

Team Manager's Report

by Douglas Fergusson

This was the first attempt to take a Combined School team on tour - a daunting task but, thanks to the efficient and comprehensive organisation of Nathan Scudder who was our Logistics Manager as well as a member of the Australian Under-25 Team, the goodwill and support of parents and other support staff and the good cheer and co-operation of the youngsters, it proved a successful, instructive and highly enjoyable trip.

We were a varied mob which assembled at Kingsford-Smith Airport with a heap of rifles and other shooting equipment... pupils, former pupils, parents, and teachers of New England Girls' School (NEGS), The Armidale School (TAS) and Sydney High School (SHS). But we managed to get all the firearms through Customs and on the plane. This was High's third trip with Thai Airlines and again their check-in procedures and general assistance were smooth, problem-free and invaluable.

At Heathrow we were met by a 50-seater coach and transported to Bisley Camp and distributed to our spartan, but very adequate, living quarters in four different locations. Our being scattered made communication difficult at times, but the boys in Dormitory 2 put a brave face on their isolation and are to be commended on successfully governing their province for three weeks, albeit knee-deep at times in belongings, shooting gear and lolly wrappers - except for one lad whose cubicle was ever spotless and tidy, but whose name must be withheld for his own well-being. We know his name; we know where he lives.

The girls were accommodated in two rooms under the gentle and observant eyes of Katina Larsson and Jane Stening, where they had access to the luxury of a spin-dryer. (The Camp, is rather like a small village in some respects, but has no laundrette). One cannot comment on the comparison between the girls' tidiness and the boys', except to state that young lads seem to have had a very bad press.

In the early part of our stay and before the individual competition began, we had the opportunity to visit London and various historic sites and to enjoy the delights of England's famous country lanes, countryside and quaint villages.

But shooting was the main point of the exercise and the Team had lots of that: on ranges from 300 yards to 1,000 yards, sometimes four shoots a day, individually and in teams. They acquitted themselves well and improved steadily, bringing back one team trophy, unofficially known as 'The Bisley Bullet'. The benefit to their shooting ability is huge and undoubted: we look forward to seeing the results in next year's schools competitions.

Congratulations to all those who won prizes or achieved personal bests, and particularly to Alex on placing third in the Young Riflemen's Aggregate. Also,

Team Logo

The Team's logo is a stylised map of Australia with two Ms representing both the Millennium Meeting and the year 2000. The UK target, with the spotting disc in the centre, represents the close bond Australians have with Bisley.

well done to Alex on her silver medal for second highest female competitor in Stage I of the Queen's.

The Team was honoured to be represented by Team Captain, Greg and Vice-Captain, Alistair, at the Westminster Abbey service to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the signing by Queen Victoria of the Act creating Australia as an independent country. They attended with other distinguished guests, including the Prime Minister of Australia.

Finally, for their help and support, apart from those already named, I wish to record our gratitude and debt to Colin Cheshire and his staff at the National Rifle Association of Great Britain (NRA), and to Simon Fraser of the Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting (CCRS) for their unfailingly prompt and goodhumoured guidance; to Iris Bennett and her husband John, without whom we would have been running in ever-diminishing circles; to Robert Bondfield for his goodnatured tolerance and ready expertise; and, of course, to David Rose, Shooting Master of TAS and NEGS, and to the SHS push of John Fittler and Aaron Govendir, whose humour, advice and support was invaluable.

We would particularly like to thank our Team Patron, Lt Gen Laurie O'Donnell for his encouragement and support.

Captain's Report

by Greg, SHS

NRA Silver Spoon: Iveagh, Wellington. Schools Hundred Badge.

The 2000 Australian Combined Schools Rifle Team tour to Bisley was a unique experience in that it was the first of its kind conducted by three separate schools from Australia, SHS, TAS and NEGS. The schools individually have had shooting success with Sydney High winning the Great Public Schools Shooting Competition for the first time ever in 1998, TAS winning in 1999 and NEGS participating in the all-boys' competition, albeit alongside, for the first time in 1999. This impressive depth of experience and competitive success forged a team of talented young shooters ready to compete with the world's best shooters at Bisley.

During 1999 and the early months of 2000 the Team was finalised and members further acquainted with one another. For High and TAS this was a strange concept as the two schools had long been fierce competitors in all GPS sports. By the final training camp, the three schools were starting to resemble a comfortable and formidable team.

Unfortunately, due to the timing of the Queen's competition at Bisley, the three schools were unable to offer their best teams in GPS competition. This was especially disappointing for reigning champions, TAS, and for SHS, who had only narrowly lost to TAS in 1999.

On 1 July the Team assembled at Sydney Airport. We were all well prepared and eager to embark on a month of touring a foreign country. Several members of the Team had never left Australia before and for some it was also their first trip on a plane.

Once settled in Bisley, we had an extensive schedule of both individual and teams matches. Amongst the first

competitions was a cadet match, including individual and team competitions. The match attracted teams from throughout England and boasted a field of more than 600 cadets. The Team also competed against the attending national teams, of both Under 25 and senior teams, in a general match. We finished in a commendable position, beating countries both obscure and renowned. The Team achieved success in the Under 19 International Match, beating the Canadians to finish second behind an elite British squad, hand picked from more than 600 shooters. Several members of the Team were also selected in an Australian Under 21 Team to compete against South Africa, America and Great Britain.

The individual shooting was even more demanding than the teams matches with students required to follow a comprehensive individual shooting schedule each day of competition, generally involving three matches.

While a large portion of time was devoted to shooting, the tour provided much more. The Team gained an insight into the history of a country at the heart of an Empire that has shaped Australia and the modern world. We experienced, first hand, the different cultures of the world, not only England's but also of many of the nations that attended the Championships. The Team integrated well into the Bisley community socialising and forging lasting friendships.

Sightseeing took place as much as possible within the restrictions placed on us by our shooting schedules. Most of all, the students benefited from the responsibility bestowed upon them during the tour relating to such matters as being prepared for individual matches and general conduct as representatives of their schools and their country.

In any mention of the tour and its success the people who enabled this success must receive recognition and the thanks that they deserve on behalf of the Team. Foremost was Sydney High Old Boy, Nathan Scudder who made nearly all the arrangements that allowed such a tour to take place as well as providing the vision for this three-school tour. The supervision and organisation of Team Manager, Mr Douglas Fergusson, SHS Shooting Master Mr John Fittler, and TAS and NEGS Shooting Master, Mr David Rose was instrumental in the running of the Team. We also benefited from the assistance of Mr Bondfield, Mrs Stening, Mrs Larsson, Mr Govendir and Mr Nelson all of whom accompanied the Team to Bisley and provided for the welfare of the students. Finally the parents and friends of the respective rifle clubs must be thanked for their tireless efforts in raising funds to help defray the cost of the tour.

Vice Captain's Report

by Alistair, TAS

Bronze Bar: Alexandra, Daily Telegraph, Prince of Wales, Young Riflemen Agg. NRA Silver Spoon: Cadet Rifle Agg, Iveagh, Wellington.

