

There was a swift pack up and prize-giving before the team headed for their ferry across to Jersey. After a long wait and a smelly Sea Cat crossing, the team arrived at St Helier where they were welcomed by Cliff Mallett. Rifles were swiftly loaded into Cliff's car and the team headed on to the Hotel Christina where they befriended Norberto (the barman) who kept them happy by ensuring that there was a healthy flow of drinks well into the night.

### **Sunday 29 May**

The team had the morning off. The breakfast club was entertained by Simon who, as the increase in noise levels proved, had now fully recovered from his initial health problems - he decided to confront the bearded Navy contingent (Charles and Keith) with a pirate style "Aha, good morning Nautical Whitebeard and Blackbeard" - names that were to stick for the rest of the tour. It also transpired that the previous evening Alex and Dom had run into another Bisley personality. Anil Bhargava had rather unfortunately chosen the Hotel Christina for a romantic break.

The team met at 11.30am for their first visit to Crabbe Range where they were greeted by a lot of familiar faces and Peter and Mary Norman's mouthwatering bacon rolls. Shooting began just after lunch with a 2 and 10 at 200 yards where the Captain surprised himself with yet another 50! Charles Dickenson won the day's shooting (an aggregate of 200 and 500 yards) with 100.17. Mark was two places behind, having scored 100.14 and pipped to second place by Cliff Mallett who scored 100.15. Bob, meanwhile, faced the ultimate rifle disaster - his stock split during his 200 yards shoot yet he made a miraculous recovery, not only finishing the shoot with 50.6 but scoring another 50.6 at 500 yards with Simon's rifle, ending up in fifth place overall.

The evening consisted of a quick visit by a few adventurous members of the team to Jersey's drag cabaret club, the Cosmopolitan, followed by dinner at the Salty Dog. The food was great and everyone was content except Chris who, to the rest of the team's amusement, had forgotten to place an order! The team match the following day commanded a relatively quiet and early night for everyone.

### **Monday 30 May**

The morning's shooting consisted of individual competitions at 300 and 600 yards. Alex (and Junior) scored 100.15, which resulted in a tie-shoot for first place with Bruce Horwood. Unfortunately she just missed out by a V bull as he scored 25.4 against her 25.3. The afternoon's team match was shot at 300, 500 and 600 yards and the team were determined to retain their unbeaten record against a Kolapore-strength Jersey team who were really fired up for the challenge. While the NRA made a solid start at 300 yards, the Jersey team made club history with a score of 400 out of a maximum 400 points. The NRA made every effort to claw back the difference throughout the rest of the match but Jersey matched them shot for shot and the overall margin remained at the six point difference that haunted them

from 300 yards. With a score of 1189.149, the Jersey team broke their previous club records and performed to an outstanding level that this NRA team (scoring 1183.147) and many other teams will aspire to.

The team kicked the evening off with some champagne on the hotel terrace overlooking St Aubin's Bay. Although there was a huge air of disappointment over the match result, there was also an overwhelming feeling of honest congratulation and camaraderie towards the JRA team, who arrived shortly afterwards for drinks and dinner. Speeches were made by Colin Mallett and Dom Harvey, who kept a promise to some Jersey friends by jumping up onto his chair for a song . . . (but of course he was always going to!). Dinner was followed by more drinks in the hotel bar, and then an exodus to La Cala bar in St Helier where there was much drinking and dancing, as ordered by the Captain. Having managed to convince the receptionist to provide an ice bucket for the champagne, an after-party ensued in Room 302 of Hotel Christina. After watching the new sport of bearded bed-dancing, it was decided in the early hours that Anil's romantic weekend should be cut short and he should be invited to join in the fun - strangely he agreed and the party continued until the sun came up at 5.30am.

### **Tuesday 31 May**

This was a final day of holiday before the team had to make the journey back to homes, offices, exams, hospitals and farms. Given the excesses of the previous night, most took it easy with some shopping and an alcohol-free lunch, although an uncharacteristically quiet Simon continued to deny that he was suffering. Some regained strength sufficiently to join Cliff Mallett for a round of golf.

The team reconvened in uniform for one last team photo on the hotel terrace before a swift change of clothing and journey to Le Frere at Rozel Bay for an excellent dinner in quite stunning surroundings, courtesy of some advance planning by the Adj - she was eating for two after all! A final trip into St Helier to experience some more of the town's night-life followed, as did the massacre of a number of songs during a trip to a karaoke bar. Inevitably the evening eventually finished in Room 302 where the last of the champagne was finished off.

### **Wednesday 1 June**

The NRA Champagne Team of 2005 started the last day of their tour at 9am in the only way they knew how, by enjoying a champagne breakfast with Cliff Mallett. We headed for the port and some took advantage of an upgrade to reclining seats for the crossing back to Poole - mercifully it was very calm and most of the team slept through the entire journey.

A great time had been had by all and no greater effort could have been made on the shooting front. Our hosts on both islands could not have done more for the team - we will all be eternally grateful to them for giving us such a trip to remember. Some excellent friendships had been forged and the team disbanded with the unanimous hope that they would find themselves touring with each other again at some stage in the near future.