

- The Single Shot Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Club of Great Britain -

www.ssbpcrc.co.uk

Affiliated to the N.R.A. – No. 1285

BLACK THUNDER

The Official Newsletter

No. 3 November 2002

The end of the first year ... well almost

The first year is almost over and we can honestly say that we've got ourselves one hell of a good little club.

In March we had the first of the two Silhouette matches. It was on this day that the "personality" of the Club was formed. In May it just got better! Seven of us lined up in turn for the first of the Buffalo shoots and realised, unanimously, just how much fun could be had from shooting these big black powder rifles.

And it's not just the shooting ... talk about bullets, powders, lubes and all the other stuff that we shooters get excited about, makes for a good day on the range.

At the end of July came the biggest test for rifle and rifleman ... the Creedmoor Cup. A thousand yards of sheer skill! (some would say luck).

A week later, the second Buffalo match took place and the aggregate worked out to give an overall winner (by 1 point) in the shape of Paul "Jacko" Jackson with his Pedersoli .40-65.

In September the Silhouette Trophy was won by Phil Morgan with an even narrower margin! After tying with Clive Taylor on equal points over the two matches, the winner had to be decided on the shortest shooting time.

www.ssbpcrc.co.uk has had hits from all over the world and our shooting buddies in America are praising what we're doing over here.

Match Reports

THE CREEDMOOR CUP



The Creedmoor Cup .. worthy of any trophy cabinet. The cup is competed for annually at 1000 yards in a match which captures the spirit of the original International Creedmoor matches of the 19th Century. Coincidentally, the XVII th. Commonwealth Games were being held at the same time and Bisley was buzzing with shooters from

all over the world. Some of the visitors showed a keen interest in what we were doing. It's always good to spread the word.

The competition on Stickledown range began on an



Len Jackson spots for Roger Andrews during the afternoon stage of the match. A tricky wind blowing from 7 o'clock made a spotter very welcome in trying to find the target.

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overcast morning. A slight 8 o'clock cross wind was blowing which made finding the target a bit tricky for those who either hadn't shot the distance before or who were using new rifles for which sight settings hadn't yet been recorded. Having a friendly spotter by your side for those first few sighters took the frustration out of it.

The course of fire for both morning and afternoon is unlimited sighters and 20 scoring shots, all within 30 minutes. Maximum possible score is 200.

The afternoon was definitely sunburn weather. The cross wind was stronger and variable from 7 o'clock but having already got sight settings worked out, we just settled down to enjoy the challenge. Roger Andrews scored 9 centres and 22 further hits on the target with his .45-90 Shiloh to win with a score of 67. The following photographs should give you a flavour of the match ... in case you missed it!



Roger Andrews gets to grips with the wind on Stickledown. Clive Taylor could only sit and watch. Earlier, one of his 3¼" cases separated and jammed so solid in his barrel that even Fultons, the resident Bisley gunsmith, couldn't shift it!



Guy Milchem looks on as Alan Stevens prepares to do battle. The flags in the background are part of the Commonwealth Games shooting events which happened to coincide with the Creedmoor shoot.



Phil Morgan presenting the Creedmoor Cup to Roger Andrews for some pretty impressive shooting. Another 3 points and the tables would have been turned. Watch out next year Roger!



Len Jackson seems to be sharing a joke while Alan Stevens takes aim with his Browning Hi Wall. Len is shooting a Pedersoli Quigley in .45-90. Don't know the make and model of his magic carpet!

Creedmoor Results

Shooter	AM	PM	Total	Place
Andrews	50(8)	17(1)	67	1st
Morgan	32(4)	33(5)	65	2nd
Milchem	20(2)	20(2)	40	3rd
L. Jackson	9(1)	26(4)	35	4th
Stevens	1	8(1)	9	5th
Taylor	0	0	0	6th

Figure in brackets indicates number of 36" x 36" centres scoring 5 points

August Buffalo Shoot



The Buffalo Trophy in all its glory. Sponsored by Geoff Hoden, this is truly a prize worth winning.

The second of the Buffalo shoots took place at Bisley on 3 August. As with the last Buff shoot back in May, the weather was unpredictable to say the least! The sun was out for the 200 yard distance in the morning but after lunch it rained for the first 3 or 4 details of the 600 yard stage. To make shooting a little more comfortable, the Club "roof" was erected over the firing point. Despite looking more like a Bedouin's tent, everyone took advantage of it! The Mark II version is already in the production stage for whatever next year's weather cares to throw at us.

The afternoon proved to be a hard fought competition, although the other competitors were oblivious to just how tight it was. "Jacko" Jackson and



Nick Steadman taking full advantage of the Club "roof" during his 600 yard detail.



A headless Jacko "watches" as Phil Morgan waits for the target to drop for scoring. The quality of NRA markers has been good and all shots marked or called with very little delay. This is critical for our timed matches. If any of you are reading this, well done.

Phil Morgan were battling for the trophy and it literally came down to the last shot of the day! Jacko finished with a 3, Phil with a 2, giving Jacko a match score of 149 to Phil's 157 but an overall aggregate score of 299 to 298! Now that's what you call a close contest. Well done Jacko ... but don't think you're getting away with it that easy next year my little buffalo runner friend!

Simon "Sid" Bennion put up the surprise of the day - he missed a shot! It's been noted down in the diary.

Everyone had a great day, even Len Jackson and his tumbling bullets (sounds like a vaudeville act). Now that you know what's causing it Len, let's have no more whistling-down-the-range, even though they do make a great sound.



Clive Ed, still suffering from the after effects of splitcasitis, demonstrates the skilful art of being a cool dude AND meticulous score keeper. [I'm sure this guy is related to Buffalo Bill Cody! - Ed.]



Geoff Hoden takes aim with his Shiloh Sharps Long Range Express in .45-70 (2.1"). John Brocklehurst watches them go in through the spotting scope while Clive Taylor contemplates what a good life this is.