From the trip I feel that I have come home with some great memories. These wouldn't be so great if it wasn't for the other people on the tour.

A memory that springs to mind is the experience of shooting on the Stickledown Range at 1,000 yards for the

very first time; the wind would change the value of the shot in a matter of seconds. At times it would get frustrating and others it would be exciting as on a good day success might be achieved.

I feel, and so does everyone else who went on the tour, that we had a very enjoyable trip, one which was both educating and interesting both on and off the range.

How it all began

by Nathan Scudder (Logistics Manager)

Australian shooters have always been at the forefront of international competition. It may surprise some readers to find that the first Australian sporting team to tour internationally was a shooting team, to Creedmore USA in June 1876 - twenty years before the first modern Olympics.

Ever since the NRA's move from Wimbledon Common to Bisley Ranges, Australian fullbore target shooters have been drawn to England to contest the Sovereign's Prize.

The establishment of the Australian Schools Combined Rifle Team was a challenging task from the outset. To organise the Team, a new association was formed - Junior Shooting Australia - which hopes to promote future tours and reciprocal visits in years to come. Despite the obvious logistical problems associated with exporting thirty-odd target rifles and related equipment, on 1 July 2000, as retailers struggled with the first day of the new GST, twenty-two students departed. The team members were aged between 13 and 19, and came from as far away as Brisbane and Bourke, including teams from three schools. Additionally, three NSW school students were selected into the Australian Under 25 Rifle Team, taking to twenty-five the total number of Australian Under 19 shooters at the Millennium Meeting.

Bisley, for those of you who don't know of it at least by reputation, is the UK's National Shooting Centre. Bisley Camp is more like a shooting village, with rows of luxurious club-houses, gun shops, and accommodation areas.

One striking thing about Bisley, and about British shooting in general, is the high participation rate of school and cadet shooters. The first week of competition was taken up with the Cadet Shooting Championships, with cadets attending from across the UK and abroad. The Australian Schools Team performed exceptionally well, with eight students (about one third of the Team) finishing in the top six per cent of entries to gain a prize in the Schools' Hundred. When not engaged in serious competition with other schools and cadet units, the students were able to entertain themselves trying out some other shooting disciplines, including air gun shooting, trap and skeet, and even the opportunity to fire a few shots on a UK service rifle.

As the schools competition drew to a close, and the majority of cadets headed home to commence their summer holidays, competition for the Australian Schools Team was only beginning. Competitors from around the world arrived at Bisley to contest the "Millennium Meeting" conducted over a ten day period. Shooting 'Bisley-style'

(three competitors on each target firing shot for shot), the Team began contesting the various matches, including several matches at 1,000 yards. The opportunity to contest the First Stage of HM the Queen's Prize was a real honour for the students involved, despite the gruelling elimination that followed - only three hundred competitors go on to Stage II, with only one hundred firing in the Queen's Final. Two Australian junior shooters (David and Alex) performed extremely well to qualify for Stage II.

But Bisley is far more than just the shooting matches. Whether it was the Overseas Teams Reception, the Beating of the Retreat featuring an Army marching band, or the Millennium Concert and Fireworks Spectacular held on Stickledown Range, there was plenty to keep the team members entertained.

As the individual matches drew to a close, Bisley moved on to the Teams Events. The Australian Schools Team contested a number of teams events, the most prestigious of which was the Millennium Under 21 Match. For some, this was an opportunity to represent their country, with a team selected at Bisley from amongst all under 21 Australian shooters in attendance. Donning the green and gold was quite an honour. The remainder of the Team formed into an Australian Schools Team to shoot against their fellow team members in the match. The Australian Team was defeated by the United States Under 21 Team, despite some fine individual scores being posted.

From the time the proposed tour was announced, the support from shooting organisations, sponsors and individual shooters was excellent. Beginning with the 'Bisley Barbecue' held at the ANZAC Rifle Range during the 1999 Queen's, and culminating in this publication, support from all quarters has been terrific.

So what was the upshot of the 2000 Tour? For the students involved, the opportunity to contest a major international sporting event, and to interact competitively and socially with some of the world's best shooters was a rewarding experience. Additionally, the structure for future schools team tours has been left in place.

The tour represents more than two years of hard work for a dedicated group of individuals led by Mr Douglas Fergusson, the Team Manager.

The 2000 Australian Schools Combined Rifle Team has, like generations before them, visited and experienced Bisley at its finest hour and through their involvement demonstrated, at a time when shooters from around the world gathered to celebrate the end of the millennium, that Australian shooting is set to prosper and continue well into the new century.

Impressions of a Shooting Master

by David Rose (Coach)

I started to write a long article of my recollections but, after a thousand words, realised that this story is best told by the team members themselves. On further reflection I realised my role in the whole undertaking was relatively peripheral to the main work, although I did my best to be a consummate tour guide. In the end

I had to return early to Australia, and as I guessed, everything seemed to run reasonably well after my departure which just proves what I said.

It is better therefore that I use this space to thank the people who did most of the work and made the Tour the great success that it was.

Nathan Scudder was the inspiration and architect of the whole enterprise; the amount of work he put in was absolutely, and typically, enormous. That he is actually thinking of another in 2002 is astounding... the thought alone exhausts me. Douglas Fergusson (Team Manager) did not, himself, shoot - which was just as well as he spent his days chasing team business all over Camp. He dealt with every possible issue with fairness and generosity - the Team could not have wanted better. John Fittler was an enthusiastic colleague who pursued every competition opportunity, lifted the Team's profile in Cadet circles and was vigorous in organisation and support. Robert Bondfield quietly assisted, coached, repaired, improved, smiled, arbitrated and made notes in a small book. Jane Stening was a tireless advocate, maintainer of standards, chaperone, mother and friend. Another non shooter, she was everywhere making sure all the Team did as much as possible to experience Bisley and England. Katina Larsson shepherded her charges like the mother she is, drove miles, fussed, soothed and protected and managed to be amazed at tapestries in between times. Her dressmaking left a lasting impression at the Bullet Ball. Aaron Govendir fussed as well, about publications, money and the exchange rate, bedtimes, dress codes, photographed everything, and also drove miles. John Nelson alerted us to good pubs and steaks and in so doing managed to visit more clubs, spoke to more people and spread the Team word better than a platoon of mere mortals.

I should also thank Angus Edwards for the reality checks, Jo Hossack, winner of the 2000 Queen's competition, for an insight and Iris Bennett for the mother hen cum genie impression, which produced whatever we needed almost instantly! The Surrey was a superb bunker. Thanks also to Colin Cheshire for his work, tolerance and humour and the girls in the NRA front office. Their admiration of my computer equipment made me feel years younger.

There are many others but we're counting words here, so let me finish by thanking the guys and gals. You gave me the excuse to be there.

Impressions of a Parent, Shooter, Coach and Armourer

by Robert Bondfield (Coach)

When I was asked if I could go to Bisley with the Australian Schools Combined Rifle Team, as a coach and armourer, it was with great pride that I accepted. Little did I know what was ahead (ditto all the other parents and staff!)

