

GLOSSARY

AIMING OFF

The practice of not aiming at the middle in order to compensate for the wind.

ANY SIGHTS

A competition allowing any form of sights, including optical (i.e. telescopic).

APERTURE

The small hole in the rearsight that you look through to sight the rifle - usually about 1.1mm diameter.

ARMOURY

The strongroom where the rifles are stored.

AVERAGE

Used in its mathematical sense and calculated from your total score divided by the number of shoots.

BACKER

A white card placed behind the target to help you spot your shots and to assist the scorers to sort out *cross shots* or missing shots.

BEDDING

The area where the *receiver* beds down into the *stock*.

BIPOD

A two-legged stand for supporting the rifle while cleaning.

BISLEY

The nearest thing the U.K. has to a national shooting centre; actually a complex of smallbore ranges, fullbore ranges and shotgun ranges, used for most major shooting championships.

BOLT

The part of the rifle action that holds the *firing pin* and *extractors*, inserts the round into the chamber, fires it and extracts it.

BORE

The internal diameter of your rifle.

BRASS

The cartridge cases are made of brass, and it's quicker to say "brass" than "cartridge cases".

BRUSH (PHOSPHOR BRONZE)

A cleaning brush used to scrub out the inside of the barrel. (Made by twisting phosphor bronze wire onto a central core.)

BUBBLE

Refers to a spirit level bubble used to ensure that the rifle is always at the same angle (very often attached to the *foresight*).

BULL

The area within the centre ring of the target that counts for ten points.

BULLET

The grey lump of lead that exits the barrel after the round is fired. It does **not** refer to the whole *round* of ammunition.

BUTT

The rear end of the *stock*.

BUTTS

The target area on the range.

CALIBRE

The internal diameter, or bore, of your rifle.

CANNELURE

The narrow groove around the bullet which is where the case is crimped in, to hold the bullet in the case.

CANT (rhymes with 'pant')

Leaning the rifle over to get the *sights* closer to your eye, or to counteract the effect of the wind.

CARD

A target.

CARTON

The very centre of the *bull*, sometimes shown as a dotted inner circle. (This counts as extra in some competitions.)

CARTRIDGE

A round of ammunition, i.e. brass case, powder, *primer* and lead *bullet*.

CHALLENGES

You are welcome to challenge the score you have been given by a *scorer* at a competition, but there's usually an 'up front' fee which you lose if your challenge is unsuccessful.

CHAMBER

The area at the back of the barrel, slightly larger than the bore and designed to hold the cartridge.

CLICK

Refers to the sound you *sights* make when adjusting them. The noise is caused by a *détente* ball which clicks in and out of grooves in the sight knob. Hence the expression “I had to come over 4 clicks to get into the bull”.

CLIPS

Usually bulldog clips for fixing your target to the *target frame*.

COURSE OF FIRE

Refers to the length of a competition and will usually be stated as a certain number of shots at each distance.

CROSS SHOT

When you put a shot on somebody else's target or even on the wrong aiming mark on your own target. There are different scoring penalties depending on the competition. Under *UIT* rules it counts as a 'miss' and therefore knocks ten points off your score, but under *NSRA* rules the penalties are not so severe and you may get away with only one or two penalty points.

CROWN

The area at the extreme end of the *muzzle*. A muzzle is said to be 'crowned' when a chamfer is cut at the very end to protect the end of the *rifling* from damage. Crowning also removes the burr on the inside of the barrel caused by the *rifling* procedure.

DEPTH OF FIELD

The area which is in focus for your eyes. It will vary depending on the size of the *rearsight aperture* of your *sights*.

DETAIL

A particular shooting time controlled by the *Range Officer* when everybody shoots together. Will vary in length, depending on the competition.

DEWAR

A particular *course of fire* of twenty shots at 50 yards (or metres) and twenty shots at 100 yards. A 'Double Dewar' is obviously twice that.

DIOPTER

A lens that can be fitted to a *rearsight* and used to focus at a particular point. Helps old eyes focus on the foresight, and magnifies one and a half times the sight picture. Allowed under *NSRA* rules but not allowed under *UIT* rules.

DISC SHOOT

A fun shoot involving shooting at - and hopefully breaking - white clay discs pinned to a board; usually shot in teams against one another.