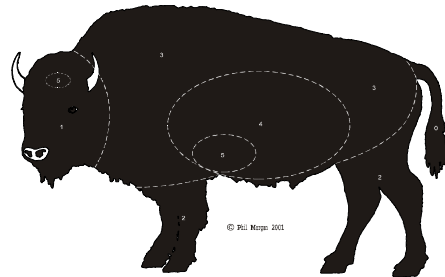


An aft view of John Brocklehurst, peering through the smoke and hoping that the marker goes into the 5 zone. John's rifle is a Pedersoli .45-70 (2.1") which is now fitted with a high quality Rex Holbrook long range rear tang sight.



Geoff Hoden, sponsor of the Buffalo Trophy, presents Paul "Jacko" Jackson with his prize. As winner of the aggregate, Jacko (Staffordshire's answer to Frank H. Mayer) gets to keep the trophy until the next Buffalo shoot in 2003 and has the honour of being the first winner to have his name engraved on it.

If we have as much fun shooting these matches next year as we've had this year, we've got a lot to look forward to. The friendship and good humour which has been demonstrated on and off the range has been fantastic!



The Buff ... not normally seen this close up. At 200 yards it's a great sight, at 600 it's the ultimate challenge, especially in the rain.

Buffalo Results

The results for the Buffalo shoot on 3rd August were as follows. Maximum possible score was 200.

Shooter	200	600	Total	Place
Morgan	90	67	157	1st
P. Jackson	95	54	149	2nd
Bennion	84	58	142	3rd
Hoden	72	50	122	4th
Steadman	75	35	110	5th
Brocklehurst	72	27	99	6th
L. Jackson	80	10	90	7th

Buffalo Trophy - Aggregate Scores

Shooter	#1	#2	Total	Place
P. Jackson	150	149	299	1st
Morgan	141	157	298	2nd
Bennion	138	142	280	3rd

Autumn Silhouette Shoot



The Silhouette Trophy ... sponsored by Dale Murphy CMS Antiques and awarded to the shooter with the highest aggregate score of the Spring and Autumn Silhouette Shoots.

This was the one the “original four” had been waiting six months to compete in. And, judging by the turn out on that bright and calm Saturday, it had fired the imagination of a few others. So much so, that we had to hire another target on Bisley’s Century range.

Unfortunately, Jacko Jackson couldn’t make the shoot, so we were down to eleven men. The atmosphere was electrifying as the chickens, which looked more like sparrows, were raised 300 yards away for the start of the match. For the time being, because we are restricted to a single target line, we’ll continue to shoot from two distances only, 300 and



Shootin’ the breeze ... Pat Farey looks happy as he contemplates the excitement to come but can’t believe those chickens look so small from 300 yards. He later went on to win the Wounded Willie Award.

500 yards. In the States, each animal is shot at different distances .. 200m, 300m, 385m and 500m. With the exception of the chicken, the pig, turkey and ram are proportionally scaled to match American BPCR Silhouette sizes. The chicken which is only 12” high, is normally shot off hand at 200m. Because we have to shoot the chicken over crossed sticks, we’ve kept to the original size to try to maintain the challenge.

Clive Taylor and Roger Andrews shot first, with Clive taking a total of seven chickens to win the coveted High Chicken award. Roger scored a hit with his very first sighter then decided the strain was too much for the next five shots! He made up for it on his next detail however, when he zapped nine pigs out of ten.



Geoff Hoden helps Guy Milchem to get onto the javelina.



Looking down the line ... Guy Milchem sights on a ram, Nick Steadman prepares for his detail and Pat Farey waits for his hit to be recorded. The woods in the distance separate Bisley’s Century range from Short Siberia range.

We welcomed four new members to the Club, Frank Pfeil, Richie James, Perry Goodacre and Pat Farey, editor of Gun Mart magazine. Pat and Richie have both shared a firing line with some of us in the past and it’s good to have them join us. Pat needs just one or two more sessions of brainwashing to realise that **black is best!** Yes, it can be dirty but it does come off if you spit on your hands and wipe it on

(Continued on page 10)

Case separation ... who needs it!

CLIVE TAYLOR REPORTS ON WHAT'S BEEN PLAGUEING HIM THIS YEAR

In the last edition of this worthy tome, there was a report on the May Buffalo Shoot. Those of you that read it will have seen that it was not the happiest day in my life. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy our shoots, in fact they're as much fun as you can legally have and still keep your clothes on! No, I had had some bizarre and unhappy experiences with my cases - *my very expensive cases!*

What was happening was that cases (6 total for the day) were splitting around the case half way down and the front half was disappearing down the barrel (That's how I know I have a loooooong throat - I have perfect brass chamber casts!).

It didn't take much to clear the blockage (except at the recent Creedmoor!). Simply dropping an unwrapped PP bullet down the barrel from the muzzle and belting it with the cleaning rod. Still the time lost and aggravation was not conducive to good shooting in a timed event (I was shooting like an idiot anyway so it didn't make much difference to the scores).

Anyway, at £3 a case I certainly didn't want this to be a regular occurrence so it was on with the thinking cap! At the same time I posted a request for comments on Shooters, to see if the predominantly American shooters on there could shed any light on my problems.

Winding back this story a few months it's worth now introducing my loading technique(s).

For years I had shot "dirty" i.e. I'd worked up a load which precluded the need for "blow tubing" or wiping between shots. Now I have nothing against these techniques. There are way too many better shooters than I using "blow tubes" but it always seemed alien to *my* vision of the old Buffalo Runners. The thought of some hairy-arsed buff runner, sitting out on the prairie, hyperventilating through a tube into the breech just didn't seem likely. I know they peed down the barrel but that was for different reasons! Anyway my old partner in crime, Dale Murphy, recently picked up a book about Sharps rifles that included a list of what was supplied when buying a new Sharps in the last quarter of the 19th. Century - *a bloody blow tube*

was included. (Sound of lovingly held theory nose-diving into the ground!!!!)

