

The Bristol bullet-in

B&DR&PC NEWSLETTER

February 2009

Editorial

STIMULI TO SHOOTING SPORTS!

Four recent happenings that have unexpectedly promoted shooting sports.

The first one is the Royal Mint—yes the place that strikes the coinage. They are holding a competition to design coins for the 2010 Olympic Games—the 29 categories representing Olympic Sports include shooting!

If you have a good idea for an Olympic Shooting coin design (tasteful please) then you could win £1,000 and a visit to the Royal Mint to see your design being struck. Full details on www.royalmintcompetition.co.uk.

The second happening is a bit of pro-activity by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC). They are so disen-

chanted with shooting sports being misrepresented in the press that they have done something about it—well done them!

They have published a comprehensive guide on shooting sports, "Shooting—the facts for journalists". Better still they have circulated 2,000 copies free of charge to television and radio stations and to newspapers and magazines. They can no longer claim to be uninformed about shooting sports.

Details are not yet on the BASC website but watch this space, basc.org.uk.

In third place happenings on the opposite side of the pond, where you cannot have failed to notice they have a new President, Barack Obama—

congratulations.

The gun culture in America always suspects the Democratic Party of being anti-gun and in the lead up to inauguration the applications for firearms permits rocketed and gun and accessory sales soared. Congratulations again Mr. President for giving the right stimulus to what could have become just another recession hit industry.

Lastly Sport England have awarded £5 million to be shared between 15 sporting disciplines—shooting sports share £750,000!

Some reservations though it mentions the "combined sports of target shooting", how will the money be spent?—I will try and keep you updated.

Ed

Forthcoming events

The calendar of forthcoming events this month shows what is happening during March, April and May. In the past I have included the current month but with the publication of the newsletter falling later in the month the current month is nearly gone.

Looking ahead April see the last of the six round for the winter aggregate, the first International gallery rifle match to be held in UK outside Bisley (see Range Talk on page 2) and the Spring Action Weekend (see panel).

April has rifle shoots and May sees the match shooting season fully underway with the 1500 Western Winner at Failand and the "must do" Phoenix Meeting at Bisley.

Happy shooting!

This issue

Editorial	1
Forthcoming Events	1
Spring into Action	1
Evolution, part 2	2
Range Talk	2
Club News	2

Spring into Action

Weekend

Saturday/Sunday

28th./29th. March 2009

NRA Bisley

The first of four Gallery Rifle Action Weekends or GRAW for short is held annually on the last weekend in March. In addition to the small-bore and centre-fire gallery rifle events, based on their pistol match predecessors, there are parallel events for long barrelled small-bore pistols and centre-fire revolvers.

Rifle shooter are not left out either, with some military rifle matches and the popular 200 yard snap shooting McQueen match.

Further details and entry forms on the notice board in the Hamilton Range .

Evolution

A musket ball being smaller in diameter than the barrel it is designed to fit, takes an erratic path down the smooth barrel making a series of ricochets with the exit trajectory being a vector of the final bounce before leaving the muzzle. This random event does not allow for consistent repeated shots and thus accuracy is relatively poor.

In rifled barrels the projectile remains in contact with the barrel along its entire length exiting in a predictable manner each shot that makes it inherently more accurate. The penalty is high cost of manufacture of the rifled barrels and the difficulty of reloading, as projectiles are more difficult to ram down rifled barrels, particularly with the build up of black powder fouling.

How or when this was discovered remains unknown, but there are 16th century examples of rifled wheel locks

PART 2—Rifles replace smoothbore!

from most north European countries and by the time of the Napoleonic Wars (1792 – 1815) Germans troops (known as Jaegers or hunters), Austrians troops (known as Grenze or Border Regiments) and British troops (simply termed Rifles) made up a significant proportions of the army. The French remained unimpressed with rifles and their army utilised them very little.

Rifle troops were usually employed in loosely ordered formations allowing aimed shots from beyond the accurate range of smooth bored muskets. Musket armed troops fought in closely ordered ranks, delivering volley fire, with large groups of soldiers firing simultaneously. A truly successful rifle would be one that could be easily produced and quickly reloaded giving all soldiers in an army rapid long range

accuracy that inevitably made warfare more destructive of life.

In America immigrants are credited with introducing the rifle, but the German style short Jaeger rifles soon developed into long, slender elegant firearms, often termed Pennsylvania Rifles. Primarily designed for hunting they also came as a shock to the British redcoat soldier during the Independence War. In fact the first British Rifle Unit, the 5th. Battalion 60th. Regiment (also known as the Royal American Regiment) was probably inspired by American irregulars they were fighting.

The industrial revolution made volume rifle production reality and next time we will look at the way bullet profiles changed, speeding up reloading and further increasing accurate range.

Range talk

I have spoken before about the history of International Gallery Rifle shooting. Two seasons ago the first Home International took place between England and Wales (England coming out on top). Last season Scotland joined the Home International circuit and shot a triangular match against Wales and England (who again won).

All these matches have been held at Bristol, so Bristol and District Rifle and Pistol Club were proud to be approached to host the first Home International away from headquarters.

Failand host international event!

Obviously the Hamilton Range will be closed to shooting on 14th. March (the date set for the event) but I am sure you will agree it is a great honour to be selected as the venue for this groundbreaking event.

Home Internationals comprise the Police and Service Matches, shot with centre fire gallery rifles. For the Bristol Match some precision events will also be added to make up a full days shooting. It is usual to have teams of eight shooting shoulder to shoulder.

Your newsletter editor has been invited to conduct the range. If any

members would be prepared to come along and lend a hand at changing targets and performing range safety duties I would be grateful for the assistance.

If we have any photographers who could come and record proceeding I will also endeavour to get match reports published, perhaps in Target Sports and hopefully the NRA Magazine. For those who have not seen the recent NRA Journal you have missed a great article (modesty prevents me naming the author) about the Irish International Gallery March last July.

Club news

Our Chairman, **P—K—**, was absent from the February Committee Meeting and in an attempt to get him to fulfil his promise to write a match report on the Boxing Day Clay Pigeon Match I would like to take this opportunity to remind him about it now. Let's see if we can get an article before we leave the cold winter weather behind.

C—N— (Training Officer) has produced a draft probationer training guide that should aid the achievement

what went on at committee?

of the required competencies in the NRA Training Manual. Achieving these competencies is vital if you wish to shoot on MOD Ranges. If you wish to take advantage of the opportunities to shoot full bore rifle or you want to shoot at Bisley then you must have a certificate, signed by the Club Chairman (oops! I've upset him now), to prove your competence.

I am sure the new training guide and probationer record will allow us to

evidence that our new shooters have achieved the standard required for safe shooting.

Hopefully newsletters will start getting through, members have noticed interruption to deliveries, so our experimentation with cheaper rival services will be discontinued and we are going back to the good old Post Office.

The Committee