



National Rifle Association Journal

Summer 2010

Volume LXXXIX

Number 2



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Cover photo: Queen Victoria, attended by Sir Joseph Whitworth, fires the first shot at Wimbledon.

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NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

by
Glynn
Alger



150th Anniversary of the National Rifle Association

Welcome to this Summer Journal which is celebrating 150 years of the Association as well as 100 years of the NRA Journal which started in July 1910. We have a few more historical articles than usual which we hope will be of interest to you. We would also like to wish the best of shooting luck and an enjoyable time to all competitors in the 150th Anniversary Imperial Meeting. Here's to the next 150 years!

A Balance

In recent times there has been ongoing speculation about the development of Bisley. Conventionally, this proposal has been thought of in terms of buildings rather than use of the facilities. A few years ago we were talking about the non-shooting pound and the spectre of the public using Bisley for all sorts of non-shooting purposes that would bring in lots of money in support of shooting. There was immediate fear that 'outsiders' would take over Bisley and interfere with our sport or even potentially stop it. The reality was that both the Association and the NSC would never have allowed that to happen because our core purpose is the promotion of shooting and to do that we need the full support of our members.

Equally by now most of you should be aware that the NRA cannot afford to continue to run Bisley on a shoe-string as in the past, because when you run your business on a financial knife-edge every now and again you will fall off and find yourself back where we were in 2001. The result has been over the last few years that to achieve a profit to pay the debt, cuts in maintenance and staffing were made. This has meant that the National Shooting Centre has suffered from a 'shabby chic' look in many areas and in service terms we have not been able to move ahead as quickly as we would have liked. The best example of this is that the NRA Charity in 2004 was run by 2.5 staff, dealing with the needs of the Association, the members, clubs

and national issues. The NSC was in a similar position over this period.

During this period, despite necessarily having to be prudent, we saw a rise in membership by a third, a change in focus and in training philosophy towards accommodating all disciplines and developing competitions and the ranges. The NRA in this time has genuinely engaged in the national shooting debate driving a number of political issues particularly relating to pistols and the Olympics, which was a new departure for the Association. We have seen NSC not only improve the way they deliver service, we have seen electronic targets, an increase in the number and scale of national competitions run on our ranges and a rise in the number of non-shooting events taking place at Bisley in support of you, to keep your costs reasonable.

Having lived through difficult times, the NRA and NSC, working closely together, have paid off the debt and are now at a cross-roads. The key question is do we return to type and bumble on, running the Association for the benefit of the 'Bisley Rifle Club' or do we truly pick up the mantle of a good national body and run Bisley to create a world class facility that makes profits to sustain our responsibilities to the sport nationally? Personally, I prefer the latter option because it forces the Association to be more business-like and professional in its approach and less likely to fall into another financial crisis.

The question is how best to use Bisley to create wealth for the Association whilst retaining the environment of Bisley and creating state of the art shooting facilities. In the past we have speculated with the non-shooting pound and been fearful of its potential consequences. Bearing this in mind NSC has shifted its focus towards maximising shooting at Bisley by trying to attract the military and the police to train here. At the same time there is speculation about military suppliers and manufacturers having workshops, warehouses and offices on site so they can demonstrate to customers. All of this is feasible and a correct way forward but it must be handled sensitively because, although this will create more income and be beneficial in a political sense, it is bound to create tensions related to the competing interests of the members and the new commercial customers.

NSC are aware of this and are looking at the possibility of creating new range accommodation and reopening some that have closed to ensure that the needs of income generation are balanced in favour of the members. Basically NSC, quite correctly, will be trying to fill the ranges every day of the week to meet our needs going forward. To minimise any potential conflict NSC will be working with the NRA to develop an overall strategy for the development and use of Bisley to maximise income with the aim of turning Bisley into a world class facility and the means of supporting the sport nationally.

Charity and Membership

There is a fundamental misunderstanding regarding what constitutes charity within the National Rifle Association.

As an example the membership subscription that is paid to the Association is seen as just that. In reality being a charity the NRA sees it as a donation to the Association to promote shooting nationally. The NRA charity draws down most of its current income from membership subscriptions; the subscriptions of the members played a major part in being able to pay back the Association's debt. The direct benefit which the NRA can give individual members in return for their subscriptions is, however, strictly limited – priority has to be given to the Association's charitable objectives.

Previously the Association has made statements that, having paid its debt off, the intention was that NSC would pay for itself, maintaining and developing Bisley commercially, with profits being gifted to the NRA in support of the its national obligations. Similarly surpluses from NRA membership would be invested in the regions having safeguarded the Association by creating the necessary reserves. In recent years the members have benefited from a policy of reducing the subscription rate by a third to £60 per annum; with the majority of members paying by direct debit the membership is further discounted by £5. There is a sound commercial argument to be made that the lowering of the subscription (donation) rate has benefited the Association in terms of increased membership.

Going forward the Association has to balance the commercial imperative against what the market will stand in terms of subscription rates to maximise the income for investment in the sport nationally. Members must also become aware that their donation is being used for this purpose, not just for their direct benefit.

National Range Strategy

As previously reported, the NRA is currently involved in trying to examine the impact of the economic downturn to the military, in particular regarding ranges and the potential for closure. At the same time the Association needs to look at range availability in a wider sense, taking into account both private and club owned ranges, to assess gaps in provision and how such gaps might be bridged.

At the end of this investigation we are hoping to secure improved access to military ranges and be able to point others in the direction of club or private ranges that have spare capacity. We will be very dependent upon clubs and individuals giving us the information to complete this work.

As an indicator of where we are currently involved, we have been giving technical advice during the build of

a new, very modern, range complex near Lyme Regis in Dorset called the Tunnel. The facility, which for the most part uses an old road tunnel, is about to open providing 25 and 50 metres fullbore ranges. The plan is that a 100 metres range will also be built in the next phase. All ranges are indoor and very modern. There will be a shop, armoury and café built in addition to the ranges in the first stage. The concept is very similar to that for a golf club, providing modern and very comfortable facilities. The NRA are pleased to support this sort of development in the interest of the sport nationally.

At the other end of the scale the Association are currently engaged with Diggle Range in Yorkshire. The aim is to provide technical support that would allow Greater Manchester Police the justification to return to using Diggle for their firearms training. Additionally the NRA is in discussion as to how we might help promote wider use of the ranges by clubs in the North of England.

In addition, of course, the NRA continues to support clubs through providing grants and interest-free loans to help them build or improve their range complexes in the support of shooting nationally.

NRA Club

The NRA Club was introduced at Bisley four years ago to ensure that new shooters, particularly those that had completed the NRA probationary course, joined a club, were supported in the early days and stayed in the sport. The aim is to encourage individuals to join other clubs, acting as a feeder organisation.

Currently the club has 900 members. Club shoots are arranged twice a month and currently attract 50 to 60 firers per session. A major attraction of the club is that it allows members to try all of the nine NRA disciplines and to make choices about what firearms they wish to shoot or own in the future.

Recently the club has decided to broaden its scope and introduce guest days on a regular basis to attract people to take up the sport and join the Association. The first guest day attracted 31 new shooters to Bisley, all of whom enjoyed the experience and are potential new members. A report of this first guest day can be found on page 16.

The other issue currently being discussed is to create a youth section as an official part of the club, to encourage more youngsters into the sport, allowing them to experience all disciplines, again acting as a feeder organisation.

General Notices

Bisley General Meeting

The 2010 Bisley General Meeting will be held during the Imperial Meeting in the Umbrella Tent at 21:00 on Wednesday 21 July.

NRA General Council Elections

Ordinary Members

The following have been elected or re-elected unopposed:

JH Carmichael
ARK Clayton
M Maksimovik
Mrs KD Robertson
WDC Wilcox

Regional Members

The following have been re-elected unopposed:

MJ Black – Northern
Dr JD Warburton – Yorkshire & Humberside
DD Watt – Eastern
DG Young – North Western

Shooting Discipline Members

The following have been re-elected unopposed:

PH Hobson – F Class
Flt Lt IW Robertson – TR
DE Spittles – Muzzle Loading

Imperial Meeting 2010 – Prize Givers

ISCRM

Sir John Cheshire KBE CB FRAeS RAF
President CCRS

TASAM

Lt Gen FMN Mans CBE
Commander Personnel & Support Command

Ashburton

Lt Gen Sir Robert Fulton KBE
President CCFA

Imperial

Maj Gen John Hartley AO (Retd)
President NRA of Australia

Team Captaincies

We send our best wishes for success to:

Jeremy Thompson	Kolapore, Bisley
Alexander Walker	Under 25 Team and Under 25 Australia Match, Bisley
Martin Townsend	Australia Match

Congratulations

The following is congratulated on his appointment as Captain for the following team:

NRA Team to Channel Islands 2011
Charles Dickenson

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 2010:

2011 GB Kolapore Team - Friday 29 July

2011 GB Under 25 Team Match - Friday 29 July

Shooting Incident in Cumbria

The NRA of the UK expresses shock at the tragedy that took place in Cumbria on Wednesday 2 June. Our thoughts are with the families of those who have lost loved ones and with those who have been injured

The shooting fraternity will be under scrutiny once again as a result of these terrible events. There will be calls for instant reaction, as well as journalists looking for a 'new angle' on this story. In particular, our clubs in Cumbria are already being subjected to intense and perhaps on occasion unreasonable pressure; we will of course do everything we can to support them.

As the National Governing Body of our sport, liaison with Government is a critical component of our role; one we take deeply seriously. We are already working closely with the BSSC and BASC to present a coordinated, measured and fact-based response to these events. In doing this we need your help. Well-intentioned comment can and sadly often will be taken out of context and misrepresented. We all share the sense of abhorrence and outrage at the events in Cumbria, whilst also sharing passion for our sport and frustration at the way that sport is sometimes misunderstood.

I would ask you to refer all enquiries to the NRA and our designated spokesperson, Glynn Alger, the Secretary General. His contact details are telephone 01483 797777 ext 123 or e-mail secgen@nra.org.uk.

In the meantime, we are working with the other shooting bodies to provide Parliament with material to help them ensure that any legislative responses are guided by fact and judgement. As the Home Secretary said to Parliament, it is important to establish the full facts and not make knee-jerk decisions.

Some of you have already asked whether the perpetrator of the shocking events in Cumbria was an NRA member. He was not a member of the NRA and, as far as we have been able to determine, he was not a member of any of our affiliated clubs either.

We will keep you informed as the situation develops over the coming days and weeks.

Robin Pizer
Chairman, National Rifle Association

The Clock Tower Appeal raised over £17,000 - we would like to thank the following donors and all those who donated anonymously or otherwise helped us restore the Clock Tower to its full glory.

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Simon Favell
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John Webster

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SHOOTING MATTERS – COMPETITIONS

Imperial Meeting

Changes to the Rules of Shooting.

There have been significant changes to the NRA Rules of Shooting for 2010. Advertisers and propagandists have long established that a message repeated is more effective in reaching its intended audience. So no apologies for restating the revised Safety Rules, extracted verbatim from the 2010 Bisley Bible. Please read them, and follow them. If you read nothing else please read rules 262 and 263. Most importantly, when presenting your bolt-action rifle for inspection, you must remove the bolt (you may put it back after the inspection is complete).

H – RANGE OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR NRA COMPETITIONS

SECTION 61 – SAFETY RULES

- 252 If any person on the range considers that there is a potential or actual breach of safety which urgently requires all competitors to stop firing he will immediately give the order “Stop, Stop, Stop”. All competitors must immediately stop firing, take their finger off the trigger, keep their firearms pointing at the target and await further instructions. No-one may unload or move off the firing point. The person ordering the stop, if not himself the RCO, must immediately explain his action to the RCO so that the RCO may take effective control of the situation.
- 253 When at the firing point a competitor must comply with all orders for the due carrying out of the NRA Rules and Regulations given by the CRO or any official acting under orders of the CRO.
- 254 No competitor may move himself or his equipment forward onto the firing point until authorised to do so by the RCO.
- 255 No round may be placed on the loading platform or in the firearm, nor may it be fired, until the RCO has given the order to load and carry on (see Para 546c).
- 256 A competitor is responsible for ensuring that his firearm and, if provided by himself, his ammunition, is safe to use. He must submit his firearm and ammunition for inspection and testing whenever required. No ammunition of a dangerous character may be used. For definition of dangerous ammunition and instructions for RCOs see Appendix V and Paras 288 and 544.
- 257 The bolt (or equivalent working part in other types of firearm) must not be closed (or opened after being closed) on a live round if the barrel is elevated at more than 70 mils (approximately 4°) above the horizontal. In practice this means

that when closing or opening the bolt with a live round in the chamber the barrel should be horizontal.

- 258 Except only where otherwise prescribed in the conditions of a competition a loaded firearm must at all times point no further left or right than the limits of the assigned butt (see Para 546d).
- 259 Neither aiming nor snapping an unloaded firearm is allowed except when in the firing position on the firing point, and then only if it would be in all respects safe actually to fire and provided it causes no delay. The RCO must give permission before any such aiming or snapping may take place. Competitors shooting muzzle loading firearms may, after the order has been given by the RCO, “cap off” to clear nipple vents prior to loading for fouling shots. During capping off the firearms must be pointed down range or into the ground immediately in front of the firing point. When competitors have completed capping off they must retire from the firing point to their designated loading location behind the firing point.
- 260 A competitor who, whilst on the firing point, accidentally discharges his firearm will not be allowed another cartridge and the shot will be recorded as a miss. He may also be dealt with under Para 261.
- 261 A competitor acting in a dangerous manner will forthwith be forbidden to fire again until the circumstances have been investigated and decided on, or referred to higher authority, by the CRO.
- 262 **Misfire Procedures**
- a Bolt-action centrefire rifles. If a misfire occurs the firer must remain on aim for at least 30 seconds (in case of a hangfire) and then inform the RCO. Under the supervision of the RCO the firer should tilt the rifle to the side and open the bolt, ensuring that his hand is not behind the bolt and that no one is standing behind the rifle. He must ensure that the cartridge comes out complete with the bullet.
- b Gallery Rifle. In accordance with the procedures in the NRA Gallery Rifle and Pistol Handbook (published separately).
- c Other types of firearm. As specified in the procedures for the relevant discipline.
- 263 **Inspection of Firearms and Magazines**
- a The competitor is primarily responsible for ensuring that his firearm is clear before it is

removed from the firing point. Any competitor who fails to present his firearm for inspection whether called to do so or not, or who presents his firearm for inspection in an unsafe condition, may be considered as “acting in a way that might prove dangerous” and be dealt with as in Para 546.

- b The responsibility to carry out inspections falls to a specific individual. When clearing an automatic or semi-automatic firearm, the person designated is the CRO or a member of the range staff to whom the CRO delegates the responsibility. Otherwise in a team competition where a coach is present on the firing point, the coach is the designated person. In individual competition, or if no coach is present, the register keeper is the designated person. In the absence of a coach or register keeper, the RCO is the designated person.
- c On the conclusion of a shoot or stage, or on the order of the RCO, all firers must:
 - i unload their firearm and inspect the chamber, action and magazine (if one is fitted) to ensure that the firearm is clear,
 - ii if using a bolt-action firearm, remove the bolt,
 - iii present their firearm to the designated person on the firing point and have them inspect and confirm that the firearm is clear,
 - iv for a service weapon complete the unload,
 - v either keep the bolt removed or insert a breech flag (or both) for any bolt-action rifle, or carry out the equivalent procedure for other firearms (which may include casing in accordance with GR&P procedure),

before leaving the firing point and before anyone goes forward of the firing point. Where applicable the firer must also ensure that the designated person signs their squadding card confirming that they have cleared the firearm.

- 264 A competitor using a bolt-action rifle must carry it either with the breech open and a breech flag, which must protrude into the chamber, clearly inserted, or with the bolt removed from the rifle, except when on the firing point. Para 254 applies. A competitor using a self-loading rifle must carry it unloaded, ie no magazine on it, no round in the chamber, working parts forward, not cocked and safety catch at ‘safe’. Civilian service rifles or practical rifles which are able to utilise a magazine fitted loading block may do so in addition to a breech flag. The cadet GP rifle must at all times be carried with a breech flag clearly inserted, except during a shoot. Firearms specified in the NRA GR&P Handbook

(published separately) must be carried in accordance with GR&P rules. All other firearms must be carried in a manner such that they are as clearly unloaded as is possible for that type of firearm.

- 265 If a firearm cannot be unloaded in the normal manner, the shooter is to leave it on the firing point pointing towards the target. The shooter is to inform the RCO immediately. The firearm is to remain pointing towards the target until the detail has finished and all shooters have cleared the firing point. The RCO is to arrange for a qualified person (at Bisley, the NSC Armourer or a person designated by him) to make the firearm safe on the firing point. At no time may a loaded firearm be taken from the firing point behind shooters or spectators. Should the armourer have to fire or expend a competitor’s live round in the interests of safety, that round will be replaced on the authority of the RCO.

One other completely new rule arises because of the need to make the rules consistent with the NRA Safe Shooting System. The new rule, reproduced below, sets out conditions which must be complied with if a competitor is to continue following a miss with the first shot.

- 277 In deliberate rifle competitions, a competitor whose first shot misses the intended target may only continue if one of the following applies:
- a The shot was seen to strike the stop butt or the ground.
 - b The competitor identifies and rectifies a fault or error (eg mis-set sight) that would reasonably account for the miss.
 - c There is reasonable evidence (eg an unexplained shot on the next target) that the competitor has crossfired.
 - d There is reasonable evidence (eg based on the advice of other competitors, which advice shall not be considered to be in the nature of coaching) that the wind allowance applied was such as to account for the miss.
 - e With the permission of the RCO.

Note that sub-para b is very widely drawn. It encompasses all sorts of errors, including loose sights, wrong distance (are you sure you are at 900 and not 1000?), wrong butt (are you aiming 1/3/10 targets away from the correct one?), wrong wind (is it left or right? - if it’s been right wind all week it’s easy to put the 10 minutes left on the wrong way out of habit), foresight not properly seated, and so on. A thorough check without prior assumptions is required.

If a competitor is required to withdraw under this rule, he will be required to produce some evidence

of having rectified the problem or having established the correct zero for the rifle and distance before the CRO may allow him to recommence on a later detail under rule 267b.

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. If you are a member and have shot in an NRA competition in the last year, you can get a certificate through the NRA – check on the website or contact Sarah Wells at the NRA. During the Meeting 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.

Ammunition for the Imperial Meeting and NRA events before the Meeting

RWS ammunition to the same specification as 2009 will be issued for all TR events at the Imperial Meeting. The 2010 batch is expected to be delivered in time for it to be used in NRA events from the Inter-Counties onwards. Competitors in Imperial Meeting events other than TR who wish to use RWS 155 grs 7.62mm ammunition may purchase it at cost for their events. Please advise the Squadding Department, who will inform the Range Office so that you can purchase your ammunition over the counter at the reduced rate.

Please remember that in all MR competitions including those competitors using RWS ammunition (in the RWS Aggregate) all competitors must supply their own ammunition. Ammunition will not be available on the firing point but will be available from the Range Office. Competitors entering the RWS Aggregate will automatically be added to the list of competitors entitled to purchase ammunition at cost, but only for the quantity required for the RWS Aggregate. If such competitors require RWS ammunition for other MR events they must notify the Squadding Department.

Equipment Checks at the Imperial Meeting

This year there will be three types of equipment check during the Imperial Meeting. First, a 10% sample of TR chambers will be checked at the start of the Meeting. This check is in addition to the green stickers currently attached to most rifles and was accepted as an alternative procedure to carrying out a 100% re-check. Those competitors whose rifles are to be checked will be selected on a random draw basis from the index numbers. If you are drawn for a check, there will be a letter enclosed with your squadding cards explaining the procedure, together with a certificate that must be completed by any gunsmith from the list on the letter. The completed certificate should then be returned to the NRA by the end of middle Saturday (or by 48 hours after collection if you are turning up later in the Meeting). The check should only take a

few moments to complete. Full details of the check will be published on the NRA website by the middle of June.

Second, there will be a scrutineering system as was run last year. The scrutineers will pre-select TR events, details and positions on the firing point to give a random selection of competitors for checking. Additionally, CROs, their deputies and Wing Officers may nominate specific competitors for checking if observation gives them cause for concern that a competitor may be breaking the technical rules. Compliance with Rules 132, 150, 203, 204, 206, 207, 209, 211 and 288 may be checked. 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. The Shooting Committee was pleased to note that competitors made considerable efforts last year to ensure that their equipment was compliant with the rules, and that there were no serious breaches. It is hoped that the small possibility of a check will again encourage competitors to ensure their own compliance with the rules.

Finally, the Shooting Committee has appointed Ammunition Officers who are authorised under Rule 287 to carry out ammunition checks to ensure compliance with Rules 156, 256 and 288. Please note that the Ammunition Officers are authorised to check any competitor's ammunition; they are not limited to TR competitors.

Extra Tie Shots

The Shooting Committee has decided that target rifle competitors making a highest possible score of 50.10 will again fire five extra tie shots immediately in accordance with Rule 508. This constitutes a change to the Conditions of TR competitions where the HPS is 50, in accordance with Rule 103. 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, the size of the V bull remains unchanged for 2010, but will again be subject to review after the Meeting.

Changes to the Programme

There have been a number of changes to the TR and F Class programmes in order to make it possible to open the Chairman's Prize to all O and T class competitors, to stage an F Class Donaldson Memorial Final and to reduce the number of very late finishes. A major change is that the Inter-Services Long Range match will be held on Second Tuesday alongside the Counties Long Range. Other changes are detailed below. Competitors are advised to study the revised timetable published on pages 323 to 328 of the Bisley Bible.

Subsequent Stages

George's II is now on Thursday after the National, which allows Queen's II to be brought forward, which in turn allows the Donaldson Memorial Final to be shot on Friday evening at 18:00, thus eliminating the very late finish on Second Wednesday.

The Chairman's Prize

Following a number of requests, the format of the Chairman's Prize has been adjusted so as to avoid clashes with most other events. In particular, O and T Class competitors who qualify for Stage II of Her Majesty the Queen's Prize will be able to compete in the final of the Chairman's Prize, thus making the event a true test of the best in each class. The Chairman's Prize Final will be shot at 900 and 1000 yards on the morning of Second Friday.

Individual TR Events after the Grand Aggregate

The programme for the last three days of the Imperial Meeting has been reorganised to improve access to the individual competitions following the Grand Aggregate. It is now possible for any competitor not involved in Queen's II, Home Country representation or higher level matches to enter all of the Stickledown, PW Richardson, Barlow, Howard Wilkinson and Queen's Consolation. The Queen's Consolation has been changed to the same course of fire as the Queen's Final. The take-up of this series of events is being monitored, as we would like to encourage increased participation in the Meeting by competitors not reaching the subsequent stages.

High Muzzle Energy (HME) Firearms

All competitors shooting HME firearms (mainly Match Rifle, Sporting Rifle and F Class) must zero their rifles, and obtain a certificate that zeroing has been completed successfully, before collecting their squadding cards. If your rifle and ammunition combination produce a muzzle energy (ME) exceeding 4,500 Joules (3,319 ft lbs) (see the graph on page 53 of the Bisley Bible) 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.

Bisley Bible Amendments and Corrections

Please note that the times shown for the Any Rifle Extras 1200 Yards on Friday 9 July in the Daily Programme section are incorrect – the correct times are 14:00, 15:05 and 16:10.

The practice sessions shown in the Daily Programme for the Australia Match on Sunday 25 July have been cancelled. The Australia Match will still start at 10:00.

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 assistance with the mysteries of decoding the information in your squadding envelope, 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 Bruce Roth, who administers 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	David Calvert	RAFTRC	No 428
	<i>(100% refund of entry fees)</i>		
2	Dion O'Leary	Welsh RA	No 76
	<i>(50% refund of entry fees)</i>		
3	Poppy Pearce	London University	No 196
	<i>(25% refund of entry fees)</i>		

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 Jennifer Lewsey of Epsom College.

General News

The 2010 Ages Match

The Ages Match will be held over the weekend 30 and 31 October 2010. 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 now traditional Dragon Fireworks Display on Stickledown range.

NOTES FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NSC



by
*Jeremy
Staples*

NRA Open Day

The NRA Open Day took place on Saturday 1 May and we had a total of 1150 registered guests shooting on the ranges. We have had very positive feedback from those who attended during the course of the day and a number of new members have been signed up. Once again we are indebted to those members who helped us out throughout the day. I know it can be a long and tiring day but the feedback has been full of praise for those coaches who spent their time and energy instructing guests and imparting their knowledge to potential new members.

The help given by all members is very much appreciated and without you we could not run these Open Days. The next Open Day is on Saturday 11 September and any members wishing to help should contact Karen Robertson by e-mail at karen@nra.org.uk.

NSC Restructuring

Details of the NSC re-structuring appeared in the last Journal. I am now pleased to confirm that John Gardener, previously working in the Range Office, has moved across to be the Clerk of Works (Estates Manager). John started this role in mid-April and has a background in plumbing and construction and has already made an immediate impact on the appearance of Bisley. Working with the teams from the Estates/Target Shed/Facilities/Engineers he will devise a planned maintenance programme to upgrade the facilities. I hope you will notice a difference when you arrive at Bisley.

Range Office/Armoury Manager

As will appear elsewhere in the Journal, Mark Jackson has taken up this role and will be driving forward the customer service offered to members within the Range Office.

Civil Nuclear Constabulary

We are in discussions with the CNC in respect of the possible redevelopment of Cheylesmore range for their exclusive use Monday to Friday for most of the year.

Draft plans have been prepared but we are currently awaiting further information from the Department of

Energy and Climate Change and the necessary Police Boards before this matter can be progressed.

Ablution Blocks

The ablution block on site 1 and 2 has now been completed and I hope the members will be pleased with the result. The facilities on site 5 are nearing completion and will be to a similar high standard.

We would welcome feedback from the members as to their views on the quality and layout of these blocks so that in the future we can, if possible, incorporate these views in further refurbishments that will be carried out.

Zero Range

The Zero Range has been de-leaded and refurbished with new sand. Fixed target holders have been installed to assist with the correct alignment of zero targets. The bund to the rear has been widened to allow for full use of all four lanes.



Golf Buggies

Unfortunately due to complaints received after last year's Imperial Meeting it has been necessary to introduce a few rules for their continued use.

- All buggy drivers must have a valid driving licence – please do not let minors drive them.
- All buggies must be insured.
- Buggies are not to be driven at night unless they have working lights.
- Please park buggies with consideration for other range users.
- Buggies must be driven with due care and consideration for pedestrians and other road users.

New Non-Executive Directors of NSC

NSC have appointed four new non-exective Directors. They are:

Roger Boyd
Russell Neighbour
Ron Pooley
Tony Cornwell

Further details will be in the next Journal.

SHOOTING MATTERS

RANGE OPERATIONS



*by Matt Ensor
Assistant Director
- Operations*

Looking forward

In the Range Office we see ourselves as the front line; the key point of contact between the NSC (and sometimes the NRA) and our members and customers. We understand that, in the past, we have tried to do too much with the resources we have had available and, as a result, have fallen short of the standards we all expect. We know that we cannot be all things to all people, yet sometimes we try. When we try, and occasionally fail, we disappoint you (and ourselves) and we know things have to change.

To this end we have started a strategic planning process on a theme of 'Customer Centricity'. Within this plan we hope to address the following key themes:

- Consistency and excellence of service
 - Getting it right first time
 - Putting it right quickly and effectively, when we need to
- Structuring ourselves effectively
 - How we work
 - What we promise our customers and stakeholders
- Improving customer feedback mechanisms and internal management reporting
- Removing unnecessary administrative work and automating activities where possible.
- Moving towards a 'Range Office without walls' by:
 - providing a presence on the ranges during shooting hours, and
 - changing from being the barrier between customers and Bisley ranges, to providing behind-the-scenes support to their range booking experience.

We know this process will require some difficult decisions, some significant investment of our time, energy and other resources, and some patience on your part as we move forward. However, we hope

you will agree that it is important we take these steps. We think this plan will take three years to achieve and we would welcome your constructive feedback throughout. Please contact me by e-mail at matthew.ensor@nra.org.uk if you have any comments on our initial thoughts.

We have identified the first step as making sure we have the right team structure to allow us to work effectively towards achieving our goals, and to build on some 'quick wins'.

Some immediate opportunities for improvement are to apply our existing policies consistently. We know we have not been 100% consistent with this in the past. For instance, some have been charged inconsistently for storage, others have been charged inconsistently for range bookings. This is no longer to be the case and you will find further information, in some aspects, later in this report.

