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Autumn 2020 – Volume XCIX No. 3

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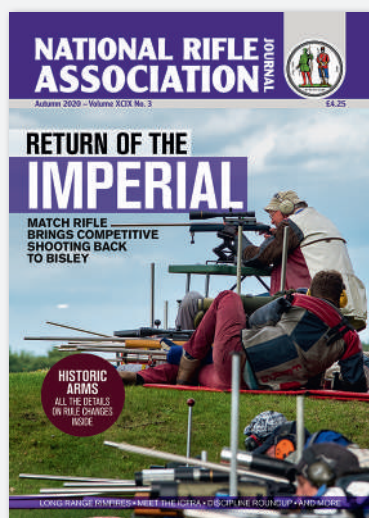
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# NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

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*There still may be other dates when we will be coming to Bisley, so if there is anything you need, let us know as we may be at Bisley at that time and can bring down any goods you require. Just give us a call.*

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# Reopening the Ranges

**Normality may still be far away, but with the NRA's expansion at Bisley Shooting Ground and Chobham Ridge, there is much to be optimistic about, reports CEO Andrew Mercer**

As summer runs into autumn, the target shooting community have been quietly and cautiously returning to their home ranges. Shooting activity at Bisley has been growing steadily and we are currently hosting the autumn Imperial competitions. Our planning has been extensive and detailed; there is no COVID-19 rulebook for ranges so adherence to government guidance has required a great deal of common sense. It became clear from opening in May that all shooters and visitors have a duty to behave responsibly and play their part in maintaining a safe environment; and I have been pleased with the quiet and sensible way that people have behaved. The shooting experience is different but this has not discouraged the number of shooters increasing steadily as the weeks progressed.

At Bisley we are blessed with open ranges and unlimited fresh air, but the same luxury is not afforded at many of our regional ranges. Clubs and organisations operating indoor ranges face particular problems with ventilation, social distancing and surface cleaning. Even when these matters have been addressed, club officials face the unenviable responsibility of signing off risk assessments and method statements. We have endeavoured to help by publishing a series of guidance notes and template documents, based upon our own experiences at Bisley and the generous advice given by a number of regional range operators. It is essential that club members continue supporting their club. Not renewing your subscription may seem an attractive option if you do not intend to shoot in the immediate future, but risks long term damage to the club and closure of the range. If there is one lesson I have learnt in my time with the NRA it is that shutting a range is a doddle; but re-opening, or finding and developing, a range is invariably a monumental undertaking.

I have been pleased with the helpful and practical way the MoD worked with us to allow NRA affiliated clubs access to military ranges. It is easy to say no, but we agreed sensible precautions and procedures that saw clubs back on ranges in August. Each club and every shooter has a duty to abide by the new MoD regulations; thoughtful and sensible adherence by all will allow access to their ranges to continue.

I am pleased to report that the dispute with Bisley Shooting Ground Limited was resolved in August. The NRA, through our



trading subsidiary National Shooting Centre Limited, is now running the busy and productive sporting clay shooting business at Cottesloe Heath. Greater control of the Bisley range complex and extending our commercial activities will be of considerable advantage to the NRA. Richie Vallance, our General Manager, has waited patiently for this opportunity, and his first report can be found in this journal.

Looking forward to 2021, it is hard to contemplate any return to 'normal'. With the running off of the Government's furlough scheme, we are making difficult decisions to shape our operations and staffing to secure our future. I am, however, confident that we will emerge in a robust state, able to weather stormy seas and take advantage of opportunities that arise.

Finally I can report on my recent visit to our (nearly) new Bisley range, Chobham Heath. The excuse was to meet with a re-wilding working group, and I was pleased to learn that many rare species, including Dartford Warblers and Hobby falcons, are successfully breeding in the range danger area. Our local Surrey Wildlife Trust and I are in heated agreement that the fabulous SSSI fauna and flora flourish because of, not despite, shooting. The range, like so much of Bisley, is a truly magical place and it was a delight to enjoy a few moments reviewing the upgraded shooting facilities that are being tested by many of our members. ■



# NEWS

## REPORTS

### NRA ACQUIRES BISLEY SHOOTING GROUND

On 7 August, the National Shooting Centre (NSC) took over the sporting clay shooting operations of Bisley Shooting Ground (BSG), under a licence granted by the NRA.

At the time of writing, we are approaching the end of our first month trading as BSG, and what struck me early on was the professionalism and resilience of the BSG staff. It is clear they are very much the Jewel in the crown and I am positive that BSG would not have achieved success without their dedication and expertise. This has been a long and particularly difficult period for all, what with the Pandemic and the uncertainty that must have seemed endless. The staff have been very supportive of the changes and appear energised and keen to make a real success of the business as we move forward.

Within our first week trading, we were able to introduce a series of quick wins to

help kick start the business and deliver confidence that we are serious about our commitment to sporting clay shooting on Cottesloe Heath. On day one we installed high-speed fibre optic broadband, which reinforced the internet phone system and provided our customers with a complimentary stable wireless internet connection. We also procured two electric buggies, which have been used to great effect ferrying our less mobile clients around the heath.

The first major event in the diary was our monthly Club shoot and we were determined to make sure it was a success. The ground staff set about giving the ground a long overdue facelift, renaming a few stands and replacing the tired old signage with new high quality substitutes. The course was designed by Tony Bracci, our Deputy Shoot Manager, and we increased



Cottesloe Heath during the club shoot. Heather in its summer bloom



This stand was named in recognition of John Heagren's commitment to BSG over the years

the shoot from 10 to 12 stands. The ever-present Covid restrictions meant we needed to introduce a squadding system, where shooters booked a 'tee off' time to ease congestion. In addition, we provided complimentary refreshments and bacon rolls on arrival. Each squad was escorted around the ground by a team of our dedicated instructors and the ground staff were on hand to ensure all the equipment worked perfectly.

One of the benefits in bringing BSG into the NSC fold is to regain control of range allocation and develop a more collaborative relationship between the rifle and clay shooting disciplines. Previously, priority days had been given to Stickledown and Century ranges, resulting in the regular closure of Cottesloe heath. This relationship has been tested owing to Rifle competitions now returning after the lockdown. Consequently we have been able to share days where Cottesloe Heath can be used in the morning and closed when rifle shooters move back to 1200 on Stickledown. The early signs are good that we can maximise both rifle and shotgun range usage, and reduce range closure time to a minimum.

All in all a very successful first month at BSG and we have great plans for further investment and many ideas for future innovations. We will shortly be running our first CPSA registered competition where we hope to showcase our shooting ground to current and new shooters.

For further details, visit [www.bisleyshooting.com](http://www.bisleyshooting.com) or telephone 01483 797017.

*Richie Vallance*

*General Manager, Bisley Clay Shooting*



# MORE WOMEN ARE INTO SHOOTING, LICENCE STATS SAY

The annual Home Office statistics on firearms and shotguns have been published for 2019/20, highlighting steady participation in shooting sports in the UK.

There were 586,351 people in possession of a firearm or shotgun certificate as at 31 March 2020, a decrease of 262 from the previous year, which was the highest number of firearm certificates on issue since comparable records began in 2009. Shotgun ownership also remained stable.

While the data shows 97 per cent of FAC holders are male, Home Office statistics also show an increase in female certificate holders, rising in line with a five-year trend. It's thought that actual participation among women is far higher than these statistics suggest.

The annual report also showed that an average of 3.8 firearms were held on a firearms certificate, and that the average number of firearms held on each certificate has shown a steady increase in the past decade.



## Notices

### FROM THE RANGE OFFICE Range Bookings

All range bookings are required to be submitted via our online system. Please do not email or call for availability unless it is for a booking within the next 48 hours. Currently with limited staff we are only able to process bookings within the near future. All bookings further than a month in advance may experience a longer delay in being processed. We aim to process all bookings within a week's date within 48 hours. Once you have submitted your range booking, please bear with us. A follow-up email or phone call is not required and will delay the process.

### Radio Communication

The control channel (16) is our main form of communication and prime purpose to be used as the safety channel. Recently it has been taken up by multiple shooters talking over one another, along with other lengthy messages to the range office. If you have a problem and would like to contact the range office, please keep your message short, clear and concise and we shall assist you where possible. The NSC have a limited supply of radios and we cannot always guarantee a pair of radios per shooter/club. Please liaise with other shooters nearby as you may be sharing. Currently due to Covid-19 the procedure is for all radios to be available on the firing point before shooting; these will be labelled up detailing what lanes they are allocated for.

### 2021 Bookings

We are currently in the early stages of planning the ranges for 2021. If you have any large booking/competitions requirements (six targets or more, multiple days, 1200x shoots), please email Kerri. Littlefield@nra.org.uk. She will issue you with a booking template you will be required to complete. Please note, while we appreciate with this year's events and the continued uncertainty, we do urge you to be as accurate as possible with your requirements. It may be that we commit you to what you request.