Upon arriving at Bisley, after getting our rifles through Customs (none were lost or damaged), we put our rifles in the Armoury while we went sightseeing.

The rifles we were using were mostly Omarks, a single-shot bolt action rifle in

7.62mm (.308") calibre.

Our sights are aperture or peep sights with no magnification allowed. They are adjustable for elevation and sideways for the effects of winds and mirage.

So, off to the ranges. Century, 100 targets and 300 shooters lined up all at once. What a sight! Shooting in the pouring rain and the English queuing up to buy ice cream! And it was heavy, cold rain. Stickle-down, 1,000 yards and the wind bending the flagpoles. Firing my first shot, miscalculating the angle of wind, overadjusting and missing the target completely. (NB: sometimes the coach has got to set an example of what not to do!!) As a point of interest, it has been calculated that the end of the barrel has only to move one sixteenth of an inch and not only will you miss a bullseye but the whole target as well!

In the evenings, before going out to dinner, everyone would clean their rifles and, if shooting in the rain, would strip down their equipment, dry it all and reassemble it before returning their rifles to the Armoury for the night. The Armourer was kept busy working out trigger weights, and solving misfire, extraction and accuracy problems.

Whilst the team members probably had some of the oldest equipment on the Range (and there was some fancy stuff!) they managed to acquit themselves very well, which goes to show that ability, dedication, practice, and more practice are some of the main attributes of this team. I can see members of this team being selected into Australian and State teams in the future.

In conclusion, I must make mention of M.A.B. Engineering in Brisbane and R D Rudduck Gunsmiths in Sydney for all their work checking and rechambering rifles to handle the English ammunition, and especially to M.A.B. Engineering for a supply of spare parts. Without this, half of the rifles would not have worked with British ammunition. Also, to the team members who worked as a team, many thanks and congratulations. Lastly the staff. What a job they have done, leading up to, during and afterwards.

Cadet Shooting at Bisley

by John Fittler (Coach & Captain ACC)

Bisley! The home of target shooting. During three and a half weeks this small English village becomes the centre of intense competition between individual competitors and teams from all over the world in a range of shooting disciplines.

After six months of intense negotiations with the Australian Army Training Command, 2 Cadet Wing, and any other person prepared to listen, approval was given only three days before departure for the Australian Cadets to compete at Bisley. Despite this, the cadet contingent together with the Royal Canadian Army Cadet team was able to provide a small but significant contrast to the large contingent of British Cadets. It is surprising how distinctive a slouch hat becomes in such a situation!

The hospitality extended to our cadets and students by Major Simon Fraser on behalf of the Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting was perhaps the highlight of the tour. Simon's support over the weeks of competition has provided the framework to encourage Eastern Cadet Wing to view

the Bisley cadet and schools competition as the model for similar activities in this country. At present changes are being floated, in Australia, to the way cadets can access full bore shooting activities.

It is difficult to put these weeks at Bisley into perspective. On one hand was the encouragement and support shown to our cadets by Lt. Col. Dave Hayes, the leader of the Australian Army Service Rifle team also competing at Bisley. On the other was the offer by Colonel Don, an adviser with the Australian Defence Staff at Australia House and a GPS old boy, to support us in further visits to Bisley. Both of these officers could not understand the reluctance on the part of Training Command to permit activities such as this tour. Likewise, the friendly encouragement and vast experience in the area of junior shooting given by Jeremy Dickson only helped make this tour to Bisley truly memorable.

The experiences gained by our cadets in seeing the elite of British cadets competing in team and individual events shows that the newly reformed Australian Cadet Corps has a long way to go to match the enthusiasm and expertise displayed during those weeks in Bisley. The experience of learning to handle the cadet-issue Parker Hale rifle with its 26 inch barrel was something that most of our shooters found difficult. However, with perseverance and the will to achieve most of the cadets improved their scores.

I wish to thank all those members of the touring team who wore the Australian Cadet uniform. You were able to wave the flag and show the British Cadets that Australians can go to the home of shooting and demonstrate that the skills between the two were not vastly different. Your bearing and behaviour was excellent.

A Great Experience

by Katina Larsson (Coach)

The group turned out to be very special and the characters on the trip kept us all laughing.

Josh surprised several of the females with a gift early in the piece only to have his birthday forgotten at the end. Happy Birthday Josh - we didn't mean to forget but simply got caught up in the excitement of the World Championships!

After meeting Victor I wondered what we were in for - he didn't sit still for a minute - excitement bubbling over.

Trafalgar Square was most entertaining and Jenny, Mel, Kristel & Louise climbed the huge lions for photo opportunities whilst James decided to treat the pigeons to dinner. We headed off to catch the "Topless Bus" and after counting carefully suddenly realised we had lost someone. Jonathan sprinted back to Trafalgar Square and returned with two boys!

Windsor Castle, Hampton Court and the trips to Portsmouth, Bath and Stonehenge were amazing and took us back into previous centuries.

Captain Greg looked the part in his hat from Greenwich. The Army Open Day was an amazing opportunity for the kids to see the latest in defence weapons and techniques. A nicer group of team members couldn't be found and I hope to see everyone at future camps.

First impressions of Bisley

by James, TAS

Bronze Bar: Century, Corporation, Daily Telegraph, Donegall, Young Riflemens Agg. NRA Silver Spoon: Cadet Rifle Agg, Iveagh, Wellington. Schools Hundred Badge.

On arrival at Heathrow Airport everyone was wide awake and wondering what was happening next. After the bus trip to Bisley Camp everyone was amazed by the size of the Range and we had only just driven into the gates.

After quickly unpacking our gear into the barracks, which were to be our home for the next three weeks, everyone was off to explore the Range and to give their cameras a workout. Everyone quickly went to all the popular spots at Bisley, like Century Range, Stickle-down, the Clock Tower, and Fulton's Gun Shop. We had lunch at the ever popular Jenny's, a small food outlet on the Camp specialising in typical English takeaway.

We spent the first week sightseeing and looking around, with two days in London. It was amazing the history that surrounds you everywhere you walk. And with short history lessons from Mr Rose everywhere we went, we went away from London with some knowledge, not just photos.

After a few days sightseeing and looking at the Range everyone was now itching to get their rifles out and put a few shots down the range. We zeroed our rifles at Short Siberia (another range at Bisley) and checked that our rifles were chambering the rounds properly.

Over the next two weeks we competed in many cadet competitions and team matches. It was very weird shooting sometimes because it didn't get dark until about 10.30 pm and sometimes you were shooting at 7 and 8 o'clock at night. The sun comes up at about 5.00 am. The night life was good and we attended many functions and receptions.

The whole team really stood out in their uniforms and we had many comments made. The whole team attended the Bullet Ball which was dinner and then a disco afterwards. On one of the last nights there was also the Millennium Fireworks Spectacular. This started at about 6.00 pm and went until very late that night. A great night was had by all. A huge music ensemble played throughout the evening. The parachutists dropped in carrying the flags of each country competing at Bisley. Later that evening they had the fireworks which were absolutely stunning. The number of people who had come to watch was quite amazing with Stickle-down Range between 900 and 1,200 yards packed.

