

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Bisley General Meeting

Minutes of the Bisley General Meeting

held in the Umbrella Tent, Bisley
on Wednesday 15th July 2015 from 9.00pm.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr JGM Webster
Chief Executive	Mr A Mercer
Vice Chairman General Council	Dr JD Warburton
Treasurer	Mr D Lowe
Members:	120 Registered and other Members

BISLEY GENERAL MEETING

Notice of the Bisley General Meeting

The notice of the Meeting was taken as read.

ITEM 1 - SPEECHES

The Speech of the Chairman is attached hereto and initialled by the Chairman.

ITEM 2 - OPEN FORUM

ITEM - 3 – QUALIFYING SCORE HM THE QUEENS PRIZE, STAGE I

The Bronze Medal went to Mr DC Luckman of Sedgmoor TSC with a score of 105.19v.

The last score qualifying for Stage II is 102.10v, finishing 34.4 at 600 yards and 35.4v at 500 yards.



Chairman

Proceedings

Chairman

Ladies and Gentlemen, it's 9pm. Welcome to the Bisley General Meeting of 2015.

I am joined here on the rostrum by John Warburton, the Vice-Chairman of General Council, Derek Lowe, our Treasurer, and Andrew Mercer, our Chief Executive.

I would like to welcome all our Vice-Presidents who have either been here, are here or are coming here, particularly those from overseas - Graeme Berman from Australia, Philippe Ginestet and Robert Chombart from France, Norris Gomez from Trinidad, Stan Frost and Sandy Peden from Canada and Cliff Mallett from Jersey.

I would especially like to welcome our newest Vice - President, Dr. Jim Thompson from Canada. Jim was until relatively recently Executive Vice President of the DCRA, a post that he held for 12 years. He has been a stalwart of relations between the two governing bodies, and has been involved in Canadian shooting for as long as I can remember, fostering competition between GB and Canada (he is this year's Commandant of the Canadian Bisley Team), and enabling it too (he was Match Director for the successful Long Range World Championships and the Palma Match in 2007).

Jim, please stand and take a bow! (*round of applause*). Jim has also kindly consented to be our prize giver on Saturday. Thank you, sir, very much and welcome.

Moving on to the competitions:

We started with the Service Rifle events, which were supported by overseas teams from Canada and Oman. Some 160 competitors took part.

The winners of Her Majesty the Queen's Medals were:

- for the Royal Navy/Royal Marines, Cpl Jim Bloom, Royal Marines;
- for the Army Reserve, Corporal J Moore, 253 Northern Ireland Medical Regiment;
- for the Army, Sgt Khagendra Tamang, 2 Signal Regiment,
- for the Royal Air Force, Corporal RKL Jamieson of the RAF Regiment who retained the title for the third year running.

The main prize giver was HRH The Duke of York. The Army Reserve prizes were presented by Major General PNYM Sanders CBE DSO, General Commanding Office of 3 UK Division.

The Methuen Trophy Inter Corp Team Shoot was won by the Royal Ghurkha Rifles. The cup was presented by Brigadier Martin Moore CBE and Commander of 101 Logistic Brigade.

Civilian Service Rifle, which runs alongside the Service Rifle events, opened the Imperial 2015 with their first shoot taking place on 24th June. This year saw 338 competitors shoot over 5 days, culminating in the prestigious NRA Methuen Cup Match, which was won by London Practical Shooting Club "A" Team taking first place from The Highpower Rifle Association, who came a close second; the London Practical Shooting Club "B" Team were third.

The winners of our third NRA Military Adaptive Championships this year were Cpl M Taylor for the Serving entrants and Olaf Jones for the Veterans.

408 cadets attended the Inter-Services Cadet Rifle Meeting - down from 558 last year. Notwithstanding this decline in overall numbers, 102 teams were represented this year, including the Royal Canadian Army Cadet National Rifle Team, compared to 108 last year. The winning team in the Team Grand Aggregate was 197 Devonport Sqn Air Training Corp with a score of 932.56v bulls and Flt Sgt C Jove, also of 197 Devonport Sqn Air Training Corp won the Bossom, the individual prize, with a score of 243. The prizes were presented by Air Commodore Hall.

At the Schools' Meeting there were 43 schools compared with 48 last year, including schools from Canada and Hong Kong, and there were 651 staff and cadets participating. 33 of those schools participated in the Ashburton Shield which was won by Ellesmere College with a score of 745 beating Dollar Academy into second place by 11 points.

The Historic Arms Meeting was run by Peter Ryder who was the Match Director and aided by volunteers to whom we owe our thanks. Although there was a reduction in the number of available Gallery Rifle events this year, there were still 90 competitors who took part. They fired 343 match cards which is up 9% on the equivalent events last year. Cadets from 211 ATC (Newbury) acted as markers and performed to their usual high standard.

