

## Tea and medals for the OFRC at Bisley 2021.

Steve 'Two Knobs' McDowell (G82-86) overshadows the OF Bisley experience for the 142<sup>nd</sup> Imperial Meeting

Being irrepressible, Neil Joy appeared on a crowded and sunny range at Bisley on July 15 for the Public Schools Veterans competition. As ever, it was great to see him, especially since for the tenth year in a row he announced he was too old, at 86, to carry on shooting. He foolishly then revealed this was his 69<sup>th</sup> consecutive PS Vets shoot. So we told the range officer, who used the PA system to tell the other 2000 people on the range. Neil looked a bit sheepish at the ensuing round of applause.

So that'll be an end to his nonsense then.

Of the 46 schools of veterans, the OFs are one of the few able to come out in three teams of five shooters.

The OFRC get down to fire two sighting shots and ten to count at 500 yards, giving a maximum score of 50 with a smaller, central 'V' Bull scoring 5.1.

What follows next is very much in the vein of our pre-Bisley shoots (*ibid*), ie a concoction of post-Pandemic rust, various injuries, evidence of advancing age and general incompetence.

The 'A' team consisted of James 'Wee Jimmy' Mehta (48.2), Sandy 'Messiah' Walker (50.8 obviously) Kim 'Plungepool' Pope (48.3), John 'Mullah' O'Halahan (47.4) and Jon 'Red Leader' Ford (50.6, of course).

With McDowell in the coaching chair, the team drops only seven points out of a possible 250. Not too bad, we say to ourselves.

We came 14<sup>th</sup>.

Bear in mind the top three teams (Epsom, Greshams and Sedburgh) dropped two points between them, you can tell what kind of competition we are in.

### Pantomime

The B-Team of McDowell (47.2), Nigel 'The guv'nor' Burnip (45.2), Geoff 'One small step' Houston (48.2) and Will 'Action' Clough (44.1) came 16<sup>th</sup> in the B competition. Oh, and with Jon



“*Bafta*” Thorp, who missed for a 42.2. Thus ensues the pantomime: “Oh no I didn’t”; “Oh yes you did” etc etc

The C-team (with only four shooters, John ‘*Slimfast*’ Horton (44.2) , Andy ‘*Noddy Holder*’ Slade (a creditable 46.3) and Luke “*Von Braun*” Malcolm (47.3) came 12<sup>th</sup> from 18 schools, with the mighty Neil ‘*Father of the House*’ submitting a tidy 44.1.

A great turn out and thus early the next morning to the Astor County Championships. Years ago there used to be a regional heat to qualify for the Bisley Astor final but since there are now only two full-bore rifle clubs in Suffolk, the OFRC and West Suffolk, we take it in turns.

So, with McDowell in the chair and coaching two shooters on two targets at once, much comedy ensues as he regains the moniker “*Two Knobs*” by twiddling sights with either hand.

The left-hand target has Jon Ford, the right-hand target has Jon Thorp. McDowell: “Ok, John, target 55 go on” Bang! “Er, Sorry, I meant the other John.” Only the OFRC could have a team of six, three of whom are called John.

Skipper Kim is abruptly requested to have more originality in team selection.

“But Luke’s gone home and I don’t have a Mark or a Matthew, so there,” she says.

We did well though, with James Mehta “going clean” at all three ranges to score a maximum 105. From a maximum 640 points we dropped only 13 and our 617.59 was good enough for sixth, beating among 19 others Jersey, Cambridge University (Cambridgeshire), Stock Exchange (City of London) and The Bedfordians (Bedfordshire).

The next team matches, the Intercounties where Suffolk (containing five OFs) performed creditably, whilst Mehta captains Essex.

On to the National where Kim O’Pope and John Al-Hoolighan turn out for Ireland, Scotland feature Sandy Walker, and James Mehta (rescued from reserve obscurity) who goes clean again with a 105. Wales won, without McDowell, who wasn’t required to propel anything more exciting than a pencil. England second, Scots third, and Ireland languish in fourth

### **And so...**

This year’s addition was a couple of buggies formerly used in a peculiar game known as golf. No longer, however are they golf buggies used to carry golf sticks around, but rifle buggies used to carry guns, shooters and cold drinks. It is of course well known that a golf course is a waste of a perfectly good rifle range.

