



ON TARGET

Newsletter of the Buffalo Rifle Association of Australia *Issue 14 Feb. 2014*

APERTURE

Just How Far and Are They Accurate?

An acquaintance of mine, once a shooter but not any longer, was aghast when I told him that I was buying an 1854 replica Sharps, single shot, black powder cartridge rifle. "What for?" he mused "my 223 with a scope can outshoot that thing any time" "Sure", I said "if all you want to do is dispatch a rabbit or a fox at 50 or maybe even 100 yards". The thing is, it's all about the mystique of taking a gun designed in the early 1800s and powder invented in the 16th century, casting your own projectiles, putting it all together and shooting consistently out to 1000 yds and more. Easy huh! NOT!

Sure there's room for sporting target shooters who use modern 308s etc shooting long distances and that's not easy either, and then there are small calibre scoped rifle clubs shooting tight groups at relatively short distances. But each to his own I say, I'll take the black every time and nothing beats the 'gong' coming back up the range 5 or so seconds after you have let the lead loose.

So the question comes up just how far will a lead projectile go and what sort of accuracy can you expect. Well, I read an article the other day that says it all. I won't reproduce it, but I will state some of the outcomes of testing done in 1992 by Shiloh Rifle Manufacturing and a group of forensic scientists.

It all started with the controversial Billy Dixon Shot. A young buffalo hunter Billy Dixon allegedly knocked Coyote Dung, an Indian warrior, from his horse, at the Battle of Adobe Walls in June 1874. This single shot was later surveyed to be 1538 yards. Although Dixon himself said it was a lucky shot, others debated over many years whether the shot actually did happen or was the Indian on a much closer butte about 700 or 800 yards distant.

The debate went on for well over 100 years and in 1992 a forensic scientist wrote an article in their newsletter stating that according to his calculations there is no way a Sharps Model 1874 in 50-90 would heave a bullet 1538 yards. Shiloh Rifle Manufacturing was invited to bring a Sharps rifle to a meeting at the Yuma Proving Grounds in Arizona where a recently de-classified radar device would be used to test various types of ammunition.

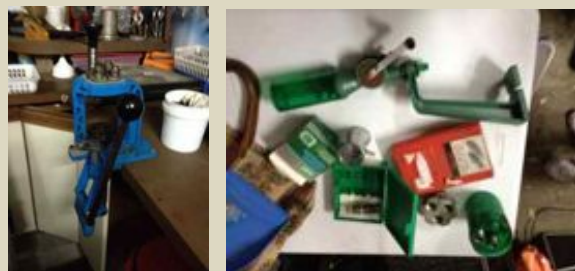
The results were astounding; the Sharps gun carrier was elevated to 35 degrees and a round carrying a 675 grain bullet over 90 grains of Ffg black powder was touched off. The scientists exclaimed that "It couldn't be", "It couldn't be". The bullet started out at only 1216 fps and landed more than 3,600 yards downrange!

Several other loads and elevations subsequently proved beyond any doubt that the Billy Dixon shot was very possible. They also tested the famed 45-110 used in the movie Quigley Down Under with a 550 grain bullet over 100 grains of Ffg producing 1322fps at the muzzle and landing 3,575 yards downrange.

Let's not forget that these rifles only carry iron sights, but any one of us can attest to the accuracy out to at least 1000 yards. Once seasoned shooters establish sight settings, relative novices can consistently hit targets at the same distance. In fact that's exactly how I started in this racket.I take no credit for the above visit http://the_montanian.tripod/Sharps.html

CLASSIFIEDS

I have advice of several pre-loved **re-loading presses, turrets, diesets, powder tricklers etc.** for sale. If you are interested contact me on 0413721819.



Let me know what you're looking for and maybe we can help.

THE POSSE

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SHOT TO BITZ

February Whiskey Shoot at Cooyal

So, we had the first 'paper shoot' at Cooyal Range and I reckon it was a great success. We did learn a few things and a little 'polish' here and there will make the next one run even smoother.

