

The Sturt Pistol & Shooting Club

History

The Sturt Pistol and Shooting Club formed in 1956 with just a few enthusiastic members. Sturt soon established itself as a traditional Pistol Club and as the years went by took great pride in becoming one of the more established Pistol Clubs in the State of South Australia.

The Club commenced activities in an area just off Seacombe Road in Seaview Downs. In only a few years the Club was forced to make its first move and relocate in the Field River Quarry - an area that was known locally as "Jim Sheidow's Land". This land was located just to the west of the Reynella township (as it was then) and some of this land today forms the suburb of Sheidow Park. There was no formal lease, just a "handshake" agreement with Mr Jim Sheidow along with a very nominal rent in return for the use of the land. Consequently it was difficult for the Club to "put down roots" as there was always the possibility of having to move again.

It was some 20 years later before it became clear that another move was inevitable. Housing had begun to encroach on "Our Range" and there was also the continuing doubt as to what the outcome would be for us when Jim Sheidow died. After several years of research, the Club was finally able to negotiate a 20-year lease with the Department for National Parks and Wildlife for an area of some 4 hectares (10 acres) in the newly established O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park which was part of the Adelaide Hills Face Zone.

So, in 1992, our Club again relocated.

This time to this picturesque package of land in the O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park. Overlooking the Adelaide coastline from Seacliff in the south-west, along the coast to Port Adelaide in the north, then inland across the Adelaide Plains (which surround the City of Adelaide), and even further around to the Mount Lofty Ranges in the east, forming a stunning backdrop to this panoramic view. Our Club is privileged to be in such an idyllic location (and all this less than 15 kms from the centre of the City of Adelaide).

Membership

The Sturt Pistol and Shooting Club enjoys a strong and active membership, currently in excess of 100 members. Our membership comes from a very diverse background including doctors, lawyers and teachers together with many other professionals and skilled workers from all walks of life. These members include men, women, juniors, and families, and several disabled competitors also. Ages range from 12 to 85 years with one of our inaugural member still competing on occasion. Most Club Members live in the nearby suburbs but there are some who travel from as far away as Tea Tree Gully, Goolwa and Callington.

The Club's competitive history is chequered with numerous State and National Team representatives, some record holders, in both junior and senior levels of competition. One of our disabled members achieved selection to compete in the Paralympics in 2000 while another Junior Shooter just recently achieved selection for the FESPIC Games in Kaula Lumpur in November, 2006. These achievements come from pursuing a dedicated training programme while travelling to intrastate, interstate and overseas competitions to seek qualifying scores which are essential to gain team selection.

In 2000, another of our Club Members was honoured by Hammerli Firearms by being asked to be the official gunsmith for the company at the Olympics in Sydney and was again given this honour for the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006.

Our Club currently has two National Judges as Members - both of whom were selected to officiate at the Olympic Games in Sydney 2004 and subsequently at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006.

The Sturt Pistol and Shooting Club has many active members who regularly travel to Open Shoots, State and National Championships and also compete in the Masters Games competitions held around our State and elsewhere in Australia.

Recent Events

In 1999 the Sturt Pistol and Shooting Club was the venue for the World Action Pistol Championships Dinner. We hosted this prestigious event, providing both the venue and the staff - and it was acclaimed as "one of the best". Later, in April 2000, the Junior Tri-State Competition was held at our Club. This competition is contested annually between the Australian States of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia and introduces our Junior Shooters to serious competition. Likewise, this was acclaimed as a tremendously successful event.

During 2004 we hosted the State Coaching Council's *Training on the Line* Programme. This was an intense, hands-on, training programme designed specifically to improve a shooter's skills technically and mentally. Applicants are accepted regardless of their starting competency and the training extends over a three or four month period. There were five attendees on this programme: four senior competitors from South Australia and one junior competitor from the Mildura Pistol and Shooting Club in Victoria.

During October 2004 Sturt hosted the South Australian ISSF State Titles. These were considered a great success by everyone who competed, officiated or spectated. One of our junior shooters claimed two of the Shields in the Junior Air Pistol and the Junior 25m Match.

Hosting the Australian Masters Games was our major event during the 2005 calendar year. There were 46 competitors and 74 volunteers participating in these Games, coming from as far away as Sydney. The ages of competitors ranged from the mid-thirties up to a very senior 74. If you would like to take a Pictorial Tour of the Masters Games [click here](#).

