

# The British Shooting Sports Council

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2007

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## FOREWORD

The Annual Report which follows is remarkable for its extent and detail. I do hope that all members of the Council will find the time to read it carefully, since it records the immense amount of work done and initiatives taken in the protection and promotion of safe shooting sports. And it is highly educative. It is too much to hope that all our legislators with interests in shooting will see it, but it would be helpful, in the interests of the public and of shooting, if they were able to do so.

It is both a pity and a danger that society generally has little knowledge, interest or toleration of arms and calculates or imagines that legislation can cure the very real problem of violence with firearms. It won't and, indeed, can make matters worse by inculcating a false sense of security. In a society beset by family breakdown and the lack of discipline and loss of moral principle among too many young people, it is sad but hardly surprising that the readily available supply of illegal firearms is used to settle scores real or imagined.

It is just possible to contemplate legislation to ban the supply of kitchen knives which are being used increasingly to stab and kill the innocent. Useless, of course, but the idea demonstrates the limitations of legislation. The only cure for gratuitous violence with whatever weapon is, I suggest, "education" in its widest sense and condign punishment for those who commit violent crimes.

One of my major concerns during my years as Chairman and President of the Council has been the increasing use of violence on television and video games as entertainment. There is no doubt, in my opinion, that it encourages the impressionable young to accept violence as the norm and I was delighted that the Council made a closely argued submission to Dr Tanya Byron's Enquiry. Let us hope that some good will come of it.

But the submission was but a tiny percent of the painstaking work done by Council Members in the interest of responsible shooting and of public safety and, in particular, by its energetic and very hard working Secretary, David Penn. We have much to thank him for, as indeed we have in the case of the Chairman Lord Shrewsbury. The latter has succeeded me as President after a most successful period as Chairman.

I have enjoyed eight years as Chairman and President. I am sad to lose this close connection with the Council but, in my opinion, it is necessary to quit any office before it becomes too comfortable and one runs out of ideas. I shall always be grateful to our Members for their friendliness and good fellowship and I thank them and I know they will be generous in their support for the continuing Officers in the work of promoting safe and disciplined shooting.

Sir Patrick Lawrence

**THE COUNCIL'S OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT	Sir Patrick Lawrence CBE DL
VICE-PRESIDENT	Brian Carter
CHAIRMAN	The Earl of Shrewsbury & Talbot DL
VICE-CHAIRMEN	Martyn Jones MP Bill Wiggin MP
TREASURER	Graham Downing
SECRETARY	David Penn

*“The aims and objectives of the Council are to promote  
And safeguard the lawful use of firearms and air weapons  
For sporting and recreational purposes in the United Kingdom  
amongst all sections of the community.”*

(Extract from the Constitution of the Council)

## ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL CLAY TARGET SHOOTING GROUNDS	Ian Clifton
ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SHOOTING INSTRUCTORS	Christopher Miles
BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR SHOOTING AND CONSERVATION	Bill Harriman TD
COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE	Graham Downing
CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING ASSOCIATION	Phil Boakes
GUN TRADE ASSOCIATION	John Batley
INSTITUTE OF CLAY SHOOTING INSTRUCTORS	Roger Hill
MUZZLE LOADERS ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN	Alan Overton (until December) Ken Hocking
NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION	Glynn Alger
NATIONAL SMALLBORE RIFLE ASSOCIATION	Geoff Doe
SHOOTING SPORTS TRUST	John Batley
SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND	Richard Malbon (until May) Alan Westlake
UNITED KINGDOM PRACTICAL SHOOTING ASSOCIATION	Graham Gill

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ACPO: Association of Chief Police Officers (England and Wales).  
 ATT: Arms Trade Treaty.  
 CIP: International Proof Commission.  
 CUF: Criminal Use of Firearms, an ACPO Secretariat.  
 DEFRA: Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.  
 DMA: Defence Manufacturers Association.  
 ELO: European Landowners Association.  
 EU: European Union.  
 FAC: Firearms Advisory Committee (not yet appointed). Also firearm certificate.  
 FACE: Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation of the European Union.  
 FELWG: Firearms and Explosives Licensing Working Group, an ACPO body.  
 FESAC: Foundation of European Societies of Arms Collectors.  
 GGE: (United Nations) Group of Government Experts.  
 HBSA: Historical Breechloading Smallarms Association.  
 HSE: Health and Safety Executive.  
 IANSA: International Action Network on Small Arms.  
 ICOMAM: The International Committee of Museums of Arms and Military History, an International Council of Museums body.  
 IMCO: The European Parliament's Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection.  
 ISSF: International Shooting Sport Federation.  
 MEP: Member of the European Parliament.  
 NFIC: National Firearms Intelligence Cell  
 NFLMS: National Firearms Licensing Management System.  
 NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation.  
 NIAG: National Independent Advisory Group.  
 NRA-TV: National Rifle Association Television (USA).  
 RFD: registered firearms dealer  
 SBAC: Society of British Aerospace Companies.  
 SGC: shotgun certificate.  
 SOCA: Serious Organised Crime Agency.  
 VCR Act: Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.

## CHANGES

In May 2007 Richard Malbon was succeeded by Alan Westlake as Director of the Sportsman's Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Alan became its representative on the Council. Richard died suddenly and without warning on the evening of Good Friday 2008. He had been Director of the Sportsman's Association since 1998. An expert in firearms law and deeply knowledgeable about the technical aspects of shooting, he will be greatly missed, as he gave so much of his time to his sport and its administration.

During December, Alan Overton stepped down as representative of the Muzzle Loaders Association of Great Britain. Alan was one of the most experienced members of Council, and was not only formidably knowledgeable on a wide range of subjects relating to target shooting, but his eye for detail and skill as a writer ensured the improvement of any draft. He was also active in his local constituency, where he made the most of his contacts with his MP, Martin Salter, the Labour Party spokesman for shooting. Alan has been succeeded by Ken Hocking, the MLAGB's Director for Collecting.

## HOME OFFICE AND PARLIAMENT

The BSSC has continued its close contact with the Home Office on all aspects of legislation affecting the shooting sports. Vernon Coaker has continued as Under Secretary of State with responsibility for firearms, and the BSSC has maintained a sound and open working relationship with him and his civil servants.

