

THE JUNIOR SHOOTER

AN ANNUAL FOR JUNIOR SHOOTERS & HUNTERS

Issue 15



WIN
1 of 2 SSAA wallet packs

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Editorial

Welcome to the 15th issue of *The Junior Shooter*.

Media Officer Kate Fantinel leads this issue with a visit to the SSAA South Australia State Range where she speaks with some of the organisers, volunteers and participants of the shooting activities at this year's Australian Venture event. Mostyn Hudson and Amy Paech, two of the Venturers who took part, also share their experiences with sports shooting prior to and during the event.

Young hunter Domenica Finch then takes us on a school holidays pig hunting trip, where her dad and a friend rid the southern Queensland property of a wild pig and a number of other feral animals. Domenica also revels in seeing native animals, meeting interesting people and learning some new skills.

Assistant Editor Dave Rose profiles Western Australian brothers and keen pistol shooters Hunter and Angus Knowles. Hunter in particular is reaching new heights in the sport by gaining his range officer accreditation - just another of the many interesting aspects of the shooting sports.

Back on the hunting front, Perry Magowan and his grandson Jack head out on a South East Queensland red deer hunt, where the 'awesome duo' also find some cast antlers and Jack gets in some target shooting practice with a rimfire rifle.

Enjoy *The Junior Shooter 15*, and remember to enter our competition for your chance to win one of two SSAA wallet packs.

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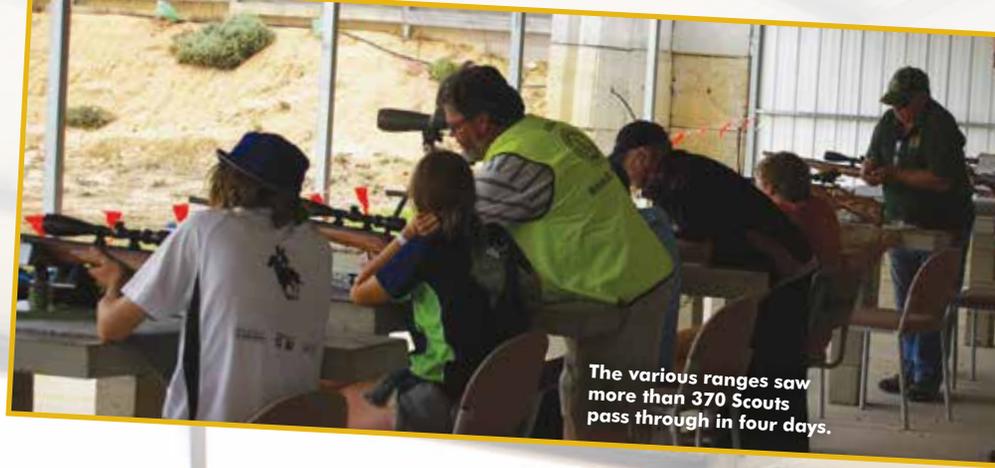
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The various ranges saw more than 370 Scouts pass through in four days.

Shooting is **Heaps** Good!



SSAA hosts international Scouts event

by Media Officer Kate Fantinel

A dreary wet weekend in the Adelaide Hills did not dampen the enthusiasm of 370 Scouts who converged on the SSAA South Australia State Range at Monarto to try their hand at target shooting.

The Venture Shooting Activity, held from January 9 to 12, formed part of the major youth event for Scouts aged 14 to 17. The 16th Australian Venture (AV2015)

adopted the theme and South Australian slogan 'Heaps Good' and saw more than 1200 Scouts, known as 'Venturers', travel from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and across Australia to participate in a range of activities. The sport of shooting was on offer thanks to the SSAA South Australia Branch. >

Although the weather forecast for the four-day activity was for the biggest rainfall event in 30 years, the first busload of Scouts arrived with excitement to learn and have a go. For some of the Scouts who elected to try target shooting, this was their first exposure to firearms. Others had limited experience, particularly those from city areas. Kieran, 16, from New South Wales, signed up for the shooting activity as it was his first opportunity to participate in the sport. "I'd never tried it before," he said. The youngsters were in good hands, as there were a number of SSAA volunteers to supervise and coach them.

The generational gap between Scout and mentor quickly faded, as the activity of learning to shoot Benchrest provided an opportunity for the more experienced shooters to pass on their knowledge of safe firearms handling to the young adults.

At the Rifle Metallic Silhouette steel resetting targets range, CZ bolt-action rifles supplied by the SSAA Para Branch were positioned on bench rests, with the challenge of hitting the fifth shot to reset the targets keenly embraced by participants. Some new shooters hit all the targets, including the steel resetting target, on their first five shots!