### SHOWS AND FAIRS ANNOUNCE NEW DATES

Major shooting shows and game fairs have announced their dates for next year after most shows were forced to postpone amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Key dates for 2021 are: British Shooting Show – 19-21 February, Northern Shooting Show – 8-9 May, The Game Fair – 23-25 July, Our Countryside Rocks – 19-20 September. At the time of going to press, the Target Shooting Show is hoping to go ahead on 14-15 November 2020 – be sure to check their website for the latest updates.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

2021 Individual Membership renewal reminders will be sent out by email by the end of September 2020. Online payments can be made from 1 October 2020. Direct debit payments will be taken on Friday 11 December 2020.

### CLUBS, SCHOOLS & ASSOCIATION RENEWALS

2021 CSA renewal paperwork including SCC lists will have been emailed to all secretaries by the end of September.

### TEAM CAPTAIN – NOMINATIONS INVITED

Nominations are invited for the Captain of the following team:

*GB Under 25 Team Captain World Championships to RSA 2023*

Nominations in writing, signed by three proposers all of whom must be full annual or life members of the NRA, must be received by the Secretary General not later than 5pm on Friday 4 December 2020. Nominations to be sent to:

**Georgina.Thatcher@nra.org.uk.**

### Team Captain Announcement

We are pleased to announce that Nick Tremlett has been appointed GB Match Rifle Captain for the Woomera Match 2022.





The return of familiar names to Bisley was a welcome sight

# Bringing Back the Magic

**Competition shooting has finally returned amid unfamiliar times – but the Match Rifle Imperial brought some familiar winners...**

At the start of the prizegiving of the 2020 Hopton, Alex Cargill-Thompson made the salient point that our four days on Stickledown were something that had felt very nearly normal in what are very abnormal times, and he wasn't wrong. This was down in no small part to the great efforts of the NRA team who helped make it all happen. While entries were a little lower this year, the match rifle community still showed up in force, bringing the competition with them. The world may rage on outside, but on Bisley camp life continues as always: Nick Tremlett won an inordinate number of trophies and decided he didn't feel the need to take them home (oh, the heights one can only aspire to); Rob Lygoe chased

close behind while maintaining both his air of serenity and his potassium levels; and the young Tyros continue to lift the standards, showing that it is not just a country for old (match-rifle) men and that the latter had all best be on their guard... And, of course, the heavens opened even though we were apparently competing during the Great British Summer.

Nor indeed was this year any different in providing challenging wind reading. For any who hadn't had much of a chance to get to know Stickledown again (or for the first time), it was certainly a baptism of fire. This was encapsulated by the first detail of the Armourers where, having started with a steady left wind, those on the firing point could watch the rain

approach through their scope with that sinking feeling all will know, and once targets were visible again, having to reconcile themselves to a significantly different amount of right wind. For the uninitiated, this year was also a good, if difficult, lesson in how a headwind can affect your shots. But it didn't seem to affect Adam Leech too much, who managed to score 221.21 to be top tyro in the Albert. Not too shabby for someone trying back-gunning for their first year.

We might have been forgiven for thinking that the wind had abated by the time we got to the FW Jones on the final day of the competition, but as you could hear shooters proclaiming "I can't see the target", the mirage stepped up to take the wind's place and keep us on our toes. Adam wasn't the only tyro who will be coming back an O next year, with Sophie Wentges winning the Warne Trophy for the 1200 Yards Aggregate, a trophy her father Mike won in 2003 and 2004. Considering that on countback Sophie was one spot above Mike in the final rankings and Mike makes her ammunition for her, we eagerly wait to see how she performs next year.

While this was a year of some normality, there were notable differences, but that is not to say that different is always bad. While we did not get to have our Elcho, and perhaps more importantly, our





## Match Rifle | REPORT

strawberries and cream and Pimm's, we did have a very tight FW Jones. So tight in fact that there were only seven points between the winners and the fifth team. We may not have had our usual spring season gearing up for the Hopton, but this did not stop the up-and-comers proving they are worth their salt. This was especially true of Mr John Lindsay III who not only ended up in two 1100 tie shoots, but walked away with both the Halford and the Saturday

Aggregate. Or at least tried to walk away before he dropped the base.

Perhaps the most notable difference this year was that after 20 years, Oxford University Rifle Club won the Humphrey Match with 867.77 to Cambridge University's 851.91. However, even in this win in which none of the Oxford shooters came away from any distance with a score below 70, some things stay the same. Fergus Flanagan scored a 224.36 overall,

a Humphrey record, only to discover afterwards that his scope was loose. Obviously, the trick we've all been missing.

Undeniably, this has been a year of people missing. Without David Friend's tell-tale puff of pipe smoke, all found the ranges lacking, not least because the fear that his shooting jacket might catch on fire always added yet another element of heat to the Elcho matches beside the normal competitive spark.

Finally, now that the members of the winning Great Britain Team of the 2019 Woomera Match have their blazer badges and can get sewing, it only remains to congratulate Nick Tremlett on his captaincy for the 2022 Woomera Tour. There will be plenty of competition to get on the team as this Hopton has shown, and the contest will only be heating up over the next two years. Fingers crossed the weather for the actual Hoptons does the same. Perhaps more clement weather will mean that the results are slightly amended in future years. ■

INDIVIDUAL SHOOTS	Winner	Top tyro	Under 25s
Whitehead	Dr Alex Cargill-Thompson	Adam Leech	
Halford	John Lindsay III	Guy Hunter	
Cottesloe	Angus McLeod	Bruce Winney	
Wimbledon	Andy Gent	Adam Leech	
Armourers	Dr Alex Cargill-Thompson	Harriet Mansell	Kim Lindsay
Edge	John Pugsley	Tim Brooking	Cecilia Catuogno-Cal
Albert	Nick Tremlett	Adam Leech	Kim Lindsay
<b>FIVE NATIONS MATCH</b>	Scotland		
<b>AGGREGATES</b>			
Saturday	John Lindsay III	Sophie Wentges	
Martin Parr	Nick Tremlett	Sophie Wentges	
Weekend	Nick Tremlett		Russel Woodger
Weekend Selection	Nick Tremlett		
Victoria	Nick Tremlett	Sophie Wentges	
Match Rifle Selection	Nick Tremlett		
Councillors 1000	Nick Tremlett		Kim Lindsay
Tribe Memorial 1100	Nick Tremlett	Harriet Mansell	
1200 Yards	Rob Lygoe	Sophie Wentges	
GGG	Jeremy Thompson		
<b>HOPTON</b>	Nick Tremlett (1009.138)		





# Seonaid Shoots for 2021

Ryan Warren gets the chance to interview future Olympian Seonaid McIntosh

**T**his August, I had the privilege of interviewing Seonaid McIntosh. At only 24, Seonaid has already become the most successful British woman rifle shooter of all time. She was World Champion at the 2018 ISSF World Shooting Championships in 50m rifle prone. In 2019, she won three World Cup medals, including the first World Cup Gold to be won by a British woman, became the first British woman to rank World #1 for the 50m rifle three position (3P) event, and became European Champion in 300m rifle prone with an equal World Record score.

**Tell us about your journey into shooting.** I started at the Dollar Academy, but I had not planned to shoot seriously outside of that because I was passionate about music. It was when I attended the London 2012 Olympics as a spectator that I was really inspired. I started with Air Rifle, competing as a junior in 10m Air and 50m Prone at the 2014 World Championships, winning Silver in 10m Air at 2015 U21 European Championships. I took up 3P in 2015 and placed 4th at the 2016 U21 European Championships. I tried 300m in 2018.

**What is your most memorable moment so far?**

Shooting an equal world record at my first proper 300m match. I had been struggling in the days leading up to the match with breaking in a new jacket, but once I had settled in, it felt really comfortable and I was stoked with the result. Very unexpected!

**An impressive achievement just a year after first shooting 300m at Bisley. What made you want to try 300m?**

I shot fullbore at school and loved it. The idea of shooting 60-shot prone matches and 3P matches with a much bigger calibre was intriguing. It certainly wasn't the cost!

**How did you find 300m compared to other disciplines?**

The positions are the same, so it wasn't too hard from that aspect. The recoil causes the positions to break down much faster – it made me work a lot harder to rebuild them consistently. I also found recoil from other people very distracting to begin with, especially people shooting 6mm XC. There are a lot less people competing in 300m, so it is a really nice community and everyone

is super friendly and helpful towards each other. There were some things I didn't know or equipment I didn't have; the people around the club were great at helping me without making me feel stupid.

**It is difficult to ignore the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. How has it affected you?**

I had a lot of competitions cancelled, including the Olympics. I also haven't had access to a range or my rifles since mid-March. I've been able to do a small amount of dry firing with the air rifle, but essentially I've had five months off. I have used the time as best I could, and have been working on my fitness.

**We have all been missing the shooting, but we can only imagine how that must have felt. What does the Games' postponement mean for you?**

Thankfully, I get to keep my quota place, so I don't have to worry about re-qualifying. We will have what should have been this year, next year. It does change some things around university and taking time off after the Olympics, but it's all manageable.



**Are there any changes you made during lockdown that you will carry forward when we return to a new normal?**

I bought a road bike near the start of lockdown and was on that quite a bit. Now I'm getting back into training, there is less time for me to fit in all the exercise I was doing. I'd like to keep up with a lot of it and hopefully keep cycling at least once a week.

