

# *MLAIC World Championships Pforzheim 2012*

*Captain's Report by David Spittles*



I missed the first day of the Championships due to Joyce having to spend the night in hospital the day we had planned to leave. When I arrived on Sunday morning the powder and welcome packs had already been dealt with. I wish to thank Nick Harvey our MLAIC delegate for stepping in and handling this. Nick's timely intervention meant that those waiting for powder and caps could get on with their practice and the Team members could check their squadding.

At the start little did I realise just how well we were going to perform. This is the first time that I can remember us finishing 2nd in the medal table, just behind Germany.

Some members accredited this high position to me being Team Captain but all I did was to ensure that things ran as smoothly as possible without any fuss. The real credit goes to the Team Members who through their skill and training brought home so many medals. I also had two very capable discipline secretaries in Jane Capewell for shotgun and Helen Harper-Smith for rifle and musket to rely on. The pistol people had to put up with me.

The sun continued to shine all week keeping the temperatures in the 30's. This meant hot work for those doing weapons inspection. The Austrians relied on the MLAGB to do the checking on the first day and we had John Marsh, Jeff Tanner, Tom Clark and our token English man Howard Markham. Bill Pink who was not a member of the Team also stepped in and helped to ease the work load, thanks Bill.

It was a long and thirsty day for the scrutinisers and the MLAIC should thank them for their efforts. Working in the weapons control requires extra dedication to our sport as it limits their time to practice on the range and to familiarise themselves with the surroundings.

The Opening Ceremony on the Tuesday was one of the least memorable. The people of Pforzheim turned out to give us a warm welcome as we paraded through the town. Jon Huggett our new team Member was given the honour of carrying the union flag and leading the British Team. We ended up in the town square where we were treated to a very noisy and enjoyable display of large bore hand held guns, the final volley certainly made everybody jump.

The National Teams then had to stand and listen to long speeches in German which were then translated in to English, with musical interludes.

The shot gunners were fortunate or unfortunate depending on your point of view to have missed this due to their competitions starting on Tuesday. Over the years there has been a mix of enjoyable and tedious opening ceremonies but they are all part of the experience that makes competing in MLAIC events worth the effort.

The Pforzheim Range with its electronic scoring system on all the 25m 50m and 100m ranges is great for the competitor as one does not need a spotting scope. One only has to look at the monitor to see the last shot and how the group is forming. The monitor also shows the value of the shots so one does not leave the range wondering if those squeaky 9's were 10's. After ones final shot the score is displayed so there is no maths to do. Each competitor is given a printout of the target showing the shot holes and the score. The system will also show cross shots by using a second board behind the target.

On the down side, with the paper targets and spotting scopes you normally have a team member who is not shooting as a buddy to check your score. I missed the buddying system and having members of the team in the spectator area keeping an eye on those who were shooting.

Our hosts had erected a large marquee for the Teams to use as a base. However, this was not practical for the ranges and was only used by the Teams for the medal ceremonies. This meant that the Team did not have a focal meeting place and were scattered over the range. I have competed in many MLAIC Championships and this is the first time where I have felt a lack of Team cohesion which I hope will be addressed at future events.

As Captain I travelled between the shotgun, rifle and pistol ranges. Whenever I went through the rifle range I would often come across a member of the Team and was always amazed at how they were coping with the heat wearing all their shooting clothing and the physical effort of getting up and down.

One person I kept meeting was Jon Harper-Smith. Jon certainly got around with an incredible display of shooting as can be seen from the medal tables with 1 gold, 3 silver and 1 bronze in the individual matches and in the team matches 3 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze.

In the Pauly team match Jon along with Helen Harper-Smith and Paul Wolpe were counted out of the gold medal place, having tied with a score of 271 but lost out on the number of 10's

Jon along with team mates Paul Wolpe and Gareth Callan set a new world record of 243 in the Hibuta team match which is for original matchlock muskets kneeling, congratulations on this achievement.

The rifle section has certainly increased their overall performance to win 3 team matches and 1 second place.

To win team matches especially at international level requires a strong performance from all the Team and this is one area where the rifle section has improved over the years, well done to all concerned.

Regrettably the Pistol section struggled to find its form, and I hope the next Championships will be somewhere cooler.



