



FIGHTING FOR FAIR AND EFFECTIVE FIREARMS LEGISLATION

SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION NEWS DECEMBER 2017

By Mike Wells Secretary General

Sportsmans's Association make Donation

The British Shooting Sports Council represent all of the shooting organisations and have the ear of the Home office, Police & government ministers All the other 17 shooting organizations meet regularly with BSSC and formulate a strategy to fight to preserve shooting sports To help for such things as an ivory ban, proposed ban of .50 cal and lever release rapid fire section 1 rifles, The Sportsman's Association have donated £5000

Bitter pill to swallow

On FAC renewals we have recently seen cases where GPs are demanding £150 for an initial response and, in more than one case, telling applicants if they do not pay up they will respond with a comment that the Licensing team 'should assume there is a relevant condition'. This goes against all guidance, clearly, and amounts to blackmail.

However, we have recently had a report from a solicitor representing one of our members in Devon and Cornwall that throws an interesting light on current practice. He said: "[I had] a helpful telephone conversation with Michelle Mounsey, the Firearms Licensing Manager for Devon & Cornwall Constabulary.

"Ms Mounsey confirmed what I heard from other police sources, i.e. that police forces no longer send the basic "tick box" questionnaires to GPs, but instead send a stock letter generated by the National Firearms Licensing Management System (NFLMS). This letter asks for a response only if there are any health matters of relevance to the application and requests any such responses within 21 days, at which point the police will continue to process the application based on the information they have available."

It perhaps reinforces the fact that forces will / should get on and issue in light of a nil response and clarifies that no response is necessary unless there is a relevant condition (which should already have been declared by the applicant) but the use of lightly veiled threats by GPs to extort money clearly needs further action. Perhaps an apple a day..

Another proposed Ban

The Home Office has been nervous for some years about .50 cal and Russian equivalent 'materiel destruction rifles' and has wished to ban them for some years. There are very few ranges on which such rifles may be used in the UK to which

civilian target shooters have access, so shooting them remains very much a minority sport. The NRA has a separate class for High Muzzle Energy firearms on its Shooters Certification Card. So far as I am aware the possession and use of such rifles have not caused any problems. I suspect that the dust was blown off this one to give the Home Office something to say on firearms.

The 'rapid firing' rifles referred to are designed to enable a rate of fire as fast as, or nearly so, a centre-fire semiautomatic rifle. I suspect both types of which I am ter on the Agenda for the BSSC Council on the 19th October. I will report Next month.

NRA News from Andrew Mercer

The unwelcome announcement from the Home Secretary on the consultation on "Offensive Weapons" has reminded us that we need to be continually alert to threats against our sport of target shooting. Some might argue there is little logic for civilians owning and shooting .50 calibre rifles or MARS / lever release firearms; however they are fundamentally no different to any other mainstream rifle used for target shooting. To assert that these rifles pose a special risk to the public makes no sense; if we cede further prohibition without challenge with rational argument we will surely encourage those who oppose civilian ownership of firearms to select the next most vulnerable type of firearm for prohibition.

The timing of the announcement is mystifying; such is the success of current firearms licensing that those with evil intent are choosing hire vehicles, kitchen knives and homemade explosives as weapons of choice.

Such unwelcome distractions come at a point when our Bisley ranges are busy, NRA membership buoyant, training programmes for new shooters full and genuine progress being made in improving regional ranges.

On a happier note I enjoyed a rewarding trip away from Bisley in September visiting the National Target Sprint Championships and then John Thorne's cracking new range at Silverstone. Target Sprint is a new discipline promoted by British Shooting; it involves three laps round a track interspersed with shooting knock-down plates with air rifles. The genuine enthusiasm shown by the predominately young athletes was a joy to behold.

The trip later that day to Silverstone was equally rewarding; John and his team have built a genuinely innovative range complex providing targets from 10m to 100m. They have wrestled with the planning authority, wary neighbours, inclement weather, technical challenges and naysayers from both within and outside the shooting community but are now the proud owners of the UK's newest range. I was pleased to learn they are steadily building up their membership; they deserve every success for their bold initiative. For further details see their new website