We think the right team structure is now in place and I am pleased to inform you of some changes to our staff in the Range Office, as set out below:

Range Office Staff

Amanda Vaughan moved across to manage events and accommodation in late 2009, and Peter Evans left us in January this year. We have used this opportunity to adapt our staffing structure to introduce more co-ordinated shift patterns with greater focus on planning in advance, across both the Range Office and Armoury. We think that these changes will result in a more consistently high level of service to our customers, especially during peak periods.

John Gardener has moved across to manage our Estates and Target Shed teams as Clerk of Works.

James Scade has been promoted to Range Safety Supervisor, to take charge of the shift pattern opposite Steve Rubley.

Paul Hendrie has accepted a permanent role with us. He will be responsible for maintaining our electronic targets, cleaning rifles and co-ordinating marker provision.

After many months providing us with temporary cover, Ian Moore has moved across to working on silverware preparations for July and will continue to support various teams on an ad-hoc basis throughout the latter part of the year and beyond.

We also welcome a number of new staff to Bisley:

Mark Jackson

Mark joined us on 15 April from Stamford School, where he was master in charge of shooting. Mark brings with him extensive experience in range operations, secure storage requirements, operations management and has already shown a passion for getting the job done right, first time. Mark is also a qualified First Aid instructor, RCO and is certified

in a number of different shooting disciplines. Mark is contactable in the Range Office or at ranges. manager@nra.org.uk.

Chris Law

Chris joins us to work on James Scade’s shift as Range Office and Customer Service Assistant. Chris has previously worked at Pirbright and Ash Ranges as a range warden where he demonstrated a clear commitment to providing excellent service to range users and a willingness to go the extra mile to make sure activities on the ranges ran smoothly and safely at all times.

Caroline Bruce

Caroline joins us from British Airways, where she was a supervisor at Heathrow Airport. She will be working on Steve Rubley’s shift pattern as Range Office and Customer Service Assistant. Caroline was a customer service and conflict management trainer at BA and brings this wealth of experience and expertise to Bisley. Caroline has agreed to take on the role of NRA and NSC Customer Services Champion, in addition to her duties in the Range Office.

Dylan Beasley

Dylan joins us in the Range Office to support our record-keeping, cleaning firearms, range office invoicing and the co-ordination of butt-markers. He moves from being one of our more experienced butt-markers, to work in the office on a part-time basis on weekdays. Dylan brings with him extensive experience in customer service and control mechanisms from his previous roles in the UK and Australia.

Bisley Range Bookings – Double bookings

We have recently had some instances when clubs have held matches between themselves and both clubs have booked targets with us, without first co-ordinating their bookings with each other. This leads to wasted range space and unnecessary range cancellation charges being levied. We will do our best to catch these double bookings and speak to the clubs concerned but we are unlikely to be able to catch them all. Please bear in mind that double bookings are subject to the standard late cancellation charges, as set out below.

Range Cancellation Fees

We have a significant problem here at Bisley in that customers will regularly ask why the range looks to be empty when we have previously informed them it is full. This is partly due to the safety templates we must employ to operate a free-movement range. However, late cancellations also significantly affect this. There appears to have previously been inconsistent application of our policy in relation to cancellations or reductions to bookings. Some customers were even under the impression that the policy had changed. This is not the case and we apologise for any confusion that may have arisen. Many of you will remember the

previous policy of four weeks’ notice being required before cancellation charges became payable. This was reduced in 2003 to the current structure, as published in the NRA Journal at the time. This current policy is copied below:

Cancellation Notice	Charge
More than two weeks	Zero
Between two weeks and one week	25%
Between one week and three days	50%
At three days notice or less*	100%

Marker fees will not be refunded once the marker has been contracted to work and we are unable to re-allocate employment.

The NSC will not refund, and reserves the right to charge for, any curtailments or cancellations to bookings or shooting due to any circumstances or events outside of its control, in line with the standard charges noted above. This includes ceasefires or range closures being in effect due to inclement weather.

*In practice the cut-off for changes to weekend bookings has been midday on the preceding Wednesday. This will remain our policy and practice. We begin to plan our marker allocation approximately a week in advance. Cancellations prior to the midday Wednesday cut-off are more likely to find we can re-allocate markers to other bookings, however this cannot be guaranteed.

Please be aware these charges will be enforced, without exception, in the event of cancellation or reduction of your range requirements. We do not accept telephone message changes to bookings, so please ensure any change requests are in person or in writing, normally by e-mail or via the Bisley Online Booking system.

For the avoidance of doubt, please bear in mind that the time limits on the various charging bands apply from 07:30 or midday on the relevant day. An example for a booking on Saturday 10 April is included below:

Charging Rate	Cancel by
Zero	07:30 on Saturday 27 March
25%	07:30 on Saturday 4 April
50%	Midday on Wednesday 7 April
100%	Any time after midday on Wednesday 7 April

Range Radios

There have been some recent occurrences where radios have gone home with customers at the end of their visit to Bisley. This leads to significant replacement costs or operational problems. As a result we have implemented a procedure where those signing in for the range must also sign for a radio, if they receive one.

Please bear in mind that the declaration you will be making includes responsibility to return the radio (and component parts including batteries) at the end of the half-day period in question, and that the person concerned accepts any fees in relation to damage or loss. In the event of delayed return, a fee of £5 per 24 hour period (or part) will be payable against your individual or club account. In the event of damage, the cost of repair will be payable, plus a £25 administration fee. In the event of loss or irreparable damage, the full cost of replacement will be charged, plus a £25 administration fee.

There are occasions where customers will be asked to share a radio. If the person who originally signed for the radio wishes to leave early, you are still able to give the radio to the person you are sharing with. This person must be the same person who signed in for the other target or lane, and the Range Office must be contacted via the Control channel (Channel 16) as the transfer takes place.

Approved Targetry

Our safety templates assume only certain materials are exposed above the mantlet on our ranges. As a result, only targetry constructed or approved by the NSC is to be used on Bisley ranges. Historically the NSC will provide the majority of handheld or stationary targets

and they will be made from wood, soft plastics and paper. If you wish to provide your own targetry, or shoot at non-standard items using different materials, prior approval is needed. Please contact the Range Office at least fourteen days in advance of your booking with your request. You may need to provide a specimen target. Any customers found aiming or shooting at inappropriate targetry may be subject to a disciplinary process.

Shooting at targetry provided by NSC

Please bear in mind that, when customers book blank screens (targets with no aiming mark), all self-positioned aiming marks must sit within the box drawn on the target. Placing your own targets outside these boxes can result in damage to the frames. If customers are found to be shooting at aiming marks placed outside the boxed area, their target will be removed and this may result in the forfeiture of the time remaining on your booking.

Signing in at Bisley

We wish to remind you that all shooting that takes place at Bisley must have a corresponding entry on our signing-in sheets in the Range Office. Those shooting at Bisley, or their nominated Range Conducting Officer, must sign in before using the ranges. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action being taken.



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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRAINING



*by
Phyllis
Farnan*

The Easter holiday period was again a popular time for target rifle training courses with several regional and Bisley courses taking place. Forty-five candidates attended Skills courses, thirty-nine completed NRA Club Instructor courses and four successfully qualified as NRA Club Coaches.

RCO and RCO (HME) Courses

The next RCO course at Bisley on 5 and 6 June is already full and bookings are now being accepted for the courses in the autumn. Dates for RCO courses at Bisley for the remainder of the year are: 25 – 26 September, 13 – 14 November and 18 – 19 December.

Regional RCO courses continue to be very popular, and these can be run throughout the year,

RCO course fees are: Bisley – £105, Regional – £50.

RCO (HME) courses will be held at Bisley on 23 May and 21 November. Course fees are £30. This course is only open to qualified RCOs. The course can also be offered regionally.

An MLAGB RCO endorsement course for muzzle-loading firearms will take place at Bisley in the autumn – date to be confirmed. For further details about this course please contact the NRA Training Department

Renewal of RCO Qualifications

RCOs who qualified in 2004 are due to renew their qualification in 2010. The renewal fee is £26.

Please contact Maureen Peach on 01483 797777 ext 149 or e-mail maureen.peach@nra.org.uk for RCO and RCO (HME) application forms, RCO renewal forms or to book a regional RCO course for your club.

Probationary Members' Courses

The next Probationary Course at Bisley will start on Saturday 13 June. This course consists of five training sessions.

From September, we will be offering our Probationary training at Bisley in a new modular format. After

completing an initial safety and induction module, probationers must then select at least one discipline-specific novice skills module from a range of options. They will also be expected to increase their shooting and range experience by shooting with the NRA Shooting Club. Modular training will be offered as a series of half-day sessions at weekends and midweek. Any NRA member who wishes to add an additional category to his Shooter's Safety Certificate will be also be able to enrol for a novice skills course once this new system is established.

Skills Courses

These are designed to enhance individual knowledge and skills. NRA Club and Regional Coaches can run NRA TR Skills courses for clubs in their regions by arrangement with the NRA. A TR Skills course will be held at Bisley on the 9 – 10 October. The course fee is £125 for NRA members and £145 for non-members.

Club Instructors Courses

A TR Club Instructor course, for NRA members and members of affiliated clubs, will take place at Bisley on 9 – 10 October. The course fee is £125 for NRA members and £145 for non-members. This course can also be run regionally.

The new General Skills Club Instructor course will also shortly be available as a regional course.

Clubs requesting a regional course must be able to provide suitable classroom and range facilities.

NRA Club Coach Course

A Club Coach course will be held on 23 – 24 October. This course is only open to NRA members who have completed the Club Instructor course (or equivalent). Candidates must also attend a Methods of Instruction and Assessment Workshop unless they hold a teaching qualification. The Club Coach course fee is £120 and the qualification is valid for five years.

The next Instruction & Assessment Workshop will be held on Sunday 3 October. The fee is £25.

Wind Coaching Course

The usual early morning short course, offering advice about reading the wind at Bisley, will be held on Friday 16 July for those attending the Imperial Meeting. Further details will be found in competitors' squadding envelopes and all proceeds will go to the OTF.

It is now hoped that a full weekend Wind Coaching course will take place at Bisley on 18 – 19 September (provisional date). This course is open to target rifle shooters of all abilities and will involve practice at both short and long range.

For further information about any NRA courses or training matters please contact the Director of Training by e-mail at training@nra.org.uk or phone on 01483 797777 ext 150.

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NRA CLUB GUEST DAY MAY 2010

by Nick Halford



It has been a long held ambition of mine to hold NRA Guest Days. As a Home Office Approved club we are allowed to but, until recently, we haven't had the manpower to organise this type of event. As this was the first, Charles Perry (the NRA Chief Instructor) and I decided to hold it on a weekday, shooting at a short distance for prone rifle as well as on some lanes on Melville for gallery rifle shooters. We wanted to feel our way into things and err on the side of caution. I am quite glad we did as interested members booked in a total of 31 guests even though we only sent invites to registered members of the NRA Shooting Club.

As there was a chance of rain we used 100 yards on Short Siberia under cover and Melville for gallery rifle. Our Secretary General, Glynn Alger, lent his presence to this inaugural meet making all feel welcome and also helping out with some fetching and carrying! Iain Robertson – Shooting Committee Chairman, fierce competitor and experienced coach – also gave a hand with one-to-one supervision and helping to ensure all ran smoothly.

Charles initially supervised the booking in of our guests, making sure they signed the required declarations while I did RCO duty until he was able to take over. It was good to see keen and eager faces who all seemed to be enjoying the day; whilst some were experienced, there were others who had never fired a rifle before and some members of other clubs coming for the NRA experience. As usual Charles guided everything with a light but safe hand making sure that everyone was happy.

The Old Sergeants Mess provided a warming soup and sandwiches lunch for those that wanted one. Meanwhile Richard Knight kept an eye on things at Melville enabling me to be able to scoot around answering questions, helping with membership forms for those interested in joining the NRA and taking contact details for those who wanted to find a club near to their home. All in all a successful day!

We shall be running more Guest Days in the future and will advertise more widely so keep an eye on the website and your e-mail for details.



NOTES FROM THE NRA FIREARMS LIAISON OFFICER

by Geoff Doe



In the Winter 2009 issue of the Journal, Mike Wayland introduced himself to you as he was standing in temporarily for Roger Speak. Unfortunately Roger has had to retire on the grounds of ill health and Mike has decided that he wishes to return to the golf course. We wish them both a happy retirement.

A number of you will know me from my time working for the National Small-bore Rifle Association as Director of Shooting, a job I held for 22 years. Some 18 months ago I let it be known that after my sixty-fifth birthday I wanted to reduce my working commitment and in April my hours reduced to one day a week in the office, as part of the handover strategy to my successor. Following a glib remark by Glynn Alger over a cup of coffee in a London café following a committee meeting that we had both attended I enquired if the NRA had any part time work to fill in some of my spare days. Glynn offered me the job of Firearms Liaison Officer.

What of my background? Shooting is in my genes. My grandfather was champion shot on many occasions in the 1890s as a member of the Slough and District Rifle Club. My parents met on the ranges and competed successfully at Bisley between the two World Wars and with that background I had no option but to follow their lead. I have a photograph in the family archives of me sitting behind the 600 yards firing point at the

first Imperial Meeting after the war in 1946 at the age of 18 months. In the late 1940s my parents 'converted' to small-bore shooting and both represented England and Great Britain on a number of occasions. Following on in their footsteps I have been shooting for over 55 years, 40 of which were at International level.

I started my working life in banking, domestic not investment, but left after 16 years to set up my own business which I operated for 10 years. In 1988 I was invited to work full time for the NSRA having been on their Board of Management as a volunteer for some 15 years previous. My role was to organise National Meetings and postal competitions. As with any job the activity expanded and soon I found I was helping members with their problems with firearms legislation. This has brought me into contact with many Firearms Licencing Managers, and, together with the fact that I am a member of the British Shooting Sports Council Practitioners Group, who liaise with the Association of Chief Police Officers and Home Office on firearms matters, I have a good working relationship with many force areas. When the military ceased to inspect civilian ranges and the task passed to the National Governing Bodies I became the lead in the NSRA having attended range construction and design courses with the Army for nearly 20 years.

As with my predecessors I will be handling Visitor Permit applications and Members Firearm Certificate renewals. In the case of the former will you please ensure that any permit application is received by the NRA at least six weeks before they are needed.

Contact numbers remain the same. Telephone: 01483 797777 ext 154, mobile 07528 037221, e-mail firearmsliaison@nra.org.uk.

NRA AUNTS AND UNCLES MENTORING SCHEME IMPERIAL MEETING 2010

by Bruce Roth

On the entry form for this year's Meeting there is a box to tick if you would like someone to give you some help and guidance as the meeting progresses. You don't need to be a first time shooter to tick the box but please don't tick it if you don't really want to have someone allocated to help you.

Last year we had a notice board outside Fulton's but this year it will be outside the NRA Training Centre (the old Bisley Gun Club behind the ATSC near the Clays). This board will be a good point of communication and should help make sure that those who have asked for help can meet up, possibly at the Training Centre, for help. For those who don't want to have an Uncle or Aunt you can just turn up to the centre and ask whoever is there for advice (there will be more information about the Training Centre in your Meeting Envelope).

The two Guides for first timers and others are available from the website [go to www.nra.org.uk] and are widely used. They are routinely updated in March or April and contain useful information about all matters which contribute to a pleasant as well as a successful Bisley.

FORTHCOMING TOURS

Great Britain Team to Canada 2010

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

Captain

Jane Messer GB, England & Sussex

Vice-Captain

Nigel Ball GB, England & Norfolk

Adjutant

David Armstrong GB, England & London

Coaches

Martin Townsend GB, Ireland & Hertfordshire

Dom Harvey GB, England & Surrey

Shooters

Gary Alexander GB, Ireland & Tyrone

Alex Bryson*

Henry Day* Suffolk

John Deane GB, England & Gloucestershire

Charles Dickenson GB, England & Berkshire

Peter Griggs GB, England & Kent

Chris Haley GB, England & Cambs

Simon Harding* England & Kent

Kitty Jack GB, Scotland & Kent

David Luckman GB, England & Somerset

David Rose GB, England & Surrey

Bruce Roth* Scotland & Kent

Paul Sykes GB, England & Sussex

Steven Thomas GB, England & Hertfordshire

Stephanie Ward* Wales & Gloucestershire

Archie Whicher* England & Berkshire

* New cap

NRA Team to the Channel Islands 2011

Got an ambition to get into an International Team? Think you've got what it takes to shoot, or coach, in teams at the highest level? Here's your chance to prove it!

The NRA have honoured me with captaincy of the NRA Team to the Channel Islands in 2011. Many shooters have got their first taste of touring with a team during this annual tour and, for a lot of them, it has proved to be a stepping stone to national and GB teams. I am looking for people who have got that potential, to give them the experience they need to move on up and fulfil their ambitions.

My intention is to select mostly uncapped shooters and coaches who have not just shown that they can shoot well individually, but who also have a proven ability to shoot or coach well in county teams. I will also

include a small number of experienced touring team members who are keen to pass on their experience. To this end, Andy Luckman GM GC2 SC has kindly agreed to be my Vice-Captain and lead the training sessions. As a Commonwealth Games medallist and Vice-Captain of the record breaking 2007 GB Palma Team he has a wealth of experience to impart.

The tour is expected to depart for Guernsey on Wednesday 25 May 2011, returning from Jersey on Wednesday 1 June. There will be at least one training weekend, probably during April 2011, with the possibility of another earlier one in October 2010 or March 2011.

If you'd like a chance to join this team, either as a shooter or a coach, or want to find out more, please contact Charles Dickenson (charles.dickenson@hotmail.co.uk or 07790 599090) or Andy Luckman (andy_luckman@yahoo.com) by the end of the Imperial Meeting. Applicants will be asked to complete an application proforma. Applications will close on 15 August, with the intention of announcing the team by the end of September 2010. If you're not known to me, please come and introduce yourself to me at the NLRC, or with the Berkshire team during county matches.

Charles Dickenson



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(photos by John Gardener, Bob Oxford, Alan Keating and Andrew Wilde)



SHOOTING DISCIPLINE MATTERS

Gallery Rifle and Pistol

from Chris Farr

Last year ended on a high note with record attendances at the Autumn Action Weekend and a win by the national team in Germany making a hat trick for the year.

This year has also started well with entries up at the Spring Action Weekend, both competitor numbers and events entered. More team events are now on offer and we hope to see an increase in entries in the new GRCF gun types following the rule change.

The 2010 Great Britain GR Team has been selected and Ashley Dagger has been appointed Captain with David Whittle as Adjutant. We wish him and his team all the best for this season. The first international is on the Monday of the Phoenix Meeting. The team members are as follows:

Jon Avetoomyan	(Gwent Police Fullbore SC & Wales)
Norman Brown	(Cheshunt R&PC & England)
Michael Chinery	(Basildon R&PC & England)
Keith Cox	(Blackfriars & England)
Ashley Dagger	(Frome & District PC & England)
Dave Emery	(Cornwall Fullbore PC)
Neil Francis	(Frome & District PC & England)
Terry Fry	(Bedford County & England)
Dave Hackett	(Basildon R&PC & England)
Dave Holt	(Derby R&PC)
Andy Jarman	(Blackfriars)
Steve Lamb	(Brighton R&PC & England)
Gwyn Roberts	(Devon Rangers SC & Wales)
Jim Smith	(Derby R&PC & England)
Phil Stead	(Frome & District PC)
Peter Watts	(Pinewood RC & England)
Chris West	(Frome & District PC)
Alan Whittle	(Frome & District PC)
Taff Wilcox	(Army TSC & Wales)

The GR&P Sub-Committee has started work on the core tasks for this year and the first of these was completed with the publication of version 5.01 of the GR&P Rules Handbook (volume four of the Bisley Bible) which can be downloaded from the NRA website. You can also pick up copies, free of charge, from the NRA. The first part of the training and coaching manual, GR&P Basic Skills, has also been published and will shortly be available for download too. Work is also proceeding on the Safety Supervisor course and manual and an invitation to clubs to benefit from practical help and advice on running an open meeting will be sent out soon.

The English, Welsh and Scottish teams will start their matches at the Phoenix Meeting where they will also be competing against teams from Germany, the Republic of Ireland and, for the first time, the Republic of South Africa.

Any competitors who wish to be considered for the GB, English, Scottish or Welsh Teams for 2011 should be aware that membership of the relevant national governing body is a prerequisite for selection. In the case of the GB team, selection will only be made from existing members of the NRA. For further information please use the contact address below.

Contact e-mail addresses are as follows:

gallery@nra.org.uk
chris@galleryrifle.com

Historic & Classic Firearms

from Rae Wills

By the time you read this, the NRA 150th Anniversary Imperial Historic Arms Meeting will be only about a month away, and it will be time to get ready. But if I follow my usual pattern I will be approaching it, as well as the usual total panic, in one of two frames of mind.

The first option is one of misplaced optimism. Having actually found time to practise and having placed a three round check group nicely in the middle, I then proceed confidently to the Meeting, blissfully unaware that, in fact, they were at the edge of a group the size of a decent wagon wheel, as I will surely find out with my first sighter.

The other is total pessimism as, having skirted around the inner for a few rounds, I finish with a bull and a V. Finding only one round left in the box I decide on one more shot, which is of course a magpie at 4 o'clock; I start thinking about wagon wheels again . . . or did I just snatch it? Time will tell!

As to the Meeting itself, no real changes in the Matches, except that there is one new Match (G82-H) Advancing Target for manual .22" rf Gallery or Sporting rifles. This is ideal for your Sportsman 5, Winchester 06 pump or Henry lever action with metallic sights "In the Spirit", so if you have been to the Phoenix, leave the red dot at home!

However, one bit of bad news; we made a loss last year, so we have had to increase the entry fees, but hope to hold these in 2011. But remember, the more cards you shoot, the lower the unit cost, and the easier it is to do so.

As for the rules, the new and very much revised Bisley Bible for 2010 is now published; reading this is a MUST, as there are revised rules, concerning such things as action on a misfire, which you must know; ignorance of such procedures can lead to all sorts of disciplinary grief. Iain Robertson, Chairman of the Shooting Committee and the main author, has already highlighted the most important bits (Page 54 of the Spring Journal). The new Bisley Bible is available in printed form (£8.50) or you can download it free from http://www.nra.org.uk/common/files/bible/2010/bible_main.pdf

With the development of so many new disciplines from F Class through 300m to Target Shotgun, it was clear that one book covering all of these would be large and unwieldy, so the new Bible only covers general NRA rules and procedures and the conduct of the main Imperial Meeting. Further discipline-specific rule books would then be published. The first of these, and now well established, is the Gallery Rifle and Pistol Handbook, again a must read especially if you enter non-Historic events; free from the Range Office, or downloadable at <http://www.nra.org.uk/common/files/gr/GRP10.pdf>

One great advantage of having these downloaded is that you can extract bits (use the select tool in Adobe)

and copy them to make your own "crib sheet" to have handy in your shooting box.

It was expected to have our own rule book in place in time for this Meeting, but the publication of the new Bible has shown that there is much work to do, so this has not been possible. Also this Handbook is planned to cover both Historic and Classics and Muzzle Loading disciplines, so there is a need for much consultation to reach agreed content.

So for this year it will be as before; the general rules are those of the NRA as in the Bible, and the Special Rules and Conditions of the Meeting are in the Programme and the match list.

David Gregory has kindly undertaken to compile the Handbook; initially he will be asking other relevant bodies for their latest rules, and expects a working group approach to merge the many into a coherent whole. If you have any input, or can help in any way, please contact him by e-mail at davidtricia.theledge@talktalk.net or telephone 01630 672463.

FESAC, the Federation of European Societies of Arms Collectors, being primarily an organisation looking after collectors interests, nevertheless does much work that protects our more general interests too. It has, ably assisted by David Penn, done much valuable work lobbying the EU concerning such matters as the Firearms Directive and, establishing effective contact with the relevant MEP, Mrs Kallenbach of Germany, did much to negate the more damaging proposals; there is also input at UN level.

The sort of things that keep appearing are proposals that all firearms are to be marked each time they cross a border, even inside the EU, or that when, at UN level, it is proposed that all international transfer of arms should be only between Governments, to prevent "grey market" arms dealers equipping rebel armies worldwide, no provision is made to exclude private sporting or collectors firearms.

Imagine if your valuable antique was marked by a prominent stamp each time you went to France, or the cost of a Government transfer each time a team went abroad, or more likely be just refused, thus effectively killing all international competition. This year the annual meeting of FESAC takes place here in Leeds 3 to 6 June; contact me if you require further details.

Concerning the safety of the Enfield No 4 and other ex-military actions in use with NRA issue RUAG ammunition, the Spring edition of the Journal contained a Safety Notice on this topic (page 11); if you have any 7.62mm conversion and unless you have already done so, you are strongly advised to mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. In the correspondence section there is also a very informative letter from Dr Erik Blakeley on the question of metal fatigue in firearms.

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by Ian Shirra-Gibb

The year started with a pre-match training weekend at Bisley in mid-March before our first overseas biannual match in France. Our friends in Clermont led the first day's matches by nine points but the NRA A team responded on Sunday with a two-day match aggregate of 4735, a win by eight points.

The top two-day score came from a young lady junior shooter in the French team, Olivia Goberville, on 597 and 598. Our best came from Simon Aldhouse opening his season's account with 596 and 597. We will welcome Clermont back to Bisley in early September.

During early April the first open prone competition was run by the British Free Rifle Club (who also run a parallel ISSF 50m event at the Lord Roberts Centre), allowing some competitors to shoot in both events. The big bore result was a win for the Isle of Man's Harry Creevey with a steady 594 – this event was also the first NRA recorded trial.

The postponed fullbore event from the Commonwealth Shooting Championships in February was rescheduled for April in Delhi and we congratulate the Welsh pair of Bob Oxford and Gareth Morris on their team gold and individual 300m medal haul as well as David Calvert in the badge matches.

Moving on to May we again took part in the NRA Open Day and managed to put just over 125 visitors through with five rounds each on two lanes during the day.

The NRA 300m Championships (and second recorded NRA trial) were held over the weekend 15 and 16 May. The small but enthusiastic entry shot in the TR/Std rifle competition on the Saturday – this was won for the first time by Gary Alexander with a steady 585. Sunday's free rifle event attracted 17 entries and was won by Simon Aldhouse on 593.

The first GB team international was shot in Denmark at the Skibby ranges in Aarhus from 20 to 24 May. Our team shot in the prone matches starting with two eliminator relays. Harry Creevey made a fine start to the competition finishing second in his relay with 598; Tony Lincoln suffered a difficult first string but recovered well to finish with 592 being one point below the cut for round two. The second relay started with the sky looking very black, we then had every weather condition thrown at our last two shooters who had to contend with rain, lightning, bad visibility and of course very difficult wind, so needless to say we did not feature in the top ten places required for the final.

However, the following morning Harry started at 09:00 and produced three perfect scores and then nine more tens before having a short break. His first shot



Harry in action.

Photos: Ian Shirra-Gibb

just missed the line but he then went on to clean the rest of the match for a magnificent 599 – a personal best and match score.

Waiting for the final result two other shooters, a Swiss and a Finnish shooter, looked to be in contention as they had both finished on the same score. With our new rules it went to X count. Harry then had to wait to see who had how many Xs – the Swiss shooter Marcel Zobrist had 36, the Finn Kari Pennanen 39 and Harry 29 so Harry finished in bronze position (*pictured below*) which was our first podium place of the year.

The European Cup circuit now moves on to Germany in early June then Switzerland in July before the full World Championships in Munich during August.

Keep up-to-date with our progress on www.gb300m.com.



EX NORTHERN FRONTIER

Over the period of August 2010 a sponsored 110 mile battle march will be taking place along the complete length of the Antonine Wall which is 37 miles, and Hadrian's Wall which is 73 miles. This is being organised by Sgt Angie Sowerby from the Royal Logistic Corps attached to Log Sup Branch, HQ 3 (UK) Division Bulford.

This march will be in aid of Help for Heroes and the Army Target Shooting Club who will be converting some of their accommodation at Bisley to cater for injured soldiers, so that they can continue to use these facilities for all types of sporting shooting and competition shooting.

Sgt Sowerby will be accompanied on this march by Sgt Kevin Sinclair from the Metropolitan Police (Feltham North Safer Neighbourhood Team), Miss Samantha Askew from Greenfield Comprehensive School, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham and a new addition Scooby a rescue dog adopted from the Dogs Trust. A small admin team will assist the group along the way.

To make this march even more challenging than it already is, Sgt Sowerby (only 5ft 3) will be completing the march wearing full Roman Legionary Battle Armour and Roman leather hobnailed sandals. Samantha Askew aged 15 will be following in the footsteps on the march wearing British Army modern day woodland fighting order and Sgt Sinclair will be completing the march wearing British Army modern day desert fighting order – all three will be carrying around 30kg extra kit each. Scooby (Scoobalixium), a new comer to the group, will be carrying his little working pack containing his fold up water bowl, treats and poop scoop bags.