Making and loading a grease cookie are steps that "complicate" an already lengthy loading process. So with Dale's recent bit of info and the fact I was shooting "target" BPCR more frequently plus there is plenty of time to wipe between shots I thought, hell, when in Rome.....(I still couldn't bring myself to blow-tube!)

So I started to work up a load that didn't use a grease cookie. Now a 3.25" case is great as you can *never* be capacity challenged. The down side is that at times there's a lot of it to fill! I didn't want to change my powder stack or bullet seating depth as these had taken a long time to arrive at so I needed to find something the right thickness to fill the space vacated by the grease cookie. A bit of hunting around and I found cork strip used with parquet flooring which was the exact thickness needed. A plus (for my conscience) was that cork was used for wadding/filler in the 19th. C. So here I was with my new load - effectively the same as before - ***Oh! How wrong can a single person be!***

My first outing with the load was a 1000 yarder with the HBSA. What a load! Couldn't seem to miss the target..... Think I could have shot in the opposite direction and still come up with at least a 4! Cloud 9 was not even in it! Unfortunately in all of this euphoria I failed to notice a problem with the cases. When I got home and started to clean them I found that every case had stretched. Not just a few thou' - we're talking mm+ here. They looked like mini bottle-necks! The cases, whilst not new, had never shown any desire to stretch previously so, OK, what am I doing differently? Ah! I'm wiping between shots now and the patch is wetted in my mouth - the breech must be being left damp sufficiently to reduce friction hence the stretch. That's it! Problem solved! So until I can get a special cleaning rod with a slot for a clean patch 34" back from the jag (think about it!) I'll wipe the breech with a patch on a pistol rod.

The next shoot was our Silhouette and there was no doubt, this load was a definite tack driver - *10 pigs cannot be wrong!* ***But***, I still had case stretch and on the chicken run a case separation. OK, I obviously hadn't dried the breech properly and perhaps I was drooling too much onto the patch. (Drooling is a congenital problem - doh! Bart!). So let's see what happens at the next shoot. Unfortunately, with the pressure of work, the next shoot was the Buffalo and not some experimental days at Wedgnock as originally intended.

And we all know what happened there!

Combined wisdom within the Club and the Net felt that if the cases hadn't gone past their sell-by date then it was a damp breech - certainly insufficient friction between the case and breech wall.

Enter stage right one certain Lee Shaver. A man I am proud to call friend. For those of you who don't know of him, Lee is a well respected gunsmith (see link from our web site), *vastly* experienced in BPCR (proverbial - he's forgotten more than I'll ever know), sits on various US NRA Councils, guiding light in the World Creedmoor Association and, on top of all this, is one extremely nice fellah. Definitely one of the good guys.

I'd mentioned these problems to him and he'd also seen my plea for help on Shooters. As it happened he'd recently written an article for "Single Shot Exchange" on case separation (did I mention he's also a regular article contributor to that excellent publication?). He sent me a copy of the article and it was a case of the proverbial !ping! as the light bulb of realisation went on.

Looking at the problem from a different angle there was a distinct possibility that my case separation was being caused not by a **reduced** friction between the case and breech but an **increased** friction between the case and the internal components. To quote an old Midlands adage - same meat but different gravy.



The bottom half of the case three weeks after separation. Didn't see the point in cleaning it!

So what new component could be increasing the friction inside the case and literally gripping it strongly enough to rip the sucker in half! I'd changed my wads from wax card to LDPE but it seemed hard to believe that a total of 0.09" worth of material could exert such grip. So *it had* to be the cork! The cork *had* to be bumping up in the case and gripping

it sufficiently to rupture the case! Could I change its friction capabilities?

Believe it or not, the obvious was not obvious to me. This is where chatting amongst our members helps..... I was at Wedgnock the following week chatting to Nick Steadman and a comment he made, can't even remember what it was (sorry Nick) illuminated that bulb above my head again. That night I nuked my grease cookie mix and let some cork wads soak in it for a while. Letting them stand on a plate for a while allowed any excess to run off.

I loaded up 10 rounds using these lubed wads. The following lunch time I nipped down to Wedgnock from

the office - yes! I live and work a mile from Wedgnock - jealous eh?

I first put an old round down to act as a base-line and sure enough - a bottle-necked 3.25" case. Then the 10 rounds with the lubed wad and, ecstasy!, not a hint of stretch..... Calming down a bit I put one more "old" round down and there was the stretch again.

Moral of this story? Don't be afraid to ask! In general we shooters are a friendly bunch and are more than willing to help out a colleague who's in trouble. There's always somebody out there who knows more than you, who's had more or different experiences than you.

And in my case, I'm still thanking my lucky stars to be counting Lee and Nick amongst my circle of friends.

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Fun shoot at Wedgnock Saturday 30 November

A fun shoot has been arranged for Saturday 30th November at Wedgnock ranges just outside Warwick. The ranges are up to International standard and consist of 100m, 50m and 25m all with covered firing points.

Range fees are £6 (MLAGB members) or £7 with a £1 entry for each "mystery" fun shoot you enter, just to cover the prizes!! Shooting will be at 100m prone, with or without cross sticks.

Wedgnock is the home range of the Muzzle Loaders Association of Great Britain and is located about 5 minutes from Junction 15 of the M40. Take the A46 towards Coventry for one junction. Turn right towards Warwick, past the IBM building on the left. Left at next roundabout, along Wedgnock Lane. Opposite Volvo (on the right), take steep narrow road sign-posted to Adventure Sports. The range is next to it.



The 100m range at Wedgnock has 50 firing points, all under cover.

More reading and viewing matter

To continue our section on BPCR related material, listed below are some more books and a video which I certainly enjoyed. If anyone has their own particular favourite which you think we'd like to read or look at, please let me know and I'll include it in the next issue.

There seems to be a definite lack of good BPCR videos to watch and I for one would really like to hear of any that are available—Ed.

