

Pioneering Lady Rifle Shooters

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by

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THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Origins

The National Rifle Association (NRA) was founded, in 1859, for ‘the encouragement of Volunteer Rifle Corps and the promotion of rifle-shooting throughout the Queen’s Dominions’. It came about in response to growing public concern about the possibility of invasion; this followed from the recent Crimean War and the reinstatement of the French Monarchy by Napoleon III. There was a call for the revival of the Volunteer Movement.

It was decided that the NRA would hold an annual meeting of the volunteer corps, with a number of rifle-shooting competitions. A location was chosen on Wimbledon Common and the first meeting was held in 1860.

The Association had the support of Queen Victoria and she decided that the most prestigious competition should carry her own prize – the Queen’s Prize of £250 (a sum which has remained constant to this day). The first winner of the Queen’s Prize was Private Edward Ross of the 7th North Yorkshire Volunteer Rifle Corps.

Within twenty years, it was apparent that the NRA would have to find a new home for its annual camp. A growing population and the subsequent continual suburban development, coupled with the increased effective range of rifles, was raising safety concerns.



Figure 1. Wimbledon 1889 – the final camp held there

Bisley

In 1888, it was decided to move the NRA meeting to Bisley Common, near Brookwood in Surrey.¹ Bisley, a sleepy agricultural village, became famous overnight (despite calls for it to be named 'New Wimbledon') and has been the home of the NRA ever since.

Whereas Wimbledon Common was enclosed for just two weeks each year (for the duration of the meeting), Bisley was a permanent camp. The ranges were available throughout the year, for those corps which did not have access to their own rifle ranges, to hire for practice.

Whilst the intent of the meeting was to foment competition between the volunteer corps, many of the competitions were open to 'all-comers'. This would increase attendance and thus gate money. At the first Wimbledon meeting in 1860, there were sixty-seven prizes of which forty were open to all-comers. This inadvertently opened the door to lady shooters – of course no-one expected them to walk through it!

¹ This decision was widely reported in national, regional and local newspapers 6-8 December 1888

WINIFRED LOUISA LEALE (1871-1941)

The twenty year-old Miss Winifred Louisa Leale caused a minor sensation at Bisley in July 1891, when she became the first ever lady competitor in the annual meeting, amongst 2000 men². The reporting was largely positive, concentrating on her achievements rather than her looks or dress. The *Middlesex & Surrey Express*, however, commented "... her achievements are not all in the handling of a rifle. She rides a bicycle with grace and skill, and swims like a duck³."

In her first shoot, she had to fire six rounds in two minutes at 200 yards. Apparently concerned not to run out of time, she scored 27 points out of 35 (poor by her standards) with twenty-five seconds still remaining.



Figure 2. Miss Winifred Leale

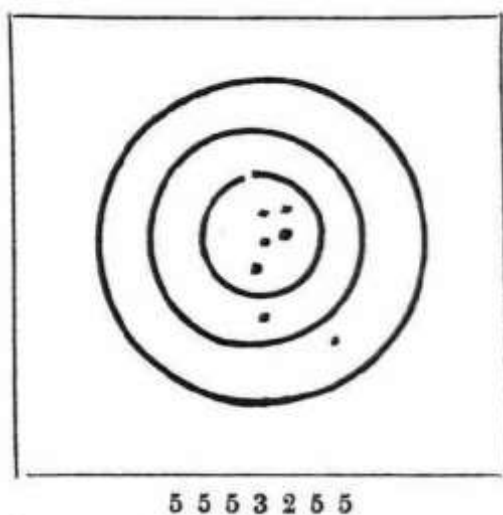


Figure 3. Miss Leale's card in the *Graphic*

In the *Graphic* competition, Miss Leale scored 30 out of 35. Scores of people gathered around to watch, such that the police were called to keep the ground clear.

The proprietors of the *Graphic* presented Miss Leale with a picture to commemorate her fine shooting.⁴

Winifred Louisa Leale was born in Guernsey on 17th March 1871. Her father, Josiah Leale, was a doctor, attached to the Northern Regiment of the Royal Guernsey Militia. Winifred had previously fired some rounds with a

² In 1887 at Wimbledon, Miss Lilian Smith and Miss Annie Oakley (of Buffalo Bill fame) had tried their hand at the 'running deer' (*Evening News* 20, 21 July 1887), where "their success proved indifferent" (*The Star*), but did not enter any of the competitions

³ One can only assume the reporter was not too familiar with ducks!