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THE IBIS OPEN MEETING 2010

by Frank Harriss

Fog in April? This is what greeted over forty competitors who assembled at 08:30 to shoot on 17 April. Whether these autumnal conditions were natural or caused by the volcanic ash from Iceland, no-one knew. However, the mists cleared and shooting started at 09:30, not before a decision had been made to cut the course of fire from a Queen's II to two and fifteen at 300 and 600 yards. In light winds and a very bright light, it was interesting to note there were no possibles at 300 yards and only five 74s. At 600, the wind became more fickle and the occasional magpie was seen after quick changes. The highest score here was 73. From all this, Robert Shaw from Sheffield emerged the winner with 147.19, followed by Dick Rosling on 146.22 and Peter Griggs, the Ibis captain, on 146.18.

The tricky winds around the zero continued in the afternoon, where the course of fire was two and ten at 1000 and 1100 yards, this being one of the rare occasions on which target rifle competitions venture back to 1100! Some were tricked by the wind at 1000 and the top score was only 48.4 from the eventual winner. At 1100, the top score was 46 from Henry Green of Greshams School. We were glad to welcome ten shooters from Greshams, together with schoolboys from Wellington College and Nottingham High School. The winner was Graham French from Lydgate Rifle and Pistol Club, high in the Pennines, with 93.07. He did admit to being a match-rifleman and thus understanding the wind at 1100 yards! He was well ahead of the field of five firers on 88, second being Pete Coley with seven V bulls, then Steve Maris with six V bulls. We are grateful to David Stevens and his team who ran the ranges so efficiently.

At the prizegiving, held in the Clubhouse at 18:15, the overall Cup was presented to Graham French, who scored 239.18. Second was our doughty Chairman, David Smith, who had come fourth in both competitions and scored 234.21. A point behind came Dick Rosling with 233.27 with Peter Griggs hard

on his heels at 233.23. These, and all those in the top seven of each competition came out first to choose from the array of bottles and chocolates available. Then there were spot prizes chosen at random down the list, which cheered up some whose day had not been so successful. Included in the prizes were four vouchers from HPS Ltd and we are most grateful for this sponsorship once again. JHC ammunition was provided by the Club to those who did not use their own. The HPS voucher for the top under 19 shooter, went to Margaret Burger of Greshams who came fifth with a splendid 232.21.

Full results can be found at www.ibisrifleclub.co.uk

The usual splendid dinner followed in the Clubhouse, arranged, as ever, by Bill Rowland who not only organised the Open Meeting but cooked all the food as well. All present were most grateful for his efforts in providing such a pleasant day.

The Club has vacancies for new members who need a base at Bisley that provides a comfortable Clubroom and accommodation as well as a self-help kitchen and members' bar. Do drop in and see us on a Club day or during the Meeting if you wish to find out more.



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T REX - FROM ASH CLOUD TO INDIA

Iceland Freezes Flight to Warmer Climes

Imagine my horror, and that of all other dinosauric types, when confronted with the pictures of giant ash clouds heading our way. According to historical theorists it was something along those lines that done for my foredinos all those millions of years ago, whether as a result of meteoric impact or some other phenomena.

All I can assume is that someone took the cork out of the unpronounceable blow hole as I contemplated a quick bask in the sun. Others found themselves confined to the waiting areas of airports around the world. Ultimately financial concerns got the better of natural caution – five days of clear blue skies, peace and quiet was replaced by the usual jet roar and haze.

But it was not before the air traffic clamp-down had caught the Scottish and English shooters before they had boarded their flights to Delhi for the Commonwealth Shooting Federation Championships. Their attempts to tune their arrival to allow just-in-time practice were swallowed up in the carbon cloud, leaving the earlier departed grinning Welsh and Irish sweltering in advance in the Indian sun.

CSFC Contrasts

At the outset let me say that I was not there at the Commonwealth Shooting Federation Championships in Delhi in April. They are DNI (dinosaurs not invited), and one has to adopt a measured approach in assessing the reports that come back from far-away places. After all, there are shooters who will be returning in October for their ultimate appointment on the firing point.

But when all is said and done it is a trifle disappointing that, after the earlier reports of slow progress towards readiness for the Championships, the facility was still not really ready on time: there were problems with the targets and the arrangements for creature comfort left much to be desired. It seems that it was due only to some good old-fashioned hard work by the team of CSF officials that the event was completed with a collective effort. (The article elsewhere in this Journal provides all the background and technical detail). The officials have a reward to look forward to – three weeks in the sun in October instead of the two originally scheduled, to be spent on snagging and training no doubt.

All the other shooting disciplines that had shot at the Dr Karni Singh complex in February arrived at a base fit for purpose; but the fullbore range at Kardarpur was still not fully ready even though the event had been put back until mid-April. Even if all the preparatory work had been done it is a moot point as to whether it could have anticipated and coped with the exceptional Delhi

heatwave, with temperatures hitting around 48°. A guess might be that the conditions were so exceptional that there would still have been the same problems,

and that leaves to one side the other issues such as brilliant light, heat haze, the winds, dust and the unstable power supply.

I am sure that there were many contrasting experiences and anecdotes across all those who officiated or competed. The staff at Kardarpur are said to have been helpful and of good humour. The security for the shooters was incredibly tight. However, for the event to run smoothly at the October Games, there will be much to do. From some of the reports received from Kardarpur the general hygiene at the Central Reserve Police Facility should be a priority item if anyone is to be billeted there for any length of time. Those who officiate or compete to provide world class sports entertainment deserve that – as much as they also have the right to full confidence in the technology and equipment that will decide the scoring and medal places.

One offers all best wishes to the hosts for October, by which month the remaining issues should, hopefully, have been sorted out. On the plus side I hear that new catering arrangements have been promised and that, thankfully, it is scheduled to be 20 degrees cooler.

Travel safely, Vulcan permitting, of course.

A Well-hung Parliament

By the time you read this column I shall have chosen my Cabinet. Thanks to my startling performance in the television debates – in which I fell off my lectern and leered at members of the studio staff – I intend to govern as an absolute minority having no truck with namby pamby offers of assistance from the also-rans.

I shall introduce a Bill to allow me to employ dinosaur relatives in well-remunerated positions to support my great office. I shall introduce a new system of allowances to ensure that one can live in a style appropriate for a subject of the public's adulation. As a matter of urgency I shall increase spending on new ablution blocks (all to have free magazines for reading as one rests). I will recoup expenditure by introducing a system of dowry in return for seats in our House. I will introduce a return to the sale of 'indulgences', preauthorised register cards with scores of 50.10 and



75.15 already filled in, signed and stamped with my official seal. I shall also introduce a system of tie-shoots to determine major policy issues.

The daydream is over and, like all the main parties, I am a bit short of ideas. One can mutter about the necessity for cuts and one can call for all and sundry to cinch in the old belt a bit. Tough medicine is called for - was this an election not to win? Let's have another one in the autumn.

Time to open another bottle of Bollydocus, fire up the Quatropod, burn off into the sunset and watch the stocks and shares with apprehension.

EreWeGo

I hear of plans for the disinterment of an old publication, specially for the 150th Anniversary Meeting. Reaching

back into the past I have secured a copy of said organ – the Earwig. I understood very little of it, full of long and esoteric words. Watch that space.

King George V Cup Heats – Quote of the Week

On being told, by way of some morale boosting, that his mundane 300 yards score was not the lowest on the firing point, a shooter was heard to remark “Oh good: so it's worth falling back then?”

King George V Cup Heats - Leg Pull of the Week

“Are you still waiting for the result from the Welsh heat of the King George V Cup, then - boyo?”

All the best for July. Toodle Pip

T Rex

THE GREATEST ADVENTURE IN THE WORLD

by Freddie Puckle Hobbs

Having thoroughly enjoyed shooting the Imperial Meeting for the past four years, I'm loathe to miss it for anything. But this year, some friends and I have decided to try something rather different . . .

On 24 July 2010 our team of six intrepid students, under the team name “Yak to the Future”, will be amongst the thousands of eager participants rendezvousing at Goodwood racecourse for the start of the 2010 Mongol Rally. After months of preparation, sourcing the most ridiculous vehicles for such an enterprise, applications for visas to enter countries with no vowels, or only vowels, in their names, vaccinations and inoculations against unspeakable diseases, and with less than ten years driving experience between us, we will set off on an epic journey to Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. With satellite navigation forbidden, and four-wheel drive deeply frowned upon, it's easy to see that this is a bit more than just your average drive down the local shops.

Believe it or not, the reason for this abject stupidity isn't just fun. Our team has already raised over £4,000 for our chosen charities – the Mercy Corps, which is directly funding development projects in Mongolia, and the Gurkha Welfare Trust, which supports British Gurkhas in Nepal. We'll also be leaving our cars in the country on arrival. We'd very much like to raise as much money as possible for these two great causes, and indeed the expense of actually getting our vehicles there, so if you'd like to give us a hand, just visit our website – www.yaktothefuture.co.uk.

Here you'll be able to find lots of other exciting information about our adventure, vehicles and team members, and you'll be able to keep up-to-date with our preparations so far. If you know someone who's keen to sponsor our team in return for advertising space on our vehicles, please send an e-mail to info@yaktothefuture.co.uk.

The world really is just a little bit too safe these days, don't you think?

Freddie will be fundraising for at least part of this year's Imperial Meeting. If you see him don't hesitate to go and speak to him about his challenge.



JANE MESSER

Talking With Tony de Launay



As probably the leading target rifle shooting woman of her generation, and some generations either side, Jane Messer is renowned as one of the steadiest shots and world class wind coaches to have graced British teams in the current and previous century. In case that sounds a trifle rude on the age front, this deserved reputation has been established since her first world championship performance in 1992. We met on an overcast May day at Bisley.

First, some bare statistics. She was the second ever woman to win the Bisley Grand Aggregate (in 1998) reaching the top 50 in that event on 15 occasions. Similarly she has reached the final of the Queen's Prize on 14 occasions, coming second in 2008. She has been a member of the last five British world championship Palma teams, with four winners' gold medals to her credit.

The latest challenge to face Jane is to lead an overseas British Rifle Team (to Canada in August of this year). It is the first time since 1958 that a lady has held this post and I wondered just how difficult it had been to break into a sport that up to the 1980s had always appeared to have been male dominated.

"I have never felt that fullbore target rifle shooting has been anything but an equal sport for men and women. Of course it is true that traditionally there were many more men than women who participated. There are historical reasons for that. However, with so many more shooting schools adopting the co-educational approach, the sport has been able to feed on male and female output from schools and universities. Personally, right from the start of my shooting career, I have never felt that I have been subjected to any sex discrimination". That did not preclude Jane from observing that a few shooters, mainly overseas, still seemed to hold more ancient attitudes to the female sex. "I know one captain was warned about the danger to the team ethos of taking women on tour. My belief is that the presence of women has indeed changed the

dynamic of teams, particularly where there is a mix of age groups, but probably not for the worse!"

So where and why did she take up shooting? "My father Lawrie was always a fine and enthusiastic shot. He started shooting as a cadet aged 14 and continued for 60 years. I can remember the years of being taken to Bisley as a small child. I would do my homework in the car or the North London while father shot and I grew to appreciate the uniquely historic and friendly place that is Bisley. It was natural that one day I should wish to have a go and that when I did, I would find it easy to put into practice all the sage advice that had washed over my head for years. In the sixth form I transferred to Eastbourne College where there was a miniature range and a team of boys. I loathed netball and the hockey pitches were a long walk up the hill in the perpetual Eastbourne drizzle, so I selected shooting as one of my sports. After my housemaster swatted an argument that 'because the ammunition was expensive it had to be reserved for the boys', I earned my place in their smallbore team." But shooting was not considered a priority sport. She can still remember the master in charge with the only telescope balanced on top of a retort stand, looking after the four shooters on the firing point.

Mayfield Rifle Club in Sussex was the next stop, coached by Les Wicker's father, and by Les himself. Ena Goodacre was another member and noted the developing talent. Membership of the North London Rifle Club and encouragement from Jean Orpen-Smellie brought Jane into fullbore, using one of Lawrie's straight stocked rifles (he is a left shoulder shooter). NLRC and Sussex County competition followed, including an early victory in the Sussex season opener at long range, the Harvey Cup. In one NLRC shoot, Jane was squadded with Robin Fulton who, having congratulated her on her good shooting, insisted that she needed her own rifle and that she should go to Fulton's to buy her own Musgrave. She complied!

An invitation to join a first overseas trip with the NRA team to the Channel Islands came to naught when the other lady on the team was allocated both beds in the room for newly born child and attendant husband. But it was simply a matter of time before major honours followed her top showings at home. Ena Goodacre took her to Australia in 1988 as a member of her ladies team, earning the British widespread compliments along the way. With assistance from Arthur Clarke and Colin Cheshire, Jane then established herself a reputation as a fine long range shot, securing her a place first on Arthur's team to Canada in 1989 and then on Colin's 1992 Palma team to the USA. It was the first of her four Palma gold medals.

Although winning this Palma was a euphoric occasion, and is one of her best memories over the years, she puts it behind her first Australia Match at Perth in 1994. "I was very nervous before the start at 300 yards. I had to dry shoot for ages to get rid of the barrel shake", she said. "By the time I shot at 1,000, with Andrew Tucker on the adjacent target, the Australians had the lead. The sight picture was very difficult. But where others had been shooting mid to high 40s we both got 50. It changed the dynamics of the match in an instant and put the pressure straight back on the Australians. We won by four points." In doing so she set a new individual record score in the match with 199 ex 200 (since surpassed). Her Commonwealth Games Bronze medal at Bisley in 2002 is another fond memory.

One of her most disappointing moments came after she had completed her win in the Grand Aggregate in 1998. With Kolapore selection on the cards she was told by the selectors that because of her success in her Grand endeavour she would probably need a break. "It was a blow, when I have always loved team shooting and have always had that reserve of strength to give to my team: I just wonder if the selectors had contemplated that – but it was their legitimate choice", she mused.

So what then makes a good shooter and a good team shot? "Focus, temperament, unselfishness", is the immediate answer. "I have now had the privilege of selecting a team to represent Great Britain in Canada. That is what I have looked for, as well as the precious



Jane with Glyn Barnett after winning Commonwealth Games Bronze medals.
(Photo: John Knight)

ability to get on well with and support others. My team has a large number of new caps with great potential. It also has members who have shot before for GB but perhaps some time ago. They all have the capability to build the team as we go and to produce the winning performance at the right time. That is what I want in my team".

If she had the opportunity to do one thing for the benefit of shooting, what would it be? "Simply to bring the costs down for shooters, to make the sport more affordable, particularly for those at the starting point of their shooting career." Shooters will have no difficulty in associating themselves with that view. With that we bring the brief encounter to an end, she back to the firing-point and I towards the lawn-mower.

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WIMBLEDON AND THE VOLUNTEERS

by David Minshall

From 1860 until 1889 the National Rifle Association held its Annual Rifle Meeting on Wimbledon Common. With royal patronage and events widely reported in the national press, the 'Wimbledon fortnight' was marked for success and established as a fashionable summer attraction. But who were the riflemen and what were they doing at Wimbledon?

Volunteers & The NRA

During the late 1850s there was growing apprehension as to the prospects of French invasion of Great Britain. A massive naval expansion was announced in France in 1855. Following the attempt on Napoleon III's life by Felice Orsini on 14 January 1858, some French officers actually called for an invasion when it was discovered that Orsini manufactured his bomb in England. In 1859 France and Piedmont were at war with Austria over Italian independence. All this was unsettling and newspapers, particularly *The Times*, continued to fuel the debate as to the formation of a Volunteer Force for home defence.

Finally, on 12 May 1859, the Government issued a circular authorising Lords Lieutenants to raise Volunteer corps. There was an immediate rush of Volunteering, but it was not expected to last. Expectation was that as the feeling of apprehension as to national security diminished, the vitality of the Volunteer force would lessen and, after a lapse of a few years, the whole force would disappear.

Measures to secure the long-term prospects of the Volunteers were, however, put in place late in 1859 when some of the leading spirits of the Volunteer movement were receiving instruction in musketry at Hythe^[1]. They formulated the idea of a national association to promote marksmanship within the Volunteers, and a committee under Earl Spencer was formed. At this time, the London Rifle Brigade was also setting about establishing a large scale annual rifle meeting. Happily the Hythe Committee and the London Committee were united at Spencer House, London, on 29 October 1859, to agree a common course of action. Here it was proposed to form a National Association "*for the encouragement of Volunteer Rifle Corps and the promotion of rifle shooting throughout Great Britain.*" A subsequent public meeting was held at the Thatched House Tavern on 16 November 1859 at which a Working Committee was established. The National Rifle Association was born.

The labours of the Working Committee speedily became so heavy as to necessitate the appointment of

a paid Secretary and the provision of an office. Rooms were taken at 11 Pall Mall East, and were occupied by the Association for its Secretary's office and for the holding of its meetings of Council.

National Rifle Meeting

The Association was promoted widely with local secretaries in the principal towns, adverts in the press, and circulars sent to all officers commanding Volunteer Rifle Corps. In a letter to *The Times* in December 1859, Lord Elcho set out the nature and objects of the Association. There was no intent to aid in the formation of Rifle Corps, nor to draw up any rules for their guidance. All such matters were addressed to the War Office. The purpose of the Association was fostering an interest in rifle shooting. Reference was made to Switzerland and their national rifle meeting, the *Tir Fédéral*, which had resulted in a taste for rifle shooting being thoroughly nationalised and a country garrisoned by a people trained in arms. The NRA planned its own great annual national meeting for rifle shooting. The principal prizes were to be open to Volunteers, thereby encouraging the Movement, and, with a view to the wider promotion of rifle shooting as a national pastime, additional prizes open to all-comers were to be established.

In 1860 practical steps were implemented to establish the National Rifle Meeting for that summer. Finding a suitable site to hold the meeting was naturally a difficult matter to decide, and many places were considered, including Woolwich, Epsom, Aldershot and Chobham.

It was Captain Mildmay, Secretary of the NRA, who suggested Wimbledon Common as a suitable location for the first prize meeting. Lord Spencer, as lord of the manor, placed it at the disposal of the NRA Council. Colonel Clark Kennedy inspected the site and declared it suitable provided "*the most stringent regulations should be framed and carried out for the prevention of trespassing across the lines of fire.*" The original intent had been for the prize meeting to be held at different locations of the country each year. This idea was shelved as impracticable due to the costs and work involved in preparing the range.

Royal Patronage

HM Queen Victoria fired the inaugural shot at the first rifle meeting on 2 July 1860. A Whitworth muzzle-loading rifle, placed in a mechanical rest, had been aligned with a target at a distance of 400 yards.

1 Hythe is situated in southern England, on the Kent coast. Existing barracks and miles of shingle beaches for ranges made it a suitable location for the establishment of a school of musketry. The School's first Commandant, Colonel Hay, arrived there in June 1853 and established the "Corps of Instructors in Musketry". The institution opened on 18 April 1854. The object of the establishment was the training of officers and non-commissioned officers so that they might become Instructors. In 1861 its title was changed to the "School of Musketry."



Royal patronage helped establish the NRA rifle meeting at Wimbledon as a fashionable summer attraction. The illustration shows HRH the Prince and Princess of Wales witnessing the match between the Lords and Commons. (*Illustrated London News*, 25 July 1863).

Joseph Whitworth handed a silken cord attached to the trigger to Her Majesty and the rifle was discharged by a slight pull on the cord. The adjustment was so accurate that the bullet struck the target within 1.25 inches of the centre.

Her Majesty had further offered encouragement by founding an annual prize that Volunteers competed for in two stages; the first at 300, 500 and 600 yards², and the second at 800, 900 and 1000 yards. The prize money was £250.

With royal patronage plus the daily papers and weekly-illustrated journals reporting widely on events, the 'Wimbledon fortnight' was marked for success and established as a fashionable summer attraction. By the mid-1860s, Edinburgh, Liverpool and Manchester newspapers had correspondents on the ground throughout the meeting, while the results of the chief competitions were telegraphed from day to day.

Queen's Prize winners became local heroes. In 1865 Private Sharman, of the 4th West York Rifles, won this coveted distinction. As a matter of course he was chaired and cheered; his health heartily drunk by all his friends; he was photographed, lionized, and finally received his prize with the band playing "See, the Conquering Hero comes!" But, bewildered as Private Sharman must have been by his hearty reception on the scene of his victory, he must have been still more astonished at the remarkable demonstration which awaited him on his return to Halifax. Here he was received in state by the town officials, and conducted in procession, as the man his townsmen wished to honour, through the principal streets. There were many thousands to see the champion – the crowd,

reportedly, being greatly in excess of that which filled the streets on the occasion of the visit of the HRH Prince of Wales to Halifax!

Contrary to expectations in some quarters, the Volunteer movement became firmly established. In 1860 there were 106,443 efficient Volunteers, and the numbers steadily increased in 1870 to 170,671; in 1880 to 196,938, and in 1888 to 220,124. Great Volunteer reviews before large crowds of spectators, and sometimes royalty, were held throughout the country where the men demonstrated their skill at drill and skirmishing. Local and regional rifle matches become commonplace and by the end of the decade of the 1860s Great Britain, with no prior tradition for rifle marksmanship, had thousands of trained riflemen.

Competitions

In 1859 Volunteering was new, rifle shooting almost unknown. The NRA Council had not only to draw up the rules and regulations, but themselves had everything to learn. Discussion, of course, arose as to the rifles to be used, the form of target at which to fire, the best distances, the number of shots, the proper position in which to shoot, the system under which the firing was to be conducted, together with the nature and value of the prizes.

HM Queen Victoria, HRH Prince Albert and the Duke of Cambridge presented valuable prizes for annual competition. With these and other donations the 67 prizes of 1860 amounted to a value of £2,238. Enthusiasm for the annual prize meeting blossomed. By 1866 the number of prizes had reached 835 with a value of £8,884 and in 1888 there were 2,814 prizes valued at £9,824, exclusive of challenge cups. The



Private Sharman of the 4th West York Rifle Volunteers and winner of HM the Queen's Prize, 1865 (*Illustrated London News*, 29 July 1865).

2 From 1861, 200 yards replaced the 300 yards range.

apparent disparity between the increase in number of prizes and their value was due to the urging of the competitors that prize money be distributed over as wide an area as possible. With competitors travelling from every part of the country, it was important that they should, if possible, not only win honour and distinction, but also sufficient money to defray their unavoidable expenses. It was far better to give ten prizes of £5, than one of £50.

There were 24 targets at Wimbledon in 1860 and of the 67 prizes, 40 were open to all-comers and 27 restricted to Volunteers. Only 299 Volunteer competitors took part and the total aggregate of entries for Volunteer prizes was 594. For the all-comers' prizes the number of entries was 720, giving a grand total of entries of all kinds of 1,314. By 1888 the meeting had become immense. Target numbers had increased to 125 and the total aggregate of entries was an astonishing 41,670. In addition to this, the enormous number of 80,188 entries was made for the various Pool shooting and Running Deer events.

At the inaugural rifle meeting of 1860, ranges for Volunteer competitions were 300, 500, 600, 800, 900

and 1,000 yards. At 300 yards, shooting was 'off the shoulder' (ie standing) while beyond that, from the kneeling position. In 1861, 200 yards replaced the 300 yards distance; 300 yards being deemed too great for effective fire with the Enfield while standing. For the all-comers matches and at distances less than 500 yards shooting was from the standing position. At the remaining distances any position was allowed, although artificial rests (including slings) were not permitted.

Competitions were broadly separated into Volunteers using the military arm of issue, all-comers shooting 'small-bore' rifles, and team shooting (including the Elcho Shield, Lords and Commons match and a day set aside for Public Schools matches).

Although the targets, number of shots fired, positions used and distances competed at varied over the years, the competition format would largely be familiar to today's marksmen . . . fire a set number of shots at a target at a given distance and achieve the highest possible score. There have, however, been less 'conventional' competitions which are worthy of review, if not revival!



The last shot of the Queen's Prize (Illustrated London News, 27 July 1872). Note the large number of spectators.

The Novelty Acts

The Owl newspaper made its debut at Wimbledon in 1864 and generously gave a prize, which was shot for under special regulations, as set forth in the following proclamation:

Owl Shooting Extraordinary.

Oh Yes! Oh Yes!!

Take Notice all,

A Prize of £50 has been given by the venerable owls of the Owl newspaper, to be competed for on such terms as the Council may fix. Out of consideration for the generous but benighted donors, the competition shall take place in the dark, at 200 yards. Lights, called Owl's Eyes, will be substituted for Bull's Eyes.

Conditions:

Each competitor shall pay one shilling per shot, and if the competitors do not appear in great numbers –

'The moping owl will to the moon complain.'

The prize shall be in the form of a beautiful silver owl, shall be adjudged to the competitor who shall by the end of the meeting have made the greatest number of owl's eyes; that is, who shall have oftenest knocked out the owl's eyes.

Every precaution has been taken to guard against accidents.

The silver owl was won by Mr Martin Smith, who fired ten shots, making four owl's eyes. Forty men in all shot for this prize. The competition was not repeated on safety grounds.

In 1873 Colonel Lloyd Lindsay introduced a prize for mounted riflemen. The initial experimental competition was a great success and it was for many years a feature of the shooting programme. The conditions in 1873 required that sections of four mounted men were to ride about three quarters of a mile, taking two flights of hurdles in the course, and were, while dismounted and their horses either linked or held by alternate files, each to fire five shots at 200 yards standing, and the same number at 400 yards in any position. There was a time limit of twelve minutes, and the rifle, of any Government pattern, had to be carried on the back or slung to the saddle. The winning team of the nine competing in the inaugural match was the Warwickshire Yeomanry, who carried Westley-Richards rifles.

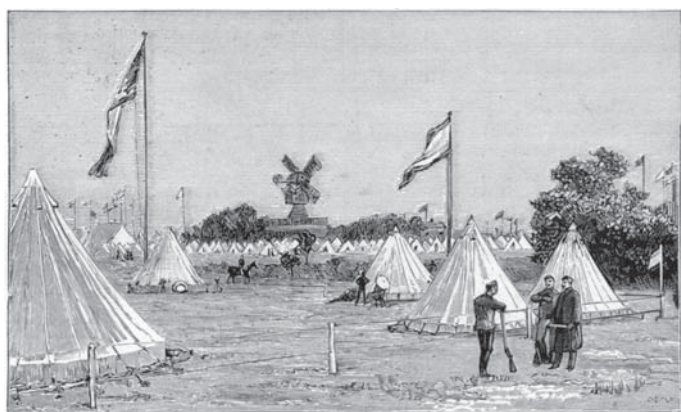
A further mounted competition was added in 1879, this being for Regular Cavalry and was called the Royal Cambridge. Conditions were much the same as the Lloyd Lindsay, except that the arm was the Martini-Henry carbine. Four teams entered, with the 5th Dragoon Guards being the winners having cleared the course in eight minutes and twenty-seven seconds and scoring 107. The second placed 11th Hussars scored 88 and were 10 points above the winning score for the Lloyd Lindsay.

Volunteer Camp

In 1861 Lord Radstock and a very small detachment of the Victoria Rifles encamped throughout the NRA meeting at Wimbledon. In 1862 there were 674 men in camp, of whom 212 were Volunteers and by 1866 this had increased to 1,292 Volunteers, with a total of 2,151 in camp. As the numbers continued to grow the annual Volunteer camp at Wimbledon became an established spectacle.

In addition to the Volunteers, regular troops also camped at Wimbledon. In 1865 the total number stationed there during the meeting was 539; being chiefly employed as markers at the butts. That year there were also 221 of the Metropolitan Police Force present.

Surgeon-Major John Wyatt (ic Medical Department) makes some interesting observations on accidents and health at Wimbledon in his report of 23 July 1865:



The Volunteer Camp (*The Graphic*, 21 July 1888).

"The number of casualties admitted into hospital on account of gunshot injuries have been six, of which three occurred at the review on the 22 August.

The volunteers and regular troops requiring medical treatment during the entire period have been 107, or less than a daily average of 2 per cent.

The most severe of the 107 medical cases which came under my notice were those of two policemen stationed at the camp; one was affected with a severe form of English cholera, the other had smallpox of a confluent character, and was immediately removed to the Fever Hospital in London.

Of the very few casualties from gun-shot accidents which occurred, the most severe were the cases of Sergeant Cousins, of the 1st Lincoln Volunteers, who shot himself through the upper part of the great toe, requiring subsequent amputation, and Private Walton, of the 2nd City of London Volunteers, who was shot at the review by the accidental discharge of the rifle of the rear-rank man, carried full cock at the trail. The whole of the blank charge with a porting of the trousers were removed from a deep wound at the back of the thigh, and the man taken home in the evening by the surgeon of the corps"

Sergeant Cousins' accident had been brought about by the practice of capping-off against the polished toe of his boot. Sadly the rifle had been left loaded!

