

NRA CHANNEL ISLANDS TOUR 2005

by Kitty Jack

Captain

Dominic Harvey GB, England and Surrey

Vice Captain

Peter Bromley GB, England and Kent

Adjutant

Alex Pilgrim GB, England and Sussex

Coaches

Anton Aspin GB, England and Cheshire

Simon Cleveland GB, England and Surrey

Shooters

Charles Dickenson GB, England and Berkshire

George Gilpin Ireland and Devon

Jo Hossack Scotland and East of Scotland

Kitty Jack Scotland and Kent

Bob Oxford Wales

Kelvin Ramsey GB, England and Surrey

Mark Shaw Nottinghamshire

Keith Sheead England and Bedfordshire

Chris Watson Wales and Northants,
Leicester & Rutland

Tuesday 24 May

The NRA Channel Islands Team assembled at Bisley in time for dinner in the LMRA clubhouse. The LMRA proved to be generous and attentive hosts, forcing the team to commence acclimatization to that major feature of Channel Islands touring – too much good food and liquid hospitality before a match.

Wednesday 25 May

The morning saw phase two of acclimatization. Henry Watson led the LMRA team of 10 against us for 2 and 10 at 300 and 600 yards. Chris Watson was the star of the match, scoring an excellent 100.17 coached by Anton Aspin. Peter Bromley and Mark Shaw also made 100, with Jo Hossack and Kelvin Ramsey on 99. The overall result was 979.121 (NRA) to 949.85 (LMRA). Gary Alexander led for the LMRA with 99.8. The event allowed us to integrate individual skills with the team drills rehearsed in April, proving that we were ready for the challenges of accuracy, meteorology and gastronomy that lay ahead. We would like to thank the whole LMRA team for their excellent hospitality over dinner and for putting the team through its paces on the range.

After a short prize-giving on the range, the drive down to Poole went smoothly and the Sea Cat crossing to Guernsey was relatively uneventful, bar a few green faces and Kelvin's sudden disappearance (he was later found assisting a poorly old lady).

Peter Jory met us at the Cobo Bay Hotel and kindly took the rifles away for storage. Most of the team stayed put for a delicious meal in the hotel restaurant, but some (led by Captain Harvey) were determined not to waste precious partying time and went for a taste of Guernsey night-life.

Thursday 26 May

For some team members, Thursday began with a hearty breakfast followed by a leisurely stroll along the beach. For others it started with a good lie-in followed by nursing of hangovers and general recovery from the previous night. The team then met for a recce visit to the range at Fort le Marchant, where the Captain reminded everyone of the huge task in hand.

The afternoon passed in St Peter Port followed by a swift retreat to the hotel where the team indulged in a couple of drops of champagne in the Jacuzzi, Anton braved the cold sea water as he went for a paddle, and the boys performed some kind of testosterone-fuelled ritual thinly disguised as a game of frisbee on the beach.

Friday 27 May

The morning's shooting consisted of individual competitions at 300 and 600 yards. While on first detail Dom was showing the team how it was done with 50.6, one of the more experienced members was rushing to the hotel to pick up his shooting kit that he had managed to leave behind in its entirety and that he realized may prove useful for the day's events. Mark Shaw beat Nick Mace by one V bull to win the aggregate with a score of 100.13. George came third with a respectable 99.15.

After heeding Cherry Le Poidevin's warnings that it could rain the following day, the team decided to make the most of the sunny weather by spending the afternoon having a picnic on the beach at Cobo Bay. The early part of the evening was spent at a wonderful reception hosted by the Guernsey Rifle Club at Castle Cornet followed by dinner with the Guernsey team at the Havelet Hotel.

Saturday 28 May

This extremely windy but sunny Saturday morning threw a number of challenges at the team. The individual competitions throughout the morning not only tested everyone's wind judgement but also their general ability not to get blown out to sea. A great lunch on the range must have helped the afternoon's shooting as everyone's body weight increased by several pounds; Paul Le Poidevin's chocolate cake (as requested by Alex Pilgrim the day before) was instrumental to this application of ballast against the breeze.

The team match in the afternoon was shot at 300, 500 and 600 yards, as the strong winds hard across the range from the left continued to gust throughout the day. Coaches Aspin and Cleveland strapped themselves into their coaching chairs and the (now heavier!) NRA team came out victorious with a score of 1164.120 to GRC's 1156.116. Adam Jory made top score in the match with 149.20 and Jo Hossack made top score for the NRA team with 148. In the Reserve Pairs match, Kitty and Bob were coached by Alex Pilgrim and beat locals Cherry Le Poidevin and Sylvia Sirett by 11 points with 286.23 to 275.19.