

It really doesn't feel like a year since I sat down to write my last Chairman's report. Annoyingly though, my desk calendar stares at me smugly and Windows joins in, every time I switch on my PC so it must be true. It just sort of shows how busy last year really was but, as we move into 2023, trust me, you ain't seen nothing yet.

CHAMPIONSHIPS

British Open Sporting and Sportrap

For the first time, the British Open Sporting was held at the Barbury Shooting School. It proved so popular we had to add extra days. In addition to a fantastic course, Josh Brown also rewarded our expectations by presenting us with a castle.

A strong turnout produced strong scores with Sam Usher winning the overall title, Chris Childerhouse coming second and Nathan Skinner third. Ladies High Gun was taken by Hannah Gibson with Georgie Moule becoming runner up after a shoot off with Charlotte Hollands. William Page took the juniors title, Ruben Calton the Colts and Martin Doughty the veterans. The British Open Sportrap, held at the same event, was won by George Digweed beating John Lee by one clay who in turn beat Sam Green by a single clay. Ladies High Gun went to Emma Stacey with Cheryl Hall taking second place and Hannah Gibson third lady overall. William Page repeated his success in the juniors ESP by also winning the Juniors Sportrap title. Lucy Earl took the lady Juniors High Gun and Steve Brightwell the Veterans.

English Open Sporting

That leafy lair of John Bidwell and Andy Coppen, which is High Lodge, hosted the English Open. Paul Batchelor took the overall title with Phil Gray coming a close second and George Digweed an even closer third. Ladies high Gun went to Cheryl Hall with Emma Stacey taking second place after a shoot off with Hannah Gibson. The Junior High Gun was taken by Jacob O'Loughlin and the Veterans by Philip Thorrold.

English Open Sportrap

Eriswell Lodge hosted this Championship. Stuart Smith set an impressive course of 150 targets with three days of competition. The weather was some of the hottest of the year making everyone grateful for the complimentary iced water which was ferried around the ground, by the Eriswell staff. Goody Bags added to the event and Kenji also got one even though he wasn't shooting.

James Attwood took the English Open title having scored 141 with Richard Faulds coming a close second on 140 and Henry Collins third on 138. The Ladies title was taken by Cheryl Hall who held Charlotte Hollands, to second place, by one clay with Georgie Moule awarded third lady overall. Tristan Hockey claimed the Junior title with Will Page coming second and Daniel King third. The Colts champion trophy went to John Porter and the Veterans title to Steve Brightwell.

British Open Skeet

In weather far less scorching than the Sportrap, Eriswell Lodge also held the British Open Skeet. On day two, Ethan Lord shot 100 straight as did his dad Marcus. They then went off to Cornwall for a holiday saying that they wouldn't be back for shoot offs. By mid-Sunday it was obvious only another two 100 straits would be put in. Ethan and Marcus decided to take the long road back which was

rewarded with, Junior, Ethan taking second place overall after a shoot off with, eventual winner, Tom Clifford. Ethan's dad Marcus came third overall. Now that was a journey worth making.

Megan Jones took the Ladies title on 99 with Hannah Gibson clinching second place by holding Ali Coupe at bay by one clay. Second overall, Ethan Lord, also took the Junior title outright with Megan Jones one point behind on 99 and Sonny Bowman on 96. The Colts title was won by George Billington with Isabel Cartlidge second and Matthew Huxtable third. Philip Thorrold was the Veterans High Gun with the second and third place being fought out over a 25 target shoot off followed by a nail biting 24 targets of sudden death. Stephen Leppington finally prevailed over Peter Stanton-Hope to take second place.

HEAD OFFICE

As always, I must pay tribute to Iain Parker and all his staff at HQ for an excellent year of Major Championships as well as managing the day-to-day running of the firm. During 2022 we were joined, for the third time, by Paula Watkins taking on the role of Events Executive. Paula left us about six years ago to go back to South Africa and has made a seamless return slotting back in as though she's never been away. Morgan Evans joined us in the role of Marketing, Communications, and PR executive and has greatly enhanced our social media and newsletter profile. Finally, in December I presented Richard Worthington, our National Development Manager, with a 10 year long service award however, as he has pointed out to me, in a couple of weeks it would have been 11 years. Better late than never Richard.