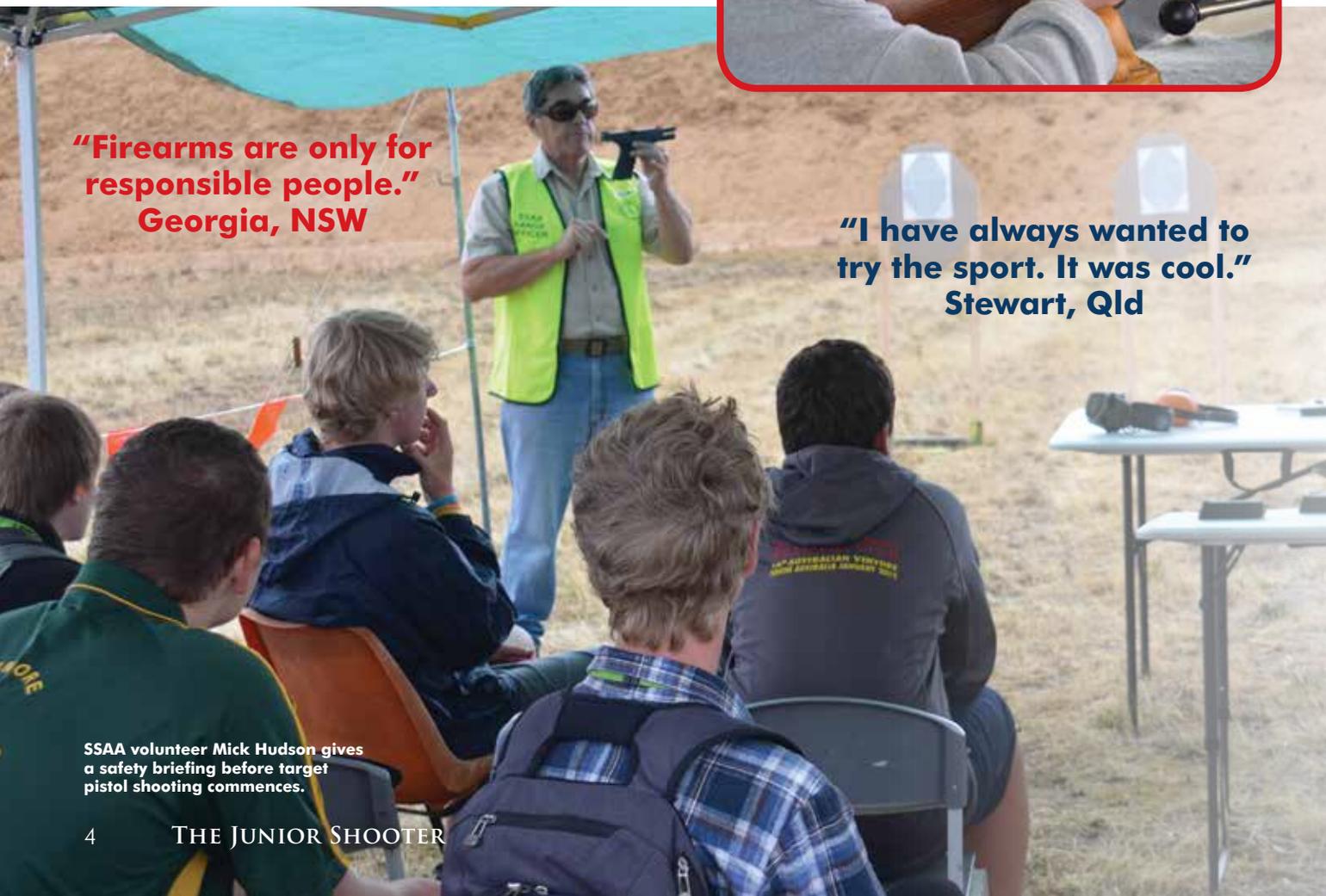
Mick Hudson coaches a Scout through his shot as Murray Lanthios watches on.



Kieran prepares to take his shot during his first shooting experience.

**"Firearms are only for responsible people."
Georgia, NSW**

**"I have always wanted to try the sport. It was cool."
Stewart, Qld**



SSAA volunteer Mick Hudson gives a safety briefing before target pistol shooting commences.

My Venture shoot

by Mostyn Hudson

We were up for an early start as the bus left Woodhouse in the Adelaide Hills at 7.45am to travel an hour to the SSAA Monarto Range near Murray Bridge. The leader in charge of the bus outlined the day's activities, general rules and what we could expect of the day.