*100m firing point complete with monitor to display shot placement and score*

## *The Clay Pigeon Team by Jane Capewell*

Historically, there are a couple of moments I remember vividly, Peter Capewell in 1998 shooting 32 straight in Manton Original and Dave Elvin in 2003 shooting 50 straight in Manton Replica, but my memorable moment came on 15th August 2012 in the Lorenzoni event at the World Championships in Pforzheim.

I knew I liked the range, having won the European Championships there in 2005, but you never know when you revisit somewhere if it will be the same or if you can replicate your previous achievements. Fortunately for me I went one better.

The weather was ideal (or maybe a little hot on some days), the range was perfect and exactly as I remembered it. We had more than enough practice allotted to us and most of the team took advantage of this and a couple were even allowed extra sessions.

Tuesday was the Manton replica event. Five of the team took part and we had high hopes for Dave Elvin and Richard Morris. Unfortunately on this occasion they were both beaten by an on form Bob Pence from USA who shot 48/50 and achieved a new World Record. Dave and Richard finished 4th and 6th respectfully but both put in good scores for the Hawker team event.

Wednesday dawned and time for all 11 shooters to have a go as everyone was entered in to the Lorenzoni Original event. There were 5 people who achieved 23/25 in the first round, but after missing my first clay I managed to keep it together and hit the next 24, leaving me ahead of the opposition by one clay.

In round two Richard Morris shot before me and hit 25/25, which put a lot of pressure on Martin and I as we both knew we had to hit the same score to either equal or beat him. Martin and I were shooting at the same time, Martin had shot 25/25 at an international championships before and was very capable of achieving a full house, but the best I had done was 24/25 – not on this occasion though, we both shot 25/25 resulting in all three Brits having perfect scores in our second rounds – unheard of before and a fantastic achievement for the Batesville team event.

To my thrill I won the Lorenzoni event with 49/50 – a new world record, with Martin and Richard both matching the old world record score of 48 and had to shoot off for 2nd/3rd places.

In the same event Peter Capewell shot 43/50 which resulted in him being in a shoot off for 6th place with one competitor from USA and another from Spain.

Thursday was the Lorenzoni Replica event – no British shooters in this, but we all went up to the range to watch the other competitors.

On Friday it was Manton Original. Peter Capewell and Bev Keeble both excelled and although 3 behind the overall Spanish winner they both shot 39/50, which put them in 2nd/3rd places and again into another shoot off. Chris Hobbs held his form and achieved an overall 6th place, which he was disappointed with but his score helped the Hawker team win a bronze medal.

The shoot offs took place on Friday afternoon. First up were Peter and the guys from USA and Spain in the 6th place shoot off for Lorenzoni Original. The American unfortunately missed one of the early clays and was eliminated. However, Peter and the competitor from Spain were on fire and it went to clay 15 before Peter was struck down with a gun malfunction. This resulted in him having 2 misfires (only one is allowed per shoot off) so the second meant Peter was given a “loss” and as such the Spanish competitor was awarded 6th place. It was quite an exciting shoot off considering it was for 6th place.

Next up was Martin and Richard for 2nd/3rd places in the Lorenzoni Original event. This was not quite so pro-longed and as Richard missed his 4th clay and Martin shot 5/5, Martin was awarded 2nd place.

Finally, Peter was back for his second shoot off of the day, this time with Bev Keeble for 2nd/3rd places in the Manton Original event. Both competitors shot 5/5 and so it went to sudden death. Unfortunately Bev missed his 6th clay but Peter didn't and was awarded 2nd place. Not bad for someone of 75 years of age and probably surviving on a very big adrenaline rush after shooting 71 clays in one day!

Overall the shotgun team did brilliantly. The Batesville team, consisting of Martin Crix, Richard Morris and myself won gold with a new world record, achieving 145/150 – beating the old record by 8 clays.

The Hawker team of Richard Morris, Dave Elvin and Chris Hobbs received a bronze medal.