**Are there any off-range activities that you found to be helpful to your shooting?**

Yoga was really beneficial for me. It's really good for your balance and proprioception but also for developing mindful techniques. I've found that being a lot fitter has really helped my shooting. I can shoot for much longer without getting sore and tired.

**What do you find hardest about shooting?**

It changes day-to-day. Some days I find getting in and out of position really hard, but you can't stay on the floor forever. Some days my kit feels like it weighs 50 tonnes and I don't want to carry it.

Sometimes my dad is there to help me, but if he's not there I just go slow. Some days I've used all my brain power and can't focus. Those days are actually good training. Most of the time it's related to low blood sugar or fatigue. So if food doesn't help then it's a clear sign I need a break.

**What advice would you give club shooters who want to improve their performance?**

A lot of people spend a lot of time 'tweaking' their positions but that may be more of a hindrance than you think. I spend a huge amount of time doing repetitions of the same thing. If I was constantly changing my position and set-up, I'd really only be doing a few repetitions. You should get used to a position before you change it. You learn more about what works for you that way.

**Let us move swiftly on – I can hear friends' accusations of perpetual tweaking ringing in my ears. Have there been any key turning points in your**

**development as a shooter to reach this level, or has it been more a case of steady progression with the right support?**

The latter. It's all just been building and progressing for years. Every match gives new experience that helps for the next match. I have a great support team behind me too with my dad as my coach and then my team at the Scottish Institute of Sport.

**Do you have any 'life hacks' for balancing everyday life with your shooting career?**

My 'life hacks' are the advice any medical professional would give you. Eat well, get enough sleep, exercise. If I have to miss going out with friends so I can get my essay done or finish training, that's what I do.

**My daughter of 11 is showing a keen interest in shooting. What would you say to her as she starts out?**

Have fun! It's the most important thing.

Be patient. No one can be the best right off the bat but if you work at it there's no reason you can't be the best in the future.

If you're not sure about something, ask. There are always people around who would love to help and pass on their knowledge.

And protect your hearing. You can't get it back.

**“My most memorable moment so far must be shooting an equal world record at my first proper 300m match**



**As the first British woman to win World Cup gold and the first British woman to rank world No 1 for 50m 3P, what do you think should be done to attract more girls to the sport?**

It's a male-dominated sport and also an ageing sport. We don't attract a lot of younger people in general. If it's possible for clubs, a youth evening works really well since kids tend to want to do something if their friends are doing it too. Speaking as a young female, it's daunting going to a club where the only woman there is your mum and you're the youngest person by 20 years. A lot of people also don't know that their local club exists. I think letting local schools or community centres know that the sport is an option is really important.

**300m is a demanding discipline that all can enjoy. It can be shot successfully with an NRA 7.62 TR rifle. If you would like to try it, contact the NRA 300m representative (300m@nra.org.uk) who can advise you how to join us. ■**





# Revising the Handbook

**The NRA Classic and Historic Arms Handbook has been reworked to make it more clear and consistent. Bryden Ritchie explains what you need to know...**

**T**he existing NRA Classic & Historic Handbook has been in use for some time now, and subject to continuing amendment and modification over that period – not always in a clear and consistent manner.

Following the Trafalgar meeting in 2019, Neil Macfarlane, NRA Council Member for Classic & Historic Shooting, called a meeting to discuss several anomalies that had been found in the existing documentation. It was agreed that the current handbook needed revisiting to resolve the anomalies, but also to see if a clearer and more stable set of regulations could be developed for the future.

The existing documents that govern the Imperial Historic Arms Meeting (IHAM) and the Trafalgar meeting are an amalgam of sets of rules developed from historic sources, NRA, BSRC, NPA, MLAGB and HBSA events going back several decades. Roughly speaking, they cover the four main areas of Gallery Rifle and Pistol, Moving Target Sporting Rifle, Short Range Rifle and Long Range Rifle. Though there was a degree of commonality, each area remained bedded in its respective terminology, habits and traditions, leading to a degree of confusion when seen as a whole, particularly by a visitor to the realm of historic shooting.

Rather than simply pursue perennial controversies such as “slings ‘n’ gloves”, we have tried to step back and create a more understandable structure that we can use to govern this important area of shooting activity into the future. We felt that too much of the current structure was based on subjective opinion and archaic knowledge. As we progressed in our discussions, it became obvious that, though the subject was more complex and dynamic than any of us thought, it would be possible to produce a structure that could be easier to understand and, more importantly, maintain and develop into the future.

At the centre of the activity is a set of matches made up from combinations of firearm classes, ranges, targets, courses of fire and conditions. This situation mirrors “conventional” target shooting, but it encompasses a much wider range of firearm types and classes and must address historical heritage, conservation and education goals that are not present in purely competitive shooting.

Our short-term aim has been to produce a Handbook for the 2020 season. This we have achieved thanks to the time and space provided by lockdown. Hopefully, we will be able to test the new Handbook in October at the Trafalgar meeting! It has become



Historic shooting helps maintain a legal reason for the possession of certain types of firearm

## ***We have sought to strike a sensible balance between the needs of safety, competition, conservation and clarity***

clear, however, that there is a longer-term need to produce a more universal structure, probably on a database, that will support a wider set of activities and serve as a useful link between special interest areas.

As a part of the revision exercise, we have produced a set of principles that we think should govern Historic shooting, and to which we should refer when considering change and development:

- The aim of shooting historical firearms is to promote an informed interest in the use and preservation of arms through enjoyable and stimulating interaction and competition. This includes an aim of maintaining a valid reason for the legal possession of working firearms of historic value.
- Safety must be at the core of all we do. Competition conditions must take account of this and reflect range practice and abilities of the shooters.
- Competitive use of historic firearms should be based on matches using comparable firearms from the same era so the abilities of the shooter,

rather than the firearm, forms the significant variable.

- When considering deviations and modifications to a firearm, due consideration needs to be taken of the intent and consequence of the modification. Modifications that are intended to maintain the safe or continuing operation of a firearm, but that do not significantly improve the performance of the arm as originally manufactured, should be accepted as part of normal maintenance. Modifications that significantly improve the performance of the specific firearms when compared to the original design may be deemed to have moved the firearm to another class.
- Owners of historic firearms should be encouraged to preserve their property as a significant element of firearms heritage. Competition should not encourage owners of historic firearms to modify and/or adapt original pieces for reasons other than the maintenance and preservation of the firearm in its original configuration and capability.



Firearms should be used in the spirit of their original design

- Matches should be as inclusive as possible, and the classification scheme constructed to offer competition to any firearm that is safe and within capacity of the ranges available. Classes should be constructed in hierarchies so if a specific firearm does not fall into a class, an alternative class should be available. There should always be an open class within each discipline where this is relevant. Where possible, competitions for equivalent modern firearms should be accommodated for comparison purposes.
- Due consideration needs to be taken of the number of firearms that exist within a class when considering limiting factors. A class definition needs to be broad enough to attract sufficient entries to create a meaningful competition.
- Reproduction firearms built to the same performance and characteristics of original designs should always be considered equivalent for shooting competitions. Limiting competition to original firearms encourages counterfeiting or the inappropriate use of historic artefacts, neither of which is helpful in maintaining a firearms heritage. We must be vigilant in our condemnation of fraud and fakery and must never condone the passing-off of modern reproductions as original pieces.
- Restrictions on the use of firearm features within a class may be imposed to facilitate fair competition and to limit variation to the lowest common denominator. Limits on the number of rounds permitted in a firearm at any one time and the zeroing of windage sights are examples of this.





- Class definitions and limitations should be explicit, logical, simple to define and implement in practice. It should be easy to do the right thing, and hard to cheat the system. Ideally, class definitions should not depend on specialist knowledge or arcane descriptions.

We have sought to strike a sensible balance between safety, competition, conservation and above all clarity in our development of the regulations. We hope competitors will understand that when they cross the boundary between current and historical shooting, priorities need to change and practices that are relevant in the present do not necessarily apply in the historical context. Presenting a well-maintained firearm in its original state and squeezing the best performance possible using contemporaneous materials and techniques should be the aim, rather than gaining the maximum possible score by any means.

Over the years, there have been many different practices in vogue with shooting, and there is always an argument to be made when trying to apply specific rules in a current context. In formulating the current set of rules, we have firstly looked at safety and the need to ensure the “three-degree” rule is maintained. Secondly, we have tried to ensure that within a class, a reasonably level playing field is achieved, and that features of a particular firearm such as magazine capacity do not give significant advantage. Lastly, we have tried to maintain a historical context to the conditions in terms of age and type of firearm. The principle is that a firearm should be used within the context it was designed for.

