'wide'. Where there was despair the air (or is it radio) waves now positively zing with megabytes. Thus far it seems to work well and has enabled far larger chunks of history to be disseminated across the steaming landscape.

T Rex can now receive all sorts of fossilised trivia through his ethereal post box. We shall coin a new expression: 'As happy as a Geekopod with two dongles'.

Underperson's Record

One cannot ignore the extraordinary achievement of Jon Underwood who, recently returned from a roasting firing point in the land of high veldt dinosaurs, emerged onto our green and pleasant land, there to score with abandon. No less than 51 consecutive shots over Queen's I and Queen's II courses of fire went into the central bullseye on the same day at the Easter Meeting.

Nigel Ball the Sailor has had a 105.21 and Jonny boy himself has previously done a 150.30. But QI and II together on the same day? Must be a record unless some gooseberry can tell me different. Well done the lad, using Carmichael HPS ammunition, I gather.

Thanks for the Poster

I am indebted to the kind gentleman who has sent me, via the Editor, a fine Natural History Museum poster of myself in full cry. On the back of the poster are pictured all the other carivorous and omniverous dinosaurs. I particularly like the Dromaeosaurus, a four foot high version of myself, but covered in feathers. The eggs are delicious boiled, with lava bread soldiers.

My write up announces " . . . the most highly evolved predator in the dinosaur kingdom . . . a wide back of head allowing for powerful jaw muscles and eyes that could look forward giving enhanced depth of vision . . . ". Evidence, says I, of my general wisdom.

It seems that I walked with my tail horizontally out behind me and not dragging on the ground. Estimates suggest that I was able to move at 25mph but some palaeontologists argue that I never did run at all on account of the fact that, while they have found many sets of fossilised walking footprints, they have never found any at a running stride.

I favour the sedate assessment myself. I do not need the thrill of the high speed chase: all I have to do is roar and homo erectus gets into a panic. Quite right too: they are living in the wrong time period.

Sniper's Puzzle Corner

Clue - 1 across: commercial vehicle loses left indicator headed south, turning into a little word with a big meaning.

Toodle and pip

T Rex

FROM THE RANGE OFFICE

by John Gardener, Senior Ranges Supervisor

Why reverse echelon?

We are often asked, why is it 600 yards this end one week and the other end the next? The answer simply is this; it is to give the target shed staff extra work shifting targets from one end of the butts to the other (thinks, they don't have to move the 500 yard targets - must do something about that!) and it gives the Range Office and the duty safety engineer something to think about when plotting and laying out the safety boards (more about those later)!

To be serious, though, we share the ranges with the National Clay Shooting Centre and Bisley Shooting Grounds and this obliges us to 'give them space'. I do not intend here to discuss the whys and wherefores of the history, layouts, agreements (or not) etc. Just like a maths teacher once told me to accept Pi for what it is, we have to accept that nothing, now that we are not getting the Olympics (which could have led to a complete re-vamp of the ranges), is going to change. We have to accept changes of echelon as fact.

So, by agreement, on the first, third and fifth weekends of each month, the rifle ranges have priority, thus the echelon is 'normal'. In effect, this means that on the other, non-priority weekends, if we used the 300 yards firing point to the left of butt 12 on Century, we would be in the danger area of NCSC, and BSG would not be able to use Cottesloe Heath since they would be in our danger area.

In Winter we stay away from the left of Century to avoid conflict. So Winter means that normally we are 'reverse echelon' . . . but not always so, because sometimes we shift it to accommodate the 300 metres shooters. The roof and extended canopy on their shed means that they are protected from falling shot anyway so they can shoot on 'Down the Line' days. Simple isn't it?

Safety Boards

We are one of the very few ranges in the world wide enough to allow shooting from different distances at the same time. This is perfectly safe as long as the rules are applied and obeyed. The rule is normally an eight target safety gap for each 100 yards between groups of firers. On Century the 'missing' lanes between butts, down which the wind flags are situated, are counted as two target widths. On Stickledown there is a single additional target width in line with the wind flags. Mathematically the absolute minimum target gap could be reduced to seven on Short Siberia, six on Century and five on Stickledown. This, as you will be aware, looks a bit close but, using the 200 mils rule (approximately 11 degrees), is theoretically safe (I use the word theoretically only because it is not possible to legislate for idiots.)

At weekends, the safety boards are placed on the 'danger' side of the lane adjacent to the extreme target

in use at any particular distance. There are 'No Entry' signs on both the gate by the 300 metres shed, and at the entrance to Century range from the 300 yards car park on Hobson's Way. They normally read, in red, "STOP - Do Not Pass This Point - Live Firing Ahead" - it could hardly be more explicit! By the time this article reaches print, these safety boards will also be active during mid-week. Before you enter the range, stop, look and make yourself aware. Never assume anything but, if you must assume, assume that it is dangerous.

Recently we had another incident of someone opening a gate and driving across the 300 yards firing point, in front of shooters (whom he had driven past at 600 yards on butt 19!) " . . . because I normally always drive that way". At least two rules had been broken. Firstly, even if you are in possession of a 'Vehicle Access Pass' you MUST confirm access with the Range Office on each and every occasion. Secondly, do not open a gate (it's there for a reason for goodness sake!) or pass a safety board without similarly obtaining permission. Hobson's Way, down which this particular idiot had driven, has a board nailed to almost every other tree! If you want to get yourself shot, go somewhere else, don't do it on my watch and spoil my weekend, I'm grumpy enough as it is.

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PHOENIX MEETING

Once again this year's Phoenix Meeting, held over the May Bank Holiday, continued to be a huge success for the NRA marking its twelfth year as one of the flagship events on the shooting calendar. With a record number of 2909 events being shot by over 560 competitors from across the UK and Europe, over 137,000 rounds of ammunition ranging from 12g slug to .22lr were safely fired down range in what eventually turned out to be very nice weather, for a change!