In the Match Rifle events, the Hopton was won by Mike Baillie-Hamilton, beating Rob Lygoe by five points on 991 with 99 V bulls. Angus McLeod won the Albert, the last shoot in the Hopton, with the score of 220.30v bulls without sighters.

The Elcho was shot at the end of the Match Rifle meeting in testing wind conditions. The Trophy was retained by England with a score of 1708 and 147 V bulls beating Scotland into second place. The medals for the match were again presented by the Earl of Wemyss and March at a separate Match Rifle prize giving.

Overall Target and Match Rifle has shown 1119 entries, a decrease of 54 on last year's figures. The Grand Aggregate has 781 entries which is down by 81 on the preceding year. Further analysis of these numbers, for which I am very grateful to Bill Richards, show that although we have seen teams and individuals from Australia, Canada, Falkland Islands, France, Germany, Guernsey, Guyana, Jersey, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa and Trinidad & Tobago, of the headline drop of 54, overseas entries are down by 44. This is probably not surprising given that the Individual and Team World Long Range Championships are being held in the USA in just a few weeks.

317 of the 1119 entries are those under 25. This is modestly down on last year which is disappointing given our policy of supporting youth shooting with 40% discounts on their entries. Perhaps it is yet a little early for this to have taken full effect.

The oldest competitor was Jo Wright at 92 and the youngest is Cadet R E J McGregor at 14.

The Imperial Gallery Rifle meeting had a total of 108 entrants compared with 91 last year and sold approximately 1100 cards compared with about 1000 last year, both very pleasing increases. Melville was very busy and the ROs worked very hard over the meeting and we would like thank them for their assistance on that.

There were 45 F class competitors this year, who shot in a newly formatted 'meeting within the Meeting'. The Farquarson Open trophy was won by Paul Eggeman from Germany, and the Farquarson-TR trophy was won by Tony Marsh. I would like to make special mention of Jo Wright who won the Wimbledon F-Open Trophy with a score of 74.10 at the ripe old age of 92. I don't know about you, but I think that deserves a round of applause. (*Applause*)

We wish all the very best on Friday to Peter Bromley and his Kolapore team and to Jane Messer and her Palma team to the USA next month. May I also wish all the very best of success to the GB Veterans, the GBU25 and the newly minted GBU21 teams in their matches also in the USA, and to the Athelings on their tour to Canada.

Now to my thank you's to those who have worked so very hard over the last 4 weeks of competitions.

- To the Operational Shooting Training Team who produced military range teams and the MoD and Landmarc teams in Pirbright.
- To Mick Barr and his team from the Bisley 'V' Club and elsewhere for their support of the newly named Arthur Clarke Schools and Cadets Long Range Target Rifle match, which gives cadets a rare opportunity to shoot at 800 and 900 yards.
- To Maj Simon Fraser and the CCRS in their support of the cadets with both ISCRM and the Schools.
- To our Chief Range Officers, Tony Clayton on Stickledown, Peter Turner on Century and Doug Watt during the Match Rifle meeting.
- To our Chief of Staff, Mike Turner, Chief Butt Officers, Colin Scoles on Century and Shane Cake on Stickledown, and all the RCOs and Butt supervisors who have kept things going for us. We were reminded during the Match rifle meeting of the debt that we owe to these people who not only keep us in line and the competitions on time, but also spring into action with great professionalism when things can go wrong. Our sincere thanks also goes to all the markers who have done a sterling job in all of the butts.
- To the staff who have prepared the Camp and Ranges.
- To Ted Molyneux and his team of volunteers who have opened the Museum.

I would also like to thank

- the front counter team for ensuring everyone had their squadding cards on time. Several members have come up to me over the meeting and said what a great job they have been doing,
- the Stats team who have produced all the results,
- the Range Office and Armoury staff who have ensured the ranges run smoothly, and also not least in sourcing our new GGG ammunition which I think we can all agree has performed extremely well,
- as well as all those working diligently behind the scenes to ensure a successful Imperial Meeting for all.

That brings me to the end of my formal speech. I would now like to open the meeting to comments and questions from the floor. If you could please come forward to the microphone here at the front, and state your name before you speak.

Questions from the floor

Dick Horrocks

Good evening everybody. My question is about provincial shooting. In fact there are two issues. One is a question and one is a proposal.

The question is regarding Landmarc. As we know, ever since Landmarc have managed MoD ranges, they have literally driven civilian shooting off those ranges.

At Altcar where we have traditionally shot for many years, we now find the new management is using the Landmarc pricing schedule as a model for their own. So from the 1st June this year, judging by the ambiguity of the information given to us, we haven't a clue what we are going to be charged for using the same targetry as we have previously.

Consequently, my own club has halved its number of bookings at Altcar, and because we have good friends at private ranges, like the Huddersfield Rifle Club and the Vere Hill Rifle Club, we are now using their facilities in anticipation of maintaining an affordable level for our members shooting.