Here's the list:-

- THE BUFFALO HARVEST by Frank Mayer and Charles Roth
- THE BREECH-LOADING SINGLE SHOT RIFLE by Major Ned Roberts and Kenneth Waters ... Published by Wolfe
- SHARPS RIFLE –THE GUN THAT SHAPED AMERICAN DESTINY by Martin Rywell
- CAST BULLETS FOR THE BLACK POWDER CARTRIDGE RIFLE by Paul Matthews .. Published by Wolfe
- BLACK POWDER CARTRIDGE SILHOUETTE (VIDEO) - BASIC INFORMATION AND SHOOTING TIPS FROM THE CHAMPIONS by Dixie Gun Works Inc.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Shortly after sending out some complementary copies of Black Thunder to various people, I received the following letter from shooting author Paul Matthews:-

Phil:

Thanks very much for the complementary copy of your newsletter and all the kind words you said about my books. I am glad you got some good out of them. You have to understand that at the time I wrote them .. and even today .. I was in a learning process, and if I was to write the same books today, there are some things that would be said differently and some things that wouldn't be said at all.

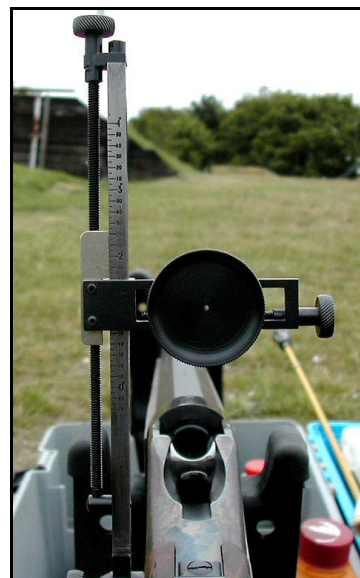
I am glad to see that you are organizing a nationwide group of black powder cartridge rifle shooters. I think

that's great. It is only through organization that you will be able to continue such a sport. In fact, I am not certain just how long it will remain a sport for us over here. With all the hype about terrorism, politicians don't like to see common people have such things as black powder on hand. They would rather see us play marbles!

I will let you go now, but will see if sometime in the future I can write something for one of your newsletters. Keep up the good work!

Good shooting
Paul A. Matthews

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Original Reloading Tools for Single Shot Rifles

Photographs and story by Dale Murphy

I have only recently got the bug for, and started to really appreciate, the accessories that go with the single shot rifles of the late 19th century. Being “in the trade” *and* being totally convinced that the only rifle a man needs is a Sharps does help a mite!

I, like most of you I assume, started reloading and still reload, using the gadgets and implements of “now”, rather than “then”, and have made them work for single shot rifles, 3 die sets, auto primers, bench mounted presses, electric lead pots etc., etc., and there is nothing wrong with that! They do the job well, and it's easy to blame the tool when all goes completely wrong on the firing line! As I said previously, I am in the trade, and when I get the chance, obtain and maybe “jiggle with”, the odd original s/shot rifle. I would love to not have to resell them, but that is not and probably never will be the case!

I decided recently, after managing to obtain a few original loading tools from the U.S., to see how they compared in actual use, to all the modern goodies.



One tool obtained was in 44/40 Winchester and was stamped with the manufacturers name and address - IDEAL MFG CO NEWHAVEN CT USA - dated 1884. It is nickel finished and in excellent condition (pic). It comprises a mould and sprue cutter, sizing die, re priming rod, and bullet seating die! All in one tool the size of a large pair of pliers!

Obviously this is not for a single shot rifle, and would most likely have been used for any lever action and revolver chambered for this very popular cartridge, but is entirely typical of what was available. It is compact, easy to use and turns out 100% perfect ammo every time!

Once I had obtained this and saw what it could do I was determined to get one I could try in a s/shot rifle, preferably in my 110 Sharps. Unfortunately any tool or mould associated with Sharps, or made by them,

go for *SERIOUS* money.

Luckily Winchester and Ideal made all the popular Sharps calibre tools. Although still not cheap they're much easier to find. I eventually located a tool made by Winchester and marked - PAT SEPT 14 1880, 45/90, WINCHESTER REP ARMS CO NEW HAVEN CONN USA -



This tool differs from the Ideal tool, being blued and does not have the bullet mould on the end. It looked to be in excellent condition. It has a repriming rod and adjustable neck size seating die and, although marked 45/90, it will easily accommodate a 2 th. case! So it is obviously designed to take most lengths of straight 45 case and NOT the tapered WIN 45/90. The die body unscrews to the desired length and is then locked off with a knurled nut, very simple and very effective. Again the size is no bigger than a pair of pliers. I always use paper patch bullets in my 110 and my regime for reloading with my “modern” tools was as follows - reprime cases with autoprime tool, neck resize cases in bench mounted press, weigh powder, drop tube through bench mounted tube, seat wad lube etc., and hand seat bullet.

Obviously a lot of this has remained the same, however when I tried it with the original tool it went like this - hold tool in left hand, drop cases one at a time into tool, close tool (which reprimed them), open tool, drop tube powder etc, drop bullet into tool, followed by full case, close tool, open tool, round loaded! No fiddling just quick, easy and perfect every time!

Now I am not trying to prove any points by this! Just that now I actually enjoy reloading, and I have gained an insight into what it must have been like reloading “on the plains” as it were, and they certainly were not having to make do with inferior loading techniques!

I am awaiting arrival of a 50/70 reloading tool and hope to try that in an original SHARPS model 1869 which we have just acquired Stateside. I would really like to work up a long range 50 cal rifle in the future, time permitting. Recently, I have stopped weighing and drop-tubing powder and am now using an original powder measure, but that is another story. (Mould is original 45 cal p/patch, casting 480 gn bullet, made by WINCHESTER).

(Continued from page 5)

your jeans! You know it's only a matter of time before you are hooked ... don't fight it, it only makes it worse!