Originally aimed at promoting and continuing the old pistol disciplines but using Gallery Rifles instead, the Phoenix Meeting has evolved over the years and now caters for a wide variety of firearms that can be used during the event. Whether you are looking for a pure speed, short or long range precision, moving target, turning target, multiple targets or multiple position match, the Phoenix will probably cater for it. Air Pistol, Air Rifle, Gallery Rifle Smallbore, Lightweight Sporting Rifle, Gallery Rifle Centrefire, Long Barrelled Pistol, Long Barrelled Revolver, Muzzle Loading Pistol and Revolver, Shotgun, Long Range Pistol and Fullbore Rifles are all shot on various ranges to provide an action packed weekend, and as always in very friendly surroundings.

To run an event of this scale requires over 100 Range Officers, the majority of whom also shoot so most of their competitions are shot on the Wednesday and Thursday to make sure that everything is ready for the rest of the competitors to start on the Friday. A huge thank you must go to all of these people for giving up their time to keep our ranges safe, and for doing such a good job. It was pretty hot for the entire weekend and being on the range for up to nine hours a day over five days is certainly not an easy task for anyone.

For many of the shooters who attended this year, it was their first time competing in a major event and many were quite nervous and unsure of what they had let themselves in for. The feedback from many of them after they had finished their competitions was that the help, advice and encouragement that they received from both the ROs and other competitors on the firing line had certainly had a positive effect on the day. Simple help with scoring, lending equipment and techniques used in some of the harder matches like the Bianchi and 1500 all helped to calm them down a bit and enjoy their experience, ensuring that they will be back next time (which is what it's all about!). Many of them are now looking forward to coming back to shoot the GR National Championships in August as well. Some had wrongly assumed that the Nationals are only open to the top shooters when in fact they are open to shooters of all abilities, and the classification system that we use will ensure that everyone has a chance of winning something on the day.

On the whole the matches ran very smoothly and the standard of shooting was very high in some of the matches with many new records being set over the weekend. In event order they were:

0521	America Match	Graham Trimmer	258.3x	Phoenix Record
0901	Timed & Precision 2 GRSB	David Hackett	595.32x	British & Phoenix record
0921	Timed & Precision 2 LBP	Clive Ferguson	591.26x	British & Phoenix record
1104	Multi Target SG	Rob Adam	107	Phoenix Record
1121	Multi-Target LBP	Graham Trimmer	112	Phoenix record
1321	Phoenix A LBP	Patrick Pritchett	179	British & Phoenix record
1322	Phoenix A LBR	Graham Trimmer	189	Phoenix record
1521	1500 LBP	Clive Ferguson	1486.91x	Phoenix Record
1701	Bianchi GRSB	Gwyn Roberts	1918.155x	British & Phoenix record
1721	Bianchi LBP	Clive Ferguson	1891.140x	British & Phoenix record
1722	Bianchi LBR	Mel Beard	1903.147x	British & Phoenix record
1942	Advancing Target MLR	Dave Berry	71	Phoenix Record
4302	Granet GRCF	Darren Digby	299.17x	Phoenix Record
5986	4, 5, 600 yards F Class	Horst Mitera	268.43V	Phoenix Record
5989	4, 5, 600 yards non .303 Military Rifle	Steven Voak	145.9V	Phoenix Record
6168	8, 9, 1000 yards Free Pistol 18.5in barrel	Trevor Alford	210.19V	Phoenix Record
6189	8, 9, 1000 yards non .303 Military Rifle	Steven Voak	211.15V	Phoenix Record

The winners of the Phoenix Aggregate matches were:

John Rolfe Trophy T&P2	John Robinson	1191.78x
Sue Mansbridge Rosebowl 1500	John Robinson	2986 229x
Target Sports Bianchi	Gwyn Roberts	3826.312x
Phoenix Trophy	Keith Cox	6714.442x.

In addition to the individual scores there were also some European Team matches in the Shorts events and these consisted of teams of five shooting the T&P1 and Multi Target matches in either rimfire or centrefire, with the top four scores to count. Highest scores on the day in GRSB were England Red with 1636.47x followed by Wales 1 with 1630.47x, and in the GRCF matches it couldn't get any closer with the top two teams having tied on x count, but England White just edged out Wales 1 by one point with 1668.90x to 1667.90x.

On the Bank Holiday Monday the annual International 1500 match was held where two teams of five shooters from each country shoot in a shoulder to shoulder match. This is always an enjoyable match to shoot, and, despite some gun breakages on the line during the Match 5 warm up, some very good individual best scores were produced. Once the final scores had been finalised it emerged that the UK team had taken the Phoenix Cup with 5966.402x with Germany in second place with 5810.257x.

In the Phoenix International Trophy match (which also included the European Gallery Rifle Federation European 1500 Championship Cup) the UK team again produced a solid score of 5974.430x to take the main trophy with the Republic of Ireland taking up second place this time with 5937.405x. Congratulations must go to all those who took part in this final competition of the weekend, along with a very big thank you to all of the ROs who stayed on to provide a safe, professional and friendly atmosphere for them to compete in.

As well as the huge amount of shooting on offer, the Phoenix is also well known for its excellent and varied Trade Show held both inside and around the Pavilion building. Several hundred, if not thousands of people

visit simply for this event alone and it is usually well worth a look as there is always something on display that you simply cannot do without. Everything from bench rest rifles to miniature cannons, custom ear plugs to the latest stock designs and everything else in between.

The party on the Saturday was well attended and certainly had an international flavour to it with members from the Irish SSAI and German BDMP also attending. As a big thank you the Range Officers and guests were treated to an evening of music and entertainment including a hot and cold buffet accompanied by free wine and beer to help wash things down. Jane Shields and Sally Agnew are to be thanked and congratulated for their hard work and effort that went into making this event such a success. Also, thanks to Andy Duffy and the generosity of the shooters, over £500 was raised on the night with various raffles and is now on its way to the Disabled Police Officers Association of Northern Ireland.

To round off a very enjoyable and successful weekend's shooting, our new NRA Chairman Dr Robin Pizer presented the trophies and awards at the prizegiving ceremony held in the MLAGB clubhouse. He was given a very warm welcome when introduced to the masses in a very packed room where he proceeded to hand out all of the individual and team prizes to those lucky enough to win something.

The final thanks must go to all of the stats crew headed by Charles Murton and Chris Farr for once again doing an excellent job, to Jane Shields, Jackie Lamb and Jacky Cowling for running the front desk, Sally Philcox and Sally Agnew for organising the squadding and everything else, and of course to you the shooters for making the Phoenix Meeting the success that it is!





