



The National Scout Air Rifle Championships 2004

by John Dohoo, Assistant County Commissioner (Activities), Hampshire

Bisley became a Scout camp for the weekend 15 to 17 October as over 500 Scouts from all over England and Wales descended on the Lord Roberts Centre to shoot in the 28th National Scout Air Rifle Championships. Previously held at the Walton Firs Scout Camp, this annual event moved to Bisley for the first time.

The Scout Championships feature a wide variety of air rifle and air pistol events for individuals and Group teams and have been sponsored by the NSRA for many years. The competition comprised three parts - the "Main Event", for which air rifles and pistols are supplied, "Own airgun" events and, for the first time this year, a Summer Biathlon, mixing running and shooting.

Both Military Field and the Sergeant's Mess field were full of tents and the Lord Roberts Centre was vibrant with hundreds of young target shooters. Only the smell of woodsmoke was missing in order to comply with the fire regulations!

The main part of the competition featured four different types of airgun shooting, keeping everyone involved over the whole weekend as most competitors fired one discipline during each of Saturday morning, afternoon and evening and Sunday morning.

Hall E of the Malcolm Cooper Range housed the NSRA mobile airgun range of 20 lanes for six-yard air rifle and pistol shooting and the target retrieval mechanisms enabled a smooth flow of shooters for the two days.

The rifle competition was based on the best two of four Air 7 target cards, the third best card being used as a tie breaker if needed. The youngest competitors (under 12) used Gamo Cadet Delta air rifles and the remainder used CF-16s. The Webley Scott Shield, the Scout Group team trophy for 6 yard Air Rifle, was won by 47th Swansea (Killay) and Andrew Dobson of 5th Morden, Greater London

South West won the Ken White Memorial Trophy for the best rifle performance by a Scout under 14. Robert Barton of Killay Explorer Scout Unit, West Glamorgan won the Bramshill Shield for the best rifle score by an Explorer Scout (under 18) with a score of 86 and Simon Shenton of Fiennes Explorers, South West Cheshire, won the over-18 class with a score of 88.

For the air pistol competition Air 6(YPS) targets were used and three cards fired. The score was based on the best two with the third best card again available as a tie-breaker. Juniors (in the Scout context "junior" means under 14 rather than under 21) were permitted to fire using both hands, but even allowing for these factors the scores were impressive. Max James of 11th Southampton West won the junior class with a score of 94 and Geoff Lacey of Meon Valley District, Hampshire won the senior class with 97. The pistol team trophy for Scout Groups was won by 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts, Nottinghamshire with a team score of 353 ex 400.

Most of the 50 metre range was turned into an air rifle field target range for the weekend. The shape of the building meant that the firing points, though on the grass, were nonetheless under cover; a fact particularly appreciated by the range staff during Saturday's rain! Field Target Champions this year were (Junior) Matt Saint of 1st Curdridge and Botley, Meon Valley, Hampshire and (Senior) Andrew Proudfoot of the Killay Explorers, West Glamorgan.

The aggregate scores in the three disciplines of air rifle, air pistol and field target are the basis for awarding the two Connaught Shields, Senior and Junior. These magnificent trophies date back to the earliest years of Scouting and have travelled as far afield as Canada, South Africa and New Zealand. The Junior and Senior Connaught Trophies were won by 1st Curdridge and Botley, Meon Valley, Hampshire and by Killay Explorers re-

spectively. The individual aggregates were each won by the leading members of these two teams; Sam Pidgley winning The Chief's Prize for the highest individual aggregate score in Air Rifle, Air Pistol and Field Target by a Scout with a score of 205 ex 250 and Andrew Proudfoot taking the NSRA Cup back to Wales with an aggregate of 215. Sam's elder sister Rebekah of Meon Valley Explorers took the Ladies plate with an aggregate of 203.5.

The fourth ingredient in the main event "package" was an air rifle "rapid fire" knockout competition, housed in Hall D. Ten sets of reactive target boxes allowed five ties to be competed in each detail. Unlike most types of target shooting, where seeing how competitors are doing is difficult, this type of shooting is a spectator sport and excitement grew as the event reached the finals just before Sunday lunchtime.

The gold medallists in this class were (junior) Luke Stanford of 1st Old Malden, Greater London SW and (senior) Neil Dunn of 9th Bramshill (Yateley), Hampshire.