As planned we shot 600yds, 400yds and 200yds (off-hand) on the Saturday and concluded the 800yds and Side Event on Sunday morning. We shot in two groups of 5 with the alternate group working target, scoring and spotting.



The white frame was 1600mm square and a 3 point target hit, the blue, 600mm square, a 5 point target hit and the orange 'bull' a measly 150mm diameter but 10 points!

Kicking off at the 600 Sugarfoot opened his account with 47 points and both Kodiak and J B Books right there with 46 and Mississippi very close on 42.

The 400 brought J B out with a massive 70 points, including 4 'bulls' in a row! Shiloh, Wounded Knees and Sugarfoot all had a more realistic 53 points and Sitting Bear right there with 51 points.



The 200 off-hand saw J B out in front again on 61 but not far ahead of Sitting Bear on 58. Kodiak was third on 50 points. The most incredible 'shot-of-the-day' came from the Bear with a bull to beat all bulls off-hand at 200yds.



The wind was up a bit on Sunday - situation normal for 800yds, but still the results were good. Chris Madsen topped the score with 36 including a 'bull'. Sitting Bear was hot on his heels with 35 points. Mississippi and Sugarfoot brought up the rear on 31 points.

So in the final wash-up, no one caught up to JB's 'bulls' on the 400. And it's time to say that J B Books was shooting a brand new Shiloh Sharps 44.77 for the first time, without sight settings, with untried loads, yada, yada, yada - the man's a genius - 194 points! You just don't get that lucky on every outing.

Let's not take away anything from Sitting Bear who roared into second place with 181 points - watch out J B there's a Bear on your trail.

Mr. Consistency, (always the 'bridesmaid'), Sugarfoot was third with 170 - no cigar and **way, way** behind was Chris Madsen on 169.



J B with the Black



Bear with the amber

THE SIDE EVENT

This month's side event was a pistol 'fun' shoot held on Sunday after the Main Match. The scheduled Saturday afternoon was abandoned, by consent of all, due to the lateness in the day and severe thirst.

We had several shooters who had never fired a pistol and each completed the required P650 Form allowing them to shoot, under supervision, without an 'H' license classification. We also had seasoned pistol shooters and RO's supervising the events.

Stage 1 was a paper target with 5 individual targets to score from. Scoring was the target ring as hit (or not).

Stage 2 each shooter had his/her own marked alum. cans hanging from a beam and the number of holes (not exit) were the points ... and ...

Stage 3 was a clay disc you scored 5 for a hit on the first shot, 4 for the second etc.

All had 5 shots at each target choosing mostly .22 revolvers and semi-autos. There were also .38 and 357 magnum to try as well.

The prize was to be given to only the winner of the P650 'class' and Wounded Knees and Mississippi tied for first place. There was little discussion over the prize and Mississippi took the red home (for dad I presume).

A great time had by all.

ON THE LINE

Note! The following dates and arrangements are subject to change from time to time depending on prevailing conditions etc. Every effort will be made by your Committee to advise any changes well prior to the event. It is also advisable to check this calendar with each issue of "On Target"

CALENDAR 2014

Jan.	25/26 Cooyal "B" 7,5,3+0 s/e LA 3 o/h
Feb.	22/23 Cooyal "P" 6,4,2+8 s/e Pistol tba
Mar.	22/23 Cooyal Quigley "B" Six Dist. tba (no side event)
April	20/21 Canberra "P" s/e SSAA Silhouette tbc
May	24/25 Nioka Champagne s/e Shotgun Clays
June	28/29 Cooyal "P" Silhouette s/e Q/ Bucket
July	26/27 Cooyal "P" 7,5,3+9 s/e Swap meet
Aug.	23/24 Cooyal "B" 6,4,2+8 s/e R'fire (any cal)
Sept.	27/28 Nioka B/Dixon+AGM s/e LA 3 o/h
Oct.	25/26 Cooyal "B" Buffalo s/e Shotgun Clays
Nov.	22/23 Cooyal "B" 6,7,8+9 s/e Pistol tba
Dec.	No match.

Note! In each match;

- "B" means shot on buffalo plate
- "P" means shot on paper targets
- the 'numbers' are (hundred) yards.
- the match will be shot in that order
- '+' separates Sat & Sun
- "s/e" means side event (duh!).

