

BRITISH SHOOTING SPORTS COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2010

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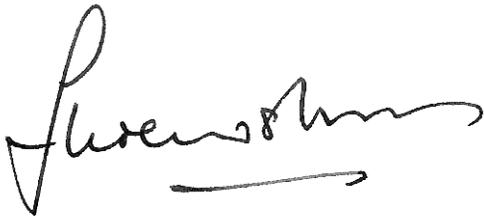
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Cover: Home Affairs Select Committee visit to Bisley. Aiden Burley MP, Anita North (Commonwealth Games 2010 gold medal and Commonwealth Games record holder), Keith Vaz MP (Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee), Charlotte Kerwood (Commonwealth Games gold medallist 2002 and 2006 and Commonwealth Games record holder) and Bridget Phillipson MP. Photo credit: Mike Wells.

FOREWORD

I am delighted to have been asked to write a short foreword to Council's Annual Report at the end of what has turned out to be an eventful 12 months. One only has to glimpse at the headline of each item in the index to the Report to realise that it has been a difficult and very busy year for the BSSC. I would like to pay tribute to all the Members of Council for their hard work and diligence, and not least to David Penn. His workload is vast, and we are fortunate indeed to have secured the use of his knowledge, advice and guidance. The BSSC does sterling and important work both at home and abroad in terms of the defence and promotion of the shooting sports in general, and long may this continue.

I commend this Report to you, and offer my grateful thanks to all those who have served on Council during the past 12 months.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Penn', with a horizontal line underneath.

The Earl of Shrewsbury & Talbot DL

THE COUNCIL'S OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	The Earl of Shrewsbury & Talbot DL
CHAIRMAN	The Lord Glentoran CBE
VICE-CHAIRMEN	Martyn Jones Tobias Ellwood 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 Andrew Clifton (from September)
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 John Perry (from March)
GUN TRADE ASSOCIATION	John Batley
INSTITUTE OF CLAY SHOOTING INSTRUCTORS	Roger Hill Malcolm Plant (from January)
MUZZLE LOADERS' ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN	Ken Hocking
NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION	Glynn Alger
NATIONAL SMALLBORE RIFLE ASSOCIATION	Geoff Doe Ali Aitken (from September)
SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND	Alan Westlake
UNITED KINGDOM PRACTICAL SHOOTING ASSOCIATION	Graham Gill George Granycome (from January)

ABBREVIATIONS

ACOP:	Approved Code of Practice
ACPO:	Association of Chief Police Officers (England and Wales)
AFEMS:	Association of European Manufacturers of Sporting Ammunition
ATT:	Arms Trade Treaty
BASC:	British Association for Shooting and Conservation
BCAP:	Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice
BIS:	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BMA:	British Medical Association
BMS4:	UN Fourth Biennial Meeting of States
CA:	Countryside Alliance
CASA:	Coordinating Action on Small Arms (a UN organization)
CAP:	Committee of Advertising Practice
CIC:	International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation
CIP:	Commission Internationale Permanente pour l'Epreuve des Armes à Feu Portatives (Permanent International Commission for Firearms Testing)
CITES:	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
COER:	Control of Explosives Regulations
CUF:	Criminal Use of Firearms, an ACPO Secretariat
DCMS:	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
EU:	European Union
FACE:	Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the European Union
FELWG:	Firearms and Explosives Licensing Working Group, an ACPO body
FLIGG:	Firearms Licensing Improvement Governance Group
GP:	General Practitioner
GTA:	Gun Trade Association
HASC:	Home Affairs Select Committee
HSA:	Health & Safety Executive
IAG:	Independent Advisory Group
IPCC:	Independent Police Complaints Commission
ISACS:	UN CASA's International Small Arms Control Standards
MSER:	Manufacture & Storage of Explosives Regulations
NFLMS:	National Firearms Licensing Management System
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRA:	National Rifle Association
NSW:	National Shooting Week
ORR:	Office of Rail Regulation
PCC:	Press Complaints Commission
POA:	UN Programme of Action
REACH:	EU Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals regulations
RRO:	Regulatory Reform Order
TNIAG:	Themed National Independent Advisory Group
UN:	United Nations
WFSA:	World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities

Overview of the year

During the first half of the year the Council's work focused on ongoing legislative matters, including the definition of 'blank firers' in relation to the Violent Crime Reduction Act, the Electronic Notification Draft Order, the Wildlife & Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill and the implementation of the amended EU Directive on weapons control and on firearms fees, issues relating to Section 11(6) exemptions for clay target shooting and on the development of a policy on pistol shooting.

Events in the latter half of the year were dominated by the tragic shootings in Cumbria on the 2nd June, carried out by Derrick Bird, the holder of certificates for the .22 rim-fire bolt action rifle and 12 bore double barrelled shotgun used to commit the murders. The private possession of firearms and the effectiveness of firearms licencing again became the subject of public concern and debate, and the Council and its member Associations worked together to respond to the media and to present a strong and reasoned defence of the sport to the Government and to Parliament.

Cumbria

The Prime Minister and Home Secretary took the position that the Government should not act until it was in possession of the full facts surrounding the events in Cumbria, a position supported by the Labour Party. Much of the media reaction supported this view. The political and media climate has been very different from that after Dunblane, with a far better understanding and acceptance of the shooting sports in evidence, the result of much hard work by the BSSC and its member Associations during the intervening years. The Government announced that a Commons debate would take place on firearms control. It was anticipated that the performance of Cumbria Constabulary and the emergency services would be a focus of attention as would be firearms licencing. Only the licencing aspect had been reported on by ACPO by the end of the year.

A coroner's inquest was opened and adjourned, and its outcome would not be known until 2011.

The BSSC had undertaken a planning meeting in March at which co-ordinating procedures within the Council were discussed, should a major incident occur. The member Associations were therefore already prepared when the shootings in Cumbria took place. As Derrick Bird had been a quarry shooter, BASC, which has political, media and firearms experts in house and an accessible, sophisticated website, took the lead role and the Associations were able to react quickly, agree the BSSC's stance on specific issues and work together. Particular thanks must be given for the excellent response to the media, with Bill Harriman and Mike Eveleigh of BASC, Tim Bonner of the Countryside Alliance and John Batley of the Gun Trade Association being at the forefront and calmly putting the case for the shooting sports. Several Association websites quickly carried pages devoted to the incident, keeping individual shooters informed and providing advice. Briefs were prepared for members of Parliament. The Associations were themselves provided with a

daily bulletin of news and activities by the BSSC Secretary during the critical days immediately after the event.