Overall, everyone had a great time on our trip thanks to the organisation by our shooting masters and helping parents. We all met new friends, learnt more about shooting and, in the time we were there, learnt about a different country.

The flight to England

by Jenny, NEGS

From the excitement of my first plane flight, let alone setting foot for the first time on international soil, I could tell this trip was going to be a memorable one.

After finally getting on the plane I wasn't worried about the twenty four hours of flying ahead like the more experienced fliers in the group yet the "what ifs..." that

my entire class at school had been putting to me, knowing that I was a first-time international traveller... what if the plane crashes?... what if the luggage ends up in another country? What if the rifles get confiscated in transit?... what if?... and the list went on. Thankfully none of the above happened.

The main problem was the air-hostesses not seeming to like the idea of our having conversations while sitting in the aisle; just because they were trying to get the food carts through wasn't the point. Realistically, who would have thought that a group of twenty odd teenagers could cause any problems on a twenty odd hour plane flight?

Within the first ten, no five, minutes of the flight some of us needed to walk around, as sitting for such a long time was getting too frustrating, not mentioning any names, Victor, as to who started the trend.

Then came the stopover in Bangkok, and although it was midnight local time, this didn't stop the duty free shops in the airport being open. Mell and I didn't lose any time with such an opportunity to shop and straight away converted dollars to baht; Mell sent a postcard to the boyfriend whom she hadn't seen for the entire time span of... a day.

After the second leg of our journey we finally got into London's Heathrow Airport, apparently one of the largest airports in the world. With the coach loaded and everyone on board, before we even left London, our strongly accented driver chipped in with a commentary from time to time. Very few listened; the main entertainment was the range of different coloured taxis and coping with local time.

The opportunities that we encountered while over in the UK will not be matched for a long time to come, from the people we met, friendships made, the history we saw and took part in and the chance of representing Australia.

Life at Bisley

by Angus , TAS

NRA Silver Spoon: Wellington.

Throughout our time in Bisley we would have had to be blind and deaf not to notice the huge international input around the Camp. Their flags covered the ranges and their different accents made for many difficult conversations. The majority of the nations had their own clubhouses ranging from the impressive mansion that is the Canadian clubhouse to "Kangaroo Corner", the former Australian meeting place. Possibly the most memorable international experience came from the International Teams Reception. This occasion was held in a large pavilion tent into which we all hardly fitted.

Each country had its own stand and on this occasion the Australian stand was divided into three; New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland each offered the beer of that state, Fosters, Victoria Bitter, and XXXX respectively. In fact, each nation was giving away its national drink. These included German beer in traditional steins, Budweiser from the Americans, a South African beer from, obviously, the South Africans, black rum from the Jamaicans and an interesting tea from the friendly Malaysians.

Actually all the international team members were friendly and enthusiastic,

always ready for a quick chat after a shoot or in the evening. And they were all keen to participate in what was possibly the favourite pastime of international competitors - badge swapping - many of the Australian Schools Team came back with an awful lot more metal on their shooting caps than they started with.

Finally, if it were not for the international teams, the Millennium meeting would have been a much less colourful and enjoyable place. Without the raucous laughter of the South Africans, the southern drawl of the Texans and the fast-spoken English of the Germans, Malaysians and Jamaicans to confuse us all, Bisley Camp would have been a strictly English affair and would not have benefited from the influence of many different nations.

Staying at Bisley

by Jessica , NEGS

Bronze Bar: Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Young Riflemen's Agg.
NRA Silver Spoon: Wellington. Schools Hundred Badge.

We arrived at Bisley Camp after travelling for twenty-four hours. We were all incredibly jet-lagged, but excited to finally be at our destination. For many of us it was our first time travelling abroad and the flight was quite an experience.

As our chartered coach arrived at the RAF Dormitory, and we unloaded our luggage, we were greeted by Iris Bennett, a Councillor with the National Rifle Association of Great Britain, who was to be our team liaison officer for the duration of our stay.

The male members of the Team were accommodated in the RAF Dormitory, a long building with low dividers between the beds like horse stalls, whilst we females (all eight of us) were escorted up the to L-Lines where we would be staying in two four-bed rooms in one of several weatherboard buildings. We were shown where the amenities were and we all found the presence of fluorescent-pink toilet paper quite amusing.

Over the next few days we wandered around the grounds of Bisley Camp which were very well maintained and soon became familiar with the Bisley Pavilion, a popular meeting place for the cadets and other shooters of our age. We were also introduced to the members of the Greshams School Team who were very friendly and helped to make our stay an enjoyable one. They invited us to make use of their clubhouse which was quite luxurious, having a kitchen, dining room bunkrooms and TV. Here we watched videos with them and exchanged stories about our shooting experiences.

When we began shooting after a few days of sightseeing we were all amazed at the size of the two ranges. Century Range, has 108 targets on it, hence the name, while Stickledown Range has fifty targets. Compared to our four target range at Wallamumbi in Armidale, these ranges were massive and shooting on them for the first time was quite a daunting experience. Many of our Team had only shot "Bisley-style" (three per target) once or twice and some had never shot that way at all. However after a few days we all became quite at home with it, and besides having sore arms from the extended time it takes to shoot this way, we were shooting quite well.

One of the things that I will fondly

remember about my stay at Bisley was how helpful everyone was and how they all contributed to making our stay an enjoyable and memorable one. For example, during the first stage of the Queen's Prize, my bolt extractor broke which meant I had to stick a cleaning rod down my barrel after every shot to pop the empty shell out. After completing the stage in this way, I left the mound and was approached by another shooter who offered to fix my bolt. Luckily for me he had a spare extractor which he fitted free of charge. The London and Middlesex Rifle Association was also helpful in lending a telescope to our Team so that we had enough equipment to go around. Without the help of these people, and many others, our tour might not have run as smoothly as it did.

Well, from the point of view of a country girl from Lightning Ridge in North West NSW, the entire tour was certainly an experience that I will remember and treasure for years to come.

First Day of Shooting in Bisley

by James , SHS

After several days of sightseeing and relaxing, this was the day we had to start concentrating on what we actually came here to do - shoot.

On the first day we arrived we had hastily assembled our rifles and they were now already safe and sound in the Bisley Armoury. The cadets (including myself) had also taken delivery of several new Parker-Hale rifles. We needed to test their performance and any factors which may have needed improving, as they were still under development.

The team awoke early in the morning, paid a visit to the Bisley Armoury where we checked out our rifles for the first time. The team then went to Short Siberia, the most remote range at Bisley, and set up. Short Siberia is a 100 yard range and it was the first time most of the team had even shot at that distance. The cadets were on one section of the range getting familiar with the Parker-Hales and shooting without shooting jackets (a requirement of cadet matches) while the remainder of the team were on the other section of the range fixing up their own rifles. Some adjusting was necessary, as we had dismantled them for the flight, and this can throw the aim off.

Having finished with the Parker-Hale rifles the cadets rejoined the team, to fix up and practice with their own rifles. The best performance of the shoot came from Victor. After firing his first shot and discovering it was a V-bull (the highest value a shot can get), his practice was over and he left the mound content with his perfect range record.

