

GREAT BRITAIN UNDER 19 RIFLE TEAM

SOUTH AFRICA TOUR 2008

Commandant:	Emma J Cannings	formally Uppingham School
Adjutant:	Simon B Fraser	CCRS
Lady Officer	Jane R Jowett	Gloucestershire ACF
Team Members:	Harry Ball	formally Epsom College
	Nicholas Beesley	Epsom College
	James Boyd	Cheltenham College
	Henry Day	formerly Cambridge ACF
	Edward Dickson	formally Marlborough College
	Sam Harley	Epsom College
	Helen Landrum	Dorset ACF
	Georgina Ogden	Sedbergh School

This year's team assembled for warm up training on Ex Maple Taste on Thursday 13th March. On Friday morning we participated in parts of the round robin of different elements of our shooting technique and administration. Some we bypassed having done them in October at our training weekend. In some cases suggested adjustments to shooting positions were tried but in most cases we did not shoot as consistently as usual so reverted to our well proven styles during the afternoon shot at 300yds, our first warm up shoot of the season. We were coached by experienced shots from many different backgrounds. This was successful as all shot well many achieving very high scores but there were also some Muppets, for example Ed Dickson who shot a 49.9.

Saturday 15th; In the morning we shot at 600 yards and tried out some Palma team techniques of team shooting which took some time to get used to but we eventually mastered them and chose in the end to adopt the method. In the afternoon we shot over the hill. The scores at 900 yards were very promising with Ed, Harry, Sam and Henry all getting double 50s. After avoiding the rain at that distance we were unlucky a 1000 and only half of us were able to shoot as the second detail was abandoned in order to save the kit from getting wet. After dinner talks were given by Jon Underwood who offered some excellent advice and helpful comments about life at the very top of the sport and we were very grateful for his support. Today contained many 'mug of the day' contending events, aka "Ballisms". One of these very special proceedings occurred at 900 yards. Boydy happily shooting away being coached by Georgie and plotted for by Ed was on his seventh shot, fired, target down, target up, so far so good. Ed happened to glance over to Harry who was getting ready to fire to warn him that he was nearly on shot. Harry, clearly in a world of his own and getting very bored of waiting decided unconsciously to proceed with his shoot on his own (after first remembering that a bolt is required for the art of shooting). A shot rang out and Harry turned round with an expression of pure shock and surprise and when the target was returned I called out V-bull, first sighter and we returned to complete Boyd's shoot!

Sunday 16th; We did not shoot today but packed the rifles, packed and repacking the team holdalls. Harry again entertained some of us by getting his car stuck outside the accommodation taking Ed and Henry 20 minutes to remove him from the ditch he had created. There was a last minute shopping trip for those who forgot to buy vital pieces of the kit while the rest of us just chilled out.

Monday 17th; The day began with a very welcome lie-in till 9 am and miraculously all of us managed to keep our holdalls under the weight limit (after a little redistribution of some items but that doesn't count!) Lunch included a doughnut eating competition which involved devouring them whole; Henry tried hard but the winner was Sam. We left Derby Lodge at 1 pm with our matching team bags and rifle cases, the tour had started. The checking in went as smoothly as it could have done following a little debate about whether we could take ammunition in our hold baggage and escaping with only 3 out of the 11 rifles required to be checked. We made it through to the main terminal and after working out a rota for guarding the bags we went shopping. Georgie got a bit confused with the screens displaying departure information, but was soon set straight by Emma, much to the amusement of all present. The remains of the brownies were devoured as we sat watching the boards with eager anticipation! On the plane most took advantage of the in flight entertainment system, while Sam had a manicure! Later on Georgie went to sleep, on two people and three chairs! Spreading out with her pillow on Sam's legs, and her legs on Helen's lap, G was more than comfortable in her oh so sexy PJB's. We were woken for breakfast at about half past four UK time, just under two hours before we arrived in Jo'burg.