At the request of Jamie Reed, MP for Copeland, the constituency in which the shootings took place, a Westminster Hall debate on lessons to be learned from the shootings took place on the 23rd June. This established the main areas of concern: the display of insensitive and ‘chequebook’ journalism by some sections of the national media; threatened funding cuts and their potential effect on West Cumbria Hospital and the Cumbrian Constabulary, and firearms legislation and its administration.

Specific firearms issues raised included mental health checks for certificate holders (although associated problems were also already recognised), data sharing among Government Departments (arising from Bird’s alleged financial difficulties), central storage for firearms and any specific flaws or gaps in the firearms legislation. Simon Hart, MP for Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire (formerly Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance) emphasised that certificate life and numbers of guns were not relevant to the incident and that, had a ‘good reason’ requirement for shotguns been in force, it would not have had an effect.

The response by James Brokenshire, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, on behalf of the Government indicated that it was strong in its wish to learn from the incident and he raised the need to achieve proportionality in firearms licencing. Adrian Whiting, the ACPO lead on firearms licencing, had been tasked with the identification of any flaws or gaps in the licencing process. James Brokenshire accepted that there would be questions regarding civilian access but was at pains to emphasise that there were already opportunities for the police to consult the medical profession and that ACPO had been in long-term discussion with medical professionals over ‘flagging’ medical records to indicate who had certificates for firearms or shotguns.

The key topics arising from the shootings in Cumbria had become clear and on the 15th July Keith Vaz MP announced that the Home Affairs Select Committee, of which he was Chair, would undertake an Inquiry into firearms controls.

The BSSC had sought a meeting to discuss firearms licencing issues with James Brokenshire before the shootings in Cumbria but this did not take place until the 27th July, after the Westminster Hall debate. Issues covered included possible changes to the Firearms Act by means of a Regulatory Reform Order, air gun security in the context of the Crime and Security Act, firearms licencing fees, devolution of air gun legislation to the Scottish Parliament, mandatory sentences, pistol shooting and greater involvement of the medical profession in the firearms licencing process. Various matters were pursued in subsequent correspondence.

During August the Council prepared and submitted a comprehensive submission to the Home Affairs Select Committee. This included an overview of the shooting sports, the use of legally-held firearms in crime, the fitness for purpose of current legislation, information

sharing between the medical profession and police and air guns. It suggested that the following recommendations be included in the Select Committee's report:

- The Firearms Act should be consolidated,
- ACPO recommendations for a Regulatory Reform Order should be acted upon,
- The collection of data on the reasons for revocation of certificates should be undertaken,
- There should be no further legislation on airguns until the effect of the Crime and Security Act has been established, but the application of existing legislation and education to discourage misuse should be robustly pursued,
- Power to legislate on airguns should not be devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

The Council was invited to send representatives to the first public session of the Home Affairs Committee held on the 14th September. Bill Harriman (BASC), Geoff Doe (NRA) and the Secretary represented the Council. In response to a request from Keith Vaz, Tim Bonner (Countryside Alliance) very kindly brought examples of typical sporting shotguns and rifles for the Committee to see, which was very helpful.

Following an explanation of the different firearms, Nicola Blackwood pressed the issue of serious injuries cause by air rifles within the 12 foot-pounds limit. It was explained that air weapon misuse had been declining since the 1980s and that the power level for air rifles was set at a limit that made them useful for humane vermin control.

David Winnick asked whether there was any case for loosening legislation and it was explained that licencing Section 1 firearms in a similar manner to shotguns would not diminish control and would make for a more efficient use of police resources. With regard to pistol shooting, it was stated that Council's policy was to seek a return of competitive pistol shooting.

Nicola Blackwood raised the desirability of a consolidating Act as a means of clarifying the law. Examples were given of the complexity not only of the legislation but also of the 'Guidance' required for its application. The desirability of minor reforms via an RRO was also mentioned.

A description was given of the process for the grant of a firearm certificate, which prompted a question from Steve McCabe about young shots. Difficulties caused by the use of the term 'occupier' were explained and the lack of problems encountered with young people using licenced firearms and the large and increasing number of young people involved safely in the shooting sports were emphasised. It was again underlined that the problem of misuse of unlicenced air guns was steadily decreasing.

Mark Reckless enquired about differences in administration of the Act between forces. It was explained that the police worked towards consistency of application and a copy of ACPO's 'Administration of Firearms and Explosives Licencing Procedural Good Practice Guide' was shown to the Committee. BSSC's concern was that impending significant

financial cuts would be applied differently in different forces, leading to less consistency and more delays.

In response to a question from Bridget Phillipson, Bill Harriman explained the process of revocation and stressed that it was rare at less than 1% of certificate holders, as shooters are well-behaved.

David Winnick raised the failure of the licencing process in the cases of Ryan and Hamilton and asked why Derrick Bird had been granted certificates. It was made clear that it would be inappropriate to comment until the contents of the police reports were available. David Winnick pressed the question of rigour in police handling of applications and was advised that the process was sufficiently rigorous, as was the regulation of Home Office Approved Clubs.

David Winnick raised the question of the ability of a government to legislate on firearms without this being incident-led. It was explained that the estimated time to prepare a comprehensive new Bill would be two years, with a year's parliamentary time.

MPs and Peers had an opportunity to meet the shooting associations at the House of Commons on 21st October. 10 member associations set out their stalls at a 'Westminster Shooting Fair' in the Terrace Pavilion. The event provided a 'one stop' opportunity for Parliamentarians to meet, talk to and receive information from representatives of the target shooting, quarry shooting and gun trade associations. Sponsoring the event was BSSC Vice Chairman Tobias Ellwood MP, a competitive pistol shot who trains with the National Squad. His presentation emphasised that, while the Home Countries and Isle of Man had won 32 medals for shooting in Delhi, Britain needed better grass-roots training to enable continued success at the Olympics. Lack of state of the art training facilities, particularly for pistol shooters, puts British competitors at a disadvantage. Noting that shooting is an activity that cuts across age barriers and is enjoyed by all parts of society, he stressed that shooting's rehabilitative benefits for disabled shooters are at the cutting edge of therapies. Commenting that "Shooting is increasingly popular among the young," Tobias Ellwood concluded that there was clear potential for British shooters to excel, but without the right support they would flounder, and any change in legislation should promote, rather than hinder, the legitimate shooter, whatever his or her age or shooting discipline.

On the 26th October, John Batley (GTA), Graham Downing (CA) and Mike Eveleigh (BASC) gave evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee.

In response to questions from Keith Vaz, Mike Eveleigh explained progress on discussions with ACPO and the British Medical Association on GP involvement in assessing licencing applicants and the Council's concern that this could discourage licence holders from seeking medical treatment and therefore be counter-productive.