So I would ask the question, given that we are now in surplus I understand and there is money to invest, how can the NRA help reduce the Landmarc iniquitous charging system which they seem to want to operate across the UK and, in doing so, price most civilian shooters off those ranges?

That's the first question. I have a not unrelated question which is also a proposal.

In the County of Lancaster, we have a very very close relationship with the cadet forces. These are not the CCF associated with schools, these are the cadet forces which are associated with the region, the army cadet forces where the young people come from backgrounds not associated with shooting, they come from average income backgrounds, so there is no tradition and they are pretty strapped for cash.

Every year, the CLRA helps host the cadet championship which has over 100 young ladies and young men all trained in the use of a cadet rifle. At the age of 18, they have to leave the cadets and they disappear. Attempts to get them into shooting when the cost of a rifle is £1,000 and travel etc, there is no appeal whatsoever.

So I am proposing, because there are a number of clubs at Altcar in the North West who are members of the County of Lancaster Rifle Association, if we could capture or attract only ten or fifteen of those cadets who are leaving each year into the civilian TR fraternity it would be an investment in the future.

So I am proposing that the Trustees seriously consider making bursaries available to help clubs in the North West support these post-cadet leavers for maybe three years from the age of 18 to 21.

My own club and Altcar Rifle Club have target rifles as club rifles which are perfectly serviceable and would compete side by side with many of the rifles we use today in the Imperial Meeting. These rifles are not being used at the moment because we do not have young people coming forward to use them. And the cost of using them in terms of ammunition is too much for them.

A 'back of the envelope' calculation by myself which would offer any one of these young shooters maybe twenty shoots a year in the North West, including competition and their ammunition costs could be covered, subsidised travel, subsidised membership of the relevant club is £2,000 per head per three years. So a £2,000 investment on one of these young people over three years could actually make sure that young person is one of our future TR, not only members, but possible champions.

And so, those are the issues. Landmarc – exorbitant charges, fewer and fewer shooters in the North West can afford to shoot on their ranges and will give up as a consequence. And the second is a proposal for bursaries for the average cadet at the age of 18 who leaves and yet they can be hosted by rifle clubs if the appropriate financial environment is there to help them for the next three years or so.

Thank you.

Round of applause

Chairman:

Thank you Dick. Some comments from me, and I'm sure that Andrew will come in.

A couple of things. First of all on regional shooting, we have appointed a Regional Ranges Manager who has just started – his name is Nic Couldrey - and he is charged with providing to Council what I have described as the 'state of the nation' of regional shooting around the UK by the year end.

With particular regard to what is happening at Altcar, I have spoken to Anton Aspin, and Anton and Nic are soon to meet. I have some understanding of the problem that you are facing.

With respect to bursaries and support of young shooting, I think it is widely known that we as Council have taken the decision to support young shooting in a number of ways. Not least that anybody who is under the age of 21 gets three free years membership to the NRA with all of its benefits, including insurance. And two, anybody who enters an NRA sponsored competition or any training under the age of 25, irrespective of whether they are in full time education, gets a 40% discount from the prices available.

To put a sterling number on that so everybody knows what it means, it is effectively a grant to that section of our membership, or prospective membership, of up to £90,000 per year. So we take supporting young shooters pretty seriously. As you can tell from my disappointment about the numbers of young shooters that we have coming to the Imperial, I think we need to sell those benefits more aggressively than perhaps we have been able to in the past three or four months. Quite clearly, as there is more that can be done and needs to be done at a local level, we should look into that and I'm sure Mr Couldrey will be doing so.

Andrew, do you have anything to add?

Chief Executive:

I think the comments about Landmarc are interesting. We are well aware that there are pressures on MoD budgets. DIO effectively contract to Landmarc. Landmarc are effectively the agents delivering on DIO and are the military estates managers as it were. It's not so much Landmarc – it's the MoD organisation that sits behind them and instructs them that I think is the issue. They are obviously looking to maximise the remuneration

generated by their ranges. Their enthusiasm to support civilian shooting is relatively limited. They see civilian shooting as an income generator and there is some standardisation.

In Altcar I think you have done very well compared to other MoD/Landmarc managed ranges in the past and I'm not at all surprised that Altcar hasn't realised that other civilian clubs are paying higher rates therefore why shouldn't the Altcar clubs? That's a painful process and one that is, to be frank, difficult to argue against.

On a wider point, Nic's appointment is very important to us. Roll forward three years and I would like to think he will be leading a team of regional managers that are much more in tune with what's going on in the regions.

The first two years or so of my career here has been really designed to effectively get Bisley right, get the NRA on a reasonable financial footing to give us the financial firepower to get out in the regions to sort out the long term strategic problems. But to be honest, we need to go out with resources, both cash and people resources, and Nic Couldrey is the first step in that.

