

SCOTTISH RIFLE ASSOCIATION AGM 22ND FEBRUARY 2009

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2008 we have seen new rules affecting the use of MOD ranges which, in my view, are part of a continuing change in the relationship between the MOD and civilian shooting. The MOD have stated very clearly that they do not see civilian shooting as a priority and are not prepared to accept any risk associated with civilians using military ranges. The new muzzle energy rules came into effect last year; fortunately, they do not affect Target Rifle shooting but do require some F-Class and Match Rifle shooters to zero rifles before they can be used on military ranges including Bisley. The new shooter certification scheme came into effect at the start of this year, putting the responsibility on club chairmen to sign certificates for each individual member of a club to confirm that they are competent to use a military range. The administration of the overall scheme is being run by the NRA and these certificates will need to be renewed each year. In using MOD ranges we have been affected by health and safety rules that now require 2 range wardens to be on duty and paid for at all times and, for the Scottish Championships at Barry this year, we were required to pay a new 'Event Fee' on top of all the other costs for using the range. In addition, we have been evicted from the target shed at Barry and therefore had to purchase a 30 foot container – in which to store our targets -- and rent space for keeping the container on Barry camp. All these changes are making it more difficult and more expensive to use MOD ranges and in the long run I suspect we will be limited to using private ranges for the majority of our shooting.

Despite these problems, the Association managed to run a full programme of events in 2008 and all the regional championships also took place, though the East of Scotland Championships had to be transferred from Castlelaw to Blair Atholl at short notice when the Castlelaw booking was taken over by a military unit. There was a good entry of 84 for the Scottish Championships at Barry but unfortunately there was serious disruption when sea mist rolled in, causing the targets to disappear, and when sailing boats came into the danger area most of Sunday afternoon, resulting in the Lawrence Trophy Match having to be run concurrent with the individual competitions. The winner of the Scottish Championship was Andrew Wilde, with the only score of 150 in the final; Ian Shaw won the Grand Aggregate; Angus McLeod won the Caledonian Trophy and Paul Crosbie won the F-Class Grand Aggregate. The entry for the Scottish Long Range Championships at Blair Atholl was about average at 27. The Grand Aggregate was won by John Potter, the F-Class Grand Aggregate was won by Paul Crosbie and the Grand Masters final by myself.

There was a change to the format of the inter region team competitions this year, with the Pentagonal Match for Target Rifle teams and the Finlux Match for F-Class teams. This format seemed to work well, though only 3 regions had F-Class teams compared to 5 Target Rifle teams. The Pentagonal match was very close, with only 1 point separating the top 3 teams, and Tayside were the winners by 10V bulls from the East of Scotland. The West of Scotland won the Finlux Match by quite a big margin. I will leave Ian Shaw to report on the various Scotland team matches apart from mentioning that the Mackinnon Trophy match at Bisley was very close and we only lost to England on the V count.

One of the major changes in 2008 was the installation of electronic targets at Blair Atholl, a venture which has proved to be very successful. The members of the West Atholl club put in a lot of work to get the system installed and running in time for the start of the shooting season and the equipment has proved to be reliable at all distances, including the longer ranges used for Match Rifle shooting. The saving in time is considerable as well as the financial savings from not requiring markers for the major events. As part of this project, the Club invested in moveable gazebos to protect the firing point monitors and shooters from the rain – 2008 turned out to be one of the wetter years and the gazebos were in use most weekends – and everyone agrees that not getting wet in the rain has been a big bonus. In October we had the annual team match against London and Middlesex Rifle Association at Blair Atholl, the first proper team match to use the electronic targets, and it was interesting to see how quickly the coaches got used to using the system.

Moving on to the plans for this year, the full programme of events is planned and attached to the copies of my report are the main shooting dates for this year. Top of the list, in March and April, you will see the Scotland Team tour to South Africa for the 80th anniversary of the formation of the South African Bisley Union which will be led by Allan Mabon. We have a very talented team of 23 going and I'm sure we will see strong performances in the team and individual competitions. I should also mention that Julia Adamson will be going to South Africa as Commandant of the under 19 GB Team. The first of the Regional Championships is the West of Scotland and, with this year being their centenary meeting, a special dinner has been arranged on the Saturday evening. The major change in the programme this year is that the Scottish Open Championships will be held at Blair Atholl rather than Barry Buddon. This was a difficult decision because of the long association we have had with Barry Buddon but the decision was based on several factors: the ever increasing costs of using Barry necessitating entries of 80+ to cover costs; the disruption to shooting we have suffered in recent years and the likely detrimental effect on entries of a large number of shooters from each of the Home countries touring to South Africa in March and April. Nonetheless, the Scottish Championships will have the usual programme over 3 days, including the Lawrence Trophy Match and long range shooting on the 3rd day, but the entry will be limited to a maximum of 60. What we do for the Scottish Championships in 2010 will depend on our experience from this year.

The Association's finances are in a satisfactory state despite the need to purchase a container in which to store our targets at Barry and Hamish Hunter will take us through the accounts shortly. Our membership numbers are about the same as previous years at 150.

I wish to thank the members of the SRA Council who have helped with running the Association and in running the shooting events and particularly Allan Mabon who carried out the difficult job of running the Scottish Championships. I must also thank Dollar Academy in the persons of Julia Adamson and Craig Stewart who provided the markers for the Scottish Championships and who, at short notice, also supplied the sentries. I also thank Bob Aitken, Allan Mabon and Mark Joyce for running RCO and RCOHME courses which are essential for ensuring we have enough RCOs to run the ranges, Ian Shaw as retiring Captain for his organisation of the Scotland teams and Allan Mabon again as the Lead Coach for the Commonwealth Games High Performance Squad, a job which involves a lot of extra work, including frequent trips to Bisley for training weekends. My thanks also to Brian Woodroffe who runs our website which has been upgraded to give a better presentation with up to date news and results and photographs for the main events and I ask the organisers of the main shooting events to provide Brian with results and information and photos of the events they run.

As always there will be challenges to overcome this year, especially with the present problems in the British economy which will have an impact on our sport, particularly in funding for the sport in general and may affect entries to our major competitions. However, we need to ensure that we maintain the existing structure of competitions, both regional and national, and attract new shooters to enter these competitions, whether in Target Rifle or F-Class, and I therefore ask members to support these events, either by participating or helping with their organisation. We also need to look at what the longer term options are for the ranges we use and whether there is any possibility to develop new privately owned ranges to replace MOD ranges.

Tim Kidner
Chairman Scottish Rifle Association

SHOOTING DATES FOR 2009

March 14th – April 5th – Scotland Team tour to South Africa

May 2nd/3rd – West of Scotland Championships (Centenary Meeting) at Blair Atholl

May 16th/17th – Scotland v RAF/Wales at Bisley

May 17th – All Weapons Shoot at Blair Atholl

June 5th-7th – Scottish Open Championships at Blair Atholl

June 27th/28th – Scottish Long Range Championships at Blair Atholl

July 5th – Pentagonal and Finlux Regional Team matches at Blair Atholl

July 11th-25th – Imperial Meeting at Bisley

July 26th-30th – F-Class World Championships at Bisley

August 8th/9th – Invernessshire Championships at Cawdor

August 22nd/23rd – Tullibardine (Tayside) Championships at Blair Atholl

September 26th – East of Scotland Championships at Castlelaw

October 10th/11th – Scotland v London & Middlesex RA at Bisley

October 30th – November 1st – F-Class European Championships at Bisley