

## COMPETITIVE SHOOTING: 157TH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS



👤 Top shooters – from the left; Michael Shearer, John Snowden and Rob Kerridge.





“...THESE WERE THE CLOSEST FINALS IN THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR SOME YEARS WITH LEAD CHANGES AND THE RESULTS IN DOUBT RIGHT TO THE LAST SHOT.”

# FULLBORE ROUNDUP –

REPORTED BY BRUCE MILLARD...

It's been a long, difficult season for Fullbore Target Shooters with wet weather delaying the start and now effecting the end of the season.

## TRENTHAM

The 157th National Championship was contested in early February with many overseas competitors attending to gauge

the conditions for next year's World Long Range Championships and Palma Match, planned for February 2019.

The National Championship lived up to its reputation with temperatures of 30+ degs at the start and strong winds at the finish. One afternoon was cancelled as a cyclone blew through! The week's shooting

concluded with graded finals in Free Target Rifle (FTR), F Open (FO) and Target Rifle (TR). Conditions for the Finals were difficult – the wind had blown from the left all week, but for the Finals it came from the right, presenting a new challenge.

The FO and FTR finals were held at the same time, in FO Rob Kerridge from Te Puke

Michael Shearer from Petone won the FTR final...

had a 3-point lead and needed them all to win by only six centres over Ian Hughes from Cheltenham. Michael Shearer from Petone won the FTR final after a close battle with two other competitors, only winning the title finally with his last shots. Following this the TR Final was held, again 15 shots at 900 yards. Last year's Ballinger Belt winner, Jim Bailey from Australia led going into the final, but again the conditions caused upsets with Jim shooting steadily until he was caught by a wind change and scored a three which allowed John Snowden from Ashburton to come through and win the

Rob Kerridge, previous winner of the FTR Belt on two occasions, took out the 2018 F Open class.

Ballinger Belt by one centre bullseye.

Some magnificent and exciting shooting was seen, these were the closest finals in the National Championships for some years with lead changes and the results in doubt right to the last shot. Rob Kerridge, the F Open Champion, has just converted to that class and has previously won the FTR Belt on two occasions, Michael Shearer won the FTR Champion belt for the second time, and as mentioned John Snowden, the TR Champion, won the Ballinger Belt (for the second time). Alexander Hoffman from the NSW Under 25 Development squad won B Grade, and John Chan from the the same squad won the C Grade.

A number of International Teams matches were also held, an Australian Team proving too strong for the NZ Team. The NZ Veterans faired better, continuing their Trentham dominance by defeating teams from





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Australia, USA and Great Britain. F Class Teams from NZ also competed against the World Champion Australians with Australia comfortably winning all competitions.

At the end of the week's shooting, teams from New Zealand, Australia, USA and Great Britain shot in a Mini Palma match over 800, 900 and 1000 yards. Again Australia ruled the range with good wind picking and fast shooting.

### RECENT EVENTS

In February the first NZ Shot Expo was held in Auckland. The NRANZ and the Clevedon Rifle Club had a stand, thanks to generous sponsorship from COLFO, and 10,000 people came through the doors over the weekend. The Ballinger Belt was displayed, NZ's oldest sporting trophy, first competed for in 1861.

In April the Commonwealth Games were held in Brisbane, Australia. John Snowden from Ashburton, Brian Carter from Te Puke and Bevan Metrhens from Malvern as Manager attended the Games. Two competitors from each Commonwealth



**John Snowden** from Ashburton won the Ballinger Belt competition for 2018, NZ's oldest sporting trophy.

Country compete from 300 yards to 1000 yards to sort out Gold, Silver and Bronze. John and Brian ended up 5th in the first event, pairs shooting, where competitors can coach each other. Against the

strong competition this was a great result. They were one point from the Bronze Medal and three points off the winners, England. In the Individual Competition, shooting was over three days, finishing at 900 and 1000 yards where the medals were sorted out. John finished 8th and Brian was 15th, again there was only a spread of six points from 1st to 15th.

As the season finishes up there have been many Regional Championships with Taranaki celebrating their 150th Championship, a great achievement for the Association and for the club who are currently

**A happy team** - NRANZ and the Clevedon Rifle Club hosted a stand at the NZ Shot Expo...!

**"...NRANZ GETS HUGE SUPPORT FROM BARNARD PRECISION AND TRUE-FLITE BARRELS, MAKING THE SPORT OF TARGET SHOOTING MORE ACCESSIBLE..."**

negotiating tenure on a new range. For some years they've been without a suitable range and holding their events at Otorohanga. The NRANZ gets huge support from Barnard Precision and Trueflite Barrels, making the sport of target shooting more accessible to all who travel to participate.

Electronic Targets are making Club shooting more enjoyable. No more having to stop shooting to change markers or find volunteers willing to mark. These targets have taken over club and regional competitions, with many buying tablets now instead of spotting scopes. With the fullbore season ending shortly many competitors are heading indoors to shoot .22s at 25 yards to keep their eyes in and improve techniques. Smallbore Clubs operate throughout New Zealand, shooting in the evenings to all levels; Social through to International.

F Class and Hunter classes are catered

for, with sporting rifle shooting and Target Rifle shooting taking place in most clubs. Contact [www.tsnz.nz](http://www.tsnz.nz) for clubs in your area.

With the World Long Range Championships and Palma to be held at Trentham, planning and range development are well under way so the event will run smoothly, provided the weather and conditions keep to the plan. The NZ Palma Team has now been selected and members are now training to be competitive on their home ranges. The NZ Veterans and Under 21 and 25s will also be competing, along with others. A great chance to attend and shoot in a World Championship without huge travel costs, and acclimatisation is not required.

It has been 25 years (1995) since New Zealand hosted the match last which is held every four years. Teams and individual shooters are coming from Australia, USA, Great Britain, South Africa, Canada, and Europe. The Trentham range is notorious for big winds and changing conditions. Many shooters have left the range having "Been Trenthamed" over the years but keep coming back for the challenge, the people and friends. Info, program and an introductory video can be found at:

[www.lrwc2019.nz](http://www.lrwc2019.nz)

Contact info is at:

[www.nznra.org.nz](http://www.nznra.org.nz)

- search Facebook for National Rifle Association, or contact the NRA Secretary at: [secretary@nranz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@nranz.org.nz)

**Bruce**

