



Peet Botha shooting an Ardesa Deerstalker .50 calibre in the Modern Hawken class at 50m.

formed by delegates from all BPSU affiliated clubs in the Western Cape to organise and regulate Provincial Black Powder shoots.

The first Western Cape Provincial Black Powder Championships were hosted by the Durbanville Shooting Club in November last year. The organising team comprised Johan and Corena de Beer and André Stander, with the tremendous support of many Durbanville Shooting Club members. Unfortunately only a few BPSU members from the rest of the country were able to compete.

The Mid- and Long-Range competitions were shot on the Good Hope Military Range in Atlantis on the Thursday and Friday and included Free (Muzzle-Loading) Rifle (300m-900m) and Free Breech-Loader (300m-600m). Wind conditions were trying, with a strong wind requiring adjustments of up to 16 minutes of angle during the 600m match. (Sixteen MOA is a bit over 2m at that distance.) During the 800m and 900m matches, the wind was not so strong but kept changing direction, and made shooting extremely challenging.

All of the short-range events (25m-200m) took place at the Durbanville Shooting Range on the Saturday. Although Durbanville has hosted various other major competitions in the past, this was its first black powder match of such stature. Thirty shooters in various disciplines took to the line and the shoot got underway with the ceremonial opening shot by Colin Twine with his miniature replica of an 1786 Blomefield black powder cannon. For the rest of the day the air was filled with the smell of black powder and the sight of white smoke. The opening 100m events were shot on the main range, but a very fine early morning

## Inter-Provincial Black Powder Champs

In 1958 a small group of Cape Town enthusiasts formed the Historical Firearms Society of South Africa and restarted the historic sport of black powder shooting which had been in limbo in South Africa. The inception of the current Black Powder Shooting Union (BPSU) followed and this is still the only governing body of black powder target shooting officially recognised by the SA Bisley Union (SABU).

Historically, all black powder shooting in the Western Cape was done under the auspices of the Cape Town Muzzle Loaders' Association (CTMLA), as it was the only club catering for formal black powder shooting

By CORENA DE BEER

in the province. However, as the interest in long-range shooting increased, the Peninsula Rifle Club (PRC) was also affiliated to the BPSU as an official club, catering mainly for long-range shooting (300m-900m). This was followed by Durbanville Shooting Club (DSC), in an effort to accommodate a group of their members shooting short range (25-200m) on a regular basis. A provincial governing committee, called the Western Cape Black Powder Association (WCBPA), was

Left: 20mm cannon used for the opening shot. This is a miniature replica of an 18 pound Blomefield cannon that was designed by Major General Sir Thomas Blomefield in 1786 and proof fired for the first time in 1790. Right: John Duckitt shooting an 1858 Parker Hale 2-band Enfield in the 50m Off Hand Military event.





drizzle had the organisers a little worried at first. The first three details were shot in this light rain, but as the firing points are under cover this did not affect the black powder or the competitor's equipment. Some lower than expected scores were attributed to the poor visibility.

These matches were followed by the 200m events, while the pistol and revolver details were running concurrently on the handgun range next door. All the 50m off-hand shoots took place after lunch, after which everyone retired to the lapa and clubhouse for refreshments, followed by the prize-giving. The meal – which included venison hamburgers and eland sosaties – was served by Reggie Meyer and the camaraderie after the prize-giving was such that not even the rugby on TV (Springboks vs Wales) could distract the shooters and their mates.

The short-range programme consisted of all recognized BPSU events. To encourage members and attract new interest, special events are included whenever there is sufficient interest – this time the special event was a Classic Handgun match at 25m – any handgun dating back to 1911 or prior (original or an exact replica) could be used. This was in addition to the usual 25m Single-Shot Pistol (SSP) and Percussion Revolver events.

The 50m events included Hawken Modern and Traditional, Patch & Ball, Free Rifle and Military (Muzzle-Loading) Rifle. We also had some competitors who shot with flintlock rifles and this event will definitely be catered for next year. The following 100m matches were shot: Hawken Modern and Traditional, Free Rifle, Military Rifle, Free Breech-Loader and .303/Bolt Action Military Service Rifle (BAMSR) and only peep sights are allowed; no front ring sights or other optical enhancements. The 200m events were limited to Free Rifle, Military Rifle, Free Breech-Loader and .303/BAMSR. All 25-100m events were shot on UIT 50m Pistol Target and the 200m events were shot on UIT 25m Olympic Rapid Fire Targets.

It was good to see so many newcomers to the formal discipline of black powder shooting. The chatter, laughter and stories told proved that all enjoyed the day. Many ideas were exchanged as to equipment, different bullet shapes and weights, etc, and there was much admiration for the different rifles used. Visitors were amazed at their accuracy and the distances at which they performed so well. There were no unfortunate incidents and the behaviour of all shooters was impeccable.



Corena de Beer loading a Pedersoli replica Gibbs .45 calibre for Free Rifle at 100m.

There were some really encouraging happenings that illustrate the courage and endurance of real black powder shooters. Four of our members had taken up long-range shooting only a few months before the shoot and they all enjoyed reasonable success. At the last league shoot André Stander simply could not read the wind correctly and struggled badly at 800m. On the Friday, in very difficult conditions, he overcame his nemesis and posted the winning score at 800m. Johan van Wyk, an avid hunter who uses a black powder rifle, had a shoulder injury and did not want to shoot the 900m event. He was persuaded otherwise and his first ever shot on the 900m target was a V-Bull, the highest possible value on a long-range target. A day later, even with the tiredness following three days of shooting, you could still not wipe the smiles off the faces of André and Johan. Two other major achievers were Chris Williams, who won the long-range aggregate, and Chris Twine, who was also awarded Junior Protea Colours in August at the Short Range Black Powder World Championships in Portugal. He constantly shot good scores and won the overall aggregate for Free Rifle from 50-900m. With youngsters of this calibre the future of black powder sport shooting in this country is in good hands.

**Results (abbreviated):**

25m SSP	Greg van Schaik	90/100
25m Revolver	Bernard Toyk	89/100
25m Classic Handgun	Bernard Toyk	88/100
100m Free Rifle	Corena de Beer	96/100
100m Free Breech Loader	Dave Taylor	91/100
100m .303/BAMSR	*Corena de Beer	99/100
	(*New National Record)	
200m Free Rifle	Chris Twine	94/100
Mid Range Total	Johan de Beer	126.1/150
Long Range Total	Chris Williams	107.4/150
Mid & Long Range Total	Johan de Beer	227.2/300
Top Gun 1.	Chris Twine	478.5/600
2.	Johan de Beer	470.2/600
3.	Chris Williams	449.6/100

The mid range total is the aggregate for 300-600m Free Rifle events and long range total is the aggregate for the 800-900m Free Rifle events. The Top Gun medal was awarded for the total combined score of all Free Rifle events (50m-900m).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all competitors, range officers, scorers and in fact everyone who helped and worked so tirelessly to make this the magnificent shoot that it was. And a big thank you also to the Durbanville Shooting Club who made the range and all their facilities available. With the great success of this shoot and the interest shown I have no doubt that this sport – and the championship – will grow in leaps and bounds. ■

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