



A PLACE FULL OF PASSION

We spoke to Managing Director of Eriswell Lodge Ltd, **Stuart Smith**, about the award-winning ground.



QWhen did the ground open and what makes it special?

A: The site dates back to the 1970's when it was linked to RAF Lakenheath, a US Air Force base, and was known at that time as the Rod & Gun Club. It then became the Lakenheath Clay Target Centre, and in January 2015 my Dad and I took over the site and rebranded it as Eriswell Lodge.

We started the ground with the intention of providing high-quality facilities and experiences for everyone, and we had extensive development works and investments in mind to help us achieve this.

We started work on our new clubhouse facility in May of 2018, and were originally due to finish and open it in late 2019. However, due to a number of factors this was delayed to spring of 2020, and then again due to COVID-19. We finally opened the new building in September 2020 and couldn't be happier with the finished result – and the response from our customers.

We are a family-run

business, and have been since the beginning, which makes a huge difference to the atmosphere at the ground. We're all connected to shooting through the ground, but a large number of us are also connected personally through hobbies and family too. When Dad and I started the ground we were adamant that we wanted the friendly and welcoming feel of a small club, but with the added facility and amenities of a large commercial ground and clubhouse – something that we're very proud to have maintained to this day.

QWhat disciplines/facilities do you offer?

A: We offer English Sporting, FITASC Sporting, Sportrap/Compak Sporting, English Skeet/Skeet Doubles, NSSA Skeet (American) and Olympic Skeet, Down the Line/Single Barrel, Automatic Ball Trap, and by default All Round as well.

For shooting areas we have 22 English Sporting stands, four of which are specifically designed for beginners, used

for lessons and experience sessions. We also have one covered Sportrap layout, which is also used for Compak Sporting, as well as a Rabbit Skeet layout. This is a full-sized, properly scaled Skeet layout which uses rabbit traps and targets rather than traditional skeet targets. This idea was put in place for the Easter weekend in 2018, and has proved immensely popular as it helps people to work on all possible angles of rabbit targets.

As well as this, we have a simulated game shooting area, four Skeet layouts, two of which with ABT layouts and one with DTL, and a separate covered DTL layout.

Facility wise, we are open seven days a week, and have our new 13,000 square foot clubhouse, which contains the reception, retail shop and gun room, a large café/restaurant and licensed bar, four conference/meeting rooms, and an outside terraced seating area.

We hold regular CPSA Registered competitions in most of our available disciplines, including County



Championships for Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex, and regional fixtures for the East Midlands.

We have held National Championships for the British Skeet Shooting Association (NSSA Skeet in the UK) every year since we opened, and several non-registered ground competitions, including the World Skeet Masters event, hosted by Eriswell Lodge and John Dyson. We also hold events for local and national charities, and regularly host shoots with the local Masonic Clay Shooting Association.

Every Wednesday evening we run a non-registered floodlit English Skeet event, and through winter we run a floodlit Sportrap and DTL on alternate Wednesdays.

Q What awards and accreditations have you won over the years?

A: The ground has won a few awards over the last six years, all of which we are very proud of! We were voted Runner-up as the CPSA Ground of the Year in 2016, and have several awards with the Nation's Favourite

Shooting Ground (Clay Shooting Magazine).

These include second in East Region in 2017, first in East Region, second in National Skeet Ground, and third National Best Breakfast in 2018. In 2019 we came second in the East Region, third in the National Skeet Ground, and third in the National Trap Ground.

Q How has the ground developed over the years?

A: Massively! As mentioned previously we built the new clubhouse, which we believe may be the largest in the country for a shooting ground, but we cannot be 100% certain about that, and have been adding to our shooting offerings as routinely as we can. We have a huge development plan for the ground as a whole, which has sadly been put on hold due to COVID-19, but it will be back on track as soon as we can restart.

Q Could you tell us a little about your shooters/sponsors programme?

A: We have three shooters that we work with on a

regular basis, and have been very pleased with their development since they joined our team.

We don't base our sponsorship on results, but on positive, professional, and polite conduct, and our collective game plan is always to improve ourselves first and foremost.

Our sponsored team includes Charlotte Patten, who worked exceptionally hard and placed second in the Ladies category for the Suffolk CPSA Supreme Championship in 2019, and has also done exceptionally well in the 2020 event –

results for that have not been published as yet, so we can't say any more! We also sponsor Henry Lungley, who won the Colts category in the Suffolk CPSA Supreme Championship in 2019, and has also done exceptionally well in the 2020 event. Henry has also achieved AA classification in English Skeet, a fantastic achievement!

Our other sponsored shooter, Josh Nunn, has moved himself into AA classes for English Sporting, All Round, and Sportrap. Josh has also been exceptionally close to winning the Suffolk CPSA Supreme Championship, and was our County Sportrap Champion in 2020.

Q Are you planning any events for 2021?

A: We have a very full calendar this year, with county championship shoots booked for Suffolk and Cambridgeshire so far, as well as The East Midlands Skeet Championship, two NSSA championships and monthly target only shoots, regular

monthly CPSA fixtures, and for 2021 we are expecting to host the first England Skeet Team Selection shoot in March, the UK Compak Sporting Championships and GB Team Selection Shoot in April, the English Open Skeet Championships in May and the English Open Skeet Doubles in June, added to our own World Skeet Masters and the Chapmans All Round in December.

Q Is there anything you feel we have missed that you would like to add?

A: We are genuinely passionate about what we do,

and our customers really matter to us. This gives us a huge incentive to keep striving to improve our offerings and facilities, and we really enjoy working to develop Eriswell Lodge towards its true potential.

Dad and I are immensely proud of what Eriswell Lodge has achieved so far,

and we are fortunate enough to have a great team of staff that share our vision and keep raising the bar, so finally a thank you from both of us to all of our customers, staff, referees, and suppliers for all of their support and efforts in developing Eriswell Lodge so far – we are very grateful! At the time of writing we are amongst the third lockdown, so we hope to see you all again soon!

“ We are genuinely passionate about what we do, and our customers really matter to us. ”



Address: Brandon Road, Eriswell, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 9FB
W: eriswell-lodge.com **E:** info@eriswell-lodge.com
T: 01638 534045 **Opening times:** Closed due to National Lockdown.