LETTERS

Sight Optics

from Richard van Lingen

I refer to John Bloomfield's article in the Spring 2009 issue.

I have a high regard for John's technical knowledge about all things related to target rifle shooting. I accept his criticism, particularly regarding the Galilean Match Rifle sights. I concede that I would have extreme difficulty standing on my head to align the sights with an inverted image of the target! It seems that the fifty-nine years since my schooldays have blunted my memory of this element of "basic schoolboy physics".

However, this error has not blunted the thrust of my letters. As far as I am concerned, the Optical Sights Working Group deliberately set out to "rubbish" the ICFRA optics proposal by playing on the inability of many shooters, particularly the younger ones, to differentiate between a telescope, as broadly defined by John, and a telescopic sight! Obviously the two are worlds apart. A telescopic sight uses optics to bring the images of the reticle (the equivalent of the foresight element) and that of the aiming mark into the same focal plane. This overcomes any lack of visual accommodation and simplifies aiming for all shooters. By the opposite token, aperture sight aiming requires the shooter to attempt to bring into focus two objects, one at virtual infinity and the other less than 1.2 metres from the rearight eyepiece. The young eye has the ability to jump focus rapidly between the two objects (visual accommodation), giving the impression that both are in simultaneous focus. With aging, the eye loses this ability and the older shooter has to find a compromise. A small aperture increases the depth of field but not sufficiently to obtain a usable sight picture. He therefore adds a lens that will focus some distance in front of the foresight, effectively defocusing both images, but much less so for the foresight element. This gives a less than ideal but usable sight picture, based on the accepted principle that one can centre a blurred aiming mark image in a reasonably well defined foresight ring, but not the other way around.

As John points out, an Eagle Eye lens enlarges the image of the aiming mark, but has no effect on the foresight element, whether in front of or behind the element. John then makes the point that a negative rearsight lens will then sharpen up the blurred aiming mark image. I pose these questions to John:

- As many (possibly the majority of vision-impaired shooters) require a small plus correction to see the foresight ring clearly enough for accurate aiming, surely the negative lens will defocus the element sufficiently to make this impossible? Even shooters with perfect uncorrected eyesight will lose clarity on the ring.

- Could it be that only some short-sighted shooters might benefit from the Eagle Eye/negative lens combination?
- If so, to what extent?
- Will this give them an unfair advantage?

All this is really academic! As I have pointed out repeatedly in these exchanges, the problem with the GBNRA position is that it is impossible for Range Officers to check whether the rearsight lens is only a correction for astigmatism. No one can justify that a rule that cannot be policed should be in the rulebook!

Olympics

from Alex Hamilton

I am very concerned to hear about the repeated attempts to get the shooting events of the 2012 Olympics to Bisley and I am writing to express my opposition to this initiative.

Given that the Woolwich proposal is a non-starter, the best option and one that we should all be pressing for is another permanent range within the Olympic site or at the very least close to London. In order to be of any use after the Games, this range must be easily and cheaply accessible on public transport. A location which youngsters can get to without parental involvement either as the drivers or financially!

Bisley may be 30 minutes ride from London, but that translates into £12 to £15 in fares or fuel. How many 14 year olds do you know that would be prepared to spend that much per session in any sport? I am not thinking about 'Olympic hopefuls', whose fawning parents are prepared to suffer any inconvenience, but about many thousands of ordinary people with average skill. We desperately need to attract that latter group if the sport is to survive!

Promoting and growing the sport should be the aim that ranks above the Olympics and that aim cannot be achieved if all the important events are concentrated at Bisley.

Have we not learned anything from the 2002 Commonwealth Games? Holding the shooting events at Bisley at that time deprived us of another range in Manchester and landed the NRA in a £2 million debt without any worthwhile publicity. In desperate attempts to get out of that huge debt the previous administration of the NRA increased its charges and thus dealt a devastating blow to fullbore rifle shooting everywhere, because MoD/Landmarc immediately increased its charges to match. Since then all those that use military ranges have been paying for the incompetent handling of that project. If anyone still has doubts about the validity of that statement, I refer

them to the copy of a letter from MoD below. (*Editor's note - unfortunately I was not able to reproduce the letter in this Journal.*)

NRA/NSRA lack the expertise to manage major projects and another fiasco like the Commonwealth Games of 2002 would finish us all off, I am afraid. My vote, therefore, is that the Olympic shooting events should be held as far away from Bisley as possible. I understand that we are obliged to offer Bisley as a venue and in that case "reluctant co-operation" should be the norm, not lobbying for the dubious privilege of digging another, bigger hole . . . !

Reply from Glynn Alger

To put this letter into context one has to understand that Bisley was the original site for the Olympic shooting in 2012.

The current proposal is that the shooting venue should be built at Woolwich and then pulled down leaving absolutely no legacy for shooting (please read my notes for a fuller explanation.)

To provide resources to enable anyone to shoot, the shooting associations need to be better funded than they are at present. The plan for Bisley included not only development for the Olympics but a wider development to improve facilities for shooters and to enable us to attract non-shooting commercial customers to improve our income.

The aim was to provide world class shooting facilities and to create the income needed to develop the sport away from Bisley.

Bisley, in planning terms, provides some challenges being constrained by various environmental classifications, SSSI being but one of them. It was correctly believed that had the Olympics come to Bisley there would have been uplift for the sport but there would also have been greater understanding in relation to planning for shooting and commercial needs.

As part of the proposed development plan for the Olympics to come to Bisley we had to submit a Business Plan showing how we would sustain the ranges after the Games. We had a comprehensive plan for mixed use of the new ranges which would have meant we would have attracted both Government and commercial funding to keep the ranges maintained and in use against a wider use of the site for commercial activities which would have funded the upgrade of Bisley and support for the sport regionally.

The NRA are still looking at development of the site to support shooting but unfortunately planning is likely to be more challenging to achieve without the Olympic dimension.

NB It is inaccurate to say that the debt incurred by the NRA was due to the Commonwealth Games. Some of it was. The bulk of the debt, that has been paid off over

the last six years, was due to year-on-year overspends prior to the Commonwealth Games.