## ***We have tried to maintain a historical context to the conditions in terms of age and type of firearm***

We have agreed on several policy principles for this edition that will simplify and clarify some of the controversy that has existed in recent years:

- Slings may be used on military long arms for “deliberate” practices but not for timed practices such as “snap” or “rapid”. The justification for this is that a sling was a basic element of all military long arms but would only be used for support when the shooter had time and opportunity to do so. Rapid and snap shooting at targets of opportunity would not have given a chance to use a sling, and the presence of a sling would interfere with safe loading procedures. Slings on military firearms must be of the correct design and fitted in the intended manner.
- The practice of resting long arms directly on an object such as a sandbag has traditionally only been allowed for sniping, harking back to the days of WW1 loophole shooting where snipers would stay in a prepared position for long periods of time. Generally, the principle is that support, if used and permitted in the conditions, should

only be to the arm or back of the hand and that the rifle should be held. Exceptions exist, and will be shown in specific match conditions, and of course additional measures may be permitted because of disability. Rests are generally not permitted in military classes.

- The wearing of clothing and gloves that are specifically designed to provide additional support to the shooter, and that may be permitted in modern competition, is not appropriate in current historic shooting practice. When specialised clothing becomes historically relevant, then it may become acceptable, but the wearing of modern high-technology shooting clothing for historic shooting is inappropriate.
- It is regrettably necessary to distinguish between the activities of Historical Re-enactment and Historical Shooting. The opportunity to misrepresent historical shooters using live ammunition wearing military uniform is too great in these political times. While wearing odd items of military surplus clothing is perfectly acceptable, the wearing of accurate representations of uniform with badges, particularly modern uniform, is too much of a risk of “photo sniping” to be allowed.
- The Carbine class within the context of these competitions will be limited to firearms with a maximum overall length of 40.5" and firing conventional military ammunition. This now covers only the classic cavalry carbines that existed before the adoption of “short rifles”, which had been permitted in the previous definition but were of a significantly higher accuracy. Short rifles have been correctly returned to the main rifle classification!

We ask that competitors approach the sport of Historic Shooting in both the “spirit of the original” and a willingness to cooperate in what is a fascinating and accessible aspect of our sport.

Please take the time to examine the Classic and Historical Handbook on the NRA Website and please participate in the feedback exercise which we intend to carry out at the end of the Trafalgar meeting. ■



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# Rimfires' return

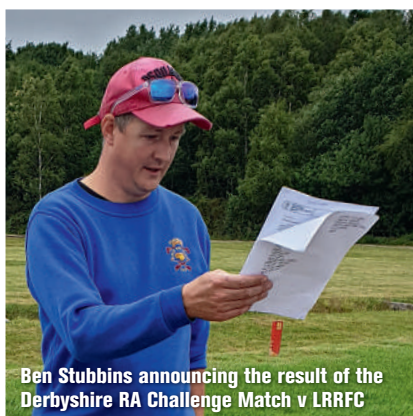
We've got the results from a socially-distanced Long Range Rim Fire Club Summer Meeting 2020

Rob Grice shooting at 100 yards on Short Siberia. 200-yard shooting was not available this year owing to the need to social-distance



The Prize List and scores made in the LRRFC Summer Meeting held at Bisley on Saturday 4 July are shown here. There were 24 entries.

The course of fire was 20 shots at 100 and 300 yards using .22 rimfire rifles. Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, shooting at 200 yards was not available. Despite the wet forecast, the day remained warm and dry (apart from one or two slight spots) but overcast throughout. There was a strong, turbulent wind, from 11 o'clock at 100 yards on Short Siberia, unreadable owing to the absence of any flags, and the highest score was 93. At 300 yards after lunch, the fresh-to-strong, blustery wind had backed to 8 o'clock, where it was worth 10 to 14 minutes, and the highest



Ben Stubbins announcing the result of the Derbyshire RA Challenge Match v LRRFC

score was 85. Peter Francis emerged the winner with an aggregate of 175.9 x 200.

The Derbyshire RA Challenge Match was shot concurrently. Derbyshire retained the shield by 637 to 623 points. ■

## PRIZE LIST

### MSRB 100

1	Ben Stubbins (TRSB)	93.6 f5
2	Peter Francis (TRSB)	93.6 f4
3	Steve Isherwood	93.5

### MSRB 300

1	Tim Stubbins (TRSB)	85.5
2	Michael Haselgrove	82.6
3	Peter Francis (TRSB)	82.3

### MSRB Aggregate

1	Peter Francis (TRSB)	175.9
2	Tim Stubbins (TRSB)	171.10
3	Michael Haselgrove	170.11

### TRSB 100

1	Ben Stubbins	93.6 f5
2	Peter Francis	93.6 f4
3	Tim Stubbins	86.5

### TRSB 300

1	Tim Stubbins	85.5
2	Peter Francis	82.3
3	Scott Hale	80.2

### TRSB Aggregate

1	Peter Francis	175.9
2	Tim Stubbins	171.10
3	Ben Stubbins	164.9

### SRSB 100

1	Jeff Wilson	64.2
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### SRSB 300

1	Jeff Wilson	63.0
---	-------------	------

### SRSB Aggregate

1	Jeff Wilson	127.2
---	-------------	-------

*Peter Francis wins the Nonington College Cup for the highest aggregate.*

DRA TEAM: T Stubbins, B Stubbins, R Grice, P Wright.  
LRRFC team: P Francis, M Blatchly, S Hale and K Ballard.



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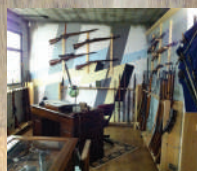
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# Commonwealth Comeback

**Bisley felt 'back to normal' as the British Commonwealth Rifle Club Open Meeting took place**

As message 1 was passed on Saturday 22 August, it was a joy to see 36 targets rise and 144 competitors begin the BCRC Open meeting only eight weeks later than our usual weekend. A huge thank-you to the team at the NRA for putting in place the Covid-safe protocols and providing sufficient markers to allow us to run a successful weekend.

Saturday morning saw a stiff breeze from left to right, testing competitors from the start. The West Indies (300x) was decided on a tie shoot going to sudden death, with Jon Underwood winning out over Steven Penrose. Falling back to the first 500x shoot,

the India, Steven this time went one V clear of the field, his 50.8 beating Toby Raincock.

The wind continued to increase, and with some deceptive angle changes, the afternoon was challenging. Matt Millar shot a superb 50.9 to win the Africa. At 600x, the Canada match was immensely tough with no one managing a full score. A tie shoot between David Luckman, Ed Welford and Dom de Vere saw David take the honours with 25.2. At the end of the day, two points split the top 10, with Jon Underwood and David Luckman leading the pack.

At the club AGM that evening, the club was kindly donated Keith Pilcher's

collection of BCRC medals – our thanks to John and Jackie Jackman for assembling the collection in a presentation box. Keith was one of the finest shots of his time and accumulated a unique collection of Club medals, which we will be proud to display.

Sunday morning saw bright sunshine and strong winds on Stickledown with almost the whole range in use – it felt like the Imperial Meeting in full swing. The Australia match at 900x was first, with the conditions spreading the field out, but five managed scores of 75, Charles Brooks' 75.13 beating Katherine Fleck and Tom Rylands (both on 75.10). Back at 1000x, Dan Clark posted a superb 74.10 to take the NZ trophy, and with other challenges fading fast, the Club Chairman, Charles Brooks, shot a solid 73.5 to take the Grand Agg by three points from David Luckman with Jon Underwood in third. Charles also secured the Ceylon (Long Range Agg) with a fantastic display.

What a return to competitive shooting in such unusual times, and once again a huge thank-you to all the range staff, NRA staff and of course the competitors. ■



Charles Brooks's impressive haul of trophies

PRIZE WINNERS	1st		2nd		3rd	
The West Indies	J. Underwood	50.8 (29.4)	S. Penrose	50.8 (28.3)	P. de Voil	50.8 (22.2)
The India	S. Penrose	50.8	T. Raincock	50.7	H. Waldern	50.7
The Africa	M. Millar	50.9	G. Childs	50.8	M. Ensor	50.7
The Canada	D. Luckman	74.9 (25.2)	E. Welford	74.9 (24.2)	D. de Vere	74.9 (23.2)
The Dominion Aggregate*	J. Underwood	221.29	D. Luckman	221.23	R. Kitson	220.26
The Australia	C. Brooks	75.13	K. Fleck	75.10	T. Rylands	75.10
The New Zealand	D. Clark	74.10	D. Hume	74.4	A. Whicher	73.10
The Ceylon Aggregate**	C. Brooks	148.18	D. Hume	147.10	N. Ball	146.14
The Rampoor Aggregate (WI, Canada, Australia)	D. Luckman	197.23	E. Welford	196.22	N. Moxon	196.19
The Commonwealth Aggregate	C. Brooks	368.36	D. Luckman	365.38	J. Underwood	364.46

\*Short range \*\*Long range

# Spring is (finally) here!

Postponed from the usual May bank holiday, the English Twenty Club Spring Meeting went ahead on 15-16 August...

A change of dates for the English Twenty Club 'Spring' Meeting meant a change in format. In foregoing The Cortis, we had a conventional QI, QII and QIII format. A full entry of 120 firers took to the range on Saturday morning for two sighters and seven to count at 300, 500 and 600 yards.

No fewer than 13 people managed to score 105, the best of which was Parag Patel with 17 v-bulls, counting out Steven Thomas with a clean shoot at 600. A further 24 people dropped just one point during the morning.