Tuesday 18th; Arriving at Jo'burg airport we walked through the airport doors hoping to find glorious sunshine beating down on our faces. The reality was somewhat different. Rain lashed our tired complexion and our

optimism immediately faded however we embarked on our journey, dropping the rifles off with Christo Lauterbach enroute to Alterlekker Camp to settle into our accommodation. A shopping trip followed, and after spending ages looking at the 'snake thong', a 'mug of the day' hat and a team mascot by the name of Bert were purchased. We devoured our food with great delight at the local steak house before retiring to our slumber nests for a quick 40 winks. Refreshed, we returned to Christo's home for the South Africans' welcome to GB U19 party and a 'Poikie', a delectable dish of meat and vegetable in a stew style. The evening wound up and we returned exhausted to the accommodation. However, some nutter decided a late-night swim was a good idea (Harry) so, post-haste, we jumped into the chilly swimming pool and splashed about before finally settling our heavy heads to rest.

Wednesday 19th; The day started too early for some as Sam had set his silly clock 5 minutes prematurely. A hearty breakfast was enjoyed before we set off from the youth camp to our first stop, the 'Bird of Prey Centre' at Dunstroom. We wandered around the centre before the flying display. We saw four birds including one which made a bid for freedom. Thence to Rose Café in Dunstroom for lunch where we endured an interesting parrot that talked a lot, but it was all worth while when it attacked Harry! We arrived at Ann de Vielt at around 5:30, and settled into our amazing rondavels (huts), then went for a cool swim before finishing the day with a delicious braai.

Thursday 20th was our day in the Kruger Park. To make the most of the day our morning started at the delightful time of 4.15 so as to reach the main Kruger Gate by 6. We were all mentally prepared not to see much as most of the animals are very hard to spot and, in some cases, very rare. However, we were very surprised to find our first sighting of the day, a hyena at the main gate to the park. This was shortly followed by MANY impala. Our most exciting sighting was a herd of some 25 elephants, including young, crossing the road 10m from our vehicles.

Some of the animals we saw where:

- Hyena
- Impala
- Giraffe
- Monkeys
- Hippo's
- Elephants
- Kudu
- Warthogs
- Crocodile
- Big spiders
- Many different species of birds
- Baboons
- Waterbuck
- Tortoise
- Load of bee's / wasps
- Zebra
- Wild dogs



Our day culminated with a night out at a pizzeria, which was satisfyingly filling.

Friday 21st; The day was started with a greatly over generous lie in until 7:45! We had a filling breakfast and set off for the day's activity, Water Tubing down the Sabie river. After signing our 'death warrants' that had an uncanny amount of 'terms and conditions', we were giving helmets and lifejackets and climbed aboard a pick up truck to take us to the top of the river. The tubing started by jumping into a cold river onto an inflated doughnut and for those who didn't fall out, it was hilarious. We then floated and bashed our way down the Sabie trundling over falling white water rapids (and very sharp pointed rocks that had a habit of smashing into your rear!). Along the way we also came across a few jumps into waterfall plunge pools. The first, a meagre, 4 meters was the warm up for the larger 8 meter jump. The brave few hurled themselves into the murky depths from what looked, when standing upon it, like a very high platform! We paddled our way to the bottom with various; bumps and scrapes from lots of falls and flips. (Mainly Boyd, who also managed to briefly lose his raft!) We then entered the second

exciting phase of the journey; the truck ride back. We dodged, ducked and dived from overhead branches before finally arriving back at the centre for our burger lunch. After a brief stop back at camp we visited Horseshoe Falls and Lone Creek Falls, both memorable sites, well recorded on our cameras. We got back to camp and, after a nice swim, enjoyed a good kebab and sausage braai before retiring to bed.

Saturday 22nd started with a relaxing visit to the Pilgrim's Rest living museum, a relic from the era of the gold rush. Elize guided us expertly round the quaint town giving us excellent information and descriptions of the many items of interest around us. For lunch we went to Scott's pancake café and each enjoyed a different filling from the selection available. We then had some time to look round on our own and buy souvenirs from stalls run by African Women. Unfortunately we ran out of time as we had to get back to camp to prepare for the evening so missed the chance to look at the historic Grave yard. After a pleasant afternoon swim and quick change we went to the Shanghana village, where on a guided tour we were introduced to the Chief's brother and the "Medicine man". Then we were treated to a traditional show of the history of the Shanghana people. During the interval we were served traditional Shanghana food. The silence emanating from of the whole team was just one indication of how wonderful this meal was. Even Emma was fully satisfied with the dish. We were privileged enough to have the chief's brother sit with us during the meal. Georgie, Elize and Margaret were all called out to dance with the chief's children in the show.