The Chairman's Prize – Sit Perpetuum, but consider an overhaul

from Andrew Horton

When the Chairman's Prize was first introduced I believe it was marketed as a chance, for those who are not likely to be involved in the main shoots after Second Thursday, to still have something to aspire to by the end of the fortnight. I remember thinking "what a great idea: free shoots and a prestigious prize for up-and-coming shooters." But, now I am lost as to what exactly the point of it is.

After briefly outlining what Os and Ts are, I explain to non-shooting friends that the Chairman's Prize is for the best shooter in each of these classes. However, I continue, it is very unlikely that the best in each class will actually win it. In fact, it is very unlikely that the best O and T shooters are even able to qualify! This is met with understandable bemusement.

Here is a possible solution. We have this extra scoreboard put up outside the NRA offices each Imperial, for the top Os and Ts. Great! But, it seems rather redundant (I don't think it was updated at all last Imperial.) Why not dispense with the extra shoots for the Prize altogether, and simply award the top O and T on their finish in the Grand Aggregate? The key would be to keep updating the Chairman's Prize scoreboard, so it is exciting to follow during the week, and allows the Os and Ts to battle it out over the meeting, in front of the Bisley masses. If you are not in the second stages of the Queen's or the St George's, you will probably be doing the extra shoots (ie Queen's Consolation and Howard Wilkinson) anyway so it may not be a big revenue loss for the NRA. And most of all, you will be able to tell your non-shooting friends that if you win the Chairman's Prize, you are officially the best O or T on the Common. I dare say this could be a more endearing way to smooth over the rough PR edges the Prize has sadly developed in recent years.

Competency Certification

from Charles Higginbottom

Can the NRA please explain the logic of expiry of competence after a 12 month period? I for one resent the implication that my competence is only accepted for some short arbitrary period, to somehow cease for no apparent reason. If the policy is as a result of some absurd reasoning within the MoD, then what measures has the NRA in place to reduce or mitigate the inconvenience and possible future cost to members of remaining "competent" on an annual basis?

Reply from Glynn Alger

Certification was an initiative introduced by the MoD to ensure civilians shooting on military ranges complied

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with the same conditions as those for soldiers. The NRA agreed to manage this requirement on the basis that if it did not civilian shooters would be excluded from MoD ranges.

The MoD as with service personnel have required civilian shooters to re-certify annually.

The NRA in the first year has tried to mitigate the inconvenience to members and clubs by administering the scheme and supplying the certificates free of charge. In addition we have tried to impress upon those affected that we do not expect individuals to be specially tested, in that our advice is assessment can be carried out during the course of a shooter's normal season during a club shoot or in the NRA's case during competitions held at Bisley. Of course there will be instances and particular reasons where action has to be taken to assess an individual's competency and safety.

Having been through the process for 2008 into 2009 the NRA has looked at its administration methods and documentation to see if we can improve our performance, thus benefitting the members. We are not making a charge for the certification service.

We have started to discuss changes to the current system to reduce the administrative burden on members with the MoD. They are of the opinion that things should remain as they are for the moment.

It is the aim of the NRA to improve the requirement and conditions surrounding certification to minimise the effect on members as best we can.

Know Your Zero

from Charles Corner

I was amazed to read John Gardener's statement that it appeared that a large number of range users had little or no idea of their elevation zeros. No wonder the MoD is concerned at our use of High Muzzle Energy weapons, which I thought was the "Nanny State" at work.

Having said that, I have seen a few instances of shots going into the stop butt or being cross-fired onto another target but none going over the top. Of course I have seen many cases of the typical errors that can happen having been a schools coach for a number of years.

I got fed up very quickly with "What's my zero Sir" despite having instructed the recording of all elevation zeros. So that I made very sure that all members had a 300 yards zero of 0, and that they were all trained how to reset the vernier plate on their back sight. I personally used to zero all the school small-bore rifles that were used by dozens of different people and it is surprising how little a true zero varies from person to person.

On many occasions I have come across people who have some strange elevations for the various ranges

and cannot deduce whether it is some mystical science or they lack the mechanical aptitude to adjust their vernier plate.

There are a few simple rules to ensure that your zeros remain constant from season to season until you change a barrel. The batch number of ammunition rarely makes a variation of as much as half a minute in elevation unless it is complete rubbish.

- 1 Never leave your back sight on the rifle even between ranges. (I have seen many damaged or bent because this has not been observed).
- 2 Check and re-check the elevation for the next range before you put the sight back on your rifle.
- 3 When you have shot the longest range immediately return your sight to the 300 yards zero.
- 4 There are few of us who do not suffer from nerves before shooting a competition so get a friend or another competitor to check your settings, you won't be giving away a trade secret (if you were shooting in a team the Adjutant would demand to check this with you).
- 5 Always set your 300 zero to 0 as it is easy to remember and all the rest fall into a simple pattern depending on the quality of your barrel. Your sighters are for the purpose of making any minor adjustments for elevation or windage and even though you have gone through the Zero Range procedure the best final adjustments are at 300 on a quiet day.

Strangely enough most of my best shots go down the range as sighters (you know that it is always going to fall apart with VV sighters) then funny how you manage to put the last to count in the middle having lost buckets in the middle!

My problem is fitness these days in my seventies, so you need to train so that you get to the end of a 15 round shoot still able to hold the rifle still. Having coached a number of very successful shots who are all far better than me, I now have a grandson to coach and a rifle to make for him and I wish that I had his talent in my early teens.

Gallery Rifle and Pistol at the Imperial Meeting

from John Warner

At the Bisley General Meeting held on 23 July 2008, the Chairman, Bill Richards, when commenting upon the Imperial Meeting, said "At the Pistol and Gallery Rifle Meeting, which largely reverted to its 2006 format, there were many more competitors than in previous years and the number of school cadets competing was the highest ever, which obviously bodes well".

In the Spring 2009 issue of the Journal, the Director of Shooting, Martin Farnan wrote "In view of the low

number of entrants and the high cost of running this meeting during the last number of years, the Shooting Committee has set a target of an increase in entrants of 25% this year. If this is not achieved the future of this part of the Imperial Meeting cannot be guaranteed."

