

## **Home International Fitasc sporting 25 September 2010 Mill Hill Ireland**

Ireland is a great place to hold a shoot but challenging to take firearms and ammunition. With a couple of the airlines refusing to take firearms and all ferries refusing to take cartridges it was fun trying to organise! However, my God it was worth it! Mill Hill is hidden down a back lane, where one would never expect to find a gun club. On arrival you are welcomed with that unique Irish welcome.

As usual there were 4 layouts of 25, each having 3 different stands so new system on the old system format.

What was quite amazing at Mill Hill was that virtually all the traps were hidden, likening most of the stands to a rough shoot or walked up. A truly fantastic array of targets presented and a massive pat on the back for Morris the course designer. The amount of work that went into holding this event really did show, with hand built bridges, crossing streams, screens, rabbit traps covered with branches and even a platform raised above a small copse to shoot down on targets, quite superb.

Apparently the Irish economy is failing fast, but there was no sign of it at this ground. Our England team had a mixture of the regulars, but this time we had six new caps. The team shot very well and was soon putting in some very creditable scores. The course was set for about 92-93, but was no surprise for the on form first time Fitasc team member veteran Graham Stirzaker to shoot an incredible 95. Paul Batchelor beat the captain Mat Hance in the shoot off for runner up as they both shot 94.

A fantastic effort from the 16 year old new cap Nathan Batchelor who shot 88 winning the juniors. (Chip off the old block). It was great to see two fathers with sons competing.

With a 92.6 average it was no surprise the senior team came first and with two new caps, Richard Bunning and Paul Lovick backed up by Martin Papworth and straight from the maternity ward seeing his 2<sup>nd</sup> son Harry born was the very proud father Roy Cherry, and obviously Mat and Paul also who shot off for runner up.

The juniors; Harry Seal, Chris Papworth and new cap Nathan Batchelor won the Junior team and the Veterans with the very experienced Graham Stirzaker, Martin Reynolds and John Pool won by 13 clays.

The ladies with two new caps Carole Sawkins and Rebecca Bream were under immense pressure when Pet Easton pulled out at the last minute. However the very on form Scottish team took no prisoners, our ladies shot well, but struggled to beat Scotland's Audrey Boyd with a 25 straight on the card who won with 83. Her team mate shot an 81 to win the team event by 11 clays.

The England Shooting Team won the Seniors, Juniors and Veterans and runners up in the Ladies. We finished with a banquet in the City North hotel where all the team captains welcomed the new members and congratulated the winners. I rounded off the speeches by passionately thanking all involved for one of the best shoots so far.

On reflection, a superb shoot with fantastic hospitality. This team used to be the poor relation to the GB Fitasc team, however, we have shown we are a force to be reckoned with. I always like to promote team bonding because we shoot this competition together as one. All the hard work has been done in qualifying for your team place so this competition should be enjoyed together as the England Shooting Team!

Guy Bond (team manager)