In May 2006 the Club celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a Fun Shoot, and this was followed by a three course "sit down" dinner. If you would like to take a Pictorial Tour of our 50th Anniversary Celebrations [click here](#).

Late in October 2006, we again hosted the South Australian ISSF State Titles. Sturt was well represented in the medal tally, with both the State Title and the Third off-gun positions in the Centrefire match being won by Sturt Members and one of our Junior Shooters took out the Junior 25m Match and the Junior Air Pistol events. If you would like a Pictorial Tour of the 2006 State Titles [click here](#).

Personnel

Our Club has been, and still is, fortunate in having members offering a diverse range of shooting-related qualifications and skills. These include educating junior and senior shooters relative to competition, firearms maintainance, reloading and range management, to mention just a few. These skills ensure that every situation is conducted or managed safely and in accordance with the rules of the competition.

14 Safety Awareness Officers (SAO's)

Safety Awareness Officers work with intending members and assist them in obtaining their Class "H" Firearms Licence

9 Range Officers (RO's)

Range Officers ensure that the Competitions are conducted according to the Rules of the Match and that safety is maintained on the Range at all times. Firearms can only be handled under direct instruction of the Range Officer.

2 National Referees

Referees in shooting events are similar to Referees in most sporting events. They are there to adjudicate when Rules need to be interpreted and to provide support mechanisms for both the Competitor and Range Officials as required.

4 National (Level 1) Coaches and 1 National (Level 2) Coach

Coaches gain accreditation via a formal training schedule. Once qualified they can then coach and train Club Members in shooting disciplines - no matter what their level of competency - to assist in improving both their mental and physical shooting skills.

Types of Competition

Sturt is predominantly an ISSF competition based Club. This means the Club competes principally in the pistol shooting events supported by the Olympic and Commonwealth Games organisations. The Club does, however, embrace a number of other disciplines supported by Pistol Australia including Black Powder and Service Pistol. There is also an active following in the Club for smallbore rifle events. For more information on Club Matches [click here](#).

Ranges

All our Ranges have been constructed according to the Rules and Regulations set out by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF).

Range 1 is an 18-position 50m Range which has been designed in such a way that it can also be used for several 25m matches as well. This has been achieved by using a “drop down” turning target mechanism at the 25m line. This then allows Range 1 to be used for the 50m Match, 50m Smallbore Rifle events, 50m Black Powder as well as a 50m Centrefire “Club” match, and it can also be used for 25m events such as Centrefire and the 25m Match (both Precision and Timed Fire), Standard Pistol, our local 25m Club Match and also 25m Smallbore Rifle events.

Next to the 50m Range, and under the same roof, there are two 25m Ranges (Range 2 and Range 3). Each has two bays of turning targets for the Rapid Fire event. These Ranges can also accommodate the Centrefire, 25m Match and Standard Pistol events as well, so providing enormous flexibility in Range management.

There is also sufficient undeveloped land at the eastern end of Ranges 1, 2 and 3 for additional ranges to be built in the future.

The Air Pistol Range accommodates eight competitors. It recently underwent a significant upgrade comprising new lighting and ventilation together with eight new “RIKA” returning targets. The RIKAs are more energy efficient, provide the competitor with a very fast target return, are smoother and quieter in performance, and significantly improve the comfort of the adjacent competitors.

All our Ranges have been constructed to international specifications, our target systems operate within the internationally specified tolerances, and our Range commands and management routines are applied in accordance with the international shooting regulations. Our Club Members can confidently travel to other State, National or International competitions and know they are not going to be faced with unfamiliar circumstances. This is vitally important for shooters wanting to compete at higher levels of competition.

For a “Quick Tour” of our Range facilities [click here](#). For an “Extended Tour” of the facilities [click here](#).

Trophy and Shield Events

The Club conducts weekly competitions for both off-gun (the highest score) and for handicap scores. There is also a Trophy Event every month as well as a Club Championship in each match the Club programmes, enabling members to compete for the much sought after Club Shield for these events.

Annual Events

Training of Naval Cadets

Every year our Club provides members to supervise the Naval Cadets in their firearms training. This enables them to qualify for their firearms proficiency badge. In turn, they repay the Club by attending one of our Working Bees. The Naval Cadets have helped to plant, literally, hundreds of trees around the Range which were made available to the Club courtesy of "Trees for Life". The Club provides storage space for the Friends of the O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park who have also donated some 400 trees which are also planted around Range. All trees and shrubs planted are native to the area and non-native species are being progressively culled or managed in way that will ultimately see their disappearance.