I find it difficult to reconcile these statements, and in addition feel that a 25% increase in competitors is most unlikely to be achieved at any Meeting. Is the Shooting Committee so intent on removing the Gallery Rifle and Muzzle Loading Pistol from the programme entirely?

Reply from Charles Murton, GR&P Discipline Rep NRA General Council

Unfortunately there seems to be some confusion over the future of the GR&P element of the Imperial Meeting, so I'll try to set the record straight.

For many years, this element of the Meeting has run at a significant loss. In 2007, the loss was just over £1,500 excluding range hire and nearer £5,000 when range hire was accounted for. Although detailed prior accounts were not available, the Director of Shooting confirmed that the figures for previous years were very similar. This contrasted sharply with the other GR&P meetings held each year (Spring Action, Phoenix, National Championships and Autumn Action), all of which had been generating a profit even after accounting for range hire. The number of GR&P competitors attending the Imperial (under 100) and the number of event entries had been largely static for some years – again in contrast to the growth being seen at the other meetings.

This effectively meant that the NRA (which is of course a registered charity) was subsidising the Imperial GR&P but not any other aspect of GR&P. It was therefore agreed between the Chairman of the Shooting Committee, the Director of Shooting, the Assistant Director of Shooting and myself that the GR&P element of the 2008 Imperial needed to break even. If it didn't, then it couldn't continue into 2009.

Unfortunately it proved very difficult to produce accounts for Imperial GR&P 2008 which were sufficiently detailed and accurate to show conclusively whether it had actually broken even, though it was certainly close (before accounting range hire – taking range hire into account it still made a substantial loss). The numbers of competitors did not go up. In fact it went down slightly from 97 in 2007 to 91 in 2008. However, the number of events entered by those competitors did rise from 739 in 2007 to 770 in 2008; this may have been the basis for the comment made by Bill Richards in his Chairman's speech, but I cannot be certain of this.

The Shooting Committee agreed that breaking even (excluding range hire) was not a good enough performance target by itself and that the Imperial GR&P needed to demonstrate the ability to perform in

line with the other GR&P meetings if it was to continue. Various performance targets were discussed, including "something like a 25% increase in entries" – the actual performance targets will be set shortly.

It is important to note that all of this only relates to the GR&P element of the Meeting – not to the Schools and Cadets, nor to the Historic Arms, both of which are separately accounted for. Should the GR&P element cease, the others will be unaffected.

While it would be sad to see the end of the Imperial GR&P, I hope everyone will understand that using charity money to subsidise it year after year simply is not appropriate. Last year the Imperial GR&P reduced the loss it was making. If it can further improve its performance this year there will at least be a case for continuing it but if not then the only responsible course of action would be, regrettably, to end it.

NATSS – A Proposal

from John Gardener

There is a lot of discussion going on about NATSS. Does no-one realise that the solution is simple?

My position as the Senior Ranges Supervisor brings me into contact with the majority of shooters who use Bisley. They are in the main, in agreement with my own opinion, which is:

Yes, let there be one governing body for all shooting in the United Kingdom. I am all in favour, with one or two provisos.

- No current single body should become responsible for another single body's liabilities, either legal or financial.
- No current single body should have access to, or control over, another single body's assets.
- No current single body should be able, through number of members, to outvote any other single body.
- The 'new' governing body shall be called the National Rifle Association.

All those in favour please e-mail me at the Range Office and I'll happily pass on those votes to the steering committee.

Those not in favour please e-mail me one good argument against my proposal.

e-mail john.gardener@nra.org.uk.

Correction

Please note that the reference to the "Chairman of the National Pistol Association" in the letter from Andy Sherrieff in the last issue of the Journal should have referred to the "President of the National Pistol Association".

OBITUARIES

Major HN Cooper RM (Ret'd)

Neville Cooper died at the Markham-Stouffville Hospital, Ontario, Canada, after a short illness. He was in his 84th year. Born on 22 February 1926, in St John's Wood, to parents Charles and Anne, he was the eldest of three children, with a younger brother, David, and sister, Rosaline (now deceased). Although christened Henry Neville, he took an early dislike to his first name and was known from a very early age as Neville. He attended Copthorne Preparatory School and in 1939 joined Wellington College, Berkshire, completing his studies in the Classics VIth. Although he won the annual shooting medal at Copthorne, he did not apparently shoot competitively at Wellington, no doubt because of wartime restrictions.



He joined the Royal Marines in 1944 being confirmed as a Lieutenant in 1946. Of particular note amongst his overseas postings, is that he was Mentioned-in-Despatches in 1951 on operations against the Communist Terrorists whilst serving in 40 Commando RM in Malaya. He also served in Malta, Cyprus, Hong Kong, the UK in a variety of postings and, as befits a true Royal Marine, as the RM Subaltern in the cruiser HMS Jamaica and as the Amphibious Operations Officer in HMS Bulwark, a Landing Platform Helicopter (a light fleet carrier converted to an amphibious assault ship). His obvious talent and huge enthusiasm for shooting were given full rein with postings to the RM Small Arms School at Browdown, the Naval Gunnery School at HMS Excellent (Whale Island) as OC Tipner Ranges and at the Army School of Infantry at Hythe. His sniper skills drew him to the heat of the action in the November 1956 landings at Port Said where 40 Commando, having cleared the Canal Company offices and the Customs Houses were tasked to move forward to release the British Consul from house arrest. Neville was commanding Support Troop and, armed with his sniper rifle, he went forward to see how the situation was progressing and whether his heavy weapons were required. He approached A Troop Commander and said "Hello, Dicky what's the form?" As he spoke a bullet flattened itself on the wall between them. "That!" replied Captain Dicky Grant.

Neville was very proud to have commanded a Company of 41 Commando RM during the Royal Marines Tercentenary celebrations in 1964 including the memorable Royal Review in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. In 1965, during the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill, Neville commanded the Guard of Honour at Tower Pier, from which point Sir Winston's coffin was embarked in the launch Havengore for its move up the

river to Festival Hall Pier, en route to Bladon where it was laid to rest. Following a three-year appointment as Director of the Royal Marines Reserve, Neville retired from the service in 1971. He maintained his contacts with the Corps and a keen supporter of the RM Benevolent Fund and an avid reader of the *Globe & Laurel Magazine*.