The Saturday afternoon brought a Queen's II format and with it some different names at the top of the prize list. Top of the shop was Major James Cook with a 150 and 25 v-bulls, counting out Theo Dodds on the same score with 50.8 to Theo's 50.7 at 600 yards. 13 people in total scored 150, with a further 19 people dropping one point each.

Just four people managed to navigate the day without dropping a point, three of whom had 36 v-bulls. David Nuthall finished the afternoon with 50.5, David Luckman with 50.6 and the Saturday Aggregate went to Nigel Ball finishing 50.7. Vern Putter, the only O class in the top 10, was the fourth shooter to go clean.

Sunday morning provided favourable conditions for the first detail, with a light, readable fishtailing wind, which became



***It's difficult to beat someone who doesn't drop any points***

friskier during the second detail. James Shepherd took the honours with a 75 and 12 v-bulls, one v-bull ahead of Steve East. A further nine people went clean.

On to 1,000 yards and the wind balanced out across the morning shoots, with the first detail generally considered to be trickier. Three people managed a full house: Tom Drysdale with 9, Steven Thomas with 10 and David Luckman topping the prize list with 11 v-bulls.

This completed the Sunday Aggregate. James Shepherd was second on the morning, dropping just one point, and David Luckman, with a pair of 75.11s, took the Sunday Aggregate.

Henry Day managed to secure sponsorship this year from Opticron, who donated a good quality scope, which was awarded to Chris Vonchek. Chris was the top Tyro for the meeting, finishing 50th in the Grand Agg and higher than a number of accomplished shooters. A 73 at 1,000 yards was a particularly fine shoot.

The top cadet, and winner of the Donegall Badge, was James Burch. The Booth Cup for Top O Class was awarded to Rich Stewart, who finished sixth in the Grand, dropping only five points along the way. Top U25 and fourth overall, dropping just three points all weekend, was Charlie Dart – an outstanding performance.

Third in the Grand Aggregate was Tom Drysdale, scoring 402.53. Second with the same number of points and seven more v-bulls was Hannah Pugsley. The winner of the Grand Aggregate, and not dropping a single point during the weekend, was David Luckman with 405.58. This is the fourth time David has lifted the trophy. As someone wrote on social media after the shoot: "It's difficult to beat someone who doesn't drop any points."

The meeting adopted the NRA processes for Covid-19 that are to be used for the Imperial Meeting. Feedback from the competitors was that it worked well and gave no cause for concerns. ■





# CSR: Service Is Restored

**After months of unused rifles gathering dust, hundreds of shooters gathered in early September to contest the Civilian Service Rifle (CSR) element of the Imperial meeting. Blair '10 Second\*' Drummond reports...**

Go back a short while, and Bisley was like a ghost town: all it needed was a bit of tumbleweed to amuse the handful of remaining NRA staff. But summer saw 'new normal' life progressively return to the camp, and it's no surprise that the NRA's carefully-managed staging of the 151st Imperial meeting was greeted so enthusiastically by the CSR community.

Nearly 400 entries (including a number of first timers) for the four days of CSR competitions (one day and a few stages having been cut from the usual Imperial programme) were proof that shooters had sorely missed this dynamic discipline (the last CSR competition was in March).

As usual, the four rifle classes were Historic (mostly iron-sighted Lee Enfields), Iron (any other iron sight rifle), Practical

Optic (usually .223 and .308 straight pull and bolt action rifles with large scopes and bipods) and Service Optic (.223 and .308 calibre straight pull rifles, with scopes limited to 4½ magnification).

## DAY ONE - THURSDAY

The 300x car park was rammed by 7am as 113 eager shooters assembled in overcast and windy conditions for the six practices of the first competition, the 100/200/300 Matches, comprising 54 rounds of snaps, rapid and timed fire at Fig 12, Fig 14 and Fig 11 targets from prone and sit/kneel/squat positions. Top dogs in the 100 Match were Historic: Tony Vizard (29/50); Iron: Doug Cross (28); Practical Optic: Fred Cooke (41); and Service Optic: Nigel Greenaway (43). Winners in the 200 Match

were Jim Gray (Historic:51/100); Gavin Gilfedder (Iron: 67); Mike Shiew (Practical Optic: 98); and Roy Wade (Service Optic: 99) while 300 Match honours went to Toby Hayes (Historic: 63/100); Doug Cross (Iron: 76); Mark Bayliss (Practical Optic: 100); and Steve Beard (Service Optic: 100).

The afternoon's Long Range Match demanded more energy from the 108 entrants who tackled four practices, featuring triple and double Fig 11 targets, plus a Fig 12, at distances from 500 to 300yds, including two 100yd rundowns, in prone and sit/kneel/squat positions. When it was all over, smiles adorned the faces of Historic winner Will Tong (116/200), Doug Cross in Iron (124), and Ady Newberry (Practical Optic: 187), with Roy Wade securing another Service Optic win (183).

## DAY TWO - FRIDAY

This was the most heavily subscribed day, with 120 CSR shooters entered for the Short Range Match (52 rounds) and the ever-popular Urban Match (40 rounds). With occasional sun and light winds, details moved efficiently between Century's firing points, butts and Short Siberia. The Short Range Match featured five practices at 300x, 200x and 100x, with prone, sit/kneel/squat and standing positions used for rapid fire and snaps, plus two rundowns. The most accurate shooters at the Fig 12c and Fig 12 targets, which seem to get smaller every year, were Gaz Corfield (Historic: 159/250), Doug Cross (Iron: 156), Steve Sheldon (Practical Optic: 235), and Roy Wade (Service Optic: 245).

The Urban Match proved as challenging as ever: running through energy-sapping shingle in 25 yard stages from 100x down



The Urban Match was as challenging as it's ever been

## CSR IMPERIAL: THE STATISTICS

- 139 individual entrants and 385 entries
- Oldest shooter 77 (Martin Camp), youngest 17 (William Barnes)
- Four women shooters
- 5 family pairs (1 x husband/wife; 4 x father/son)
- Almost 44 miles of combined rundowns (exc Plates and Methuen)

\*10 Second: inadvertently cut 10 seconds from a 20-second exposure while running the butts for a Methuen detail.

to 25x; quickly changing from standing and kneeling supported positions to standing / kneeling, and standing; and trying to avoid cross-lane shooting on closely-spaced Fig 11 and Fig 14 targets – all factors placing a premium on quick reflexes and sight or aiming off adjustments. After shooters had put nearly 5,000 rounds down range, class winners were declared as Will Tong (Historic: 129/200), Dog Cross (Iron: 147), Paul Allsopp (Practical Optic: 183), and Roy Wade (Service Optic: 189).

DAY THREE

The second-last day of the CSR Imperial reflected tight planning as 114 shooters moved from Bisley to nearby Pirbright for the final CSR competition, the Rural Match, sponsored by Vortex Optics. As one of the longer competitions, competitors each fired 62 rounds over six practices at 100x, 200x, 300, 400x and 500x, closing with a final rundown (500x to 400x and then 300x).

A combination of Fig 14, double and triple Fig 11s, and Fig 12 targets, positional changes (stand, then kneel/squat, sitting and prone), and snaps and rapid fire provided a good test. Historic victor was Tom Waite (158/300), with Doug Cross topping Iron (199). In Practical Optic, Justin Frankland's first place with 274 won the Vortex Nation Trophy, with Ady Newberry scoring 265 for second place, and Olly Dunn (265) getting third on countback. All three also received a Vortex Viper PST scope. Roy Wade won gold, the Vortex Challenge Cup and a Vortex Viper PST scope for his 284 score in Service Optic, trailed by Peter Cottrell (275) in second, and Adam Chapman third with 268 (the latter two also each receiving a Viper PST scope).

But the day wasn't over – many shooters stayed at Pirbright, with more joining them, for the Falling Plates competition, a traditional highlight of the CSR Imperial. This year saw a record 40 entries with 24 Historic teams (most using Lee Enfield No 4s and SMLEs), and 16 in Modern Rifle (scoped rifles). Amid good-humoured banter and vocal support, the four-man Historic teams ran (or in many cases, ambled) 25yds to the firing point before throwing themselves prone and firing at ten 12"x10" steel plates 200 yards away.



CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS	
Historic	
1	Will Tong (659 points)
2	Gaz Corfield (630)
Iron	
1	Doug Cross (787)
Practical Optic	
1	Justin Frankland (1,092)
2	Nick St Aubyn (1,062)
3	Olly Dunn (1,043)
Service Optic	
1	Roy Wade (1,130)
2	Adam Chapman (1,094)
3	Nigel Greenaway (1,038)

The Modern Rifle teams repeated the manoeuvre – except they had to run 100 yards to the firing point, which made heat winners more and more weary as they advanced through the table. When the dust had finally settled, the BYSA Irregulars were Historic winners of the Fulton Team Challenge Trophy, with the KLSM Red team securing the Modern Rifle win and the Challenge Cup in a thrilling final.

DAY FOUR – SUNDAY

This featured the final competition of the CSR Imperial, the Methuen team match, entered this year by seven Historic teams

and 10 Practical Optic teams. Pairs of shooters from each six-man team rotated through a five-stage shoot at 300x, 200x and 100x, shot at Fig 12 or Fig 12c targets from prone, sitting/kneeling/squatting, and standing/kneeling, including a rundown.

