

GAUGING SUPPORT

FOR A NEW COMPETITION FORMAT AT BISLEY

Report from the event held on 14 August at Bisley Shooting Ground.



The 12 gauge has long been the gold standard in clay shooting competitions, dominating the scene as the international gauge of choice. However Bisley Shooting Ground hosted a Sub-Gauge Sporting Competition, celebrating the often-overlooked smaller gauges and offering a fresh twist to traditional clay shooting – proving that smaller calibres have a lot to offer.

Recognizing the untapped potential of smaller gauges, this was a chance for shooters to try their hand with lightweight .410, 28 gauge, and 20 gauge shotguns. Traditionally seen as tools for the game shooting field or for newcomers seeking a gentler recoil, these smaller gauges were given their time to shine in a competitive format, challenging the notion that bigger is always better.



- High Gun .410: Pat Bolton, demonstrating remarkable accuracy with a score of 45, securing £50 cash and a free CPSA membership.
- High Gun 28 Gauge: Gary Bevan, narrowly claiming victory with a score of 49, also winning £50 cash and a CPSA membership.
- High Gun 20 Gauge: Tim King, winning on countback with a score of 42, earning the same rewards.

Sponsored by Rizzini, the competition provided not only an exciting day of shooting but also valuable prizes, encouraging more shooters to explore the potential of these smaller gauges.

A NEW ERA FOR SUB-GAUGE SHOOTING

This competition is more than just a one-off event; it represents a shift towards inclusivity in clay shooting. Smaller gauges offer a less intimidating entry point for younger, female, and lighter-framed shooters while providing seasoned veterans with a new challenge. In fact, many game shooters prefer the 28 or 20 bore for their fieldwork and welcomed the opportunity to compete with their guns of choice.

In the U.S., sub-gauge events are already an integral part of major competitions, offering a range of challenges that appeal to a broad



spectrum of shooters. The format is popular not only because it's physically less demanding, but also because it brings new strategic elements to the sport. The .410 is often regarded as a more challenging gauge for its precision requirements. American shooters have embraced the flexibility of using a single gun with drop-in tubes to switch between gauges, a trend that could soon catch on in the UK.

The success of Bisley's event, along with other competitions in this format which are starting to take place around the country, suggests that there's a growing appetite for sub-gauge competitions in the UK. These events offer shooting grounds an additional source of income while encouraging shooters to spend more time at the grounds, benefiting the local economy and sponsors alike.

LOOKING AHEAD

With such a positive response to this competition, there's hope that sub-gauge events will become a regular feature in the UK's competitive shooting calendar. For now, though, we can reflect on a fantastic day of shooting at Bisley, where the small but mighty .410 and its siblings proved they're more than capable of holding their own on the clay circuit.

As the dust settles and the final scores are posted, one thing is clear: the future of clay shooting in the UK might just be a little bit smaller – and that's a good thing. 🍃

THE WINNERS

The competition was fierce across all categories, with shooters pushing their skills to the limit on a course designed to test the capabilities of each gauge. Congratulations to the winners:

- Three Gun Overall Champion: Tom Pargetter, who shot an impressive 130 across all three gauges, taking home the £150 cash prize.