### **All Party Group on Shooting and Conservation**

This Group exists to provide an information source and discussion forum for legislators, and it is proving of great value. Meetings are held both at Westminster and in the field. The Secretariat is provided by BASC. BSSC joined in January 2007, and the Secretary has attended meetings on Sunday Shooting, the Deer Initiative, the effects of game bird rearing and releasing on the local habitat and wildlife, the CLA's Shoot Assurance Scheme and Code of Good Shooting Practice.

### **Review of Firearms Legislation**

During the year there was no discernable Home Office activity on the Review of Firearms Legislation, although this became a matter of political speculation in Scotland, with the growing pressure for devolution to Holyrood of a power to legislate on firearms. It is anticipated that the Home Office will be engaged until 2009 in the implementation of

changes emanating from Amendments to the 1991 EU Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons. Nor is there likely to be any impetus in Westminster for a 'root and branch' reform of firearms legislation this side of a general election.

### **Firearms Advisory Committee**

Any move in Westminster to appoint a Firearms Advisory Committee, the proposed successor to the Firearms Consultative Committee, is now expected to be consequent on the re-activation of work on the Review, although Holyrood has shown interest in the idea.

### **Parliamentary Reporting**

The Council has benefited throughout the year from the excellent service provided by Rees & Freres, Parliamentary Agents, in keeping the Council promptly informed of firearms and shooting-related matters raised not only in the Westminster Parliament, but also in the Edinburgh Parliament. Rees & Freres was amalgamated with Eversheds in December, and the latter will continue to provide a reporting service.

### **Proposed ban on 'samurai' swords**

Although the Private Members Bill number 217 tabled on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2006 did not succeed in its intention to ban the sale, manufacture, hire, loan, or importation of sharpened samurai swords, it nevertheless succeeded in keeping this a live political issue against the background of the Scottish Parliament's initiative with the Custodial Sentences & Weapons Bill, Scotland. Such legislation would potentially significantly affect collectors, re-enactors and the gun trade, some of whose members trade in collectors' arms and in knives for use in field sports, so was of concern to the BSSC.

In March the Home Office published a consultation document, focussed on 'samurai' swords and 'fantasy' knives. Following consultation with FESAC, HBSA, MLAGB, ICOMAM and the Arms & Armour Society, a BSSC response was sent in May.

The Home Office's Summary of Responses to its Consultation Paper on Banning Offensive Weapons was subsequently published, and the Home Secretary announced on 12<sup>th</sup> December that action would be taken on 'samurai swords', in effect a ban with exceptions, with the intention of having controls in place by April 2008. This would be achieved by an Order amending the 1988 Offensive Weapons Order.

The Response demonstrated that, numerically, respondents were against a ban, but that the consultation website was visited only 3507 times, and only 270 replies were received. There had been four police responses (one being from ACPO). Only two victims' groups

responded, and were clearly not in complete accord with each other. In Paragraph 2.3 the Summary stated that ‘We need to balance the views of the many collectors and martial arts enthusiasts against the position adopted by law enforcement agencies and victims organizations, *reflecting the views of wider communities*, who thought a ban necessary and proportionate...’ (emphasis added). This assumption is very much open to question, especially as one of the two victims’ groups seemed not to have supported a ban. Although the Government did not propose ‘at present’ to add any other articles to the Offensive Weapons Order, Paragraph 2.3 included a statement that ‘The Government will consider whether this should be extended to other swords, subject again to appropriate exemptions.’ There were clearly also unresolved definitional problems relating to ‘samurai’ swords.

The BSSC sought an early meeting with the Home Office in 2008, and formed a group of interested parties, including the GTA and auction houses as well as museums and collectors’ organisations.

### **Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006**

This Act was given the Royal assent on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2006. Its main impact is on those who collect or use realistic imitation firearms (where the design of the original firearm post-dates 1870) or blank firers or soft air guns, the importation, manufacture or sale of which has been banned if they are realistic imitation firearms (there are exemptions for soft-air skirmishing, re-enactment, and theatrical uses). Those already in private possession may be retained and used. The commercial sale of conventional air weapons is restricted to registered firearms dealers (private sales remain unaffected) and the age at which an air weapon may be purchased was raised to 18.

The Secretary continued to work closely with the Gun Trade Association and the Home Office on the implementation of this Act, a process still not completed by the end of 2007.

The outgoing First Minister of the Scottish Government, Jack McConnell, ordered Scottish Police Forces to report in two years time on the effect on crime of the Violent Crime Reduction Act.

The work of John Batley and Colin Greenwood of the GTA in discussions on the detailed wording of Regulations has considerably contributed to the improvement in detail of this legislation.

### **Home office investigation into violence in the media:**

The Home Office announced a review to be undertaken by Dr Tanya Byron, the well-known television psychologist and columnist, into violence in the media, the results to be submitted in March 2008. The Secretary submitted a response on behalf of the BSSC, which has maintained an interest in this subject since the mid-1990s.

## **Westminster Fair**

Following on the success of the 2005 and 2006 events, a third ‘Westminster Fair’ was held at the Houses of Parliament on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November on the theme of ‘Shooting-the Sport of a Million People’. Aimed primarily at MPs and Peers, this event gives the BSSC’s constituent organisations the chance to put the case for the shooting sports to our legislators, and they put on outstanding displays which generated much favourable comment. They were again joined by ACPO FELWG, the Police licensing group, and the HBSA, representing collectors of breech-loaders. Bill Wiggin MP, our host, and Martyn Jones MP, the BSSC’s two Vice-Chairmen, spoke eloquently on the grassroots of the sport that provided the base of the ‘performance pyramid’ on which our international success is based; on the opportunity provided to see our sport flourish as a result of the London Olympics and the Paralympics in 2012 and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014; on the risk of a ‘nil’ legacy of permanent World-class shooting range facilities in either London or Glasgow and of the need for individual shooters to ensure that their MPs were aware of the shooting sports.

## **SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

### **Custodial Sentences and Weapons (Scotland) Act 2007**

This Act introduced new measures to restrict the sale of ‘non-domestic’ knives and swords and increased maximum sentences for some existing offences. Because of the adverse effect that it could have on legitimate dealers, some of whom are registered firearms dealers, in knives, swords and antique arms, if only by discouraging law-abiding customers, it was of considerable concern to the Gun Trade Association and the BSSC.