⁴ *The Star (Guernsey)* 18 July 1891

pistol at an 'impromptu target' but, in early 1890 (just eighteen months before her appearance at Bisley), she persuaded her father to allow her to try her hand with a rifle. She joined the Guernsey Rifle Club and became a member of the NRA.

In 1892 it was reported that Annie Oakley would be competing at the meeting⁵ but there is no evidence to suggest she turned up. Over the next few years, Miss Leale competed regularly, matching the men and winning numerous of the minor prizes. She acquired the epithet "Guernsey Shooting Queen". Her fame also stretched across the Atlantic, reported in a number of US newspapers. In July 1893, the *New Northwest*, of Deer Lodge, Montana compared her exploits with those of Annie Oakley, then aged 30 and still drawing her own headlines.

In 1894, Miss Leale was featured in Lady Violet Greville's anthology: 'Ladies in the Field: Sketches in Sport'. In her own words:

At the Bisley Meeting of 1891, I took part in some of the competitions open to all comers. The measure of success which I achieved has gained a publicity for which I was scarcely prepared, and has brought around me a group of correspondents who have plied me with questions as to my experience in rifle shooting, and the rise and progress of my devotion to an accomplishment so unusual for ladies, and even deemed by many to be somewhat out of their reach.

I purpose, therefore, to put a few notes together, in which I shall endeavour to answer some of the questions proposed to me, and to relate such passages of my experience as may serve to encourage those of my own sex who may have some ambition in this direction.

It was a little more than four years ago when I first handled a Martini-Henry rifle. I was looking on at the shooting one afternoon at the Guernsey Wimbledon, and wondered if it was a very difficult thing to hit the target, which appeared to me to be such a mere speck when seen from so great a distance. I had, some time before this, fired a few shots with a piece at an impromptu target, but rifle shooting looked to me far more real and interesting. At length I succeeded in persuading my father to allow me to try my hand at a shot with a rifle.

I remember that there was some discussion, at that time, about the recoil, but as I was so very ignorant of the management and powers of the rifle, I did not give this really serious question the necessary attention. I believe that had I heard, at this early stage, as much about recoil as I have since, I should probably have been afraid to shoot with a Martini.

A certain militiaman, who is now one of our best shots, related to me a curious incident which happened to him when he first fired with a service rifle. He was shooting in the prone position, and, after pulling the trigger, he heard a great noise, and immediately there was a good deal of smoke about; but the rifle had disappeared. On looking round, however, he saw his rifle behind him! He had been resting the under part of the butt lightly on his shoulders, and holding the rifle loosely: thus, the force of the recoil had actually driven it past him over his shoulder.

⁵ *Greenock Telegraph* 12 July 1892

I have heard of many other cases of the recoil becoming dangerous; but I believe it is from fear of being "kicked" that recruits fail to hold their rifles properly while pulling the trigger.

In my own case, certainly, "ignorance was bliss"; for, in firing my first shot, I was enabled to give my whole attention to keeping the rifle steady, and placing it firmly against my shoulder for that purpose alone undisturbed by any fear of recoil. And I believe that this absence of fear is the chief reason why I have been able to use a Martini-Henry rifle without suffering from the recoil.

Thinking from the experience of my first shot that shooting was easy, I was anxious to go on with it. Many experienced shots volunteered information which was very helpful; but I soon discovered that I was wrong in thinking that rifle shooting was merely a matter of seeing the bull's eye over the sights. The first difficulty was that of keeping the rifle steady. I had to learn exactly how to hold it and for this I had to study position.

I had fired my first shot in the kneeling position. I did not then know of any other, except the standing and lying down. The former I could not manage, as the rifle was too heavy to hold up without any support for the arms; and the lying down position seemed to me, then, to require a great deal of practice. This conjecture has been well justified by my subsequent experience. I have never since fired from the kneeling position, as a much better one was recommended to me, namely, the sitting position. In this way I can have a rest for both arms, which is an advantage over the other method in which it is only possible to rest one.

Having chosen a position, I found that it needed a great deal of studying. It was then that I discovered another great difficulty, i.e. that of pulling the trigger without disturbing the aim. I received some advice on this subject which at first sounded rather curious. I was told to squeeze the trigger "like I would a lemon" and to let it go off without my knowing. This accomplishment requires a great deal of practice, but is well worth the trouble of learning; for I am confident that it is the great secret of good shooting.