Rifle buggies are life changing since the amount of kit necessary to shoot is cumbersome and heavy so to drive directly onto the range saves



middle-aged bodies from overstraining and the heat getting the better of us all. Bisley camp is huge – more than 1000 acres – so distances from one’s accommodation and one’s target allocation can easily be half a mile or more.

Convenience breeds idleness as McDowell and Mehta discovered when arriving at the far end of the range and smugly basking in the shade of the canopy.

“Uhm, Stevie,” says James, “Have we forgotten something?”

“Scope, check; jacket, check; mat, check; score sheets, check; ear defenders, check; hat, check; ammo, check....er...”

“Guns!”

It’s amazing how fast a buggy can go when pressed.

The rest of the nine-day Bisley meeting is made up of individual shoots varying from 300 to 1000 yards, sometimes with ten shots to count, giving a maximum of 50.10 points and 15 rounds, giving a top score of 75.15.

Progress can be measured with appearances on the much-coveted Prize Lists for each individual competition. The top 100 scores (handicapped according to class X, A, O and T in that order) get a medal. And we at the OFRC love medals.

Below they are listed but OF of the Meeting has to go to Jon Thorp for picking up some serious silverware by winning the Chairman’s Prize. Well done to him.

We meet again in September. As ever, feel free to come and have a go.

### **Admiral Hutton 900 yards**

49 Mr JD Thorp O 49.5v

78 Miss KE Pope O 48.4v

### **Century 500 & 600 yards**

13 Air Cdre JAF Ford X 49.4v 50.8v 99.12v

### **Chairman’s Prize 900 & 1000 yards**

**The Challenge Trophy, a Special Gold Embroidered Badge and £40.00**

Winner Mr JD Thorp O 72.6v 72.8v 144.14v

### **Corporation 1000 yards**

45 Miss KE Pope O 49.4v

### **Daily Telegraph 500 yards**

69 Mr J Halahan O 74.4v

### **Donegall 300 yards**

7 Mr ANR Walker **X** RC 50.8v  
70 Mr JD Thorp **O** RC 49.7v

**Duke of Cambridge 900 yards**

80 Mr TS McDowell **O** C 49.5v

**Prince of Wales 600 yards**

7 Mr AR Radkovskii **A** 75.11v (Top A class)  
45 Miss KE Pope **O** 74.6v  
72 Mr JD Thorp **O** 73.7v

**Queens 2 300, 500 & 600 yards**

39 Mr ANR Walker **X** 48.7v 49.5v 49.6v 146.18v  
154 Air Cdre JAF Ford **X** 45.2v 49.6v 47.4v 141.12v

**Queens Final 900 & 1000 yards**

76 Mr ANR Walker **X** 146.18v 73.8v 69.5v 288.31v

**St George's Prize (defending champion ANR Walker)**

**Stage 1 300 yards**

23 Mr ANR Walker **X** 75.10v  
117 Mr AR Radkovskii **A** 74.7v

**Stage 2 600 yards**

26 Mr ANR Walker **X** 75.10v 74.7v 149.17v  
146 Mr AR Radkovskii **A** 74.7v 72.6v 146.13v

**Stage 3 900 yards**

49 Mr ANR Walker **X** 74.7v 72.7v 146.14v

**The Times 300 yards**

70 Mr JD Thorp **O** 49.5v

**Wimbledon 600 yards**

10 Mr ANR Walker **X** 75.12v  
51 Mr TS McDowell **O** 74.4v  
66 Mr JD Thorp **O** 73.8v

**Grand Aggregate all competitions ex 725 points (584 entrants)**

19 Sandy Walker 710.83  
155 Kim Pope 694.67v  
158 Sasha Radovskii 694.64  
222 Jon Ford 688.68  
223 Jon Thorp 688.64  
302 J Mehta 681.58  
361 Steve McDowell 673.41  
395 J Halahan 665.45  
473 Nigel Burnip 644.32

Here are some pictures supplied by James Mehta, starting off with a photo of his good self shooting



Sandy Walker



Jon Thorp being presented with a trophy



Jon Ford shooting



Finally a lovely view of the range

