



THE ORIGINAL

# INSIDE EDGE

REGIONAL NEWS + REVIEWS

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## GET A GRIP



### INSIDE

#### ONCE YOU'RE IN IT'S GRIP, FT IS HIGHLY ADDICTIVE

Field Target – a sport that caters for all levels and abilities on the same course; it's pretty unique.

#### IS IT SUPERNATURAL OR JUST LUCK?

Just what do some of the top shots see on a course that the rest of us don't? Does anyone have the answer?

#### SHOOT DATES

Shoot dates for the MFTA and neighbouring regions. Don't forget there will be some Christmas shoots over the break, support your local clubs!



# GRIPPED

## BY THE FT BUG



**YOU CAN ONLY LEARN A CERTAIN AMOUNT BY WATCHING FROM THE WINGS - THE BEST WAY IS TO GET INVOLVED AND HAVE A GO**

How many times have we been on a firing line at a competition, or at a large public event like the Euro's when they were at Weston Park, and whilst talking to a spectator heard the phrase 'Oh no it's OK, I'm not good enough to do that'? Plenty is the answer, and it's such a shame if when we do hear that we don't put in the effort to try and change their minds, and get them to have a go - even if it's just a couple of shots at the end of a course.

The truth is our sports needs more people, of any age and often the best way is to try and encourage a family to get involved so they can

new recruits before it's too late, and we suddenly find ourselves in a situation where covering costs on a regional level are more difficult than they need be. I'm sure the majority of clubs have a bunch of members that never venture away from the plinking range, and if we could just get 10% of those to have a go that would be a wonderful boost to our sport.

To fall in line with the BFTA, the MFTA is looking to introduce the use of 'Sticks' into Open Class which I hope will encourage a few of the less mobile shooters, and the MFTA is also looking to change the format of it's summer offerings for 2024, again

**IT'S DOWN TO CLUBS AND INDIVIDUALS TO DO ALL THEY CAN TO ENCOURAGE NEW TALENT INTO THE SPORT. NEFTA SEEM TO HAVE IT RIGHT WITH 60+ COMPETITORS AT THEIR RECENT WINTER LEAGUE AT REDFEARNS.**

all benefit from a sport that really is quite unique. There's few sports that offer such a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere on the same day at the same event, whether you're a complete beginner or a seasoned marksman, and from my experience once a newcomer gets involved they quickly get caught in the trap and can't resist the addictive nature of field target. Traditionally the Winter League's have been the time to recruit new members, where the shoots are more relaxed and travelling is far less than during the summer months. This I am sure is still the case, but it seems we need to try and find new ways of finding these

to try and encourage more to have a go, and put an element of fun and an enjoyable experience into a Sunday afternoon (more info on that in future issues).

So, if you're reading this and you have never had a go, or don't think you are good enough to have a go please do come along to your local club. If you have some kit bring it with you, and just ask any of the members what it's all about and how you can get involved - they will be more than happy to get you set up - you won't regret it. ■

**THERE'S FEW SPORTS WHERE A COMPLETE BEGINNER CAN COMPETE ALONGSIDE A MULTIPLE WORLD CHAMPION AT THE SAME NATIONAL EVENT, AT THE SAME TIME - AND GET SOME HELP AND ADVICE FOR FREE TOO!**





# IT'S IN *the trees*

JUST WHAT DO THE TOP SHOTS SEE THAT WE DON'T. IS IT SUPERNATURAL?

Well, if it were supernatural, or a black art then at least the majority of us would have a decent excuse as to why it is so often a mystery that seems impossible to solve. However, as much as I like the idea of these top shots having super powers, I'm afraid they don't - it's just down to a number of basic things; understanding and being 100% at one with your kit, years of experience, lots and lots of practice and of course many have a natural talent. There are always other elements of course that come into play, such as a familiarity of a certain type of ground, correctly assessing and understanding the conditions or the desire to win and

let's not forget we all need a little bit of luck. I'm sure we've all had a great shoot where one of the targets fell, but quite how you're not sure!

If you take a selection of some of the best in FT, they can have quite different approaches but they all help make a difference and what works for one might not work for another. The master of everything FT Andy Calpin was always as relaxed on the course as he would be down the local pub which suited him and won him many titles over the years. The same can be said for the late, great Dave Baines, although having partnered him in

many a competition he did seem to have more luck than most! (Still miss you Dave).

On the flip side of this, Central Southern's Justin Wood is the epitome of calm, with a focus and determination that can be seen in the very best professional sports stars. This calculated and consistent approach also works for James Osborne, SEFTA's Dan Eley, Northern Ireland's Conor McFlynn or the lovable Berty Bassett to name a few.

