



Scottish Target Shooting
 Caledonia House
 1 Redheughs Rigg
 Edinburgh
 EH12 9DQ

Visit to Commonwealth Games Gold Coast 10-15 April 2018

Report By: Chair of Scottish Target Shooting
Submitted On: 25th April 2018

In my capacity as Chair of Scottish Target Shooting, I attended the Commonwealth games on Gold Coast, Australia, over the period of my accreditation, being Tuesday 10 through to Sunday 15 April 2018.

My trip was partially funded by STS, as agreed by the Board, for accommodation and subsistence, with me funding my own travel to and from Australia. I was accommodated in the Mantra on View, in central Gold Coast, which had been designated 'Scotland House' and branded accordingly on the 2nd floor, with a dedicated space for CGS, and where the Commonwealth Games Scotland representatives (board members) were staying, along with some team family members. The athletes, coaches and support staff were all accommodated in the Athletes' Village on the north-east outskirts of Gold Coast which, by all accounts, was extremely well run, comfortable, and well-provisioned.

Shooting was conducted on the Belmont Range complex, in a suburb to the south east of Brisbane. This outstanding complex was perfect for every discipline, with a 1,000-yard fullbore range; a 50-firing point smallbore/pistol/air weapon qualification range, of an indoor/outdoor construction with a 10-lane 'Finals Hall', all with electronic scoring and with spectator seating; and a newly-constructed trap layout capable of taking 18 clay target shooters simultaneously, and again with plenty of spectator seating and electronic scoring. The whole site, which is of considerable size, was very well serviced by a shuttle bus system and a team of enthusiastic and very hospitable volunteers, or 'Games Shapers'.

The only slight disadvantage of the Belmont site was its distance from the Athletes' Village and 'Scotland House', but the journey time of about 1.5 hours compared very favourably with that between Glasgow and Barry Buddon in 2014, even if it did mean some rather early starts in the morning, and the transport system to and from the ranges for the athletes and myself was extremely reliable. Overall, the logistic arrangements seemed to be very smooth, and no athlete was, so far as I am aware, in any way disadvantaged by any aspect of the organization, meaning they could concentrate on their shooting.

I attended the ranges every day, Tuesday 10 through to Saturday 14 April, to support our shooters in their various events. These included:

- Men's 10m Air Pistol (Aedan Evans – DNQ for final)
- Women's 10m Air Pistol (Jess Liddon & Caroline Brownlie – Both DNQ for final)
- Women's 25m Pistol (Jess Liddon – DNQ for final)
- Men's 50m 3P (Neil Stirton – DNQ for final)
- Men's 50m Prone (Neil Stirton – Silver Medal)
- Women's 50m Prone (Jennifer & Seonaid McIntosh - Seonaid Bronze Medal, Jennifer 8th)
- Women's 50m 3P (Jennifer & Seonaid McIntosh – Seonaid Bronze medal, Jennifer 8th in final)

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- Men's Double Trap (David McMath & Calum Fraser; David Gold Medal, Calum DNQ for final)
- Women's Double Trap (Linda Pearson – Bronze Medal)
- Women's Single Trap (Sharon Niven – 6th in final)
- Queen's Prize Pairs (Ian Shaw & Sandy Walker – Bronze Medal)
- Queen's Prize Individual (Ian Shaw 4th, Sandy Walker 10th)

I was delighted that Tim Kidner was chosen to be a judge in the fullbore event, and that Colin McEachran was able to pay a visit on Thursday 12 April. There were also a variety of family members out supporting the team, including Tim Liddon, Shirley McIntosh, David McMath's parents, and others. Support for Scotland's athletes was enthusiastic and appropriately vocal!

Overall, the standard of shooting throughout the Games was of a very high standard in all disciplines, and the outstanding performance of our shooters, particularly those with little international or Games experience – has to be placed in this context. The team's target of five medals was achieved and bettered, and represented some 14% of the total Scottish team aggregate, from a team that was only about 6% of the team's total sporting strength, so a very good return. Donald McIntosh will be producing his own post-CG report, but I wish to place on record my thanks to him, Lindsey Peden (fullbore coach), Marco Micheli (shotgun coach) and all the other coaches and support staff, and all the athletes for an exceptional all-round performance. The team spirit was evident, and collegiate, turning up at each other's events and finals, working for and supporting each other, regardless of their individual discipline. This was all most gratifying to witness.