With the camp increasing in size the necessity for regulations arose, and the NRA Council was obliged to issue certain rules with reference to the conduct of their camp. Life at the camp became an odd mixture of military exactitude and laughing unconventionality. Reveille sounded at half past six and after that hour Volunteers were not permitted slumber; all must attend parade. One Volunteer recalled being awoken by an Orderly-Sergeant who *"wore nothing but his cross-belt, forage cap, and cane, and who swaggered rather more than if he had been in full uniform at a royal inspection."* Another Volunteer recalled a somewhat ruder awakening:

"You catch hold of his head and I'll catch hold of his feet." Methought in my dreams that I heard a gruff voice utter these words; and then I experienced a sensation of being lifted up and carried through the air. The sensation was brief, its conclusion unpleasant, for I was roughly awakened by being dropped, and, starting up, found myself on the ground in front of the tent, and two stalwart Volunteers standing beside me with pails of water in their hands. Before I could utter a word, splash came the contents of one pail over me, quickly followed by those of the other."

The morning parade was somewhat unorthodox if this 1883 description is anything to go by: "I have seen the captain commandant appear on parade in dressing-gown and socks; and I have seen a man present himself in a piece of Turkish carpet, a fez, and

a cigarette; and another actually enjoying his morning tub in the ranks."

'Field-Marshal Punch' inspected camp in 1875 and, with a view to ensuring uniformity, published in the satirical magazine bearing his name a number of regulations for Wimbledon, some of which are reprinted below:

Dress

Officers ordered to attend Full Dress Parade, will not appear in white neck-ties, lavender kid gloves, and swallow-tailed coats. A projected visit to the Opera (after the Parade has been dismissed) will not in future be accepted as an excuse for disobedience of this order.

Non-Commissioned Officers taking part in Battalion Drill should never unfurl their umbrellas without the command of a Brigadier General.

Fancy grey Overcoats (with black velvet collars and cuffs) should not be worn over tweed shooting-jackets and regulation trousers on parade in fine weather.

A Major (in the absence of his Commanding Officer) should never hold a Church Parade in a straw-hat, a sword, and a pair of galoshes.

Drill

The Order "March at ease" will not be considered, in future, as tantamount to a permission for a Company to ride home on the outside of an omnibus.

Guides should not explain the theory of Billiards or the rules of Lawn-tennis to their Markers during the formation of a four-deep square.

No more than a dozen Privates (to each Company) should speak at once on the call of "Attention!" Constant disregard of this rule will be found to cause some confusion, especially in the performance of brigade movements.

Camp Comforts

Camp life for some was relatively comfy; the NRA Secretary's tent included a curtained bed, boarded floor and thick carpet amongst other comforts from home. For the Volunteers things were somewhat less luxurious and one, writing in 1867, described the camp in less than glowing terms:

Distance lent enchantment to the view in the case of our tent; for although its appearance from afar was singularly neat and inviting, yet upon a nearer approach the neatness vanished, and gloomy thoughts of sleepless nights disquieted the soul enamoured of nocturnal repose. The tent had been pitched with a greater regard to uniformity with the others than for the comfort of its occupants. A colony of misguided ants had originally settled upon the spot now covered by it, and, having devoured every blade of grass around the settlement, had departed again in search

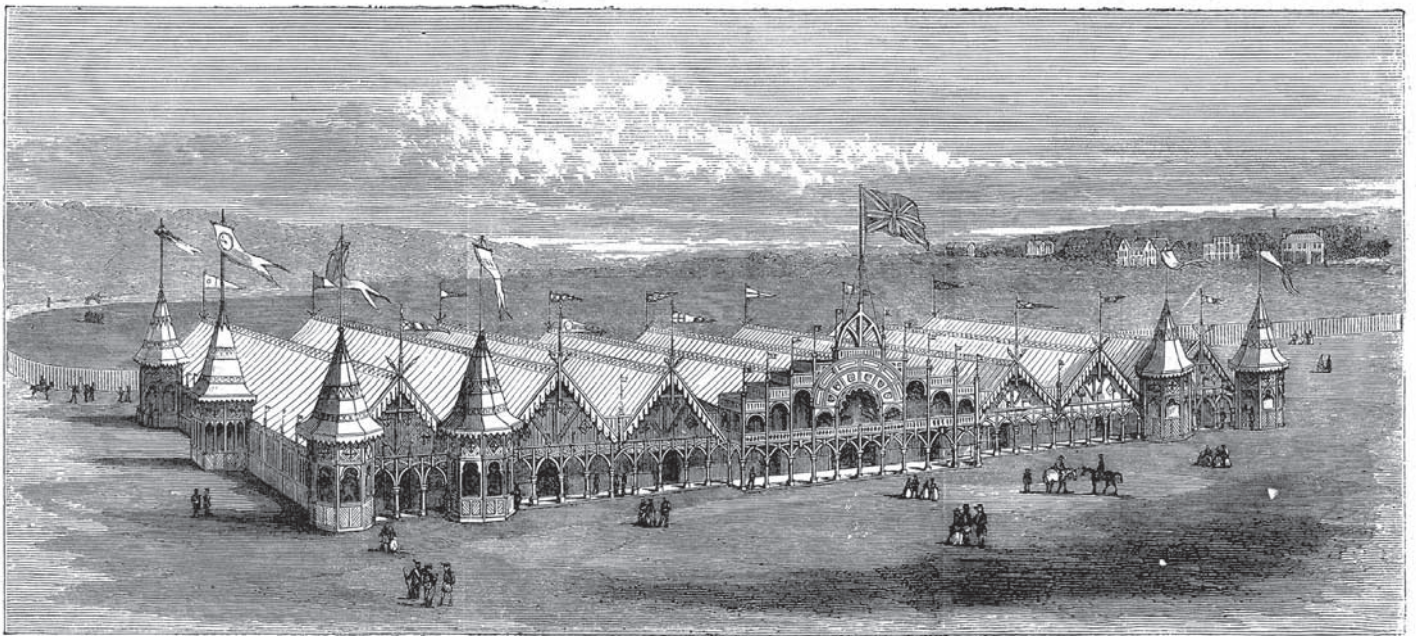
of happier regions, abandoning their penitralia to the earwig^[3] and the beetle, which delightful animals were careering in playful sportiveness all over the place. The furniture of the tent was not luxurious; it consisted solely of two minute iron bedsteads, suggestive of anything rather than one's ability to lie down on them. One of these proved to be broken . . .

Then, as nowadays at Bisley, there was a break in shooting for dinner. On the firing of the dinner gun shooting ceased and "the soldier in the grey great-coat who has been waving the red flag of danger now stabs the staff in the ground and proclaims a truce. The cautious markers emerge from behind their iron walls and enjoy the short cessation of the week's rainy season of bullets" wrote a reporter in 1862. He continued:

The ladies rise from their chairs and are gallanted to the dining tents; the orderlies canter their horses to their own quarters; a national peace between all belligerents is proclaimed. The diners divide into many bands. The ladies are drafted off into the private tents, where the effect of a ceaseless duel is kept up by the popping of champagne corks. I and the other vagrant males betake ourselves to an enormous bell tent, supported by a polished mast, and large enough to shelter the whole regiment of the Blues. Round the counters, every possible colour of rifleman is having pork-pies, frothing up stout, or clamouring for sandwiches. Grey coats with red collars, green coats with red collars, grey coats with black and silver lace, green coats with black braiding, are all smitten with the same vast and insatiable hunger. In a moment barrels are emptied, loaves severed, biscuits snapped, and sandwiches devoured. In the large dining tent, the long tables are crowded with volunteer officers and hungry marksmen of all ages, classes, and degrees of title; nor do I see the least difference between the man who has made three bull's-eyes running and the man who has missed twice in succession. No doubt the loser is suffering slightly from heartburn, and would, if he dared, run his fork into the bull's-eye man; but he eats with very creditable energy, and outwardly seems no whit the worse.

The commissariat arrangements were necessarily on a large scale. From 1863 Messrs Jennison, of Manchester, began bringing to Wimbledon from Lancashire their entire staff. "Their wood, their carts, their horses, their men and women (numbering more than a hundred), their beer, meat, milk, and, in short, everything that enters into the construction of their building, or tenants them when constructed, comes from Lancashire."

3 The prevalence of the earwig was such that the Victoria Rifles named their camp newspaper after it. The Earwig was first published in 1864, as "a paper containing neither Politics, Literature, Science, nor Art." In 1866 "The Earwig Prize", value £20, an inkstand in silver and blue enamel representing an earwig, appeared in the prize list. The prize was open to any purchaser of a copy of the Earwig newspaper, on payment of a shilling for an 'Earwig' ticket. Both the newspaper and prize disappeared in 1872.



The refreshment tent at Wimbledon (*The Graphic*, 22 July 1871).

In 1871 the NRA opened its own catering pavilion at Wimbledon, to be let to the catering contractors. The building was designed to be built in sections so as to be removed at the end of the meeting and stored for re-erection in future years. Its cost was about £4500, including plant. Each year the building was assembled for the Wimbledon fortnight and dismantled at the close. With the move of the NRA rifle meeting to Bisley in 1890 the Pavilion found a permanent home. By 1923 the building had, however, reached the end of its useful life and was demolished to make way for the current NRA Pavilion which opened in 1924.

Entertainment

The NRA Council provided a club-tent. *"If you have ever seen a comfortable club-room in town, you need no description of the National Rifle Association Club-tent, the sole difference being that the one is a tent and has a piano in it,"* wrote one commentator in 1867. Entertainment for the Volunteers in camp was sometimes provided in the club-tent, while the regimental camps vied with each other in friendly rivalry in their almost unbounded hospitality. The bagpipes of the London



The Club Tent (*Illustrated London News*, 16 July 1864).

Scottish were however a cause of terror at first to the weaker-minded. So, at least, reported *The Earwig*, camp newspaper of the Victoria Rifles:

Last evening a sudden and violent illness seized the members of the Victoria Camp, and caused great anxiety to their worthy and much respected surgeon. On mature inquiry, it was found to arise from the effect of playing of the bagpipes in the Scottish camp; on the cessation of the noise the symptoms of the illness deceased, and the members gradually recovered.

The mess tent in the evenings was the site of much conviviality. A Volunteer writing in 1867 described the scene when he entered the tent to find *"the men assembled and busily engaged in quaffing a fiery compound, which the members of the staff were pouring from a huge tin."* The effects were apparently wonderfully potent in the *"promotion of jollity,"* inducing many a chorus, with song succeeding song in rapid succession while the fun-promoting contents of the huge tin fast disappeared. With the bugle sounding the ten minute warning prior to lights out, and after a heartrending verse of *"God save the Queen"* it was time to retire. This was not necessarily easy to accomplish as our Volunteer recalled:

Some wonderful natural convulsion appeared to be taking place as we issued forth from the mess-tent, causing the contents to whirl round and round, and then dart from side to side, in the most surprising manner, rendering it a work of no slight difficulty to catch them. Fortunately I was perfectly sober, so bided my time; and when I saw our tent make a slight pause in its wild career past us, with a mighty spring I threw myself upon it, and grasping one of its ropes with both hands, held on firmly in spite of all its attempts to shake me off. The convulsion soon passed over, and Miller, who was very drunk, pulled

me into the tent, and implored me to get into bed. Knowing how hopeless it was to reason with one in his unfortunate state, I complied with his request, and tumbled in just as the camp guard was threatening to cut our tent-ropes if the light were not extinguished immediately.

While the mess tents catered for the masses, select tea-parties were to be found amidst the camp tents and on occasions an entertainment of a more refined sort might be found where perhaps a young lady made music with a violin.

Serious Aims, For Some . . .



Tea Time! The Camp at Wimbledon (*The Graphic*, 16 July 1870).

For many the Wimbledon Meeting was regarded as a fourteen days' picnic with no particular aim other than pleasant enjoyment, but for many others it was a fortnight of work with serious aims. Following is an affectionate portrait of the 'shooting man' written in 1883:

At roll-call he is the only individual properly dressed; at breakfast he is not visible – nor at lunch, nor at dinner, nor at tea; the mess tent knows him not, and if he eats at all, he must do so invisibly in holes and corners. By nine o'clock he is at the firing point, and there or thereabout, he remains all day. At gun-fire (seven pm) he returns to his tent, after perhaps a single sententious pipe in his doorway. His speech is composed of scornful monosyllables; his manner seems based on a careful study of the snub direct. These peculiarities are due, I suppose, to deep thought on such matters as wind-pressure, fore-sights and back-sights, inners and outers, and bulls – which, if

you once yield to them, bind you with an insatiable fascination. But, eccentricities apart, the shooting man commands respect. He works hard, he maintains the credit of his corps, and he makes not a little money. In short, he sets a good example; for unless they were decent marksmen, Volunteers would not be of very immediate service in an emergency.

Shooting began each day at nine, by which time the bulk of the camp population was to be found at the various firing points or loitering in the 'high street' of trade tents or the refreshment rooms. Others remained amongst the tents devoting their mornings to rehearsals of amateur theatricals, to the tuning of pianos, to the pretence of reading the daily papers, or to the serious business of the morning pipe.

After the lunch time break, opportunity might be taken to stroll around and see what there was to be seen. With the stream of visitors increasing throughout the afternoon there was the added distraction of ladies to the scene. Chairs were provided inside the ropes at the firing points for the ladies, and this an area "*which no male dared enter but the shooting man, the scorer and the officer in charge.*" The officer was regarded with not a little envy, managing to combine his duties with flirtation!

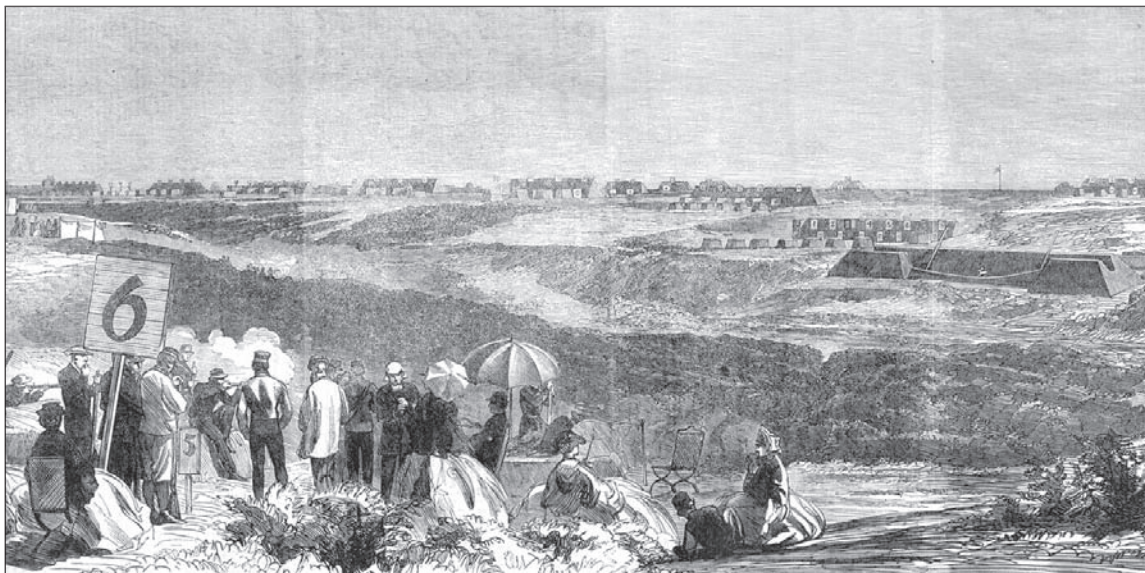
If the weather changed for the worse, then the scenes of gaiety melted away as the officer in charge developed a view of life which was little less than blasphemous. The shooting men were the same though and "*that strange product of Wimbledon existence, the offensively robust person who parades a pair of knickerbockers of a remarkable check pattern and a head-covering of no known shape or designation*" was to the fore as usual, "*with his field-glasses and comforting flask of sherry.*"

The Sunday in camp was one of noise and bustle. Throughout the preceding week the papers had long accounts of the events, and those that could not get away from business on the weekdays availed themselves of the Sunday to visit Wimbledon and see what had excited so much attention. These large crowds were not without their problems.

Common Problems

The use of the common was not unopposed in 1860 and Lord Spencer received a deputation from local residents. In 1865 a complaint was received by the NRA Council about bullets passing over the Coombe Estate, belonging to the Duke of Cambridge, a member of the Council. Further complaints were received from the Duke of Cambridge's solicitor in 1869, and compensation of £100 was paid to the Duke's tenant Colonel Clifton.

Over the years objections continued from other householders in the growing neighbourhood. The large crowds of visitors troubled them and their free use of the Common was restricted. The Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act of 1871 introduced some



General view of the butts (*Illustrated London News*, 25 July 1863).

regulation to the use of the Common, a rent of £100 per annum payable by the NRA and free passes to local householders.

In 1879 a charge of sixpence was introduced for admission after gunfire. This was an attempt to keep out the increasing crowds, and partially to recoup some of the receipts that had been lost by the issue of the free passes. This was not a popular move! Paraffin was used to set fire to the Common and hoardings and there were conflicts with the police which developed into riots. The fee was dropped in 1880, and the fence made of corrugated iron; not readily combustible . . .

By 1887 Wimbledon was a rapidly growing suburban neighbourhood. The residents were disturbed by the crowds from London, and were upset at having their rights of access to the Common curtailed. With the NRA about to embark on some costly repairs and enlargements, the Duke of Cambridge, who had long suffered the danger of bullets going over the butts into his grounds, this year gave the NRA notice to quit the Common prior to any commitment to large expenses.

Due to difficulties associated with finding and preparing a suitable location for a rifle range, the Prize Meeting remained at Wimbledon until 1889. In 1890 it moved to Bisley, where it remains today.

Norman Clark

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THE FIRST WIMBLEDON MEETING

by Christopher C Bunch

Introduction

On 2 July 1860 the first Prize Meeting of the National Rifle Association was opened on Wimbledon Common by HM Queen Victoria who fired the first shot, duly scoring a bull's eye at 400 yards.

The creation of the National Rifle Association had come about as a direct outcome of the re-establishment of a Volunteer Force in Great Britain which had been originally stood down after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. This had been largely driven by French sabre rattling and public alarm at the state of the country's defence and was eventually sanctioned by a War Office Circular dated 12 May 1859. In a second circular, of the same date, the Volunteer Constitution was laid out in great detail and Section 7 of this document seems to have influenced more than anything else the ideas that shortly manifested themselves in the formation of the National Rifle Association – *"The instruction, therefore, that is most requisite is practice in the use and handling of the rifle; and with a view to this, sites for firing at a target should be established, if possible, in every locality where companies or bodies of Volunteer riflemen are formed, and every encouragement given to the men to avail themselves of them, leaving it to themselves to select their own hours of practice, or for such further instructions, as sharpshooters, as it may avail themselves of cover . . ."*

Two prominent noblemen, Lord Spencer of Althorp and Lord Elcho, heir to the Earldom of Wemyss and March, were largely responsible for bringing together the two separate groups that were to result in the formation of the National Rifle Association. The Association itself being finally formed at a meeting held at Willis's Rooms at the Thatched House Tavern, in St James's Street, on 16 November 1859.

During the meeting, chaired by Lord Elcho, Lord Spencer 'moved the first resolution providing for the formation of the Association'. He had then gone on to state that *'he was most anxious that one great society should be formed, in order that there may be no rivalry. This Society would not be connected with one corps or one locality; to secure success it must be National. There was every prospect of their receiving the highest sanction for this Association'*.

Spencer then proceeded to describe a conversation he had had with the Prince Consort on the subject of the Association. *'His Royal Highness had assured him he was highly in favour of it and would support it in every way. It was his (Lord Spencer's) impression that, should the Association continue to prosper, the Queen and His Royal Highness would probably like to offer prizes for competition amongst its members'*.

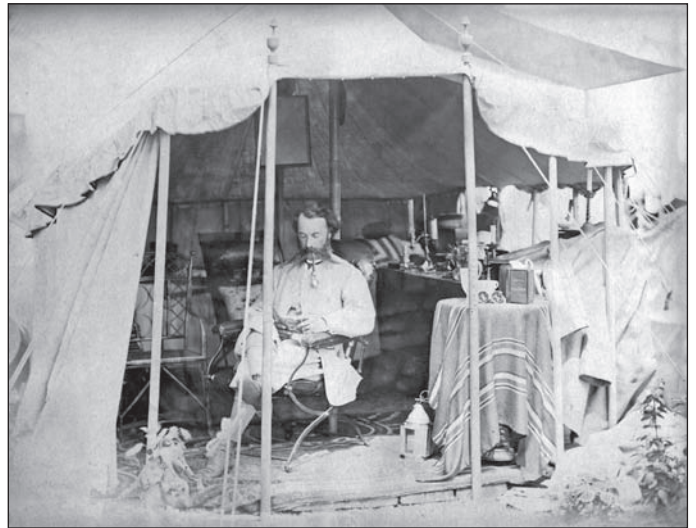
Another significant motion, by Captain Wilbraham Taylor, was also moved at the meeting and carried:

"That the first Meeting of this Association be held in the neighbourhood of London on the first Monday of July, 1860, or as near that date as can conveniently be appointed."

The Working Committee that had been set up met for the first time on 19 November 1859 at Spencer House under the Chairmanship of Lord Elcho and it was at this Meeting that the name of Edmond St John Mildmay was put forward as the leading candidate for the important post of Secretary to the Association at a salary of £300:

The name of Captain Edmond Mildmay for the post of Secretary was then brought forward for consideration:- He served in the Austrian Army from 1834 to 1844. Was Equerry in waiting to the late Duke of Cambridge from 1844 to 1850 – then became equerry to the present Duke. For some time temporarily attached to the Legation in Vienna. Served as British Commissioner to the Austrian Army in Italy. Is a very good Linguist. Lord Elcho undertook to see him on the subject.

At a subsequent meeting of the Working Party it was announced that Capt Mildmay had accepted the Office.



Captain Edmond St John Mildmay, the first Secretary of the Association, in his tent on Wimbledon Common in July 1863 sporting his characteristic whiskers. The picture is by a well-known mid-Victorian photographer, Herbert Watkins.

The aims of the Association were publicised through the columns of *The Times*, and on 9 December 1859, an explanatory letter from Lord Elcho was published:

Sir, As many of the letters which the Committee of the National Rifle Association daily receive show considerable misapprehension as to its nature and objects, the Committee hope that, for the sake of the public convenience, and in the interest of the Rifle movement, which you have done so much to promote,

you will find a place in your columns for a short explanatory statement on the subject.

The Association is formed for the purpose of encouraging the volunteer movement, and fostering a taste for Rifle shooting; but it does not propose to do so, as many would appear to think, by in any way aiding or assisting in the formation of Rifle Corps; it does not intend to draw up any rules for their guidance; neither does it presume to offer advice, or undertake to give information on matters connected with the organization, management, discipline, arms, accoutrements, dress, &c., of Volunteer Corps; and there is no idea of making the Association a kind of court of appeal in cases where any differences of opinion may exist. It is, no doubt, desirable that there should be some recognized central authority to whom reference might be made, and from whom information might be obtained on all such matters. But it appears to the Committee that they do not come within the province of the Association, and that the only proper authority on such questions is the department of the War Office, which has been especially devoted to the volunteer service.

Having said this much in explanation of what the National Rifle Association does not propose to do, let me now shortly state what its nature and objects really are.

The National Association is formed "for the encouragement of Volunteer Rifle Corps, and the promotion of Rifle-shooting throughout Great Britain," by raising funds for the establishment of a great annual national meeting for Rifle-shooting, similar to the "Tir Federal," which takes place every two years in Switzerland, at which prizes will be competed for. The principal prizes will be opened only to enrolled effective volunteers, and it is thus that encouragement will be given to the volunteer movement; but, at the same time, with a view to promote Rifle-shooting as a national pastime and custom, it is proposed likewise to establish prizes which will be open to all comers, whether volunteers or not.

It is further intended that the Association should embrace Scotland as well as England in its operations; and that, following the example of the Royal Agricultural Society, it should hold its annual meetings in different towns in the United Kingdom. The first meeting will be in the neighbourhood of London, and it is proposed that it should take place the second week in July.

Such, shortly, are the nature and objects of the Association. It has been formed in the belief that something of this kind will be necessary to give permanence to the volunteer force, and to render it, as it ought to be, part and parcel of our institutions, for, when once a large volunteer force has been organised, and the present excitement on the question of national

defence has subsided, there is danger of our becoming lukewarm on the subject, and again relapsing into the state of fancied security from which we have recently and happily been roused. Nothing, therefore, it appears to the promoters of the Association, is more likely to keep up these Corps, and to nationalize in this country a taste for Rifle-shooting, than the creation of a spirit of rivalry and emulation, such as a great and annual gathering for prize shooting could not fail to call forth. We see the good effect of such meetings in Switzerland, for the best Rifle shots flock from all parts to the "Tir Federal," where a truly patriotic feeling prevails, and a national brotherhood in arms is established. The taste for Rifle-shooting is thus thoroughly nationalized; it penetrates into the remotest valleys, and the natural fastnesses of that small country, thus garrisoned by a people trained to arms, become the home and stronghold of a nation in the enjoyment of the utmost political freedom, though surrounded by despotic Governments. In our own country, archery was formerly the chief national pastime, and therein lay the nation's strength and security. What the bow was in former times, the rifle should now be. Competition is the life and soul of our national sports. How long would cricket flourish without "Lords," or horse racing without "The Derby"? We want, then, to encourage volunteers and Rifle-shooting in Great Britain by establishing an annual "Rifle Derby"; but this cannot be done without money; the number of prizes and their value will necessarily depend on the number of those who join the Association, and on the amount of their donations.

At the "Tir Federal" at Zurich, in 1859, the total value of the prizes shot for amounted to £10,000. Let it not be said that the people of Great Britain are less liberal and patriotic than the Swiss.

I remain, your obedient servant.

ELCHO

(On behalf of the Committee).

23, St James's Place,

December 9th, 1859.

It was decided that the rules of the new Association should be based on those of the long established Swiss TIR and at the Working Party meeting of 24 November 1859 it was minuted 'that the translation of the Swiss Rules be printed and circulated among the Committee and Council'. This enabled the Working Committee, after being engaged for many weeks in organising the Association, to present a draft set of rules to the Council at a meeting held on 25 February 1860. At the same meeting this Committee, being recognised as having completed its work, was disbanded and its responsibilities were handed over to an expanded Council. Amongst the Council's first resolutions was to request the Patronage of the Prince Consort, to which he readily acceded. The Rt Hon Sir Sydney

Herbert (Secretary of State for War) became the first President of the NRA.

The Council now not only had to address themselves to drawing up the draft Bye Laws for the regulation of the Prize Shooting in 1860 but also to locate and lay out a suitable ground on which the first Meeting could take place.

The Establishment of the Prize Meeting

Her Majesty had already signified her wish to found a prize of £250 to be competed for annually by Volunteers. This now translated into HM the Queen's Prize (or Sovereign's Prize as it became collectively known when a King, Edward VII, came to the throne in 1901), still the Grand Prize of the tournament; and to this the Council added their Gold Medal. The Prince Consort also offered a prize of £100 to be competed for by all comers from all nations, and the Duke of Cambridge, the Head of the British Army, presented a prize of £50 for breech loading rifles in seeking to improve firearms; all contemporary British military rifles being muzzle loaders.

Another item of significance was the design to be applied to the Association's Gold and Silver medals.

The Council are indebted to the celebrated Artist, Mr Watts (George Frederick Watts 1817 – 1904 who later also designed the Elcho Shield and the original Running Man target for the Association) for the design for the Medal which was beautifully modelled and executed by Mr Adams (George Gammon Adams 1821-1898) the sculptor. Mr Adams obtained the prize for the Exhibition Medal

of 1851, which he subsequently executed, and is deservedly celebrated in this department of art. The medal as illustrative of the objectives of the Association, represents an archer of the time of the Plantagenets and a rifleman standing side by side, the motto at the bottom of the medal being "Sit Perpetuum".

This design, of course, became the symbol of the National Rifle Association.

Other important decisions concerned the choice of rifles to be used at the opening meeting, specifically in respect of HM the Queen's Prize, and a suitable site on which to hold the Meeting.