Sunday 23rd March; We headed off to the Canopy Tour in the morning where fantastic fun was had by all despite Georgie having a run in with a spider that managed to attach itself to her eyebrow while on the zip-wire! After the adrenalin rush we went for a fantastic lunch at a local restaurant/brewery where we sampled the cold lager brewed on site, much deserved after a hot morning spent swinging through the canopy! Unfortunately in the afternoon rain forced us to abandon our trip to Shanghana village to watch the villagers make souvenirs and so lost the opportunity to shop in one of the main traditional African markets. Instead we chilled out in camp with most people recovering from the sky rail and the tubing. In the evening we had a lovely braai with included t-bone steak with fruit salad and Pimms.



GU U19 with the 3 Rondavels behind

Monday 24th; With another early start, 6:00am wake up, we headed for the Cheetah Endangered Species Sanctuary actually arriving early. We went on a mini safari tour of the sanctuary, where all the animals were in cages as they were part of a breeding program. The cheetah were the main attraction but there were also lions, a tiger, wild dogs and other forms of wild cat. The sanctuary was also looking after an orphaned rhino and a zebra. It was great to see three of the big five which we hadn't been lucky enough to find free in the Kruger. But by far the most crowd gathering of animals were the millipedes crawling over Boyd's shoe. Later that afternoon we drove around the Blyde river canyon with spectacular views. Many also indulged in yet more roadside shopping

from the African women who frequent the lay byes all along many roads. That evening we went to The Fig Tree game restaurant in Sabie where we were able to try such delights as Kudu, Warthog, Ostrich, and Crocodile. All in all it was a great relaxing day, but sadly the last of our R & R. Nevertheless we were looking forward to getting back to Pretoria and on to Bloemfontain, ready to get into shooting, the real reason for our visit.

Tuesday 25th; Today we left the Aan de Vliet and begun the long journey back to Pretoria. The first part of the journey was fairly uneventful apart from the blazing music coming from the 'love bus'. We stopped off at some caves and were shown around them by an enthusiastic guide. She pointed out many fascinating rocks, one of which cast the shadow of a pregnant woman. Our next stop was lunch at Milly's trout restaurant. The afternoon promised a long boring drive however with the kombie running seriously short of fuel, but with the onboard mobile not functioning, a quick, nay very quick diversion for one of the fastest fill ups in the history of man, Formula One would have been proud of it, enlivened the journey. We arrive safely back in Pretoria and while the Burgers headed home to recover from GB U19, we trailed an eating house that we planned to use for our end of tour party. The resulting meal was a great success and we finished trying various exotic and interestingly named concoctions.

Wednesday 26th; After going to bed as soon as we returned from the restaurant the whole team woke this morning refreshed and ready for the journey ahead. We breakfasted and set off; most shockingly we were on time! For lunch we stopped at "BJ's express". Mid-afternoon we arrived safely at Gen De Wit Range camp, Bloemfontain and found all the important places: accommodation, ablutions, cookhouse and the canteen. We went out for a meal in the town after having our rifles weighed and checked. The first shock that occurred was that the Commandant found herself unequal to the meal, the second greater shock was that Harry and Sam also failed to finish! Before leaving the Prima Patti restaurant with our doggy bags, the Commandant announced that Mr. Henry Day was to be the Team Captain with Mr. Sam Harley as Vice Captain.

Thursday 27th; To start the first day of the 12 day course of shooting, we were thoughtfully awoken by the wonderful fully orange suited butt markers, and their morning praise to the butt God. We started the day with breakfast and an hour and a bit wait until we were actually allowed onto the 300 metre range. Our shooting was overall quite shocking leading to most, as it turned out erroneously, blaming the transporting of their rifles in a thin slip in the trailer onto the bumpy range rather than their difficulties with the conditions. In the afternoon we begun the Free State pairs competition at 600 metre. A lesson or two was learnt during the shoots and there were of course a few stories to tell. Georgie, in a pair with Henry exclaimed frantically that there was an ant under her top. Henry valiantly sprung to Georgie's rescue pulling her top over her head but taking her t-shirt with it, leaving little to the imagination of the SA and GB shooters around the point. Edward Dickson earned the 'mug of the day' after twice claiming that the round was stuck in his breech only to find both times that on further inspection it was not a mechanical failure on the rifle's part but his failure to clear out the breech flag... Few could keep their eyes open after a day spent in the African sun so we retired for a fairly early night in preparation for the next early start.