I was very proud to be the Chair of STS at the Games, and everyone associated with shooting should be proud of what they achieved. It was a great privilege to witness the Saltire being raised half a dozen times at the awards ceremonies, and especially so to mark David McMath's Gold medal.

The issue of shooting at Birmingham in 2022 was raised frequently, often by the athletes themselves when being interviewed by the media around medal ceremonies, but also in the margins, in my conversations with other CGA Chairs, national/territory shooting Chairs, Chefs de Mission, shooting officials, athletes and spectators. The overwhelming view was one of great disappointment at the situation, and a desire to do all that could be done to influence the inclusion of shooting in 2022.

The Chair of Commonwealth Shooting Federation (CSF), Harry Murphy (Gibraltar) convened a meeting on Friday 13 April, at which he shared a platform with Peter Underhill (England, but representing ISSF); the meeting had representatives of most of the participating shooting nations/territories, and the broad outcomes of this were:

- A unanimous desire to do everything feasible to ensure that shooting was included in CG 2022.
- An outline plan to ensure that shooting will be included in some form in 2022; the options are:
 - Full inclusion, using the range complex at Bisley as a satellite venue (as happened for Manchester 2002, Barry Buddon for Glasgow 2014 and Belmont for Gold Coast 2018).
 - Full inclusion, but at split sites in the Birmingham area (there are sufficient ranges, but the Queen's prize may need to be modified to allow it to be shot at a slightly shorter range; ISSF are happy to consider such a modification).
 - Some form of Commonwealth Shooting Federation 'event' being run at Bisley or similar, parallel to the CG 2022. This was recognized as an inadequate substitute and would make it difficult to justify

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funding for high performance in the run-up to 2022, but it would at least keep shooting 'alive' looking towards 2026.

The meeting agreed that all Associations needed to lobby their own CGAs and, where appropriate, their CG Regional committees, while there was also a need to influence the Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee (yet to be established). The key to such lobbying would be:

- An 'evidence based' approach, focusing on the benefits that shooting brought to CG (e.g. inclusion of small nations/territories, medal chances – and proportion of medals for shooting – for that cohort of participants, historical use of Bisley in the past etc.).
- Well-mannered, logical argument, with no room for hysteria or hyperbole/bad manners.
- Common argumentation, supplemented by individual nation/territory issues.
- A coordinated approach.

In addition, some political lobbying should also be considered; for example, the Australian Sports Minister will be writing to the Secretary of State for DCM&A to lobby for shooting's inclusion, and other national ministers may do likewise. Peter Underhill briefed that he had already written to Birmingham 2022 on behalf of British Shooting, and ISSF representatives have met with Louise Martin CBE and David Grevenberg CBE from the Commonwealth Games Federation to 'make the case'. The message is – the door is not yet closed.

In terms of timing, the key date to target is the CG General Assembly in October 2019 – the Birmingham Organising Committee is yet to form, and will most likely not do so until late summer 2018. The key is to have a motion brought to the General Assembly in October 2019 to have shooting re-included, having done all the necessary background work and lobbying in advance of that meeting.

I left CSF and all present at the meeting assured that STS was fully and unyieldingly behind all and every effort to ensure that shooting is re-included, not just as a sport in 2022 but also as a 'core sport' for the future. To this end I offered to share some of Oliver's data on countries' medal successes with other nations/territories to help them build their arguments, while Peter Underhill assured all present that ISSF was equally keen to do what it could to ensure the same outcome, even to the extent of looking to recognise Commonwealth Games scores as World Records where appropriate, and introduce a 'ranking system' for Commonwealth shooters, noting that this presented a number of unique challenges in the Commonwealth context, especially surrounding 'nationality'.

As Chair, I will work with the Board and COO, and all Disciplines, to ensure that we play our part, along with our Commonwealth and ISSF partners, to get shooting back in the Games. I believe that reasoned, balanced, evidence-based and coordinated argument is the way ahead, and stands a very good chance of success. We must try.

In conclusion, Gold Coast 2018 was a great success for Scottish shooting. We exceeded our medal tally target, and narrowly missed out on one, if not two, other medals that could have gone our way on another day. The team were just that, and not a group of individuals, while the coaches were of tremendous support to their athletes. The investment in shooting was fully justified, and Paul Bush of CGS commented on how pleased he was with the return on investment. This gives STS valuable leverage as we head towards the next four-year funding round in April 2019, and will also make it easier for CGS to give shooting its fullest possible support for inclusion in 2022.

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