The Act limits the commercial sale of non-domestic knives to licensed dealers and bans the sale of swords made after 1945, but provides exceptions to the ban on sale for legitimate religious, cultural and sporting purposes, including highland dancing, theatre, film, television, antique collecting, re-enactment and living history, fencing and those martial arts that are organised on a recognised sporting basis. The age at which a person may buy a crossbow was raised from 17 to 18.

There will be strong powers of enforcement, including a right of entry and seizure by police officers and trading standards officers if there are reasonable grounds for believing that an offence has been committed.

Draft Regulations for licensing the sale of non-domestic knives had still not been published at the end of 2007, but the BSSC remains ready to work towards achieving practicability in the application and enforcement of an Act which the BSSC considers ill-

founded. It is unlikely to affect the criminal, who tends to use cheap domestic or craft knives, but will impact most on legitimate users and small businesses. The extreme measures against swords appear to have been driven more by political distaste and disapproval than by any evidence or frequency of misuse. The wide powers it is intended to give to local authorities with regard to both the conditions attached to the knife dealer's licence and the fees charged are likely to be a recipe for inconsistency and unreasonableness.

### **Firearms legislation and Scotland**

On 18<sup>th</sup> December 2006 the then MSP Tommy Sheridan, founder of the Solidarity Group, lodged in the Scottish Parliament a consultation document on a proposal for a 'Member's Bill to restrict the sale and usage of air guns', supported by an 11,000 signature petition. Effectively it would have banned air weapons except for use in registered clubs (where the air weapons would also have to be stored) or for use by local authority- approved vermin controllers, so would have had a profound impact on the shooting sports in Scotland, and on the gun trade. It failed for constitutional reasons, but firearms, and air weapons in particular, remained a live political issue in Scotland during 2007.

Under pressure from the Scottish Nationalist Party, the Scottish Government made representations to Her Majesty's Government to introduce legislation to ban airguns in Scotland and to transfer legislative responsibility for firearms control from Westminster to the Scottish Parliament. Kenny MacAskill, Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice, responded to the effect that the Scottish Executive could not ignore the strength of public feeling about the misuse of air weapons in Scottish communities and was committed to taking appropriate steps to minimise the risk posed by air weapons. It was committed to ensuring that Scotland had a firearms regime that meets Scotland's needs and intended to engage with the Westminster Government on a wide range of issues including firearms.

Following the Scottish Nationalist Party's announcement, as part of its 2007-2008 legislative programme, that it was to pursue additional firearms legislation for Scotland, the Secretary briefed the Home Office on the undesirability of this proposal, as did the GTA, and subsequently met senior Scottish civil servants from the Scottish Government's Police & Community Safety Directorate and Sports Policy Unit on 14<sup>th</sup> November. It became clear that the debate in Scotland had moved on from a desire to 'ban' air weapons to a wish to create a new Firearms Act and a growing political appreciation of the benefits brought to the shooting sports, particularly to the rural economy. Just before Christmas, however, the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, vetoed the devolution proposal, claiming that any variation of the laws between Scotland and England would be "confusing and potentially damaging". The BSSC strongly supports the retention by Westminster of legislative powers on firearms issues. It is anticipated that this will remain very much a live political issue in 2008.

## POLICE

### Practitioners' Group Meetings

The meetings during the year again underlined the very good level of cooperation between ACPO Firearms and Explosives Licensing Working Group, the Home Office, the Forensic Science Service and the BSSC.

At the meeting held at BASC Headquarters on 28<sup>th</sup> February, it was reported that a number of issues raised at the previous meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2006 had been satisfactorily resolved, including:

- guidance on RFDs returning shotguns to their owners by carrier;
- agreement that FAC holders with a condition limiting them to MoD-certified ranges only may now use ranges certified under the new arrangements by organisations other than the MoD, including the National Rifle Association and the National Smallbore Rifle Association. The MoD-only condition will be removed when next the certificate is returned to the licensing office. This agreement had been promulgated to all forces by ACPO;
- FELWG had made use of the Gun Trade Association's information on how the VCR Act would affect the commercial sale of air weapons;
- FELWG had taken on board GTA concern about the registration of registered firearms dealers as bodies corporate and this was now covered in training for the National Firearms Licences Management System;
- An outstanding question about the status of grenade cup dischargers remains subject to a moratorium pending the outcome of a court case.

Concern was expressed about turnaround times for grant and renewal of certificates. During discussion it was stated that there were problems with the certificate renewal 'bulge' and with delays caused by the rolling out of the National Firearms License Management System.

Among matters discussed were:

- The good practice of Firearms Enquiry Officers providing printed contact details to applicants.
- The inherent danger of one particular model of humane killer. The police agreed that those in possession of such pistols should be contacted.
- Concerns regarding rights of local authority Council Tax Inspectors to enter private properties to conduct inspections and evaluations, and the undesirability of this with regard to dealers dealing from home or FAC holders.
- Concerns regarding contacts from bogus Firearms Enquiry Officers. It was agreed that if there was any doubt the certificate holder should refuse entry, refuse to answer questions, and check back with his firearms licensing office.

A meeting was held on 20<sup>th</sup> June. Matters under discussion included:

- Confirmation that dealers would not have to pay for information from the National Firearms Licensing Management System (NFLMS).
- Progress on the revision of firearms forms.
- An apparent increase in the use of the ‘accompanied’ condition for neophyte sporting rifle users.
- Pre-grant training.
- NFLMS delays, and a clarification of the numbering systems for RFDs in the NFLMS database.
- A paper proposing a new way of defining obsolete centrefire breechloaders that should be given Section 58(2) antique status, which was presented by Bill Harriman and the Secretary.
- A Home Office intention to revise its 2002 ‘Guidance’ on firearms law, which would be of great importance to all shooters, and in which the BSSC and its constituent Associations may expect to be closely involved.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> October, the meeting addressed the following issues:

- The acceptance that there was no active move to prohibit long barrelled revolvers and the withdrawal of police letters of advice that such a prohibition was under consideration.
- The general acceptance that only photocopies of FACs or SGCs need be submitted at renewal, rather than the original certificate.
- Training or supervision of novice shooters (an ongoing topic).
- Proposals relating to data retention by certificate holders arising from electronic means of communication.
- Delays in grants and renewals of certificates. A ‘best practice’ renewal process is now in place. Problems relating to the issue of Section 7 Permits, and their limitations, continue under consideration.
- Impact of the Violent Crime Reduction Act on dealer registration and on the acquisition of air rifles by the Scout Association and cadet forces, and the return of air weapons after repair. Positive pragmatic and practicable means of compliance were agreed upon.
- Following minor revision in the light of comments, the proposed changes to the way of defining antique breech-loading cartridge firearms were discussed further. These will be reconsidered in the light of the outcome of Amendments to the EU Weapons Directive.
- Discussion continued on the transportation of prohibited weapons by registered firearms dealers.