Alan Stevens, who recently had an RHO telescope fitted to his Shiloh Sharps decided that it was more



Clive Taylor unleashes the full power of his mighty weapon as he takes out another ram from 500 yards. Guy Milchem takes a look to see the strike.

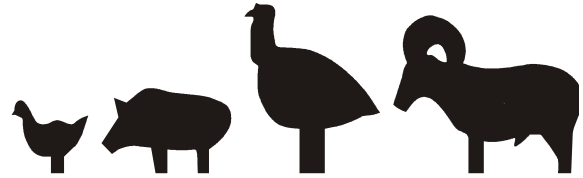
fun to shoot in a world of his own than to compete for the match on equal ground. If anyone else fancies joining him next year, we'll introduce a separate class for 'scoped rifles. Alan's rifle is pictured on p.12.

I think it's fair to say that everyone had a good day. I know I did!



The moment of truth. Clive Taylor presents the Silhouette Trophy to Phil Morgan, this year's winner. It could so easily have gone the other way, with both men tying for first place. The outcome was finally decided on the shortest shooting time. Not the best way to win a trophy but come home with Daddy anyway!

Silhouette Results



The results for the Silhouette shoot on 28th September were as follows. Maximum possible score was 40.

Shooter	C	P	T	R	Total	Class
Morgan	4	10	7	9	30	Master
Andrews	4	9	7	6	26	AAA
Taylor*	7*	8	3	4	22	AAA
Steadman	5	6	5	4	20	AA
Milchem	2	8	2	6	18	AA
Hoden	1	5	4	3	13	A
Farey	0	6	2	2	10	A
James	1	4	1	4	10	A
Goodacre	4	4	0	0	8	B
Pfeil	2	3	0	0	5	B
Stevens ('scope)	4	7	2	5	18	

* Clive Taylor won the High Chicken award for the second time running.

Silhouette Trophy - Aggregate Scores

Shooter	#1	#2	Total	Place
Morgan	15	30	45*	1st
Taylor	23	22	45*	2nd
Steadman	12	20	32	3rd
Hoden	17	13	30	4th

* In the event of a tie, 1st place is awarded to the shooter with the fastest time.

The following article is from The Billings Gazette – 23 June 2002 and reproduced with the author's kind permission.

Montana Outdoors: In the beginning, there was a movie...

by Mark Henckel

It all began when Forsyth rancher Al Lee went to the movie house in Miles City a dozen years ago.



Lee and a friend watched the film "Quigley Down Under" which featured actor-portraying-American-cowboy Tom Selleck performing fantastic shooting feats with a Shiloh Sharps rifle as he battled bad guys in Australia.

A so-called "buffalo rifle" aficionado himself, Lee took the seed that was planted by the film back to Forsyth with him.

With a very active shooting group in the Forsyth Rifle and Pistol Club, that seed grew into the Matthew Quigley Buffalo Rifle Match the following year.

That first Quigley match drew just two dozen shooters in 1991.

My, how times have changed.

The annual Father's Day weekend event drew a record 416 shooters to the Lee Ranch, north of Forsyth, last Saturday and Sunday, making it the biggest buffalo rifle event in the country - bigger even than the national championships held at Raton, N.M.

The scene

Why is the Quigley match such a big and growing draw?

Part of the reason can only be described as the scene itself. It's a buffalo rifle match held in traditional buffalo country with a grand view of sagebrush-dotted hills and flats blanketed with the green grasses of June and alive under the blue sweep of a big Montana sky.

Shooters came from 34 states, Canada and Northern Ireland this year to step to the shooting stations located on a half-mile-long firing line in this scene.

Some were in traditional period dress of the late 1800s. Others simply wore their city clothes, or ranch clothes, or their lucky shooting clothes. The format of

the shoot should be a model for ease of operation in sports events elsewhere. Heavy metal targets are set out at six distances ranging from 200 to 800 yards. Each shooter fires eight shots at each target.

Near the targets, there is a CB radio which records the "dings" of lead bullets hitting steel. When the scorer hears the "ding" from a CB at the firing line, it's scored as a hit. A second or more later, that sweet sound of success drifts naturally back to the shooter and spectators. Misses are seen as a cloud of dust on the hillside near the target.

It's a rifle match that spectators can see, and hear, and appreciate as much as the shooters can.

The rifles

At this match, the rifles being used are also almost as much of a draw as the shooting itself. These are classic lever actions and trapdoors, single shots in .40, .45 and .50 caliber that can weigh up to 15 pounds. No rifle scopes are allowed here. Just adjustable open sights in the rear and a bead in front. The longer distances, out to 800 yards, are shot in the sitting position, with the rifle resting on cross-sticks. The 200-yard target is shot in the offhand position - with the shooter standing erect and trying to hold steady.

How accurate can a shooter be with these rifles?

Suffice it to say that Joan Jilka, of Volborg, won the match with 43 hits in 48 shots, edging out Mark Sackett, of Sheridan, Wyo., with 42 hits and Greg Childress, of Broadus, and Ed Schleichardt, of Sheridan, each with 41 hits. Remember, these are at targets clear out to 800 yards.

Part of the draw among these shooters is also to show how well these traditional rifles really do shoot, with cartridges filled with black powder and with cast lead bullets.

While some rifles being used by shooters are fairly old, many are relatively new or even brand new.

So it's also a testament to how well these rifles are being made today by companies like Shiloh Sharps and Pedersoli Sharps, each of which donated a rifle to be drawn for among the competitors in the match. Anthony Devich, of Little Canada, Minn., won the Shiloh Sharps while retired brigadier general Robert Tips, of Tulsa, Okla., was the lucky winner of the Pedersoli Sharps.

The match

Even though Tom Selleck has never been able to attend the match himself, Lee does correspond with the actor about it each year. And he only hopes that someday Selleck will come here himself to see what a great event his movie inspired.

A Selleck photo and autograph are part of the engraving on the Montana-shaped awards plaques that go to the winners of the various classes each year.