When we arrived at the Monarto Shooting Complex, we were taken into the clubhouse where the instructors introduced themselves. We were told about how the activity was to be conducted and the different firearms that we would be using. All of us were briefed by a SSAA safety instructor on how the .22-calibre bolt-action rifle worked and the safety procedures when handling the rifle. We were split into three groups for the different shooting activities and we then moved to the particular ranges for each of the different shooting activities.

My group went to the pistol shooting first, where there were targets set up and individual instructors. My dad Mick Hudson, who was one of the organisers of the event, was one the instructors. Dad gave the group a briefing on how the Glock 17A pistol worked, how to stand, how to hold and grip the pistol firmly and how to use the sights.

After the briefing, we went up to the shooting line and were individually coached by the instructor, who talked us through which targets to shoot at. First, we were given a magazine, which held one round that we would shoot as an aiming shot into the mini IPSC target. This was to get a feel for the firearm, as most of the Venturers had not shot a handgun before. I have shot and won some medals in IPSC competitions before, so it wasn't a new experience for me, but it was still great fun. We then were given a 10-round magazine, which I fired into the second target.



Mostyn in action during an IPSC competition.

The second shooting activity was a short walk to a rifle range where we fired a .22 bolt-action rifle. As with the pistol shooting, there was a target for sighting the rifle so everyone could have a shot to get a feel for the rifle, and then there were individual silhouette paper targets at 25m, which we could keep to show the number of hits we obtained on the silhouettes.

The last activity was at another rifle range, where there were 10 swinging steel targets set up at 25m, which would flick up when hit. Once all were in the vertical position, the top silhouette was then hit and all fell back down. This was great fun, as you could see the targets move when they were hit.

Overall, the shooting activity was well organised and great fun. Some of the Venturers enjoyed it so much that they returned for another go. I think I can safely say that all the Venturers had a 'Heaps Good' time!



Mostyn takes aim from the bench rest.

"Shooting looks easier than it really is. I want to try again!" Alyson, ACT



Scouts show off their skills in target pistol with range officers Mick Hudson and Murray Lanthios.

Bernard, 17, from Queensland, said the skills he had previously learned from archery helped with his aim and sighting-in skills. "It's similar to archery in that sense," he said.

Robin, 15, from Victoria, who had never shot before, also pointed to her experience with archery as beneficial for shooting. She even described the Rifle Metallic Silhouette activity as "much easier than archery!" "It was fun too," she added.

Target handgun shooting was a new experience for the majority of the Scouts, and it was also the most anticipated. Two sets of IPSC modified mini paper targets were set up and Glock 9mm self-loading pistols supplied by the SSAA Security Shooters Club were available for the participants to try under the responsible eye of two mentors per shooter.

Venturers Bernard and Robin showed promise with the pistols, while others in the group found the pistol a different concept compared to shooting a rifle. Kieran said it was different, but he enjoyed the new experience.

SSAA SA volunteer and pistol range officer Murray Lanthios was impressed with some of the skill on display. "Some could be really good with more training," he said. Murray, along with fellow range officer Michael Hudson, coordinated the pistol activity and more than 4000 rounds were fired through the pistols over the course of the event.

Savage .22-calibre rifles supplied by SSAA Para were the tools of trade for the Rifle Metallic Silhouette paper target range. The Scouts were given 20 shots to fire at a series of 20 small targets and this challenge was quickly embraced by the Scouts. "I did all right," said Bernard, showing a paper that had very few misses. Other shooters demonstrated responsible shooting skills, with head and heart shots in the small animal-shaped targets commonplace.

Encouragement, camaraderie and a keenness to learn was on display throughout the four days of shooting, and while the volunteers were as tired as the Scouts by the shoot's end, the enthusiasm and willingness to teach others about the shooting sports was clear.

Edinburgh Park Scout Group Leader Brett Kallin, who volunteered for the four-day event, said reports from the Scouts were overwhelmingly positive. "We found that the vast majority of the 370 youth who participated over the four days were engaged in the learning, interested in the sport, and keen to try again," he said.

"A few were so keen, I reckon I saw a few faces more than once over the four days. We even found that there is a lot of natural talent out there, with many Venturers obtaining perfect scores at Silhouette and excellent scores at Pistol and Benchrest.

"A massive cheer for all the Venturers who came along to have a try at a new sport, and were all so well behaved and acted responsibly."

For Venturer Michael, from Victoria, shooting presented him with an opportunity to follow in a family tradition.



A SSAA volunteer offers some advice to Bernard as he lines up his shot.

**"It is a cool activity. I enjoyed the silhouette targets most."
Chris, NSW**

"I found out that the local [rifle] club has a trophy named after my grandfather," he said. "Now I have found out that I can do the training, learn about being safe, and get my licence. I want to win my granddad's trophy."

