

Ladies & Gentlemen,

The main headline is that we are able to report another healthy surplus for 2015 and continued growth in our membership. I hope you will by now have had the opportunity to read our annual report which was published in March outlining our financial position. Once again, I am going to leave Derek Lowe to review our financials after I have finished my speech.

There are a number of other positive achievements since we met at this meeting last year that I would like to share with you.

Our membership continues to grow. At the end of May this year, we now have 8,143 members with more joining at a current rate of 90 per month – yes, that is 450 already so far this year. Necessary changes to our membership billing put a lot of pressure on our Membership department during the latter part of last year and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank Georgina Thatcher and her team on accomplishing all this so effectively. Our database is better, our membership offering for both individuals and clubs is better with improved membership benefits, and the on-boarding of new members is better. This has in turn put pressure on our Training team and their facilities, who have responded magnificently to the challenge.

Range use both by members and corporate users continues to grow. Revenue from civilian (i.e. not including corporate) range hire is up 5% year on year. This has put pressure on certain disciplines, particularly those that involve shooting at 300 yards or less, as range availability at these distances becomes increasingly scarce, particularly on Short Siberia. Managing our fixed range resources efficiently is critical, as is the need to balance the needs of our members versus our corporate users, whose range use demonstrates the value of Bisley to the community and generates significant income for the benefit of the entire Association. I would like to compliment Rick Wells on his management of this Herculean task. To help you appreciate what is involved, the range office has received 17,000 bids for range bookings over the past 9 months. That is over 60 per day, and represents civilian bookings only, i.e. it excludes our corporate users.

On the ranges themselves, there have been some notable events. The fact that for the first time both the NRA's representative teams that travelled abroad during 2015 were captained by Ladies serves as another reminder that we are one of the very few sports that can proudly say that men and women, as well as young and old, and able and physically challenged, can compete together in open competition.

If that wasn't notable enough, the GB TR rifle team captained by Jane Messer swept to victory at the World Long Range Championships at Camp Perry, USA in August, breaking the previous match record by a colossal 79 points with some brilliant coached shooting.

Whilst on the subject of TR, it is perhaps worth noting that the much vaunted "Death of TR" that crops up in conversations around this place from time to time seems overblown. The introduction of GGG as the ammunition for our 'issued ammo' competitions proved to be a resounding success, delivering at least equivalent accuracy to its predecessor at a price 20p per round less. Our congratulations should be extended to those who put this contract together because this has given a considerable boost to the TR community. Given that we sell at least 500,000 rounds of match grade TR ammo every year, the success of this new contract has put over £100,000 back into TR shooting community in the past 12 months. And so it continues; for the first 5 months of this year, TR match ammo sales through our Range Office are 3½ times

those for the equivalent period last year. This is indicative of a major increase in TR activity, which may well explain in part the pressure on marker resources that we have experienced during the same period despite expenditure on markers and marking increasing. So please can we put to bed the myth that the NRA somehow doesn't like TR? Since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, almost 500 new members who shoot TR have joined the NRA. The simple fact is that due to the hard work of the professional staff that we have and the enthusiasm of the volunteers that we rely on, we have seen an increase across all disciplines and this can only be good for the future of competitive target shooting. TR is growing and the other types of shooting are growing too.

We continue to make improvements to our ranges here at Bisley both behind and in front of the mantlet. The introduction of electronic targets has proved an interesting learning curve and we will continue to develop our electronic target offering as the best way to increase capacity and fulfil expectations. We are also slowly catching up on road, ground and building maintenance. The membership survey that we conducted threw up some astounding figures. Out of some 28,500 full-bore shooters across the country (that is full NRA members and those designated as regular full-bore shooters by NRA affiliated clubs), some 18,000 claim to use Bisley as their 'home' range. This is particularly because of the facilities at longer ranges. So I make no apologies therefore for focusing a lot of our efforts on improving both infrastructure and capacity here at Bisley. Andrew Mercer will talk more about our plans for the Pavilion in a moment. But with figures like these, it doesn't take long to figure out why Bisley is the National Shooting Centre, and why it is so important to our future.