We have a very interesting position because as at today, we've got about 20,000 full-bore shooting members of affiliated clubs who are not NRA members. Those affiliated clubs pay a capitation fee, so that suggests to me that they are regular full-bore shooters shooting somewhere across the country. To my considerable shame and embarrassment, we haven't got much of a clue where those 20,000 people shoot and that's Nic's first job.

So it may well be that there is a particular pressure point in the North West around Manchester and Altcar, and that may well be where the greatest need lies. I suspect that might not be the case, but we simply don't know. So we need to do a very quick analysis of the accessible ranges, what's available, how much they cost, where they are, how accessible they are, what are the various pernicious and pernicky rules and regulations that often stop civilian clubs shooting on there, and come up with a plan.

We have got financial resources to bring to bear, but we are going to do it in what I like to think is an intelligent and thoughtful way. It is very much a work in progress and that work has just started.

Gillian Kaile:

First, not to take anybody's thunder, is the person who is going to be speaking about the fact that we are shooting four details a day in F-Class actually here?

OK, if it's alright, I'll cover both subjects in the one go.

My subject I'll cover first, and if that person turns up, I'll be happy to hand over.

We are now looking at covering four details in F-Class which means we are shooting late into the evening, which means as the ranges are not directly pointing to the North, the sun is getting into the back of our scopes. Which, for those people who shoot early, is quite an advantage, because shooting into the sun is really a military operation, with a special guard at the front, and a special guard at the back, and your spotter looking out for you. It is not so much a civilian activity and many people turned up at the range, to be fair me included, without the sort of military kit that usually goes with shooting into the sun.

If it's got to be done for next year, could it be done for one competition right across the range so everybody gets the same conditions?

We are shooting four details a day. I don't know quite how to put this correctly politically, but many of our shooters have come to shooting after a lifetime of being behind a desk and they are in the more generously proportioned variety of gentlemen. I hope I've put that correctly. This means that they are actually finding it physically difficult to undertake four details a day, moving from Century to Stickledown, Stickledown to Century and back again, together with all their kit. My kit weighs probably 20 kilos. In an F-Class Open you are looking at quite a bit more. I know for TR shooters this doesn't make sense, we always seem to carry a lot of kit. It has been noticeable that some people have been doing it more as a survival course and by the time they actually get there, they are clearly, even in the younger category, not performing to the highest level that could be hoped for.

We also have disabled shooters for which everybody has been ganging together, but they really are finding it very, very difficult to get around four details. The general consensus that I have heard, and I'm sorry that the other person isn't here, is that three details a day, making it one extra day, would be the most equitable compromise and not put us even as far back

as we were last year. And I ask for that on behalf of the other speaker to be given serious consideration.

Thank you.

Chairman:

Thank you Gillian.

My understanding is that, and I mentioned this at F-Class Prize giving yesterday afternoon, this year was an experiment, so any change is very much for the group of people who want to do this. I think we were learning as we went over the last four or five days or so. For those of you who don't know, F-Class used to be run parallel to the entire TR meeting. This year the idea was to see if we could get a more involved meeting across a shorter period of time - Friday through to effectively Tuesday lunchtime, with finals on Tuesday morning.

Your NRA will do precisely what the F-Class community would like to do. So, thank you for raising it here; it has been raised already. We have no axe to grind against four versus three. There was a view going in, or an assumption going in, that more ranges per day were better. I think quite a lot of details were shooting 15's rather than 10s. It has become quite an assault course - I think is the way I would put it - which was not the intention. We will certainly take it under advisement and the Shooting Committee is fully aware of the points that you have made. Thank you.

Clive Wall:

My name is Clive Wall and I am also an F-Class shooter and I was unaware that Gillian was going to raise that point. If I may just add to it slightly. I think that the programme was extremely successful this year but it was a pretty tough course to run. Particularly anybody who was getting into a final as well - on Monday we had five shoots to do, they were four times fifteen and a twenty shot shoot in the evening, so it made it very difficult. Maybe there should be some changes made.

But that wasn't the point I wanted to raise this evening. I'm doing F-Class after more years than I care to remember shooting Target Rifle, so I've come into the F-Class scene/discipline from that route. I have really enjoyed doing it and I've also really enjoyed this meeting this week, apart from the fact I'm nearly on my knees as a result!

The point I would like to raise is that although the F-Class programme this year has been very successful, there is a downside. The downside is that most of the F-Class shooters would have stopped shooting on Monday and only those who got into the Farquarson or the George's finals shot on Tuesday morning, and even they would have stopped by lunchtime on Tuesday.