The individual Historic winner of the Methuen Bayonet was LERA's Seth Ellett (156/200 points), while LERA A (731 points) won the Mauser Trophy as top Historic team. Adam Chapman (HRA) took home the Kukri Trophy for top individual score in Practical Optic (242), while HRA A secured the Mauser Trophy for topping the class with a stunning 1400 points, which may well be a new record.

Closing the Imperial, CSR force-of-nature Martin Camp paid credit to the NRA for its organisation of the Methuen, as well as the overall CSR Imperial, saying: "It used to be a nightmare, but now it's well locked in the NRA calendar, and is very good." NRA chief executive Andrew Mercer said CSR shooters distinguished themselves by the way they organised themselves as a collective, undertaking many on-range tasks (such as running firing points and butts, pulling and refacing targets), and, especially, for how they treated, and worked with, NRA staff.

That sentiment marks how life has returned to Bisley, not perhaps quite as normal as we're used to, but life nonetheless. CSR service has been restored – and it's very welcome. ■



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# ICFRA: Much more than an acronym

Phillip Harrison, former Secretary General of ICFRA, outlines the organisation's work ahead of the Commonwealth shooting event in 2022



The winning Australian Team with the Palma Trophy at Trentham, New Zealand, 2019

In the Spring edition of the *NRA Journal*, there was mention of the role that the ISSF would have in the Commonwealth Shooting event planned to be held in India in January 2022. However, it omitted to mention the role that ICFRA would play in the Fullbore Rifle event, as well as the fact that ICFRA had worked with the ISSF to try to keep shooting in the 2022 Commonwealth Games. As many NRA members may not have heard of ICFRA nor appreciate its role, this article will serve to outline its purpose and to say what it does.

In a nutshell, ICFRA – International Confederation of Fullbore Rifle Associations – is Fullbore Rifle's International Governing Body (IGB), i.e. for many of you it is 'your' IGB. ICFRA was formed at the turn of the century following the realisation that such a body was needed to represent Fullbore Rifle's interests in the burgeoning management of

sports at global level. Like cricket with the MCC, international governance formerly flowed from the GB National Association – in our case the NRA of the UK – but it was time to take a wider view.

Two fundamental changes in the International Match programme resulted from this realisation. Firstly, the need for a World Championship to take its place on the global stage, and secondly the need for internationally agreed rules for the Commonwealth Games Fullbore Rifle events. The first of these was met by the National Rifle Association of the USA agreeing to the transfer of management of the Palma Match from the former 'Palma Council' to the new International Governing Body, on the basis that it would form the World Championship event for long-range team shooting (and that the accompanying individual event would be developed into

an individual World Championship); and the second was met by the NRA of the UK agreeing to relinquish responsibility for the Commonwealth Games Match Conditions.

The Palma Match and Long Range World Championships at Bisley in 2003 were the inaugural events for the new organisation. Subsequently, the NRA of Australia agreed that the Australia match should also be placed under the aegis of the ICFRA. The founding President of ICFRA was Stan Frost of Canada, and the Secretary-General was Colin Cheshire of GB. Subsequent Presidents have been: Tony Loughnan (NZL), Bernand de Beer (RSA) and our current President, Des Vamplew (CAN). Today there are 38 active members of ICFRA including the two 'regional associations', West Indies and Channel Islands.

The constitution of ICFRA calls for it to standardise rules for Fullbore Rifle



and oversee the International Match programme. ICFRA's policy is that standardisation of rules should not take place by imposition from the centre: rather the rules, including the dimensions of the targets, should be seen to be desirable for adoption by National Governing Bodies. As it happens, the rules for the Commonwealth Games preceded the International Rules: Phil Harrison had been invited by the President of the Commonwealth Shooting Federation to work up a set of shooting rules and match conditions for the 2006 Games at Melbourne, which he did. In a moment of madness, he also offered them to the then-President of ICFRA, Tony Loughnan, as a basis for ICFRA's TR shooting rules work, which had then not begun. A mistake – he was told that if he was so jolly clever he'd better get on with it.

The Commonwealth Games rules were combined with a draft produced by the late Richard van Lingen in South Africa. A triumvirate of Phil, Richard and Colin Cheshire laboured long and hard to produce the first set of rules. The argumentation was fierce – it is estimated that more than 1,000 emails were exchanged. The rules were ready for their first outing at the 2007 World Championships in Canada, which were also the first to be shot on ICFRA targets.

At this time F-Class shooting was taking off in a big way, and the F-Class community invited Phil and its Chairman, Paul Monaghan, to develop an associated set of rules for F-Class shooting and conditions for the F-Class World Championship (FCWC). In fact there had



The Fullbore Rifle Pairs podium at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

been an FCWC in 2002, shot in Ottawa under DCRA rules and subsequently recognised by the ICFRA. This work was completed to the satisfaction of both parties and came into use for the 2009 FCWC at Bisley. F-Class shooting has its own Management Committee within the ICFRA structure, which also looks after the staging of the FCWC, so allowing a high degree of flexibility for the F-Class community to set its own agenda. Indeed, 11 of the last 12 new members of ICFRA have all been F-Class countries, of which Italy and Ukraine have advanced to full membership – full membership being reserved for Countries that send full Teams to the TR or FC World Championships.

The 2014 and 2018 Commonwealth Games saw the development of working relationships to enable the ICFRA and ISSF to work together to oversee delivery of the shooting events at the Games, with which went the Commonwealth Games

Federation's policy move to work with the IGBs for shooting rather than the Commonwealth Shooting Federation.

As a consequence of this joint approach, ISSF and ICFRA worked together to respond to the Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee's omission of shooting from the Games, making the appropriate presentation (together with British Shooting) to the 'Optional Sports Review' committee following the success of the worldwide representations made to everyone from the Queen downwards.

ICFRA, like ISSF, has indicated its willingness to provide technical support and guarantee full compliance with the rules in relation to the event to be held at Chandigarh in India. Of course, currently we all, including colleagues in India, have other matters diverting our attention. At the time of writing we have been told that there will be Fullbore Rifle at the Indian event, but this has not been officially confirmed. ■



There are now some 38 nations among the ICFRA membership

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**STEVE HOUGHTON**



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Serial 45 range, Lydd, Kent, August 2020:  
NRA affiliated club members enjoy the  
return to outdoor target shooting

# Regional Update

Regional Ranges Manager, Nic Couldrey, reports as shooting gets going again up and down the country

## SHOOTING RESUMES ON MOD RANGES IN THE UK

The easing of Covid-19 restrictions in July, coupled with the NRA's experience of operating outdoor ranges at the NSC Bisley, provided the basis for agreement with MoD to allow the resumption of target shooting on Defence ranges. However, MoD Policy requires that all non-essential activities comply with 2m social distancing. The number of people permitted to access to outdoor ranges is also subject to site-specific restrictions to protect users and MoD staff. To comply with MoD's Covid-19 policies and procedures and find a way to get affiliated Clubs back on outdoor ranges, a new risk assessment and supporting Policy has been developed with regional clubs and agreed with DIO Safety and Assurance. The resumption of bookings

across the UK has been gradual in line with guidelines from each of the Devolved Administrations and the approval of the respective Regional Commander.

I am encouraged that Clubs were able to shoot in August at Ponteland and Altcar, albeit with fewer numbers and limited to experienced shooters. Special thanks to the private operators who have opened ranges like Thorpe Cloud with new Covid-19 protocols. Regional competitions are also resuming: the Northern Ireland Championships will be held on 3-4 October at the DIO centre at Ballykinler.

I caught up with Cinque Ports Muzzle Loaders to hear about their recent shoot on Serial 45 range at Lydd. The Club Secretary kindly provided the following summary of the day:

"Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the numbers on the range were limited

to 17 including the RCO. With a Club membership of 60, slots were allocated on a first-come basis once the booking was confirmed, and the list of attendees submitted to the Training Safety Officer at Lydd 15 days before the booking to enable gate passes to be issued.

"To confirm the bookings it's important to prepare and submit the RASP in due time and to make sure all details are correct. All clubs need the RCO signatures detailed, the planning officer nominated cannot be the RCO, and is not permitted to shoot. There is now a requirement to have a qualified first-aider present who cannot shoot.

"The club has first-aiders qualified in the basics of the treatment of gunshot wounds and catastrophic bleeding plus the use of standard defibrillators, through Spartan Medical services. We re-qualify

yearly with details forwarded together with our range documentation.

“Serial 45 has 4 firing points with multiple figure 11 targets out to 1200m, but due to storm damage targets were only available out to 800m. As usual, the range warden was there to greet us in his usual amiable and accommodating manner.

“The standard range brief was conducted with no additional changes to the range standing orders advised by the range warden and the permitted calibres confirmed with range control and the TSO before firing began.

“All members confirmed they were in possession of all necessary paperwork, FACs / membership cards and most importantly, the Shooter Certification Card. We were advised that the Training Safety Officer planned to pay us a visit later in the day.