Matt Perring of BASC joined the Practitioners’ Group as Minutes Secretary. He immediately established his ability in this essential role.

### **Firearms Licensing Conference**

John Batley of the GTA, Geoff Doe of the NSRA, Bill Harriman and Mike Eveleigh of BASC, Phil Boakes of the CPSA and the Secretary all attended this Conference, with

John Batley, Geoff Doe, Mike Eveleigh and the Secretary all either giving papers or introducing sessions. The Conference was held against the background of the recently-published Home Office Research Study number 298 'Gun Crime: the market in and use of illegal firearms' which included the suggestion that burglaries were still a source of shotguns used in crime, that there was a problem with the leakage of shotgun cartridges from the legal into the illegal market, and there was an increasing use of shotguns, which are more likely to be discharged. A rebuttal paper was produced by Colin Greenwood of the Shooting Sports Trust. In 2006, firearms crime was reducing for the first time since 1998, although injuries were up. To the end of 2005, firearm certificate numbers had risen by 3.5%, shotgun certificates by 0.4% and RFDs by 0.7% (and set to rise further to cover air weapon dealers), an encouraging trend for the shooting sports. The main themes of the conference were: the new Violent Crime Reduction Act; night shooting; new procedures for range certification; 'secondary good reason' (for instance the use of a rifle granted for deer stalking for shooting foxes or boar); the new National Ballistics Intelligence Programme; disguised weapons; final stages of the 'roll-out' of the National Firearms License Management System; and the Home Office's review of firearms forms; and 'conditions'. In general, this was a very useful conference, with a considerable willingness to discuss problems openly and positive attitudes towards change being in considerable evidence. It is to be hoped that the various initiatives will be pursued, and that the BSSC will be invited to attend and contribute to future Conferences.

### **National Independent Advisory Group to the ACPO Criminal Use of Firearms Secretariat**

The Secretary is a member of this NIAG, which has continued to focus on issues and proposed solutions other than 'gun control'. These have included the utility of amnesties, and, at its meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> April, the role of mediation between rival criminal groups and witness protection, an essential prerequisite for successful prosecution of gang members.

At its meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> September, it considered the setting up by Jacqui Smith, Home Secretary, of a ministerial task force and a specialist national police unit headed by Jon Murphy, Deputy Chief Constable of Merseyside, following the death of Rhys Jones and rising firearms homicides. Provisional Home Office figures indicate that there were 58 firearms-related homicides in England and Wales in 2006-07 compared with 49 in the previous year. The unit was given a £1 million budget, and was to report in February or March 2008. It was to concentrate on local supply of firearms to gangs in London, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham, on criminal armourers, on ports of entry and the postal system. It brought together to work on illegal firearms as a high priority, a number of agencies including the Serious Organized Crime Agency, Customs & Revenue, the postal authorities, and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. The ministerial task force would involve other relevant ministries, local government and community groups in the development of a five year programme on a range of violent crime issues, including gun and knife crime. The Group also learned more of the work of the National Firearms Intelligence Cell, which is working with the above specialist national police unit.

Founded in December 2006, NFIC is a multi-agency unit, involving Customs & Revenue, the Border & Immigration Agency, SOCA, the West Midlands Police and the Metropolitan Police. Its role is to act as a centre of expertise on the criminal use of firearms and the law enforcement response. Its work-plan embraces conversions and reactivations, legislation, internet sales that are 'legal' in the country of origin but break UK law when the purchases arrive here, vulnerable borders, the cultural use of firearms, theatres of war and a European threat assessment. It has also expressed interest in areas of 'legal ambiguity', which may well be of great interest to the BSSC if any proposed solutions might impact adversely on the legitimate shooter.

This Group met again on 12<sup>th</sup> December, and was addressed by Vernon Coaker, Home Office Minister, who praised its work and confirmed its status as one of the Home Office's most important Advisory Groups. The role of the ACPO Criminal Use of Firearms portfolio will be changing. It will become part of the broader 'Violent Crime' portfolio, concentrating on the supply side of weapons. It is not yet clear how this will impact on the work of the NIAG. A very interesting presentation was given by a prison officer and a former armed robber, criminal armourer and 'lifer' on intervention programmes in prisons and schools, whereby formerly violent criminals are encouraged to help to dissuade children and those at an early stage of their criminal career to turn away from the carrying and use of weapons.

## HEALTH & SAFETY EXECUTIVE

While there has been no further advance on the HSE's intention to issue new guidance on the storage of shooters' powders, the HSE did issue a consultative document entitled 'Proposals for Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations) Regulations' which did include a proposal that the Firearm (or Shotgun) Certificate should become the basis for licensing the possession of black powder by shooters. While, in principle, an excellent concept that would simplify life for all parties, the suggested maximum of 1.5 kilos of black powder to be held on the authority of a FAC would be far too low for the great majority of users. There were also a number of other technical licensing issues affecting dealers and game fairs which it was opportune to discuss. A meeting with HSE was therefore arranged for January 2008, for which a discussion paper was prepared by the GTA and considerable research was undertaken on shooters' requirements regarding black powder by BASC and the MLAGB, to ensure a well-supported case.

## DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

During 2006 the BSSC had made submissions to the DEFRA Wildlife Management Team on proposed changes to the 1991 Deer Act relating to deer management. Following

the consultation process, DEFRA used the Regulatory Reform Act to implement changes. These implemented new close seasons for Chinese water deer and red/sika deer hybrids and a licensing system for culling deer during the close season or at night. They also permitted the use of a stationary mechanically-propelled vehicle, with its engine off, as a shooting platform, and the use of ‘any reasonable means’ to despatch a wounded deer. Restrictions on the use of rifles under .240 inch calibre for killing deer in England and Wales were modified to permit the use of a rifle with not less than .220 inch calibre and a muzzle energy of not less than 1,356 joules (1,000 foot pounds) and a soft nosed or hollow nosed bullet not less than 3.24 grammes (50 grains) in weight for Chinese water Deer and muntjac, but not for roe (as originally intended) there having been opposition to this by Natural England and the RSPCA. It is to be regretted that a complete alignment of practice between English and Scottish legislation on rifles and cartridges suitable for smaller deer species, an outcome strongly supported by BSSC, was not achieved. Nevertheless the other changes were greatly to be welcomed.