Graham Downing outlined medical reasons for revocation and voiced GP concern over the role that might be expected of them. In response to a question about strengthening the

gun laws he stated that the competence and experience of firearms licencing managers and enquiry officers were the key to strengthening the laws and there was concern about the negative impact of financial cuts.

Graham Downing emphasised that centralised storage in the context of countryside shooting was not practical and Mike Eveleigh confirmed that firearms thefts were at a very low level.

John Batley explained the process for ensuring that applicants for registration as firearms dealers were fit persons and the measures in place to provide a record of all commercial firearms transactions, now including air guns, and to require the dealer to establish the *bona fides* of a purchaser. In response to a question on the licencing of air guns he explained the problems in registering the several million air weapons in public hands and on the impact of recent legislation, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 and latterly the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006. Air gun crime had halved since 2004. He also explained that Home Office figures indicated only nine instances of misuse of deactivated firearms over a four year period, so education would be a more effective approach than licencing.

John Batley, Graham Downing and Mike Eveleigh all agreed with the suggestion from the Chair that video games could encourage violent or irresponsible behaviour with firearms, in contradistinction to the beneficial effect of proper firearms training which encouraged responsibility and safety.

On 8th November Keith Vaz and other members of the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee visited the National Shooting Centre at Bisley at the invitation of the BSSC. Instructors and Commonwealth games medallists demonstrated .22 rifle and air rifle and pistol at the Lord Roberts Centre. The visitors also participated in shooting, in some cases with evident ability. At the Clay layout coaches and medallists instructed the MPs in the techniques needed to break clays with over and under and semi-automatic shotguns and even a flintlock! Back at the Lord Roberts Centre Graham Downing of the Countryside Alliance gave a presentation on game shooting, stalking and vermin control, followed by John Batley of the Gun Trade Association on deactivated firearms, paint ball guns and on the impact of the Violent Crime Reduction Act on realistic imitation firearms. The morning finished with a question and answer session which allowed the Committee members to explore further aspects of the impact of legislation on the shooting sports. On behalf of the Home Affairs Committee Keith Vaz thanked everyone for a most informative day and for the opportunity to experience our sport. Following the event the Council submitted a further written submission picking up on points raised and 'Shooting Times' ran two pieces relating to the visit. The considerable value of this practical exercise was reflected in both the HASC's report and in the subsequent Commons debate.

On 17th November Mike Eveleigh of BASC and the Secretary attended a meeting with representatives of ACPO, the British Medical Association and the Information Commissioner's Office to discuss the possible further involvement of the medical profession in the firearms licencing process. Strong representations were made on data

security, were record ‘tagging’ to be introduced, on the potential breach of trust between doctor and patient resulting in a risk that patients would be dissuaded from seeking medical advice if they feared the loss of their certificate and the impact of mandatory GP checks on the cost of licencing.

Prior to the publication of the Select Committee’s report and the Commons debate on firearms control, several associations provided detailed website briefings for their members, encouraging them to contact their MPs, and every MP was sent a BSSC briefing paper.

On the 14th December the BSSC submitted to the Home Office a detailed response to Adrian Whiting’s ‘Further comments concerning Firearms Control’ and to Part 2 of his report following the shootings in Cumbria. While these comments and report were measured, balanced and contained much with which the Council concurred, the Council was nevertheless not in accord with all his proposals, particularly those relating to the medical profession’s involvement in licencing, miniature ranges, a ‘single certificate’ for Section 1 firearms and shotguns, humane dispatch, a new power to suspend a certificate, the replacement of ‘Firearms Law Guidance to the Police 2002’ by an ACOP, the right to possess a firearm and the basis for calculating fees.

The BSSC provided its Vice-Chairman Tobias Ellwood with a detailed brief on the Home Affairs Select Committee’s report, published on the 20th December, in advance of the House of Commons debate on firearms control, which ran from 6.21pm to 9.40pm on the 20th December. There was relatively little that was unexpected in the debate, with an almost universally held view that any Government proposals must be proportionate, focused on the actual problems and reached through measured, open-minded and informed debate. Although much of the debate was concerned with legally-held firearms, there were frequent reminders of the greater scale of the illegal gun problem and the need to tackle it.

Key points were:

- Handguns: In response to Tobias Ellwood, James Brokenshire (Minister for Crime Prevention) stated that DCMS was content with the present arrangements for the National Squad, and this would not be reviewed until after 2012.
- The Government welcomed the ACPO/BMA agreement on GP consultation and would look further at ‘tagging’. The Government felt that compulsory medical checks were not proportionate.
- The Opposition response from Diana Johnson, shadow Minister with responsibility for policing policy, was very measured, in particular putting both sides of the ‘GP involvement’ question, and hoping that the Government would recognise the positive role that shooting could have for young people. She supported better enforcement with regard to air guns and firmly batted the question of a single certificate into the Government’s court.

- Therese Coffey, made a spirited defence of shooting and took the line that tighter controls would probably not prevent crime, but would hinder legitimate users. She was strongly in support of shooting opportunities for the young.
- Keith Vaz (Chair, HASC) gave a remarkable speech. He stated that the HASC report was not an attack on anybody. He admitted ignorance of the subject when he began the enquiry, valued immensely the visit to Bisley and the opportunity to meet the medallists, and stated that he “no longer needed to be convinced of the importance of this sport.” He commented that the odds were that there would be another amok incident, and that he did not want the Government to be blamed for any decisions that it might take, since “hindsight was a wonderful gift.” On ages, he said the Committee took no particular view, although people had their private views, so they were batting it over to the Government. On consolidation, he considered this a “no brainer.” On GP involvement, he said that there had been a debate in the Committee about this, but they could live with the ACPO/BMA agreement. He raised concern about the role of the media after the shootings in Cumbria. With regard to legally-owned firearms he acknowledged the very small number of incidences of misuse. Laws needed to be not necessarily tougher but better. Loopholes needed to be closed.
- Chris Williamson made the only strongly anti-shooting speech of the debate, wishing for a gun-free Britain (but admitting that this was not going to happen for the foreseeable future), advocating central storage and annual medical checks and expressing concern at the ‘message’ that was given by encouraging young people to shoot - a view which was contested by Simon Hart who saw organised shooting as part of the solution.
- Tobias Ellwood gave a wide-ranging defence of shooting. He emphasised the size of the illegal gun problem, supported a consolidation Bill, accepted the ACPO/BMA agreement but stated ‘tagging’ was a step too far, pointed out that several issues (what to do about suspended sentences and spousal consultation were instanced) were still very unclear and needed careful analysis. He spoke firmly against Section 1 controls for shotguns, pointed out that ‘Guidance’ needed updating and that training for firearms enquiry staff was still not in place. He spoke from personal experience of the problems of repeated media intrusion.
- Simon Hart forcefully argued the case for young shots and the way that shooting was an integral part of rural life and the rural economy. He reiterated the argument against tagging (insecure and disproportionate, quoting the IPCC and Information Commissioner’s Office) and spousal involvement in certification. He explained how putting shotguns on Section 1 would devastate the gun trade and put an unacceptable burden on the police licencing offices. He supported consolidation. In his view, none of the HASC’s proposals would have affected the tragedies of Hungerford, Dunblane or Cumbria.