## The GB Team Results

### Shotgun

#### *Lorenzoni Original (percussion)*

1st Jane Capewell	49/50	NWR
2nd Martin Crix	48/50	
3rd Richard Morris	48/50	

#### *Manton Original (flintlock)*

2nd Peter Capewell	39/50
3rd Bev Keeble	39/50
6th Chris Hobbs	33/50

#### *Manton Replica (flintlock)*

4th David Elvin	44/50
6th Richard Morris	42/50

#### *Batesville Team (percussion)*

1st Jane Capewell, Martin Crix, Richard Morris	145/150	NWR
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#### *Hawker Team (flintlock)*

3rd Richard Morris, Dave Elvin, Chris Hobbs	119/150
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### Rifle/Musket

#### *Maximilian Original (flintlock rifle)*

1st Jon Harper-Smith	90
5th Helen Harper-Smith	87

#### *Tanegashima Original*

(matchlock musket standing)	
2nd Jon Harper-Smith	92
5th Tony Asker	88

#### *Hizadai Original*

(matchlock musket kneeling)	
2nd Jon Harper-Smith	91
4th Tony Asker	90

#### *Vetterli Original*

(flintlock or percussion rifle)	
2nd Jon Harper-Smith	98

#### *Walkyrie Original (percussion rifle)*

2nd Helen Harper-Smith	90
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#### *Pennsylvania Original (free flintlock rifle)*

4th Jon Harper-Smith	91
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#### *Minie Original (military percussion rifle)*

3rd Jon Harper-Smith	94
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#### *Wedgnock Team (original flintlock rifle)*

1st Jon Harper-Smith, Helen Harper-Smith, Gareth Callan	259
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#### *Nobunaga Team*

##### *(original matchlock musket standing)*

1st Jon Harper-Smith, Paul Wolpe, David Brigden	259
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#### *Hibuta Team (original matchlock kneeling)*

1st Jon Harper-Smith, Paul Wolpe, Gareth Callan	243	NWR
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#### *Pauly Team*

##### *(original military percussion rifle)*

2nd Jon Harper-Smith, Helen Harper-Smith, Paul Wolpe	271
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#### *Grand Prix de Versailles (original flintlock military musket and percussion rifle)*

3rd Tony Asker, Helen Harper-Smith, Jon Harper-Smith, Jeff Tanner, Paul Wolpe
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Above: *Wedgnock Team (original flintlock rifle) winners  
Jon Harper-Smith,  
Helen Harper-Smith,  
Gareth Callan*

Left: *Manton Original (flintlock shotgun)  
Peter Capewell, 2nd  
Gerardo Garcia Giner (Spain), 1st  
Bev Keeble, 3rd*

## Pistol

### *Tanzutsu Original (matchlock)*

2nd Nick Harvey	86
5th John Marsh	69
6th David Brigden	68

### *Cominazzo Original (flintlock)*

5th Jon Harper-Smith	86
6th Sandy Roberson	85

### *Boutet Team (original percussion pistol)*

3rd Helen Harper-Smith, John Marsh, Nick Harvey	274
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### *Egg Team (original flintlock)*

3rd Jon Harper-Smith, John Marsh, David Spittles	243
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*David Spittles, Team Captain*

*The 3rd placed Boutet Team (original percussion pistol):  
Nick Harvey, Helen Harper-Smith, John Marsh*

## MLAIC World Championships – Pforzheim 2012

# Would I Do It Again?

by Jon Huggett

It's funny what you find yourself doing sometimes. Black powder muzzle loading is not a main stream sport which will never be at the Olympics and will never be the main feature in the sports news on TV or in the papers... and yet we still do it. We still go into our sheds (or kitchens if you are lucky enough) to make bullets, weigh powder and frankly spend ages cleaning the damnable things afterwards, more often than not in my case, a frustrating morning on a cold and damp range – but I suppose that is the point isn't it.

Allan Whiffin asked me late last year if I would like to represent Great Britain in Pforzheim in 2012 at the World Championships, I slowly said yes – but what is involved? With a wry smile accented by his moustache he said 'Shooting dear boy, shooting'..... with such a clear explanation how could I say no?

I fully realise it is not everyone's cup of tea tramping across Europe to shoot, occasionally wear a blazer and go to a nice dinner at the end, but you really shouldn't knock it until you have tried it. Put simply I learned a lot about myself, mental approach to shooting, equipment and finally that golden 30 minutes that everything has been leading up to when you have your 13 shots.

Being relatively new to the shooting scene with a mere 4 years under my belt I only have a small number of different guns that I shoot competitively - an original 5 groove private purchase Enfield and an original off hand Schutzen rifle (which I only had put on my licence in March) so I could only realistically shoot in 4 competitions – 2 offhand and 2 prone. I determined that I should try to make the most of my experience and when not shooting make myself available to the rest of the team to help carry, fetch and support wherever and whenever I could.