Friday 28th; In this first set of individual competition shoots it is fair to say that the conditions and more particularly the wind got the better of all the team on at least one occasion. However we are all now better prepared for the changes that we had underestimated, and "kept our cool" to achieve some reward in the prize giving that evening. Sam won a few prizes and Nick took the junior competition by storm with two first places including under 19 Champion of the Free State, and a second place. The Meeting Meal followed the prize giving and then there was an auction to raise funds for the Free State young shooters, in which there was possibly more competition than there had been during the day's shooting. The under 19s held our own buying several 'silver glasses and two bottles of brandy ahead of the senior GB team (well we had to beat them at something).

Saturday 29th; The Morning started briskly and after a hearty breakfast we began shooting the 'Scottish Sward' competition at 300 and 900 metres. The first distance was like a walk in the park compared to the challenging wind conditions ahead at 900. Many of the team left the point shaking their heads in disbelief. After a good lunch we started the main shoot of the day with our first team practice shoot. The team shot well at 300 with Helen making 49 and Harry 50.6. A quick team regroup led to a consistent set of scores at 600 metres. We headed into Bloem for a great meal at the Mall by the lake before heading back to camp for a respectable early night so as to make the most of lie-in tomorrow morning. Sam & Harry

Sunday 30th; Most enjoyed the lie in however, the butt markers decided to play football and cricket early in the morning to wake us by their cheers and shouts. Simon headed into Bloemfontein to do the much needed laundry trip followed later by the team, missing breakfast, to use the internet café in the Mall and to shop. We had lunch at the Mazelspoort resort and spent the afternoon sunbathing, swimming, playing touch rugby, volleyball, and of course using the waterslides. Some came out of the slides a little sore after hurtling down at breakneck speeds two at a time while trying to stay on a rubber mat. All in all, it was a much needed rest day before moving on to the Cattle Baron for steak. Even after devouring some large chunks of meat a number of us decided to have 'make

your own ice cream' pudding complete with six different sauces, marshmallows, jelly babies and Smarties. Once consumed we headed back to camp for an early night, as tomorrow the Grand Aggregate begins.

Monday 31st; The Opening ceremony of the SA Championships began at 7am. After the speeches and watching the flag raising, Gen Mac read the morning scripture and led the prayers before we trundled off to 300 metres for the start of the Orange Free State Cup at 300m, 500m and 600m. Our top score was Sam with a 102 followed by Georgie, Boyd and Beesley who achieved 100/105. The amount of shooting in SA compared to the Imperial meeting is much greater and so lunch was a very welcomed break from the constant details and sweaty heat. We fired the second of our team practises, which went well with some impressive scores both coaches, and all firers finished with full confidence in their judgement. In the evening the team co-hosted the Great Britain reception where we had a meal and socialised with distinguished members of the South African Bisley Union and the senior GB Team, with the coaches picking up many tips and ideas for the team match.

Tuesday 1st April; Today started as expected by some with an excellent April fools joke played on us by the Butt markers. For a brief moment we thought we might be firing at square targets! Only to here the General's clarion cry of 'April Fool!' Shooting started with the Dalrymple Cup 2 + 10 at 300m and 2 + 11 at 600m then the Dave Smith Cup 2 + 10 at 800m before lunch, followed by the Rhodes Cup, a team match at 800 and 900m which we shot alongside for practice. The shooting was mixed with some good and some bad scores with James Boyd coming out on top in the Dalrymple. In the team match we really had to work hard when an unexpected problem occurred with Harry's rifle leading him to have to use one of the coaches' rifles for the rest of the match. We also had a member of the team suffer badly from the heat. However we learnt some good lessons and hopefully we would be able to pull it together for the Junior International Long Range Match tomorrow. In the evening we went on a game drive into the range danger area where we enjoyed the sight of wildebeests and zebra stampeding in front of the sunset. If only we had had a less tiring day we would have been able to enjoy it much more. After today's shooting, following a quick meal we were all ready for bed.