- Heather Wheeler, a shot gun certificate holder, highlighted the difference between rural and urban attitudes to firearms.
- Dr Daniel Poulter, a non-shooting former GP, regretted that it had taken the Cumbria shootings to generate the debate, as the real problem was persistent illegal use in deprived urban areas. Legislation must make things better, and there was no evidence that it would make much difference to focus on licenced firearms. He did not support medical checking, felt the case was not proven, that there was a danger of stigmatising those with a mental health condition who were not necessarily dangerous, and foresaw possible problems from the blame culture if a doctor got it wrong.
- James Brokenshire summed up for the Government, saying that the debate had been thorough, proportionate and informed. The Government was in listening mode and would continue to take into account any other views from interested parties. He did make very specific comment that the Government would look at certification issues, while acknowledging their potential complexity, and stated that the Forms Working Group would look specifically at the feasibility of a single certificate. He would wish to ensure that controls were targeted fairly and proportionate and acknowledged the need to grapple with criminal misuse. He recognised that there were two legislative strands: the need for simplification and consolidation. He would need to look at storage issues and the danger of creating more risk. He pointed out that not all solutions required legislation and welcomed the ACPO/BMA agreement. He accepted that there was no evidence of misuse of licenced firearms by young people, but would consider the issue carefully. He ended by indicating that all options remained open for discussion.

The tone of the debate was civilised, measured, calm and well-informed. BSSC and Association briefs had clearly been read. MPs were stressing the legitimacy and value of shooting sports rather than demonising their participants as was the case in 1996. Demonstrably the BSSC and the Associations have achieved much in the last 16 years. BSSC will continue to work on behalf of shooting as the ramifications of the tragedy in Cumbria evolve in 2011.

ACPO Criminal Use of Firearms Themed National Independent Advisory Group

The Secretary attended meetings in February, August and October and, representing the TNIAG, attended the Home Secretary's 'Guns, Gangs and Knives' Round Table on the 2nd March. The Group continues to evolve in both its membership and its work programme, to the drafting of which the Secretary has contributed, in response to ACPO CUF's wish for it to take on additional work. Tom Tanner, a former journalist and documentary filmmaker ('Murder Blues') and currently the Chair of the Police IAG in Hackney, Claudia Webb, Chair of the Trident IAG and of London Crimestoppers, and John Batley (GTA)

have joined the Group. During the year the Group looked at Operation Trident's work on gun crime prevention in schools and colleges, the ongoing concern over the convertibility of some blank firers (on which John Batley, Mark Scoggins, the BSSC's Honorary Legal Adviser, and the Secretary made major contributions), issues surrounding sentencing policy for gun crimes, where Mark Scoggins' comments were of particular assistance, the problems of illegal armourers and illegal importation and the outcomes of the shootings in Cumbria, on which CUF made a presentation to the Home Affairs Select Committee. A presentation of the work of the TNIAG was given to Lt. Col. David Birch, a Senator from Bermuda, and Dr Derrick Brown, a Permanent Secretary in the Bermudan Civil Service, who are setting up a gang task force, followed by a question and answer session.

The work of the Group continues to concern matters relevant to the possession and use of, and trade in, firearms for sporting purposes, so direct input to the TNIAG on legitimate use and on technical and legal matters is very much to the benefit of this Council's members.

Annual General Meeting and Annual Luncheon

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 18th March. The Earl of Shrewsbury was re-elected as President. The Lord Glentoran was re-elected as Chairman, Tobias Ellwood MP and Martyn Jones MP were re-elected as Vice-Chairmen and Graham Downing as Treasurer. The post of Vice-President remains vacant. The AGM was followed by a short Council meeting.

The meetings were followed by a very successful Annual Luncheon at the Army & Navy Club. Council guests included Mrs Sue Fish (Chair ACPO Criminal Use of Firearms portfolio), Roger Hancox (Birmingham Proof Master), Bill Wiggin (a former Vice-Chairman), Dr Jonathon Riley (Director General and Master of the Royal Armouries and a member of CUF), Mark Scoggins (Hon. Legal Adviser), Adrian Whiting (Chair, ACPO Firearms & Explosives Licencing Working Group) and Graham Widdecombe (Home Office Firearms Unit). Presentations were made to Brian Carter, who had stepped down as a Vice President after 31 years of active and distinguished service on the Council, and to Bill Wiggin who had stood down as a Vice-Chairman after being appointed a Whip in the previous year, and had, while serving as a Vice-Chairman, followed his father in his strong and active support of the BSSC's work. Bill took the opportunity to commend the Council on its work and to remind its members of the relevance and importance of the Three Musketeers' motto: 'One for All and All for One!'

Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice Review of Broadcast Advertising Standards

In March 2009 CAP (the Committee of Advertising Practice) and BCAP (the Broadcast

Committee), began consultations on a wide range of proposed changes to broadcast advertising standards, including those relating to firearms and shooting. Current regulations effectively ban advertisements for firearms, gun clubs or shooting (with a partial exception for clay pigeon shooting). The intention was to extend the prohibition to replica firearms and to further extend the limitation of the radio advertising of clay pigeon shooting. The prohibitions are based on the false premise that firearms and shooting are, in themselves, likely to cause widespread offence. The BSSC and numerous shooting organisations submitted very robust comments.

In March 2010 BCAP published on the web the detailed outcomes of this consultation, demonstrating that the BSSC and its Associations had achieved some success.

While BCAP continued to maintain that the proposed prohibition on replica advertising was appropriate, it stated its intention to allow limited advertising of clay pigeon shooting (if it forms part of a wider range of events) on television as well as radio, which is a modest improvement.

BCAP had decided to retain the existing prohibition on advertisements for guns because 'wholesale ads for guns... could not be targeted effectively in broadcast media.' In response to the proposition that this could have an adverse impact on Olympic shooting, BCAP took the view that the ban was on the advertising of guns and gun clubs, not the advertising for sports in which they feature.