Our **next shoot** will be at **Cooyal** on **March 22-23** and it is our intention to emulate, as far as it is practical, the Matthew Quigley Match which is held in Montana in June. The match will use the distances and targets as close as possible to the MQ match. Apart from the obvious help to those who will be attending the Montana event it will provide great variety for the rest of us who participate. Obviously it is a gong shoot.

The targets and distances are shown below, however we may not have the exact shape and size. The buffalo looks familiar though.

Sitting Cross-Stick Targets

Target #1, Buffalo,
5 ft x 7 ft, 805 yards



Target #3, Rectangle,
28" wide, 32" high, 530 yards



Target #2, Octagon,
48" diameter, 600 yards



Target #4, Diamond,
24" diameter, 405 yards

Target #5, Rectangle,
22" wide, 28" high, 417 yards



Off-Hand Target
Target #6, "Bucket", 28" wide at top,
22" wide at bottom, 32" high, 350 yards

You can also refer to www.quigleymatch.com/target-info.html for target info.

It is anticipated that we will shoot the 600, 530, 405 & 350 events on Saturday beginning at 9:00 and the 805 and 417 on the Sunday morning.

In order to stay as close as possible to the MQ Match we will have the usual 5 sighters but only 8 scoring shots. A 'target hit' is 1 point

On Friday you can practice provided it does not interfere with the range set-up.

Now all we need to do is duplicate the wind in Montana and we've got it - ha!

There will be no **side event** as we will be shooting six distances instead of the usual four and time may not permit.

Prizes will be awarded for the highest score for the six distances, runner-up and an 'Eight' on the 'Off-Hand'

A cooked breakfast and lunch will be available on the range for \$5 each on Sat and Sun. subject to your advice of attendance one week prior to the event. If arriving on Friday you will need to bring your own lunch. Dinner will be available at the Cooyal Pub on Friday and Sat. night.

NOTE! For catering purposes it is essential to advise any one of the Committee Members of your attendance at any match at least a week prior to any event. No advice - no meals!

Camping and bunkhouse facilities are free on the range. The Cooyal Pub (Ph. 6373 5353) offers a range of accommodation and Yarrowonga Cedar Cottages are close by yarrowongacottages.com.au. There are many other alternative 'digs' in the Mudgee area.

BISON TALES

Sand Creek Massacre - Part 1

SAND CREEK - a windswept place haunted by violence and broken promises. The 1864 massacre of Cheyenne and Arapaho people opened the last phase of a broader conflict between Native Americans and a rapidly expanding nation. Understandably the massacre deepened Plains Indian Resistance to American expansion, spurring cycle of raids and reprisals. But the savagery at Sand Creek also helped awaken America to the plight of its native peoples. Sand Creek remains sacred ground - a place to honor the dead and dispossessed, a place where they are not forgotten.

The Great Plains in the 1800's was a seemingly endless prairie stretching east from the Rockies toward the Missouri, covered with grass and shrub. Threaded with tree-lined streams, tracked by great herds of Buffalo. This land was the prize, the scene of both struggle and accord between Native Americans and the United States.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho came from the north in the 1600s they had farmed from the Great Lakes to western Minnesota. Pressured from the east by other tribes they moved west, eventually reaching the Black Hills. In less than 50 years the horse became a crucial part of their lives. Moving south onto the plains, they entered what is now Colorado by the 1820s. they gathered and traded wild horses and hunted buffalo and other animals that provided food, shelter, tools, and hides for trade.

By 1841, through trade along the Santa Fe and other trails, these tribes built far-ranging trade networks and alliances. As marriages between traders and Native American women solidified these ties, the deepening economic relations significantly altered the material lives of the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

Immigrants from the United States poured onto the plains. Settlers, miners, and speculators crossed what was then called the "Great American Desert", seeking wealth or simply a new start. By 1850, through treaty, annexation, and war, the United States and its territories spanned the continent. The discovery of gold in the Rockies brought more immigrants, more settlement. By 1864 land speculation became a major business interest in a Colorado Territory poised on the brink of statehood.

