

Dear Shooter

1st December Christmas Shoot and Social

Saint Nicholas must have organised the weather especially for the shooters who turned up for the event. Butt Zero on Stickledown was bathed in glorious sunshine, although warm clothing was needed to keep the December chill out. Of course you could have opted for the full snowman attire that somebody wore in the tented reception on range! (Which seemed very quiet without the calls associated with raffle tickets sales!) In fact the day's shooting was very easy on the pocket as individual events were only priced at two pounds with free tea, coffee and hot chocolate on tap the whole day.

'Shooting and fun' was in order with five different shooting competitions to enter with this year's 'bobbing turkey' still proving very popular. Mounted on the moving target range the turkey raced backwards and forwards whilst randomly swinging on an arm, if it decided to swing at all, which of course made it a little easier for the lucky few. If you were not into shooting 'game' there was the totally random Christmas bauble shoot. Each competitor had their own colour target of a festive tree decorated with baubles with each bauble having scores ranging from one to a hundred. This truly was random, as the scores were not shown on the target. A secret overlay was applied to the targets after all the shooting was completed, making it open to all levels of shooter.

At lunchtime we all trooped back to the Artists clubhouse where the fireplace in dining room had a stack of burning logs making it a cosy venue for our lunchtime meal of chunky thick broth with fresh warm bread.

Shooting started again after lunch, where you could continue on with the remaining three competitions. 'Santa Windows' was indeed a challenge and that was just the Range Officer's verbal briefing! There was an elaboration on the popular Speed Steel challenge which involved three sets of steels being painted different colours and all of them having a common red stop plate. The competitor had to pull a coloured disk out of a cloth bag before engaging that coloured steel. I have already written up the new and improved course of fire to ensure more people can shoot this next year.

The last event people could enter was the Team Log Chop open to teams of four with each team having two smallbore and two centrefire rifles. The team faced a log with the winning team splitting their log in the quickest time. The Blue Team choose to fire the event, for fun, using their shotgun firing solid slug, which resulted in their team taking one of the longest times of the day. However with first place prizes including two hundred pounds in cash, a shot timer, free phoenix entry, one hundred pounds in vouchers and a massive Christmas hamper there were plenty of re-entries being paid for. All had great fun and I even did a spot of Range Officering!

If you visit www.galleryrifle.co.uk <<http://www.galleryrifle.co.uk>> and click on 'Gallery', '2007' and 'Christmas shoot and dinner' there is some proof.

With the light fading we retired to spruce ourselves up for the night of feasting, drinking, birthday speeches and an unusual prize giving. The details get a little hazy around eleven but I definitely saw Mary and Joseph, a walking Christmas pudding, a fairy, James Bond (?), Satan's Santa but most strangely Steve Smoothy in a DJ and bow tie.

Judging by the expressions of gratitude for a wonderful night, a good fun was had by all. There are, of course, many stories to tell of the evening but if you wish to sample the atmosphere yourselves, you need to pencil in your diary the 6th December 2008 to find out!

Good shooting and good luck!

Brian Thomas