Neville then entered the legal profession, working as a legal executive with the firms of Musgrave Larkin in London and Tuck & Mann in Leatherhead until he finally retired in 1997. He focussed on various aspects of corporate litigation. During this period he was of very considerable help to the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association in dealings concerned with the Macdonald Stewart Pavilion at Bisley.

In 1952, Neville married Shirley Leslie Trethewey, a member of a formerly Cornish family involved in silver mining in the Cobalt area of northern Ontario. Neville was keenly interested in the Trethewey family history and made special trips to the north in pursuit of more information on this. The Coopers had four children, Geoffrey, Guy, Clare (Bailey) and William. In more recent times, four grandchildren were added to the clan. Leslie died in 1989, leaving a great void in Neville's life. It was filled in small measure by his move to Canada and by his myriad activities in the world of shooting. His home at Bisley was named Trethewey Lodge. There too he made sure that the flag pole, on which he flew the Union Jack while 'in residence', was taller than the one next door where the German team flew its flag during the Imperial Meeting! The Trethewey Medal was struck to be awarded each year to the winner of HM The Queen's Prize when she or he arrived at the Lodge as the last port of call on the long ride in the chair around Bisley Camp. Champagne was also served to the winner and to the weary bearers of the chair. Although Neville was not able to be at Bisley in 2008, he characteristically left instructions that a bottle of champagne be taken to the Canadian Pavilion and served to the winner there.

Following his retirement, and with his children and grandchildren now all living in North America, Neville decided to split his life between Canada and the UK, buying a house in Markham, Ontario, in 1999. While many people look for ways to escape the Canadian winter, Neville did the reverse, spending his summer at Bisley and the winter in Canada. He characteristically threw himself into the lives of his grandchildren, providing great support to their activities in ice hockey and golf. Neville was always very proud of his family and their accomplishments, never needing much prompting to talk about them.

With his family, and the wider family of the Royal Marines, Neville's other great love was target shooting at Bisley and around the world. He became a member of the RM VIII in 1951, and shot with this team in every year to 1970 when his postings and other duties allowed. He was a highly proficient service rifle shot, winning

the Canadian Service Rifle Championship in 1954, and placing second in the Bisley Queen Mary in 1971. In the latter, it might be noted that he used his trusty No 4 Enfield rifle, while nearly everyone else fired the FN-SLR. The "obsolete" Enfield was not meant to be able to do so well. There are also memories of Neville shooting the 'Running Man' at Bisley with his service revolver, something again that was not meant to be feasible.

Along with his service shooting, he rapidly became part of the SR(b) and target shooting worlds. He joined the NRA and North London Rifle Club in the late 1940s, and began a long career of accomplishment both on the range and in service and commitment. Although the "big" prizes eluded him, he won nine Queen's Final badges with a best placing of 22nd in 1977 at the age of 61; nine Grand Aggregate crosses, finishing fifth in 1963; and placed twice in the top 25 of the St George's. He won the Daily Mail in 1956 and the Short Range Aggregate in 1968. He was a member of the Great Britain Kolapore and the Australia (Empire) Match teams, four times on each, as well as the English National and Mackinnon teams, seven times each. Quite early on, he developed a great liking for overseas travel. He was Adjutant to the Great Britain Team to Canada in 1954, a team that also included Dr Mike Walker and Dr John Tetlow, both of whom subsequently moved to Canada, as did Neville. In addition to the Service Rifle Championship, Neville came second in the Canadian Grand Aggregate, to his fellow team member, John Tetlow. Other tours followed, to Australia and New Zealand as Adjutant in 1958, when he won the NZ Grand Aggregate, to Canada as Captain in 1970, to the West Indies in 1971, and to Canada and the USA in 1971 for the Palma Match at Camp Perry. In later years, he regularly coached the Barbados Team at Bisley, winning the Junior Kolapore in 1981, and was a member of a number of teams from the Wandsworth Rifle Club which visited Canada.

Neville was always determined to put as much back into the shooting world as he himself had gained from it. He was elected to the NRA Council in 1970, being regularly re-elected until deciding to retire in 1991. He was active in the Service and Cadet programmes, and in the Executive, Pistol, Estates and Coaching Committees.

He was very much involved with the Old Wellingtonian Rifle Club and with shooting at Wellington College. Almost every year during the 1990s, Neville would meet the boys at Bisley at the start of the season and give a talk on "Wind Reading". On one of these occasions it was reported that "this picture will never leave my mind, the boys were all sitting in a trench behind 500 yards, wearing every piece of clothing they had. There was a blizzard and the snow was falling thick and fast. Neville held his post, resplendent in his blazer and with his back to the targets. He was covered head to toe in white as were the boys. My only regret was that I didn't have a camera with me. He had so totally submersed himself in the task of teaching that he didn't even notice the snow and cold."

He was Shooting Captain of the North London Rifle Club in the late 1980s and became President in 2003,

succeeding Lt Col Larry Orpen-Smellie. His particular interests around the Club were in encouraging young shooters, something he always felt very strongly about, and in restoring and improving the fabric of the building and gardens. Although living for much of the year in Canada, Neville kept in close touch with the Club, often making special trips to the UK to be present at important meetings and functions.

Following his move to Canada, he did some shooting with the Ontario and Dominion of Canada Rifle Associations, becoming a Life Member of both. He was always most interested in the affairs of the DCRA and the NRA, a strong supporter of international exchanges and a generous host to visitors on both sides of the Atlantic.

Neville was a direct and straight-talking man. One of his favourite instructions was to "stop shilly-shallying around and get on with it" – advice which when taken often led to very good things. He was a loyal friend, on whom one could always rely. Perhaps his most fitting epitaph is this quote from a member of the North London, "Neville was always there when we needed him".

A service in memory of Neville's life was held in Markham on 2 April 2009. It is planned that a further commemoration will be held during the Bisley Imperial Meeting in July 2009.