During my first few months of shooting, I only used to think of taking a correct aim at the bull's eye, and trying to keep still while pulling the trigger. I was so absorbed in this effort, that it did not occur to me for some time that there was much more than this dexterity to be gained in order to be sure of making a good score. There remained the great question of finding the bulls eye. This, of course, involves the scientific part of rifle shooting; and although, at first, I was alarmed at the difficulty of the subject, I soon saw that the shooting would become tame and monotonous without it.

The range where I was in the habit of practicing (and still do practice) is near the sea. The targets have the sea for a background and, as is often the case near the sea, we have a great deal of wind. It was quite easy to understand that the wind would affect the course of the bullet; but it did not turn out to be so easy as it appeared, to calculate in feet and inches how much allowance should be made for this source of disturbance. Fortunately, "young shots" are not expected to be able to find out this for themselves by the long and painful discipline of repeated failure; and it is always easy for them to obtain advice from persons on the range who have had more experience than themselves. I was very fortunate in that way myself and feel very grateful for the good instruction I have received from several "crack shots".

In 1898, the Guernsey Team (for which Miss Leale was not eligible to shoot) won the *Kolapore* competition. However, in April the following year she was presented with a silver tea service, engraved “Presented to Miss W L Leale by the members of the Kolapore Team as a memento of 1898” as a token of ‘the gratitude and respect they entertain towards Miss Leale for the unceasing efforts she has made in promoting rifle shooting’.

In 1899, the Northern Regiment of the Royal Guernsey Militia mutinied. Eight riflemen from the regiment were dropped from the Guernsey team to go to Bisley and Winifred’s father was replaced as team captain⁶. As a result of this mutiny, unrest spread to the other Battalions and the whole of the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry was suspended pending an investigation by the War Office. Miss Leale appears not to have shot at Bisley again.

Winifred Louisa Leale died on 1st November 1941.

⁶ <http://www.jerseymilitia.co.uk/guernseyhistory.html>; *Jersey Evening Post* 31 May 1899

PRETENDERS TO THE THRONE

In the early 1900s, a number of lady shootists appeared at Bisley; each in turn was hailed by the press as a 'successor to Miss Leale'. None really grasped the mantle.

Lillian Renier

Miss Lillian Renier was born in Bradford, England, but moved to Pretoria, South Africa at a young age. Her shooting prowess soon showed and she won prizes in Australia, the US, India, Japan, China & Java.



Figure 4. Miss Renier at Bisley

In 1899 she came to Bisley sporting a solid gold medal given to her by President Kruger for scoring 100 points out of 105.

Unfortunately, her shooting at Bisley was somewhat underwhelming. In the *Golden Penny* she scored only 29 points out of 35. In the *Daily Telegraph* Cup she scored just 23.⁷

Always a show-business shooter, Lillian went on to join Frank E. Fillis's Great Savage South Africa Show⁸, which a year later was exhibiting in Glasgow.



Figure 5. Entre'act advert 1906

⁷ *Daily Telegraph* 21 July 1899

⁸ *The Era* 29 December 1900

Florence Vivian Lewes

The story of Miss Florence Vivian Lewes is an unusual but romantic one. Her fiancé, Herbert Oliver Maxwell Hanson, left for Canada in 1900, leaving her behind with the words “We must be patient. There isn’t even a house there to shelter you.” Florence reflected and realised he was right - she would have to ‘toughen up’ to survive in Canada.

As a part of this ‘toughening’, Florence joined the South London Rifle Club (its only female member) and learned to shoot. In July 1904, she arrived at Bisley to compete. She scored 26 out of 35 at 600 yards.



Figure 6. Miss Lewes

The following year she went out to Canada and married Herbert - the banns being read in Greenwich church, Kent. Their first son was born in Canada in 1906, but they returned to England soon afterwards; their second son was born in Greenwich in 1908. There is no evidence of her competing again.

1901-14

In 1901, Mrs Louisa Oram, of Prestwich, competed at Bisley. This appears to be her only visit as a competitor. In this year, a *Ladies’ Miniature Rifle⁹ Competition* was established.

In 1905, there were two lady shots at Bisley for the first time. They were Mrs E J ‘Kitty’ Way, from the Transvaal, and Mrs Clara Adelaide Chapman, of the South London Rifle Club¹⁰.

