

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY RIFLE ASSOCIATION

(registered Charity 258396)



Autumn Newsletter



Dear Members, Alumni, and Friends of CURA and CUSBC,

As frost settles over Stickledown and our target rifles enter their winter hibernation, as countless novices pick up a smallbore rifle for the first time in Michaelmas, the time has come once again to update you on the past season and look forward to the year to come.

Mark your calendars

We are thrilled to invite you to the **CURA Annual Dinner**, which will be held on the **15th March 2025 at Magdalene College**. Please see details and the RSVP form in the following section.

Stay Connected

If you know alumni or friends who may not have received this newsletter, please encourage them to get in touch. We'd love to welcome them back into the fold. Similarly, if your contact details have changed, let us know so we don't lose touch with old friends.

Smallbore Success

CUSBC has had another record-breaking Michaelmas, recruiting more novices than ever before, and our range is buzzing with activity during our 16 range hours every week. Four Cambridge teams are competing in BUCS and we have the largest number of students out of any university competing in the individuals. Our match results have been strong, with impressive performances

from both experienced shooters and novices. We are very optimistic for our smallbore Varsities at the end of Lent term, hoping to extend our long streak of Heslop victories and take home the Kensington, Ex-Captains, Lerman and Bentata for another clean sweep.

Fullbore Season and Challenges

The CURA season will begin with our annual Easter Bisley training camp from **24th–30th March 2025**. Recruitment last year was phenomenal, and we hope to continue building a strong membership for years to come. If you'd like to help during the training camp or at any point in the season, please reach out – we'd be delighted to have your support.

However, the rising cost of fullbore shooting remains a significant challenge, making the sport less accessible to many students. As someone who dedicates much of my PhD stipend to this sport, I deeply understand why students might hesitate to prioritize it over other expenses. To secure CURA's future, we need to do everything we can to support new members getting into the sport.

Fundraising for Reloading Equipment

One impactful measure we've adopted is handloading our ammunition, saving over 40p per match rifle round. To sustain this, we're raising funds to establish a reloading facility in our gunroom at the EVIII. This facility will allow us to produce high-quality ammunition at lower cost, thus alleviating Easter Bisley bills and aiding recruitment efforts. This will not be possible without support from alumni and friends like you. You can find more details about this project and how to support it below.

Thank You

We are incredibly grateful for the unwavering support from our alumni and friends. Whether it's through time helping on the range or donations, you are the backbone of our club. Special thanks go to our senior committee for their constant advice and the Lovell and Green Trust for making it possible for young shooters to experience and enjoy this sport.

We wish you the best of health and good shooting, and we look forward to seeing you at the CURA Dinner.

Yours sincerely,

Luca Schwarz

CURA Captain 2023-25

CURA Dinner 2025

The annual CURA dinner will be held on 15th March 2025, at Magdalene College. As always, it promises to be an enjoyable evening with friends old and new. RSVP via the online form below or return the attached invitation form via email to social@curifle.org.uk or post to the address indicated on the invitation.

If you decide to include a donation with your dinner payment, either by BACS or cheque, please consider also filling out the attached gift aid form to ensure your gift goes as far as possible.

RSVP form: tinyurl.com/CURADinner2025

**

Imperial Meeting 2024

Chancellors: CURA 1137.98v - OURC 1100.83v

Humphry: OURC 843.90v - CURA 837.68v

Match Rifle Imperial

In mid-July, six of our members arrived at Bisley to take part in the 155th Match Rifle Imperial Meeting, with it being the first for three of them. The conditions ranged from calm winds to fluctuating gusts, testing and improving the wind reading skills of all members, especially the newcomers. Following the debut of his new (very beautiful) backgun, our captain Luca Schwarz took home the 1200 yards Tyro Challenge Cup and the Henry Mellish Challenge Cup.



Luca keeps the CURA silverware collection in good order with the Henry Mellish Challenge Cup

Following the individual shooting and the excitement of Elcho day, it was time for the Humphry on the final day of the Match Rifle Imperial Meeting. Our Humphry IV saw two CURA backgunners, revealing the Captain's secret (and so far futile) efforts of converting all of CURA to the gentlemanly way of shooting.

After a calm start and a strong 1000 and 1100 from both teams, Oxford had a one-point lead at lunchtime and it was sure to be another closely fought match. A special mention to Ben Vary, who in his first Varsity match had to very quickly learn how to aim off after the wind turret on his scope stopped working for the end of 1000 yards, still managing to finish the distance with a 71.7v. Luckily, thanks to Norman Clark the scope was fixed before the next distance.