I'm sure there are plenty of you who have your own views as what makes a great FT competitor, but



Confidence and great technique is a hard combination to beat.



The Murph made Brook Valley look easy – but rest assured it wasn't!

for me the last thing, and one of the most important after the basics have been taken care of is confidence, self belief or whatever you want to call it. You'll often find that throughout a season (or two) the same few names crop up all the time, as once a person has a few wins or good results under their belt, their confidence is sky high and to them, they simply cannot miss – and for me that goes a long way to achieving great results.

So, it isn't black magic, or seeing the wind in the woods, it's just good practice, time and effort. This was demonstrated at the recent MFTA Winter League at Brook Valley, >



where the wind was for most very difficult to read, with the firing line sitting at the top of a large gully with targets high up in trees or tucked away at the foot of the stream. Plenty of decent shooters came crashing down with lower than expected results, but Nick Murphy made it look easy, finishing missing just two out of the forty shots. It was an impressive result, but one that we have got accustomed to seeing from Nick, and that is down to the reasons mentioned earlier on. He has a lot of experience, he practices a lot, he certainly knows his kit but most of all, and I have discussed this at length with him, he knows he is capable of hitting them all, and his confidence is sky high every time he gets to his lane, and if the proof is in the pudding, then Sir, order me a double helping of Sticky Toffee please!



Undulating terrain at Brook Valley made it very difficult for many to judge the wind.

Despite some results lacking in glory, Brook Valley gave us all a very enjoyable Winter League shoot, with a good selection of angles that really made you consider the options for every shot. This club really has come on leaps and bounds over the past six months or so, and they have plans

to further improve the experience which is great, as I type they are busy improving access to the practice ranges and in full swing in developing the new discipline of tactical PRS. If you're around the Stoke on Trent/Crewe area I strongly suggest you pay them a visit.

**ROUND # 5: MILLRIDE**

Mid November saw us at Millride for the first time this Winter, a famously tricky ground where a bit of luck at the top of the hill and in the field is definitely needed!

It wasn't quite as windy or tricky as previous visits to the ground, but care and attention was needed nevertheless. Stodders was on home ground and managed to put in the top score of the day (bar Open Class where Buck finished on an impressive 36/40), but was equally matched by the mighty Murph who, with another 100% under his belt strengthened his top three position in the League so far. As expected Ozzy and Reggy were not far behind and A Grade's Phil James pulled it out of the bag to finish on 33 and win himself an FT Monki Grade Winner Badge. It was also great to see Rodney Howes put in another winning grade score at Millride, he really seems to have settled down now with his new ISP, and a beautiful bit of kit it is too.

Simon Critchlow from Brook Valley once again came out on top in C Grade, showing that if Simon can make a few more of the shoots, the top spot in C is not cut and dry by any stretch, and it will be great to see how this pans out throughout the rest of the season. It's all pretty close in each grade, and once we start dropping rounds it could get very even closer.

**ROUND # 6: PURLEY CHASE**

Purley hosted their second shoot of the season on 3 December, and if

any of us were unsure as to when winter would arrive, we certainly know the answer now. Credit has to go Alan, Terry and Matt who laid out a superb course for us all on the Saturday in extremely challenging conditions.

A snowfall during the night had also made Purley very picturesque and after booking in 36 competitors by 9:45 we were ready for the off. It was a bitterly cold morning and stayed below zero all day. There was a heavy mist that didn't lift at all, making many of the targets, especially those across the stream at the far end of the wood, very difficult to rangefind; in fact looking through my trusty Leup was like using an old Tasco from the 80s!

Despite this, the day actually started off quite pleasant, with a course that wound down and around the woodland creating lanes that had great shots over the stream and plenty of variation in angles to keep you on your toes. There was hardly any wind, or at least not one that you could see but it was just enough to drift your shot out, as Nick Murphy discovered much to his disgust, missing a couple early on to dent



With the mist that didn't lift all day, the woods at Purley Chase looked like something out of Jurassic Park.

his confidence in judging the wind. By mid-morning the rain had settled in and to be honest, it was awful, but that didn't stop some big results coming in.

A Grade saw Emma Chadbourne score a fantastic clearance, her first WL 40/40 and was very well deserved. Des Edwards, Paul Rudge, Sue Swift and Carl Hill also put in great results to keep the top of A a very close call, and with scores being dropped from now on it will be interesting to see who can pull it out of the bag to take the A Grade title in a couple of months time.

