



competitors either side of me as I was using high velocity ammunition. I also beat them both.

The following year, Howard became the Muzzle Loaders' Association of Great Britain representative on the NPA Committee for Pistol '79. I was asked to assist and jumped at the chance. For the first four years there were only two black powder events — Percussion Pistol and Flintlock Pistol. Both were very open regarding type of pistol as the whole object was to encourage people to 'get out there shooting'. The events are now four in number and weapons need to be somewhat more specialised.

### The 'Colt' Event

A revolver, either reproduction or original, is needed with no apparent alterations from the norm. The one exception to this is that front sights may be 1/4" high but still in the same form. Less obvious tuning is the order of the day. Trigger pulls are best lightened by soft soldering a brass shim just under the full cock notch of the hammer. On repro Remingtons the trigger is usually too curved, so it should be heated until red-hot and straightened somewhat. With care you can make it foul the trigger guard just after the hammer falls, thereby creating a trigger stop. The Remington is the revolver to win most competitions, simply because it has better sights but it is also the easiest to manage. The cylinder arbour should be eased so that it may instantly be withdrawn, with the fingers dropping the rammer level. I can remove and replace the cylinder of my Remington in five seconds.

It is also essential to brush the barrel of your revolver between every six shots, or the fouling will harden and your shots will start to go higher and higher. The Colt does have some advantages, in that the rear sight may be raised or lowered by altering the length of the sear. Also

Exciting smells — Chanel No5 and SNIA Black Silver mixed atmosphere on Gallery range.

**JEFF TANNER** first shot black powder at Bisley when it was . . .

## New for Pistol '79

**I**N 1978, Howard Markham suggested that he and I should enter the new event at Bisley, Pistol '78.

There were no black powder events that year so I opted to enter the UIT Centrefire event. The only centrefire pistol I owned then was a .45 Colt Auto, and it was not until about half way through the duelling that the Range Officer, a Scottish doctor whose name escapes me, told me that my pistol was illegal for the event. I said I didn't mind being disqualified provided that I could finish the event. This I was allowed to do although I don't think it pleased the



WITH TARGET GUN

the 1869 Army has the best grip to be found on any cap and ball revolver. If you are thinking of getting a stainless steel cap and ball revolver, make sure you check the barrel. I have seen several where the rifling is not true to the bore. Also, I have seen a repro Rogers and Spencer with a mild steel hammer and trigger which relied on hard chromeplating to withstand wear. It didn't work.

Later Remingtons have a misprofiled hammer which sometimes obscures the rear sight at fullcock. If you have one, grind the top off the hammer until the sights can be seen. Quite often too, the grips are too narrow when compared with originals. This can be overcome by glueing veneers on inner faces to bulk it up, and oversize screws will lessen side slop and give better lock-up. If you carry spare parts make sure they fit.

Finally, remember you are at no disadvantage against a muzzle loading target pistol. The revolver nearly always shoots a higher score. There are many other tweaks but it would take a complete article with pictures to cover them.

### Flintlock pistol

For this event anything will do, provided it is reliable. It has been won more than once with a home made pistol and one lad shoots in the 80's all day with a £30 American gun bought as a kit. The rifled flintlocks always win but you can usually make silver standard with a smoothbore. I always shoot my smoothbore without patching and rarely go below 75 but a rifled barrel must be patched. This event is open and anything goes apart from optical sights.

### Percussion Pistol

This is the one for Old Army Rugers, target sighted Remingtons, Tingles, and any special homebrews. If you wish you can also shoot your bog standard revolver.

### Percussion Target Pistol

Another for the purist. Any target pistol repro or original with configuration in the spirit of an original pistol. There will be strict scrutiny on this one. Many of these pistols have set triggers, which is OK if you tend to freeze but not so good if you are a bit twitchy, or dislike the trigger suddenly disappearing from under your finger. Patching is all important and good quality strong cotton type material is essential. I saw a chap shooting a single shot pistol once with patches made from bandages. The shots wouldn't hold the target and I

know him to be a good shot. Had he joined the Muzzle Loaders' Association he would have known better.

Finally, do have a try. Remember you

don't have to win to get your standard medals and two Golds or 5 Bronze will get you a Grand Master Medal with bars. ■

## Blue clouds over Bisley?

**S**HOOTING, it must be admitted, is not a spectator sport, and the reasons are obvious. Without a scope you just cannot see any results, particularly in small bore events. Black powder shooting, on the other hand, is a different story altogether. A flash of gunpowder and a puff of smoke and spectators appear from thin air.

Well, you can't blame them can you! Black powder shooting has an appeal all of its own, partially perhaps because the thrill of seeing weapons being shot as they were a century or so ago, when such modern refinements as adjustable sights and anatomical grips were unheard of. It must surely have been a case of purely pointing the pistol in the right direction and trusting to aim. Nowadays, of course, we apply all the training and theory that goes into modern UIT disciplines but with a few modifications. The results, needless to say, must be a great improvement on those of our forebears.

*Continued overleaf*



**Chris Mortimer** — a comparative newcomer, but an Organiser nevertheless.

In 1984, the message to Longrange competitors was: if you want to see your target, stay upwind of the black power! This year, segregation has set in and the black powder fraternity will smoke dry only themselves.