In the *Conan Doyle*, a competition for novices, Mrs Chapman scored 18 out of 35, shooting at 200 yards. Mrs Way, also at 200 yards, had a best score of 33.

A correspondent in *The Field* opined: “Of lady shooters at Bisley there have been a limited number, and their doings have



Figure 7. Mrs E J Way

⁹ Miniature Rifle is what we would now call small-bore i.e. a smaller calibre bullet

¹⁰ The South London Rifle Club was the only one at this time to admit lady members

received an amount of attention inversely proportionate to their number. One is in fact inclined to surmise that rifle shooting by ladies will be regarded as bad form if it is limited to those who are willing to be interviewed several times a day and receive congratulations on what must be regarded as a very mediocre grade of performance.”



Figure 8. Mrs Chapman 1905

The same two ladies also competed in 1906, Mrs Chapman showing considerable improvement with scores of 31 at both 500 and 600 yards. Mrs Way won a tyro¹¹ prize in the *Stock Exchange* competition.

Mrs Way became more famous perhaps for the sumptuousness of her tent than the quality of her shooting. The tent was pitched at the side of Century range, bedecked with flowers and shrubs, and with the motto “l’esprit de mon pere m’est toujours procho” (“The spirit of my fathers is ever with me”) over the doorway. It became a feature of the camp regularly pointed out to tourists.

Mrs way was also a motoring pioneer, often seen driving visitors around the camp in her car.



Figure 9. Mrs Way in her car

¹¹ In shooting, a tyro is a competitor who has not previously appeared in a prize list

In 1907, Mrs Chapman became the first lady competitor to make a maximum score of 35 out of 35, which she achieved at 500 yards in the Graphic competition; the NRA presented her with a silver goblet in commemoration of the achievement¹². That year, she and Mrs Way had more female company - in the form of Mrs Forbes-Major from India and Mrs Scanlen, a revolver shot from Rhodesia.



Figure 10. Mrs Forbes-Major



Figure 11. Mrs Scanlen

In 1908, Miss Phyllis Bethel made a maximum score at the “disappearing man” targets. By 1909, Mrs Chapman could probably lay claim to Miss Leale’s crown¹³. In addition to having already won numerous minor prizes, she added to her 1907 maximum score by making 99 out of a possible 105 under *King’s Prize* conditions.



Figure 12. Ladies’ Miniature Rifle Competition 1909

¹² *Daily Mirror* 17 July 1908

¹³ It should be noted that the Lee-Metford and the later Lee-Enfield rifles, which were now being used, were more accurate weapons than the Martini-Henry rifle that Miss Leale had used; ammunition too was improving. As a consequence, scores in general were improving year on year

Other lady competitors in 1909 included: Miss Ellen Seaton, Mrs Carson, Mrs J Fearon, Miss Cowan and Mrs Kay (revolver).

In 1910, Miss Seaton surpassed Mrs Chapman's record by scoring 100 out of 105. Within days, Mrs Chapman had scored 103. Miss Caroline Smith, Miss Alice Holmes, and Miss Douglas of the Malay States were also competing.



Figure 13. Surrey Ladies' Rifle Association 1911



Figure 14. Mrs Lester Alton



Figure 15. Miss Ada M Sharp

June 1911 saw the first meeting of the Surrey Ladies' Rifle Association. These meetings were continued for the next couple of years. Prominent amongst the competitors were Mrs Chapman, Mrs Lester Alton and Miss Ada Madeline Sharp.

With the outbreak of the First World War, Bisley Camp was taken over by the military for troop accommodation and training. Recreational shooting was suspended.

MISS FANNY GERTRUDE PRESTON (1863-1953)

Following the First World War, the Bisley meeting resumed in the summer of 1919. Partly due to the high level of casualties in the war and partly due to a loss of interest in rifle shooting following such slaughter, the NRA decided to change the eligibility rules. Although most competitions were open to all-comers, the *King's Prize* and the *St George's* were still open only to present or past members of the Home Defence Army. With the agreement of King George V, this was expanded to qualify anyone who had served or was serving with the various branches of the British Naval, Military and Air Forces and the Forces of the Dominions. This, for the first time, allowed women (who had served) to enter for the *King's Prize*.

Miss Fanny Gertrude Preston was the first lady to shoot in the *King's Prize* competition, in 1919 – the only time she did so (and the only one to do so until 1926). Mrs Ada M Irvine, previously Miss Sharp, also entered but was considered as ineligible and her entry was, rather contentiously, rejected on the morning of the competition (during the war she had worked in the censor's office, including at Dunkirk, but was not considered to have served with a military unit).