Notwithstanding this continued focus however, 2015 marked the beginning of our regional ranges initiative, led by Nic Couldrey. Nic made a presentation to the Trustees earlier in the year outlining the spread of membership across the country as well as an inventory of the ranges where they shoot. This ground work has identified all the ranges across the country, the clubs that use them, the scale of those clubs and where their members are located. This will inform the conversations that we are having with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation at the MoD (DIO) and Landmarc about access, pricing and availability. And we are exploring options to invest in ranges away from Bisley for the benefit of NRA members and affiliated clubs. Our pilot scheme in this new partnership arrangement is with the Frome and District Rifle & Pistol Club (FDRPC) at their new Shepton Mallet Target Sports Centre where the NRA has made available on long term loan £18,000 of range equipment. This new range is scheduled to open late July 2016. The Frome Club will make available four weekend days of range hire each year for NRA sponsored / organised training events, competitions etc.; and offer preferential range hire rates for NRA members.

Our policy with regards to young shooters is also taking root as more and more are taking advantage of the financial assistance we are offering. This is crucial to the future of our sport. As part of this, we have developed a cadet imperial to be shot alongside the TR competitions on Century range. My thanks go to Peter Turner and others who have put this together. We see this as a logical extension of the policy that we have as an Association to promote shooting amongst the young. Cadets join cadet units largely because they want to learn how to shoot, which is why we found such a receptive audience from the MOD when we challenged them – with prodding from Mark Garnier MP and Andrew Mercer – to lift their prohibitive restrictions on the movement of cadet rifles and ammunition.

We have finally reached resolution on the Rule 150 issue. All of the three work streams are now substantially complete, and the findings will be published in due course. In summary, in the first work stream to be completed, legal Counsel has emphatically dismissed allegations that the NRA had behaved illegally and concluded the NRA has done nothing illegal; the second work

stream to be completed was the extensive tests conducted by the Birmingham Proof House under the supervision of Dr Derek Allsop, the Birmingham Proof House's appointee to oversee these tests. These have clearly demonstrated that the rifle/ammunition combination used in Rule 150/NRA issued ammo competitions is safe, and has been throughout. The NRA therefore does not have, and never has had, a safety problem with its rifles and ammunition in Rule 150 TR competitions; and third the General Council report addresses a number of issues raised over the years relating to Rule 150. The authors of the report interviewed a number of people and reviewed a large number of documents, both contemporary and historic. It is substantially in its final form and will be published, as will the other two, in early July before the BGM. I would like to thank Alice Gran and David Lacey for all their work on the General Council report, and to John Bloomfield for his work with the Birmingham Proof House supporting their tests. Each of them have put in a colossal amount of work to get to the bottom of what has proved to be a thorny and emotive issue.

But just as one thorny and emotive issue is put to bed, another threatens to dominate proceedings; that is club lease renewals and the setting of rents. I suppose it would not be Bisley without having something to disagree about! However, this issue has generated much heat, and in an attempt to throw more light on the subject, the General Council has discussed this matter in its meeting earlier today and will ruminate on those discussions. It is too early to reach any conclusions yet. We must all remember however that the laws under which we operate are quite restrictive and that each of us has a horse in this race; we are either a member of an affected club (me for sure, as I am a member of several), or we are a member of the NRA but not a member of an affected club who has every right to expect that the Association as landlord gets the correct rent for the properties on its estate. That is why, in this particular discussion, we must carefully listen to what our professional advisers – our Lawyers and Chartered Surveyors - say not only because they are experts, but also because they are independent.

Notwithstanding this, I remain bullish about our Association's future. I believe we are on a good path. Before I handover to Derek to demonstrate that, I would just like to say a big thank you to my fellow Trustees and to Andrew Mercer and his staff for all their energy, enthusiasm and hard work over the past 12 months and for the achievements that have been accomplished.