A "drop in and shoot" Archery competition, run by the Hampshire Scout Archery Club was located indoors at the extreme right hand end of Hall E. This was a popular attraction and there was a continuous queue of would-be archers waiting to have a go. Max James and Simon Shenton were the most successful archers (junior and senior respectively).

The summer biathlon was introduced to the Scout Championships as a "demonstration event" this year. Based on the winter biathlon of Nordic skiing and shooting, the "summer" version replaces skiing with running. Another difference is that the rifles are not carried on the run but remain on the range. The sequence was run 400 metres - shoot (standing) - run - shoot (kneeling) - run - shoot (prone) - run. Each shoot is at a set of five "knock-



down" targets. The clock keeps running whether the competitor is running or shooting and for every target missed a penalty of one minute is added to the total time. Sam Pidgley won the junior Biathlon with a total time of 14 minutes 39 seconds that included 3 penalty minutes. James Powell of Bramshill Explorers won the senior Biathlon. His overall time of 11 minutes 53 included just one penalty minute. The event was popular, attracting well over a hundred entrants and, as one of the few shooting events actually to promote physical fitness amongst young people, it has earned a permanent place in the Scout Championships.

In addition to the classes fired with rifles supplied to the competitors, the Championships include a series of "own airgun" classes. "Own airgun" in this context includes those owned by Scout Groups as well as by individuals and the idea of these classes is to provide an entry route into more advanced competition.

These classes were fired on Saturday in Hall A (six yard paper targets) and Hall B (ten metre rifle at electronic targets). Own Pistol is fired at Air 8 targets instead of the more generous Air 6 used for the "main" pistol event and David Gibson of St Mary's, Twickenham and Simon Shenton both scored 86 with a "tie-break" score of 40 ex 50 on their third cards. Both had similar numbers of tens, nines etc on their corresponding cards and recourse had to be made to graduated gauging to resolve the tie by which means David Gibson emerged the winner.

The 6-yard own rifle classes (juniors and seniors) are limited to recoiling "Piston and spring" air rifles. Sam Pidgley picked up yet another gold medal, scoring 78 to win the Junior own rifle class. Sterling Explorers of Petersfield District, Hampshire achieved a notable "one-two" in the senior class, Robert Chester taking gold with a score of 86 and Pierre Reader the silver with 85.

The move to Bisley allowed the ten-metre air rifle class to make use of the Sius Ascor electronic targets for the first time and to introduce a "Final" stage. The first phase was a series of 20 shots, from which the best eight shooters proceeded to the Final. The top shooters in this class are not only Scouting's elite shooters but also some of the very best young shooters in the country. The eight finalists included seven young people with just one adult Leader taking the eighth place. No one was surprised that Meon Valley Explorer Scout Chris Lacey won the class with 195 in the first round followed by a magnificent 102.1 in the final. It would have seemed remarkable had the joint Great Britain Senior National Record Holder at this event not done so. In similar vein Melanie Flowers of 3rd Hampton Hill Scout Group (and better known to readers of *The Rifleman* as English Junior Ladies Champion) came second with 189 plus

95.7. There is depth, too. Rebekah Pidgley took the bronze medal, a mere 1.4 points behind Melanie and other young members of the GB Junior Development Squad who have progressed to this level through Scouting's own National Scout Rifle Squad took all the next four places.

Not that all of the "Own airgun" shooting is at this exalted level. There is a special competition for Vintage Rifles, which means "spring guns" more than 50 years old. Whilst some of the competitors in this event are of similar age, many are not and Explorer Scout Robert Barton won the Bill Cook Trophy, continuing the recent trend of young shooters achieving success with these "heritage" air rifles.



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The field target range in operation.

The third weekend in October is a significant date in worldwide Scouting, not for shooting but for two "electronic" Jamborees - in which Scouts use Amateur Radio and the Internet to communicate with each other across the globe. Jamboree stations of both kinds were operated at Bisley throughout the weekend, based at the nearby Pavilion of 71st (Yeomanry) Signal Regiment.

Of course, even with all this going on, Scouting did not take over the whole of Bisley Camp for the entire weekend. The European Long Range Championships were taking place on Stickledown and the NRA arranged for parties of interested Scouts to visit the range to see this for themselves and to learn about full bore shooting. The NRA museum was opened and several Scouts declared that seeing this collection of historic firearms and truly magnificent silverware was the highlight of their weekend. In the Lord Roberts Centre, the Scout 10m air rifle competition coexisted happily with a British Pistol Club training session on Saturday. On Sunday the finals of the Eley competition took place and even here, Scouting was represented; Stephen Waters of Bramshill Explorers winning second place in his class.

