

# The Bristol bullet in

B&DR&PC NEWSLETTER

January 2009

## Editorial EVOLUTION

2008 was the two hundredth anniversary of Darwin's birth and I need no further prompting to announce that I will use this theme (evolution that is) for the shooting articles found on the second page of the newsletter.

The new year may also be the time to reflect that the club continues to evolve. I have mentioned previously the growth of membership, and particularly the average age of the membership, which I believe is now falling.

The call goes out at each Annual General Meeting, "the future of shooting is with the youngsters" and "where are they?" It might be a bit contentious therefore to express my opinion that the future of shooting is not with the youth mem-

bers at all!

I think many youngsters do follow their parents and friends into shooting, and being of a learning age, quickly achieve a competent standard. Life's fickle course then intervenes to introduce them to the pleasures of adulthood, including wine, women and woodbines!

It is not until some of these juniors complete the metamorphosis to maturity that they return to shooting, then becoming the bedrock of the membership into their senior years.

There are still other who missed out on opportunities during their early years to try shooting sports and it is only with their middle years that they have the time to seek recreational opportu-

nity and discover our sport.

Darwin discovered that evolution is not simply "survival of the fittest" but by species developing in many different ways we end up with a myriad of different life forms, each successful in their own way.

Shooting will also develop in many different ways and it will adapt to adversity and the club membership will reflect this. Some like competition shooting, others historic firearms, some hunting, whilst some just like the idea of getting out of the house every now and again and passing the time with a little informal target practice.

How will your shooting evolve during 2009?  
Happy New Year.

Ed

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### **Membership Cards 2008 /09**

Enclosed with this newsletter is your 2008/09 membership card. It is important that you carry it with you when visiting the range.

It is hoped that the renewal problems experienced this year have now been overcome and things should begin to run more smoothly now.

Committee Members have noticed that the wearing of range passes is slipping. Please remember to bring your range pass and set an example to newer members by wearing it when shooting.

Thankyou

D— W—

Membership Secretary

## Forthcoming events

Plenty of things to be getting on with—a black powder precision match, 13 shots best 10 to count in February (Watkins Range) and a centre fire precision match with stages at 50 and 25m in March.

Rifle dates also at Yoxter on

some Saturdays and at Warminster in February.

The first national match of the season at Bisley at the end of March (28th. And 29th.) - the so called Spring into Action.

Remember if you want to shoot at Bisley or on MOD

Ranges then you need to ensure you have your range certificate. If you are an NRA Member then contact them, if not then speak with the Rifle Captain or any Committee Member about it.

Happy Shooting.

## Evolution

The British have a reputation of being Francophobes, but in one aspect shooters have a lot to thank the French for, specifically one particular Frenchman ... Paul Vieille, but why?

It cannot have escaped the attention of many members that the accompaniment of black powder shooting is the voluminous clouds of white smoke following each discharge. Imaging then the consequences of 100 men, in line, each firing a musket (or rifle) simultaneously charged with 80-90 grains of black powder. Without a brisk wind the target is obscured making repeat aimed shots difficult and a lone sniper would quickly betray their position at the first shot.

The solution is simple, make the propellant smoke free. During the late 18th. and early 19th. century the Swedish Army experimented with air-

guns and to a degree they worked. They did require an infrastructure of pumps to recharge the screw-in air receivers that powered the rifles, but they did work well even when it rained and air is free!

The real solution was with a solid propellant that was smoke free and with the development of nitrocellulose in 1846 (another story perhaps) it became chemically possible to achieve this holy grail. The race was on and the accredited winner is Paul Marie Eugène Vieille, a French Chemist, who in 1884 managed to make a stable form of nitrocellulose based propellant that he called "Poudre B".

It was invented in time to load the cartridge that was designed for the new Lebel bolt action rifle with which the French Army was just being equipped. The 8mm round was a

thoroughly modern cartridge in every way, from its small bore (previously rifles had been 10 or 11mm in bore, or .45") with its metal jacket it attained over 2,300 fps at the muzzle without significant barrel fowling. With this firearm the French went into the First World War and many were still in service in 1939.

In Britain Alfred Nobel (of the "peace" prize fame) led a team to design the equivalent product called "Ballistite", which developed into the well known "Cordite" which was used as a rifle propellant in Lee Enfield Rifles for over half a century.

In 1894 Winchester developed their model 94 under lever rifle for the 30/30 cartridge, used extensively in America for hunting. This was the first civilian cartridge/rifle combination designed for smokeless powder.

## Range talk

I would like to thank my son **D—W—** for organising the last two rounds of the Winter Aggregate whilst I have been out of circulation with back problems and family commitments. I should be back in harness for the next round—only two more to go so if you want to be in with a chance come along and shoot.

Nineteen members have entered the police and service matches so far and some very competitive scores have been posted. I have put the results of the most recent rounds on the back of the calendar of forthcoming events enclosed with this newsletter.

Although we have had a good level of entries for the police and service matches I have not issued many precision targets for the last stage of the aggregate. Remember if you want to be in with a chance of winning the Greg Patterson Trophy you must shoot the precision event as well.

Rifle Captain **S—D—** has been under the weather and has spent some time in hospital recently. He has caught an infection, following an operation on his hand. I will try and keep you up to date with his progress, and I

am sure you would all like to join me in sending him our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

On the topic of sickness it is good to see that Chief Range Officer **S—H—** is now back on his feet after his knee surgery. He tells me that he has started back at the gym—well done Steve!

The Chairman, **P—K—**, has promised an article on the Boxing Day Shotgun Match ... watch this space.

## Club news

**E—C—J—**, having completed the necessary requirements of his probation, was accepted for full membership at the January Committee Meeting—Congratulations Ed.

A large order of timber is due to be delivered to the range shortly. Some ply to make new target boards and some railway sleepers to replace the rotten ones. This should enable us to

get the range fully up to scratch before the fine weather (we hope!) brings a busy spring.

In addition to timber a skip will be dropped in the car park and members are requested to help out with clearing the target store and the green container, thank you.

The club has now received the muzzle loading rifle for use by members—this

## what went on at committee?

means that we have a widely representative selection of firearms that can be used by members and probationers during training. This is very important as we have just received the new NRA training syllabus and new probationers must follow this syllabus in order to complete their introductory period. Training Officer, **C—N—**, has taken on the job of implementing the syllabus at the club.

*The Committee*