As somebody who comes here not only to shoot, but to enjoy the Imperial as we know it, I find it rather disappointing that there is nothing for me to do except socialise for the rest of the week. I know that there are some others who feel the same. So my point is a simple request to the NRA, and that is to look at the possibility of making it possible for F-Class to enter other competitions later on in the week, and I can see no reason why F-Class can't be involved in the Stickledown, the Barlow, the Howard Wilkinson as extra competitions. And also, since we do not shoot the Conan Doyle, for instance, and we do not shoot the Prince of Wales, it would be surely a very simple administrative procedure to include F-Class in those competitions, just as separate competitions and maybe even take a lead from the programme this year where we shot the long-range shoots in the Grand twice, which is why we finished up doing four shoots a day, we could perhaps do the same with one or two or even more of those competitions, and make it possible for people who want to be part of the whole thing and integrate properly with the rest of the community.

Otherwise people are going to leave and that's a missed opportunity. And by making it possible for people to be active for the rest of the week, you are going to potentially improve income for the NRA.

Round of applause

Chairman:

Thank you very much.

The thinking that had gone into the current programme was that if people were short of holiday time, and knowing that there are the highly successful European F-Class Championships in September, we would not be seeking to take ten days' worth of holiday from people, but the competitions themselves would be run over an extended weekend, which would allow more people to come and go.

What I hear you to say - and please nod yes or no - is that that you would like to keep the programme roughly as is but then enable those who want to stay around for the remainder of the meeting to participate in an F-Class division of some description for some of the extra competitions? (yes)

I think the Chairman of the Shooting Committee has heard you pretty loud and clear.

Clive Wall:

Basically yes. The main point is that if people are concerned about spending time taking leave, then it's their choice.

Chairman:

Agreed but I think that the idea was that if we can get up to 100 to 150 competitors to participate in that extended weekend, and then have the 30 or 40 staying on to do the extra competitions, that was the vision. I'm not sure that we are going to get there, but certainly we will try and put the circumstances in place that that might become the reality.

Clive Wall:

If I may say, it's one of the few, if not the only discipline where the numbers are expanding. So take the opportunity.

Chairman:

As we know from the European Championships. We are behind you. Thank you.

Anybody else? Chris Law. I should say before Chris takes the stage, he has been kind enough to tell us his questions in advance. He should address those to the meeting, but it has allowed us, and I thank you for this sir, it has allowed some of us at least to see if we can get prepared with a respectable answer!

Chris Law:

Thank you Chairman.

The first question I was going to do is probably lightweight and I should have limped to the podium because I think I'm going to shoot myself in the foot by addressing it.

I was disappointed that there were no reports of the shooting competitions, or apparently no reports of shooting competitions in the broad sheet newspapers. And I have shot myself in the foot, because there is a fairly adequate report on Target Rifle in today's!

But I did also ask what the role of the media gentleman was who is perambulating the camp. Could I just ask what releases he produces on behalf of the NRA?

Chief Executive:

You mean the gentleman who has the media badge? His job is primarily to harvest images that we post primarily on social media. We use those for other media channels as well, so he is a paid consultant/contractor to us scooping up images. He has a set programme to go round, but he is also there to capture what we hope is the essence of the various competitions that roll through.

He is engaged with us on an annual basis, the Imperial is one, a very important one, but just one of the events that he covers.

Chairman:

Chris, if I may just say, this has come up in Council before – the broadsheet reporting. I think that we have struggled to engage with a number of the broadsheets for different reasons, some of it is formatting, some of it is change of editors, some of it is the fact that we have changed our personnel here - Tony de Launay used to do a lot of this voluntarily and his work was not inconsequential and very well done. Another example of a volunteer around here who does a sterling job and deserves our thanks.

We are making incremental progress, I think, in this particular area with respect to the broadsheets. But Andrew has alluded to the fact that we currently have, and have had, quite a lot of social media presence. I'm certainly not young enough to understand what that is, but it is "copasetic", if I can use that word, with our policy with respect of the young and youth shooting. And so we consider that to be an extremely important part of what we do.

So we are making progress; it has been laboured and we wish it had been better, but as this morning proved, between your question and this meeting, obviously some of that was put right.

Second question, sir.

Chris Law:

The long range shooters meeting at the end of the Hopton last week on Tuesday night. The issue was raised regarding the Butts arrangements. In my book I come here for two essential things – a decent firing point and I'll let other gardeners discuss that. But I'm really very concerned about the receiving end for the projectiles that I throw down. And two issues appear to have arisen.

I'm not at all comfortable that, whilst the markers have done sterling work - I don't deny that - I'm concerned that during the progress of a shoot, they may not be giving totally undivided attention to their targets and may be distracted by modern media, such as the headsets that we know they are wearing.

I wonder if we could have a confirmation, or it be passed on that during the conduct of the shoot, these extra distractions are not permitted. That was one point that arose from the meeting.

Chairman:

Can we just answer that whilst we are going as I think this is helpful?

A couple of points that I would make – the state of the firing points are a disappointment to us all. Those of you who will have been down on certainly Century range will see that a scarifying process is still evident, but the weather let us down rather badly with respect to putting on top soil and seed and weed killer at the appropriate time.