The task of presenting the many trophies was shared by an illustrious group of shooting and Scouting personalities:

Mick Gault, winner of 11 Commonwealth Games medals and a former Cub Scout, Chris Lacey, GB Record Holder and a current Explorer Scout, David Lattimore, NSRA Hon. Treasurer, and Alex Minajew, Scouting's National Commissioner for Activities.

Three new trophies were presented this year. Pat Killen, for many years the Field Target Chief Range Officer, presented a trophy for Senior Field Target.

Two trophies have been instituted to reward improvement from year to year.

These are the Killay Trophy for the most improved rifle score by an Explorer Scout and the Walton Firs Trophy for the most improved rifle score by a Scout. These were won by Gregory Chadburn of 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts and Nick Higson of 3rd Hampton Hill with improvements of 50 and 45 respectively.

Dave McIntosh, Warden of Walton Firs Scout Camp, made these presentations. He said he was pleased to see the Championships flourishing in target shooting's National Centre and wished the event well in its new home. Echoing a message from Bill Cook, his predecessor as Warden and founder of the Championships, he said he too was proud that what had begun at Walton Firs nearly thirty years ago had truly "come of age". Its growth had meant that it had needed to expand to a larger site if entry restrictions based on a qualifying score were to be avoided and it was important that the event should retain its Scouting character, remaining open to all Scouts and not become one merely for elite shooters. The trophies for improving shooters were a symbol of this.

For most of the 500 Scouts it was their first visit to Bisley. They went away determined to return.

Aggregate Trophies

HRH The Duke of Connaught Senior Trophy

1 Killay ESU	595
Andrew Proudfoot	215

Simon O'Rourke	202
Robert Barton	178
2 Fiennes ESU	591
Simon Shenton	210
John Brookes	186.5
Andrew Brookes	194.5
3 Bramshill ESU	577
Stephen Waters	210
James Powell	183
Mark Hobbs	184

NSRA Cup: Andrew Proudfoot, Killay ESU

HRH The Duke of Connaught Junior Trophy

1 1st Curdridge and Botley	494.5
Sam Pidgley	205
Matt Saint	180
Chris Gambin	109.5
2 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts	485
Chris Stockton	154
Sam King	181.5
James Lowe	149.5
3 10th South West Cheshire	475.5
Oliver Welch	179.5
James Brookes	161
Andrew Dalton	135

The Chief's Prize: Sam Pidgley, 1st Curdridge and Botley

Ladies Plate: Rebekah Pidgley, Meon Valley ESU

Six-yard Air Rifle

Webley Scott Trophy

1 47th Swansea (Killay)	294
Jonathan Gratrix	88
Paul Gammon	73
James Kift	71
Luke Reimnitz	62
2 7th Malden	277
Nick Baker	84
Chris Barnes	74
Graeme Baker	61
Kenan McGrath	58
3 10th SW Cheshire	272
James Brookes	71
Martin Oakes	69
Oliver Welch	69
Jon Oakes	63

Over 18

1 Simon Shenton	88 (+42)
Fiennes ESU	
2 Jonathan Gratrix	88 (+39)
47th Swansea (Killay)	
3 David Robinson	86
Woking District	

Under 18 (and the Bramshill Trophy)

1 Robert Barton, Killay ESU	87
2 John Brookes, Fiennes ESU	86 (+38)
3 Rebekah Pidgley	85 (+40)
Meon Valley ESU	

Under 14

1 Andrew Dobson	77
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5th Morden	
2 Robert Alderman	76 (+35)
1st Liphook	
3 Joe Chadwick	76 (+27)
14th Wimbledon	

Under 12

1 Peter Hall, 3rd Hampton Hill	64
2 Jon Oakes, 10th SW Cheshire	63
3 Luke Reimnitz	62
47th Swansea (Killay)	

Ken White Memorial Trophy: Andrew Dobson, 5th Morden

Fellowship Medal: Rebekah Pidgley, Meon Valley ESU

Walton Firs Trophy: Nick Higson, 3rd Hampton Hill (+45)