In time for 1200 yards, the winds picked up and started changing direction rapidly, making the coaches' jobs very difficult and necessitating some long waits. The winds caused several magpies on both teams, but despite our best efforts OURC ultimately managed to secure the win by 6 points with 843.90v to CURA's 837.68v. Our MR vice-captain Russell Woodger top-scored for Cambridge with 215.23v. Congratulations to OURC for claiming the Humphry after a hard fight, we look forward to welcoming it back in the near future. A thank you to our coaches Ashley Abrahams, Nick Brasier, Adam Leech and Rosanne Furniss and to our adjutant Hannah Fischer for helping us on the day and carrying us through some tricky conditions.



The Humphry IV and Reserve

Target Rifle Imperial

After celebrating the end of Match Rifle with our traditional Humphry Dinner, it was time for Target Rifle, and this year we saw a large influx in newcomers! We had 15 members compete in the Target Rifle Imperial, for six of which it was their first. At the start of the week, wind conditions were more forgiving, with very little wind in the mornings, and after picking up a bit around noon, slowly dying back down towards the late afternoon. These conditions were ideal for easing people into self-coaching and wind reading. Later in the week, the wind became harsher, with strong and fluctuating winds from 09:00, suddenly it was more difficult.

Individually, CURA saw some great successes with many prize lists featuring club members. Will Bacon reached the second stage of St. George's, while Russell Woodger reached the final where he stylishly sported his new leather shooting bag for the first time (an excellent match with his moustache). Four of our members reached the second stage of HM The King's Prize, with CUSBC Captain and soon-to-be fullbore-convert Joe Pattison getting through to the final in his first Imperial! Additionally, Joe came 8th in the Admiral Hutton Tyro Trophy, with Will Bacon following him in 9th. Many of our members represented their counties during the Inter-Counties competitions, and Will Bacon, Alex Harrison and Ben Vary were also selected to shoot the Universities National for England.



CUSBC Captain Joe Pattison shooting in the King's Final

At the end of week, the Chancellors arrived. With many members available to help out behind the firing point, in stark contrast to last year, significant stress was taken off the team during the match allowing us to focus on the shooting itself. Due to the fantastic performance of the team, and the essential help from everyone present, CURA took back the big Chancellors tankard from OURC to return it to its home at Hawks, winning decisively by 37 points 1137.98v to 1100.83v. Joe Pattison top-scored the match with an outstanding 148.11v. A thank you to our adjutant Richard Vary and our helpers including Alice Good (GM) and Jacob Parsons for helping reduce the pressure on the team on the match day.



Returning the Chancellors to where it belongs

Finally, after all rounds were fired, all V-bulls claimed and all message 10's received, we gathered for our grand Chancellors Dinner on the final night, enjoying a critically acclaimed soup by Will Bacon, bacon-wrapped chicken breasts, and fudgy brownies and copious amounts of cheese to end the dinner, with the vast amounts of wine seeing us through the rest of the night's celebrations.

Other Team Matches

In the months leading up to the Imperial, members of CURA were in shooting in Bisley almost every weekend, allowing members new and old to gain valuable match experience. We shot plenty MR and TR fixtures, against OCRA, RAF, NLRC as well as the Purples Match and entered a CURA-only team at the Inter-Counties.

The Dale Cup and our concurrent match against the RAF were particularly memorable. The matches delivered some of the most difficult wind conditions seen this year on Bisley ranges, challenging coaches on all sides with three minute wind changes not being uncommon between shots. These difficulties were amplified at long range in the afternoon, with bold wind calls by the coaches being sure to place you somewhere between the bull and the outer. Overall, OCRA came away with the victory, scoring 992.60v to CURA's 952.52v and Cambridgeshire's self-coached 894.46v. The concurrent match against the RAF was only interrupted by the apparent sounding of the hooter, a noise which actually turned out to be a passing jet as the RAF reliably informed us. CURA won the very close match with 952.52v to the RAF's 949.58v.