DROPPED POINTS

A method of scoring where the score is counted as the number of points that are lost on a target e.g. a 97 would be 3 off and the score entered as 3 rather than 97. It is a natural progression of scoring as you count the shots that miss the bull rather than adding up ten for every bull.

EIGHT

Only a number, but it gains almost mystical significance in the smallbore shooters' minds because they hate them. It basically refers to a shot in the eight ring.

ELEMENT

The plastic or metal ring which fits inside the foresight tunnel and is interchangeable for different sizes.

ELEVATION

The adjustment necessary on the sights to allow for the trajectory of your bullet at different ranges.

EMPTIES

The brass cases you eject all over the firing point during the process of reloading.

ENGLISH MATCH

A particular course of fire involving 60 shots at 50 yards or 50 metres.

ESSU

The English Smallbore Shooting Union.

EXTRACTOR

The spring-loaded claw responsible for pulling your empty cartridge case out of the rifle and throwing it over your next-door neighbour.

FILTER

Some form of coloured glass or plastic fitted to the rearsight to improve the sight picture.

FIRING PIN

A spring-driven pin which hammers into the back of the cartridge case in order to ignite the primer.

FIRING POINT

The area you're given to lay on to shoot your targets. Should be under the control of a *Range Officer*. Ranges are usually measured from the target edge of the firing point (or a line close to it) and the rules state that you should keep the elbow supporting the rifle behind that line.

FLYER

That odd unexplained shot that appears from nowhere and ruins an otherwise good card.

FOREND

That long bit of wood, or more often these days metal, that projects out underneath the barrel. Usually with a slotted rail to take accessories like *handstops*, *sling swivels* and *bipods*.

FORESIGHT

The tube on top of the barrel at the muzzle end of your rifle; this holds the ring elements that form part of the sighting system.

GAUGE

Usually a plug which is inserted into a shot hole which is very close to a line on the target, in order to ascertain whether the shot has broken the line.

GROOVES

Part of the internal rifling of your barrel (see also **LANDS**).

GROUP

One of the most important words in the shooter's dictionary - it refers to a group of shots. The size of the group you shoot is a measure of your proficiency as a shooter. The smaller the group diameter, the more consistent you are. (Usually measured over five or ten shots.)

HANDICAP

A method of scoring to enable novices to compete on equal terms with experts.

HANDSTOP

A fitting attached to the underside of the forend of your rifle to ensure that you always place your hand in the same place every time. May just be a round block, or could be shaped to suit your hand; may also have a *sling swivel* built in.

HANG FIRE

A dangerous situation where the round of ammunition has not ignited immediately it is struck with the firing pin. It's sometimes caused by old ammo or a weak strike by the pin. As a safety precaution you should wait for at least 30 seconds before ejecting the round, if the cartridge fails to ignite at any time.

HEADSPACE

The space between the face of the bolt and the back of the barrel, which holds the rim of the cartridge.

HOOK

The curved tail at the bottom of the butt plate designed to fit under the armpit.

INNER AND OUTER SCORING

Most 25-yard indoor targets are 'outward gauging', i.e. you decide whether the outside edge of the shot hole has broken the line. If so, it's the lower score that counts. Outdoor shooting is usually 'inward gauging', i.e. the innermost edge of the hole is examined to see if it's broken the line. If it has, the higher score is awarded.

IRIS

Usually adjustable and can be fitted to either the foresight or the rearsight. It works by having an interlocking system of leaves that open and close (much like the iris in a camera lens) when you twist the outer ring, yet they remain completely central to the sight line.

ISSF

International Shooting Sports Federation; the governing body for all shooting sports in the UK.

JAG

This is not short for a particular make of car but is the brass tool you fit to the end of a cleaning rod; it has sharp projections to hold the cleaning patch that you wrap around it.

KEYHOLE

There are two possible explanations for this phenomenon. One is the appearance of the hole when a bullet goes through the target sideways, as can happen with poor quality ammunition; the other is when two shots are so close together that they overlap and make a keyhole shape.

KNEELING

One of the three positions of which *prone* and *standing* are the other two.

KNOCKOUTS

Some competitions are arranged on a knockout basis which means basically you keep shooting until you lose, then you're 'knocked out'.