Fanny Gertrude Preston was born in Liverpool in November 1863. She trained as a nurse at David Lewis Northern Hospital, Liverpool, attaining her certificate in 1899.¹⁴

Miss Preston had started shooting with a rook rifle¹⁵ when she was 14. In 1914, she brought the Cheshire ladies rifle team to Bisley to compete in the County Championship.

During the First World War, Miss Preston served in France and Belgium with the British Red Cross Society, attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) Auxiliary Unit, and with the French Red Cross. While serving at the Queen of the Belgians' Hospital at De Panne, she was wounded in the face, by a bomb explosion, during an enemy attack.

Miss Preston decided to take advantage of the change in the eligibility rule and entered for the *King's Prize*, as well as some other competitions, in the 1919 meeting. She entered under 'Sister Gertrude Preston' and was generally reported in the press as 'Mrs Preston'.¹⁶

¹⁴ UK & Ireland, *Nursing Registers*, 1898-1968

¹⁵ Originally called the rook and rabbit rifle, an English single-shot small calibre rifle (now obsolete) intended for shooting small game, particularly rook shooting

¹⁶ There is a short piece of silent film showing Miss Preston shooting in the competition:

<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/victory-bisley-meet-aka-victory-bislim-meet/query/Preston>

In 1919, the first stage of the *King's Prize* consisted of ten shots at 200 yards followed by ten shots at 500 yards¹⁷. Miss Preston, firing in her service uniform, scored 31 out of 50 at 200 yards and 22 out of 50 at 500 yards, for an aggregate of 53 out of a possible 100. To put this in context, there were numerous scores in single figures, a two-way tie for the bronze medal with 87/100 and a score of 75 qualified for the second stage with scores of 74 and 73 shooting off for the remaining places. The main reason for the low scores was generally thought to be the ammunition, which was war stock and not selected especially for competition rifle shooting, as would normally be the case.



Figure 16. Miss F G Preston shooting in the *King's Prize*

Miss Preston retired from nursing when Tooting Military Hospital closed in 1923.¹⁸ She died in Cornwall in January 1953, aged 89.

¹⁷ It had previously been (and subsequently was again) seven rounds fired at each of three distances

¹⁸ *UK & Ireland, Nursing Registers, 1898-1968*

BLANCHE MARGARET MARY BADCOCK (1892-1957)

Blanche Margaret Mary Badcock was born on 20th April 1892, in Bhagulpore, Bengal, India. Her father was in the Indian Civil service; he retired from the East India Company in March 1895 and came back to the UK.

During the First World War, Blanche served as a driver with the Army Service Corps (ASC).

In 1923, Blanche moved to Frimley Green, Surrey and started a chicken farming business. It must have been at about this time that she first met Miss Marjorie Foster, who was living nearby. Miss Foster became partners with Miss Badcock in the poultry farm.

It was Miss Foster who persuaded Miss Badcock to take up rifle shooting.¹⁹ In October 1925 she joined the South London Rifle Club and, in 1926, entered the NRA meeting for the first time. Because of her wartime service she was eligible to enter for the *King's Prize* and thus became only the second woman to shoot in the competition.