Paul Wolpe kindly offered me a space in his car and although it was a 15 hour drive we jollied one another along and shared the driving, which for me at the very least seemed to fly by.... I can't speak for Paul but we seemed to share the same taste in music and I hope I made a good driving companion! With 10 rifles and muskets we made it safely into Germany and to our hotel which although did not come with air conditioning, was 10 minutes from the range and my room had the benefit of being able to wash and dry polo tops in less than 4 hours a definite advantage when it's over 36°C on the range.... I'm told on the shot gun range it was over 38°C on some days.

When we visited the range for practice sessions (available in abundance) and scrutineering I was amazed at how nice the shooting house was, the bar and café as well as the abundance of covered and indoor ranges, plus of course the electronic targets with a monitor to the shooters left - eliminating the requirement for shooting scopes cluttering up the range! This also had the effect of turning the shooting into a very watchable and at times, quite tense sport. In an odd sort of way a bit like tennis as you watch the individual scores rack up. I have to hand it to the German organisers as they were very well organised and very likable (other than the car parking attendant who didn't seem to understand that shooting cases, boxes of lead and equipment need to be collected from as near to the shooting house as possible – but we all soon got over this).

For me the practice sessions were a mixed bag. I was told that there may not be much time and space to check equipment over and check sites so I frankly did not take enough bullets for all the sessions that I could have shot on and practiced at different times of the day, so I could get some experience of shooting in the heat – the lube on my .577 bullets was like water in the afternoon... more bees wax needed in the future I think. I managed to get a personal best on my Schutzen rifle, with 91, so this makes me 44th in the world or something like that! Although if I hadn't loaded the last bullet without powder which I then had to retrieve, flatten off the head, load correctly WITH powder and then re-use I may have got 93/94... but still a lesson learned and all that!

My Enfield rifle did not fair so well with frankly poor performance at 100m (but at least I wasn't last) and a score at 50m that left me feeling bitter for some time. Jon Harper-Smith on the other hand contributed to 11 of the 25 medals won, placing Team GB second on the medals table out of 25 countries.

So what did I learn...

Well therein lies the rub...more than I can put down here for sure, but my top 10 comments for shooting irrespective of whether it is at Bisley, Warwick at my own club or abroad:

1. Shoot against yourself – it is a 13 shot competition and the only other competitor that counts is you.
2. Practice...Practice and Practice. At your home range and if you can, elsewhere.
3. Food, sleep and water. Try to keep within the same regime as you would normally do...filling yourself with alcohol staying up late and drinking coffee to recover will not help – I found bananas were a good source of fuel.
4. Mental preparation. Don't rush to get to the range. Leave plenty of time to set up and chill out. Chat to other shooters and get comfortable.
5. Equipment. I made sure everything was weighed and measured as is my normal routine... So it didn't help me much in Germany this time with the Enfield but that's down to me alone.

6. Nerves. I suffer from nerves so think about something else or as Dave Brigden advised me – sing a song to yourself... I have young children so recently at the Short Range Championships all I could think of was 'Frere Jacques' and the theme tune to 'Noddy'.... irrespective of song I found it helps.
7. Listen to advice... Then take and use the bits that are relevant to you... I was advised by Alan and Paul to take a block of wood to act as a gun rack on the table... which I did. One of the other competitors I was watching from South Africa hadn't been advised to do this and while she was setting out her equipment – you guessed it, the rifle fell on the floor and broke the rear site clean off – naturally she was quite upset...
8. When shooting in a big competition buddy up with someone. They can then help carry kit in and out, provide support, fetch forgotten items and just be there – it really does make a difference. I found myself looking for an empty coke can for Jeff Tanner when he was shooting his Japanese Matchlock... I gather you need a container to put the burning match into when not in use... not an easy thing to do on a nice clean German range.
9. Get more guns.... You can never have too many and it takes the mental pressure off 'having' to do well in just 1 or 2 disciplines... plus it is fun to see the bemused faces of the customs officials when going in and out of the country.
10. Finally...Have fun and enjoy the company. I thoroughly enjoyed the company of the team I was with and chatting to the other nations.

I feel privileged and proud to have been able to represent my country (especially in the Olympic year) and I even got to carry the flag at the opening ceremony, although this may have been because I was the youngest there with the least number of ailments, but it was still nice to do. My thanks must go to the Rifle Team Captain Helen Harper-Smith for her help and guidance, Paul Wolpe who proved to be a great companion and mentor and the rest of the team as they were all great company..... and finally the 'WAGS' who came along to offer support to their other halves and the team.

Would I do it again? YES