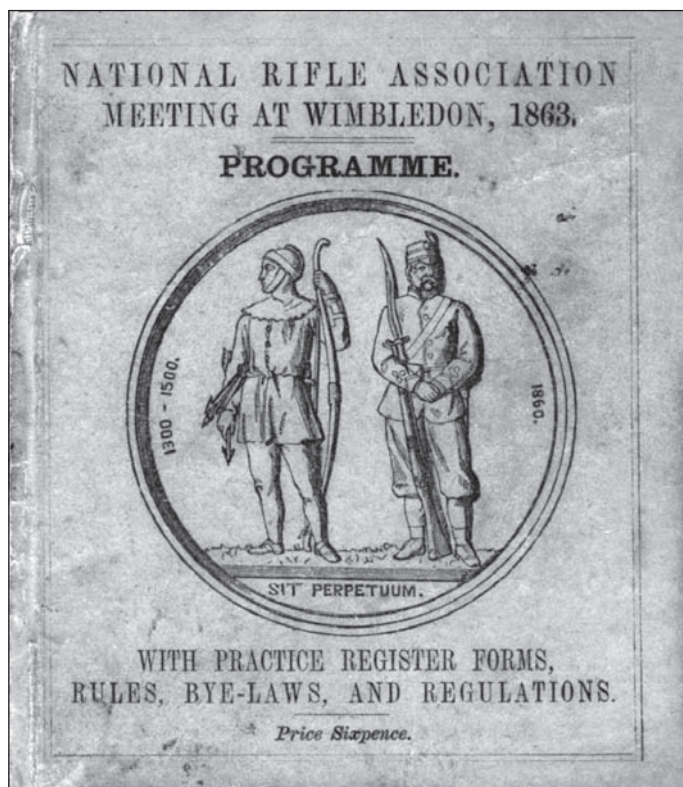
The standard military rifle of the time was the Enfield, a muzzle loader of .577 calibre, which was also used by the great majority of the Volunteers. The Government's willingness to loan such rifles for the duration of the Meeting made its adoption an almost foregone conclusion. However the Enfield was only deemed accurate up to 600 yards and, longer ranges having been proposed for competitions such as the Sovereign's Prize, it was necessary to identify a rifle that produced high accuracy at distances up to 1000 yards and more.

The type of rifle to be used for long range shooting was discussed at the Sub-Committee Meeting of the Council held on 22 March 1860 which was chaired by Lord Elcho.

General Hay (Commanding at the Hythe Government Ranges) made some suggestions as to how the shooting ought to be carried on, and Lord Elcho read a paper from Mr Ross (Horatio Ross was the father of Edward Ross, the first Queen's Prize winner) on the subject. Mr Ross suggests that the Volunteers in shooting at the long range should be allowed to use any kind of Rifles – General Hay objected to this and suggested that the only Rifle to compete with on strict equality ought to be Whitworth's which had been proved to be, for the present at least, the best.

The apparent decision to use the Whitworth Rifle caused some consternation with the other gunmakers of the country and they duly protested. A full account regarding the choice of both the Enfield and the Whitworth rifles was carried in the Association's Report for the year.

This (the choice of rifle), it was decided, should be the long Enfield up to 600 yards; because, although the Lancaster rifle, the Sea Service rifle, and the short as well as the long Enfield rifles are in use amongst the Volunteer corps, the latter is the weapon with which nine-tenths of the force are armed. The Council are indebted to the authorities at the War Office for enabling them to give effect to this principle, as they kindly placed at their disposal 1000 long Enfield rifles, 1853 pattern, made in the



The Symbol of the NRA as printed on the cover of the 1863 Programme Book or 'Bible', the first to be issued.

Government Factories. These rifles were lent a month previous to the meeting to such Volunteers as by the rules of the Association were entitled to compete for the Volunteer Prizes, and were after the close of the meeting returned into store, where they will be kept until required next year for re-distribution.

Prizes of considerable value were at the same time offered for competition with any description of rifle of a Government pattern in use amongst Volunteers. The range for the competition with the long Enfield was limited to 600 yards, because it was considered that beyond that distance sufficient reliance could not be placed upon its accuracy; and it was thought advisable that Her Majesty's prize, and the gold medal of the Association, should be competed for at ranges of 800, 900, and 1000 yards, in order to show the world the power of English rifles, and the skill of English marksmen. At these long ranges the extreme accuracy of the long Enfield was known to fail; and the superiority of small bore rifles had been incontestably proved. It only remained therefore to decide upon the description of rifle which was to be used in 1860 by the Volunteers, who might be entitled to compete for Her Majesty's prize at these long ranges.

Before any decision upon this question had been come to by the Council, it was publicly stated that they had decided in favour of a rifle made by Mr Whitworth, of Manchester; and Mr Goodman, on the part of the Birmingham Arms Trade, wrote to the Times newspaper, remonstrating against this decision.

The Council, being anxious to show that they had acted in a spirit of fairness and impartiality, resolved to arrange a trial of Whitworth's rifle against those of the gun makers of Great Britain and this was held at the Government's Hythe Ranges situated on Romney Marsh.

Council of the Association were represented at Hythe by Lord Spencer, Lord Elcho, Lord Vernon, General Hay, Mr T Fairbairn, and the Secretary, Capt St John Mildmay. The programme of the trials was drawn up on Tuesday, and in spite of the high winds which prevailed, some score shots were fired from the rival rifles, each firing alternately at the same target at a range of 800 yards. The experiments were begun at too late an hour of the day to admit of their being long continued. The results, as far as they went on the first day, were greatly in favour of the Whitworth. On the following day, in spite of the wind, which was blowing a complete gale, the trials, under the judicious arrangement of General Hay and his well-organised staff, were proceeded with. The United Gunmakers insisted that all the shooting should be from the machine-rest, as that was the most satisfactory mode of testing the guns, without depending on the marksman's skill. They had not, however, provided a rest of their own, but

made use of one constructed by Mr Whitworth for the Hythe School of Musketry. Mr Whitworth brought with him a similar rest, and both were placed side by side in the first instance at 800 yards from the target. The superiority of the Whitworth rifle was manifest from the first, and the United Gunmakers, after trying two of their best rifles, found it hopeless to continue the contest, and withdrew their rifles from further competition. The mean deviation of 40 shots of the Whitworth rifles was 21-36; of 40 shots of the gunmakers' rifles 70-80 inches, at 800 yards. It should be stated that the wind continued to blow down the range with the greatest violence throughout the trials, and in fact, about half of the 40 shots of the United Gunmakers failed to hit the target, which was 18 feet square. All the Whitworth shots hit, as the Whitworth projectile, owing doubtless to its greater velocity and lower trajectory, was much less affected by the wind. With the view of rendering the comparison more complete, the best of the rifles of the United Gunmakers, 39 inches long, was fired against a Whitworth 33 inches long, at a range of 1100 yards, and the result, as was in fact anticipated, more fully confirmed the superiority of the Whitworth rifle. It can hardly be said, considering the results which have been obtained from these trials, that the Council of the National Rifle Association committed an error of judgement when they proposed that the Whitworth rifle should be used at the National Rifle Meeting in July by those who intended to compete at the longest ranges.

The Selection of the Site

Requisites laid down for the site were 'great space, safety, accessibility and vicinity of the Metropolis' to which was added 'picturesqueness and charm of situation'. Various sites were investigated including locations at Woolwich, Epsom, Aldershot and Chobham, but none were entirely satisfactory; however Capt Mildmay, the NRA Secretary, then suggested Wimbledon Common as the place which best fitted these criteria and in this he was fully supported by Lord Spencer, who fortuitously being the Lord of the Manor, proceeded to place it at the disposal of the Council. The chosen site was inspected by Col J Clark Kennedy, who was specifically appointed by the Military Authorities at the Horse Guards and was also a member of the Association's Council, and he was able to compose a very favourable Report which was immediately accepted by both the Council and the Military Authorities.

Woolwich, 11th May, 1860.

SIR, – I have the honour to report, for the information of His Royal Highness the General Commanding in Chief, that in obedience to the instructions contained in your letter of yesterday's date, I proceeded to Wimbledon Common, for the purpose of inspecting and reporting upon the ground proposed by the

National Rifle Association, as the place where their Annual Meeting for the Prize Rifle Shooting Competition for the current year, should be held.

Lord Elcho being present upon the part of the National Rifle Association, and Colonel Oliphant and Mr Francis accompanying us (the former a Military Officer who has resided 21 years near the Common, and the latter gentleman, the representative of Earl Spencer, as lord of the manor), the ground was carefully inspected with reference to its adaptability for competitive Rifle Shooting on a large scale, and especially with reference to the safety of the various ranges proposed, and marked upon the plan prepared for and shown upon the ground by the Association.

The ground generally is well adapted for the purpose. It is proposed to place ten pairs of targets across the Common, facing the east, at a distance increasing from 750 to 1000 yards from the road, forming the western boundary of Wimbledon Park – these ranges to be used for distances up to 600 yards.

An eleventh pair of targets to the southward of this line was proposed, but upon examination, not proving perfectly satisfactory, this range was condemned, and struck out of the plan.

Four long ranges for 1000 yards are also laid out in the same line of fire as the ten double 600 yard ranges, but are not to be used simultaneously with them.

The general line of fire is from east to west, and the various lines converge somewhat towards their

centre; behind the targets, the prolongations of the lines of fire extend over the Common for about 1400 yards of open ground.

The firing points are so situated, that there is little or no probability of accidents arising from the firing frightening horses on the public road.

The most stringent regulations should be framed and carried out for the prevention of trespassing across the lines of fire in rear of the targets, by guarding and watching both flanks up to the rivulet, forming the western boundary of the Common. Not less than three danger signal posts should be erected – one on the north, and at least two on the south side of the Common.

Provided that the usual and proper precautions are observed, I do not consider that a safer or more eligible site for the Meeting of the Association could be found than Wimbledon Common.

I have the honour to be, SIR,

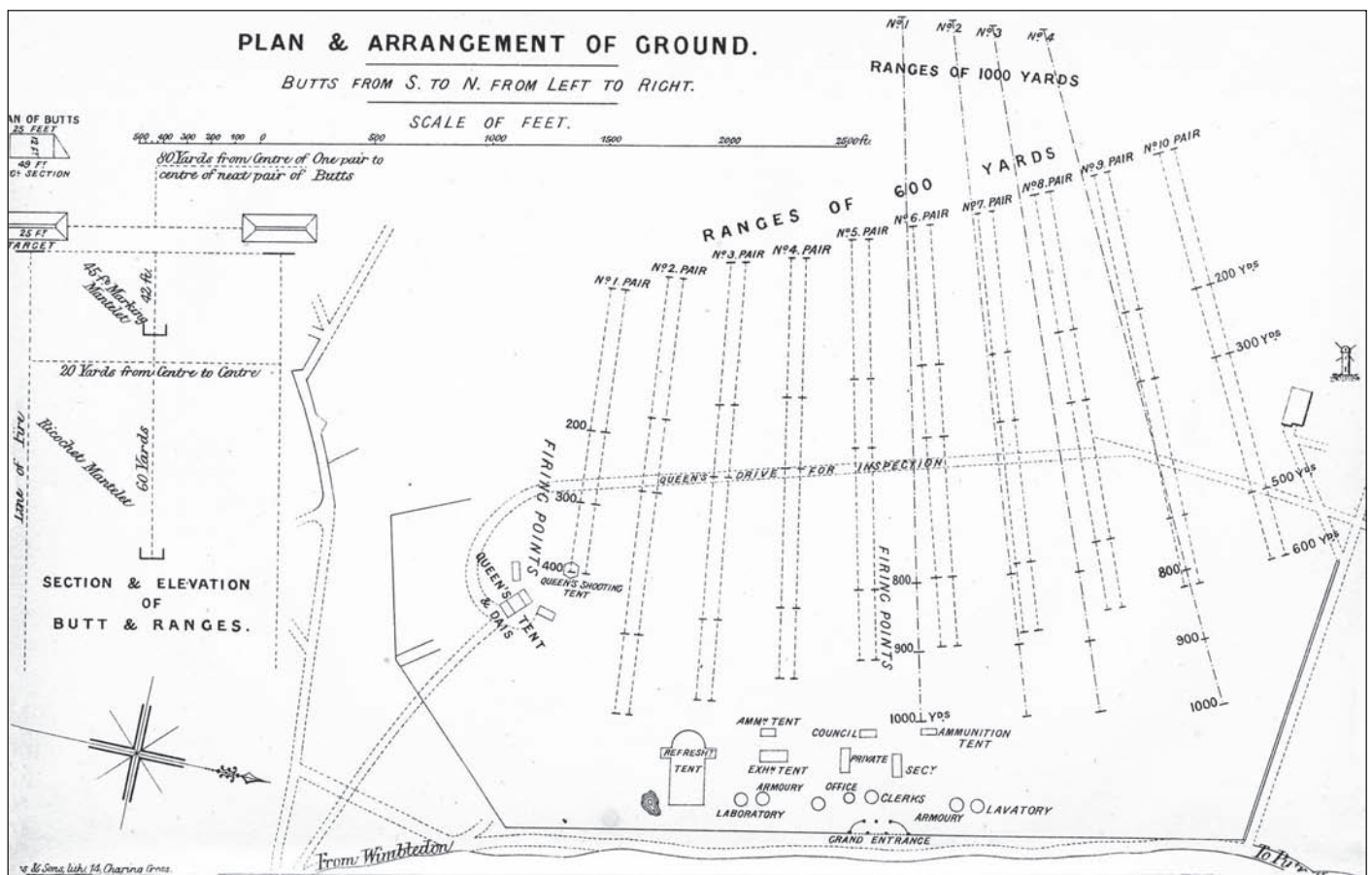
Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) J CLARK KENNEDY, Colonel.

The Quarter-Master-General of the Forces &c.,
Horse Guards

The Meeting

Monday 2 July 1860 had been fixed as the date for opening the first Meeting on the Common and Her Majesty had signified her intention of inaugurating it in person and firing the first shot. Estimates



The Plan of the first Meeting held in 1860 showing the Queen's Shooting Tent and the route of the Inspection Drive.

for erecting the butts (£622) and the laying out of the enclosure (£250) were based on the hard dry conditions existing on the Common at the time with the Government promising the loan of tents, mantelets and other necessary accoutrements. However, the rain then started to fall and did not finally let up until the day of the opening of the Meeting thus turning much of the Common into marsh with parts under water.

Nothing indeed could look more hopeless, and the Council were obliged to issue orders from day to day for works to be done and preparations to be made which were never contemplated, and for which it was necessarily impossible to obtain estimates or enter into contracts. The Common had to be drained and ditches opened, roads had to be made, many hundred yards of planking for roadway had to be laid down; and large sums had to be expended in providing additional tents and accommodation for the protection of those who might be expected to be present at the inauguration; thus the estimated outlay has been more than doubled, as will be seen on reference to the printed statement of Accounts. Whilst referring to the preparation of the ground, the Council cannot omit recording their grateful sense of the services rendered by Colonel Bewes, by whom the butts were admirably laid out, and who for many weeks was constantly on the ground; and they would likewise acknowledge the efficient manner in which the butts were erected and the drainage and other works performed by Mr Scott, who was engaged almost night and day in superintending the various operations up to the very hour of Her Majesty's arrival. But notwithstanding the zeal and energy displayed by them, as well as by many other members of the Council and other gentlemen, the inclemency of the weather, and the difficulty of procuring labour, caused so many delays that at the last the Council were obliged to apply for fatigue parties of the Guards, and for some Sailors from Woolwich Dockyard. This aid was readily granted, and it was mainly owing to their exertions and the heartiness with which they worked, that everything was in readiness for Her Majesty's reception at the opening of the Meeting.

In recognition of the assistance given by the Swiss TIR in setting up the Association, one hundred and fifty riflemen from Switzerland paraded at the opening ceremony.

The Queen arrived about three o'clock and was received by the Premier, Lord Palmerston; the Secretary of State for War, Mr Sidney Herbert; Lord Elcho, the great officers of State, and commanding officers of a large number of units of the Volunteer Force.

A guard of honour was mounted by the competitors, and with them were associated a hundred and fifty Swiss riflemen, the best shots of their respective

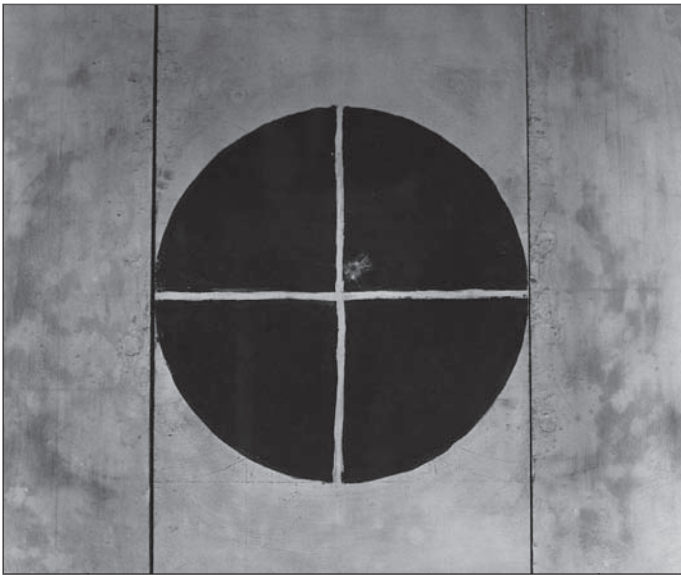
societies or clubs, who had come over to take part in the first English national shoot. The Swiss wore no uniform beyond the badge or ribbon of their society, and they marched on the ground preceded by the flag of the Swiss Confederation. The Common was thronged with Volunteers in the varied uniforms of the numerous recently raised Corps. "In such a young force," it was recorded in a contemporary account, "it is not to be wondered at that the civilian was more apparent than the soldier," and the prints of the period show "the curled whisker, the shaven upper lip, the long and aristocratically dressed locks of hair, and the shirt collar of the civilian, worn in conjunction with the military uniform. The uniforms also were more picturesque than soldierly, there being a general tendency to wear skirts to the tunic, nearly as long as those of a French vivandière."

After addresses had been presented to Her Majesty and the Prince Consort, the Royal party proceeded to the Pavilion, where Mr Whitworth had, by means of a mechanical rest, fixed the rifle with which the Queen was to fire the first shot, the distance being 400 yards. A silken cord attached to the trigger was handed to Her Majesty by Mr Whitworth, and the rifle having been fired by a sharp pull, it was found that so accurately had the rifle been adjusted that the bullet had struck the target within a quarter of an inch of the centre. A duplicate of the gold medal of the Association was then presented to the Queen by Lord Elcho, the chairman of the Council, while a salvo of artillery announced the opening of the meeting.



Queen Victoria, attended by Sir Joseph Whitworth, fires the first shot at Wimbledon.

The first HM the Queen's Prize was won by Private Edward Ross of the 7th North Yorkshire Volunteer Rifle Corps using a .451 calibre Whitworth Rifle, with Lord Fielding of the 4th Flintshire Rifle Volunteers as "runner-up". The prize-giving was held, on the Monday following the meeting, at the Crystal Palace (a practice which continued until 1864), and a crowd of twenty thousand assembled there to watch the distribution of the prizes by the Under-Secretary of State for War, Earl de Grey and Ripon.



The location of HM Queen Victoria's opening shot of the 1860 Meeting.
(Photo courtesy of the Royal Photographic Collection)

Chambers Journal for 4 August 1860 carried a vivid eye witness description of the Meeting including the conclusion of the Queen's Prize Competition in which Edward Ross finally triumphed over Lord Fielding.

... Passing through the entrance, where we paid one shilling, we found ourselves on the common – a wide heath, with patches of furze, and a fringe of tents. The eye took in the arrangements at a glance. Within the fringe of tents, which contained mainly refreshments, were a row of others in pairs, about a hundred yards apart, opposite and corresponding to pairs of butts 500 yards off. These were mounds of earth, some 15 feet high, and 30 feet wide. Beyond them was a still more distant line, nearly a mile off. In front of each stood the targets – plates of iron about half an inch thick, and six feet square, white-washed, with a black centre two feet in diameter. The furthest were so distant that the centre was just visible as a little black dot not much bigger than that of an 'i'.

The tents from which the firing was going on were surrounded by crowds of people, who were kept from interfering with the shooters by a rope passed round a ring of stakes driven into the ground. The firing-tents to the right were occupied by the candidates for the Queen's Prize of £250; those on the left were hard at work at 'Aunt Sally.' We visited these first. 'Aunt Sally' is adapted from the popular venture of that name at fairs and races. You pay a shilling for your shot, and the receipts are divided at the close of the day among those who hit the centre. I walked up to the tent opposite the third pair of butts; a crowd of gallant volunteers were waiting for their turn to shoot. The tent from which they fired in rotation was about eight feet wide, open before and behind. At the entrance, a man sat with pen, ink, and paper, ready to receive the moneys, and put down the names of those who hit the centre. Some twenty men were standing in single file, treading close on each other's heels, and

shuffling forward as the turn of the leading man came to fire; after which he moved off to the right, round the tent, reloaded, and took his place again in the line – like the processions in the smaller theatres. You might fire in any position. This liberty was freely used. Some stood; some knelt in the approved Hythe posture; others sat down, and gathered up their knees as if they were going to take their place in a circle of 'Hunt the Slipper;' others lay flat down upon their stomachs. The mistakes made were occasionally odd enough – 'Hollo! sir, you have forgotten to cock your rifle.' 'You have not put up your sight'. 'That is the wrong butt you are aiming at.' One fat fellow sat down with a jolt and fired right up into the air!

Close beside each target was a bullet-proof iron shed, shaped like the body of a Hansom cab off its wheels: in this the marker sat, and signalled the result of each shot. A dark-blue flag shewed that the centre was hit; a white one, that the white part of the target had been struck; a red, waved close to the ground that the ball had fallen short.

Armed with a race-glass, lent to me by one of the bystanders, I sat down on the grass at the entrance of the tent, and watched the shooting. The target, I have said was 500 yards off, and the centre two feet in diameter. No one was allowed to fire from a rest. This, then, was no child's play, though many of those present joined in it with great merriment. The party who were firing belonged to a genuine London corps; many of them, till within the last few months, never had a rifle in their hands. The shooting however, was remarkably good. One smart young fellow was telling me how he knew nothing whatever about shooting until lately. When his turn came, he laid himself flat down on the ground, and quietly drove his bullet right into the centre – that is, he would have hit a man more than a quarter of a mile off. I stood by the tent for some time; again and again the distant flag was waved, shewing that the target had been struck; and this was the skill of men who hitherto had spent their lives behind the counter or at the desk. Think of that, ye sneering martinets and swaggering French colonels! Here were thoroughbred Cockneys, poking fun at one another, but all the while making practice that would rival or even beat the famous Chasseurs de Vincennes, without seeming to think they were doing anything out of the way. A soldier alone, who stood by me, expressed any surprise.

Presently the order came to cease firing; and the markers, waving large red flags to indicate danger, came out of their holes, and went to dinner. Most of the spectators turned into a huge refreshment marquee, furnished by Strange, the caterer at the Crystal Palace. All tastes were suited; you could dine at any figure at well-ordered tables, or be happy on the grass with a slice of bread and cheese and a pot of porter.

During the armistice, I walked up to the butts. For many yards in front of them the ground was covered with flakes of lead, the bullets that struck the iron having been, not flattened – that is too gentle a word – but actually splashed about. The targets were spotted all over with hits. Those untrained, inexperienced Londoners would have utterly cut up a body of horse or foot half a mile off!

When the firing began again, I went to see the conclusion of the contest for the Queen's Prize – the highest honour of the week. The competitors had already been shooting at the 800 and 900 yard ranges; and when I walked up, a party of the Scots Fusilier Guards, in undress, were fixing up the tent to fire from at the final distance of 1000 yards. The target was also in this case white, with a centre two feet in diameter. It looked hopelessly distant. Imagine yourself standing at the Oxford Street circus, and expected to hit a tea-tray in Tottenham Court Road. There was quite a purple haze, that made the butt look like a distant hill, the target shewing like a white cottage at its foot with one small window.

Thousands of spectators had now assembled to watch the progress, or rather final struggle, of the match. The signal-flags were so distant, that many would not trust their naked eyes, but used a telescope. In a very short time, the strife became exceedingly interesting. Mr Ross and another gentleman were ahead of the rest, and equal. It was Mr Ross's turn. He knelt down, aimed deliberately, and pulled the trigger. Alas! his rifle was only at half-cock. This threw him out for a minute. Several voices sympathetically enough, said: 'Ah, now he will miss.' A shade of nervousness crossed his mind. His close competitor, strung up to the tightest strain of excitement, lay down flat upon the grass, and hid his face. Ross, having now cocked his rifle, missed as was predicted. The other gentleman picked himself up from the ground, and came forward. See! he kneels down, steadies himself upon his heel, and puts his rifle to his shoulder. No – not yet – something dazzles him. He takes it down for a moment, and passes his hand over his eyes. Another aim – crack! Yes – up goes the white flag; the target is hit – he is one ahead. Now, Mr Ross, this is the crisis of your fame: miss, and you lose the prize; hit the centre, and you win – that will count two, and leave you victor by one point. It is a trying moment. The little dot on the white target seems to move further off; you can barely see it; but to hit it, with that small candle-end of lead you have just pushed into your rifle, shade of Robin Hood, behold! Now for nerves of steel, and a pulseless heart. All hold their breath. The marker's hand stops midway with fresh-dipped pen; the very policemen on duty shade their eyes with their palms to catch sight of the possible signal. The gallant young volunteer kneels coolly down in the door of the tent, and raises his rifle. Crack! a puff of smoke;

no other sound breaks the silence. No! – yes, yes, it is the dark flag; he has struck the centre, that little hopeless dot, no bigger than a parasol, nearly a mile off; and the suppressed breath of the multitude bursts forth into a well-earned cheer. After this, he shot off one or two ties, and established his victory.

And now fresh bodies of volunteers came pouring into the common, dusty, and, to judge of the rate at which they rushed into the refreshment-booth, when they had piled arms, thirsty as sand.

Chambers Journal 4 August 1860

At the first Council meeting, just after the Wimbledon tournament, some significant resolutions were agreed and duly recorded in the minutes. Roger Fenton, by now famous for his photographs, especially those recording the Crimea War campaign and who had taken those of the Meeting, had presented the copyright to the Council. They in turn agreed a vote of thanks, made him a life member and also requested him to fill the position of official photographer to the Association. They also resolved to present a set of his pictures to the Prince Consort. It was also agreed that General Hay should negotiate with Whitworth to secure the rifle, with which Queen Victoria had fired the first shot to open the Meeting for the Association.

July 1860	
Council Medal	Resolved that the man who should provide himself with a Bronze Medal (should he wish to do so) on Commemoration of the first Wimbledon Meeting. Application to be made to Mr Adams to strike the medals.
Gun Races Competition	23 Resolved that the Gun Races Competition be immediately advertised to take place early in the month of February 1861
Announcer Appointed	24 Resolved that Mr Smith, Gun Master of Gravesend, be appointed Announcer to the Association.
Rifle, shot by the Queen	25 Resolved that Genl Hay negotiate with Mr Whitworth respecting the Rifle with which the Queen fired the first shot at Wimbledon Common, the Council being anxious to retain it, in Commemoration of the great event.
Shooting Suits	26 Resolved that C. B. Kennedy make enquiries about the Shooting Suits (Mantlets to be paid for) 2 Coats of Art. paint
Vote of Thanks to Mr Fenton	27 Resolved that a vote of thanks be addressed to Mr Fenton for having presented the Copy right of his Photographs of the Wimbledon Meeting, to the Association, and also informing him of his having been made a life member of the Association.
Set of Photographs from Prince Consort	28 Resolved that a set of the Photographs be sent to H. R. H. the Prince Consort.
	29 Resolved that a vote of thanks be

The resolutions from the Council Meeting of 30 July 1860 respecting Whitworth, Fenton and the Prince Consort

All quotes are verbatim. All material is from the NRA Council Books and Museum Archive unless otherwise stated

These photographs taken by Roger Fenton at the Meeting are now in the Royal Photographic Collection at Windsor Castle and are reproduced on these pages with their kind permission. The rifle fired by the Queen with its stand, the Queen's target, Edward Ross' rifle and his kepi (of the Cambridge University Rifle Volunteers) all now reside in the NRA Museum at Bisley.



The first Queen's Prize winner Private Edward Ross.



Edward Ross and his father Horatio Ross.