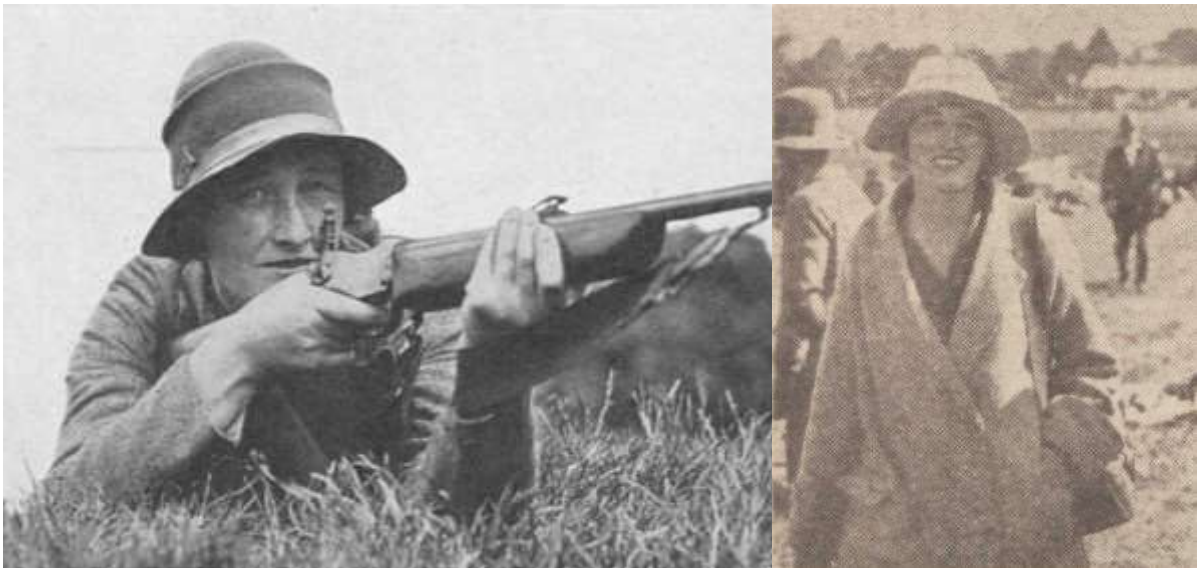


Figure 17. Miss Badcock at Bisley in 1927 & 1928

On the first Saturday, Miss Badcock and Miss Foster were both shooting in the *Stock Exchange Aggregate*, consisting of the *Graphic*, *Daily Graphic* and *Wimbledon Cup* competitions. In the *Graphic*, Miss Foster scored 48 out of 50, in the *Daily Graphic*, 47/50 and in the *Wimbledon*, 34/35, for an aggregate score of 129. In the second event, Miss Badcock was firing side by side with Miss Foster and beat her, scoring 48, though finishing with a lower aggregate score of 126.

¹⁹ *Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic News* 24 July 1926

Three days later, Miss Badcock was reportedly distracted in her shooting by ‘the irritating attention of people, who attracted by her personality and fame, stood jabbering behind her on the range...’²⁰. Despite this, she made three scores of 31/35.

Shooting in the *King’s Prize*, she made it into the second stage. There she scored 44, 48 and 47 out of 50 at the three ranges, for a total of 139, missing out on a place in the final by just one point.

In 1929, Miss Badcock again reached the second stage of the *King’s Prize*, missing out on the final this time by two points.

Whilst somewhat eclipsed over the next decade by the fame of her friend and partner Marjorie Foster, Miss Badcock continued shooting, making the final of the *King’s Prize* in 1932. In 1936, she appeared in the *Mackinnon*, shooting for India and, in 1937, she was 9th in the *Grand Aggregate*.

In 1941, Miss Badcock was awarded an MBE²¹.

Blanche Margaret Mary Badcock died on 20th January 1957.

²⁰ *Birmingham Daily Gazette* 14 July 1926

²¹ *Supplement to London Gazette* 1 January 1941

MARJORIE ELAINE FOSTER (1893-1974)

Marjorie Elaine Foster was born on 20th June 1893 in the Hampstead area of London. Her father had presumably inherited money as he is described as 'living on his own means' from the age of 23 (1891 census). By 1901, her family had moved to Frimley, Surrey.

Miss Foster learned to shoot, from the age of eight, on the miniature range of the Camberley & Yorktown Rifle Club.

In 1923, Miss Blanche Badcock moved to Frimley Green, about 3 miles from where Marjorie was living, and started a chicken farming business. It must have been at about this time that the two first met. Miss Foster became partners with Miss Badcock in the poultry farm.

In 1925, it was Miss Foster who persuaded Miss Badcock to take up rifle shooting,²² joining her at the South London Rifle Club.

Over the next four years, Miss Foster was overshadowed by her protégé – Miss Badcock proved an outstanding novice and grabbed the majority of the headlines, twice reaching the second stage of the *King's Prize*.

The continual improvement in scores had led the NRA, in 1924, to reduce the size of the scoring rings on the targets. In 1928, they were further reduced – the bulls-eye thereafter being five inches diameter at 200 yards, nine inches at 300 yards and 18 inches at 500 and 600 yards.

In April 1929, Miss Foster became the first person (man or woman) to score the maximum of 105 points (on the new targets) with seven shots fired at each of three distances, under *King's Prize* conditions.

Miss Foster had by now joined the British Legion Women's Section which made her eligible to compete in the *King's Prize* and *St George's*



Figure 18. Miss Foster at Bisley, 1929

²² *Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic News* 24 July 1926

competitions. Unfortunately, she could not repeat her feat from April and failed to progress from the first stage.

