

The Imperial Meeting 2004

An account by Alistair Speirs

Each person's experience of Bisley is necessarily individual, influenced by such factors as the amount of rain which falls on their details, how the different batches of RG ammunition agreed with their rifle and whether all their scoring shots arrived on the correct target. Having said that, the collective experience of the 2004 GB team to Canada was undoubtedly overwhelmingly positive. At times the only things darker than the skies over Century range were the mutterings about ammunition and yet, while it was pouring 20 miles away, Bisley, and our bedding, remained dry and the team left this year's Imperial with a large clutch of shooting trophies and achievements spread amongst them.

Fund-raising for the team continued, and picked up pace during the meeting. The target outside the NRA office slowly turned red as we sold our spots; tracking down the last person on one's list of those who had said they would give £10 for the OTF swindle was a challenging new game for some of us and, after an excellent Queens' Lodge curry, the Auction of Promises was a great success, raising £14,000 for the three overseas teams involved. Spirited bidding for the Captain's port was topped only in excitement by James Lewis' attempts to push up the bidding on his case of claret which ended with him holding the baby as he failed to persuade another bidder to top his over-optimistic last venture into the fray.

As to the shooting, the team more than acquitted itself well. Over a quarter of the top 50 places in the Grand Aggregate were occupied by members of the team with pride of place going to Andy Luckman who came second to Tim Kidner. The two of them had each occupied the top spot during the week but after the Prince of Wales competition Andy found himself pipped by the Scot. 11 members of the team were present on the firing point for the Queens Final. It was a typical Queens III day, sunny, hot and with a stiff breeze from the left. Nigel Ball had set the pace for the team by winning the George's Final that morning. After 900x the Adjutant, James Watson, was showing the way, top of the board having dropped two points in Queens II and conquered the winds at 900x to put in an excellent 75.9 (one of only two possibles that afternoon). At the end of the competition, however, it was the only other person who had managed a possible at 900x who won the day, HRT Jeens, a student at Cambridge. It used to be that it was the youth of policemen which was a reminder of one's age, nowadays it is that of the Queen's prize winner. Top team honours went to Toby Raincock who ended on the podium in third place, followed by Jon Cload and John Underwood in sixth and tenth places. Nigel Ball ended a marvellous day by finishing just out of the top ten in eleventh place.

By the end of the week four competitions had been won by members of the team (James Lewis, Alexandra; David Luckman, Donaldson Memorial; James Watson, St Georges First stage and Nigel Ball, Georges Final) as well as 10 of the Aggregates (John Cload (3), David Richards (2), Nigel Ball (2), Mary Boston (2), and David Luckman). In the challenging British Open Target Rifle Championship (Grand + Queen's II and III scores) team members occupied an extraordinary 5 out of the top 10 places (John Cload (2nd), David Luckman (5th), John Underwood (7th), Jeremy Langley (9th), and David Richards (10th)).

The team's story of success was repeated in Team matches. Nine team members were capped in the Mackinnon (Jane Messer, Andy Luckman, David Luckman, David Richards and Parag Patel for England and Ross McQuillan, Alwyn McLean, Erica McMullan and David Calvert for Ireland) Six in the Kolapore (Nick Hinchliffe, Jeremy Langley, David Calvert, Nigel Ball, David Luckman and John Cload) with both reserves (James Watson and Andy Luckman) members of our team. Ten of the team represented their countries in the National Match.

As team members left Bisley for a little over two weeks of work, rest and thinking about how we were going to fit our kit, clothing and all the rest into one lockable suitcase, leaving enough weight allowance for ammunition, I'm sure all of them reflected that they were not only well prepared for but looking forward to competing in Canada and the U.S.A.

Placings in Top 50 in Grand

2 Andy Luckman
6 John Cload
12 David Luckman
13 John Underwood
14 David Calvert
18 Jeremy Langley
21 Mary Boston
23 Jane Messer
25 David Richards
32 Alistair Speirs
36 Alwyn McLean
38 Nigel Ball
40 James Watson
43 Toby Raincock

Placings in Top 100 in Queens

3 Toby Raincock
6 John Cload
10 John Underwood
11 Nigel Ball
14 David Luckman
16 James Watson
17 Jeremy Langley
23 David Richards
42 Mary Boston
44 David Calvert
46 Parag Patel

Placings in British Open Target Rifle Championship

2 John Cload
5 David Luckman
7 John Underwood
9 Jeremy Langley
10 David Richards

Top 3 placings in Competitions by Team members.**Donaldson Memorial Stage 1**

1st David Richards

The Brigadier

1st David Richards

OTF Short Range

1st David Luckman

Short Range Aggregate

1st Nigel Ball

Admiral Campbell

1st Nigel Ball

The Amazons

1st Mary Boston

Northland Aggregate

1st John Cload

The Alton

1st Mary Boston

The Loder

1st John Cload

The Volunteer Force

1st John Cload

Alexandra

1st James Lewis

Conan Doyle

2nd David Richards

Wimbledon

2nd Jon Underwood

St Georges I

1st James Watson after tie-shoot

2nd Toby Raincock

Queens Prize First Stage

2nd David Luckman

Donaldson Memorial

1st David Luckman

3rd Alwyn McLean

St Georges Second Stage

2nd David Calvert

3rd David Luckman

St Georges Third Stage

1st Nigel Ball

3rd Jon Underwood

Team caps

Mackinnon

English Coach - Jane Messer

English Firers - Andy Luckman, David Luckman, David Richards, Parag Patel

Irish Coach - Ross McQuillan

Irish Firers - Alwyn McLean, Erica McMullan, David Calvert

Kolapore

Main Coach - Nick Hinchliffe

Coach - Jeremy Langley

Firers - David Calvert, Nigel Ball, David Luckman, John Cload

Reserves - James Watson, Andy Luckman

National

English Firers - David Luckman, Andy Luckman, Mary Boston, John Underwood, James Watson, John Cload

Irish Firers - Martin Millar, Erica McMullan, Alwyn McLean, David Calvert