In AA Karl Morris put in a sterling 39 missing just one stander, with Reggy and Simon Francis just behind on 37. All three were winning scores on most days, but there were two more clearances at Purley from James Osborne and Ian Stoddart who, together with Nick have a great battle going on for the top spot. However, as always with a number of others who are not far behind, a slip up from now on would leave the door open for a change of names at the top of the tree.

With another good result of 35 Anne Smith goes into the Christmas break leading B Grade, but MFTA Chair Shaun Shore is having a good season now and will not be that far behind, as long as he can keep Rodney and his ISP at bay of course.

Compared to previous years, C Grade is a bit light this season which is a shame as this is historically a well populated grade, but Bob Selvey still has to keep on his game as Simon Critchlow and Steve Booth are certainly putting in the results when they are able to make the shoots.

Steve Cash is doing very well in Open class, especially since he's decided to shoot a spring gun







RND 4 BROOK VALLEY  
FT MONKI BADGE WINNERS

AA	NICK MURPHY	C	BOB SELVEY
A	JOHN SEARS	O	STEVE CASH
B	RODNEY HOWES	P	NICK GIBNEY

RND 5 MILLRIDE  
FT MONKI BADGE WINNERS

AA	IAN STODDART	C	SIMON CRITCHLOW
A	PHIL JAMES	O	BUCK CHARLTON
B	RODNEY HOWES	P	BEN CHRISTIE

RND 6 PURLEY CHASE  
FT MONKI BADGE WINNERS

AA	JAMES OSBORNE	C	BOB SELVEY
	IAN STODDART	O	BUCK CHARLTON
A	EMMA CHADBOURNE	P	BEN CHRISTIE
B	SHAUN SHORE		

this season – brave man! But it seems to suit him and he'll take some catching to loose his current number one spot. Meanwhile, Neil Thorneycroft who for many years has been a leader of the spring gun discipline is showing good form, but with one of our newest members Ben Christie getting into the swing and hot on his tail that could all change in the new year.

So, all too quickly we've reached the end of the first half of the Winter League season. I have no doubt the second half will be just as eventful, and with scores being dropped at each round from now on it really could be edge of the



Steve Cash (above) and Neil Thorneycroft (above top) have their own little Spring Gun battle going on this season.

seat stuff for many who are on the cusp of taking home a trophy at the end of the season.

With that in mind, I'd also like to say a big thank you Johnno of AJP who is once again making the Winter League trophies for us. He does a great job and I'm sure you'll agree last years were superb and after a conversation yesterday this season's are going to be just as good, I just wish I was in the running to get one!

Remember the League starts back again on Sunday 7 Jan at Throckmorton – don't miss it (see back page for details). ■



15mm and only 14yds but still a challenge under the wintry conditions. It did get bit more shot up than this!



Thanks to AJP, last season's trophies were excellent, this year's will be just as coveted.



# MFTA & CHRISTMAS SHOOT CALENDAR 2023/24

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
17 DEC	ANSTON CHAMPS	ANSTON (NEFTA)
27 DEC	XMAS SHOOT	EMLEY MOOR (NEFTA)

## 2024

07 JAN	WINTER LEAGUE # 7	THROCKMORTON
21 JAN	WINTER LEAGUE # 8	BROOK VALLEY
04 FEB	WINTER LEAGUE # 9 + MFTA AGM	MILLRIDE
18 FEB	MFTA MASTERS & CLUBS CUP (+ PRESENTATIONS)	HARRIERS

If any of our MFTA clubs have an event, open shoot or club shoot planned for this season they would like to promote, please let me know so I can put it on the calendar, thank you.

## STOP PRESS



**Remember, the next round of the MFTA Winter League is at Throckmorton Shooting Ground, 07 Jan 2024.**

Throckmorton Shooting Ground, Worcestershire have very kindly offered to host Round 7 of our Winter League, for which we are extremely grateful. The ground has hosted plenty of HFT events as well as some Opens, so we are extremely excited to be visiting. If you have never been before please do make the effort, it's just 15 minutes of J6/M5 and a superb venue and you won't be disappointed.

Located on Throckmorton Road, Throckmorton, Pershore, WR10 2JY.

/// what3words: [greet.station.rejoins](https://www.what3words.com/greet.station.rejoins)



The new season BFTA Calendar is now available, which **can be found here**. It's looking to be a great 2024, with a new look to the GP Series and new formats to some of the other BFTA National shoots. Make sure you take a look and get yourself booked in for anything that takes your fancy. Also, the MFTA is proud to have Castle FTARC represent the region, hosting the BFTA GP2 on 26 May.

The 'original' Inside Edge magazine is an independent publication, aimed at promoting the sport of Field Target in the Midlands and the UK, and supports the objectives and work of the MFTA. Any comments or views are entirely those of the author unless specified.