And this year, two of the three .45-110 caliber Shiloh Sharps rifles that Selleck used in the movie were on display for the shooters to see, brought there by

Shiloh Sharps with the actor's blessing. The other movie rifle is on display in the national NRA Museum. When you figure that all a shooter pays to participate in the Quigley Match is a \$15 fee...

When you add in that enough proceeds are generated from the event to offer a scholarship to a Forsyth High School graduate each year...

When you look at the local Boy Scouts who are selling breakfasts and lunches as a fund-raiser for their troop...

And when you sample the hospitality and take in the scope and breadth of the beautiful buffalo country where the shoot is held...

And then you think that it all started because Al Lee and a friend went to the movie house in Miles City to see a cowboy movie with a famous rifle - well, that's an incredible success story for everybody all the way around.

Top shooters list

Here are the top 20 shooters among the 416 from 34 states, Canada and Northern Ireland, that competed in the Matthew Quigley Buffalo Rifle Match. Ties were broken by offhand hits and longest target scores:

1. Joan Jilka, Volborg, 43 of a possible 48.
2. Mark Sackett, Sheridan, Wyo., 42.
3. Greg Childress, Broadus, 41.
4. Ed Schleichardt, Sheridan, Wyo., 41.
5. Craig Wolf, Bozeman, 40.
6. Linda Clendenen, Amidon, N.D., 40.
7. George Remington, Antigo, Wis., 40.
8. Brian Krueger, Warroad, Minn., 39.
9. Mark Lincoln, Bridger, Mont. 39.
10. Mike Alexander, Lincoln, Neb., 39.
11. Bruce Stevens, Gillette, Wyo., 39.
12. Chuck Raithel, Leavenworth, Kan., 39.
13. Forrest Asmus, Sheridan, Wyo., 39.
14. Jim Ross, Powell, Wyo., 38.
15. Dennis Bardon, Rosebud, 38.
16. David Jennings, Billings, 38.
17. Bruce Aune, St. Paul, Minn. 37.
18. Tom Desnoyer, Athens, Wis., 37.
19. Russ Dene Kamp, St. Paul, Minn., 37.
20. Gary Campbell, Forsyth, 37.

Shiloh Sharps drawing winner: Anthony Devich, Little Canada, Minn.

Pedersoli Sharps drawing winner: Robert Tips, Tulsa, Okla.

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Buffalo Photo courtesy of The Billings Gazette
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Rifles & Stuff

Rifle pin-up of the month ...



Alan Stevens' Shiloh Sharps in .45-100 (2.6") complete with its new accessory, an RHO telescopic sight, looking amazingly sexy on Century's 500 yard firing point! If there's enough interest in 'scoped shooting, we'll start up a separate class to accommodate.

Shoots at Bisley in 2003

The following dates are booked for next year and are correct at time of printing:-

Silhouette	300/500	29 March
Creedmoor	1000	26 April
Buffalo	200/600	10 May
Man from		
Down Under	300/600	14 June
Buffalo	200/600	23 Aug.
Silhouette	300/500	27 Sept.
Man from		
Down Under	300/600	25 Oct.

Entry forms will be sent out with the renewal forms for 2003 (get 'em in early!)

Practice dates and any additional shoots will be published nearer the time.

Don't forget to book if you wanna shoot!

If you want to enter any of the shoots, do send your entries off in good time. It helps to plan the squadding, makes the shoot run smoothly and avoids disappointment on the day. Thanks for your co-operation.

Thanks to Steve Garbe and Black Powder Cartridge News for permission to reproduce his article from "Cranks Corner".

Little Known Black Powder Cartridges

Those of you who are not bona fide rifle cranks need to please turn to another page. This issue's Crank Corner is going to deal with little known and even less discussed black powder cartridges that are truly on the fringe. If you like normal discussions dealing with familiar rifles and cartridges then you are out of luck. This issue we will discuss the merits (?) of some truly strange black powder cartridges.

First on the roster is a pair of cartridges developed by that well-known crank W.D. Pickett of Meeteetse, Wyoming. In case Mr. Pickett isn't that well known I will give you some background. Pickett owned a ranch outside of Meeteetse and was an enthusiastic rifleman and experimenter. He believed strongly in the "Express" principle, i.e., a light bullet at high velocity for a dramatically flattened trajectory. He carried on much correspondence with the Sharps Rifle Company, the Winchester folks and A.C. Gould of "Shooting and Fishing" magazine concerning accurate rifles and loads based on the Express principle. Pickett also demanded real accuracy from his Express rifles and challenged many of the widely held beliefs from the celebrated English gun makers. In short, he was a major gun-crank and a bit of a rabble-rouser. (A man after my own heart!)

Col. Pickett backed up his ideas with exhaustive testing and kept extensive notes on his experiments. That's why whenever I'm perusing issues of Shooting and Fishing I always stop to read any of the articles sent in by Col. Pickett. In the October 1 edition my eye caught a small article entitled "Col. Pickett's Rifles." I will quote directly as this article is fascinating. "In the past five years I have been using for all large game, a .32 caliber. For two years I experimented with a rifle of that caliber with 65 grains of powder and a 185-grain bullet. I found this sufficient for elk-the bullet usually going through them. I then had a .32 caliber rifle made for an 85-grain bottlenecked shell, with a 205-grain express bullet or a 223-grain solid ball. I have been using this latter arm for two years and prefer it to the first-mentioned rifle on account of its increased powder. I would not hesitate to tackle a grizzly with either of these rifles. The weight of the rifle I now use is eight pounds, and the express bullet has an initial velocity of about 2000 feet per second-making a six-inch curve in 200 yards. The first rifle weighed seven

pounds, and with it I have done some remarkable shooting, at long range, at antelope and elk. These rifles were made especially for me by the Winchester Company; both are the "single-shot action." I consider this action the best for hunting, after the Sharps, and their workmanship is unexcelled. As the small-bore has been determined on as the military caliber of the future, so will it, eventually, be that of the sporting rifle". - W.D. Pickett, Mee-Tee-Tse, Wyo.