Jim Thompson

Peter Jacques

Peter Jacques, who passed away on 13 March, aged 78, was a man of many parts. His shooting career started at Wellingborough School and might have taken an unexpected turn soon after when, as a National Service Subaltern in the Royal Horse Artillery, he was leading a small patrol in Malaya which found itself in the beginning of a fire fight which fortunately terminated quite rapidly when the "enemy" proved to be another British patrol. Peter's shooting interests extended over many disciplines but his greatest love was surely his passion for fine British muzzle loaders. His collecting instincts were matched by his enthusiasm in their use. A very early member of the Muzzle Loaders Association of Great Britain, he served for many years on its National Committee finally becoming the Association's President on the death of their Founding Life President, Ted Burton. He took over as the British Representative on the Muzzle Loading Association's International Committee in 1973, not long after it was formed, and became well known throughout the Black Powder World. Game shooting and fishing were also his passions but away from this



he had a lifelong enthusiasm for amateur dramatics with an emphasis on musical comedy. A keenness for fine cars, wine and music rounded off a life well spent. An NRA Life Member since 1974, he found that target shooting with muzzle loaders led to his regaining an interest in fullbore TR and, although never in the first rank of TR shooters, his organisational skills led to him being selected as Adjutant of the 1993 Mackinnon, the 1986 Canada and the 1996 West Indies teams as well as Vice-Captain of the 1988 Canada Team. In 2002 he took part in the F Class Team to Canada. The City Rifle Club was his principle watering hole at Bisley but for relaxation on a summer evening, the veranda of his bungalow on Stickledown was a haven of peace. Peter was the respected Chairman of the Midland Counties Rifle Club from 1984. In recent years, in common with so many clubs, the difficulties with range allocations on MOD Ranges have been causing problems and Peter strove constantly to maintain the activities of the MCRC. His support and generous benefactions to the Club will be sadly missed by the members.

Anon

Chris Barber

Chris Barber, a County Durham Police Officer, who served in Durham Constabulary for nearly 25 years, and a nationally renowned Firearms Specialist, died 5 April 2009 in St Teresa's Hospice after a short illness.

The Temporary Assistant Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary, Michael Banks, paid tribute to PC Barber, describing him as *'a leading firearms expert and someone who was recognised as the best armourer in the country. He was a gentleman who was admired and respected across the Force for his professionalism. His passion for firearms embraced both theory and practice and he was always trying to develop his encyclopaedic knowledge of weapons. He was totally unflappable, just the person you needed in the type of situations he was trained to deal with. But above all, he was a one-off who was genuinely liked and loved – a word not often used in policing'*.

Chris Barber was born in Middlesbrough and joined Durham Police in 1984. He was a Firearms Officer for most of his career and, more recently, performed duties as Force Armourer and Weapons Examiner. Chris was also qualified as an Expert Witness, providing expert testimony for the Courts and he never lost one criminal case he was responsible for. National and international forces regularly sought him out for his specialist firearms knowledge.

He had a particular interest and passion for the Lee Enfield rifle. Chris was a Bisley shot and led the Durham Constabulary Gun Club, used by serving and retired



officers, as well as members of the British Deer Society, the Historical Muzzleloaders and the Black Powder Society.

Chris Barber was involved in the protection of former Prime Minister Tony Blair and family when they lived at the Prime Minister's constituency home in County Durham. He was also involved in the state visit to the UK of the former United States President George W Bush, as well as the protection of several members of the Royal Family when they visited the North East of England.

On 15 April 2009, hundreds of mourners packed into Durham Cathedral to say a final farewell and pay their respects to Chris. The funeral cortege was led into Durham City with a police escort and police motorbike outriders. Two mounted officers on horseback from Cleveland Constabulary led the cortege around the Cathedral grounds to the Cathedral door. A Guard of Honour then lined both sides of the Cathedral Cloisters into the Cathedral itself.

Family, friends and colleagues came from all over the country to hear the service. Reverend David Sudron said; *'Chris was a good friend to this church, indeed he was someone in whose debt it stands for the kindness that he showed to it and to its staff. It is our privilege to welcome his family, friends and colleagues to a place that he loved'*.

Michael Banks said in his eulogy, *'Chris was at the top of his profession when he was taken from us. He was a man of many talents, and a man admired and loved by many people'*.

Chris was a much-loved husband, brother, son, uncle, godfather and friend. He leaves a wife, Ann.

Chris died in St Teresa's Hospice at Darlington. His family and friends are now fundraising for the Hospice. Readers, should they wish, can send donations to the Hospice at St Teresa's Hospice, The Woodlands, Woodland Road, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 7UA. Cheques can be made payable to St Teresa's Hospice.

James Stuart Brown

Our Chairman Jim (Jimbo) Brown passed away after a long fight with cancer but typical of Jimbo he fought all the way to the finish working as hard as ever as Chairman right to the end. He was a character, sometimes outspoken, but he always stuck to his guns. He was always there to give advice to anybody who needed it and I was one of those people.



He was a great shooter, one of the best at 1500 if not the best; he was never beaten at long range pistol and he was also a good clay shot and fullbore rifle shooter. He was the only sanctioned British Bianchi Referee. Jim shot in America with a group of like-minded 1500 pistol shooters and they acquitted themselves well.

Jim started shooting in the late 1960s with Laycocks Rifle Club and his first rifle was an Anschutz model 54. He moved on to the Bridge Houses range as a member of British Rail Gun Club and he was instrumental in the early set up of long range pistol shooting in this country, excelling at this discipline. He was a member of a number of clubs but Mattersey R&PC was dear to his heart and it was here that Jim and a group of other members ran both the first British 1500 and Bianchi Nationals. He was also a keen photographer and motorbike enthusiast and a wizard with the computer; anything Jim put his mind to he excelled at. I was privileged to go to Jim's funeral which was, to say the least, different. Typical of Jim he put his own slant on this by recording his own service some of which made us laugh, and he chose all his own music with running commentary. As we came out of the service the word on everyone's lips was that it was just like Jimbo to do it this way. A quote on Jim's funeral pamphlet stated that at his first assembly of his secondary school, the Headmaster said "you are all failures, it is our job to do the best we can with you". Jim never forgot this, it remained with him and he was influenced by those words throughout his life. Of course nothing was further from the truth. Jim was a perfectionist and excelled at everything he did.