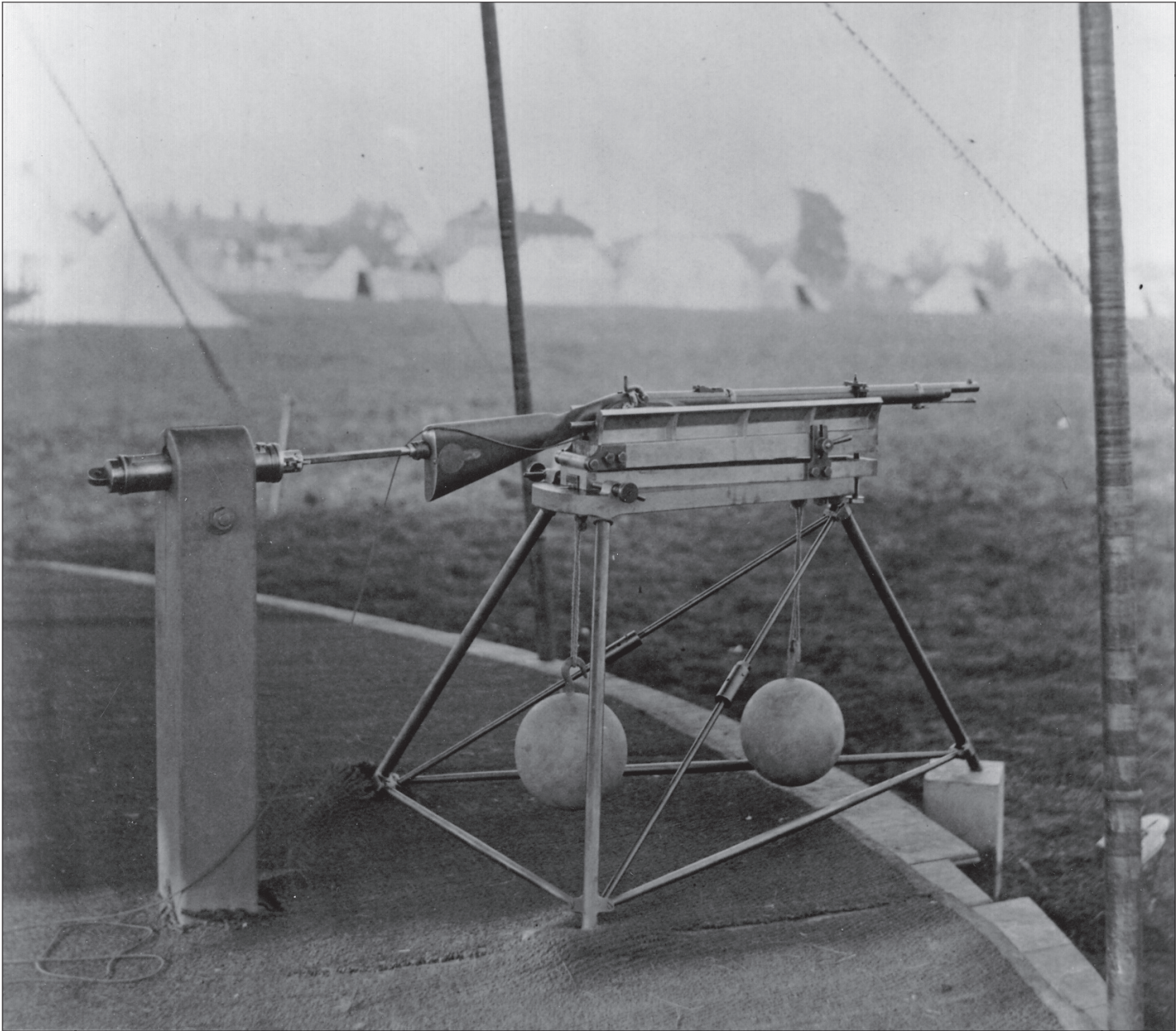
Shooting for the Duke of Cambridge.



Horatio Ross, Edward Ross and friends.



Horatio Ross with rifle.



The rifle fired by HM the Queen with its stand.

COMMONWEALTH SHOOTING FEDERATION CHAMPIONSHIPS 2010

by Phil Harrison

The Sixth CSF Championship Fullbore event was held at the brand new range built at the Central Reserve Police Facility (CRPF) at Kadarapur, one hour's journey south and west of Delhi. Postponed from the originally intended dates in February, when the CSF Championships for all the other shooting disciplines were held (the facilities were not ready and the ammunition was still in Australia), the event finally took place on 14 to 24 April. As is customary, the CSF Championships were used as the test event for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in October. Your author was one of four International Technical Officials ("Jurors") rostered for the event, the others being Cliff Mallett (Jersey), Jim Thompson (Canada) and Tony Loughnan (New Zealand, President of ICFRA).

On arrival at Indira Ghandi Airport I was met and conducted through the formalities with great speed and efficiency by two Delhi 2010 officials, and taken to the CRPF vehicle for transport to Kadarapur. Little did I know that this was about the only thing that was going to go well for the next fortnight! CRPF is a paramilitary police force fighting a counter-insurgency campaign against rebels in central India, and CRPF is the training school for young Officers. Accommodation was therefore spartan (but quite spacious) – but definitely not for the fastidious. First thing to do was to see off the cockroaches . . . (Delhi-belly afflicted well over 80% of all visitors at some time – some more than once).

There was ample time to visit the range for a first view. There is a dedicated, fully-featured, range HQ building in front of which lies the only firing point! I should explain: space constraints prevent the building of a full "JSP 403" Range with Danger Area, so a range to New Zealand "No Danger Area" design (complete with a very high end-wall plus side and ground baffles) had been provided – the concrete being painted a delicate (and prophetic) shade of bilious green. Further,

in order to improve the presentation of the event, there was to be a single firing point in full view of spectators and television cameras, and the targets were required to 'fall back' rather than the shooters – this is a manpower-intensive operation, requiring far more than would a full butt of markers . . .

To complete the innovatory design and presentation of the event, the ISSF accredited firm of Sius Ascor had designed and implemented Electronic Scoring Targets (ESTs) to the 8ft x 6ft dimension with variable-size aiming marks. These targets have front and back surfaces forming a sound box with microphones at the four corners to triangulate the position of the shot from the shockwave of the bullet while travelling between them. Shot outcomes are fed to monitors at each firing position, and the electronics drive large display screens for spectators' use and interest which give shot-by-shot scoring updates and mini diagrams of the shooters' most recent shots.

The Indian authorities had prevaricated over many months on the provision of the vital resources for the event, most notably ammunition (collected from the airport mid-afternoon before the first practice day) and staffing – there is no experience of fullbore TR in India whatever – and the designated CRO/Staff Trainer (Bert Bowden – CRO for Melbourne 2006) was not in attendance, despite having needed to be present many weeks before the event to prepare it. Small wonder, then, that the four Jurors effectively had to run the event from scratch at 24 hours notice! Tony agreed to act as CRO, I dealt with all aspects of electronic scoring and stats, Jim did the squadding and administrative aspects, and Cliff had to coach the (scratch) Indian team!

On day 1 Delhi entered an unprecedented heatwave, which led to several days in the mid-40s Celsius, topping out at 47 (117 Fahrenheit). The range was not ready in respect of the tidying up of the rubble and earthworks, and Tony had three times to decline to



The end wall.

(Photos: Phil Harrison)



The side baffles.



Horizontal baffles.



View of firing point from building.

issue a safety certificate. This heat, coupled with a 3 o'clock breeze had an unfortunate effect on the targetry, combining to cause closure of the sound-box as the two faces were sucked together, and a process of progressive target failures started manifesting itself just before 10:00 as temperatures rose. Fortunately, the first events – the 300m Practice, Pairs and Individual – were able to be completed just before the failures started, the start of shooting having been brought forward by an hour. The Sius technicians – whose performance was admirable – came up with a modification to the targets, and the Queen's Prize programme was subsequently run without target failure, being subject to a further one hour advance in the start time (07:00) and a regime of only shooting one distance a day (ie 300 yards Q1, Q2 and Pairs on day 1, 500 yards on day 2 and so on). This took out delays from moving the targets from distance to distance and reduced the possibility of damage from mishandling.

In the 300m events the Welsh and Northern Irish came to the fore, with the Welsh – Gaz Morris and Robert Oxford – beating Northern Ireland to the Gold Medal in the Pairs:-

Wales:	Morris 579.20	
	Oxford 582.15	Total 1161.35
N Ireland:	Calvert 592.21	
	Alexander 558.11	Total 1150.32

In the Badge Match (individual, concurrent with the Pairs), David Calvert's 592.21 was enough to see off David Wright of Australia (589.16) and Robert Oxford (582.15). Come the Individual, however, Robert Oxford turned the tables with 586.26 to strike Gold, edging out David Wright's 586.16 and David Calvert's 585.23 in a thoroughly tight finish – Robert finishing with the necessary 10 on his final shot.

By this time events in Iceland were making their presence felt, and three of the TR teams failed to arrive – Scotland, England and Guernsey – and Canada was left a man short, Paul Tremblay having got trapped in London. Nevertheless the 20 shooters present set about a very competitive Queen's Prize event under thoroughly novel conditions. Practice showed that the targets were well capable of accurate recording of shots at long range which was a relief. During the match, all cross shots were easily detected but there is anecdotal suggestion of slight variations in elevation between targets which is being looked into (the late



The 300 Metres Individual medal winners.



The 300 Metres Pairs medal winners.

(Photos: Martin Watkins)



The Queen's Prize Pairs medal winners.



Gaz Morris wins gold!

(Photos: Bob Oxford)

arrival of ammunition meant that target calibration was not possible to the desired standards prior to the matches). Unfortunately, some problems with the ammunition became apparent, with live rounds failing to extract if needing to be changed and, spectacularly, a round with no propellant. Fortunately the recipient (Jim Corbett) was sufficiently alert not to load another round, and the bullet was knocked clear of the barrel with a cleaning rod. Following an incident where Geoff Grenfell had two misses in the same shoot, one of his shots was (almost certainly) manifested by a bullet hole in the target number plate at 6 o'clock. This was most unfortunate, as he was shooting at the top of his form at the time. Further quality inspection processes will be put in place prior to issue of the Games ammo. The inherent accuracy of the ammunition is not in doubt, the Pairs/Badge shooters obtaining five 150s from 20 shooters, and the Individual no less than eight 105s and another three 150s – these on the relatively tight ICFRA target.

To add to the interest of the proceedings, the flags at Kadarapur were of non-standard (too light) material and were 'sleeved' onto the flagpoles rather than having a halyard. Visibility can be very poor, with the sun sideways onto the target, considerable pollutant smog being evident in the early mornings, and the occasional plume of dust lifted from the range floor. Unfortunately, these factors were all present for the final shoots at 1000 yards for the Pairs, Badge and the Individual Matches. Young eyes were best, and Gaz Morris completed a fine meeting for Wales by winning the Gold in the Individual Match, with the NZ pair of Collings and Snowden triumphing in the Pairs.

Badge Match

1	R McQuillan (NIR)	$148.11 + 136.04 = 284.15$
2	B Carter (NZ)	$146.15 + 136.08 = 282.23$
3	D Richardson (JER)	$150.16 + 132.05 = 282.21$

Pairs Match

1	NZ	585.55 (Snowdon 295.31, Collings 290.24)
2	AUS	577.51 (Grenfell 294.26, Corbett 283.25)
3	NIR	576.43 (Calvert 293.26, Alexander 283.17)

Individual

1	G Morris (WAL)	$105.17 + 149.18 + 143.07 = 397.42$
2	P Haasbroek (SA)	$105.14 + 149.14 + 140.13 = 394.41$
3	J Corbett (AUS)	$105.11 + 150.13 + 140.09 = 394.33$

Under all the circumstances, the scoring was extraordinarily high. After a medal ceremony notable for the adulation for the President of ISSF, and the total ignoring of the Range Designer and President of ICFRA, we dispersed – some with a bad taste in the mouth – to our various flights, mainly untroubled by the efforts of Eyjafjallajökul.

Postscript

Following the preliminary review of the CSF Championships, consideration is being given to the possibility of using two non-Indian Range Officers and a non-Indian Armourer at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi. Details are sparse at this stage, other than the dates of (or within) 23 September to 14 October. Anyone who might be interested in acting should please make themselves known to Phil Harrison at phil@nosirrah01.freemove.co.uk.

AUNTS AND UNCLES SCHEME – A RETROSPECTIVE

by Tim Elliott

I once, in these pages, described an Aunt or Uncle as a cross between Solomon the Wise and a shoulder to cry on, with the added bonus of possibly introducing a new member into a Club and of almost certainly confirming a young firer as a shooter for life.

Solomon was in retrospect (this is, after all, a “retrospective”) a poor reference point, having a reputation for casual despotic brutality which was unsurpassed in his era; but it is the myth that counts and Bisley is a place of myths and (often inaccurate) history. This article is an attempt to preclude myths in the future and to give long-overdue acknowledgement to the man whose idea (with his permission, I would add) I plagiarised so happily.

In his remarks at the Umbrella Tent Meeting on 22 July 1998, the then Chairman, John de Havilland, strongly reinforced the NRA’s commitment to helping younger firers, and made specific mention of the Aunts and Uncles scheme. It had indeed by then become an integral part of that commitment and, before I handed the scheme over in 2009 to Bruce Roth to run (please see his routine article elsewhere in this Journal), 179 people had, amazingly, contributed their expertise, patience – and sense of humour – to it.

It is often not realised that the scheme is open to firers of all ages and nationalities and, in recent years, many overseas competitors, even those on national or provincial teams, have taken advantage of one of the scheme’s most useful spin-offs: the Guides to the Meeting, tailored nowadays to meet the requirements of adults as well as cadets.

Likewise, dozens of experienced firers help younger shooters without being part of the scheme in any formal sense, and many schools and cadet units run their own programmes. I like to think that this is because the fullbore shooting world, alone of any of the sports with which I am familiar, fosters this constructive and unselfish attitude. The scheme is, I believe, unique in world sport and it is a cause of much satisfaction that so many countries are now contemplating their own versions independently of and based upon the NRA’s example.

But it is time for a bit of (accurate) history.

In the early 1980s, John Rowley, the charismatic master in charge of Gresham’s School who did so much to put his school on the Bisley map both literally (the Gresham’s Pavilion) and figuratively, introduced a scheme for his squads whereby he arranged for them to receive expert help for the Imperial Meeting from among his many shooting friends. It was rumoured, a mite uncharitably, that he used to recruit these in the bar of the North London; but one should never put one’s faith in rumours.

Then, with a greater than parochial vision, he extended this by offering help to young firers from other schools, relying on his wide network of shooting contacts to meet the resulting obligation. But, as with all such personal initiatives, there came a time when the very success it generated threatened to overwhelm it. Perhaps he did not realise just how great was the need for such a scheme in the esoteric and hitherto somewhat hermetic world of fullbore shooting. Other sports would do well to take a leaf out of his book.

Since the late 1970s I had independently been running a similar scheme as part of my training programme for the Athelings and it seemed logical to adopt and extend John’s initiative, adding his team of coaches to my own. He was kind enough, when approached in 1993, to give this idea his blessing and support.

And, like Topsy, it “just grewed”.

By 1996, the NRA had agreed to give whatever backing and administrative help that might be needed. Also in 1996, the scheme was widened to include all young firers and not just those coming into the sport through the schools.

In 1998 and to fill a major gap, a “Guide to the Imperial Meeting” for cadet first-timers was written. In 2003, one for adults was added and in the same year the scheme was opened to all comers (the Guides are updated annually and can be downloaded from the website).

I have now stood back from the scheme and it is in the provenly capable (and, above all, younger) hands of Bruce Roth. I wish him – and the scheme – a long and successful future, which may well, I fear, be coming under intrusive and potentially terminal threat from trends in modern legislation, however laudable in the right context, where young people are concerned.

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Jonathan Branch Kent University formerly Elizabeth College

Michael Creber formerly Elizabeth College

Robert Hull Salesian College

Robert Hyndman Birmingham University formerly RGS Guildford

Paul Lanigan London School of Economics formerly Tonbridge School

Charles Rivett-Carnac formerly Epsom College

Lucie Watson formerly Cheltenham College

After what seemed like a week-long flight, we eventually landed in Johannesburg on Thursday 18 March and got off the plane; and to our relief the luggage (and rifle) collection went smoothly. Leaving the airport in search of our hire car, a fireball of heat hit us in the face. Unfortunately, the airport barriers did not understand the concept of a trailer, resulting in Paul Lanigan having to pull the trailer manually out of the car park. We were soon on our way to our first base at Reitvlei Camp. After being forewarned about the basic accommodation we were about to sleep in, we were pleasantly surprised to find our housing for the start of the tour was chalets by a lake, backing on to a nature reserve. Due to insufficient space, the female members of the team stayed with the Burgers, just a short 30 minutes drive away.

Our next port of call was the Burger's house, where we had our first braai (South African barbecue) of the tour, followed by a swim. The Burgers were very hospitable and it was a really great start to our South African adventure.

On Friday we took to the road for the 40 minute journey to the Monte Casino complex, where we spent the morning at the Bird Park, watching Rob getting attacked by cockatoos, Tommy charming the toucan, Paul scaring Lulu in the snake enclosure and numerous bird impressions from the team.

That evening we went to the Karoo steak house. Four of the team enjoyed ostrich, whilst the rest had the biggest steaks we'd ever seen. Only a few managed to brave the dessert that followed.

On Saturday we all departed for Glen Afric where we were introduced to General and Mrs Wildman and our driver, Ellias, before starting an epic tour of the grounds. Amongst sightings of most of the Big 5, we were lucky enough to meet a mother elephant and her two calves. There was also an amusing encounter with a randy zebra and a stubborn hippo. After the drive, we enjoyed ridiculously sized burgers before thanking the General for his hospitality and heading to Cameleon Village Curio Market.

We spent Sunday morning travelling round the nature reserve opposite our huts, whilst Simon went to fetch Rob Hyndman from the airport. Finally, the team was complete!

In the afternoon, we went to the Lesedi Culture Village where we were entertained with traditional African dancing and a tour of reconstructed traditional tribal villages. A particular highlight of the trip was Rob Hyndman's stick fight with a tribesman, which Rob debatably won. The trip finished with a huge buffet meal featuring buffalo, crocodile and ostrich.

We finished the night packing for the long drive to Bloemfontein in the morning – not a drive any of the team were particularly looking forward to.

The journey started. It was broken up by several stops – the restaurant where Lulu decided to wear her glass of Sprite instead of drinking it, another where some team members had great enjoyment in the kiddies playground, and a final one where nothing but refuelling the vehicles happened. Finally, we arrived at our home for the next week – Gen De Wet Ranges at Bloemfontein. At first glance the accommodation looked like a run-down, white shed, but after further inspection we found it to be more comfortable than that. After a quick tour of the complex, unpacking and checking the rifles and a shower, we went to the Longhorn, a local steak house, where some rather large slabs of meat were eaten. Jonathan Branch was appointed Captain and so to bed, to prepare for our first day of shooting.

Tuesday was tough. It is fair to say that none of us found it easy. After our briefings back at Bisley, we were apprehensive about what was in store with the threat of heat stroke, being stabbed by devilish thorns or just generally melting in the African sun. If we are honest, it was not as bad as we had been told. But, and this is a big but, as teenagers we thought that we knew best. We were not really prepared for it. The heat was not hotter than the surface of the sun, but it was still enough to make the whole job of shooting significantly harder than we initially thought. This, coupled with the very tricky wind meant that several of the team were disappointed with their scores at 300, 600 and 800 metres. However there were some

good shoots with Rob Hull and Lulu achieving second place in the Under 19 and the Ladies competitions respectively. After a long and draining day, the whole team were ready for an early night.

Wednesday started with the Hamilton team match, which we shot alongside. The top score for the match was from Rob Hull, with 98 points out of a possible 105. In the afternoon we shot alongside the Rhodes team match that consisted of 2 sighters and 10 rounds at 800 and 900 metres. Conditions were tricky. The top score of the afternoon was 91.2 from Paul Lanigan. The entertainment for the day was provided by a number of meerkats playing on the firing point ahead. It must be noted that this did not distract the coaches from the job at hand. The evening was spent enjoying refreshments at the bar, meeting the local shooters and playing football by the accommodation.

Thursday was our earliest morning so far with breakfast at 06:30 followed by the SABU Opening Ceremony. The Free State Cup was the major competition today, consisting of two sighters and seven rounds at 300, 500 and 600 metres. Possibles were shot by Paul, Rob Hull and Mike with a great 102.

After a filling lunch, we headed out for some more team practice, shooting at 300 and 600 metres alongside the Rhodes Cup. The wind was once again quite challenging but the coaches did a fine job and the shooters held out for the incredibly tiring 2 sighters and 15 rounds. The highest overall score for the afternoon was Chaz with at total 142 out of a possible 150. Whilst the team were struggling through all this intense shooting, the Commandant was lying in the sun, sun-bathing with his rifle bolted to the ground shooting F Class (although he did come and support our tough team practice).

Friday was relatively cool and the lack of sun was somewhat surprising. However, that did not stop Rob Hull from badly burning his legs after failing to use sun cream. At 300, we shot 2 sighters and 10 shots to count, then at 600 metres a 2 and 11 to complete the Dalrymple Cup, then another 600 metres, the Kings Norton. In the afternoon we were set to shoot at both 800 metres and 900 metres. After a heavy downpour and lightning just behind the targets, we were rather hoping it would be delayed but we continued to shoot positively, unlike some of our South African counterparts who did not wish to get wet! The rain did not seem to put off Chaz, who shot a 48.2 at 900 metres, earning him a Merit. That evening, we thoroughly cleaned out our rifles, many of which had got water in their bedding. We had an early night, ready for the State President's first stage on Saturday morning, and our first team match in the afternoon.

Saturday shooting began with the State President First Stage, which is the equivalent to Queen's I at Bisley. Chaz showed fine shooting form, dropping only one

point over the three distances, earning him a gold medal in his class. We then left the range for lunch and to prepare for the match.

We were back out in good time and set up on the 800 metres firing point. This range was shot efficiently and effectively, despite the wind being ridiculously difficult. This left us a team score of 407.18, just six points ahead of our South African rivals. We packed up our kit as soon as possible and made our way back to 900 metres to relax, so that the coaches could continue to study the wind. Unfortunately 900 metres did not go as well as planned, due to extremely slow markers who had to be given Message 4s every other shot. We also had rifle problems. However these issues were overcome to leave us with a 900 metres score of 389.10, an incredible overall 46 points clear of the South African Juniors, confirming how tricky the conditions were. The top scorer of the day was Jonathan Branch, who scored 140.7 ex 150. Despite the teams dissatisfaction on how the shoot had gone their professional performance enormously impressed many South Africans who marvelled that a junior team could be so well organised and proficient.

After the first part of the prizegiving we went out for our official team party to thank our guests for everything they had done for us. The evening, at the Kalahari Fish Restaurant, was filled with good food, good conversation and was a great success. We presented team glasses to our guests as tokens of appreciation.

Finally it was Sunday and the team enjoyed a luxurious lie-in before a day at a waterpark. On arriving at Mazelspoort, we all changed into our swimwear and enjoyed the park's facilities – including the swimming pool and water tunnels. We had a really filling carvery lunch, a full three course Sunday roast, and afterwards (after all the other clients had left) Tommy strolled up to the piano and showed off his considerable musical skills. The musical prowess of the team was further demonstrated when Paul and Chaz also entertained the staff, and us, with a medley of tunes and duets. Then the team went into the refreshingly cool pool and played water polo. We then had flume-based fun and afterwards returned to camp. After hitting the light refreshments and an evening meal of takeaway pizzas, we went to bed, mentally preparing ourselves for the looming final phase of shooting.

Monday was back to the usual 06:00 rise and we were out on the range for 08:00 ready to shoot the Jack Mitchley at 300m followed by the President's Cup at 600m and 800m then finishing the morning with the Col Bodley Memorial Match at 900m before lunch. After this action packed morning, we held a specially arranged team practice, checking wind zeros before the Junior Protea on Wednesday.

Tuesday's State President's II at 300, 500 and 600 metres, was a great success with Rob Hyndman, Rob



Waiting to shoot.



The team in action.



The two teams after the match.



Mum, Dad please let us come home – we'll be good we promise!



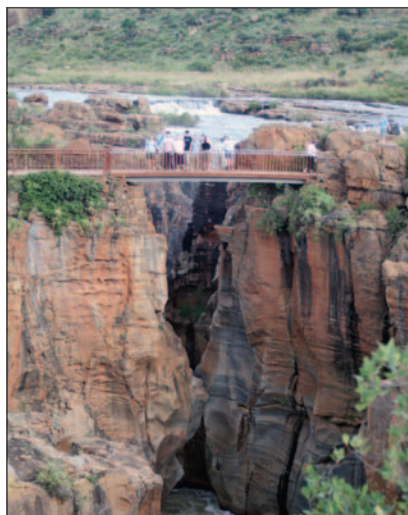
Strictly Come Dancing hits South Africa!



"Come on lads I think I see a McDonalds over there!"



The Commandant gets a bath!



"Who forgot the bungee?!"



"Wheeeeeeeeeee!"

Hull and Charles being placed 99th, 100th and 101st respectively. After a light lunch some of us decided that a trip to the mall was called for. We returned to the camp in time for a braai held for us and the South African Juniors by Fritz Naumann and other SABU members, in particular Gerrit Lamprecht of the East Cape who generously provided the meat. Everyone relaxed and enjoyed a good meal and conversation. During the course of the evening, we discovered that four members of the team (Jonny, Chaz and the two Robs) had made it through to the State President's Final, which was greeted with great joy and congratulations!

Wednesday and everybody was feeling somewhat nervous as the Junior Protea match at 300, 600 and 900 metres was in the morning. The first drama came when Paul (who was firing the pilot shot) had a misfire, reloaded and then misfired again. Having dragged him off the firing point, it turned out that his trigger had broken. We eventually got through all firers, with Paul shooting with Lulu's rifle. At 300 metres we accumulated a six point lead, helped by Rob Hull's fantastic 50.2. Luckily 600 metres was relatively easy, and we managed to increase our lead to 14 points. At 900 metres it was rather harder and we were not helped early on by an unexplained miss. However we recovered well and finished the 900 metres shoot, with the South Africans gaining just one point on us. We had therefore managed to win by 13 points to become only the fourth GB U19 team to win the match in thirteen years, and the third team to win both the Protea and the Long Range match which had taken place on Saturday.

Having slipped out of team mode and back into individual mode, four firers went off to the 800 metres point to start the State President's Final. The remainder of the team turned up to support the finalists, having tidied up and packed as best as they could. All four managed to catch most of the fast wind changes, with Rob Hull achieving a fantastic 74.8 at 800 metres, and 73.6 at 900 metres. There was a small panic when Lulu managed to lose her camera, but it was quickly returned having been found by a range officer. Having cheered the champion off the range we quickly returned to the accommodation to change into our formal dress for the prizegiving at which the whole team went up to collect the Simon Fraser Trophy and the medals for the two team matches. Chaz, Tommy, Paul and Rob Hull also received medals for various individual triumphs. After this, the team hosted a braai, for the SA Juniors and various other guests. After a fantastic day of shooting and an amazing steak cooked by Jacko, the whole team went to bed with a smile on their faces.

On Thursday we retraced the six hour journey from the ranges, back to the chalets at Reitvlei. Everyone was very quiet on the journey, with the successes of yesterday still sinking in. For dinner that night, we

went to a restaurant called Prima Piatta, where the team stuffed themselves on pizza and steaks.

Friday was another exhausting travelling day. We travelled from the Reitvlei to Hazyview in Mpumalanga, near the Kruger National Park. The journey took over seven hours, many of which were spent asleep (apart from our poor drivers Natalie, Simon and Jacko). Our accommodation was in rondavels holding five or six people in each, with each one equipped with a kitchen, bathroom and more importantly an air conditioning unit. They also featured a thatch roof, although this didn't prove to be entirely waterproof in one case! The team spent much of the evening in the swimming pool. Although we weren't given a recommended bed time, most of us dropped off very early after a long day travelling. It was also a good way of escaping the torrential rain.

Saturday started with a slightly later than usual departure from the rondavels for the canopy tour, a zip wire trip through the forest. Upon arrival we were fitted for safety equipment, split into groups, shown and rehearsed the method for movement and stopping on the zip wire. The tour included nine different rides of varying speeds and distances. The highlight was Elize Burger failing to brake and crashing into a tree. The evening meal was a delicious braai of kebabs cooked by Deon and Jeanette Burger, and we all enjoyed the relaxed environment in camp.

Easter Sunday started with a 05:00 departure for the Kruger National Park. Understandably, everyone was rather sleepy, but it didn't take long before we saw our first game. Springbok and kudu were the first sightings of the day, along with a single elephant grazing next to the road. We visited a bird hide on Lake Panic, where the team saw a kingfisher, several other birds and some huge spiders. At our next stop we ate a picnic breakfast of burgers, hot dogs, chocolate milk and Easter eggs overlooking the Sabie River, where hippo were spotted amongst the nearby reeds.

We were extremely lucky to see some giraffes by the side of the road. Less than 100 metres further on was a herd of elephants. We were then gifted with another treat when a pack of wild dogs, a very rare sight, walked along the road next to us. Later, after a period of not spotting any wildlife at all, Tommy spotted a concealed lion under a tree, which posed for a while before running away.