“Firing points were allocated to groups of four, and the necessary hand sanitisers, wipes, and bin bags were strategically positioned, with all assembled careful to maintain the recommended 2m distancing.

“The weather was hot and the skies clear, with little wind, which made for some excellent shooting. Fortunately there was a gentle breeze to cool us off and a relaxed and enjoyable day’s shooting took place.”

### CLUB INDOOR RANGES

Indoor sporting and leisure facilities may now re-open as long as this can be done safely and comply with the latest Covid-19 guidance and any local restrictions. The operator should produce a Covid-19 risk assessment and supporting procedures. The NRA recognises that indoor ranges are all different; many have been constructed in re-purposed structures and buildings. A generic Covid-19 risk assessment template has been developed by the NRA in consultation with Clubs and independent indoor range operators. The document may be used by Club Officials as to develop their own site/range-specific risk assessment to allow ranges to be re-opened. Social distancing, hygiene and handwashing remain key elements of minimising the transmission risk. Range operators should consider how to schedule activities to facilitate social distancing.



The reopening of Frome and District Pistol Club

## **Social distancing, hygiene and handwashing remain key elements of minimising the transmission risk**

New cleaning procedures will be needed, particularly for firing points. Non-essential areas including kitchens should remain closed to minimise the risk of transmission. Ventilation and the provision of fresh air within the range premises is an important control to reduce the risk of airborne transmission of Covid-19. Club Officials should consider seeking specialist advice, particularly for older ventilation/extraction equipment and air conditioning units. Club Officials are reminded that volunteers and club members enjoy the same protections as employed individuals and should be consulted as part of the development of new procedures and risk assessments.

The good news is that Clubs around the country are re-opening indoor ranges, allowing shooting to resume. My thanks to Frome and District Pistol Club who kindly agreed to contribute to the development of the Covid-19 risk assessment and share pictures taken of the re-opening of the indoor range at Shepton Mallet. The Club has restricted firing to the centre lane of each bay;

shooters maintain 1m distance and wear PPE. The club restricts access to the premises to the Range Officer and those who are actually shooting in order to prevent congregation. Shooting time is restricted and the range is wiped down between details.

Re-opening indoor ranges presents a different set of challenges for more than 300 of our affiliated clubs; we hope that the risk assessment template will be of use to Club Officials. There may also be merit in sharing knowledge between Clubs; I have shared the details of a specialist ventilation contractor that provided a good service to one of our Clubs.

Adapting the Club operating model to Covid-19 is going to be an iterative task. Having spoken to several Club Officials, many realise that they must find ways to work around the virus in order to survive. Those that are open report a lot of interest from new shooters seeking access to ranges, while existing members are understandably cautious. I'd be interested to hear from Clubs and facilitate the sharing of our collective experience. ■



# OBITUARIES

## ROBERT CHOMBART 1931-2020

On 23 June 2020 Robert Chombart left us, aged almost 89, at the end of a life filled with adventure.

Robert was born on 30 November 1931, in a village on the Franco-Belgian border. As a young man, he qualified as a diesel technician and set sail on a freighter serving Africa; his services were immediately much in demand as, during his first voyage, he had repaired a damaged machine in the cargo.

His unique qualities later led him to be appointed to oversee a coffee plantation in Oubangui Chari, a French colony in French Equatorial Africa (which became the Central African Republic). Here Robert blossomed and, in these colonial times, acted as the 'big chief': building roads through the jungle, feeding his employees with products of his hunting, and settling local affairs as his natural authority led the locals to appoint him 'judge' of the 'palavers' (*à la mode Africaine*). Robert arbitrated these litigations with a 'picturesque' wisdom all of his own – the 'Code Chombart' – especially in conjugal matters. His sentences would have had any European judge apoplectic – and have us die laughing today!

He said that he had enjoyed 'a beautiful life for a man in Africa'. Sadly, at the



end of the 1950s, the serious unrest in neighbouring Belgian Congo, together with the independence of Oubangui Chari, put an end to the reign of 'Bwana Chombart' as Robert felt his position precarious – not least because he had had the rashness to lead a commando of colonial colleagues, rifle in hand, to rescue some Europeans who had been captured by the Congolese rebels across the Oubangui border river.

Back in France, Robert got a job as technical salesman for agricultural machinery, and was then taken on by the big firm CEGEDUR-ALMET, part of the Pechiney Group, where he trained as a metallurgical engineer. He rose to the top of his profession as he was appointed manager of both the English and German production of aluminium sheet metal, spending alternate weeks in Slough in England and the Mannheim area of Germany. So, in addition to African Swahili, Robert spoke English and German, and was fluent in technical terms in four languages. (Our friends in the Kenyan shooting team were astonished to discover that Robert not only understood but also spoke their language!)

In 1977, while taking a walk in Surrey, Robert discovered Bisley Camp and long-range rifle shooting. Unfortunately, Robert's first welcome from the General Secretary was somewhat cool and unencouraging; his arrival on the day of the Final of the Queen's Prize meant that NRA officials were somewhat busy. However, Robert persevered and, having confirmed with the Queen's Herald that Her Majesty was (still) Duke of Normandy, he formed the Normandy Rifle Club and led French shooters back to Bisley for the first time in more than 70 years. He was justifiably proud when, under his captaincy, the Normandy Team won the Junior Kolapore and then the Nobel Challenge Trophy.

Robert Chombart was nicknamed 'le Major' (pronounced in the French style) by his team members ever since the time,

many years ago, when a Canadian officer, no doubt impressed by the presence of our friend, enquired of Philippe Ginestet where 'le Major Chombart' could be found.

In Bisley, Robert Chombart displayed the richness of his mechanical genius and was a creative gunsmith. He made important contributions to the improvement of the Paramount action, and he designed the CG action, followed by the Delta and the Inch. Finally, he designed the Millennium action, which has been widely praised by members of the Palma teams of the southern hemisphere. Robert also designed a remarkable rearsight for the German company CENTRA, as well as a folding bipod and numerous triggers; some of these triggers are manufactured by Geissele in the USA and have been adopted by US Army Special Forces.

Robert has sometimes been imitated, but never equalled. He achieved much of his success in gunsmithing despite suffering from macular degeneration for some 25 years. His phenomenal memory and extraordinary mechanical insight allowed him to overcome the handicap posed by the loss of his sight, and he continued to work with the assistance of a video enlarger/enhancer – a testament to his determination and strength of character.

Robert had a great sense of humour and enjoyed merriment and parties. He was also kind and generous. He was always ready to help any shooter who had a technical problem. He enjoyed the company of 'the Britishers' and Bisley was his second home.

Robert was a member of the London and Middlesex RA, the British Commonwealth RC, and the North London RC; he was a Vice President of the NRA.

In leaving us, Robert has made us sad for the first time. Bisley will never be the same without him. But we can be certain that, bottle of Calvados in hand, he has joined other late Bisley figures in the celestial Paradise Rifle Club. *Philippe Ginestet*

## RICHARD GARDINER 1955 – 2020

Richard Hugh Gardiner was born on 25 June 1955 and died on 24 June 2020, just one day before his 65th birthday.

Richard was born in Edgware into an RAF family, his father eventually retiring as a Wing Commander. Richard's father was regularly posted to different RAF stations, but Richard's upbringing became more stable after primary school, when his father's postings were to various positions in London. Richard went to St. Benedict's School in Ealing, where he discovered the joys of shooting. He joined the CCF and was taught to shoot with a .22 rifle. Richard wanted to keep up the family tradition and join the RAF as a pilot. However, this was not to be, due to his eyesight, and he had no desire for a desk job in the RAF.

Richard was shown an advert for applicants as management trainees at Sainsbury's; he applied, was accepted, and spent 32 years in various departments within the company. At the age of 25 he became the youngest Sainsbury's store manager when he was appointed manager of the Watney Market store. In 2000 he was appointed head of property and facilities management, a post he held until he retired.

Richard met his wife Kay when they started work for Sainsbury's on the same day and in 1979 they were married.

Richard suffered a bleed in the brain in 2005, and though this was treated successfully, no doubt it led in part to his decision to retire early at the age of 50. Although a shock, it did give Richard more time with his family and his Freemasonry.

Richard's enjoyment of shooting had been forgotten until he was invited to shoot at a club in Leatherhead. He then took up fullbore target rifle shooting and shot and coached for the Berkshire team. In 2013 Richard was a reserve for the England team in the National Match. He also shot and coached with Club 25 and the City Rifle Club, of which he was the current chairman.

Richard was a private and modest man with four great loves in his life: his faith and church; Kay and their family Lucy, Timothy and Deborah; Freemasonry; and shooting. He managed to combine all four with Kay's help. He will be sorely missed.



## CHRIS ELGOOD 1932-2020

I am sad to announce the death of Chris Elgood of the Kent County Rifle Association, the English XX Club and the North London Rifle Club. He was a Vice President of the Association and former Hon. Secretary.

Richard Christopher Philip Elgood was educated at Bradfield College and Trinity College, Cambridge. His passion was to work overseas, and in order to do so, he joined the Civil Service in the UK, soon to be transferred to Rhodesia. When the British Government's policy towards the Empire changed, Chris returned to the UK as a Training Officer. He moved on to GKN for a career in training and management; this was followed by a period at the Bramshill Police College, again providing the benefit of his management skills.