The Australian Schools
Combined Rifle Team would like
to thank
Traveland Bathurst
and
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many courtesies
extended to the team.



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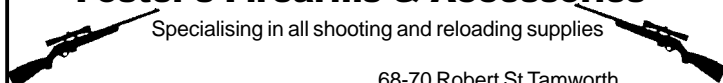
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The Social Side

by Wilson , SHS

NRA Silver Spoon: Iveagh.

Since my transition from small- to fullbore rifle shooting, I believe that I have developed many important motor and marksmanship skills – this owing to the skills imparted by Mr Fittler and other experienced shooters.

This year's visit to the Millennium Meeting, I believe, has given me a greater insight into what rifle shooting is all about. I hope that I will be able to compete on a higher level in future shoots. I also hope to travel to Bisley again as part of an official cadet team.

Some of the highlights of the tour were visiting attractions such as Stonehenge, Warwick and Windsor Castles, Buckingham Palace and the Greenwich Meridian, just to name a few; shooting in the Queen's; and paint-balling at the Army barrack open day.

Many may wonder what the Team might have done for leisure or free time. Simply put we could hop over to the Canadian Cadets or Greshams School Club for a sociable time, walk to the Pavilion for a game of pool or a spine tingling session of 'House of the Dead', or visit the Surrey Rifle Association for a quiet (soft) one with the boys or a game of darts.

The food was good, if maybe a little monotonous (hint, hint, Mr Fittler). I'm sure that these memories will be with me for years to come.

Adventure of a Lifetime

by Tom , TAS

Bronze Bar: Admiral Hutton, Donegall, Lovell. NRA Silver Spoon: Iveagh, Wellington. Schools Hundred Badge.

The adventure of a lifetime began as we departed for places unknown. It was to be the biggest eye-opener of our lives.

Mum had me thoroughly drilled as to how many pieces of luggage I had, number of travellers cheques and the order in which I was to cash them, never to take my money belt off, don't even look sideways in Bangkok and so on...

During our time in England we managed to visit many attractions including Stonehenge, Warwick Castle, Big Ben, the famous London Bridge (and no...it isn't falling down), the Tower of London and the Crown Jewels, Buckingham Palace (where we saw the Changing of the Guard), Trafalgar Square, Westminster Abbey, Harrods, HMS Victory and Warrior, and so many others I can't remember them... sorry Mr Rose. You did a great job, but it was all just so mind-boggling at the time. It is great to be able to come home and say "been there, done that".

While on tour we also managed to do a spot of shooting - on the Bisley Ranges: Stickledown and Century. Bisley was awesome and now I can boast that I've shot on two of the world's most prestigious ranges (with some degree of success, too). I can just hear my mum and dad proudly stating to all who will listen at every prize shoot they attend - "Our son shot in the World Championships at Bisley".

If asked to nominate my favourite tourist spot or 'best moment' - I couldn't do it. The whole tour was just so enjoyable. The greatest experience I had

was meeting and shooting alongside people from all over the world; South Africans, Germans, New Zealanders, Scots, Dutch, Irish, Kenyans, West Indians, Englishmen, Canadians and Frenchmen; exchanging heritage, culture and sometimes ideas about the wind and shooting. This was one of the most rewarding experiences of the tour, and I would have to say my life so far. I will remember and look back on this forever.

Many thanks to all the hard working adults who organised and accompanied us on tour. I'm sure it was a mammoth job to get us (and our rifles) to, and home from, England in one piece. Also I would like to thank my parents Liz and Gary for supporting me and my sister, Alex, in our shooting journeys, and last but certainly not least I want to thank all the feral goats for being co-operative enough to be caught - thus paying for a large chunk of the cost of the Bisley tour. Alex and I spent most of our school holidays over the last twelve months chasing those elusive feral goats, with a measure of success, thank goodness.

Individual Match Shooting

by Louise , NEGS

The Individual matches taught me to be independent. During this time the wind was often very gusty but learning to understand the wind flags made a big difference. Wind flags are used to tell how far to adjust your sights when the wind changes direction or strength.

On Century Range, there were 324 shooters on the mound at the one time. Bisley-style shooting means that with three shooters per target one fires a shot, one scores and the other gets ready to fire their shot.

The distances we shot varied from 300 to 1,000 yards. Our targets were allocated at random so for one stage you could be shooting with a team member and for the next you could be with the world's best shot in your squad.

Several times I shot I was on the same target as a man from Guernsey Island. He was a very pleasant man to shoot with and he helped me understand the adjustment of the sights. I loved meeting so many people from around the world and everyone was very friendly.

Shooting was very tiring so trips to Tony's ice cream van were essential. The van was parked behind each range and on hot days there would be two vans to buy from. During the Queen's Final the queue for ice creams was a 30 minute wait but it was worth it!

I had a great time and loved every minute.

Cadet Shooting

by Kristel , NEGS

NRA Silver Spoon: Wellington. Schools Hundred Badge.

& Mell , NEGS

NRA Silver Spoon: Wellington.

About a week into our stay at Bisley we began to take part in the cadet teams matches. All school shooting in the UK is based on their cadets. Students are issued with uniforms (including funny hats with really nice badges). In our team uniform, we looked like a bunch of canaries in a very green forest. The

cadets are transported to Bisley, housed, fed and issued with ammunition. Their teachers are paid as well, so all their target shooting is free. Schools had travelled to Bisley from all over the UK and one school, Dollar Academy, came from Perth, Scotland.

This was a mostly girls team, and they shot in kilts and skirts on Ashburton Day, the big final match of the school teams week. Two of their girls shot well enough to be selected in the Athelings, a team of young shooters that is sent to Canada every year.

After a few days we girls became friends with several cadets from Greshams School, Wellington College and Victoria College. Greshams had a really good clubhouse next to our rooms. It is a long building with bunkrooms, kitchen, dining room and TV room. Wellington and Victoria were in more basic huts nearby.

Some of the boys made social contact with other schools but their dormitory wasn't close to any other schools, although Canada Lodge was a popular destination.

We were able to compare the differences between our countries and we learnt a few new words and phrases. We even ended up going on an outing with them to a local ice skating rink.

Shooting next to so many people our age was amazing, and while many of the schools were all-boy and thought us unusual, there were many girl cadets (such as at Greshams) who not only shot but held rank, and were treated very much like anyone else. We still got a lot of attention (which wasn't good when you were having a bad shooting day) - I guess that was because we were Aussies.

Overall, we learnt a lot from the cadet shooting; about being organised, keeping up with everything that was going on and comparing our scores. It was an enjoyable experience in every way.

Sightseeing in England

by Joel , SHS

Bronze Bar: Prince of Wales, Times, Young Riflemens Agg. Bronze HPS Cross: Times. NRA Silver Spoon: Iveagh, Wellington. Schools Hundred Badge.

England is a country with a rich history – ancient buildings, quaint little villages and rolling countryside - and when the Team visited, we got to see plenty of them.