Some of the Scouts were asked to rank the activity out of five, with five being 'awesome'. The overwhelming majority gave it full marks. For Gabby from New South Wales, the target shooting activity was the standout of the whole AV2015 event. "I liked it so much, I came back twice!" she said.

SSAA South Australia President David Handyside said the event was a huge success for both the shooting sports and Scouts Australia. "It was fantastic to see so many juniors come out and try the sport of shooting, with some returning two and even three times to have another go," he said.

A SSAA volunteer mentors one of the Scouts in the Rifle Metallic Silhouette paper target shoot.

"Some of the Scouts were remarkably good shots, and I was particularly impressed with the high standards set by the girls who out-shot the boys on many occasions.

"The event could not have been successful without the dedication and assistance of SSAA volunteers who mentored the Scouts and gave up their time to run the event over four days, and I thank them for all their hard work."

**"It was good to try shooting here. I would like to do it again soon."
Sam, Qld**



A Scout's experience

by Amy Paech

I am a Scout from the Angle Vale Scout Group Black Pearl Venturer Unit in South Australia and I started target shooting at the SSAA Para Range almost two years ago, when I was 16. Since then, I have learned and experienced what it is like to hold and use a firearm. This includes all of the safety precautions for yourself and others around you, how the firearms work, how to correctly and safely use firearms, and how to transport them.

When I first decided that I wanted to give target shooting a go, I had to complete the South Australian Safety Training Course before I could hold a firearm. This involved listening to an experienced and qualified shooter talk about all of the different safety aspects of a firearm. Once we had finished, we completed a theory test, where we provided evidence of our learning, and once we had passed the test, we were allowed to start shooting.

Each month at the SSAA Para Range, we have several opportunities to shoot different types of firearms. The main ones that we use are air rifles and .22-calibre rifles. Twice a month on a Monday night, we shoot air rifles in the 10m Air Precision match, and on Sundays we shoot with the .22 rifles. We alternate between shooting Rifle Metallic Silhouette competitions where our targets are small silhouettes of chickens, pigs, turkeys and rams; 3-Positional Rimfire where we shoot in the prone, standing and sitting positions; and Field Rifle Rimfire where we shoot rapid-fire, standing supported and sitting supported.

I believe that my experience with firearms has made me more mature, sensible and responsible. I have been trained and I know how to ensure I safely handle and use firearms. Target shooting is a disciplined but enjoyable sport that I am glad to be a part of, and I aim to still be very involved in it when I become a Rover, the final stage of Scouts, for adults aged 18 to 25.



Calling future shooting champions!

If you've visited a shooting range, you probably already know there are lots of different shooting competitions and events out there that you can participate in. But did you know that the SSAA offers several dedicated junior national shooting championships?

National Junior Challenge

One of the biggest junior events on the SSAA calendar is the SSAA National Junior Challenge. First held in Canberra in 2008, the National Junior Challenge is a shoulder-to-shoulder rimfire rifle shooting championship for SSAA junior shooters aged 12 to 18 years.

This year's National Junior Challenge will be held at the SSAA Glenorchy Range in Tasmania from July 3 to 5 and will offer three core rimfire rifle events: Field Rifle, 3-Positional and Rifle Metallic Silhouette. Presentations will be held each night, with national medals awarded to the first, second and third place winners for the three core events and the overall winners in the 12 to Under 15, and 15 to Under 18 age groups. A roast dinner and trivia night will be held on the Saturday night, and light meals, snacks and hot and cold drinks will be available at the range each day.

In addition to offering three great days of competition, the National Junior Challenge allows juniors to try new shooting disciplines, learn skills from coaches and other shooters, aim to achieve new personal bests, compete against young shooters of all levels from around the country, and make new friends.

The 2015 SSAA National Junior Challenge costs \$20 per event, or \$60 for all three core events and the Saturday night dinner. Dinner costs \$10 for non-competitors.

Postal championships

For those juniors who may not be able to travel interstate, or are simply looking to get in more competition practice, the SSAA offers two national junior postal championships. Postal championships are great because they allow you to participate at your local SSAA club and you don't have to mail off your targets - you simply send in your name, branch, age and score information, including how many 10s, nines, eights, etc, you shot on your targets.

The SSAA National Junior Rifle Metallic Silhouette Postal Championships is a 40-shot rimfire rifle match. It opened on February 1 and will run until June 30, so there's still plenty of time to participate and get your scores in by July 30. Awards are given to the first, second and third place winners in the Under 15 and 15 to Under 18 age groups.

In the second half of 2015, juniors can participate in the SSAA National Junior Field Rifle Postal Championships. This 40-shot rimfire rifle match will run from July 1 to November 30, with all competitor and score information to be sent in by December 10. Awards are also given to the top three winners in both age groups.