Jim and Christine went to the North Cape to see the midnight sun in a van they had converted to a camper. Jim being Jim they had planned to go and he wasn't going to let a thing like cancer stop him so they completed this marathon journey and we were all thrilled to see the magnificent photographs with which they recorded the event on display at his funeral.

Finally, on a personal note, my lasting memory of Jim will be of a group of us all sat round the camp fire at Mattersey on the eve of the Mattersey Ten with him drawing on a big Cuban cigar, glass in hand laughing loud and hearty.

We at Mattersey will miss you Jimbo but I am sure you will be there in spirit around the camp fire laughing at the jokes!

Peter Whomersley

Chairman and Vice President, Mattersey R&PC

Dr Kevin Beurle

Kevin Beurle was an eminent physicist and programmer at Queen Mary University London. His interest in shooting went with a full portfolio of other sporting activity including mountaineering, skiing and scuba-diving, pastimes that he himself described as 'gravitational-related'.

He was a member of Carshalton Rifle Club and became a member of the NRA in 2005. He participated in shotgun, gallery rifle, muzzle-loading and smallbore events. A gentle and quiet spoken man age 53, he had



impressed members of the NRA Rifle Club on his visits to the ranges.

As a space scientist, he had built a formidable reputation in imaging systems and space telescopes, developing the software and other equipment for the Cassini space programme, launched in 1997, and currently orbiting Saturn.

Beurle, who lived in Clapham, London, was on holiday in Cappadocia, Turkey, at the time of his death. He and his partner Julie Boas had just started a hot air balloon trip over the mountains of Eastern Turkey when his balloon collided with another, crashing to the ground from a height of some 50 metres when its canopy was ripped open.

Beurle was killed in the accident and nine other tourists including his partner and the British pilot were injured, many seriously. He is survived by his daughter.

NRA SHOOTING MENTORS "AUNTS AND UNCLES" SCHEME IMPERIAL MEETING 2009

This is just a "reminder" article.

There will be two changes in the system for 2009.

So far as the set-up phase is concerned:

In 2009, Nieces and Nephews will be contacted as and when requests are processed, and the customary full details will be sent to everyone when the books close at the beginning of July.

Emergencies after that date will, of course, always be dealt with.

It will then be up to the Nieces and Nephews to e-mail their Aunt or Uncle in order to set up that vital first meeting – and not the other way around, as has been the case in the past.

This is designed to reduce to a minimum the no-shows which have characterised the system in the past.

There will be a central notice board (to be called "The Hub") alongside Fulton's which will serve as a communications centre.

Tim Elliott

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NRA OVERSEAS TEAM FUND

	Year ending 31/12/08	Year ending 31/12/07
CONTRIBUTIONS TO GB AND OTHER TEAMS		
GBRT South Africa 2008	10,000.00	0.00
NRA team to Channel Isles 08 (07)	2,700.00	2,850.00
GBRT Canada Palma 07	0.00	15,000.00
GB Veterans Canada 07	0.00	5,000.00
GBRT U25 Canada 07	0.00	7,853.00
Total Contributions to Teams	12,700.00	30,703.00
less Sports Council Grants received	0.00	0.00
CONTRIBUTIONS BY OTF	12,700.00	30,703.00
INCOME FOR THE YEAR		
Donations		
Donation of shares	5,000.00	0.00
NRA Channel Islands 2007	0.00	1,420.00
Corporation insurance	250.00	115.00
2008 Imperial competitions TR	4,363.00	4,180.00
2008 Imperial competitions MR	401.00	324.00
Gallery Rifle	163.00	0.00
Other donations	224.82	397.66
	10,401.82	6,436.66
Supporters Clubs		
Freddy Payne 100 Club	6,000.00	6,000.00
OTF Swindle (net)	1,760.00	1,900.00
Albert Sweepstake	440.00	1,165.00
MR course	508.30	0.00
Share of fireworks surplus	731.82	670.00
Golf day	1,451.60	1,669.92
Cookbook	877.50	545.00
Koolers	467.50	0.00
	12,236.72	11,949.92
Interest		
Interest on Gilts	0.00	1,853.44
Loss on redemption	0.00	-457.15
COIF interest	6,714.65	5,883.17
Bank & deposit interest	516.68	42.46
	7,231.33	7,321.92
TOTAL INCOME	29,869.87	25,708.50
Less Expenditure		
Contributions by OTF to GB & other teams	12,700.00	30,703.00
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	17,169.87	-4,994.50
Reserves at 1/1/08	131,853.77	136,848.27
RESERVES AT 31/12/2008	149,023.64	131,853.77
Represented by:-		
Investment in unquoted shares	5,000.00	0.00
Deposit with stockbrokers	13,464.46	0.00
COIF Deposit account	129,396.16	122,681.51
Business Premium account	3,139.88	3,096.51
Owing by (to) NRA general funds	-1,976.86	-23,014.71
Debtors	0.00	31,790.46
Creditors	0.00	-2,700.00
Net Assets at 31/12/2008	149,023.64	131,853.77
Reserves at 31/12/2008		
Capital	116,768.82	116,768.82
General available for Grants	32,254.82	15,084.95
	149,023.64	131,853.77

SUMMARY ACCOUNTS

NRA Target Rifle Team, Channel Islands, May 2008

Captain – Matthew Charlton

A full account of the tour was given in the Summer 2008 Journal (pp50-53). The team of 14 competed successfully in individual competitions and matches against Guernsey and Jersey on their respective ranges, winning both matches by narrow margins.

Expenditure	£	Income	£
Travel	2,886	NRA OTF Grant	2,700
Accommodation	5,017	Sponsorship & Donations	7,471
Subsistence	1,646	Corporate Days	2,433
Team Formalities	1,231	Interest	8
Trophies and Gifts	443	Team Members' Contributions	3,585
Tour Shooting Costs	1,767		
Team Training	1,552		
Team Building	96		
Clothing	1,497		
Admin	62		
Total Expenditure	16,197	Total Income	16,197

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Illustrated London News 7 June 1879

Proceeds to the National Rifle Association Overseas Team Fund

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