At 300x the wind changes wouldn't throw you into the outer... yet

Scottish Open 2024

Leaving behind the plains of Bisley, in mid-June CURA ventured far north to Blair Atholl to compete in the Scottish Open. For most of us this was the first time shooting target rifle away from Bisley. The rain didn't let up for the duration of the weekend, but this didn't deter from some excellent shooting across the board. Particular mention must go to our TR Vice-Captain and English Lion Amy Xu, who with the Lawrence shot her first match for England after a strong set of individual scores. CURA also took home silverware after winning the Schools and Universities trophy in an intense battle with Dollar Academy, winning on V's in the end.



Enjoying a rare dry shoot in beautiful Scotland

The only thing matching the rain in consistency (other than our shooting of course) was the absence of the fearsome Blair Atholl winds. However, just in time for the long-range shoots on Sunday morning, the Scottish weather presented us with another treat, the excitement of playing peekaboo with the targets at 900 yards. Luckily the clouds lifted eventually, allowing one to identify which black dot to shoot at. All in all, this was a great success and CURA hopes to return next year to secure our new trophy for another year.

Alumni News – 2024 World Champs

We are extremely proud to celebrate the tremendous achievements of our alumnae Rosanne Furniss and Alice Good (GM) who competed in South Africa in the 2024 World Championships. Rosanne not only finished 7th in the individuals with a score of 735.80v, achieving the highest score of any woman, but also broke a world record in her first Palma Match by going clean with 450.67v. She also came 9th in the State President (equivalent to King's) and was part of the GB team which won the Protea match. Many congratulations to Rosanne!



Rosanne Furniss with Gen. (Ret) Mac Alexander after finishing as the top woman in the world

Alice also had great success coming 4th in the U25 Individual World Championships, 5th in both the short and long range aggregates, 3rd woman overall in the SA Championships and of course, being part of the victorious GB U25 team, who gave an outstanding performance to become world champions, while also achieving the highest target score on the range that day out of all the teams there. CURA has been incredibly privileged to watch Alice grow from a novice to a world champion, and simply could not be more proud.

CUSBC Captain's Update

The 2024 season saw victory in all five of five varsity matches, with Cambridge reclaiming the Bentata cup in glorious fashion – the women's team putting up the second highest Bentata score of all time. In BUCS we saw the A team showing themselves to be the best University team in England, only being beaten out by the Scottish teams to take an overall third. A strong start to the new season has seen our teams take 4 of 5 external matches, with 13 members making their debuts for Cambridge. With such a strong start, we are redoubling efforts to secure a varsity sweep and work towards even more medals at BUCS.



The CUSBC squad at BUCS team finals, showing off their shiny new medals

Fundraising for Reloading Equipment

The rising cost of fullbore shooting, especially ammunition, has placed a heavy financial burden on our members. This has created challenges for some of our most talented smallbore shooters transitioning to fullbore shooting with CURA. While the club is not in a financial position to subsidise ammunition costs, we are committed to keeping expenses as manageable as possible for our members.

Last year, we began handloading our ammunition to tackle this issue. With match rifle ammunition surpassing £1.80 per round, many new members were discouraged from participating in this discipline. Thanks to some of our members, who volunteered their weekends, we successfully loaded over 3,500 rounds reducing the cost to £1.35 per round. While still costly compared to pre-2020 levels, this reduction has made a tangible difference — bringing costs on par with TR ammunition, alleviating Easter Bisley bills, and aiding recruitment efforts. However, this relied on borrowed equipment, which is not reliably available for club use when needed.



To ensure handloading remains a sustainable solution, we aim to establish a dedicated reloading facility in our gunroom at EVIII. Our plan includes the stepwise acquisition of:

- Several dies (ca. £500)
- Two reloading presses (ca. £300)
- Two priming tools (ca. £150)
- A case tumbler (ca. £150)
- A case-trimming station (ca. £200)
- An Autotrickler with scale (ca. £1000)

This setup would allow us to load accurate, Oxford-beating ammunition efficiently on the scale required and make an impact for many years to come.

We need your help to make this vision a reality. **Your donation, no matter the size, can make a significant impact.** We encourage everyone, especially recent alumni, to consider setting up a recurring donation. Even by donating the cost of a cup of coffee each month you can support CURA in a meaningful, sustainable way. Recurring donations are simple to set up through our donation portal at tinyurl.com/SupportCURA. As always, you can also contribute when you RSVP for the CURA Dinner, or you can donate directly through our donation portal. And don't forget: all proceeds are eligible for Gift Aid and will go directly to CURA.



Thank you for supporting CURA and ensuring that fullbore shooting remains accessible to our student members, to make the same happy memories you have.