There shouldn't be doubt in anyone's mind where Winchester came up with the idea for the .33 Winchester after reading the above. I find it interesting that Pickett was experimenting along these lines in 1891. He obviously took a .40-65 case and ran it into a .32-40 die to come up with the ".32-65 Pickett." This cartridge is so close to the .33 Winchester that was introduced in 1902 that it is very probable that the boys in New Haven took a hint from Col. Pickett. I would speculate that Winchester didn't want customers simply re-chambering .32-40's to the new .32-65 so they changed bullet diameter to .33 caliber. Voila! The .33 Winchester is born.

The .32-85 Pickett would probably have been a .38-90 necked to .32 caliber. These are fascinating wildcat cartridges and represent what it is possible to do with black powder in regards to velocity. Of course after reading this I'm going to have to build up a .32-85 Pickett if for no other reason than to check out his purported velocities. I also wonder about accuracy, fouling, and case stretching. One of Pickett's staunch beliefs was the use of fast twists with light bullets. He held that he obtained better accuracy with light bullets in relatively fast twist barrels. This was in direct contradiction to the English school of thought, also indorsed by some American gun makers, that Express rifles needed slow rifling twists. The aggravating thing about Pickett was that he backed up his theories with shooting on paper.

I'm sure that all this is welcome news to Dan Theodore who has been leading the charge on using the .32-40 in black powder silhouette. Dan has been shooting in the California matches with a .32-40 and enjoying some measure of success. Stu Harvey, Special Advisory Counsel to the "News", usually keeps me abreast of Mr. Theodore's latest endeavors. Given the .32-85 Pickett it is possible we will see some .32's on the line at Raton. I can't wait to hear the comments from the .45-90 crowd!

Seriously, I think that a 220-grain cast bullet at 2000 feet per second would take rams off and minimize wind drift compared to the more conventional calibers. According to the Lyman Cast Bullet Handbook, drift in a 5 mph wind at 550 yards with a 214 grain .32 bullet at 2000 fps is 20.47 inches. Energy is 721 foot-pounds, and total drop is 155.98 inches. Compare this to the wind drift of a 490 grain .45 bullet at 1200 fps of 28.16 inches. Energy for the .45 is 953 foot-pounds and total drop is 326.58

inches. It would seem that, on paper at least, the .32-85 Pickett would work for silhouette. How much advantage the greatly flattened trajectory would be on ram knockdown is open to debate but it would have to help. The glancing blow that is struck by a bullet with a high trajectory greatly diminishes the energy transferred to the target.

Recoil is another question. The 1906 Winchester catalog lists a free recoil of 9.58 pounds for the .38-90 shooting a 217-grain bullet at 1546 fps. I would assume that increasing the velocity to 2000 would probably result in about 12 pounds of felt recoil. This is still less than the 18.43 pounds listed for the .45-70 Gov't with the 500-grain service bullet at 1179. Very interesting.

I know this discussion is rocking some people's worlds, but technically speaking there is no reason why the .32-85 Pickett would not be legal for silhouette. It was originally loaded with black powder and Winchester made up the outfit in 1889. It would be pretty hard to argue with that. Of course, this cartridge would only come under criticism if someone used it to win Nationals. Now, I wonder who would consider such a thing...

Those of you who have read the "Letters from Readers" column already will note that the boys down in Texas have been experimenting, although somewhat "tongue in cheek", with the idea of a .45 Basic necked to .38; a somewhat larger .38-90 WCF. Seriously speaking, there wouldn't be much use for this cartridge other than in the field. Let's give it the benefit of the doubt however; it would be interesting to see what velocities and trajectories were like.

I would like to now really open a can of worms. I have long in the back of my mind wanted to experiment with a .303 British for BPCR silhouette. Ah, I can hear the howls of protest! Before you go too far however, consider some of the facts surrounding this largely ignored and underestimated cartridge. The .303 was adopted by the British Empire in 1888 and was originally loaded with a COMPRESSED black powder charge. Ammunition and rifles, such as the Winchester High Wall were made available in the U.S. about 1897. Arguably it would qualify for use in BPCR silhouette given that it was chambered by a number of American manufacturers and that it was originally a black powder cartridge; exactly like the .32-40 and .38-55. Now, whether or not one could use it without having numerous protests filed would probably depend on how well it shot. Given BPCR Silhouette's inclination to "pick and choose" when it comes to interpretation of rules I would not like to bet on the outcome of a competitor protest. For the sake of discussion, let's assume that it would be allowed and see would the .303 would provide in the way of advantages for silhouette.

Number one, would the .303 deliver reported

velocities with black powder? I'm not entirely sure that one could reload a .303 in the same manner that the Brits did in order to achieve reported velocities. I'm referring to the technique they also used later to load stick Cordite. If you've ever taken an old .303 loaded round apart the first thing you notice is that it would be impossible to load all the sticks of Cordite necessary for a complete charge through the neck of the case. The way it was done was by loading the Cordite BEFORE the case was necked. I have the sneaking suspicion that they did the same thing with a highly compressed black powder charge. Given the Swiss powder we are now so lucky to have, one may possibly be able to use 3FG highly compressed to get close to 2000 feet per second. I hope I don't have to preface this kind of talk with, "Kids, don't try this at home!" Needless to say, when one experiments along these lines, every precaution to prevent blown primers, separated cases, and many other unknown "events" should be exercised. We don't recommend this sort of thing for the average shooter; in fact we don't officially recommend these types of experiments for anyone! Do as we say, not as we do.