In about 1929, Marjorie moved to live with Blanche Badcock at the poultry farm they ran together.²³ It is probable that they were in a same-sex relationship.

The following year Marjorie Foster realised her potential. In the *St George's*, she made history by heading the list after making a maximum 100 in the first stage. Two days later she had to progress from the first stage of the *King's Prize* by coming through a tie shoot with 101 men to take one of the last 30 places in the second stage.

In the second stage, Miss Foster made 48 out of 50 at each of the three distances to aggregate 144, finish fourth, and book her place in the final. In the final, Miss Foster scored 136 with a bulls-eye to finish, to make 280 and win by one point.



Figure 19. Miss Marjorie Foster, chaired from the firing point after winning the King's Prize

The traditional telegram from the Sovereign read: "I most heartily congratulate Miss M E Foster on winning my prize. That she should have done so is a wonderful achievement in the history of shooting, and as such will be universally acclaimed." Unfortunately, it was not; there was still an

²³ *Surrey Electoral Registers, 1832-1962, CC802/48/4*

element who felt that women had no place in the competition. One letter said: “*Your winning of the premier event absolutely sickened me, as it must have done thousands of other service and ex-service men, Not, mind you, in any personal enmity towards you, but simply the utter incongruity of the position.*” There was sufficient grumbling for the NRA to state, early in 1931, that they would **not** ban women from entering.

Generally however, Marjorie was feted from all quarters. The Frimley fire engine was despatched to give her a lift home; the NRA named a road – Marjorie Foster Way – after her and she even had a rose named for her. A public subscription was made to buy her a car and her photograph was taken for the National Portrait Gallery.



Figure 20. Coaching 14-years old Joan Williams, 1931

Marjorie Foster continued to win competitions into her late fifties, coming runner-up in the *King's Prize* in 1939. She represented her country on numerous occasions, at home and abroad, being vice-captain of the British Team in 1953. She also took an active interest in coaching young shooters.

After retiring, Miss Foster continued a strong association with the sport and served as vice-president of the NRA. She was also secretary of the Commonwealth Rifle Club.

Marjorie Elaine Foster died, aged 80, on 30th March 1974.

G.B. LADIES RIFLE TEAM

Despite a post-war surge in women's shooting (and its already impressive history), there was no official Great British Ladies Team until 1988 – pictured below.



Figure 21. The GB Ladies Rifle Team 1988

Back row: Frieda Day (Coach), Jo Smith, Irene Rowley, Belinda Moore
Front row: Tracy Fitzsimons, Mary Anderson (Adjutant), Ena Goodacre (Capt.), Jane Messer

Two members of this team later went on to win the *Grand Aggregate*: Mary Anderson (under her then married name of Pugsley), in 1992, and Jane Messer, in 1998. They remain the only two female winners (as of March 2021).

TIME-LINE

July 1891	Miss Winifred Leale became the first woman to shoot in the NRA meeting.
July 1907	Mrs Clara Chapman became the first lady shot to make a maximum 35/35 (seven consecutive bulls) in competition.
July 1919	Miss Fanny Gertrude Preston and Mrs Ada Irvine were the first women to enter for the <i>King's Prize</i> . Mrs Irvine's entry was rejected as she had not served with an army unit. Miss Preston was the first woman to shoot in the competition.
July 1926	Miss Blanche Badcock was the first woman to reach the second stage of the <i>King's Prize</i> competition.
April 1929	Miss Marjorie Foster was the first person (man or woman) to achieve scores of 35 out of 35 at all three distances (200, 500 & 600 yards) in one competition, with the new (smaller) NRA targets.
July 1930	Miss Marjorie Foster became the first woman to win the <i>King's Prize</i> (after also becoming the first to reach the final stage).
1931	The NRA confirmed that they would not heed any protests and will not ban women from entering the <i>King's Prize</i> .
1945	<i>King's Prize</i> opened up to civilians (at the request of King George VI).
1988	First official G.B. Ladies Rifle Team
July 1992	Mrs Mary J Pugsley became the first woman to win the <i>Grand Aggregate</i> .
July 1998	Miss Jane Messer became only the second woman to win the <i>Grand Aggregate</i> .
July 2000	Miss Joanna Hossack became only the second woman to win the <i>Queen's Prize</i> .

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