Additional information

If these junior-specific events aren't enough for your competitive spirit, be sure to check out the regular state and national championships of your chosen discipline near you. There is usually discounted pricing on junior nominations and often medals for each junior grade. For nomination forms and more information, visit www.ssaa.org.au/juniorsports



Getting in some rifle practice.

In pursuit of pigs at Wandibindle

by Domenica Finch

Wandibindle is a 1200-acre property about an hour west of Goondiwindi in Queensland. Owned and run by Rowan and Jenny Murphy, the property originally farmed wool and mutton, but now runs 1300 head of cattle. It is also known for its feral cats, foxes, goats, dogs and roos, but most importantly, pigs.

Conveniently enough for me, my father is good mates with Rowan, so we are privileged with excellent accommodation on the property, in a very comfortable little cottage. So, last year in the June/July school holidays, Dad, our good mate Sarah and I set out in pursuit of pigs.

On day one, we each set out with different goals in mind: Sarah was keen to finally shoot a pig herself, and Dad and I just wanted to have some fun out in the scrub. After the five-hour drive from our own property near Toowoomba, we checked in with Rowan and Jenny, and much to my delight, we discovered they had recently got a new puppy, which they had named Cisco.

After as much puppy playing as I could fit in, we unpacked in the cottage accommodation and Dad and I set off on a 4km jog. We had intended to go further, but after 4km of seeing roos and cows, we then 'tawt we taw a puddy tat' and stalked it. The wind was blowing towards us, so we got within 10m before being noticed. The cat was a beautiful golden brown color with black stripes on its tail, and after about five minutes of stalking, the (rather plump, I must add) cat finally cottoned on to our presence. We stood and waited as it tried to slowly and unsuccessfully disappear into the grass. When it decided that plan A was not working, it sprung out of the grass and bolted for the nearest trees. It wasn't really a hunt, but it was fun nonetheless.

After a dinner of pork chops - store-bought, sadly - we went out on a spotlight. I can't really say anything much about this because I was asleep. I was not woken by gunshots though, so I presume Sarah and Dad didn't find much. ➤



Emus were spotted on day three.



Two foxes in two shots at 200m.

A mixed bag of ferals

Day two started with an early rise and I was very sad to leave my room in which I had been nicely snuggled in a sleeping bag, covered in a woollen doona, wearing my Kathmandu woollen thermals. Anyway, we set off at the crack of dawn in search of anything really, but we really wanted to find a pig.

After some time and just as our spirits were running low, a pig jumped out of the grass in the paddock beside us. It was running flat out parallel to us, so we raced down the road to the end of the next paddock, where we scouted for the animal. We couldn't find any trace of him, when all of a sudden, Dad yelled, "There he is!" and I saw the huge black boar run in front of us and into the next paddock of impenetrable (by car) scrub.

We drove to the end of that paddock, got out of the car and went for a walk. On our adventure, we saw very fresh pig tracks and some very large, steaming pig poos. We walked the entire length of the 2km paddock, but found nothing so returned to the car.

We arrived home and ate some well-deserved breakfast. After our eggs and orange juice, we went and set some yabby pots, and Rowan gave some very useful tips on dog and horse training. I am attempting both at the moment with my six-month-old bitsa dog Nahla and my Arab cross filly Adele.

After that, we sighted-in our guns and returned home for lunch. Our chicken salad needed some time to settle, so Dad had a nap and Sarah and I had a little chill-out in the sun.

After our lunch had settled and we were rested up nicely, Dad and I set off on another run and managed about 6km. As we had travelled around 11km on foot that day, we decided to go out for a scout in the car. Unfortunately, nothing much happened, so we returned home for some grub.

After this, another spotlight followed, but this time, I was prepared - I hopped into the ute with my doona and was asleep in minutes with my earplugs in so I wouldn't even wake up when a shot was taken. Dad shot two foxes, and Sarah shot a rabbit and a hare. Pigs were apparently also seen, but none were shot.

Final spotlight gets the pig

Day three started late, as we had only got to bed around midnight the night before. During a short drive around some paddocks, we attracted some emus with the age-old trick of waving a hat outside the vehicle and waiting for them to come and investigate. Well, it worked, because they started out almost 100m away and came right in and circled the car three times!

About 2km up the track, a mob of pigs we had seen earlier ran out in front of us. Sarah jumped up and prepared to take a shot, but they were just too quick for her and soon escaped. Sarah was excited all the same. Nothing else eventful followed on that outing, so we returned home for some scrambled eggs and juice. We then headed out the back to practise with the guns again.



Sarah was over the moon to have taken her first pig.