After lunch we saw a hippo which was out of the water, a great sight for photographers, then a troop of baboons relaxing on the road – a few were causing mischief by attempting to steal car aerials. During this time, impala ran across the road, appearing to jump over car bonnets. As the sun was setting, ten minutes before leaving the park, hyenas wondered across the road, finishing a fantastic 12 hours for us in the park.

Everyone was very pleased by the amount of wildlife spotted. Paul was especially pleased to find that his unidentified object turned out, thanks to Simon's high powered camera, to have been a rhino. A 'light' meal was consumed at Pappa's Kitchen, an Italian restaurant, after which we returned to camp and turned in for the night, tired but exhilarated by the fantastic game we had seen.

Monday and finally a lie in until 06:45! We took a short drive to the water rafting centre, where we got kitted up and received a briefing from the head guide. We then loaded onto our rafts and set off down the Sabie River. Half way down, we stopped for drinks and crisps, whilst a select few took part in 'butt sliding' and rapid surfing in the river. We then continued our trip, which ended in a massive 100 metres long rapid. On return to the centre we changed into dry clothes and enjoyed a lunch of lasagne before returning to camp where some headed for the pool, and others to the mall, where nearly all the shops were closed. We all enjoyed a braai of steak and pork sausages before retiring to bed, ready for the next busy day.

On Tuesday we drove to Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre for wild animals. On arrival we were given an excellent talk on how the centre had been started and how there was not enough natural habitat left in Africa for the animals. The centre's primary aim is to rescue and save animals and release them back into the wild and failing that keeping them as "ambassadors" for their species. The first animal we met was a cheetah that we were lucky enough to be able to stroke. Other animals included wild dogs, a hyena called "Shadow" some honey badgers, eagles, lions, a leopard and a two month old baby black rhino. Nearly all the animals (apart from the wild dogs) were tame and showed a lot of affection towards our guide. We also met the vultures, and fed them whilst they perched on our outstretched arm. Lulu and Rob Hull's vultures decided that they didn't want to leave their arms and instead walked up to their shoulder, resulting in some painful scratches!

Lunch was at the Cotton Club Cafe under a malting tree. We then drove round Blyde River Canyon, the third biggest canyon in the world, stopping at some viewing points to take some photos of the fantastic views including the Bourke's Luck Potholes and the Berlin Falls. Dinner was a braai back at camp, and whilst it was prepared the team went for a quick night time swim.

After a relaxed start on Wednesday we headed off to see more of the geological features of Blyde River Canyon. First we visited the Pinnacle, a tall and thin lone standing slab of rock, then after a short drive, God's Window with absolutely stunning views across the forest and in the far distance the border with Mozambique. After buying various trinkets from the Curio market in God's Window car park, we headed

off to Pilgrim's Rest, the site of a gold-rush in the late 19th century. Now there is a working museum showing what life was like at the turn of the century. After a late lunch at a pancake house and some extra time to wander round the town, we drove to Sabie and went to see the Lone Creek waterfall, our final waterfall. This was very impressive as we got very close to the base of the 100m falls. In the evening, we ate at the Wild Fig restaurant which offered various exotic meats such as Crocodile and Kudu. The Commandant presented Merits to those who had won them and thank-you gifts of team glasses to Jeanette and Elize Burger. The rain started again!

Thursday was a fairly late start after packing our kit in preparation for departure. The journey to the private game reserve that was to be our base for the last night should have included some more amazing views and a stop at Long Tom Pass but visibility was just over two cars length so it took around four hours with no views. Upon arrival, at Kwanja Game Reserve, we were greeted by the owners Anita and Jan Venter and taken on a game drive. The drive took around half an hour during which we fleetingly saw kudu, impala and waterbuck. But travelling in the open-topped vehicle through the thorny bush created much hilarity as some of the team had personal encounters with some very thorny local foliage. Back at camp the Venters kindly put on a delicious braai with drinks and the tenderest of steaks. Sitting round the fire in their Lapa, everyone was pleased to have the evening to relax and recharge batteries ready for the following day's long journey home.

Friday started with a great full English breakfast before we said farewell to the Venters and headed back to the Burger's home near Pretoria. After one final South African meal at a local Spur we changed, repacked, loaded the vehicles and went to the airport. Having said a fond farewell and big thank you to Deon, Jeanette and Elize we proceeded to check in. Once the authorities had decided how they wished to handle the rifles, with order and counter order we eventually had everything checked and were through customs and airside to wait for our flight. At last it was time to board where we found that Peter Turner had worked magic and captured bulkhead seats for most so the flight was much more comfortable than expected, thank you Peter.

After an uneventful flight we touched down 15 minutes ahead of schedule. Cases and rifles duly were recovered and with minimum fuss we were in the coach heading back to Bisley. Rifles were secured and bags repacked before, with a degree of sadness, goodbyes were said and we dispersed. It was the end of a momentous tour.

We would like to say a very big thank you to everyone, far too numerous to name but you know who you are, who made it possible.

THE PHOENIX MEETING 2010

by Neil Francis, Alan Keating, Gwyn Roberts and Alan Whittle





This year's Phoenix Meeting, held over the Bank Holiday weekend of 28 to 30 May, attracted yet another record number of Gallery Rifle shooters to one of our Flagship events with over 560 shooters entering 3058 individual events – 5% up on last year. The Phoenix Meeting continues to grow from strength to strength and this is thanks to the combined effort of both NSC staff and volunteers from within the GR community. Brian Thomas, Sally Agnew and Sally Philcox were the main people responsible for the success of this event, which demanded a great deal of hard work and commitment for several months prior to the competition, as well as during it, where they were constantly on hand performing their various roles. Chris Farr, Charles Murton and the ever efficient stats crew also performed their duties admirably as did Jane Shields and the rest of the ladies on the reception desk, making sure this huge event ran as smoothly as it did each day.

For some the Phoenix weekend starts much earlier, and the Range Officers and other crews had to start shooting their own matches from the Tuesday morning up until Thursday evening. This format helps ensure that there are always an adequate number of experienced people available to run the competitors through their matches, which is usually non-stop from 08:00 each morning up until around 18:00 on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The Phoenix simply couldn't be run without the expertise and commitment given each year by this band of volunteers, and everyone concerned in the event is extremely grateful to them for all of their help and guidance!

Another group of people to arrive early on camp were a small contingent of shooters from South Africa. Four members representing the South African Hunting and Game Conservation Association spent Wednesday and Thursday familiarising themselves with gallery rifles and picking up some coaching tips from GB shooters Gwyn Roberts and Taff Wilcox. Considering they had never shot using these types of firearms or actions before, nor had they ever used turning targets along

with the quick exposures used in some of the "short" events, they all acquitted themselves admirably and went on to post some very encouraging individual scores throughout the rest of the weekend. Early indications show that the South African shooters will adapt themselves very quickly to our Gallery Rifle disciplines and that they will definitely be a force to be reckoned with in the not so distant future!

The Phoenix Meeting appeals to such a broad spectrum of shooters because it offers a huge choice of individual disciplines that in turn can be shot with an almost unlimited number of various types of firearm. Everything from air and long range pistols, to classic military or F Class rifles can be used and many shooters will bring at least three or four different guns with them to shoot with over the weekend.

The weather for this year's Phoenix was pretty good on the whole with only a couple of light showers here and there, although the stiff wind blowing around on the Saturday and Sunday certainly made it challenging for the majority of people to achieve a good score on their cards. Despite this, though, everyone looked as though they were having a good time and this also included our friends from Germany and Ireland, albeit with reduced numbers in their teams this year due to political and legislative problems back home. With a record number of events being shot this year the ranges were certainly busy and many of the Gallery Rifle "shorts" events were sold out before the Meeting even began. For those shooters that entered online, shooting their chosen events wasn't a problem, but for some who just turned up on the day expecting to be able to shoot half a dozen matches or so, unfortunately they weren't so lucky. Due to the demand and limited number of spaces available in some of the matches, future competitors would be best advised to use the online booking system that we have in operation. This will hopefully ensure that you get to shoot all of your preferred matches at times or on days to suit so please bear this in mind for any future competitions to help avoid any disappointment.



Many rifles and pistols were taken home by their happy new owners over the Phoenix Meeting weekend.

The diverse types of firearms that are catered for at the Phoenix are complemented by the wide range of goods offered for sale at the very popular trade fair. This alone is the reason why many people attend this event as pretty much anything that you could want or need will be available somewhere along the aisles. From the major importers like Midway UK to local firearms dealers from around the country there was certainly enough on offer to please most people and once again the trade fair proved to be a huge success.

Once the last shots had been fired down range on the Sunday afternoon, the stats crew were working flat out to compile a complete set of results for people to check prior to the prize giving which this year was to be held in the Bisley Gun Club. All in all a total of 70 pages of results made their way over to a full to capacity prizegiving ceremony where the trophies and medals were presented by the Chairman of the Shooting Committee, Iain Robertson. A new format was used this year to try and reduce the amount of time that it took to hand out all of the silverware, which is usually around the two hour mark. Although it did take quite a few events being called out before a winner was found who was actually present to receive it, the prizegiving duties proceeded to carry on very smoothly and the time taken was reduced compared to the previous year. A total of 64 Grand Master medals were gained by competitors this year and the standard of Gallery Rifle shooting across the board seems to be improving all the time. There are



Our new friends from South Africa are left to right Deon De Villiers, Andries Erasmus, Gwyn Roberts (GB), Taff Wilcox (GB), Nic Roets and Calvin Vlok.



Having to run both themselves and the competitors through every single match over five or six days is always a long and tiring job for the ROs, but it is also very rewarding and satisfying at the same time. Would you be able to help out on the range next time? If so, please get in touch!

three main Gallery Rifle trophies which are presented at the Phoenix Meeting each year and the winners of these were:

The Sue Mansbridge Rose Bowl Aggregate of 1500 GRSB & GRCF

1	John Robinson	2990 227X
2	Gwyn Roberts	2976 236X
3	David Hackett	2974 205X

The Bianchi Aggregate Trophy Aggregate of Bianchi GRSB & GRCF

1	Gwyn Roberts	3810 319X
2	Dave Emery	3724 259X
3	Mel Beard	3702 273X

The Phoenix Gallery Rifle Champion Aggregate of 1500 GRSB & GRCF and Bianchi GRSB & GRCF

1	Gwyn Roberts	6786 555X
2	Mel Beard	6593 420X
3	Neil Hornsby	6250 410X

A big thank you must go to all of the competitors, range officers and organisers who made this year's Phoenix Meeting yet another great success for the NRA/NSC, and we look forward to hosting the Gallery Rifle National Championships here again at Bisley at the end of August. So until then, good shooting!



Ireland's Jeff Kehoe receiving one of his many medals from Iain Robertson, Chairman of the Shooting Committee.

PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL MATCH REPORT

by Alan Whittle

Gallery Rifle Achieves GB Status

Just twelve years since gallery rifle replaced pistol shooting at the Bisley Spring Bank Holiday Meeting, the discipline has matured with truly international dimensions as this year the National Rifle Association has bestowed the coveted GB status on our international team. The debut event for the GB team was on the Bank Holiday Monday 31 May 2010 of the Phoenix Meeting, when it fielded two representative teams against Ireland and Germany.

The chosen format for international gallery rifle shooting is the 1500 Match – a complex mixture of rapid fire and reloading at 10, 15 and 25 metres, with precision multi-position (kneeling, sitting, weak and strong shoulder shooting) stages at 25 and 50 metres. The 1500 is seen as the ultimate test for gallery rifle shooting and as the name suggested comprises 150 shots fired in an hour and a half, or thereabouts, a ten point maximum for each shot fired making the 1500 maximum possible score that the name implies. The firearm of choice for gallery rifle shooting is the under-lever rifle in traditional pistol calibres, usually .38" special / .357" magnum or the corresponding .44" chambering.

About five or six years after the adoption of gallery rifle shooting we found that other countries had developed an interest in the sport, with Ireland effectively suffering a pistol embargo and the gallery rifle seen as an extension of M1 carbine match shooting, popular in Germany. Thus the Phoenix Meeting has had an international feel to it since 2005. Initially the host nation badged its team the "Phoenix" team and in 2008 it graduated to UK status under the NRA banner and finally this year became the GB Gallery Rifle Team.

The Phoenix International has developed into two matches running parallel to each other, with Germany, Ireland and the host nation usually fielding two teams each to compete for the Phoenix International Trophy and the Phoenix International Cup. The Phoenix International is one of three regular international gallery rifle dates in the shooting calendar and this year the Phoenix Trophy was also designated the European Championship.

Somewhat uncharacteristically match day was graced with overcast but calm conditions for the first time in many years and eventually the whole scene was graced with warm sunshine. This year the visitors, who had both suffered logistical problems, were only able to field a single team each, so their team score counted for both the Trophy and the Cup matches.

Having been involved in the Phoenix International since 2005 I was particularly proud to be selected for the first GB team and I shot with the International Cup team. It was my fourth international outing and I do

not know whether it is more nerve racking to shoot in the match itself, or, as has become tradition, to be a non-shooting team member acting in support during shooting. I was amply supplied with drinks during breaks in shooting and the supporters also provided encouragement, although somewhat unwarranted in my case, as I chided myself for the points dropped at the longer distance.

Some outstanding individual performances with eight shooters breaking 1490; John Robinson (Ireland) top scored, dropping just a single point and returning a magnificent 1499.

The five-strong teams aggregate their four best scores, making a possible 6000 points available to each team. Over the years Germany and Ireland have constantly improved their performances and this year the match was taken right to the wire. In the Trophy Match and European Championships the scores were tied, with GB and Ireland each scoring 5959, dropping just 41 points, Germany were 39 points behind on 5920. The match was therefore decided on X count, with GB (426 X) coming out Champions by the narrowest of margins from Ireland (408X).

In the Cup Match the GB team, despite two 1490+ scores, fell 10 points behind Ireland on 5949. As can be seen from the full scores below the key to team shooting is consistency and on the day the Irish performance was rock steady and deserves to take the laurels.

Phoenix International Trophy and European Championship

GB

Gwyn Roberts	1497
Pete Watts	1494
Dave Hackett	1491
Neil Francis	1477
Phil Stead	1471
Total	5959 (426X)

Ireland

John Robinson	1499
Jeff Kehoe	1492
Declan Byrne	1484
Martin Hayes	1484
Kieran Barry	1458
Total	5959 (408X)

Germany

Frank Heymal	1491
Torstein Riewe	1483
Rolf Filbig	1476
Bruno Blüße	1470
Uwe Zahner	1350
Total	5920 (333X)



The GB Trophy Team at the rapid fire stage.

Phoenix International Cup

Ireland

John Robinson	1499
Jeff Kehoe	1492
Declan Byrne	1484
Martin Hayes	1484
Kieran Barry	1458
Total	5959 (408X)

GB

Taff Wilcox	1496
Mike Chinnery	1491
Norman Brown	1486
Alan Whittle	1476
Dave Holt	1469
Total	5949 (412X)

Germany

Frank Heymal	1491
Torstein Riewe	1483
Rolf Filbig	1476
Bruno Blüße	1470
Uwe Zahner	1350
Total	5920 (333X)

This year the Phoenix Meeting was host to South African Hunters Sports Shooting, who are interested in joining the gallery rifle community and their Club President, Deon De Villiers, was kind enough to present the prizes to the competing teams. At the International Reception Dinner the evening before match day, it was obvious that the South Africans enjoyed what they had seen and declared their intention to enter teams in the 2011 Phoenix Meeting. Such a welcome addition would both extend gallery rifle beyond the European frontiers, whilst at the same time making GB team membership a more tantalising prospect for those with an inclination to travel – watch this space!

I mentioned earlier that both Ireland and Germany had reduced teams this year, due to licensing difficulties in Ireland and issues within der Bund der Militär und Polizeischützen (BDMP), the shooting governing body

in Germany. Both teams are confident that these issues will be resolved by next spring and we may see up to eight teams competing for the trophies next time around.

What next? GB will be entering teams in Ireland, at the Fermoy Rifle Club, European Open International Gallery Rifle Competition, from 9 to 11 July 2010. I was lucky enough to shoot for the UK team in this event in 2008 and team members can look forward to a very warm welcome and, judging by the recent standards, they can also expect an equally warm welcome and competition on the shooting ground. In November Germany host their International Open Gallery Rifle Match in Leitmar and I know a full strength German team on home soil will be quite a handful. I hope to bring you reports on both these events.

If you are involved in gallery rifle shooting and would like to be considered for the GB team then it is simple. Just enter as many classified 1500 matches as you can, there are four held at Bisley each year; the Spring Action Weekend (March), the Phoenix Meeting (May), the Gallery Rifle National Championships (August) and the Autumn Action Weekend (October). In addition many regional clubs host classified matches, including Derby, Stourport, Basildon, Cheshunt and Frome. Anyone entering 1500 matches at these events will be automatically considered for inclusion in the team for the forthcoming year based on their achievements throughout the season.

Each year the NRA invite applications from the shooting community to captain the GB team. The NRA Gallery Rifle Sub-Committee has the unenviable duty of appointing the Captain based on the application and supporting testimonials from NRA members. The GB Gallery Rifle Team Captain for the 2010 season is Ashley Dagger who is the Chairman of Frome Pistol Club in Somerset. Ashley has been an active shooter for over twenty years and is also a shooting member of the GB squad although this is not a necessary qualifying prerequisite.



The successful Ireland Phoenix Cup winning team - with Deon de Villiers from SA Hunters Sports Shooters presenting the Phoenix Cup.

THE BRITISH CADET RIFLE TEAM (THE ATHELINGS)

A BRIEF HISTORY

The first exchange visits of cadet teams took place in 1910, when parties of cadets from Australia, New Zealand and Canada came to England, and a contingent of 12 English cadets under Major McCalmont MP, Adjutant of Eton College OTC visited Canada. Many cadets from the self-governing Dominions came here in 1911 for the Coronation, and the British-Canadian exchange visits for cadet shooting teams (then called "Fire Units") were resumed in 1912 and 1913.

These early interchanges were fostered by the Imperial Cadet Association, founded in 1908 by Surgeon Captain RJE Hanson, to create and maintain links between the cadet movements in the "Mother Country", Dominions and Colonies. Resulting from this linkage, Surgeon Captain Hanson received in 1928 an official invitation from the Secretary of the DCRA for a party of two Officers and twelve Cadets to take part in the Annual Meeting at Connaught in August, and then to spend two weeks on tour in Canada. This, and the subsequent regular visits of British Cadet Rifle Teams, was organised by the Imperial Cadet Association, with the approval of the War Office. The 1928 visit was paid for in its entirety by Sir Charles Wakefield Bt, who at the same time presented to DCRA the Cadet Aggregate Trophy which bears his name.

After 1928, annual visits to Canada were firmly established, and they continued without a break until 1939. Surgeon Captain Hanson introduced the name "Atheling" during this period, to describe the members of these teams going overseas to represent their country in shooting. The word, of Anglo-Saxon origin, means a "young noble", usually the heir to

a ruler or leader. In 1932 Surgeon Captain Hanson presented a trophy, which he named in honour of Michael Faraday, to be competed for on the Connaught Ranges, Ottawa, between the Athelings and a team of Canadian cadets.

Surgeon Captain Hanson died in 1940 and the task of restarting the visits after World War II fell mainly on Major JAO Muirhead of Clifton, who had been the Commandant of the 1928 team, and on Major EF Housden of Harrow, Commandant in 1937, who succeeded Surgeon Captain Hanson as Secretary of the Imperial Cadet Association. Post-war difficulties, financial and otherwise, prevented effective action before 1951 when, thanks to the enthusiasm and practical support of Colonel DG Buell, the Director of Cadets in Ottawa, an exchange of rifle teams was arranged. Colonel Buell's efforts provided generous hospitality for Athelings both on the ranges and while on tour in Canada.

During the Fifties, War Office support for the British Cadet team did not include any financial assistance, and consequently the high costs of the visits fell entirely on the parents of the Athelings and on their Schools and Cadet Units. As a result it was sometimes difficult to find a sufficient number of cadets with adequate shooting ability who could afford to go, and in 1958 and 1959 the Athelings tours had to be cancelled.

The position greatly improved in 1960 when, on the occasion of the centenary of the Cadet Forces in UK, the Ministry of Defence undertook to make a substantial grant which almost entirely covered the travel costs of the team. This grant was negotiated by Lieutenant Colonel CE Bond of the City of London School who, in that year, took over the organisation of the Athelings tour, and it has continued until the present time. Since 1960 the number of applications for membership of the team has been far in excess of the places available and cadets can now be selected entirely on their ability as outstanding shots. In 1970, following the setting up of the Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting, which incorporates the former Imperial Cadet Association together with other cadet shooting bodies, Colonel Bond was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel RE Goddard of Epsom, and in 1995 Lieutenant Colonel NS Suffield-Jones, late of Bradfield, who is the present Honorary Organiser of the Atheling Canadian Tour but who hands over to Capt JRW Postle, late of Epsom now of Blundells, in 2010.

As mentioned, reciprocal visits by a team of Royal Canadian Army Cadets started in the early fifties. In 1954 Colonel Buell presented a trophy, named after Alexander Graham Bell, for competition at Bisley by



The 14th Punjab Regiment Club trophy and the two statuettes which will be presented for the Athelings Centenary Aggregate.

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the cadet teams of Canada and the UK. For this match the UK team is selected from all CCF and Open Unit cadets who are shooting in the target rifle events of the NRA Imperial Meeting.

A further match, shot in two stages, at Bisley and at Connaught, was instituted in 1987. It is known as the Rex Goddard, with a trophy presented by Lieutenant Colonel AJ Cafik, Commandant of the RCAC Bisley Teams of 1985 - 1988. Competition is between the Canadian Bisley Team and the Athelings, and was at first based on aggregate scores in the Ashburton/Garry and the Buell matches, the trophy being presented in Canada. Since 1993 this event has been fired as a separate match, using the standard issue cadet rifle of the host country.

Results up to and including 2009 are as follows:

Michael Faraday:

Canadian Cadets	36 wins
Athelings (UK)	29 wins

Alexander G Bell:

Canadian Cadets	11 wins
UK Cadets	45 wins

Rex Goddard:

Canadian Cadets	11 wins
Athelings (UK)	11 wins
(1993: no match)	

This year sees the introduction of the Athelings Centenary Aggregate which will be awarded to the competitors whose scores in the Conan Doyle and Queen's Prize 1st Stage make up the highest aggregate. The 14th Punjab Regiment Club trophy has been presented by the Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting to commemorate the centenary of the first visit by a British Cadet rifle team to Canada in 1910.

Two statuettes, associated with the above Regiment, will also be presented - one each to the highest UK competitor and Overseas competitor eligible to shoot in the Cadet International Match.

ATTENTION MATCH RIFLE AND F CLASS SHOOTERS

All competitors shooting HME firearms in the Match Rifle Meeting must zero their rifles, and obtain a certificate that zeroing has been completed successfully, before collecting their squadding cards. The Zero Range will be open until 17:30 on Pre-Friday and will reopen at 07:00 on First Saturday. Please allow enough time to complete your zeroing and pick up your cards before shooting starts at 08:00. You can check your detail timings by contacting the Squadding Department on 01483 797777 ext 146 after Tuesday 8 July.

100 YEARS AGO

by Ted Molyneux

It was a time of invention and adventure. Science was making progress in all directions and, in particular, the development of flight. Aircraft, of all sorts of weird and wonderful designs, were being created in attempts to conquer the air and a large proportion never got off the ground!

It marked the world's first cross-country air race of 185 miles from London to Manchester for a prize of £10,000. In the event it was a two-man contest between Claude Grahame-White (English) and Louis Paulhan (French) both flying Farman biplanes. Paulhan emerged the winner. There was also, at the Milan Air Meeting, the world's first mid-air collision. This was between the Antoinette monoplane of René Thomas of France which rammed the Farman biplane of Bertram Dickson of England. Both were seriously injured but survived.

EM Forster wrote *Howards End* and the *NRA Journal* was born in July costing one penny. It consisted of 22 pages of text, 12 of advertisements and had the blessing of his Majesty King George V, at that time uncrowned. His father, and our patron of 47 years, His Majesty King Edward VII had died of bronchitis on 6 May. Another notable death was that of Florence Nightingale (the Angel of the Crimea) in August, in London, at the age of 90 years.

In the world of rifle shooting the year saw intensive ballistics experiments and trials to improve ammunition, sights and rifles, spurred on by the realisation that our equipment was not as good as that of some other nations. The Palma Match had indicated that improvements needed to be made if we were to be successfully competitive and there was to be an Empire Match here at Bisley.

Australia, Canada, India and Singapore plus Great Britain contested the match which Great Britain won with a record score of 2177 points and a clear margin of 72 points from Canada with Australia (2045), India (1973) and Singapore (1972) following in that order (see pages 66 to 69).



The 1910 Stats Department.

It was the 51st NRA Annual Prize Meeting and it attracted a large number of competitors from overseas which, in addition to those countries previously mentioned, included South Africa, Shanghai, Guernsey, the Malay States and Egypt.

HM the King's Prize was won by Oxford OTC undergraduate Cpl FR Radice (*right*), who also won the second stage after a three-man tie shoot. He was 22 years old.



The Grand Aggregate was won by Sgt H Ommundsen (GM), Queens Edinburgh Rifles, after a tie shoot with Private Steele of Canada and Private Gale (4th Hampshires).

Bradfield won the Ashburton with 524 points which was a new record score.

The Elcho Shield was won comfortably by England with the distances all increased by 100 yards. The top score of the match was made by Dr Sellers of Ireland with a score of 221.

The Royal Navy's Bisley team swept all before them, winning the Aldershot, United Services, the Mappin trophy, the Whitehead and the Cheylesmore of the major trophies.

So, looking back over the past 100 years of our history, what has changed? Well, if you read the following extract from *NRA Journal* No 1, not a lot!

"The first week of the NRA fortnight was blessed with anything but shooting weather. Varying winds and rain storms were the marksmen's lot, and cold – intense cold for July – at night. In the second week the weather improved." It was ever thus!



The NRA Front Counter in 1910.

THE EMPIRE MATCH 1910

This year sees the NRA hosting the Australia Match (previously known as the Empire Match) on Sunday 25 July 2010 for teams from Great Britain, Australia, Canada, Channel Islands, Germany and Kenya.

One hundred years ago Bisley hosted the Empire Match for the first time on 1 and 2 July 1910.

The following pages provide an account of the 1910 match with detailed scores as well as information on the history of the Australia (Empire Match).

Selecting a British Team

by Lt Col The Hon TF Fremantle VD commanding the Buckinghamshire Battalion, Captain, Great Britain's 1910 Empire Match Team.

The man on whom falls the task of organising a rifle team to represent his country in some great match, bears a heavy responsibility, lightened by the excellent spirit and good fellowship always to be found amongst riflemen of experience. In selecting his men he necessarily makes use of such information as the Twenty Clubs and other match organisations afford, and he keeps an eye on the Bisley records. His choice of men, however, is of necessity limited by circumstances. He wishes to secure the services of those who are at the top of the tree in reputation and experience; yet at the same time he wants those who are in the first flight on the form of the moment. Yet it is not all of those whom he would wish to secure for the preliminary stages who are able, owing to their private circumstances, to make the necessary sacrifice of time. This is especially the case when a team has to cross the sea, and an absence of weeks or even months from home is involved.

The difference between a team and a collection of skilled individuals is great. There must be no "rule of thumb" among members of the team, each man must know what the zero of his rifle is, and be able accurately to gauge whatever departure he makes from it. His holding should be perfect; and he must not hesitate to confess it if there is any unsteadiness in a shot, or his neighbour's score, as well as his own, will suffer. He must not be a dawdling or slow shot; when weather conditions shift rapidly, everything depends on the promptitude with which the shot is delivered. His nerves should be beyond suspicion. He should be capable of firing the last shot in the match with the consciousness that a bull's-eye is needed to win it.

But still more is needed from him than the best qualities which mark the successful individual shot. He must be ready both to give and to take advice and coaching. He must be free from all jealousy and incapable of shooting purely for his own hand; and must be prepared, if necessary, to fire the first shot at a fresh range or after some sudden change of weather,

when a bull's-eye is hoped for, but not expected. Those who have experience of teams know that it is not always the man who has made top score in the team who has done most to help towards its success.

In a good team there is no room for the man who cannot hit it off with his fellows. On the other hand, cheerfulness and willingness are a very valuable asset to which we may add sociability when there is a question of a voyage or a prolonged course of training. In a word, the team must be felt to be the collective unit in which the individuals are merged; the "greatest good of the greatest number" is the aim.