With regard to the existing ban on advertisements for gun clubs, we achieved some success. Having read the respondents' comments to the Code Review Consultation, BCAP decided it would consult further on the prohibition on advertising gun clubs. BCAP will therefore conduct a consultation in 2011, specifically examining whether the prohibition should be relaxed or maintained. BSSC will seek to be involved in this consultation.

EU legislation

Deactivated firearms: The EU Commission is encouraging the CIP, the international proof authority, to work towards common EU standards for deactivation. Work within the Commission on deactivation guidelines is expected to begin in 2011, but there does not appear to be a deadline. The BSSC continues to have an active interest in this subject, which could affect both the gun trade and legitimate collectors.

Directive 91/477/EEC on weapons control, as amended by Directive 2008/51/EC of 21st May 2008: Implementation in British law of some parts of the amendments to the EU Directive on the control of weapons occurred on the 28th July *via* the Firearms (Amendment) Regulations 2010. These raise the age at which a person can buy or hire a firearm or shot gun from 17 to 18, which brings this part of the law into line with restrictions on the purchase of air guns and crossbows. There are amendments also to require that anyone acting as a gun bearer for someone under 18 must be 18 or over; that

in any instance where a person under 18 borrows a shot gun from an ‘occupier’, the ‘occupier’ must be 18 or over; and, if lending a firearm as an estate rifle to a person under 18, the owner must be over 18. Changes affecting the way in which dealers keep their records do not require implementation until 2014. BSSC was closely involved in both the amendment process in Europe and with the Home Office on implementation issues and satisfaction may be taken in the minimal impact of the changes on the legitimate shooter, particularly the young shot.

Work within the EU is expected to begin on the drafting of possible changes to the Directive’s existing four categories of firearm. There has been a proposal for a reduction to two (‘prohibited’ and ‘authorised’) but this is by no means a foregone conclusion. Work is also anticipated on a ‘model law’ to serve as guidance for national legislation within the EU.

Import and export of antique firearms: In December BSSC was alerted to an intention by a UK interdepartmental body called FLIGG (Firearms Licensing Improvement Governance Group, which incorporates representatives of the Home Office, ACPO, HM Customs & Revenue, the Border Agency and BIS, and is mainly concerned with import/export issues) to seek the introduction of the Schengen Agreement date of 1870 for defining antique firearms for UK import/export purposes. Fortunately this had not been finalised and the GTA and BSSC expect to be involved in further discussions. It is hoped that this can be dealt with in parallel with discussions on the implementation of Article 10 (see below).

Proposal for a Regulation to implement Article 10 of the United Nations’ Firearms Protocol and to establish export authorisation, import and transit measures for firearms, their parts and components and ammunition: This draft proposal, published in July, refers to the UN Vienna Firearms Protocol. It is concerned with the movement of non-military firearms into and out of (but not within) the EU. It has implications for marking on import, but the Regulation would not apply in certain circumstances, including to:

‘firearms, their parts and essential components and ammunition if specially designed for military use and, in any case, firearms of the fully automatic firing type’ (the EU has separate legislation covering the trade in military weapons),

‘collectors and bodies concerned with cultural and historical aspects of firearms, their parts and essential components and ammunition and recognised as such by the Member State in whose territory they are established, provided that tracing measures are ensured’,

‘deactivated firearms’,

‘antique firearms and their replicas as defined in accordance with national legislation, provided that antique firearms do not include firearms manufactured after 1899’.

This Proposal has to reconcile different wording in the EC Directive and the UN Firearms Protocol and work around inconsistencies within the Directive. The implementation of the amended Directive by the adoption of Article 10 has been delayed following criticism from Government experts that the draft was seriously flawed. The technical aspects have been referred to an EU Customs Committee and this has provided an opportunity for input from the GTA via BIS (the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) and from the European Sport Shooting Forum. It is hoped that this will result in more practicable Regulations affecting the import and export of firearms to and from the EU.

Article 7 of the Protocol makes provision for ‘temporary export of firearms for verifiable lawful purposes, which include hunting, sport shooting, evaluation, exhibitions and repair.’ Of benefit to EU shooters, it will also make provision for the use of the European Firearms Pass as the only document needed to facilitate temporary export from the EU, but only for hunting and target shooting.

REACH (Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals): The Secretary has continued to provide information to the AFEMS (Association of European Manufacturers of Sporting Ammunition) Expert Group which has prepared a response to the EU REACH Programme in conjunction with the International Lead Association. The Regulation entered into force on 1st June 2007. AFEMS has been involved long-term in the preparation of the EU ammunition industry’s response to REACH, which covers not only manufacture but the use of lead for both quarry shooting and target sports. The Secretary participated in telephone conferences on the draft, which was completed in July.

Regulation 185/2010: This unanticipated new Regulation ‘banned’ the transport of ammunition in hold baggage on aircraft within the EU, but it quickly became apparent that any EU country could benefit from a derogation allowing such transport to continue, provided the country in question does itself regulate such carriage of ammunition. There was a successful UK outcome after prompt lobbying by the BSSC, GTA and BASC, so ammunition can be transported in hold baggage as before.

Report on the placing on the market of replica firearms: This report was completed on the 27th July and was the subject of a meeting in Brussels on the 8th October. Britain was represented by the Gun Trade Association and the Birmingham Proof House. The report is concerned not only with the economic aspects of the manufacture, import, export and internal trade in imitation firearms, ‘air-soft’ guns, paintball guns and blank firers but also with their legitimate and illegal uses. It, or any action emanating from it, is highly unlikely to affect British users, as the UK is one of the three EU states which already heavily regulate them (the Netherlands and Portugal being the others).

Health and Safety Executive

On the 16th November the HSE announced its long-awaited Explosives Legislative Review.

This involves several working groups. The Secretary has been included in the COER (Control of Explosives Regulations) 1 working group, Colin Greenwood of the Gun Trade Association and Dr Sandy Robertson of the Muzzle Loaders Association of Great Britain in the COER 2 working group, and Matt Perring of BASC in the MSER (Manufacture & Storage of Explosives Regulations) 1 working group. A busy year is anticipated in 2011.

Home Office

Following the tragic shootings in Cumbria on the 2nd June and the consequential inquiries there was little progress in a number of areas affecting legislation, pending the publication of the Home Affairs Select Committee's Report and the holding of the House of Commons debate.

Consultation on the revision of the 2002 edition of the Home Office Guidance to the Firearms Act: The intention is to make the next edition a 'live' document which can be consulted (and readily updated) online. The participation of the shooting organisations is a key element in the revision process and a fourth tranche of draft revisions was received in 2010. An additional Technical & Research Committee meeting was held to consider the Council's response to revisions to Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Appendix 4, with detailed comments being submitted at the end of April.