We ventured into the heart of London by train. We walked and walked through the City of Westminster, seeing the outsides of the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Cathedral, the Tower of London and Nelson's Column, among other things. Tuesday saw us back in London, but this time, we rode on an open-topped tour bus, as well as a boat on the river. From our vantage point, we saw many of the sights of London and Westminster. We also went inside the Tower of London, and those who could be bothered spending hours in the queue even saw the Crown Jewels.

For the next few days we shot. One adventurous outing was shopping at Sainsburys, the local supermarket, for an hour or two. Some days later we all went on a day trip to Portsmouth. The most often said sentence that day would have to have been people pointing across a body of water and saying "is that France?" We saw the Old Ships –

including the HMS Victory, Admiral Lord Nelson's flagship – as well as the D-day museum and, after a bit of begging, a typical English pebbly beach. The next afternoon we travelled to Windsor Castle, the largest surviving castle in England. Due to the time restraints, however, only three of us decided to enter the castle that day. There were a number of short tours during the intervening period when we weren't shooting.

There were only four days left in the tour by the time we left Bisley Camp again. After weeks of shooting we were all exhausted and just aching for an opportunity to just sit back and relax, and never having to pick up a rifle again. One group travelled to Salisbury Plain to see an ancient monument known worldwide – Stonehenge. Many commented that it was smaller than they had expected.

Following this, we went to Winchester Cathedral. On the Saturday, we returned to London for the last time, saw the Greenwich Prime Meridian, and went shopping at Harrods, using the incredibly efficient, but confusing London Underground to travel. On our last full day, Sunday, we drove to Warwick Castle and thoroughly explored the place, inside and out.

On Monday 24 July, we all packed our bags and sadly said farewell to Bisley Camp, England.

Warwick Castle

by Andrew, SHS

NRA Silver Spoon: Iveagh, Wellington.

After completing the shooting for the tour, the entire group went to Warwick Castle. It was a long drive but well worth the trip. Mid-way we stopped off at Ann Hathaway's cottage, although this was mainly just to stretch our legs.

Arriving at Warwick we parked, paid our entrance fees in what were originally the stables, and split into various groups to soon be intrigued by the sight of one of England's most impressive ancient fortresses.

After pulling ourselves away from the sight of the amazing exterior, we proceeded through the portcullis and gatehouse. We hoped to visit the dungeons first but, as the queue was so long, we headed towards the oldest part of the castle called the Mound. Being on top of a , it was originally the most important part of the Norman castle. However as military architecture improved, it became less significant.

From here we visited the Ghost Tower, which is believed to be haunted by one of Warwick Castle's previous owners, Sir Fulke Greville. Inside there were his living quarters and below, a souvenir shop. When we left the Tower, we joined a long line waiting to enter the Torture Chamber and Armoury.

Inside the Torture Chamber there were various implements of torture including the rack, thumbscrews and the scold's bridle. In the Armoury we saw and handled swords, spears, pistols, muskets and rifles as well as suits of armour, chain mail and helmets from different centuries.

The Castle is surrounded by ramparts and Towers built in the 14th and 15th centuries. We were able to climb the narrow stone stairs and walk along the ramparts into Guy's Tower. From here

there was a clear view of the town of Warwick.

Unfortunately time was against us and we were unable to see the Dungeons, Caesar's Tower and the State Rooms. Even so, it was a unique experience for Australians to be able to visit such an old, historic castle. If I have the opportunity to go to England again, I'll definitely return to Warwick.

Sights and sounds of London

by Jonathan, SHS

After an exciting arrival in England everyone settled in fairly well. We got our first taste of the English rail system; the trains were different from Australian ones and seem to go much, much faster so as we sped towards London excitement filled the air. In London the immensity of the place and the outrageous food prices soon hit us. After lunch we headed off to London Bridge - the simple stone building was not what we had expected till we realised that the famous London Bridge was actually called Tower Bridge. Looking around we saw Parliament House and the Millennium Wheel on the River Thames. Walking being our primary form of transport meant we saw many of the sights.

After a much-needed rest we headed out again the next day. Armed with our previous day's knowledge of the area we went to Buckingham Palace to see the Changing of the Guard. On the way we saw the Horse Guards.

After lunch in a little English café we continued the bus tour, learned a lot and, a few surprises later, arrived at the Tower of London. Now the name is deceiving as it's not really a tower but more of a squat castle. After doing the rounds of the tower it was onto a ferry for a trip up the River with a commentary from a crew member. Along the way we saw other features including the rebuilt Globe Theatre and the Houses of Parliament. All of this left us exhausted so it was back to the train station tired but much enlightened to the sights and sounds of London.

Exploring London

by Max, SHS

Bronze Bar: Admiral Hutton, Donegall, Young Riflemen Agg.
Silver Spoon: Iveagh, Wellington. Schools Hundred Badge.

One of the many highlights of my trip to Bisley was the many sightseeing trips we did. Not only did this give us a great insight into British traditions and history, but also made the trip not only just a sporting tour, but a great holiday.

One of the outings I particularly enjoyed was to Harrods. On approaching the department store we could already see the wealth that was inside. The fact that the roads were lined with Rolls-Royce and Bentley vehicles with Arabic number plates showed that the wealth of the oil field sheiks was within. The security was extreme with guards posted on every door. A bunch of billy Australians wearing Blundstones and rugby jerseys heightened the suspicions of the already wary security guards. On entering Harrods we were bewildered to see the variety and expense of the merchandise. One thing that will stick in my mind is

when and I found ourselves looking at a £50,000 TV which did not seem any better than the £300 one next to it, except that it was ten times the scale.

The subway system was an intricate and sometimes confusing hive of tunnels, crossways and bridges. I believe everyone, including myself was impressed by this efficient mode of transport. We had moments during peak hour, which definitely gave our chaperones their fair e of stress, due to having to escort such a large group of boisterous teenagers stopping at every new and interesting thing we saw. Because so many people used the subway, one almost felt like a sardine at times.

Another sightseeing trip saw us finding ourselves at Greenwich once we had finally found the right stop. The fact that it lies on the Thames makes it very picturesque. It is in a park-like setting, and a very quaint village lies nearby. Our lack of sleep ensured that many of us were hunting for the escalator to the top instead of taking the steep 300 metre hike. Once at the top we were thrilled to see the Millennium Dome, the River Thames and the northern suburbs of London.

Our enthusiasm to see the sights of London unfortunately prevented some of us from seeing the Final of the Queen's Prize, much to our disappointment. However we were able to catch the winner's rounds to all the clubhouses, and ed her success.

Although I have just scraped the surface of all the wonderful things we saw and did, I hope I have left a few impressions of the magnificent memories which will live with us forever.

A return to fullbore shooting

by Dani, SHS

Bronze Bar: Century, Conan Doyle, Daily Telegraph. NRA
Silver Spoon: Iveagh, Wellington. Schools Hundred Badge.

It was a cool Saturday morning in mid July. I was being driven up to Bisley Camp to meet with my shooting buddies and embark on an intensive three-week shooting binge. Watching the road go by I recalled memories from a couple of years back; coming back from the Sydney High 1998 Canada Tour, and making plans for the big one at Bisley. I recalled writing about my enthusiasm for Bisley in my Canada Tour report and it was hard to believe just how quickly the two years had passed, and how much had changed since then.