This is a little bit like the British Open Golf where you get the fairways that nature gives you. We made the effort to try and put a much better surface on the firing points and were defeated by our inadequate weather forecasting.

On the second issue, and I'll let Andrew add to both of these, I think we need to all recognise if there was a question about whether we should actually ban these particular instruments in the butts altogether. We are still highly dependent upon the young to pull our targets for us, and they do it increasingly well once they have done a period of training. We also have one of Andrew's initiatives which is to get the markers to come and shoot on First Monday as our guests to see what the shooting experience is like.

Thereafter their marking does get remarkably better because they get to see what is expected.

Notwithstanding that, we take your point that perhaps when targets are up, they should be fully focused on what they are doing. But, banning them completely I think would be extremely difficult; particularly for a young person to be cut them off from what effectively appears to be their life support system for three hours (*laughter*), I think we would really struggle to get to recruit anybody.

Chief Executive

I think it is interesting because I've had pretty much nothing but exclusively compliments about the conduct of the markers at the meeting. So the assertion that they are being distracted by their mobiles came as a considerable surprise to me.

As a point of principle, when markers are marking a target, they are not allowed to use their mobile phones. In any meeting we run, my staff will thin out those markers who do not adhere to the rules that are very firmly administered by the Chief Butts Officer. I think a dozen or so have left our employ during this meeting to date.

Using mobile phones whilst they are marking is strictly verboten. When they are standing down, it is not verboten at all. But we do expect them to pay attention when the targets are there to be marked.

Chris Law:

Possibly the most important part I would like to offer to you is the concern about the construction of the targets. I am concerned that the structure of them is flawed.

I'm interested to greet the new Vice President from the DCRA because I am led to understand that DCRA no longer uses the type of construction material that we persist in using now which is this form of what I call estate agent board or correx.

I also understand that many of the Australian clubs have gone from using correx back to cardboard targets because there have been problems with correx, particularly at long range. We find that it can self-seal so that the supposed hole is very difficult to see. And also, the self-adhesive patches adhering thereto very easily move when it's wet and on one occasion, the target that I was organising was down for a prolonged period and I was told

it was purely because the marker was trying to press the various tabs back on again.

Another problem that arises with corex is when it is back-lit. Another range that I was conducting in the week was badly back-lit, we had complaints from the competitors because the aiming mark appeared to be swaying across section which is hardly suitable for reinforcement. What I shall propose to do on behalf of the Match Riflemen is to ask for a consultation with the NRA with a view to putting paper facing on the whole of the long range targets because the only paper they have is the aiming mark paper. The rest of the target does not have paper on it at all. If you have paper on the targets you will get a greater eruption of the surface enabling them to spot more easily.

We've had dozens, possibly hundreds, of message 7s and message 4s on long range of where has my shot gone. Some of the replies that have been given to the shooters have not really been up to scratch. So I ask that that be considered.

In conclusion may I just observe that Bisley shooting is a peculiar ephemeral phenomenon because we have two or three people to the firing point and the indication of your shot may only last for one minute before it is patched over and lost. When the Palma team goes to Camp Perry next month, they will be able to buy their own target. The last time I was there it was \$6. Because they were shooting in strings, only one person is firing at a time and if you have a particularly good target you can buy it at the end, so your shots stay on.

We could never do that with Bisley targetry. There is really only one event here that I recall in which the shot was lasting and was brought out for all to see from Stickledown butts a few years ago. Sadly, one of the marker's cars was hit by a projectile which took out the engine block and when at the end of the detail the vehicle was brought out, towed out, one of the more droll members of the butts crew had affixed the following (*Chris shows an orange Vbull target card*)

Chairman:

Thank you Chris. I'm not an expert in target building or manufacture but I think we will all recognise one of the important or essential ingredients of shooting is the proper reflection of where our shot has gone. I have no problem in saying that we should take any comments about that under advisement.

Andrew, do you have any issues with that?

Chief Executive:

I have lots of thoughts but none terribly appropriate for the moment.

Chairman:

Any further questions or comments?

Charles Kennish:

I asked a question last year about trade tents. I arrived on the camp on Monday and went into the front office and asked what trade tents were coming. I was snapped at and told we can't make them come. I've made a few contacts since so I'd like a response from the chair please.

Chairman:

I'll pass that over to Andrew.

Chief Executive:

Last year we got our pricing wrong. This year we cut the prices down. I think we were proposing £200 for the entire meeting for a decent sized stand with an offer to come and go as you please.

The major trade stand where there was a bit of fuss about last year had the trade stand application form emailed to him with a cheery letter by me personally. I also sent a copy to his wife and never received a reply.

We've tried a number of other trade exhibitors. They do not wish to come and trade. The sole trade stand we have, I popped over to see them this afternoon and they reported good business. So, the simple fact is that if traders do good business they will come and they will stay. If traders don't do good business then they will not come.