Crime and Security Act 2010: Air weapons have continued to maintain a high political profile at Westminster and Holyrood. The Crime & Security Act, introduced as a Bill in November 2009, became law in April 2010. It creates 'an offence for a person in possession of an air weapon to fail to take reasonable precautions to prevent any person under the age of 18 from having the weapon with him'. The BSSC harboured doubts about this Bill's ability to achieve its stated aim of raising airgun owners' attentiveness to safekeeping unless it was widely and prominently publicised. The BSSC commented in detail on the draft circular to Chief Officers for the implementation of this Act which was received from the Home Office for comment in December.

Deactivated firearms: While this remains a live issue in the EU and the question of 'reactivation' has been brought to the fore in a confidential briefing given to the Home Affairs Select Committee by the National Ballistics Intelligence Service, there has been no further discussion based on the consultation undertaken by the Home Office in 2009. The BSSC's position, based on published Home Office figures, continues to be that the use of deactivated firearms in crime is miniscule and the use of reactivated firearms vanishingly so. The Home Office's own statistics demonstrate that only two reactivated handguns were used in crime in each of the years 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 whilst there were zero, two and one other reactivated firearms respectively in those years. Deactivated firearms that had not been reactivated were used in one, four and two cases.

Draft Firearms (Electronic Communications) Order: This draft Order (which has the objective of permitting in law the use of electronic communication in serving various

notices prescribed within the Firearms Act, a practice already widely if not universally used for notifying the police of firearms transactions) was discussed within BSSC in July 2009 and a response sent to the Home Office. During 2010 the draft Order has been awaiting the attention of Parliamentary draftsmen. It is hoped that this desirable and uncontroversial measure will be implemented during 2011.

Firearms fees: Consultations were initiated in December 2009 with regard to firearms fee levels and the police activities for which fees are charged (several activities, such as ‘one for one’ variations or Section 11(8) approvals for clay pigeon shoots attract no fee). There has been no increase in fees for certificate grant and renewal since January 2001 and pressure had built up to review them. The BSSC made its views known on the ACPO fees paper, which proposed substantial increases and the inclusion of other activities in the charging regime. While willing to accept an increase in line with inflation, this would have to be linked to an improvement in the efficiency and consistency of police administration of the licencing system. Fees have been frequently referred to in the contexts of the administration of the law in the aftermath of the Cumbria shootings and the anticipated impact of severe financial cuts on the police service, from which firearms licencing offices are unlikely to escape unscathed. It is anticipated that fee levels will again be raised for discussion when the Government has developed its response to the Report on firearms control from the Home Affairs Committee and the House of Commons debate.

Violent Crime Reduction Act and blank firers: During the year, there was considerable pressure for action from within the police on further controls on blank firers capable of conversion to fire ball ammunition. The specification for blank firers remains with the Home Office which has been considering this issue as part of the wider implications of the adoption of Regulations to implement amendments to the EU Directive on Weapons Control. The control of blank firers is under active review in Brussels.

The Gun Trade Association, BASC and the Secretary were consulted at length by ACPO with regard to the reclassification of the Olympic 380 blank firing revolver to Section 5 prohibited status. This revolver had been on the market for some years and has been used as a starting pistol and for dog training. It had not initially been deemed ‘readily convertible’ under the provisions of the Firearms Act 1982. Indeed those made for the UK market were to a very high specification designed to frustrate any such conversion. The appearance in criminal hands of a significant number successfully converted to fire ball ammunition led to a re-appraisal by the Forensic Science Service during February 2010, however, and this specific model was re-classified as a prohibited weapon. ACPO announced an amnesty to allow owners to hand in their revolvers between the 16th April and the 4th June. The GTA, BASC and the BSSC worked closely with ACPO with the aim of achieving an outcome which minimised any adverse effect on the gun trade and put in place practicable measures to make owners of these revolvers aware of the latter’s change in status and of the amnesty. ACPO acknowledged the excellent support and cooperation from the trade and its suppliers. Despite pressure from the BSSC, however, no ‘buy-back’ scheme or other financial compensation was offered to those handing in examples of this revolver.

Working Party on the revision of firearms forms: Following good progress in 2009 on a single application form to be used for both Firearm Certificate and Shot Gun Certificate applications and also on a short application form for variations, a meeting of the Working Party took place on the 16th April. Again progress was good, to the point where the draft of a single application form to be used for both Firearm Certificate and Shot Gun Certificate applications could be submitted to professional forms designers. Unfortunately no further meetings took place during 2010.

Lead and Noise Abatement Working Group and DEFRA Lead Ammunition Group

In late 2009 this Working Group had contributed data relating to the use of lead in ammunition in the UK to the preparation of the AFEMS (Association of European Manufacturers of Sporting Ammunition) report on the use of lead in the shooting sports for the project “Lead in Ammunition-Exposure Scenarios under REACH”. The Working Group did not meet again during 2010 in the light of the formation by Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) of a Lead Ammunition Group under the chairmanship of John Swift, Chief Executive of BASC, which first met in April. Other members representing shooting interests on the Group are John Batley (Gun Trade Association) and Rob Gray (Countryside Alliance). The Group consists of stakeholders representing the scientific and conservation communities, including the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, as well as the shooting world. The purpose of the group is to advise Defra and the Food Standards Agency on the key risks to wildlife from lead ammunition, the respective levels of those risks and to explore possible solutions to any significant risks, and possible options for managing the risk to human health from the increased exposure to lead as a result of using lead ammunition. The Group has so far held three meetings and is making progress gathering evidence before the process of risk assessment takes place. John Batley has accepted the position of representing the trade in issues relating to guns, ammunition and other issues.

National Shooting Week 2010

The fourth annual National Shooting Week, organised on behalf of the BSSC by the Countryside Alliance, took place between Saturday 29th May and Sunday 6th June. In view of the tragic shootings in Cumbria on the 2nd June, there was no overt publicity drive during the week, but just under 100 clay grounds and local clubs held events as planned. The NSW has become an increasingly popular initiative to introduce people to our sport. This year the concentration was on the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines. Gender, age and disability are no barriers to success and the outgoing Sports Minister Gerry Sutcliffe had continued with his active support, saying: “National Shooting Week is an opportunity for the sport to show itself to the wider community in the UK. The week gives an opportunity for all the misconceptions about shooting to be put to one side but it also gives people the

chance to understand that this is a sport that can be for everybody.” Olympic 400 metre runner Iwan Thomas MBE launched this year’s National Shooting Week with a demonstration of his newly learned skills at the Barbury Shooting School in Wiltshire. Iwan learnt to shoot this year for his starring role in a new shooting DVD, “Shooting from Scratch” which tracks his progression from shotgun novice to confident shot. Iwan said: “Shooting is an exhilarating sport. It is challenging, fun, and a true skill. I have loved learning to shoot and it is something I plan to pursue.”