Wednesday 2nd; The day started with a number of the team feeling under the weather. Despite this the scores in the State Presidents first stage were generally reasonable with some standing a good chance of make it through to the final if the second stage goes well too. Highest was Henry Day on 104.8 with Boyd and Helen both on 103. The heat increased and we all could not wait to get out of the sun for the lunch break even though there was only 30 minutes before we were back onto the range for the Junior International Long Range Match. Henry Day top scored with a brilliant 148.14 leading GB U19 to 841.46, 12 points ahead of Scotland U19 (Dollar Academy) and 34 points ahead of the South African Juniors. At the first prize giving in the evening at which Simon was co-opted to do the honours, Boyd won three individual medals and we received our winner's medals for the International Match. Afterwards we just chilled in the canteen with the South African Juniors before bed.

Thursday 3rd was the final day of the SA Grand Aggregate and our last big day of individual shooting. Starting off with the Jack Mitchley at 300m, Henry Day scored an impressive 50.6 followed immediately by the King's Norton Cup at 600m in which Georgie achieved 50.4. After another gruelling 600m shoot in the President's Cup, where tricky wind conditions had proved a considerable challenge to the team, we retired for lunch and, for some, time to quickly wash dusty and dirt ridden clothes before the long range challenges of the afternoon. 800 and 900 meters are difficult at the best of times but when the wind is deciding to change every few seconds it wreaked havoc with many of the team's scores. However Harry still managed a 48. At 900 the wind seemed to be doing little yet due to the faded light, the invisible mirage gave a disagreeing value from the wind flags and confused even the most intelligent of us. Ed still managed a 49 losing his last into the 4 ring. In the evenings Jane took the Team out for a nice meal in Bloemfontein while the Commandant and Adjutant sat through the announcements of the teams for the following day's Protea Matches.

Friday 4th; We woke today in eager anticipation of the competition ahead, the day of the Junior Protea Match had arrived and the whole team were looking forward with excitement and for some a strong case of the jitters! We started the day with the second stage of the State Presidents competition; two and tens at 300, 500 and 600 was a tiring but exhilarating start to the day. During lunch it was time to switch from individual shooters to become the GB Under 19 Rifle Team. The team headed out to the range focused yet very relaxed, dancing in the party bus to the latest tunes, and settled at three hundred metres to prepare. Lady officer Jane invited us to become part of an honorary "Gloucester bubble!" to focus the team and bring us together and totally phase the opposition! The tried and tested method of the bubble performed its magic and the team won this distance by 8 points giving us a good head start on the other teams. After 600m Scotland had closed to within 3 points. At the end of the day the teams were waiting behind the boards for Katie Simpson from Dollar, and James Boyd to finish their shoots, so we could finalise the results. After many ups and downs, we finally realised that we were clear of the Scotland U19 team by 8 points and the South African Juniors, though putting up a good fight, were even further behind. All three teams, South African Juniors, GB Under 19, and the Scotland Under 19 team had each won a distance. There was

much shaking of hands and friendship between the teams after a brief approach to the senior teams score boards to find four 150s on the GB Board taking them to victory in the Protea match. The Brits had cleared up, both senior and junior teams taking the prizes. We returned to our range for the post match photos and the customary presentation by GBU19 to their SA counterparts before rushing back to the accommodation to change for the Protea Dinner, at which the captain, Henry, had to make a speech. En-route to the dinner via the score boards we were thrilled to find that the cut off for the State President's final was 145.20 and that four of the team, Henry, Ed, James and Helen, had made it through.