It is certainly not because we are charging punitive rates for trade stand space.

Charles Kennish:

So there no truth in the rumour that they wanted a lease from the first to the last of the month?

Chief Executive:

No, the trade stand application was absolutely explicit, we said you can hire the pitch for the meeting, you can come and go as you see fit. We identified the busy days, the busy weeks. We told them approximately how many people will be coming on those days and weekends. We told them who they were and we said it's your pitch for the duration of the meeting, come and go as you please for a one-off fee.

Charles Kennish:

Was there any restrictions on his security?

Chief Executive:

No.

Dick Horrocks:

This is a comment about the state of the dereliction that greets us when we drive into the camp. I understand the NSRA own that dereliction. Every year I come in, the degree of degradation of the so-called cook house has increased.

Now either the NSRA are waiting for nature to take its course, which will probably take 50 years for the microbes and termites to remove that building from the site, or I wonder if the NRA has any power to force them to do something about that site, because at the moment it's a bit like going down one of our UK high streets in the middle of the recession when you come across all the closed signs before you see there is actually a Marks & Spencer still in business at the end of the row!

So, I do feel that for newcomers to Bisley, that is not a good advert for the hallowed turf of the camp. I just wonder if actions can be taken.

Chairman:

We agree with you. First of all Site 103 is what you are referring to. Site 103 does not belong to us, it belongs to the NSRA. I will reply by repeating comments that I made at the Annual General Meeting.

The NSRA and the NRA have been having a series of discussions about a closer co-operation. Derek Lowe and I have met, and separately Andrew Mercer and I have met, with Ken Nash, who is their Vice Chairman, and Richard Watchorn, who is their Treasurer.

These have been very cordial discussions. They started with an idea that as we both run membership departments, competition departments, and finance departments, wouldn't it be beneficial if we aggregated all of those and had one department between us.

We concluded after a pretty thorough investigation that frankly that type of working together was going to yield very small benefits for each side, but cause quite a lot of upheaval for the employees and the organisations involved.

However, having gone through that exercise and decided that it wasn't going to move the needle in any material way, we have undertaken to not stop there. The NSRA have invited us, the NRA, to come up with a much different and radical proposal as to how we might work together.

I think that's about as much as I can say at present. The problem in reality is the site doesn't belong to us. I don't think it's any secret that the NSRA is in a state of financial disarray, and they cannot afford to do with that particular site what they wanted to do when we first sold it to them.

So, we're of a mind and I think they are of the same mind that it's in both our interests to try and reach some sort of negotiation on that. It is a little complicated and we've got some work to do and some negotiating to do, but certainly we are working on it. We have actually gone back to them with a first draft of that proposal, and have yet to hear their reaction. As and when things move on, we will be able to report something more substantial.

Thank you.

Any further questions?

And is Peter Turner in the room? Peter, can you bring up the envelope please as I think we are probably getting to that time?

Nigel Wells:

I have to say that the gravel on Century is not bicycle friendly! I did fall off but fortunately the rifle was alright and I could complete the competition. They always say if you fall don't break the rifle because you can't finish.

I'm asking essentially that the gravel is removed and re-turfed like it should have been. That is the gravel over the bridges over the trenches.

Chief Executive:

That's the first negative Nigel I've heard about the beautiful gravel over the bridges. We need to think about how many errant peddlers of cycles we need to accommodate and whether there needs to be a special cycle track for you over the bridges!

Nigel Wells:

I'll need room for the trolley as well.

Secondly, the other thing that bugs me coming from being a pistol shooter, is that even if you turned up on the day of the competition, you paid your entry fee and you weren't given a surcharge. So every year I get the Imperial entry and you've got to enter by a certain date otherwise you have this flipping surcharge.

I think it's about time in this century now that we move on from that as Bisley is moving forward and forget the surcharge.

(Round of applause)

Chairman:

Let me answer that directly. We buy about 605,000 rounds every year. There are about 250,000 rounds that are used for the Imperial Meeting. We have to pay for that when it is delivered. It needs to be delivered in time for the meeting. If we don't pay for that within 30 days we are in breach of our covenant and our suppliers will charge interest. So it is enormously important to the NRA's cash flow that people enter by a certain date.

And the only reason that we have a surcharge after the 30th May is for that very reason. We have to fork out the thick end of £250,000 to be able to do purchase the ammo for the meeting. We have to pay by 30th June so we need the money in the bank.

Those people who pay early are a great help to us. So there is an incentive to help the cash flow of the NRA and I don't necessarily see that that is a problem. You are shaking your head, sir, but I don't hear a rational response to that particular issue.

We have to fork out that money. You are actually suggesting that we keep idle cash around to basically pay for the ammunition, rather than invest in our infrastructure and things like that. Most know that they want to come to the meeting, so therefore pay early – it just makes sense, otherwise other members effectively subsidise the idle cash needed to purchase the ammo for those who shoot the Imperial.