Office of Rail Regulation

On learning from BASC that the Office of Rail Regulation was considering a complete ban on the carriage of unloaded firearms by rail the Secretary wrote to the ORR requesting a meeting. The response noted a similar letter from BASC and stated that neither the ORR nor the Department for Transportation had any plans for a public consultation. It had therefore passed BSSC’s letter to Passenger Focus for consideration. It is understood that Passenger Focus will not be considering the carriage of unloaded firearms by rail until some point in 2011, at which point the BSSC will pursue the matter.

Pistol shooting

In ‘Extending Opportunities: A Conservative Policy Paper on Sport’ it was suggested that the party would amend firearms legislation to ensure the UK target pistol shooters can train and compete in this country, which would end the absurd situation whereby public money is used to support athletes to train abroad in an activity banned in this country.

Following a request from the NRA, a meeting was held to draft the following policy statement, subsequently approved by Council:

‘The British Shooting Sports Council wishes to see competitive shooting with cartridge pistols re-instated under controlled conditions in Great Britain. It considers that the most straightforward way of initiating this would be by the repeal of the Firearms (Amendment) (No.2) Act 1997. This would adhere to the policy position of the Conservative Government in 1996 and is, we understand, straightforward and quick to achieve in terms of Parliamentary process. It would allow the re-commencement of .22 pistol shooting in ‘Licenced Pistol Clubs’. Subject to agreement on details of implementation and licencing, it would allow the development of a proper performance pyramid at the grass-roots level, essential if we are to put our athletes on a level playing field and to achieve long-term podium success at Olympic, World Championship and Commonwealth Games levels.’

Despite the statement made to the BSSC by James Brokenshire and repeated in the Commons debate that, following the formation of the Coalition Government, there is now no policy with regard to pistol shooting, and that this matter will not be reviewed until after the 2012 Olympics, the BSSC will continue to work towards the return of competitive cartridge pistol shooting.

Practitioners Group

The Group, chaired by the BSSC's Secretary and comprising members of BSSC, ACPO Firearms and Explosives Licencing Working Group, the Home Office and the Forensic Science Service, continues to provide a very valuable forum to discuss matters relating to firearms legislation and its administration. It met in Poole on the 28th April as guests of Dorset Police, at which time the Home Office was 'in purdah' because of the impending election, so was unable to comment on progress on the Crime & Security Act, deactivated firearms, the proposed Regulatory Reform Order, and the Electronic Notification Order. The main points of discussion were the lack of need for a 'one for one' variation for a replacement barrel; draft EU Regulations; a paper by Colin Greenwood (GTA) on simplification of Section 11(6) approvals for clay pigeon shooting; range safety; possible measures to even out the major fluctuations in the cycle of renewals of firearm and shotgun certificates and the impact of a successful appeal relating to an unrestricted .44 Magnum revolver for humane dispatch.

A second meeting was held at the Home Office on 9th September. Issues addressed included problems with the numbering of dealers' certificates arising from NFLMS and ongoing concerns relating to range safety inspection, Section 11(6) approvals, licencing renewal 'peaks and troughs' and other renewal issues. Also raised was the potential impact of cuts to police budgets on the staffing and operation of Firearms Licencing Offices. As a result of the Cumbria shootings and the awaited political debate, many issues, including firearms fees, were in suspense for the latter half of 2010.

Following the retirement of the Group's Secretary, Richard Dennison of Norfolk Constabulary, there will be some changes made to the composition and administration of the Group, as police representation will be reduced, reflecting financial cut-backs.

Press Complaints Commission

On 5th May BSSC finally reached agreement with the Press Complaints Commission over the publication of a correction in the Scottish edition of the Times for an inaccurate article published on 26th October 2009 alleging incorrectly that gun crime had reached a 10-year high in Scotland. This was potentially damaging to legitimate shooting interests and needed to be challenged. Resolution was hindered by delays within both the Times' complaints department and the PCC.

Proposed changes to weapon laws in EU member states

As in previous years, the Secretary continues to monitor proposals to change laws regulating firearms or other weapons within the EU and to provide information and advice if requested. This is increasingly necessary as nations study each other's controls and

international and regional legislation such as the UN Vienna Firearms Protocol and EU Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons exert increasing influence. Changes in French weapons laws are imminent. Administration of the weapons law will (except for prohibited weapons) pass from the French Ministry of Defence to the Interior Ministry. The number of categories will be reduced from eight to four and the partial ban on military calibres will in most cases be lifted (it is anticipated that all 'military' rifle cartridges except 7.62mm Nato, 5.56mm Nato and 7.62mm x 39 will be taken out of the prohibited category). Category B holdings will be limited to 12 firearms. Shotguns will be registered but not licenced. An 1899 break date for antiques is anticipated. There is no indication about the position of collectors.

Scottish Government

Wildlife & Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill: The BSSC had responded to the Scottish Government's consultation paper in 2009. The Scottish Parliament Stage One debate took place on the 2nd December. The proposal to introduce a new code of conduct for deer management was agreed. The Government had agreed to amend the Bill to include vicarious liability under wild bird crimes so as to ensure employers bore some of the burden where their employees were prosecuted for such a crime. A licencing scheme for shooting businesses will not be introduced without consultation. The Government's intention was to opt for a voluntary approach to rural management, unless there was compelling evidence demanding central intervention. Regulations would be introduced for snaring to ensure that it was only carried out by trained workers, would be subject to strict welfare standards and would be reviewed in five years' time. During the debate there was a discussion on the possibility of an outright ban of snaring, so field sports issues will continue to be of political concern in Scotland.

In response to a letter from the BSSC, on the 1st November the Scotland Office confirmed that a power to legislate on air weapons would be included in the Devolution Bill to be considered during the current session of Parliament. There will continue to be opportunities for Clause 11, which relates to air gun controls, to be scrutinised and discussed as the Bill passes through Parliament, a process that is expected to take much of 2011. Should the power be devolved, it is not expected to take effect until 2015. The Scottish National Party has already stated that the power is inadequate, and devolution of all firearms legislation will be pursued.

