



Team Journal – Part 1

Wednesday 11th August

The team members arrived at Bisley throughout the afternoon. James Watson was, as ever, rushing about, sorting out some last minute issues such as embroidery on shirts. Half the team disappeared to the skeet range for an extended session of clays; Jon Cload claimed to have got through 250 cartridges. Packing, including issue of 200 rounds each to put in personal luggage, was intended to have taken place this evening but was put on hold due to the late arrival of the ammunition. The team had a meal in the Surrey while Ross went to Heathrow to pick up the Irish contingent. After dinner drink was taken at Queens' Lodge.

Thursday 12th August

Packing, aided by bacon sandwiches, started at the Surrey at 8 a.m. Handled efficiently by the baggage-master, Nigel Ball, each case was checked against the 32kg limit. The mountain of luggage was loaded on the coach and we left for Heathrow pretty much on time at 10.30. Just before leaving it was noted by some observant team member that Captain Jon Cload had taken up the previously unoccupied position as team transsexual: probably owing to a misprint in a fax he was sporting a shirt emblazoned with the name Joan Cload. It was agreed that his tour name will therefore be Captain Joan.



At Heathrow time slowed. The check-in desk was adamant that each passenger was entitled to put only two bags into the hold. We all had one suitcase and one rifle case each so the 11 team bags, containing shooting mats, scopes, stands and 3 boxes of the team brochure, among other things, were surplus to our quota. There followed a very protracted negotiation between the adjutant and various levels of Air Canada management. The outcome was that we paid £180 excess baggage in respect of 2 of the bags.



A further potential problem, that Nigel's scales, which had been used to weigh each of the bags in the Surrey before leaving, seemed to have been underestimating the weight of some of the team bags, was avoided by judicious use of the baggage-master's foot under the corner of Air Canada's scales.

After these small difficulties had been resolved the rest of the checking-in process went smoothly. Customs, faced by two large trolley loads of rifle cases took the path of least resistance and opted for a spot check on only 4. Nevertheless, by the time that we had cleared immigration and security there was time only for a quick bite at O'Neills before our flight was called for boarding.

We left the runway at 3.45 p.m. - we are on our way!

The flight passed uneventfully and in no time we were back in an airport waiting. All our baggage arrived safely and so to Canadian customs who, more fastidious than their UK counterparts, insisted on seeing each rifle, consequently it took us 3 hours to reach the exit of Ottawa airport. The loading of the six vans was done quickly and in half an hour we were gratefully in the bar of the hotel. A little unpacking and a long day was over.