LANDS

The raised parts of the rifling on the inside of your barrel (see also **GROOVES**).

LEAD (rhymes with 'seed')

The part of the chamber which leads into the rifling to give a gradual introduction of the bullet into the rifling. An area which suffers a great deal of wear and tear and may account for why old rifles don't shoot as well as new ones.

LEAD (rhymes with 'bed')

What your bullets are made of.

LEAGUES

In this country competitions are run in leagues, with divisions, promotions and demotions - just the same as in the football leagues.

LUBRICANT

Is what it says, but in shooting it usually refers to the waxy greasy substances sticking to your bullets. It must not be removed before shooting, as it's essential to provide lubrication to your barrel.

MARTINI

Refers to an underlever action normally, found on BSA rifles.

MISFIRE

When the cartridge fails to ignite. The cause should be investigated. It may be a defective round, or a weak strike, or too much headspace, or one of several other possibilities.

MUZZLE

The business end of the barrel where the bullet comes out. Must be kept protected and clean.

NOMINATED MEETINGS

Competitions which have been nominated by the organisers so that competitors may be considered for National Squad selection.

NOMINATED SCORE

Some competitions are organised such that you have to name the score you are going to achieve *before* you shoot; the closest to that score is the winner.

NSRA

The National Smallbore Rifle Association.

OBJECT LENS

The large lens at the target end of your spotting scope or telescopic sight.

OGIVE

The shape of the front of your lead bullets. It takes its name from the shape of church doors.

PAPER SHOOTS

Refers to some of the competitions run in the UK which have been sponsored by newspapers.

PATCHES (Cleaning)

Little squares of 'Forbytoo' (4"x2") cloth, cut up ready for you to wrap around a jag.

PATCHES (Target)

Paper patches used to patch the holes in targets so they can be used again without incurring the cost of new targets.

PEEPHOLE

How some people refer to the aperture in your rearsight, because you peep through it.

PIMPERNEL

A target with a central small red dot, which must be totally eliminated by shooting a certain number of shots. Not as easy as it sounds.

POLARISER

A particular filter that can be attached to a rearsight. It works by turning one piece of polarised glass or plastic against another.

POSTAL

Competitions where cards are shot in on a shooter's home range and the cards are posted off to independent scorers. These can be organised nationally or internationally.

PRIMER

The explosive substance that ignites into a very hot flame when struck a blow. It is responsible for igniting the main propellant charge inside your cartridges.

PRONE

One of the three positions, *standing* and *kneeling* being the other two.

QUEEN ALEX (THE)

A competition, for teams and individuals, named after Queen Alexandra, wife of Edward VII. It involves timed rapid shooting as well as the more usual deliberate fire.

RANGE OFFICER

The person responsible for your safety on the firing point and ranges; also responsible for the smooth running of details during competitions.

RANGES

Where all target shooting takes place. Can be indoors at 15, 20 or 25 yards or 25 metres, and outdoors at 50 yards or metres or 100 yards or metres.

REARSIGHT

The large adjustable piece of equipment usually mounted on the receiver of the rifle. Holds the aperture and can be adjusted for *windage* and *elevation* by means of rotating knobs.

RECEIVER

Holds the firing mechanism of the rifle. It can house either a bolt or an underlever. The barrel is fixed into the front end by various methods and the trigger attaches underneath. The whole thing is bolted to the stock either by vertical bedding bolts (in the case of a bolt action) or by a long horizontal stock bolt (in the case of an underlever).

RIFLING

Rifling is made up of a series of lands and grooves down the inside of your barrel. A slow twist in the rifling imparts a spinning motion to the bullet which gives it gyroscopic stability. The bullet has rings on it which engage in the rifling. The average barrel will have seven lands and seven grooves and will twist approximately one and a quarter times down the length of the barrel.

RIMFIRE

All .22 ammunition currently used in smallbore competitions is rimfire ammunition. The case has an enlarged diameter at the back, which forms a rim into which an explosive compound is put during manufacture. When the trigger is released the firing pin strikes the rim and crushes it, which explodes the primer inside. That in turn ignites the main propellant powder.

ROBERTS (THE)

The British Long-Range Championships are held every year at Bisley and that competition is referred to as 'The Roberts' after Earl Roberts.

ROUND

Each competition in the league and knockout events is referred to as a 'round'.