Sarah with a feral stripy cat.

The fuel in the ute was running low, so we ventured out to St George. After a trip in which I was meant to get a pair of walking boots, we all came back heavily laden with things we had not intended to buy. While in town, we also had lunch in a café and then went next door to see some emu egg carvings.

We then packed back into the car and headed down to the Nindigully Pub, where, much to my delight, we met yet another puppy! We had actually intended to go fishing in the Moonie River, but that wasn't very successful. However, we did make some very nice and useful paracord bracelets and then we headed home and ate dinner.

We then set out on our final spotlight, which ended up being the most successful - Sarah was over the moon to finally get a pig, and she also shot the cat we stalked on day one. Of course, I can't go into too much detail because I was snuggled in the back seat, wearing my earplugs and oblivious to everything because I was fast asleep.

Clever survival tactics

On day four, our final day at Wandibindle, we started with one last scout around the paddocks and we saw a huge boar running across a cleared paddock. Now, I'm sure you know that once they've got going, pigs rarely change direction. With that in mind, we raced alongside this giant and as he ran into the scrub strip between the two paddocks, we expected him to keep going out into the next paddock.

Well, our hairy black companion was strange not only because he stopped, but also because he made a 90-degree turn and kept running! We saw him though, so once again, we predicted his next move and raced to the end of the scrub strip and waited to ambush him. We waited for what seemed a long time. Too long really. Had the pig stopped? He must have. We jumped back in the ute and drove back along the strip of scrub, looking for him, but couldn't find him. He was definitely a unique animal with some very clever survival tactics.

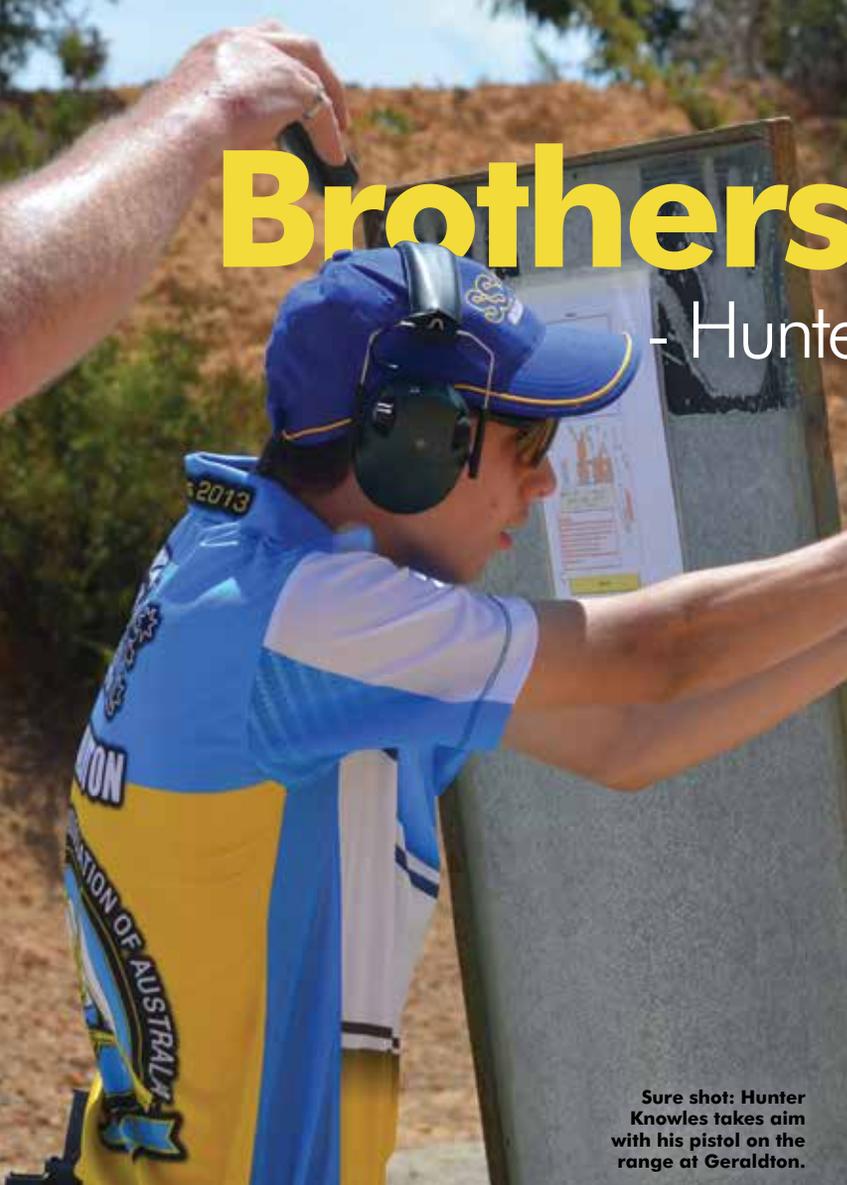
Getting back to the pig that Sarah had shot the night before, it is my belief that both she and Dad were so excited at shooting the pig that they forgot to cut the back legs off for meat prior to leaving it where it lay. So, that morning, everyone was very keen to find this pig to retrieve the meat and we did, but by now, the meat was spoiled. Sarah was very pleased to see her downed pig again, but was also, as was everyone else, very sad that we wouldn't be eating wild pork that night.