UN CASA ISACS project

CASA is an 'umbrella' organisation for all UN agencies with an interest in small arms and light weapons. It is undertaking a project to draw up International Small Arms Control Standards which goes far beyond the original intention of the UN Programme of Action to combat illicit international trade, and which is a separate initiative to the Arms Trade

Treaty. The CASA project will cover national controls over manufacture and civilian access, marking and tracing and issues of crime and young persons' access to firearms, international trade and national licencing of brokers, manufacturers, dealers and civilian owners. Although the adoption of these standards will be entirely voluntary, any state which signs up to them will be expected to apply them, at least in the longer term. The Secretary is part of an Expert Reference Group to assist the consultants drawing up the modules and has been engaged in commenting on the six modules remaining from Phase 1 of the project on International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS). At the time of writing Phase 2 reviews had not yet begun. He was unable to attend the ISACS Workshop in November as it coincided with other business. The report on the workshop covered work done so far, areas of discussion that had arisen over the standard-setting process, the relationship between the ISACS project and the UN Programme of Action on illegal trade in small arms, the proposed UN Conventional Arms Trade Treaty and the imminent UN Ammunition Technical Guidelines (the ISACS module on ammunition will remain in draft until the Technical Guidelines are available). Major issues included the differing types of module (some are entirely technical, others deal with less concrete issues such as gender) and the problem of their harmonisation, translation, and the publication format (paper, electronic or a mixture). It can be said that some of these issues remain unresolved.

World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities

The BSSC is a founding member of the World Forum (WFSA), a NGO in Roster Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The work of World Forum continues to be of primary importance to shooting in Britain, since so much legislation is now supranational in origin.

At its Executive Committee meeting in Nuremberg on the 10th and 11th March, World Forum's work was focused on the increasing international debate on lead in ammunition, on noise issues, on the outcomes of the successful 2009 Symposium on the economic and ecological benefits of hunting, on World Forum contributions to the model regulations on international small arms trade being prepared by the UN and on preparation for the UN Biennial meeting on illegal trade in small arms and light weapons in June and the UN Preparatory Committee meeting on the proposed Arms Trade Treaty in July. At its Plenary Session the theme was 'Giving back: Hunting, Sport Shooting and Prosperity'. The Shooting Ambassador award for 2010 was made to Ms Chiara Cainero, the Italian Skeet shooting Olympic gold medallist. Besides covering the work of the Executive Committee, the Session included a very valuable panel discussion on the UN Firearms Protocol Model Regulations. Work continues on the proposed workshop 'Sporting Firearms and Ammunition as Airline Baggage: Growing Problems – Simple Solutions,' in which John Batley, Jim McAllister and the Secretary are actively involved.

WFSA continues to work with CIC (the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation) and FACE (Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the

European Union) on issues relating to the use of lead in hunting and meetings were held in May and December. A decision was made that WFSA should become part of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Besides the aforementioned CASA ISACS project there continue to be three current major strands to UN activity concerning firearms, usually referred to by the UN as 'SALW' (small arms and light weapons): the Vienna Firearms Protocol, the long-standing Programme of Action (POA) on illicit trade; and the proposed Arms Trade Treaty dealing with legitimate trade and almost certain to include SALW alongside a wide range of conventional arms and 'dual use' materiel.

With regard to the UN Vienna Protocol a 'Model Regulations Panel', which includes representatives from the firearms industry, is now dealing with legislative proposals on the international movement of firearms. It has shown a renewed and positive interest in providing simplified procedures for the international movement of privately owned civilian firearms, which is encouraging.

World Forum made a number of presentations at the UN Biennial Meeting of States (BMS4) on curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This aspect of the UN's work on small arms and light weapons will be picked up again in 2011, when an Open Ended Working Group of Government Experts will meet to discuss another major conference on SALW in 2012. There will be a major effort to include small arms in the UN's Register of Conventional Arms by 2012, and this could impact on the international commercial trade in civilian firearms. Mexico has been trying to get private civilian transfers of firearms included on the UN Register, which at worst could affect hunters and target shooters seeking to travel for their sport. This issue therefore continues to be of great importance.

During 2010 discussions on the proposed Conventional Arms Trade Treaty progressed more quickly and in greater detail than had been anticipated and some preliminary consideration was given to the following *potential* 'exclusions' from an ATT:

- Internal transfers,
- National ownership and regulation of weapons,
- Sporting and hunting rifles for recreational purposes,
- Antique weapons.

Internal transfers and antique weapons are considered non-controversial. There is a need to agree a definition of 'sporting firearms' (the expectation is that any final definition would be wider than just rifles), World Forum is working on this and the Secretary has been closely involved. At this stage discussions are all 'informal' in diplomatic parlance. This means that nothing has been agreed or decided. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office, following discussions with the BSSC, had included a proposal that no 'overtly burdensome controls' be placed on the movement of privately owned antique or sporting firearms in its initial response to the proposed ATT. During the general discussions many states

supported the inclusion of small arms and light weapons and ammunition within the ATT, but concern was expressed by other states about the inclusion of one, the other or both. Besides settling on the categories of arms and 'dual use' technology to be included in an ATT, consideration will be given to the inclusion of a wide range of activities including brokering, temporary export, artisanal manufacture and manufacture under foreign licence. These will need to be watched at the definitional stage to ensure that they do not impinge on civilian manufacture and trade, but the debate has certainly widened out considerably from the previous narrow focus on small arms and light weapons.

The Secretary and Matt Perring of BASC attended a meeting on the 8th February, called by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office for organisations which it hoped would champion the ATT and was to discuss areas of co-operation and sources of possible funding for events and seminars. The opportunity was taken to raise the issues of protecting the interests of civilian shooters and the international trade in, and movement of, civilian firearms, if possible by excluding them from the Treaty.

An ATT subgroup has been created within the EU administration and Baroness Ashton, the EU's High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will lead for the EU. A submission from the BSSC has been sent to her office.

World Forum was invited to make a further presentation to the UN General Assembly First Committee on the 25th October. The First Committee has both the Programme of Action (aimed at illegal international trade) and the proposed Conventional Arms Trade Treaty (intended to cover legal international trade) within its purview. The Secretary was involved in the drafting of the presentation and subjects covered were the continuing need for Non-Governmental Organisations to be involved in discussions, the definition of military small arms, ammunition and the ecological and economic benefits of hunting. Another goal is to persuade the UN to acknowledge the beneficial effects of the legal possession of firearms by civilians. The next formal discussions are scheduled for February 2011 and there will be more UN activity in New York in June and July. The inclusion or exclusion of ammunition continues to be a major issue.

Miscellaneous matters

On the 17th October, the Secretary was delighted and honoured to accept a Lifetime Achievement award from Tackle & Guns at its annual Gala Dinner.

On the 29th November, the Secretary was appointed as an Honorary Historical Consultant to the Royal Armouries.

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