## PROPOSED EUROPEAN UNION BAN ON NON-METRIC MEASURES

In February the Secretary responded (as did the Gun Trade Association, Shooting Sports Trust and many other industries and interest groups) to an EU request for consultation on the use of ‘supplementary indicators’ (i.e. non-metric measurements), laying down arguments for the continuation of the measurement of shotgun bores by the number of pure lead round balls to the pound, the use of Imperial measures for cartridges and the grain for projectile and propellant weights. While the EU is committed to universal metrication, it recognizes that other systems remain in widespread use and understanding, and has to accept that one of the EU’s major export markets, the USA, is unlikely ever to metricate. Hitherto, the EU has permitted the use of non-metric measurements alongside metric.

On 26<sup>th</sup> June the EU report on the consultation on the 1979 Directive 80/181/EEC was published, with the anticipated outcome of a recommendation that traditional units of measurement should be allowed to continue indefinitely, to the benefit of the shooting sports and gun trade, along with the manufacturers of detergent, bicycles and a host of other products. While almost all states and all industry representative groups were sensibly in favour of the status quo, curiously the only strong pressure for a rigid and exclusive metrication policy came from private individuals, mostly school teachers, in the UK.

## EUROPEAN FIREARMS ISSUES

**Amendment of the EU Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons.**

In order for the EU to comply with the United Nation's anti-crime Vienna Protocol, some minimal changes to the 1991 Directive were required, covering marking and tracing of firearms, illegal manufacture, the period of time for which dealers' registers must be maintained, and deactivation standards. During 2006 it became clear that real pressure was being exerted by some anti-gun Members of the European Parliament to open up the debate on the Directive with a view to making it significantly more restrictive.

The progress of the Amendments through the EU Committee and Parliamentary process continued through 2007, with well over 120 Amendments and Compromise Amendments in play, and preparing briefings for MEPs on these, liaising with interested UK organizations, particularly the Gun Trade Association (also very active, as it became clearer that the trade would be affected to an even greater extent than the shooter) and European bodies, particularly FACE and FESAC, were major aspects of the Secretary's work for the year. The debate swung back and forth, with the interests of the legitimate shooting sports and the trade gaining some ascendancy in midyear after hard lobbying, but the lack of agreement within the European Parliament's Committees was reflected by the postponement from September to November of the EU Parliament's Plenary Session to discuss the proposed Amendments, despite the Presidency's commitment to completing the amendment process before the end of the year, and there was a distinct hardening of attitudes during October. Following a series of what are called 'Trilogue' meetings (which are neither public nor minuted for public consumption) between the Presidency (Portugal at the time of the discussions), the EU Parliament, represented by Arlene McCarthy, a UK MEP who is the Chair of the IMCO (internal market) Committee, and the Commission (the EU civil servants), a compromise set of draft Amendments was finally agreed in November. On 29<sup>th</sup> November the European Parliament approved the final compromise Amendment 53 to the 1991 Directive, which was carried with 588 votes in favour, 14 against and 11 abstentions.

What have the shooting and collecting organisations achieved?

- **Antiques:** The BSSC's Secretary, who is also President of the Arms & Armour Society, made a major contribution in this area, directly and via FESAC. After long negotiations on the understanding that the UN Protocol which precipitated the Amendment process appeared to mandate a definitional date no later than 1899 (which would have adversely affected the Britain's practicable approach to the definition of antique firearms), we have ended up where we started, which is not a bad place in which to be. The definition of antique will be left to individual states, and collectors and museums will remain outwith the Directive, as they are now. This does not mean that we are out of the woods in Britain, however, since the UK has individually signed (but not yet ratified) the UN Treaty, so the BSSC has begun discussions with the Home Office on this basis.
- **Auctions:** Conventional auctions of modern firearms should remain unaffected by provisions dealing with selling by means of 'distance communication'. BSSC and the GTA took the lead on this issue, which particularly affects the UK

- **Brokers:** Some draconian and very wide-ranging proposals regarding brokers have been dropped, although some regulation at national level is encouraged. Within the UK, our existing DTI regulations will ensure compliance.
- **Deactivation and convertible firearms:** There will be strict deactivation guidelines, but again with little likely impact on Britain. Convertible blank firers and convertible replicas will be treated as real firearms. Again, there is unlikely to be much impact on the legal owner in the UK, but these measures are intended to help choke off supplies for illegal conversion for criminal purposes.
- **European Firearms Pass:** Despite the best endeavours of the shooting organizations and considerable support within Europe to make the EFP the only document needed for EU citizens to travel with their firearms across internal borders, we lost on this one, and Britain retains the ability to demand a British Visitors Permit as well as an EFP. Britain will not be permitted to charge a fee for any part of the EFP process, and the BSSC and FACE have begun to press for the acceptance of a copy of the EFP, rather than the original document as currently required, as part of the application process for the British Visitor's Permit by EU citizens. This would considerably reduce the inconvenience of the present system to EU visitors.
- **Four categories:** After a considerable effort, the four categories of firearm enshrined in the 1991 Directive have been retained for those states (principally France and Austria) that want them. Category D allows possession of conventional non-repeating shotguns without any form of license in those states. Within four years, however, the Commission will report on the possible advantages and disadvantages of reducing the number of categories to two ('prohibited' and 'authorised').
- **Marking and tracing:** Marking to indicate manufacturer and country of origin, date of manufacture and serial number will become compulsory for the EU, as will a similar requirement to mark firearms being sold out of Government stocks for civilian use, should they be inadequately marked. We did manage to prevent the adoption of both draconian marking requirements for ammunition and, at one stage, only the BSSC appeared to have been fully aware of the possible very adverse impact that a proposed ill-defined 'unique individual numbering' system could have had on dealers and shooters alike. Thanks to hard lobbying by the BSSC, this was dropped. Some limited recognition has been given to the CIP (the international proof authority).
- **National computerized data filing systems:** These will become mandatory, to link firearms sold in the EU to their owners, but will not much affect the UK shooter as we already have NFLMS. The main impact is likely to be on record-keeping requirements for the UK gun trade, including commercial import and export between member states, and the precise nature of this is already under discussed with the Home Office.
- **'Replica' firearms:** The Commission will carry out a study of what in Britain are called 'repros' (i.e. fully functional facsimiles of old firearms), which in some

European countries are treated on the same basis as the antique they mimic. This study may also extend to non-firing replicas, and will be submitted in 2010. The UK is unlikely to be much affected.