The stage was set: Here were two vastly different cultures, one a rapidly growing, expansionist nation employing industrial technology, intent on fulfilling its self-proclaimed "Manifest Destiny". Directly in its path was a nomadic people dependant on the buffalo hide trade. A clash of these two cultures produced a great American tragedy.

The Sun rising at their backs, a long column of riders moved up dry Big Sandy Creek towards the tipis along its banks. The village's 700 Cheyenne and Arapaho people were stirring, tending to chores. The temporary camp was along the northern border of the Fort Wise Treaty Lands, where most felt protected. Hearing distant hoofbeats, Indian women called out, "The buffalo are coming!"

But on this cold November morning the "buffalo" were hundreds of blue clad soldiers. to be continued

Stay tuned next month for the conclusion of this story, which has been reproduced with acknowledgement and thanks to the National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior.

GUNSMITH

Gun and Calibre Choice

I guess it's a personal thing when it comes to choosing a rifle to participate in our Buffalo Rifle Shoots. Most of us would opt for the 45-70 or 45-90 as they are the most popular in terms of rifles, loading equipment, cases, and projectiles, all readily available. - well sort of. And, in search of glory, some choose to punish themselves with 45-110, 120, 140 and, God forbid, 50-90, 100, 110 and so on. Most of these calibres were covered in earlier issues of this Newsletter. Of course the cost of these rifles and loading accessories also plays a significant role in our choice of rifle.

At the Cooyal shoot covered earlier in this issue, I mentioned that J B Brooks was shooting his brand new Shiloh Sharps 44-77 and obviously very successfully, I might add.

I asked him why he chose such an 'odd' caliber.

"(I) Think it's been a good decision.

Basically it's classed as a Shiloh No.1 Sporter/ sporting rifle. 30" - No.1 heavy octagonal bbl, extra fancy wood, ebony tipped/ schnabel forend, checkered woodwork. Calibre is 44 x 2 1/4" Sharps (or 44/77 bottleneck). Weighs about 12 1/2 lbs. I was using a bullet from a Steve Brooks mould at Cooyal. Sort of a Creedmoor/ Original Postell hybrid that I worked out with Steve Brooks. Has reduced forward driving band. Bullet weighs 480 grains. No idea of velocity so far but will hopefully have it over the chronograph in the next week or so.

Really is a pleasure to shoot. Blackpowder bottleneck cases got some bad press years ago.... and while they are a bit more of a fiddle to set up for when compared to 45/70 or 45/90, once you get going (touch wood), they can be pretty rewarding. 44/77 was the largest selling single calibre with the Sharps until the advent of the 45/70 govt. So it obviously accounted for a great many buffalo as well as being one of the cartridges used by the American team to beat the Irish at Creedmoor. They apparently loaded them up with close to 90 grains of powder for that match and used a 520 grain bullet. Given the rifles only weighed 10 lbs for that match that would have made quite a statement ... at both ends!

Ran three different grease groove bullets in it today to see how it went and it seems to like them all. My paper patch tests leave a lot to be desired for the moment but I might leave that hurdle till I've sorted out the grease grooves. With everyone's results a little patchy at the 800 the other day it was hard to judge but I am a little concerned that the bullet may be too long and not stabilising enough for the longer ranges."

Well there you have it and for those that didn't keep Issue 4 of this newsletter, below was the write up on the same calibre.

.44-77 Sharps and .44-77 Remington

This pair is actually the same cartridge. The .44-77 was introduced in 1869 by Sharps for their Model 1869 rifle, and was based on the Sharps 2 1/4" rimmed, bottleneck case. This case had a base diameter of .516", shoulder diameter of .502" and neck diameter of .467". Bullet diameter was .446" and cartridge overall length was 3.05".

It was also available under the Remington name in their No. 3 Rolling Block rifle. The .44-77 was used for both hunting and target shooting. Factory loads were provided with various bullet weights up to 470 grains. Using a 365 grain bullet, one typical factory load had an advertised MV of 1460 fps and ME of 1730 ft. lbs.