We returned to the cottage and packed up. After a double and triple check that we hadn't left anything behind, we drove over to Rowan and Jenny's house to say goodbye. After many thanks for their hospitality and advice, and a very sad goodbye to Cisco the puppy, we finally got in the car and drove home. We had seen more 30 pigs in total and Sarah had finally shot her first, so it was definitely a great trip!

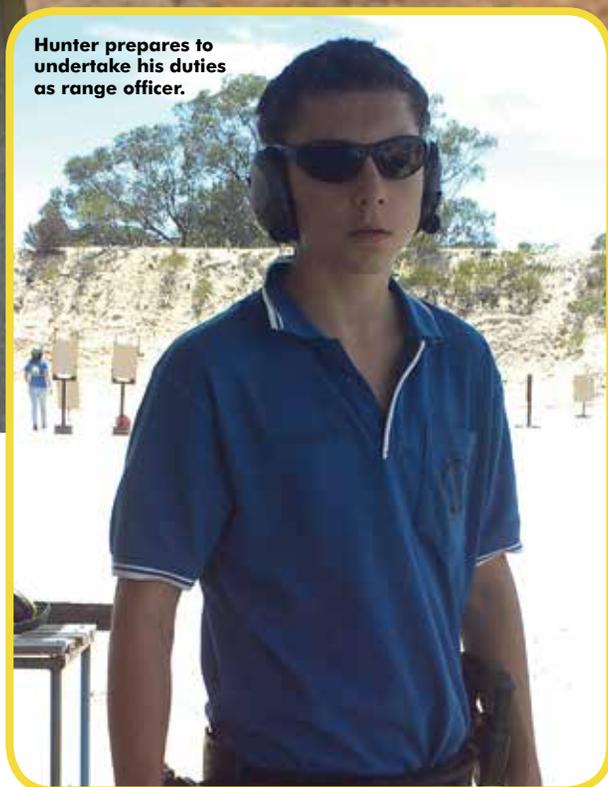
Brothers in arms

- Hunter and Angus Knowles

by Assistant Editor
Dave Rose



Sure shot: Hunter Knowles takes aim with his pistol on the range at Geraldton.



Hunter prepares to undertake his duties as range officer.

Shooting runs in the family for Western Australia brothers Hunter and Angus Knowles. Hunter, 16, and Angus, 11, simply followed the lead of dad Terry and mum Kristy, who were always keen shooters when the family lived on farms in Deniliquin and Moulamein in the Riverina region of New South Wales. So keeping up their interest was a ‘must’ when they moved to Geraldton, WA, eight years ago.

“We weren’t on a farm any more, so the natural thing seemed to be for us to join a gun club so that we could keep things going,” said Kristy.

Hunter and Angus now go along with their parents to practise their pistol shooting skills at the SSAA Geraldton Pistol Club where they are regular visitors. However, Hunter has achieved further prowess by attaining his qualification as a range officer, which enables him to oversee shooters at the range.

“I think he got his qualification when he was just about 14, so it must make him one of the youngest range officers around,” said Kristy.

This fact was verified by SSAA WA Public Relations Officer Astrid Coleman.

“It is quite extraordinary,” said Astrid. “Hunter is a real quiet achiever. Even as a shooter, I think he has the ability to go far, at least as far as the State Titles.

“We get quite a lot of good juniors coming though and he is one of those who we took under our wing. He showed great ability right from an early age.”

Astrid stressed the pressure that Hunter was under in doing such a demanding job at such a tender age.

Angus Knowles in position to take a shot from the bench rest at the Geraldton range.



“Being so young, he has to deal with older shooters and he shows a lot of grit to do that. He just gets on with things quietly in his own way. He’s always floating around.”

To gain his range officer qualifications, Hunter had to complete a mixture of theory and practical shooting. “He knows his way around and all the rules and regulations,” said Astrid.

Astrid also has high hopes for Angus, who she feels possesses real talent. “He’s quite a character and into all things Clint Eastwood in a good way, so I think he may move on to rifles,” she said.