- **Under-18s:** There was considerable pressure from some quarters to restrict considerably or even prohibit target shooting or hunting by under-18s. After much effort (with positive inputs from our Home Office), the ability of British young shooters to shoot unsupervised should not be affected (they will need permission from a parent), but the age at which a firearm or shotgun can be purchased will rise from 17 to 18. Given the lack of support in Europe for a younger age for purchase, we had no prospect of changing this. The BSSC provided draft wording which was used to improve this section of the Directive.

The amended Directive will come into force in January 2008, with implementation by 2010. The BSSC has already been involved in negotiations with the Home Office on the practical implementation of the revised Directive, which is now EU law and will be implemented in the UK by means of an Order in Council. Some trade record-keeping issues apart, the only change that is likely to impact on the ordinary shooter is the raising to 18 from 17 of the age at which someone may buy a shotgun or rifle. 18 is already the minimum age for purchase of an air weapon or crossbow.

## WORLD FORUM

The BSSC is a founding member of the World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities (WFSA), a NGO in Roster Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

### **Proposed United Nations Arms Trade Treaty**

In 2006 the UK and six other countries sent a letter to all Governments proposing a UN Group of Experts to consider a global Arms Trade Treaty that would establish common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. This would be legally binding, and cover all conventional arms, not just small arms and light weapons. The BSSC's concern, shared by World Forum, is that such measures intended to control the trade in, and brokering of, military equipment could have an unintended and damaging impact on the legitimate international trade in sporting firearms and ammunition, and even on the international movement of privately-owned firearms for hunting, target shooting or cultural purposes. Concern also grew over the possible extension of the proposed ATT to ammunition, and over the UN's interest in model national legislation on brokering and firearms controls.

The Secretary was involved in preparing the World Forum's submission to the UN First Committee in October 2006, and the process towards a treaty is now under way. It is likely to take at least five years.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office's 'Response to the United Nations Secretary General's Request for Views' on the proposed ATT advocates, not surprisingly, a tough, transparent system with sanctions to control international trade in conventional weapons. The Secretary had discussions with the FCO about excepting antiques and sporting firearms from the strictures of the proposed treaty, and Paragraph 13 of the FCO's Response states: *'An instrument should also not place overly burdensome controls on the movement of privately owned antique or sporting firearms for sporting or cultural purposes.'* This represents a useful statement on which to build further on issues relating to civilian firearms and the ability to move them internationally.

Following discussions with World Forum and the Defence Manufacturers Association, a joint submission, drafted by the Secretary, was made on the 9<sup>th</sup> May on behalf of the DMA and BSSC to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office on the specific issues of marking, tracing and international movement of ammunition, a matter being considered by a second UN Group of Government Experts.

The Secretary attended the Study Day on the ATT held on 5<sup>th</sup> June at the Royal College of Defence Studies. The programme was one of group discussions and reporting back to an open forum. An excellent background paper by Professor Paul Cornish, Carrington Professor at Chatham House and Head of its International Security Programme had been distributed, and, very importantly, this recognized the civilian sporting shooter as one of the stakeholders of whose interests account needed to be taken in any ATT. World Forum was represented by Tom Mason and the Secretary represented civilian firearms issues. It was made abundantly clear by the FCO that the ATT was not in any way aimed at domestic firearms legislation anywhere. Tom Mason and the Secretary made sure that those present were fully aware of the size and impact world-wide of civilian ownership. It was clear that the civilian owner and user of firearms, and the legitimate civilian gun trade, are seen by the FCO as stakeholders in this issue, and that there was no inbuilt animus against the trade in, or legitimate international movement of, civilian firearms.

The Secretary attended one day of the informal ATT Workshop hosted by Canada in Geneva during the week of 27<sup>th</sup> August, along with other World Forum representatives, during which he had a personal meeting with UK Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs John Duncan to discuss specific civilian firearms issues. He also attended a major seminar in London jointly hosted by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the DMA on 14<sup>th</sup> September. At both the point was made very strongly that the ATT was not intended to affect domestic firearms legislation, but the likely effect on the international trade in civilian arms (or indeed the international movement of firearms by their private owners) remains much less certain, and intentions are not likely to become clear on these issues until detailed drafting of the UN Group of Government Experts' report begins in the latter part of 2008. The anti-gun Non-Governmental Organisations are already very heavily involved in lobbying and inputting information into the ATT process. They are

against any differentiation between civilian firearms and military small arms, and are increasingly portraying the proposed treaty as an anti-crime measure, supported by instances of misuse of shotguns and pistols in developing countries. It is now widely appreciated that the 'gun lobby' can have a profound effect on the attitudes of any US administration to an ATT and, without US involvement, an ATT would be seriously compromised. World Forum made a presentation on the need to exempt civilian firearms from the proposed Arms Trade Treaty to the UN 1<sup>st</sup> Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2007, one of only four NGOs invited to do so. This went very well, and, exceptionally, the WFSA team was praised for an exemplary presentation.

The Secretary was invited to a Foreign & Commonwealth Office conference held at Wilton Park, the FCO's country house conference/training centre, from 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> December. Attendance was by invitation and it was heavily subscribed, with 57 attendees from 26 countries. Most present were government representatives or staff of Non-Governmental Organisations, these comprising Amnesty, British Red Cross, BSSC (and World Forum), IANSA, Oxfam, Saferworld and SBAC (Society of British Aerospace Companies, which also covers high tech defence systems). Academic organisations were Chatham House, the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford and the Royal United Services Institute. Representatives of the UK Department for International Development, the UK Ministry of Defence and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs were also present. Much of what was discussed was aimed at informing the UN Group of Government Experts who will be considering the feasibility of an Arms Trade Treaty over the next year or so, and several of the GGE were present. The proceedings were conducted under Chatham House rules, so comments cannot be attributed to organisations or individuals. The format was talks on set themes (export, import, and scope), followed by breakout groups. The Secretary was there on behalf of World Forum as well as the BSSC, with the aim of ensuring that the position of the legitimate civilian firearms owner and the civilian gun trade was protected and understood in a milieu in which inevitably small arms and light weapons were the point of focus, whatever the aspirations of the ATT's proponents for the coverage of all conventional arms.