He elected to become independent and set up Chris Elgood & Associates, where he was joined by his daughter Christine, specialising in management games and simulations.

His shooting career, starting at university, saw him achieve Captaincy of the Cambridge University Rifle Team. In 1956, he shot in the National Match for England. On his return to the UK he eventually settled in Cranbrook, Kent,

joining the Kent County Rifle Association. Always keen on target rifle shooting, he attended the Imperial Meeting at Bisley for many years and also most of the County shooting events until about 10 years ago when he decided to retire from active shooting. His talent, however, lay in the encouragement of young shooters. While KCRA Hon. Secretary, he was instrumental in the development of schools' shooting in the County, liaising closely with the late Andrew Penfold in providing opportunities for talented pupils at Sevenoaks School and later at Tonbridge School. His talents were also enjoyed by the pupils of Marlborough House School in Hawkhurst, where he provided shooting tuition for 10 years for younger pupils at this preparatory school.

Described as an author, having written both fact and fiction, and a champion of making learning fun, Chris died on 9 April 2020 after falling ill with Norovirus following admission to hospital for a hip replacement.

His wife Delise predeceased him but he leaves his daughter and business partner Christine, to whom we send our sincere condolences.

We have lost yet another friend of many years standing. *Peter Merry*



## MAÎTRE PHILIPPE MULLOT

Maître Philippe Mulot – Life Member, who died of cardiac problems in France on 17 August – was the epitome of what an NRA member should be. He will be much missed by the many friends he made at Bisley.

Professionally, in his day job as a lawyer, he was well-known in France as probably the foremost expert on all legal aspects of French shooting and weaponry. Much of his expertise was based on his deep knowledge of Bisley, his having qualified as an Assessor for RCO, and for each and every aspect of TR, F-Class and MR shooting.

In France he founded the influential ‘Groupe Mike’ club in the South-West and served at a national level in his own country as one of the senior representatives of the Union Française des Amateurs d’Armes, the go-to organisation in that country for all matters relating to target shooting. He, in particular, brought Bisley-style shooting to France and, for instance, set up the club matches for the Lagardère trophy (for teams drawn from France, the English XX, the RAF, Surrey and so on).

At Bisley, he was a multiple trophy winner, a Life Member of the NRA, a generous donor of important things such as decent champagne and foie gras and a much sought-after companion. He was a top-class



TR coach and I had the pleasure of including him as one of my regular guest coaches for the Vizianagram match on second Friday.

*Tim Elliott*

## HARALD DUNTON 1946-2020



The word ‘stalwart’ is often used when referring to bastions of their sport, but when it came to shooting, Harald Dunton, who has died from pancreatic cancer aged 73, was more of a bulkhead.

Anyone who sat with him on the NRA’s General Council will attest to Harald’s cool and considered method to get across his point. They will also bear witness to his relentlessness and fearlessness in support of his charges.

Harald was the Eastern Region representative on General Council and an unwavering advocate for those shooters who did not consider Bisley to be the centre of the shooting world – rather their local clubs and ranges where they regularly met to socialise, plink and compete.

Harald’s active participation in local MoD meetings and his relationships with Clubs and stakeholders provided valuable insights to the NRA. Harald supported the NRA’s bid to acquire an outdoor range in Norfolk and facilitated preliminary discussions with the owner of a former MoD range in Suffolk.

He clearly understood the strategic need to promote and safeguard access to ranges to sustain grassroots club shooting.

He was one of the most enthusiastic proponents of the creation of an NRA regional manager post, who, in the effective shape of Nic Couldrey, was duly appointed.

Harald Francis Dunton was born in Surrey in December 1946. His father was a GPO official and his Norwegian mother a nurse.

Perhaps he was bestowed not only his name from his Norwegian mother but also the streak of Nordic resolve which served him so well in later years.

He attended John Ruskin Grammar School for Boys in Croydon, during which time he was a junior member of Addiscombe Rifle Club, and read Agricultural Botany at Reading University between 1965 and 1968.

Following graduation, he moved to East Anglia where he worked first in technical research in the agricultural chemicals industry before establishing himself over many years as an independent consulting agronomist and continued to work until a few weeks before his death.

His enthusiasm for shooting was sparked at a very young age during a visit to a Norwegian relative.

His primary discipline during his teens and early career was pistol shooting, but after the 1997 ban, like many he concentrated on Target Rifle and particularly F Class, a community within

which he found locally some world class friendly competitors.

Aside from his passion for grassroots regional shooting opportunities, he cultivated informal youth participation, and was totally committed to safety awareness and standards.

As such he was one of the country’s most qualified RCOs and Range Assessors and frequently offered his assistance wherever needed.

Appropriately, he was the much-loved chairman of the Viking (Home Guard) Rifle and Pistol Club in Suffolk. A very rural location, it survives today with a lively and growing membership, and runs smoothly on a rigid safety framework created and enforced by Harald himself.

Any member of the Viking (including me) will tell you that the Sunday range days in which Harald held court, tea in hand in the club hut, will be sorely missed. He will be, as one member put it, a hard act to follow.

The source of the hut itself, an old Second World War dispersal hut from Martlesham Airfield, is a secret Harald himself takes to his grave.

Chair of the Viking, Harald was also chairman of the West Suffolk Rifle Club, of Suffolk County full-bore section, and of Suffolk County Pistol Section among many other influences and appointments.

He is survived by two daughters and his partner, Andrea Jones.

*Steve McDowell*



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# MESSAGE



## Martin Watkins, NRA Regional Representative for Wales, talks to the NRA

### How did you get into shooting and at what age?

It was all down to my father, who shot with the Army Rifle Team for many years. He took me to the Sennybridge ranges when I was about 10 and I have been hooked ever since. I went to Bromsgrove School aged 13 and joined the CCF. I was in the School VIII and captained the team for two years. In 1969 I attended my first Imperial meeting.

### What is the most memorable moment in your career?

I am lucky enough to have had a few. Being part of the Torfaen Rifle Club to win the national team-of-8 and team-of-4 competitions in the same season was memorable. Being Chair of the Welsh Target Shooting Federation has been a privilege. I have also been coach/manager to the Wales fullbore pair at the last three Commonwealth Games, with Gaz Morris and Chris Watson winning Silver in 2018.

The most memorable moment, though, was being part of the first Wales team to win the National Match in 2016. That was special, and the team celebrations that evening were of epic proportions!

### What was the biggest hurdle you had to overcome?

Keeping shooting at university and during my early working career, when shooting had to compete against work, finances and my love of other sports – particularly badminton, at which I competed at county level during my university years, and athletics, in which I represented Wales. In the 1970s I competed against Sebastian Coe in the 800 metres at Loughborough. Needless to say, he won.

### What role do your family/friends play in your shooting?

Everybody has been supportive, from my parents who helped me buy my first rifles to my wife Kate who has endured my absence on far too many occasions and for too many years.

Being able to meet so many people through shooting, many of whom became lifelong friends, is a tremendous feature of our sport.

### What Club are you a member of?

My primary club is Abergavenny Rifle & Pistol club, of which I am Chairman and am also a member of the Welsh Rifle Association at Bisley. I am an honorary member of the Old Marlborough Rifle Club and have coached shooting at Marlborough College for the last 12



years. It is supremely rewarding to work with the next generation of shooters, particularly when team members go on to represent the GB Cadets in South Africa or become a GB Athlete to Canada.

### Who has been your biggest inspiration?

There are several. My master in charge of shooting at Bromsgrove, Mike Ryder, is one – but most notably it was Lord Swansea, who lived just a few miles from me in the Brecon Beacons National Park. His winning Gold for Wales in the 1966 Commonwealth Games inspired me to continue in the sport.

### How has Bisley and the NRA influenced you?

I started shooting at Bisley in the 60s, living in a tent and progressing through a modest caravan to the luxuries of the Waldegrave site. Bisley has been a second home to me.

### Do you have any pre-competition routines?

Good preparation is important, especially a good breakfast, and I like to arrive with enough time before a competition not to be rushed.

### What advice would you give to somebody who wanted to take up shooting?

It is a marvellous sport, it is rewarding, and if you persevere and become good enough, you will be able to travel the world enjoying it. It is a sport you can enjoy for life. After learning the basics at a good club, borrow kit if necessary, then buy the best gear you can afford.

### So, what next?

When normality returns after Covid-19, we are looking to finish building a fullbore range north of Cardiff, just 15 minutes off the M4. The club has signed a 21-year lease and the range will be capable of hosting major events. It is envisaged to have up to 30 electronic targets going back to 600 yards. With support from the NRA, Sports Wales and Commonwealth Games Wales, we hope to gain the second phase of permission from Caerphilly County Borough Council.

I am standing down as Chairman of the Welsh Target Shooting Federation to concentrate on other areas. I have taken on the role of Chairman of Commonwealth Committee for ICFRA and am looking forward to working alongside the ISSF to ensure that fullbore shooting is part of the Commonwealth Championships in 2022 and that shooting is in the Games in 2026. ■



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