Less than an hour had passed before I was reunited with old friends and made new ones. Unlike them I had managed to evade the deadly, twenty-four hour journey over to Bisley - I had taken up residence in cool and rainy England a whole eighteen months prior, you see. It was calming to see that little had changed since then, as I was whisked away for scoring duty within seconds of my arrival.

The setting was generally similar to that of the Canada Tour. Military grade accommodation, early morning breakfasts, sightseeing, a lot of shooting, fierce competition, and much fun to be had. I was slightly nervous due to the fact that I had not so much as touched a rifle in the past year and a half, but fortunately my fears were soon calmed when I put in some fairly reasonable scores the next

day. I didn't make much improvement over the next few days, so I was beginning to think my equipment was at fault. Others, as well as myself, were having trouble with extraction of fired rounds due to slight variations in the ammunition. Finally, the combination of a worn out barrel, the different ammunition, and a chunk of wood to assist in opening my bolt, led to my bolt handle snapping right off - in the middle of my shoot! Luckily it was a team shoot, so the glitch could be easily smoothed over, and I was put down for another two consecutive details. In the first I managed to beat all my previous scores, and the second offered me a 35.4 - I was happy, but this was no doubt due to the fact that I was now using the brilliantly set up rifle of Mr Fittler.

But this could not last forever, for in the individual competition we were squadded at the same times so I couldn't use a team-mate's rifle. Instead a rifle was hired from the NRA, and aside from some slight problems at 300 yards the rifle was as good as the armourer described it.

I had never shot using a two-point sling before, fortunately the bloke next to me had a similar rifle and was able to give me a brief rundown as I arrived on the mound and set up my gear with two minutes left until it was time to start. Just when I thought I had things under control it became apparent that an essential ingredient was missing; ammunition! To cut a long story short it was a different rifle, the sling was loose, I had a pulse from hell, and I was more than satisfied to get up off the mound with a 49 for my first individual shoot.

The rest of the meeting ticked along more or less normally, with the occasional day of sightseeing. There were also many opportunities to get dressed up and mingle with other teams, whilst boosting badge collections at the regular receptions.

The tour provided a good opportunity to push your skill to the limit in trying to cope with such concentrated shooting, a different environment, unfamiliar procedures and conduct, tough conditions, different ranges, targets and ammunition. I can only speak for myself, but I am quite sure that the other team members will be pleasantly surprised when they begin to shoot in Australia: no more Bisley style; nobody to wait for, no situations with every flag pointing in a different direction (a direction which is randomly swinging through 180 degrees between shots), no pressure, and no extraction problems. What was an English 47 is easily an Australian 50.

I'm not completely sure how you would measure the success of a tour, but if it's the amount of fun, amusement, and experience you have gained then this was

certainly a successful tour. It was my honour to participate in a competition of such size, at such a unique time, and alongside the world's most skilled shooters.

A study of the English Motorway System

by John , TAS

The morning of 21 July started early as our first destination was Heathrow Airport where we had to drop Mr Rose so he could catch his flight back to Australia. Mr Rose drove up the M25 and somehow managed to find his way to Terminal 3 where we said farewell, and then Mrs Larsson somehow managed to find her way back to the M25 and continue in the right direction north to the M11 exit which took us to Cambridge. We were travelling in a single van with Mrs Stening and Mrs Larsson ing driving and navigating.

Although the drive was quite long, Cambridge was well worth it. The University is centred on a number of old colleges, hundreds of years old, the most famous being King's College. The older section of the town is within a ring road, with the newer colleges and houses outside this area.

We went to the 'backs' on the River Cam and looked over the meadow to King's famous chapel, saw people punting on the river and then walked into the main street.

Tourism was obviously a big feature of the town's commerce as there were souvenir shops and merchandise everywhere. Nevertheless the overall impression was very grand.

We travelled back down the M11 to Duxford, a famous World War II fighter field which is now part of the Imperial War Museum, housing a vast collection of military and civilian aircraft in several hangars. The Museum's collection of tanks and trucks is displayed there as well.

The exhibit which interested me most was the first Concorde to be built, a test aircraft used in the development of the world's first supersonic passenger aircraft back in the late 1960s. Visitors were able to walk through the aircraft and a volunteer guide was able to answer questions and relate a great deal of information about its history and development.

Little did we know that the Concorde was about to make headlines so soon after we left England. Returning to Bisley we reflected on how enjoyable the day had been. Indeed throughout the tour, our sightseeing to many places was a very interesting and great experience.

Australian slouches gain international acclaim

by Justin , SHS

Bronze Bar: Admiral Hutton

Shooting is always a difficult sport to master, whether you are young or old, a nugget or lanky, everyone is on equal terms. Equal, that is, until you place experience into the equation.

Now, everyone knows that cadets are not your average shooters; they are different; and during the tour they were definitely different. One of the most

frustrating aspects about being different in Bisley was that the cadets had to shoot with the British cadet rifle, rather than their own stainless-steel barrelled target rifles.

It would be fair to say that by the end of the teams events the cadets were almost as familiar with this new type of rifle as with their own, and that their cadet uniforms were becoming better known around the place than their schools team uniform. All the struggles aside, all the discomforts put away, the cadets could bring home one major piece of education from the military side of the tour, which is that slouch hats are a definite form of easy fundraising! With offers of £40 to £60, even to the level where liquor was offered as a form of trade, the cadets were certainly finding it hard to... anyway.

The moral of this story is that a visit to the local disposal store could be well worth your while before departing on your next trip to that cold, wet and windy place they call England!

Reflections

By Victor , SHS

The 2000 tour was a great event for all concerned. For some it was their first trip to England, for others their first trip overseas. It provided a great opportunity to mix with shooters from others schools and from around the world. I remember a Kenyan saying how he thought that it was remarkable that 7.62 mm could bring people together from all over the world. There isn't a shooting event in Australia which even comes close to matching the number of nations represented let alone the number of competitors.

I am glad to say that I learnt to read the conditions by the end of the meeting when I coached one of the Schools Teams in the Under 21 match, coaching Justin and Jessica to the top scores of the Team. The conditions were tricky as the wind was flicking around, the mirage constantly coming and going with the light continually changing, or maybe I'm just trying to talk myself up. Many will say the latter is true.

Away from shooting, there were many social functions. Some events were formal such as the Bullet Ball and various other receptions while other events were rather casual such as the Universities BBQ and Millennium Concert and Fireworks. Talking to the locals provided a chance to really get into the English psyche. After overcoming the language barrier, I discovered that they were quite laid back and really enjoyed a drink.

We also managed to get some sightseeing done. We saw London on one of those famous red sightseeing buses. I was taken aback by the history of the place. It was over 1,000 years old which makes Australia seem rather juvenile in comparison. Visiting places like White Tower, Hampton Court and Bath really made me wish that I had paid attention in history class.