Killay Trophy: Gregory Chadburn, 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts (+50)

Six-Yard Air Pistol

Group Pistol Team Trophy

1 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts	353
Simon Belcher	93
James Low	91
Sam King	89
Kal Gibbs	80
2 47th Swansea (Killay)	352

Jonathan Gratrix	90
Paul Gammon	88
James Kift	87
Adam Couling	87
3 1st Curdridge and Botley	327
Sam Pidgley	87
Peter Pidgley	86
Matt Saint	80
Shaun Broadbent	74

Senior Pistol

1 Geoff Lacey, Meon Valley District	97
2 Nick Baker, 7th Malden	95 (+47)
3 Martin Feltham, 7th Malden	95 (+43)

Junior Pistol

1 Max James, 11th Southampton West	94
2 James Lowe, 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts	91
3 Sam King, 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts	89

Field Target

Senior (and the Killen Senior Field Target Trophy)

1 Andrew Proudfoot, Killay ESU	45
2 Rebekah Pidgley, Meon Valley ESU	42.5



The archery, set up in the 50 metre range, proved a popular "taster" activity.

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The Scouts' Connaught Shields, the Senior (above) first awarded in 1911, and the Junior (below) in 1925.



- 3 Martin Stocker, Phoenix ESU 40 (+5)
Junior (and the Junior Field Target Trophy)
- 1 Matt Saint, 1st Curdrige and Botley 45 (+9)
- 2 Sam Pidgley, 1st Curdrige and Botley 45 (+7)
- 3 Philip Strange, 9th Bramshill 42.5 (+8) (Yateley)

Air Rifle Knockout Competition

Senior

Winner: Neil Dunn 9th, Bramshill (Yateley), Hampshire

Runner up: Ben Pidgley, Meon Valley ESU, Hampshire

Bronze Medals: John Brookes, Fiennes ESU, SW Cheshire

John Bowering, Central ESU, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire

Junior

Winner: Luke Stanford, 1st Old Malden, Greater London SW

Runner up: Billy Sheen, 10th South West Cheshire (Haslington)

Bronze Medals: Joe Riddett, 3rd Hampton Hill, Greater London SW

James Lee, 9th Worcester (Hallow), Hereford & Worcester

Summer Biathlon

Senior

1 James Powell, Bramshill ESU, 11 minutes 53 sec

2 Nicholas Peacock, 9th Bramshill (Yateley), 13 minutes 38 sec

3 Andrew Proudfoot, Killay ESU, 14 minutes 24 sec

Junior

1 Sam Pidgley, 1st Curdrige and Botley, 14 minutes 39 sec

2 James Lowe, 5th Mansfield Sea Scouts, 17 minutes 19 sec

3 Alex Cluett, Stalbridge Scout Troop, 19 minutes 24 sec

Own Airgun

10-metre Air Rifle (and the Beckett Trophy)

1 Chris Lacey 195+ 102.1
Meon Valley ESU

2 Melanie Flowers 189 + 95.7
3rd Hampton Hill

3 Rebekah Pidgley 187 + 96.4
Meon Valley ESU

4 Rebecca Saint 183 + 93.7

Meon Valley ESU

4 Stephen Waters 181 + 95.7
Bramshill ESU

6 Nathan Sutherland 179 + 96.1
19th Harrow

7 Mark Hobbs 172 + 96.9
Bramshill ESU

8 Andrew Brookes 166 + 90.4
Fiennes ESU

Six-Yard Own Rifle (Senior)

1 Robert Chester 86
Sterling ESU

2 Pierre Reader 85 (+39)
Sterling ESU

3 Amit Chauhan 85 (+38)
19th Harrow

Six-Yard Own Rifle (Junior)

1 Sam Pidgley 78
1st Curdrige and Botley

2 Philip Strange 60
9th Bramshill (Yateley)

3 Elliot Hughes 51
1st North Springfield

Vintage Rifle (and the Bill Cook Trophy)

1 Robert Barton, Killay ESU 86

2 Andrew Proudfoot 83 (+40)
Killay ESU

3 David Gibson 83 (+37)
St. Mary's, Twickenham

Own Pistol

1 David Gibson 86 (+40)
St. Mary's, Twickenham

2 Simon Shenton 88 (+40)
Fiennes ESU

3 David Robinson 86 (+38)
Woking District

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