

OFRC Win back the Long Range Trophy

“The breath of life is in the sunlight and the hand of life is in the wind.”

Its probably unlikely Kahlil Gilbran was musing on the wind flags of Bisley’s 1000-yard Stickle-down range when he penned The Prophet, but he might as well have been.

The sun periodically bathed the faces of ten OF riflers between thick rough clouds shoved across the sky as if by some enormous shoulder.

Wind, to a long-range shooter, is the enemy but it is an old and highly respected enemy. To master the wind requires fine judgement, precision, quick thinking and bold decision making.

It is therefore astonishing that the bungling buffoons of the OF Rifle Club, not possessing any of these qualities, managed to win back the coveted Long-Range Trophy from the grasping hands of the Old Lawrentians

Aged between 21 and 84 the shooters mustered on the firing point at a mere 900 yards – 20 yards over half a mile. At stake was the 50-year old solid silver ‘The Long-Range Cup’ that we had not won for four years.

Numbers are a big thing in shooting, calibres, barrel length, units of alcohol consumed and possibly most important of all :- range.

How far away the target always becomes more exciting and at commensurately scary the further away you are from it.

You are firing a 10-gram projectile half a mile away and the OF A team regularly expect it to land in a circle 14.4” across. You can’t even see it at that distance.

And for the uninitiated the OFs do not use telescopic sights - it is all done with bone and eye and breathing.

Then the wind. The sights were eventually set so far left you were actually aiming at the next target to yours – around 12 feet to the left.

Strange and mystical characters called ‘wind coaches’ read the wind and then huddle together to come up with another number – how many minutes of arc to aim off and then allow the bullet to swing onto the middle of the target we would score on.

Our opponents, hard core teams from more expensive public schools, knew we were without two of our best – and the crack Wind Reader ‘Farty McBowell’ was missing with the lame excuse he’d only just come back from an international tour.

The pre shoot verbal sparring demonstrated that they knew we were not at full strength, most of us resorted to lavatory humour in defence.

After one hundred and twenty of the finest 7.62mm ammunition was sent on its one and a half second journey to the targets, we were doing OK.

In fact, we were in the lead. Perfect timing for a good old fashioned OF disaster, which happily didn't happen on this occasion. Moving back to 1000 yards the conditions became more varied with the wind moving around. I can remember my wind coach leaning over and fiddling with the knobs on my sights, calling "Wait, wait..... now shoot, no wait!.

Cap'n Mehta walking way with the highest score of the day with 94.6. What that really means is that he got half his shots within 14.4inches and most within 24 inches. Those are very impressive numbers.

And even our B team managed third place, much to the chagrin of other teams.

With the 150th Imperial Meeting starting in July, things are looking good for the OFs.

| | 900yds | 1000yds | Total |
|------------------|--------|---------|--------|
| Old Frams A | 184.6 | 176.4 | 360.10 |
| Old Albanians | 170.7 | 166.5 | 336.12 |
| Old Frams B | 169.9 | 166.3 | 335.09 |
| Old Cranleighans | 179.13 | 155.7 | 334.20 |
| Old Lawrentians | 152.4 | 168.4 | 320.08 |

| | 900 | 1000 | Total |
|----------|------|------|-------|
| Mehta | 48.4 | 46.2 | 94.6 |
| Burnip | 43 | 45 | 88 |
| Thorp | 46.2 | 42.1 | 88.3 |
| Moore | 47 | 43.1 | 90.1 |
| Halahan | 43.3 | 40.1 | 83.4 |
| Ford | 40.3 | 44.1 | 84.4 |
| Horton J | 44.2 | 38 | 88.2 |
| Joy | 41.1 | 44.1 | 85.2 |
| Overbury | 34 | 41 | 75 |
| Smith | 34.1 | 0 | 34.1 |