Life on the range was a new experience. Living in barrack-style accommodation with twenty other blokes, no privacy and having to clean up after ourselves provided a large hurdle. We heard some stories from the TAS guys about their boarding school habits which



left the city slickers worried. At times Mr Fittler compared the place to a pigsty.

Bisley Camp was like a little town with the clubhouses lined up along narrow roads amidst the trees and grassed areas. There were plenty of places to go to relax and mingle, especially after a long day. The clubhouses were nothing like the clubhouses at Malabar.

There were many standout events which happened on tour. Some will never be spoken of again, whereas others will never be forgotten. These include experiencing the culinary delights the Jamaicans had to offer in their concoction they called V-bull and for those who went, who can forget our trip to, and especially from, Windsor. On the tour, we met a lot of interesting people. The memories were great but some of the photos were even better.

Accounts of a first-time air traveller

by Joshua , SHS

Bronze Bar: Duke of Cambridge, Times.

Our Thai Airways flight left at 3.00 pm but because we were taking the rifles through we needed to check in early, at 11.30 am. We had a group check-in so a special counter was opened for us. The adults collected everybody's passport and got our boarding passes. After a quick lecture on the importance of not losing our boarding passes we put name and destination tags on our luggage and then weighed it in.

Lugging overfilled coat bags, scope boxes and various other pieces of hand luggage we moved to the departure gate. There were hugs and kisses all round as people said goodbye to their families who had come to see them off. It wasn't until we had passed through the security checkpoint that I realised that I was about to catch my very first plane. Everyone spread out as people headed for duty free shops to collect their purchases, and they spent their last few Australian dollars on some of the ridiculously expensive food and drink available in the departure lounge.

We lounged around the departure area until we were called to board. With everyone trying to cram their hand luggage into the overhead lockers at once, my first view of the plane was a large number of bags, els and bodies. Once everyone had settled in for the first 9 hour leg of the trip, I took the opportunity to have a look around. The plane was a lot like a large coach, the same style seats and the same plastic interior.

After the seatbelt lights had been turned off the air hostesses began to hand out menus and headphones. The inflight magazine had a listing of all the music that was on the different channels. There was a lot of country and classical music as well as some Thai music and a selection of popular modern music - a very small selection. My only memory of airplane food during the flight over is that I shouldn't have asked for the curry.

In Bangkok the first thing that hit you was literally the air. It was solid. Then, as you walked out into the airport there was the smell - exotic. We spent about three hours in Bangkok, waiting around watching CNN news or just chatting.

Once we had boarded the plane and taken off it was the same procedure as on the Sydney-Bangkok leg - menus, headphones. It was exactly the same music and some unknown classics that kept us entertained during the flight to London, there may have been a good movie but most people were probably asleep, exhausted after a 9 hour flight and not looking forward to arriving to a morning which should be a night.

Breakfast was served just before we landed in London, sausage and egg or crepes. After breakfast we filled out our customs information forms. Just before we landed the plane was sprayed with insecticide to stop any insects being brought into England. We collected our baggage and went through Customs. Heathrow seemed to be a lot like home - if you ignored the strong English accents everywhere. Once we had all grouped up, the rifles had made their way through Customs, and we had located our coach, we loaded our bags in and settled down for a nice quiet trip to Bisley Camp.

What an experience

by Daniel

Bronze Bar: Corporation, Prince of Wales, Times, Wimbledon TR, Young Riflemens Agg. NRA Tankard: Corporation.

What an experience! There could be no better way to gain experience in this sport of ours other than through exposure to highly competitive events such as Bisley and the Millennium Meeting. It is through such events that one truly comes to understand the complexities and discipline required to succeed in our sport, and this translates to life.

Throughout the tour a competitive and team-orientated mindset was held by all, resulting in some fine shooting by my fellow team members. It would be my hope that in the future a team modelled on this one may be able to emulate what this team has achieved.

The last word...

by Aaron Govendir (Coach)

Even without having direct experience I would equate my time at Bisley with a woman who's just had a baby. When you ask each of us if we'd do it again the immediate answer has to be 'No'. But after a short time the memory of the blood, sweat and tears recedes and we begin looking forward to the next time.

My first shock was at the airport with the realisation that years of planning, fundraising and training had brought together a disparate group and, having waved goodbye to three previous tours by Sydney High teams, I was actually going on this one. The second shock was seeing how much luggage we had to get onto the plane.

We spent the first two days in London. I don't know about the others but it was an eye-opener for me as it was my first time there. We did all the touristy things; they've reported elsewhere in this Brochure so I won't bore you. But watching the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace was important for us all to experience because there were units from the Australian Army and Navy mounting guard as part of our Centenary of Federation celebrations. We were witnessing history happening

Those first days were very hot and humid - not my favourite kind of weather. Then it rained. Despite this the kids still had to compete and all the dormitories looked like a refugee village with damp clothes, shooting jackets and mats strung all over the place. Most of the time we all did our own handwashing but a couple of times Katina and I took loads of heavy gear to a laundrette - an expensive exercise - taking most of a day to wash and dry. But, then, that's what we were there for - to look after the kids so that they could concentrate on shooting. When the kids weren't shooting we took them sightseeing. On one evening the British Schools Team took us and the Canadian Schools Team ling. It was great to see the three groups of kids interacting - I'm sure a few friendships were made that will continue via e-mail.

Despite the fact that my t-shirt had "coach" on it I told the Poms that this was because the NRA didn't recognise "Kelpie" as an official title. Listening to the kids' conversations reinforced the realisation that they are way past the point that I'm able to offer any shooting advice. Listening to them discussing sizes of foresight rings at different ranges, coping with the frequent and subtle wind changes, reading the mirage, how many clicks up down, left right when adjusting the rear sights... way, way beyond me.

As expected, the most bored person at Bisley was the full-time ambulance officer - simply said, the sport is safe.

For me also, being in England was an education!!! I noticed lots of things that were different from home - not worse or better - just different. The food in England was an eye opener (after the weather) as *everything* seems to come with chips.

With few exceptions it would be fair to say that they don't know about air conditioning (I hate the heat). The windows in the trains are tiny, those in the Underground are non-existent - the only ventilation is from tiny openings in the side and when the carriage doors open. Having said that the public transport is quite magnificent and easy to navigate after a short practice.

There are no awnings over the shops to protect you from the weather. Sydney streets are very narrow but London's seem even more so and being so close to the cars whizzing by makes the traffic seem chaotic.

To my eyes London was very flat with very few tall buildings to puncture the skyline. Oh yes - I noticed only three colours in England; mostly it's green - the other two colours are grey. I also noticed that many of their terrace-like blocks of units are called "mansions" or "gardens" but are actually neither. But the most important "lesson" I learnt? I know that *many* Brits migrated to Australia just after the War - after experiencing their summer weather (which is like a Sydney winter) I'm surprised they didn't *all* migrate.

Which brings me back to my first paragraph - despite my 'complaints' I'm really looking forward to the blood, sweat and tears we'll expend raising funds for the next tour. But most of all, I'm anxious to return to the British Commonwealth Rifle Club (affectionately dubbed the Colonial Outpost) to sit in the shade of the gum tree we planted to commemorate the Team's visit.