



CHAIRMANS REPORT – ESSU AGM 2008

This has been yet another challenging and demanding year for the ESSU. Work has continued to establish and integrate the Team England National Squad (TENS) into the national performance level structures. Furthermore and to this end, I am happy to report that we have now firmly established a TENS Development squad for both the rifle and pistol disciplines. Membership continues to be of interest and it is pleasing to note an increase in membership, especially among the young. As ever, much of our time has been taken up with the ongoing battles to secure funding for our performance level shooters and investing in talent for the future. I am very happy to report that Sport England has granted the English Target Shooting Federation a sum of £343,000 to prepare the Shooting Team for the next Commonwealth Games in 2010. Obviously a large proportion of this money will be spent on the ESSU cartridge and air disciplines. Naturally we are very grateful for this SE investment and the Committee, along with the performance coaches, are mindful of the need to repay this faith with more medals in New Delhi. Finally it was very pleasing to hear of the award of an OBE to Michael Gault in the New Years honours list; most well deserved and fitting recognition of his fine efforts on behalf of his Country.

1. **Commonwealth Games.** Some of you will have been aware of the proposals by the Commonwealth Games Federation to alter the way that the Games are structured and organised. In essence they are concerned to ensure that future Games do not become so large that cities and countries cannot be found to host them. Recommendations have been made to limit the size of teams, reduce the number of events and align the Games more closely with the Olympics. Much work has gone into ensuring that the views of the ESSU and that of English shooting have been passed to the Commonwealth Shooting Federation to safe guard the sports future in the Games. However, despite much hard work our efforts have been in vain and following a vote at the Commonwealth Games General Assembly in November of last year, the shooting programme for the Games post 2010 has been drastically reduced. There will no longer be any team events (individuals only, reducing shooting events from 38 to 17); non Olympic events have been dropped (excepting Full-bore Rifle), and the schedule reduced from 8 to 4 days with no Badge Matches. Naturally this is a serious blow to our sport. It is interesting to note that the European block of 14 nations voted against these proposals, whereas the remaining continental federations (50 nations) block votes went for and backed the CGF proposals. These proposals do not apply to the New Delhi CG's in 2010, but will be in effect for Glasgow in 2014. In addition it should be noted that the Commonwealth Shooting Federation Championships due to be held in October 2009, have been moved back to February 2010 (18 to 28th).

2. **Intershoot.** Some 40 of our members enjoyed an excellent deployment to Intershoot in The Hague in February. We won a total of 10 medals, not one of our better performances but creditable in mind of the development nature of the team and event. The competition remains of a high standard, but is not so high that it discourages the relative novice. Therefore we shall continue to support this event, allowing a broad spectrum of eligible members to attend. It is an excellent vehicle for all standards and a proving ground for juniors, relative novices and seasoned shooters alike. I thank Norah Hunter and Frank Balcombe for their continued efforts in organising our involvement with this most worthwhile event.

3. **TENS.** The Team England National Squad has been firmly established and 7 training weekends have been conducted since the Commonwealth Games. Thankfully SE funding now means that we have been able to send TENS squad members to minor international matches and training sessions during the winter in Europe. These have proved most successful. I thank Martyn White, Ken Parr and Tom Redhead for all their hard work and efforts on behalf of TENS. There is no doubt that the advent of TENS has been reflected with enhanced results on the international stage. We are now seeking ways of continuing TENS activities beyond the scope of preparations for the Commonwealth Games and enhancing GB activities still further.

4. **Academy.** The Academy Squads, both in rifle and pistol, continue to underpin the main TENS initiative. It was pleasing to note that Michele Smith winner of this year's British championship has benefited from being a member of the TENS Academy. SE funding has allowed us to employ 3 coaches to run the rifle squad; Steve Downs, Bob Sanderson and Bob Dickie. Regular Assessment weekends take place to maintain and monitor progress and standards. The TENS Academy now forms part of a national athlete pathway, newly created following the latest award of exchequer funding from UK Sport to British Shooting. Not only is this important for our own welfare and future protection, but reflects the changing emphasis placed upon Home Countries. We will be providing the basis from which talented youngsters are projected into the senior national squads. I thank the coaches for their diligence and commitment.

5. **TASS and SportsAid Funding.** Unfortunately the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) which had been available to the Sport has been withdrawn under new criteria coming into effect under SE guidelines. Shooting is not one of the 12 preferred summer sports to enjoy continued TASS support from October 2008 onward. However, SportsAid continues to be of great value to our young and aspiring athletes aged between 13 and 18.

6. **Home country responsibilities.** Under new funding arrangements imposed by UK Sport and adopted by GBTSF, the Home Countries are required to take on a more leading role in providing the stepping stone between aspiring individuals and the GB national squads and those on the new athlete performance pathway. Negotiations are under way to put in place the resources and infrastructure to support this policy change. This increase in responsibility will require further change and an even more professional approach by shooters and administrators alike. From some a no compromise approach will be called for. In light of an uncertain future it would seem prudent to ensure that we remain proactive and positive in our approach.

Summary. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the Committee members for their invaluable time and support over the past year on your behalves. In particular I would like to express gratitude to Frank Balcombe, Norah Hunter and Martyn White for all their continued efforts. The SE award of SE £343,000 is an excellent fillip to our cause and is just reward for our fine achievements in Melbourne 2006. It now remains for us to continue our successes and justify such investment by producing even greater accolades in New Delhi 2010.

Peter Underhill
Chairman ESSU