There was growing appreciation by importing states which do not manufacture weapons that non-state actors and criminals had no difficulty in getting small arms and light weapons on the black market, but that small states were facing export refusals.

Of the 92 states, plus the EU, who had submitted views on the proposed Arms Trade Treaty, four had raised the issue of the movement of private civilian firearms. These were Bosnia, Canada, Malta and the UK. All used the UK text (i.e. it should not place overly burdensome controls on the movement of privately owned firearms). The Secretary clarified that this was intended to facilitate temporary exportation/importation for people going to hunt or target shoot in a country other than their own). He emphasised in a plenary session the point that there were a very large number of legitimate civilian firearms owners and users in the World (using the Swiss Small Arms Survey figures), and that their interests, and the interests of the substantial legitimate trade supplying them, needed to be given proper consideration.

The point was well made that many of the conflict areas in Sub-Saharan Africa have now progressed to 'post-conflict' status, and so low intensity conflict is no longer seen as the exclusive reason for achieving an ATT. There is an increasingly significant movement in some unsympathetic quarters towards supporting the proposed ATT as a method of reducing crime, with Brazil being held up as an example of uncontrolled armed criminality. Clearly the failure of the Firearms Ban Referendum there continues to rankle.

The BSSC will continue to help maintain pressure to avoid civilian and collectors' arms being caught up in controls aimed at modern military small arms and light weapons.

### **World Forum "Workshop on Shooting Ranges: Lead Reclamation, Sound Attenuation, and Backstop Construction" Palermo, 2-3 October**

Dr John Harradine (BASC) and Major Frank Compton (MoD) gave papers of great interest on, respectively, 'Responses to shooting noise problems in the UK' and 'UK Ministry of Defence Development, Maintenance and Remediation of Stop Butts'. The 30 participants included the world's leading authorities on shooting range design and management, who listened to seventeen presentations related to lead management, sound attenuation and projectile containment. Following on from the World Forum's very influential 'World Symposium on Lead in Ammunition' held in Rome in 2004, the meeting gave an overview of the latest technologies, innovations and developments in various countries. The Palermo Proceedings are to be published in early 2008.

### **World Forum Executive Committee Meetings, Nuremberg 7-8 March and Palermo, 4-5 October**

At the March meeting the Secretary presented a discussion paper proposing a number of topics for future conferences. He was appointed to an *ad hoc* committee monitoring the Arms Trade Treaty. He was also re-appointed to the Executive Committee until 2009 and chaired the plenary session and gave the final 'call to action' address to the session and was interviewed at length for NRA-TV. Major concerns centred on the UN's legislative programme, which had re-started the process after the failed New York Conference of 2006, and now encompassed the proposed Arms Trade Treaty and positive steps towards the control of trade in ammunition; the amendment of the EU Directive on Weapons Control and the environmental issues of lead pollution and noise.

In October the Secretary was involved in further discussions on the expansion of the WFA's website and chaired the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meeting was preceded by meetings of the Legislative, Statistics and Environmental Sub-Committees and the Manufacturers' Action Group. Apart from the Arms Trade Treaty and the EU Directive, major issues were increasing problems associated with flying with firearms, postal problems involving firearms and environmental matters. The Secretary was made a member of the working group which will be addressing the airline and postal issues and the ATT working group will be very active over the next several years.

Planning is beginning on the 2009 workshop on the environmental benefits of hunting, as proposed by Professor Gary Mauser and the Secretary.

## NATIONAL SHOOTING WEEK 2007

The BSSC's first National Shooting Week, which ran from 26<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> June, was a considerable success. Information on the event reached 15 million people (12.9 million through non-specialist print media, all but one of them positive in tone, and also through radio and television). The media launch at Bisley by the Chairman Lord Shrewsbury attracted considerable political support.

Richard Caborn, the then Sports Minister, wrote:

"I would like to take this opportunity to wish all those involved in the event every success. Offering people a chance to try Olympic and Paralympic sports may inspire future 2012 medallists. Britain has a strong track record of Olympic shooting success."

Martin Salter, the Labour spokesman on shooting and fishing, gave a very positive address highlighting the ridiculous situation in which our Olympic pistol squad finds itself, having to train in Switzerland because the 1997 Firearms (Amendment) (No.2) Act banned target shooting with a .22 pistols, stating:

"The event will also demystify certain imagery surrounding guns and give members of the public a great day out in a safe environment."

Hugh Robertson, the Shadow Sports Minister, said:

"Shooting is one of the most inclusive Olympic and Paralympic sports, where gender, age and disability are no barriers to success. I applaud National Shooting Week as an excellent idea to promote a sport in which Britain excels. We must give our best shooters every chance to shine in the future."

Also attending was Kate Hoey MP, Chair of the Countryside Alliance and President of the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association. Enjoying the day were Dr Derrick Campbell, Chair of the ACPO Criminal Use of Firearms National Independent Advisory Group and Detective Chief Inspector Phil Healy, the then staff officer to the ACPO CUF portfolio. Those attending had the opportunity to meet, talk to and watch in action top clay target, small bore and air weapon shooters, many of them juniors with their eyes on the 2012 Olympics. These included Lawrence Collier (gold medallist, Junior men's skeet, 2006 ISSF World Championships), Nathan Sutherland (English Junior Air Rifle Champion 2006), Ryan Sperling (16-year-old clay pigeon shooter, bronze medallist in the 2005 European Championships), Sally Bond (gold medallist, women's skeet, Sydney Youth Olympic Festival 2007), Rory Warlow (silver medallist, skeet, Sydney Youth Olympic Festival 2007), Samantha Buckley (silver medallist, Junior Women's British Open Air

Pistol Championships), Mick Gault (pistol shooter. English, British and Commonwealth Champion, and most decorated English Commonwealth Games Competitor), Elena Little (World record holder in Women's Olympic Skeet), Nathan Milgate (Paralympian air rifle shooter. Winner, standing category, British Airgun Championships) and Montana Jones (Modern Pentathlete, and one of the first five junior athletes to receive a 2012 Sports Scholarship in 2005).