Saturday 5th; The final day's shooting with four in the State President's Final. The day started as usual, hot. Despite the need to pack most of the team went to the Bloemfontein mall to do some shopping leaving the Adjutant to pack as much as possible before the final shoots. After lunch Henry, Ed, James and Helen went out to the range to shoot. All looked well until a massive dust storm blew through followed by torrential rain, which drenched everything just as message 1 was sent. Several people pulled out of the competition but not our four GB U19 team members. The rain stopped leaving a very tricky wind however David Dyson, GB, had the mastery of it winning dropping just two points. He was chaired off the point. We rushed to change for the prize giving where Boydy won the medal for coming third in the Under 19 Championships and the team collected the Junior Protea Trophy and winner's medals. Immediately afterwards we held our traditional braai with the South Africans Juniors and several supporting adults. Afterwards those of the team not completing the packing joined the GB Team for a drink.



GB U19 with the Trophy ~ mission accomplished

Sunday 6th; Nick had spent much of the night in the wash room feeling very ill apparently after eating some bad springbok and a dodgy Indian. The day began promptly to get everyone packed and ready. The stores that were to be left in Bloem were handed over to Peter Bramley and amazingly we were ready on time for breakfast and departure for Pretoria. The team slept throughout the 6 hour journey back at our accommodation at Alterlekker where we settled back in and had showers before going out to the Spur steak house. Some seriously large steaks were ordered. Appropriately we were seated at the children's end so soon set about getting our faces painted with some succumbing to our own in house team artists Georgie and Emma. Using the Adjutant's knowledge, that at the Spur, if it is someone's birthday, the waiters sing to the individual and present a cake, we therefore deemed that Nick should suddenly turn 18 and the Spur staff did the rest. We also called in and executed the fallacious promise that Ed Jeens, from the GB Team and a former U19 team member, claimed that Simon had made, namely that if GB Under 19 won both their matches then he would dye his eyebrows purple. The vice-captain did the honours using spray mysteriously obtained by the Commandant and as the eyebrows duly changed colour, confirmed in several pictures. We all, after not inconsiderable difficulty in removing our face paint, the paint just smudged and smeared before finally coming off, eventually went to bed feeling very full.

Monday 7th; WOOHOO Theme Park day! Gold Reef City here we come, a day of R & R at the theme park on the edge of Johannesburg built around the old gold mine. We spent the morning getting very wet on the Log Flume and Raging River Rapid rides, before progressed to bigger, scarier rides, resulting in some excellent pictures of Henry, James and Georgie. After lunch we went on a tour down to the first level of the old gold mine, wearing some attractive head gear and super torches! Underground we were shown round some of the shafts and tunnels and received an expert tour with fantastic information about the mine and the people that used to work it. Back to base and we had a half hour to be ready for our farewell Team Party, a dinner to thank those South Africans who were able to be present for all they had done to make our trip such fun. We made various presentations and finished with the Commandant presenting team members with their SABU medals and merits and the team thanking the Officers with much appreciated gifts. It was an excellent finish to the tour with good food, some good wine and a brilliant atmosphere.

Tuesday 8th; At last a leisurely start before breakfast with final packing adjustments and one last visit to the Mall before we moved to the Burgers home to leave our possessions whilst going out for a final lunch then back to relax, check in on line, change and off to the airport. Fortunately the Adjutant managed to persuade the authorities to let him check in all the rifles and luggage so eventually, with minimum pain and fuss, and sorrowful but very appreciative farewells to the Burgers, we were through to the duty free shops to wait for our flight home. We boarded a full aircraft and were on our way.

Wednesday 9th; After an incident free flight we arrive at Terminal Five but despite all the reports of chaos we passed through painlessly, even the customs man was in a great mood and did not require to see the rifles. The coach turned up and we were soon back at Bisley to unpack and repack possessions, sort rifles and collect items left in Derby Lodge whilst we were away. Fond farewells said the Team dispersed. The Adventure was over but the memories will endure.

To all those, both in the UK and in South Africa, who made it possible and are far too numerous to name, THANK YOU one and all. Match results:

International Junior Long Range Match (2 & 15 at 800 & 900m)

Great Britain Under 19	841.48
Scotland Under 19 (Dollar Academy)	829.40
South African Juniors	807.39

Junior International Protea (2 & 10 at 300, 600 & 900m)

Great Britain Under 19	842.47
Scotland Under 19 (Dollar Academy)	834.45
South African Juniors	827.45



GB U19, SA J & Scotland U19 after The Junior International Protea Match