

## Silverdale Rifle Range

Another year has passed and it has been very rewarding for me as Range Manager here at Silverdale. The attendance figures have grown steadily and this can be attributed to better utilisation of the range facilities and also a good team, staff members and volunteer Range Safety Officers. We have had over 13,000 shooter visits during the last year, with 64 people completing the Safe Shooting course and 177 people attending the Deer Caping and Butchery demonstrations.

We have continued to expand the number of targets and combination of ranges available. We currently offer the following:

- 12 benches where 50yd, 100yd and 200yd targets are available
- 18 benches offer 50yd and 100yd targets
- 5 that offer 50yd and 200yd targets
- 3 benches for 200yds, and,
- 1 bench for 50yds

This amounts to 172 individual target faces that can be shot from 40 benches. This is vastly different to the 82 target faces available back in 2014, when I arrived at Silverdale.

We now have 5 x three position shooting stations and 5 x Pistol/Rimfire Metallic Silhouette shooting stations on the multipurpose range.

Earthwork maintenance is much easier now that we have range access for machinery through the multi-use range. Our tractor can get quick access to all earthen mounds for repair purposes.

The continued availability of hot food and snacks to our members, through the canteen, has been appreciated and many regular shooters have come to expect a hot feed on their visits to the range.

The introduction of Credit Card facilities has been well received. Over the last year, more than \$85,000 has been taken here using credit or debit cards. Of course, a large portion of this money would have been spent anyway, but we have definitely picked up some sales and provided a much needed facility to our members, because Eftpos is available.

The changeover to moulded plastic target frames, supplied by Zero-In Target Systems has been successful. The plan is to replace the worst 20 target faces every 3 months. This will cost us approximately \$6 per day, to maintain over 100 quality target faces all year round. The old timber target frames are only used for very limited applications on the multipurpose range.

General maintenance is ongoing and once again, I must thank the staff here for their efforts, especially Syd Lampe.

The planned FAR inspection was carried out in December and we came through with flying colours. Quoting the letter subsequently received from Range Inspector Dick Oakley "*It was obvious this was a very well managed facility. The range was presented in good condition showing the efforts and pride you take. The maintenance matters mentioned are of a minor*

*nature reflecting your efforts. Please pass onto your committee and members the Firearms Registry's appreciation."*

Preparation for Dick's visit was a team effort and the range was closed for a few days prior to allow us to get the work completed. Thanks should go to Les Gardner, who prepared an audit of jobs needed to comply as well as new Range Standing Orders.

The 200yd butt stop was repaired and made safe using a 20 tonne excavator; the 120 yd cliff was trimmed to vertical; the range drainage was improved; a new earth mound was created at the 50yd line; and new 50yd targets installed; adjustable baffles were installed in the multipurpose range; trees that may cause ricochets and trees damaged by old bullet strikes were removed, fences were repaired, new warning signs fitted and all target faces were replaced.

Another project is the upgrade of the Rimfire Silhouette Targets to pneumatic operation. This modification was carried out with the assistance of Peter Thomson and his efforts are appreciated. We have re-installed these targets and built removable shrouds to meet FAR compliance.

We have recently installed a concrete slab to take a new bank of turning pistol targets. These have been constructed by Daniel Ryder and will be operational soon.

We are preparing to introduce some new disciplines, including Lever Action, commencing late July. I hope to have Rimfire Pistol Silhouette, Field Rifle, Centrefire Rifle 3 Position, Black Powder Cannon and Big Game Rifle, up and running by the end of the year. A bench warning light system that allows a shooter to call the RSO to their bench, has been designed and will be installed soon. This will allow us to reintroduce magazine use.

Currently, I am the Range Manager, Fred Blacker is the Senior Range Officer and Kerry Barlogio is the Permanent Part Time Range Officer. I am fortunate to have such a pleasant crew to work with. All staff members are encouraged to walk the line and offer assistance to anyone in need, and also to share their knowledge and to offer a helpful hand to any beginners. We also have an armourer on duty every day for ammo sales; firearm transfers for members; as well as sales of shooting accessories.

Don't be shy, make your way out to Silverdale – we're looking forward to seeing you and I'm sure you'll enjoy the experience.

Andy Mallen

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Silverdale Range Manager