

The Shackleton Scholarship Fund - Shackleton Scholar's Report 2008

National Rifle Association Imperial Meeting - Bisley 2008

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The 139th Imperial Meeting took place at Bisley shooting range from 17 to 26 July 2008 and as usual attracted over 1,000 competitors of all standards and abilities from all over the world.

This year the Falkland Islands Rifle Club were able to send four members to take part in this prestigious event and I was fortunate enough to receive funding from the SSF in respect of all costs associated with this. Although I have only been shooting for two Austral Summers the request to SSF to attend this meeting was on the basis that I would gain considerable experience and confidence boost by competing against seasoned shooters of exceptionally high standards.

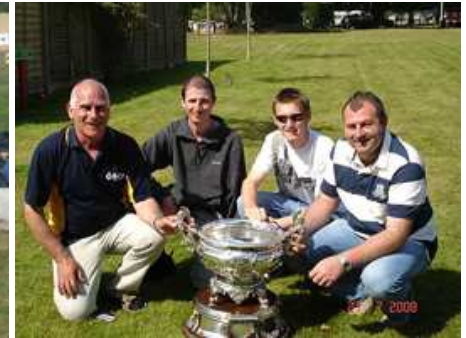
A Sunday attendance of perhaps 8-10 competitors in the Falklands for a competition is somewhat overshadowed when you are lined up on a shooting mound at Bisley with 300+ people. Fortunately first time attendees are given help, encouragement and guidance by fellow competitors and the sheer volume of participant's means that strict rules, regulations and etiquette have to be observed in this highly competitive and physically and mentally challenging sport. The competitions at the Imperial Meeting are shot over a ten day period which means you could be shooting at 8am and perhaps not finish the day until 8pm, with the weather playing an important role as you are expected to shoot rain or shine.



Falkland Islands Rifle Club members and the Junior Kolapore Cup



Mark taking aim, at Bisley shooting range



Falkland Islands Rifle Club members and the Nobel Cup

The Falklands team entered approximately 18 events individually and 4 team events. Although individually I did not win any prizes as a team we managed to win the Junior Kolapore Cup by beating 4 other countries, whose populations by far exceeds that of the Falklands, and the Nobel Cup which was the aggregate of the scores of three of the team shoots. The Junior Kolapore Cup was last won by the Falklands in 1957.

Savouring the atmosphere and receiving expert coaching, and encouragement from many different sources, gave me a tremendous confidence boost and it helped me raise my own personal standards by achieving better overall results across all ranges. Initially I may have been nervous about not wanting to let our team down however I believe that I acquitted myself particularly well and played a significant role in aiding the Falklands team win the two cups referred to above.

I would like to thank the SSF for giving me the opportunity to attend this competition as I feel I have learned so much from it and I strongly recommend that given the chance any shooter should participate at Bisley at least once as the experience is amazing. Our attendance, and winning, at these events is also an excellent PR exercise for the Falklands and proves that we can compete on almost equal terms against countries considerably larger than our own.

I hope that my achievements may encourage other young members of the community to take up sports such as rifle shooting and I would actively help in their development as it would be nice to think that organisations such as the Rifle Club will continue for years to come.