This training initiative has now been extended to include the Air Force Cadets and negotiations are currently underway with the Army Cadets to visit with a view to assisting them in Firearms Training as well.

Australia Day Fireworks

Celebrating Australia Day began purely as a social event for the Club. However, in recent years a Black Powder shoot has been introduced - most of it conducted after dark. This spectacular event has captured the imagination of everyone who competed and/or watched it. Club Members are invited to bring their families and friends to share a meal and enjoy the fireworks display from our wonderfully elevated vantage point. It truly is a remarkable night.

The Annual General Meeting and Dinner

The AGM and Dinner is held in July of each year. It is at this meeting where fees are set and any Club business relative to the Constitution is conducted (if required). It is also the day when the Club Championship Shields and Trophies are presented for that calendar year. The AGM is usually preceded with a fun shoot, the rules of which change each year. After the AGM there is a sit down dinner for Members and their families. To view some Gallery photos of the last AGM [click here](#).

The Christmas Shoot

This shoot is intended to be a fun activity for both Club Members and their families. Adults participate in a 25m live fire competition (different rules each year) and the under 16's have their own Air Pistol competition which is conducted under the close supervision of experienced shooters. After shooting has finished, there is a typical Christmas meal with members bringing along food to share. A good time is enjoyed by everyone.

Club Projects

Trees For Life

After being granted the lease for the O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park site, the Club joined the Trees for Life group and has since planted some 250 native trees and shrubs every year. The Club is committed to maintaining the environment in its natural state and has planted only trees and shrubs indigenous to the area. Apart from retaining the natural beauty of the area, these indigenous plants attract native birds and other wildlife back to the area. Planting is now complete with the entire Range site having been planted out. Currently we are "fine tuning" some planting on the embankments areas and continuing to maintain and service the existing plantings.

Recycling

Several Club members collect and recycle brass using the proceeds to fund trips to Open Competitions. Other members collect the lead from the backstops to make fishing sinkers which are on-sold to a local tackle shop. Other lead is recovered and recycled into more projectiles which are reloaded by Club members. We recycle all our used targets.

Facilities for the Disabled

During the original construction of the Club's facilities, and for all works carried out subsequently, every effort has been made to ensure easy access has been provided for the disabled - from car parking arrangements to the toilet facilities.

Grants

Safety Baffles

Due to the pro-active nature of the Club's Committee of Management, in 1999 we applied for, and were granted, a Department of Recreation and Sport "Active Club" grant. The basis of the application was to build additional safety baffles across all of our Ranges (to prevent the possibility of a bullet accidentally escaping the Range area).

The baffles were designed by a Club Member, and subsequently approved by a Civil Engineer, to better cater for shooters short in stature, juniors shooters and also for disabled shooters who have to shoot from a wheelchair "seated" position.

In total this project cost some \$13000 which was subsidised by a \$4000 "Active Club" grant. So successful has this baffle design been, the Firearms Branch of the South Australia Police Force is now using our Club as the benchmark in baffle design for other pistol clubs in South Australia to adopt.

Sound Abatement

In 2002 we again applied for assistance to install Sound Abatement material on all the walls and ceilings of our live fire Ranges. While it's not possible to totally absorb noise from live firing, our aim was to minimise the amount of noise inside the Range as well as outside. This will make for a much safer environment for both shooters and spectators alike. It is also reassuring that we have not had a single complaint from neighbours or passers-by about noise originating from the Range. Club Members who have visited other pistol clubs with similar sound abatement systems installed observed a marked improvement so consequently, we felt it wise to continue with our pro-activity in this instance as well. This project cost just over \$13000 but the "Active Club" grant assisted by injecting some \$5500 towards this project.

Currently the Club is upgrading both the kitchen area in the Club House and also installing a shower in the ablution block. Again we were successful in our application for an "Active Club" grant to assist in funding these projects which are estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$11800. Some \$3000 from the grant is subsidising these projects. This will now enable us to comply with the new Food Legislation for kitchen areas and it will also provide much better ablution facilities for our competitors who stay "on-range" during a major event.

Additional Information

If you would like more information about our Club's history or activities [click here](#)