Anyway, question asked and answered. We can debate it as much as we like, but personally I won't vote for such a change.

Paul Charlton:

If the surcharge is related to the cash flow of the Association, then 10% for a month seems an extraordinary high rate.

Chairman:

It is. But it is also an incentive. It's not only a surcharge, it is an incentive. This is behavioural economics as well as financial economics.

It is what we need to avoid subsidisation. It is the same thing with the paper entry surcharge. Paper entries cost more money to process, so please, if you're not great with email, get your grandchildren to enter for you! (*laughter*) because it is much easier to process an online entry than it is a paper entry.

Paul Charlton:

However, on that, could I ask that the NRA scrutinise the notes that you ask to attach so that when you say I've already entered on this index number, you don't get issued a second one which would generate spurious statistics about how many people have entered?

Chairman:

We are very hopeful next year that we can have a proper system of online discount, rather than a paper surcharge. But in the end, and I've stood up here before you on a number of occasions, I do not believe in cross-subsidisation between one set of members and another.

Those of you who want to enter by paper are perfectly at liberty to do so, but you must recognise that you should not expect those who enter online to subsidise the extra costs of your paper entries. It's that simple.

And again, I come to this whole issue of behavioural economics – we would much prefer everybody 1) to enter early and 2) to enter electronically, and then we can get the prices down even further than we have done this year.

Nigel Wells:

I disagree with the surcharge. Somebody might realise that they can come and shoot on the day. They turn up on the day and they can pay their money, you will get the money. If you've got a surcharge on, they aren't going to come so you don't get the money.

But that aside, the other thing is, paying online you can only pay by credit card. Why can't you put PayPal accounts in and debit cards?

Chief Executive:

You can pay by debit card.

Chairman:

Any further questions?

It's 10 o' clock, can we make this our last question? Is anybody really pressing to ask a question? Good, the last question then and then Peter we need your assistance.

John Payne:

This won't take very long. I've noticed today, and all this week we have a very, very reduced time to get prepared to get down to the range. We have something like 8 minutes before message 1. A lot of us older people can't get organised and be prepared in that 8 minutes. We've always had 10 or 15 minutes.

People who stand behind the firing point for about 20 minutes on two occasions today and Range Officers were waiting to be instructed to get people onto the range. I just think it's silly.

Chairman:

Thank you for your comments. You are not the first person who has mentioned that to me. I have certainly addressed it to one of the Chief Range Officers present, but I'm not sure the other.

Two things that I thought were quite interesting. One is that the issue is really fairness to everybody. Sometimes there are details which are close together and other details that are not. The view was taken by the CRO in question that this would be fair to everybody because of the way that the competitions are run; everybody would have the same preparation time.

I am not fixed to this. I think we, as competitors, can only make our voices heard to the Chief Range Officers and the Match Director. I do need to remind everybody that the Chief Range Officers and the Range Conducting Officers are not only here for the efficient running of the competitions, but they are also here for our safety and our welfare, and this was amply demonstrated during the Match Rifle meeting when we had an incident when there was a gas explosion and someone was hit in the face.

In the process of exploring what had happened, a number of people came up to me and said how well the Range Conducting Officer and the staff had acted in that particular event. It is clear that these guys are doing this because they like it and they enjoy it, but also they are volunteering their time to do it. But not only do they have to keep us on point and making sure the competitions run on time, but also when we do have a mishap, they are very skilled at making sure all our welfare is protected.

The CRO concerned felt that this is the fairest way to run his range.

Peter, talking of a Chief Range Officer, do you have the envelope?

While Peter is bringing that up, Andrew is going to read out the results of one of the General Council elections for us.

Chief Executive:

Thank you Chairman.

Ladies and gentlemen, we just completed the election for the Target Shotgun Discipline Rep on General Council. 125 members were eligible to vote. We received a rather astonishing 107 votes from members, and the two candidates had their votes as follows:

James Harris	Votes Yes	73
Alan Wragg	Votes Yes	34

For both candidates there were no zero votes, no abstentions, and no spoilt votes.

James Harris is duly appointed as the Target Shotgun Discipline Representative. Well done James! *(round of applause)*

Chairman:

So traditionally to close the meeting, I can read out the results of today's shoot, Her Majesty the Queen's Prize first stage; the winner of the NRA Bronze Medal and the NRA Bronze Badge is Mr DC Luckman of the Sedgemoor Target Shooting Club with a score of 105.19v.

(round of applause)

Important to the rest of us mere mortals is the last score in to the 2nd stage; 102.10v scoring 34.4v at 600 yards and 35.4v at 500 yards.

For those of you who got through today, many congratulations. To those of you, like me, who didn't, commiserations.

I wish you continued success and enjoyment in your shooting for the few days to come.

Thank you very much.

Meeting closed at 10.05pm.