Other MPs had attended the events run throughout the UK by 101 clubs providing 200 'open days', at some of which attendance was five-fold higher than anticipated. The idea for the National Shooting Week came from the Countryside Alliance, and the central organisation was undertaken by Rob Gray, its Campaigns Director, who has earned the considerable thanks of the shooting community by his introduction of the shooting sports to a very substantial number of potential participants and his generation of much good publicity that has had a positive effect on the perception of shooting among the public at large.

## LEAD AND NOISE ATTENUATION WORKING GROUP

Following preliminary information-gathering meetings in February and March, this BSSC Group held two meetings in July and September, and has been working on two specific areas: sound attenuation, particularly on clay shooting grounds, and the preparation of a paper on this subject by Dr John Harradine at the World Forum Workshop on Shooting Ranges: Lead Reclamation, Sound Attenuation, and Backstop Construction (see under World Forum). This involved a wide-ranging survey of clay shooting grounds carried out by the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation

## AUCTION HOUSES

The Secretary and the Gun Trade Association continue to be involved in discussions with the major arms auction houses, led by Bonhams, on problems relating to auction house business involving firearms subject to certification. A report addressing the issues prepared for the BSSC by Colin Greenwood of the Shooting Sports Trust was considered in detail at a meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January. The Secretary has also continued to brief on potential problems that might arise from proposed amendments to the EU Directive on Weapons Control and Westminster legislation on swords.

## DEFENCE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION SECTION 5 GROUP

In May the Secretary drafted a joint submission from the Defence Manufacturers Association and BSSC to the FCO on the feasibility of marking and tracing small arms ammunition. This has been a major arms control issue at both UN and EU levels.

## STANDING CONFERENCE ON COUNTRYSIDE SPORTS

The 58th meeting was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007. Of particular note had been the creation in November 2006 of 'Natural England', bringing together the Countryside Agency, English Nature and Defra's Rural Development Service. Dr Helen Phillips, its Chief Executive, gave a presentation on 'Ambitions for the Rural Economy and Countryside'. This new body's purpose was to help resource the natural environment, and to improve access and enjoyment. Its programme would be based on sustainable use and ensuring environmental security. She acknowledged the role of country sports in moorland and hedgerow management; in the encouragement of field margins; of legitimate predator control; of the need for care over introduced species and of the work of wildfowling clubs in improving coastal SSSIs and even in flood prevention. She stressed that Natural England wished to work positively with country sports organisations. David Collins, Deputy Chief Constable of North Yorkshire, and Chair of the ACPO Rural Affairs committee, gave a lively and amusing talk on the problems of rural policing in what is now seen as an 'urban-centric' policing ethos, the need for rural enforcement and the problem on unenforceable legislation. John Lloyd-Jones, Chairman, Countryside Council for Wales, gave a talk on the interplay between economic pressures, public policy and the farmer's personal preference. Climate change (which could be the major influence on the success or failure of local species populations), the need to find alternatives to oil and population growth all exerted considerable influence. Shooting could help to preserve bio-diversity, including through predator control. In general the Meeting re-enforced the growing understanding and acceptance that field sports are part of the solution to social and economic problems, rather than being perceived as part of the problem. They do, however, have to earn that acceptance through active co-operation with other agencies.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 the Secretary attended the 59<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Conference. The theme was 'Sharing Experience from Europe'. Subjects included food hygiene Directives and their implementation, a review of the Nature Directives, the Weapons Directive, and the work of the European Landowners Organisation (ELO). The ELO, originally founded in 1985, is made up of 56 national organisations and is based in Brussels. *Inter alia*, it runs the secretariat of the European Parliament's 'Intergroup Sustainable Hunting', which can influence EU policy. Its key message is that wildlife managers, hunters and anglers have a deep interest in the environment and are 'solution providers' for the protection of biodiversity. It has created a Charter of good practices for wildlife management. Yves Lecocq of FACE gave an outstanding overview of 'Countryside sports-their contribution to European rural and urban communities'. The number of hunters was growing in the Nordic countries, Germany and Ireland (which had the highest percentage of its population involved in rural sports), but falling elsewhere,

and with a rising average age. The challenge was to persuade more of the urban young and women to become involved.

## ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Guest of Honour Vernon Coaker, Minister of State at the Home Office, drew warm applause at the British Shooting Sports Council's Annual Luncheon on 29<sup>th</sup> March when he emphasised the Government's determination to prevent disruption of lawful shooting and fishing activities by animal rights extremists. Pointing to the Government's record of firm and effective action against extremists through its bio-science strategy, he made it clear that this would be applied with equal rigour against those intimidating or harassing shooters and anglers.

Vernon Coaker praised the BSSC's National Shooting Week initiative for "presenting your sport to the public in a positive light whilst promoting the responsible use of firearms" and promoting a wider public understanding of the difference between the legal use of firearms and their misuse by "thugs out there murdering people on our streets". He stressed his willingness to listen to the shooters' point of view and his appreciation for the assistance, advice and information they contributed to a sometimes complex debate.

## MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

In March the Secretary was elected President of the Arms & Armour Society and appointed a Consultant to FESAC, the Foundation of European Societies of Arms Collectors.

The Secretary appeared on Sky News, Oxford Local Radio and Radio Five Live about the Virginia Tech shootings and National Shooting Week, and had a letter on gun crime published in the London Evening Standard.

The Secretary gave a paper on areas of agreement and disagreement over legislative change at the BASC/ACPO Firearms and Explosives Licensing Working Group on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> June the Secretary gave a presentation on the VCR Act and changes to the Deer Act to a Metropolitan Police Firearms Enquiry Officers training day. He was also one of the respondents to the Metropolitan Police Firearms Policy and Standard Operating Procedures review in May.

The Secretary was interviewed for an article which appeared in the 'Daily Telegraph' on the granting of shotgun certificates to children. This article elicited numerous responses

on the 'Daily Telegraph's' website, almost all favourable to the responsible involvement of young people in the shooting sports. He was also interviewed at length about the amendments to the EU Weapons Control Directive for the American NRA Radio channel.

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