ROUNDS

As in 'rounds' of ammunition and refers to the complete cartridge.

SCORER

Those poor volunteers who dedicate their lives to working out your scores for you, either in the postal leagues or at shoulder-to-shoulder competitions.

SCOTTISH (THE)

A national meeting held at a different venue in Scotland each year; open to all nationalities, although the 'Earl Haig' is restricted to Scottish nationals.

SCOTTISH MATCH

Sixty shots at 100 yards.

SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER

A competition where everybody shoots together on the same range. The expression comes from the fact that shooters lay 'shoulder to shoulder' when shooting prone.

SIGHTER

The target you're given with your match cards; this is non-scoring, to allow you to sight in the rifle before shooting the shots that count.

SINGLE STAGE

Refers to a trigger having only one movement to release it.

SLING

Can be one-piece (most likely), or two-piece, and is used to support the rifle while shooting.

SLING SWIVEL

The attachment on the rifle that allows you to connect the sling to the rifle.

SSSU

Scottish Smallbore Shooting Union

STANDING

The most difficult of all the positions.

STATS

Short for 'statistical office'; will be found at all shoulder-to-shoulder competitions. It's where the scoring is done, away from the prying eyes of the shooters. Scores are usually displayed outside 'stats' for all to see.

STICKERS

The self-adhesive labels issued by competition organisers, to be stuck to your targets before they're shot. The sticker often has to be placed where a shot will pass through it, to stop anybody putting the sticker on a good card after it's shot. (Not that anybody would, as cheating is almost unheard of in the sport!)

STOCK

The big brown wooden bit (or it might be multi coloured or metal or both, these days) that you hold to shoot your rifle.

TARGET CHANGERS

Overseas ranges very often have a system where the target travels backwards and forwards down the range at the push of a button, or where the targets are all folded up inside a box and the push of a button releases the next target. Only a few ranges in the UK have this facility.

TARGET FRAMES

Usually wood but may be plastic; used to hold the target in place at the butts. Targets are attached with clips, elastic or sundry other methods.

THUMBHOLE

Some stocks have a hole through them to accommodate the thumb in a more natural position when shooting.

TON

A ton is a score of 100.

TORQUE SETTING

The bedding bolts that clamp the stock to the receiver can be 'torqued up' to different settings to alter the barrel vibrations.

TRAJECTORY

As soon as your bullet leaves the muzzle it is affected by gravity and, as it slows down because of air resistance, that effect increases. Hence your bullet follows a downward curved path which gets steeper as the bullet slows. This is called the trajectory and is why you have to increase the elevation of the rearsight as you move to longer ranges.

TRIGGER

The trigger is responsible for holding back the firing pin and then releasing it when you're ready. It refers to the whole mechanism not just the trigger blade, which is the bit you put your finger on.

TWO STAGE

A trigger that has a small amount of lighter movement before it reaches the release point.

UIT (UNION INTERNATIONALE DE TIR)

Literally translated, the International Shooting Union; the body which lays down the rules for most European competitions.

UNDERLEVER

A mechanism for cocking and unloading a rifle mostly found on *BSA* rifles.

WAILING WALL

Popular name for the place where the scores are displayed.

WIND FLAG

Refers (fairly obviously) to a small flag placed out on the range to help you make some sort of attempt at deciphering what the wind is doing. There's nothing to stop you making and using your own, but they won't be allowed in shoulder-to-shoulder competitions.

WINDAGE

As with *elevation*, it's an adjustment you make to your sight to make allowance for the bullet drift caused by the wind.

WITNESS

Means the same as in law; refers to you having to get your targets signed by an official witness to say that they were shot in accordance with the appropriate rules of the competition.

WOOL MOP

An attachment for a cleaning rod made from sheep's wool; used for depositing oil down the inside of your barrel for protection, should you have to leave it unused for any length of time.

WSSU

Welsh Smallbore Shooting Union.

X CLASS

Formerly described the top one hundred shooters in the UK and entry was by invitation only. Now it simply refers to the highest classification, and shooters are promoted and demoted on their performance, usually at the National meetings.

X-RING

The innermost ring of a target. Another name for the 'carton' mentioned earlier.

ZEROING

Adjusting your sights so the shots fall in the centre of the target.