The arrangements for coaching are of the highest importance and cannot here be dealt with at length. It is enough to say that the coaching must carry with it the full confidence of the shooter and that it should be advisory rather than dictatorial in tone. A captain has no duty more difficult or less pleasant than in deciding whom to put in the reserve rather than in the team when the work of preparation is over; but, so far as my experience goes, that task is eased by the good sense and loyalty of those most affected. And it is always the greatness of pleasures to meet in friendly rivalry our kinsmen from across the sea.

The Empire Match

Great Britain's Record Win

The team that represented Great Britain in the Empire match last month is probably the best that has ever done duty for the old country. The men were faced with a powerful opposition from Canada and Australia, and the weather conditions were such that any team might have been pardoned for going to pieces. The cold wet weather probably cost the Australians many points, but they are generous enough to say that Britain's team would have beaten them in any case; one thinks that this is so, for the team fired with a cohesion and collective judgement that has been lacking in many of our eights in recent years. With Britain's win the records of the Empire match stand as follows:

- 1907 Australia 2104; New Zealand 2056; Great Britain 2053. Fired in Australia.
- 1909 Australia 2088; New Zealand 1958. Fired in Australia.
- 1910 Great Britain 2177; Canada 2105; Australia 2045; Singapore 1973; India 1064. Fired in England.

The Contest

In the first stage the leadership was secured by Great Britain and was held as follows;

- 200 yards. Great Britain 392; Canada 392; Australia 390; Singapore 382; India 378.
- 500 yards. Great Britain 777; Australia 770; Canada 764; India 742; Singapore 732.

600 yards. Great Britain 1139; Australia 1135;
Canada 1128; Singapore 1081; India 1064.

800 yards

When Great Britain began at the 800 yards range they brought from the first stage a lead of only four points over Australia, and at this range Canada began to forge to the front. Shooting very finely it looked as though the Ross rifle would prove the superiority of its barrel at long distances. With it they reduced the Australians' advantage over them to a single point, and set out to overtake the home lead. It was a fine effort, but Britain managed to get the better of the Dominion men at this range by six points, which, added to the short range lead, made the position as follows after 800 yards had been completed.

Great Britain	1498
Australia	1482
Canada	1481
Singapore	1427
India	1388

900 yards

At 900 yards sunshine alternated with heavy showers, which culminated in a tempest of rain which temporarily blotted out the landscape. The driving rain washed the range as with a flood. Outers and misses came all along the line, and it was here that

Britain won the match. Recovering quickly from the disorganisation of so fierce a downpour, they rallied under the splendid coaching of Major Ranken, without the loss of many points, and shooting superbly they placed the issue beyond reasonable doubt. At 900 yards the position was as follows:

Great Britain	1838
Canada	1798
Australia	1762
Singapore	1714
India	1681

1000 yards

At 1000 yards some shot in rapid fire order when they could. Despite some misses, Britain, admirably advised in turn by Major Ranken, Sergeant-Major Wallingford, and Sergeant Ommundsen, simply mastered the weather conditions. At every shot Britain leapt to the front. Rangecraft and generalship of a high order, added to a knowledge of Bisley conditions in bad weather, made the Lee Enfield supreme over the Ross rifle, although without the high velocity ammunition for which the rifle is made, the cartridge used being the present service one. Sergeant-Major Wallingford maintained his position to the end as the highest scorer, and when Capt Davies had recorded Britain's last shot a round of applause greeted the home team's fine performance.



1910 EMPIRE MATCH FINAL SCORES

GREAT BRITAIN

Captain: Lt Col The Hon TF Fremantle VD

Adjutant: Capt AS Bates

Coaches: Maj T Ranken, Sgt Maj JA Wallingford, Sgt ANVH Ommundsen

Reserves: Pte J Reid, Sgt J Tippins

Sgt Maj JA Wallingford	50	49	49	48	41	47	284
Maj T Ranken	49	48	48	45	41	49	280
Pte AG Fulton	50	49	46	45	44	44	278
Sgt HG Burr	49	50	46	44	45	43	277
Sgt ANVH Ommundsen	50	49	43	41	46	41	270
Ar Sgt JE Martin	49	47	43	48	38	43	268
Capt EL Parnell	46	48	46	47	45	32	264
QMSI R Hawkins	49	45	41	41	40	40	256
	392	385	362	359	340	339	2177

CANADA

Captain: Maj JE Hutcheson

Adjutant: Lt G Rowe

Coaches:

Reserves: Sgt D McInnes, Pte WJ Clifford

Lt FH Morris	50	49	44	42	43	41	269
Capt CR Crowe	49	45	47	46	42	40	269
Pte GW Russell	49	46	47	44	41	39	266
Capt WH Forrest	49	46	49	38	43	39	264
Sgt J Freeborn	49	46	44	49	38	38	264
Capt W Hart-McHarg	49	47	41	48	42	33	260
SSgt T Mitchell	50	45	46	45	34	37	257
Pte JA Steele	47	48	46	41	34	40	256
	392	372	364	353	317	307	2105

AUSTRALIA

Commandant: Lt Col JJ Paine VD

Captain & Adjutant: Capt T Pye

Coaches: From within the team

Reserves: Res WA Pilbeam, Res G Fisher

Res A Grant	50	48	46	39	42	46	271
Res LR Armstrong	50	47	49	46	42	35	269
Res H Goy	49	48	46	41	42	39	265
Res JH Williams	50	46	45	46	38	38	263
Res AW Cutler	49	46	46	41	37	38	257
Res FJ Burgoyne	46	49	45	45	31	33	249
Res OE Boyd	49	50	45	46	17	38	245
Res JE Halligan	47	46	43	43	31	16	226
	390	380	365	347	280	283	2045

INDIA

Captain: Maj W Donald Smith

Adjutant: Capt JH Henderson

Coaches: Maj FCL Waller

Reserve: Lt H McComas

Lt RDT Alexander	47	49	44	44	48	38	270
Capt J Colville	48	50	44	43	34	39	258
Maj CE Tristram	49	43	38	34	38	45	247
Capt EFC Willis	49	47	42	39	39	31	247
Lt AS Crum	49	47	45	41	32	32	246
Maj W Donald Smith	45	47	37	45	41	31	246
Capt JH Henderson	47	41	38	42	37	39	244
Capt AA Cantor	44	40	34	36	24	37	215
	378	364	322	324	293	292	1973

SINGAPORE

Captain: Maj FM Elliott

Adjutant: Capt CM Phillips

Coaches: Capt RH McVittie

Reserves: Sgt MK Watt, Spr HN Soper

Maj FM Elliott	47	48	46	48	36	34	259
Ar Sgt E Gallistan	48	44	44	44	43	34	257
Lt RV Cuthbert	49	41	43	44	42	37	256
Capt CM Phillips	50	45	40	41	42	35	253
Sgt Tan Chow Kim	46	44	46	44	36	32	248
Sgt J Long	47	42	46	45	29	30	239
Sgt DA Walker	48	42	36	32	33	41	232
Lt WL Kemp	47	44	48	48	26	15	228
	382	350	349	346	287	258	1972

COACHING THE TEAM

by An Observer

Never was any team coached better or more admirably handled by Captain and Adjutant. Much of the success of the home side is due to the good coaching in bad weather and to the absolute strength and unity of the whole. All the qualities enumerated in the NRA Journal last month by Lieut-Col the Hon TF Fremantle as being the essence of good team shooting seemed to have matured under his guidance. He was not able to be with the team on the last day, but his work had told, for they won.

The departure of Lieut-Col Fremantle was much felt by the team, especially as he had had all the work of coaching and blending the pairs during the week. The calling in of a coach was considered by the team, but the general feeling was that Major Ranken, Sgt Ommundsen and Sgt Major Wallingford could do that work as well as their shooting. Lieut-Col Freemantle was no mere titular captain. He was sitting in his chair behind the telescope every minute that the team devoted to practice; this meant at least six hours daily, in very inclement weather.

I heard one member of the team refer to the adjutant (Capt AS Bates) as "Statistics", and I think he was quite correct. Capt Bates arrived on the range daily with a brief box full of blank diagrams and went home with the same forms filled in. These he had to diagnose during the evening – a tremendous amount of work – but he seemed to get through it quite smoothly and was up to time again next morning. His best quality was tact without loss of dignity. This in an Officer is a fine quality.

Coaching was carried out at the first stage by the Captain of the team assisted by Major Ranken, Sgt Ommundsen and Sgt Major Wallingford. At the second stage Major Ranken and Sgt Ommundsen took the first, while Sgt Major Wallingford took the second detail. It was noticed that Wallingford always demanded that Parnell and Fulton should sit near him so that he could consult them when in difficulties. Their advice justified his demand. Ommundsen and Martin were paired together. They are two Scots who have shot together many times, so they were quite at home. Private Fulton and Sgt Burr live close

to Bisley, and therefore see a great deal of each other. They are both slow firers, but this is due to their cautious nature. Major Ranken and QMS Hawkins were not a well blended pair, Hawkins should never have been taken from under Wallingford's wing. He is a very good shot, but this was his first big event, and he must have been a little anxious. Major Ranken can always shoot very well, and his 49 at 1000 was a wonderful shoot, the last shot especially proved rare judgement. Major Ranken on the 9th shot had obtained a bull just in at 9 o'clock with 18 minutes; this in itself ought to have taken off 1½ minutes. Everyone noticed in addition that the wind had dropped and was surprised to hear the coach call 19 minutes, which to the onlookers meant a left outer. Major Ranken must have had absolute confidence to have fired under the condition, but a good bull was the result.

Captain Parnell and Wallingford were paired. As already stated, Hawkins was entitled to Wallingford's experience, but he had been doing so splendidly in practice, and is himself no chicken, that it was thought better to give Parnell to Wallingford. They have both shot together on several occasions on their world's tour in 1907, and were therefore well acquainted with one another.

The ammunition used was service RL 1910, and proved exceptionally good. The rifles were L-E charger load of private make, the only exception being in Wallingford's case, who used a rack rifle. At 200 yards an 8 inch bull is too large, as the great number of HPS's will show. At 500 yards the figure target, which caused such a scare when introduced, did not seem to prevent high scoring, and now that the marksmen are used to it I quite believe that they agree that it is a more serviceable target than the bullseye.

Canada used their Army Mark II** the Ross, this carried a very heavy barrel with front bolt locking lugs. It was thought that at the longer ranges this would give an easy victory to the Canadians. There seems no doubt whatever that this is a better rifle for target work than ours, but the organisation of our team seems to have made up the deficiency of the rifle.



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THE HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIA (EMPIRE) MATCH

The National Rifle Association of Great Britain received a cordial invitation in 1906 from Colonel JM Templeton CMG on behalf of the Commonwealth Council of the Rifle Associations of Australia, to send a team to Australia in the following year to compete for an "Imperial Match".

The invitation was immediately accepted and an Appeal for funds was made by the Chairman of the Council, with the approval of the President, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Donations for the Australian Match Fund, 1907, amounted to £2,145.11s.0d. This was a considerable sum and it is interesting to see from the list of contributions how many gifts were expressed in guineas.

On learning that the Council of the NRA had decided to arrange the visit to Australia by a team of British riflemen, the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association gave a very pressing invitation to the Council to arrange for the team to visit Canada, en route, and take part in the match for the Palma Trophy at Ottawa, and to this the Council agreed.

The Great Britain Rifle Team to Canada and Australia, 1907, was led by Major PW Richardson and sailed from Liverpool on the *SS Empress of Britain* on 9 August, arriving at Ottawa just four days later. There were seventeen men in the team. The British team recorded modest successes in the five days of the DCRM Meeting before firing in the Palma Match on 7 September.

The Palma Trophy was won by the United States of America, scoring an average of five points per head more than the Canadian team who were second. Australia was third, some two points per head less, with Great Britain coming fourth, a further nine points per man behind. It is unusual, nowadays, to see such a wide spread of scores.

Immediately after the Palma Match, the Great Britain Rifle Team left the ranges for Vancouver, where they boarded the *SS Aorangi* to sail for Brisbane, arriving on 4 October.

After shooting for three days in Queensland, the team moved to New South Wales for the squadded competitions at Sydney, to be followed by the first Imperial Match that was then renamed "The Empire Match" fired over two days on 28 and 29 October.

The competition was held at distances of 200, 500, 600 yards held on the first day and 800, 900 and 1000 yards on the second day. Each rifleman fired two sighting shots, with ten shots to count, at each distance. The winners were Australia with 2105 points. In second place, New Zealand, with a score of 2056, were just three points ahead of Great Britain.

A splendid silver trophy, manufactured in Perth, Western Australia and mounted on black marble, was

presented for the competition. It weighs more than 2 cwt and is now protected in a fine glass fronted case. It is inscribed "The Empire Rifle Match – for competition by Great Britain and Units of the Empire". The Empire Trophy was added to the list of major shooting awards and started a new era in international competitive fullbore target rifle team shooting.

The British team returned home after some three and a half months away. Few tours were to last so long again.

The conditions of the Empire Match were varied in 1953, when the 800 yards distance was dropped and then the 500 yards range was excluded from 1956.

Teams initially comprised eight shooters but the number was increased to ten in 1976 thereby making the maximum score 2000 points. The match is now fired on one day, the shorter ranges (300 and 600 yards) in the morning and the longer ranges (900 and 1000 yards) in the afternoon.

With both short and long ranges included, unusually, in the one competition, the Empire Match has become a prestigious international event. Organised by the NRA of Australia, it is a considerable honour to be invited by them to participate and, with the number of Commonwealth and other countries competing, it is always a thrilling event.

From 1988 the match has been known as "The Australia Match". The name was altered to commemorate the Australian Bicentenary in that year. From 1994 the title of "The Commonwealth Teams Championship" was also added. However teams outside the Commonwealth have been allowed to enter from time to time with the permission of the NRA of Australia.

Great Britain have won the match 21 times out of the 38 times they have competed; Australia have competed in all 48 matches and won 17 of them; New Zealand have won it six times and Canada four. Eighteen other countries or groups of countries have competed.

The record score, which everyone will be aiming to beat, is 1977.217 which was achieved by Australia at Brisbane in 2005. The record individual score under the same conditions is 200.29 by Eric Pintard of the United States of America at Bisley in 2003.

For further information on the Australia (Empire) Match please visit the ICFRA website at www.icfra.com.

If you would like to watch this years match in progress, it will be starting at 10:00 on Century Range on Sunday 25 July and all are welcome to come along to support their favourite team. If you would like to help by register keeping for one of the teams please contact karen@nra.org.uk.

Hope to see you there!

OBITUARIES

James (Jimmy) Robertson Still Cantlay

Jimmy was born in Stonehaven, Scotland and moved to Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) at the age of nine. Having been a member of his school cadets, and wishing to continue with shooting, Jimmy took up competitive shooting in 1964. His love for being involved in sports administration saw him elected to the 2-6-9 Battalion Club committee within two years and shortly thereafter to the Matabeleland Rifle Association, where he became President. As provincial President, Jimmy was a delegate within the Rhodesian National Rifle Association. When he left Bulawayo for Kwekwe, at the end of 1972, Jimmy was recognised by the Matabeleland Association, by being awarded an honorary life membership. Upon moving to Kwekwe, Jimmy was quickly elected to the Midlands Rifle Association and took over as their President in 1973.

Although Jimmy had initially started shooting to compete in service rifle competition, he soon took up target rifle and it was in this discipline that he was selected to represent the Rhodesian Junior National Team, the Sables, in 1973 for a tour to South Africa. He was awarded full colours to compete in the Palma Match taking place in Bloemfontein in 1974.

While living in the Midlands of Zimbabwe, Jimmy became the President of the Rhodesian National Rifle Association, a position he held for the next 25 years. In 1980 Jimmy moved to live in Harare. Due to the decrease in shooting members within Midlands, Jimmy agreed to maintain his role for some years to come as their President in order to maintain the annual Kynoch interprovincial competition which was held annually in Gweru.

Jimmy again was actively involved in administration, finding himself elected very soon after his arrival as President of the Mashonaland Rifle Association as well as Chairman of the Harare Rifle Club. Through his role as President of the National Rifle Association of Zimbabwe, Jimmy was instrumental in facilitating the return of Zimbabwe to international competition after independence in April 1980. Part of this activity was captaining a full 23-member team, to compete in the Imperial Meeting at Bisley that year. The last time the country had toured Britain they had managed a clean sweep of all team competitions and Jimmy took great pride in leading so many of the previous team in their defence of their trophies.

This was Jimmy's first of 25 consecutive annual trips to Bisley, which saw many international friendships develop and flourish both on the range and in the many clubhouses he was to frequent.

Meanwhile, in Zimbabwe, Jimmy represented shooting to the Zimbabwe Olympic Committee and encouraged them to send shooters to compete in all disciplines at both the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games. Jimmy was also an active member of the Zimbabwean All Africa



Games Organising Committee in 1995, again representing all disciplines of shooting.

Jimmy worked tirelessly to encourage the post-independence armed forces of Zimbabwe

to participate actively in the annual service rifle championships and other national and provincial competitions. Through Jimmy's guidance, both service rifle and target rifle competitions were held in Zimbabwe over subsequent years with regional and international teams invited to visit.

Jimmy's friendships with the international community, many of which were formed at Bisley, saw visits to Zimbabwe by teams from Zambia, Malawi and Kenya, then Namibia after their independence in 1990 and South Africa in 1993, as well as Australia and Great Britain.

His involvement throughout sub-Saharan Africa saw Jimmy being instrumental in the formation of the East and Central African Rifle Association in recent years.

Through this work within the region Jimmy was honoured to have been presented numerous awards in recognition of all he did for the sport, including honorary life memberships of a number of regional associations. Probably the proudest achievement of Jimmy's shooting career was his being named an Honorary Life Vice-President of the National Rifle Association.

A large part of the achievements mentioned above were made possible through the assistance Jimmy received throughout the years from his wife Marion, who supported and encouraged Jimmy throughout his involvement with the shooting fraternities of the world. From the very early days of being his secretary at home, then becoming Secretary of the Zimbabwean Association and adjutant of many a touring team, Jimmy was incredibly well supported.

This use of family members in helping saw his daughter and son and their extended families all co-opted from a very early age to assist with all things shooting, from making targets, marking targets, butts officer, range officer to assisting with scoring, administration, catering, working behind the bar and serving on club and provincial committees.

Jimmy's love for the sport, his willingness to assist in making the sport enjoyable for all, and his sharing of many a drink through all of the clubhouses he attended around the world while making friends, will ensure Jimmy is well remembered. May he rest in peace.

Allan Cantlay

Laurie Ingram

Who was Laurie Ingram you might well ask? Well once in every generation or so comes someone or, in Laurie's case, two people that revolutionise a sport; in Laurie's case it was target rifle and latterly match rifle shooting. To put it simply Laurie Ingram was the "Ing" in the Swing target rifle, a collaboration between George Swenson and Laurie. Back in the 1960s pretty well all target rifles were converted military battle rifles and there was great room for improvement. Without going into details that have already been well covered in previous NRA Journals, the Swing rifle started a revolution that carried six marks of the Swing rifle, four of the Paramount and several RPAs culminating in the current Quadlock. It was also the first rifle that offered cack-handed shooters an easily available, dedicated southpaw rifle. Finally there was the collaboration with Robert Chombart that developed into the INCH (Ingram Chombart) rifles which should shortly be entering production.



Laurie grew up in the family funeral business which he eventually took over. In between he completed his national service in the local regiment and was fortunate and thankful for completing the service at home while some of his colleagues in training went to the far flung outposts of a collapsing empire and some didn't come back.

At Laurie's recent memorial gathering at Bisley, a close friend described how Laurie disposed of the family Rolls-Royce hearses and bought new American hearses. Once modified to Laurie's specifications there was much speculation as to how fast the new hearses could travel and a trip north of London to collect a customer provided the opportunity. On the way home Laurie gunned the hearse and, amongst other cars, went past a Bentley at a high rate of knots. Evidence of Laurie's speed was provided by the Bentley driver who happened to be a popular radio personality who described "driving at over 100mph only to be overtaken by a hearse, complete with coffin"! A keen wit, he was very skilled at awarding incisive nicknames to people and many Bisley characters were so named, some printable, however many, particularly referring to those in the corridors of power, were definitely not! Of the more printable, he awarded himself the title "Swine of the Line" shortened to Swotl or simply Swine, on account of his service in a Line Infantry Regiment, whilst the author received the nom de plume of "Guards" and so they went.

His early sporting years saw frequent visits to Brands Hatch and other racing circuits, racing a succession of cars with some success. But it was always to Bisley that he returned, holding a special place in his heart, and to the shooters of Bisley – he had a great many shooting

friends from all over the world. But at the same time he wasn't a slavish follower of the NRA; indeed where the offices of the NRA were concerned he was very pragmatic, holding fond memories of some, including a former Royal Naval Captain who refused to aggrandise his position, simply being referred to as "Secretary", whilst others were held in sincere, but deep, contempt. The "Sin of 71" was a further source of deep hurt at the injustice heaped on his colleague and friend George Swenson. He spoke with deep irony when, prior to his first selection for the English VIII for the Elcho match, his plotting sheets were "modified" by those in authority, to ensure that they were of a standard fit to be seen by the lord high arbitrator. Meanwhile a recent fracas with NSC authority resulted in the prototype Swing #00 being withdrawn from loan to the NRA Museum and is now permanently lost to the NRA.

Circumstances forced Laurie out of the family business and saw a family move to Southern France. However the lure of Bisley was too much and the 1990s witnessed a return to competitive shooting at Bisley, mainly in match rifle but with the occasional foray into TR in support of his close friend Robert Chombart's CPC team as a shooter and/or coach. His final discipline was F Class and Laurie had a succession of superb chamberings where greater success was only defeated by frequent elderly and "Swinely" moments. His proudest moment was being invited to join the ranks of the Stickledown Club and to partake religiously in their annual shoot in November, indeed despite being gravely ill he had planned to attend the last meeting of the club, but a faux-pax on the part of the NRA prevented it happening.

With his passing, shooting and shooters have lost a valuable advocate and the sport can only be the poorer for his passing.

Peter Campbell

Ted Sargent

Ted was born in London and moved to Bicester and then Banbury. He joined Bicester Town and District Rifle and Pistol Club in the early 1980s so that he could shoot his father's Luger found in his sea chest. He turned up at the club in a blue Rolls-Royce – he loved flash cars!



Ted was a regular classic pistol shooter at Bisley winning many trophies. When not shooting he was always found running 'Advancing Man' on the gallery which he enjoyed. Ted shot rifle after the pistol ban, favouring sniper as it reminded him of 'Advancing Man'.

Ted was quiet, calm and well liked by all who knew him. Apart from shooting he liked tinkering with cars especially his Saab and Vicky's Porsche.

At Bisley Open Days, Ted enjoyed showing people how to shoot classic pistols and was always happy to teach another generation. One young lad fired a light load from Ted's 44 Ruger Magnum. The grin on the boy's face said it all, and when Ted presented him with the empty shell case it made the young lad's day.

Ted will be missed by his many friends both at Bicester Club and at Bisley where he was an NPA, SLRC and NRA member.

Ted was a great friend and we send our condolences to his wife Debbie and children Vicky, Luke and Kelly.

Roy Singleton

LETTERS

That's the way to do it

from BAI Fraser

On a soggy bank holiday weekend and in the midst of General Election meltdown, morale enjoyed a welcome boost when I read the report (Sunday Times 2 May) of a spectacular sniper 'take-out' in Afghanistan.

Corporal of Horse Harrison of the Household Cavalry was part of a patrol which came under fire. He dismounted with his L115A3 sniper rifle, leaving his driver to act as spotter. Two Taliban were identified in the distance, setting up a machine gun. Although a thousand yards beyond the weapons supposed accurate range, Harrison estimated elevation and drift then engaged the target.

He fired twice, killing both Taliban with hits to the torso. GPS readings verified the range as a new world record of fractionally over 2700 yards. Quite apart from admirable coolness under fire, this demonstrated clear thinking and marksmanship of the very highest order. Not to mention the effectiveness of the new British-made sniper rifle.

I was also interested to note that the Army's rules of engagement appear to be based on NRA Bisley rules, ie sighters are convertible!

A View

from Roger Baker

A previous Journal carried two articles in need of clarification in law. The first was a report of police over-reaction to rifles stolen from a supervised hotel car park resulting in confiscation of remaining firearms, suspension of FACs and so on: I vividly recall in or about 1981 such officious conduct resulted in a test case being heard by the Court of Appeal that firearms locked in a car and not on obvious display are in law considered as securely stored as in a home cabinet.

The second was the pusillanimous stricture that owners of long-barrelled revolvers "cannot let somebody else have a go" with them. This has, as far as I am aware, never been enshrined in law: it seems to have been another rule ratcheting-up exercise by the Home Office and is extremely unlikely to ever be acted upon for two reasons. Firstly when the Firearms

Department in the Home Office had this 'rule' put in front of them they found the wording so ambiguous that they actually called my Bisley club secretary to ask his opinion of the meaning. The second reason is that should an LBR owner ever be brought to a court over allowing another club member or friend to try out the kit, the (probably non-shooting) judge will require an explanation as to why a (say) .44" or .357" Magnum 60 cm or 30 cm barrelled firearm can be borrowed by others if it has a reciprocal (lever) action but not when said action is rotary even though the latter holds less ammunition! This is an issue over which the NRA could of its own volition have acted long ago. The NRA should at least make an effort to defend shooting in all facets: unfortunately their demeanour is so obsequious that whenever another vindictive snipe exudes from the Home Office, their invariable reaction is to bend over and grab their ankles. Seeing the treatment dished out to Bisley over the Olympic Games, this conduct seems none too profitable.

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MEMBERS PAGE

NRA 150th Anniversary Celebrations

Commemorative Badges

These badges are now available - please make sure you collect your free badge if you are shooting in the Imperial Meeting. Extra badges will be available for sale from the Range Office and Front Counter during the Imperial Meeting.

Imperial Meeting

The 150th party will be held on the evening of Friday 23 July. Clubs who have already planned events include:

- The London and Middlesex Rifle Club will be holding a Cajun/Creole evening serving authentic Cajun/Creole food with live music and dancing to the Crane River Cajuns whose motto is "Laissez les bon temps roulez!" Contact the LMRA on 01483 473006 to book.
- The Artists Rifle Club will be holding a Dinner and Jazz Night with live music. Contact Katie on 01483 797501 to book.
- The Surrey RA will be holding a carvery and party. Contact bar@surreyra.org to book.
- A Dance event with DJ Scadey will be held somewhere on Camp – further details nearer the time. Warning – not for those of a delicate disposition!
- The Army Target Shooting Club will be holding a Cocktail & Canapé Party with live music. Contact Karen on 01483 797160 to book.
- The North London Rifle Club will be holding a formal black tie dinner (possibly with a Victorian theme). Contact Barbara on 01483 473117 to book.
- The RAF Target Rifle Club will be holding a Cocktails and Karaoke evening with the traditional Empty Cases barbecue.
- The City Rifle Club will be holding a Buffet Supper. Contact the City RC during the Meeting to book.

Please contact each club individually for further information or to book places.

At 22:00, the NRA invites everyone to Stickledown for a massive Fireworks Display set to music by Dragon Fireworks. As anyone who has been to the Annual Fireworks Display in October will tell you this will be an event not to be missed! The Fireworks Display will be open to all members, competitors and their guests so please feel free to bring your friends and family to help us celebrate. After the fireworks we return to the clubhouses and carry on partying.

An updated list of events will be on the website and advertised in the squadding envelopes so if you would like to advertise your event please contact Karen Robertson (contact details on page 1) with full details.

The Earwig

As mentioned in the last Journal, the Earwig competition is being reinstated for this year. The competition will consist of twelve rounds with one shot to count in each round. All those getting a bull or V bull will progress to the next round. The rounds will be concurrent with the following shots in the following competitions.

Round	Competition	Shot number
1	Daily Telegraph	15th to count
2	Alexandra	8th to count
3	Daily Mail	1st to count
4	Duke of Cambridge	7th to count
5	Times	10th to count
6	Wimbledon	2nd to count
7	Corporation	1st sighter
8	St Georges	13th to count
9	Queens 1 300	1st to count
10	Queens 1 500	4th to count
11	Queens 1 600	7th to count
12	Prince of Wales	1st sighter

Each competitor in the Grand Aggregate will find a claim card in their squadding envelope – these cards must be completed and handed in by 08:30 on Second Friday. A box will be located in the NRA Front Office for completed cards. V bulls will be used to break ties but if necessary a tie shoot will be held on Final Saturday after the Mackinnon. First prize will be £100 and a bottle of champagne with further prizes in each class. Full rules and conditions can be found on the claim card. Good luck to you all (especially in Round 7!).

RIP Radio

We are sad to announce that the recent fire claimed one victim.

Brian Thomas, Assistant Director of Competitions, managed to drop his radio whilst pretending to be a real fireman.

We will be taking the cost of a new one out of his wages!



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