THE YEAR AHEAD

We all know the problems the sport has faced over the years of Covid restrictions. 2022 saw membership rise again but peaking in July when the cost of living crisis started to have an effect and numbers began to drop. Thankfully, this trend was brief and we have reached a plateau of about 22500 members which is holding steady. With a revised budget we are still forecasting a surplus for this year and the company remains financially sound with strong prospects for the future. But prices are rising everywhere and grounds are facing serious problems, as are all businesses. You, our members, have increasing costs, mortgage hikes, soaring food and fuel prices, as well as eye watering charges for accommodation when travelling to Championships. We have responded to these pressures by trying, where possible, to locate as many of our major championships in a central band across the country to reduce the distances our members have to travel, who live in the far south or north of the country, saving on fuel and, perhaps hotel costs.

In addition, we have recognised that, this year, we need to help bear some of the additional costs which grounds are facing when running a major championships. This will have a cost to the company but we are confident we can do it without lowering the standards of our Championships or the experiences of our members competing. In fact, it's not only a belief it's a guarantee which I happily and confidently give you now.

That said, we are planning an astoundingly busy year for 2023, with the jewel in the crown being the World Sporting at EJ Churchill's. Selling out on day two, we had to open some extra slots on the proceeding weekend. We're running two Sporting and a Prelim course as well as the British open Sportrap. Instead of a FITASC Championship we will be running our first ever major Super Sporting Championship. The final day has also been changed to the Saturday, ensuring we can make best advantage of the main ground facilities and allowing Sunday for everyone to recoup before going back to work on the Monday. Sounds like a plan to me.

Steve Lovatt will be hosting the British Open Sporting at Garlands Shooting Ground and, after the success of the English Open Sportrap last year, Eriswell Lodge will be taking on the English Open Sporting for the first time. The English Open Sportrap is going to Barbury who should find it a fairly pedestrian affair after the success of last year's British Open.

Carl Smith will be overseeing the English Open Skeet at Nottingham and Rob Hall will be taking on the British Open Skeet at East Yorkshire. It will come as no surprise, as it sort of says it on the tin that the Bywell DTL Weekend, comprising the Sponsors Day, the Dougall Memorial and the English Open, will be at Bywell, courtesy of the Henry family. Finally, the English Open ABT championship is in the very capable hands of Oli Jones, David Dale, and quite possibly Duke, down at the National Clay Shooting Centre at Bisley.

In addition to our major championship, England will also be hosting two ICTSC Home International Championships. Andrew Clifton will be welcoming the five nations to Sporting Targets for the Home International English Sporting while Ed Barker will be doing pretty much the same for the Home International Olympic Trap at Nuthampstead. Whilst on the subject, last year, after five terms as England's ESP team manager, Richard Hunter stood down and was succeeded by Phil Easeman who took the team to success at the Home International on Jersey. Dorothy Bird, the much loved and very successful Olympic Skeet manager, moved north, very close to the ice wall, to direct her energies into a new farming venture. After managing the Olympic Skeet teams for six years, herding sheep should prove a walk in the park (only half kidding guys). Dot is succeeded by Paul Tudge starting a three year term. Paul Chapman stood down as ABT manager and is succeeded by Dr Rebecca Wockenforth whilst Julia Havill was overwhelmingly reselected by her very successful English Skeet team to manage them for a further three years to provide advice, support and, above all, cake.

And so, a small part of 2023 has already passed but the majority, and the shooting parts, are yet to come. With everything that's going on in the world it's going to be different but, we sort of got used to that over the last three years and we very much have the tee-shirt. Different is the new normal and I'm confident that the staff at HQ, the Directors and above all you, the members, will take everything in their stride in 2023 and, despite the Harbingers of doom, will make this one of the most successful years ever.

I'm looking forward to meeting up with you all on the grounds, at the meetings and on the training courses. If you are where I am, please come and have a word and tell me your thoughts. I'm easy to spot, I'm the one with the Labrador, slightly thinning on top and with a totally confused look on his face, me that is, not the Lab.

To paraphrase everyone's favourite Vulcan, Shoot Well and Prosper.

See you all soon.

Dr John martin
CPSA Chairman