There are some pitfalls to highly compressed black powder charges. One is ignition. Those who have read Spence Wolf's book on re-creating Trapdoor Springfield original ammo and velocities will remember that he had difficulty with ignition when compressing powder (sometimes as much as a half inch). His solution was to ream out primer pockets to .098 thousandths and always use a magnum primer. Highly compressed powder columns also have a tendency to stretch brass, sometimes to the point of case separation. I would think that with the .303 it would be a good idea to tumble cases bright and clean between firings. Pressure could also be a problem. Don't for a minute think that you can't make black powder "mad" enough to show pressure signs. I compressed some 4FG Swiss in a .30-30 Wesson and stretched cases .020 every shot along with flattening primers. This was only 30 grains of powder; a .303 British will hold substantially more powder.

By now you are probably saying, "Is all this necessary?" Probably not, but one does wonder if a .30 caliber bullet propelled by black would actually work. Given a 200-grain bullet at 1800 fps, would this be enough energy to knock off rams? There's only one sure way to find out and the only people interested would be those cranks among us who enjoy "stirring the black powder pot."

We might as well mention some other relatively unknown black powder cartridges that are very interesting. Some of these could have silhouette applications; all are suitable for Schuetzen work as that is where they came from in the beginning. I'm speaking of the .33-47, .35-40, and the .39-55. These were all cartridges that were offered and chambered by the likes of Harry Pope, George Schoyen, and

A.O. Zischang. They came to be because of the common-sense idea of re-cutting a shot-out or damaged rifle barrel. All were adaptations of the .32-40 or .38-55 case and saved the price of a completely new barrel job. In Gerald Kever's excellent book "Respectfully Yours, H. M. Pope" there are numerous references to this procedure made by Harry Pope to customers wishing to salvage a damaged barrel - "In regard to re-boring your rifle to .40 caliber I would say that I have no tools at present larger than .39 caliber. I have a set in the works for a .45 caliber but can't tell yet when they will be done.

It is probable that your .38 caliber can be bored to a .39 caliber. If this is so the price would be \$12.00."

To another customer who had ringed a barrel by probably not seating a muzzle loaded bullet all the way to the cartridge case he wrote—"The best thing you can have done to the rifle, if it is all right otherwise except the ring is to have it re-bored to .33 caliber. This will undoubtedly remove the ring entirely, or if not, the traces of it will be so small to be of no consequence. This will make it in every way as good as a new barrel. It will still use the .32-40 shell."

To another customer Harry described how to form .35-40 cases from .32-40 - "I am shipping by parcel post your .35 caliber rifle. It looks as if it shoots very finely if we can get a proper load, more of which later.

Shells for this size are made by shooting a .32-40, twice. Wipe the chamber clean each time and they will expand to fit. They come up to size a little better if the mouths of the .32-40 are annealed by holding about a half inch of the case in the flame of a Bunsen burner or the flame of a gas stove, just enough to color the ends blue which is generally about the time the heads get too hot to hold..."

George C. Schoyen was another 'smith who advocating the re-cutting and re-chambering of damaged barrels to a "size larger". His catalog, pictured in John Dutcher's excellent 1971 Gun Digest article on Schoyen, advertised - "Old barrels bored, re-rifled, and fitted with false muzzle, with loading outfit complete, same as new barrel, - \$20.00"

What do these cartridges offer the rifle crank? I would think that the .35-40 and .39-55 would both be adaptable to silhouette; in fact, if memory serves, I talked to a fellow a few years back at Raton who was using a .35-40 Maynard successfully on silhouettes. Obviously, the .39-55 would also work in the silhouette game although it is hair-splitting close to the various .40 caliber cartridges currently in use. I can't see any obvious advantages over either the .38-55 or the .40-60 Maynard.

For those who are contemplating some of these

cartridges and want to know bullet diameters I would have to say (but by no means striking it in stone) that the .33-47 would use a .338 bullet, the .35-40 a .358, and the .39-55 a .395 diameter slug. These dimensions would all clean the original .32-40 and .38-55 land and groove sizes in the re-cutting processes. Obviously, there are plenty of .338 and .358 barrels out there of modern manufacture but the .395 is going to have to be a custom barrel. Dan Pedersen (110 N. Summit, Prescott, AZ 86301 - cutrifle.com) would be one source for the crank wanting to build a .39-55.

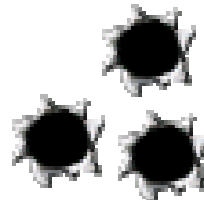
I think the biggest area that these traditional cartridges would be suited for is in the black powder Schuetzen matches across the country. This is a popular new discipline and generally speaking, black powder is a little easier to work with in calibers larger than .32. With both the ISSA and ASSRA having a Traditional/and or Black Powder classification I think we will see some of the "crankier" riflemen turn to some of these little known cartridges. The .33-47 already has a small, but devoted group of followers in the Schuetzen game. They claim an edge in wind-bucking ability over the .32-40 without the recoil of the .38-55. I personally am really drawn to the .35-40; in fact I have to admit to already having a barrel fit up to one of my favorite Ballards. I will keep my brother cranks fully informed on future developments.

As I stated in the beginning of this article, if you aren't a bona fide rifle crank you have probably been bored to tears by all this. It is much easier by far to stick with the standard run-of-the-mill .45-70, .40-65, or .32-40. However, there are those who aren't happy with the status quo and will want to experiment with cartridges that possess advantages that probably exist only in the rifleman's head. But isn't that what matters anyway?

So many rifles, so little time.

Hold Center.

Steve Garbe





Thought you might like to see this photograph of Kenny Wasserburger and Bill Bagwell, aka rdnck, two of our American cyber-friends. Kenny is pointing to Bill's 1,037 yard hit on his Hostile target which is set up on his ranch. The rdnck's rifle is in .45-90. One of these days, my friends, we're gonna come knocking on your door! Photograph by Sidra (Mrs. Rdnck)

THE LAST WORD ...



We'd like to thank everyone who has shared the dream and helped to make the Club a success in its first year. To Martin Farnan, NRA Shooting Manager, for his help and advice in the early days and to the staff at Bisley for all their help, especially the markers who score our "funny" targets so efficiently. If you are reading this, you know who you are.

Have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Phil Morgan and Clive Taylor

Sales & Wants



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