Meanwhile, the Knowles family is content to keep in the swing of things at the Geraldton club. “It’s mostly pistol Practical Shooting for us, but occasionally we may do some Benchrest,” said Kristy.

“Hunter and Angus have been shooting since they were kids, I suppose, when they grew up on the farm and used to shoot at rabbits.

“But we don’t do any hunting now; it’s all just out in the range...We used to go down to the range about every fortnight, but now it’s about once a month because time just doesn’t permit it.”

One of the welcome ‘distractions’ is that another son, Declan, 14, is a keen speedway rider, so the family have been busy following him around as he competes at various meets. Indeed, Declan rode in the Under 16 250cc Championship at the Pinjar Park Speedway last November.

Whether their chosen hobbies are competitive or recreational, it’s clear that the Knowles family likes to keep busy and spend a lot of their time together. “Hunter and my husband Terry took part in a couple of state shoots a couple of years ago, but we’re quite happy just to visit the range,” said Kristy.

Juniors-only competition

Only junior SSAA members are eligible to enter. One entry per member. To enter, simply write your name, address and membership number on the back of an envelope and send it to:

April Junior competition
SSAA National
PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at www.australianshooter.com.au

Competition closes April 30, 2015

**WIN 1 of 2 SSAA
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An awesome hunting duo

by Perry Magowan

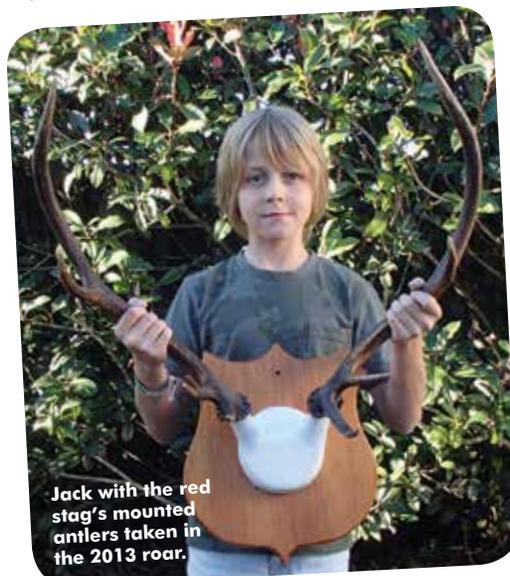
It all started after my grandson and little hunting mate Jack and I had our first hunt together early last year in the red deer roar in South East Queensland. I had shot a little 4x4 stag for him in the 2013 roar and on the way home, I said to him that we might go out looking for cast antlers towards the end of winter. I make my own hunting knives and put cast deer antler handles on them. At the end of July, we went for a look around to see if we could find a group of stags anywhere to give us an indication of where they may drop their antlers. Bingo! We were lucky enough to find a small group of stags. Alas, we couldn't find any fallen antlers.

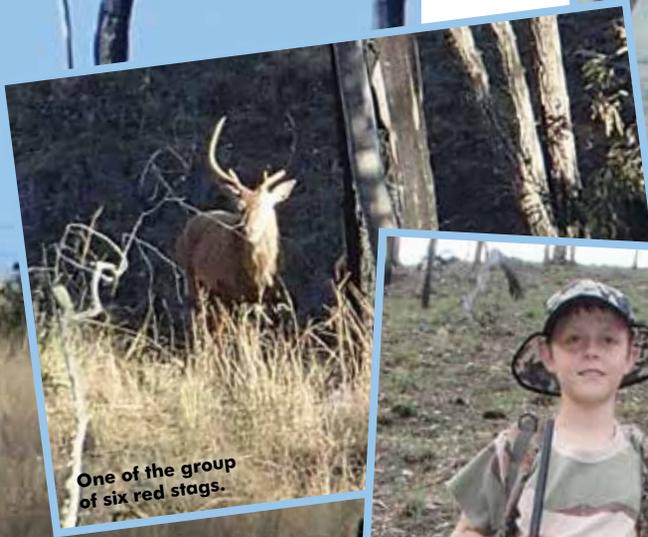
A week later, I went back on my own just to see how many deer were about and whether they were still carrying their antlers. This time, there were plenty of does around as well. There were six stags in all in the one group we had seen the week before. They ranged in age from two to about five years old. The biggest antlers were a 4x4 down to a few of 2x2s. The stags had plenty of tucker and water where they were and that being the case, I thought they might stay there for the winter and cast their antlers in the same area.

From the end of August, I tried to arrange a trip for Jack and myself, to no avail. Finally, we got our chance in the middle of November. We left Morayfield around 9.30am, filled the car up with fuel at Wamuran and headed off to the bush.

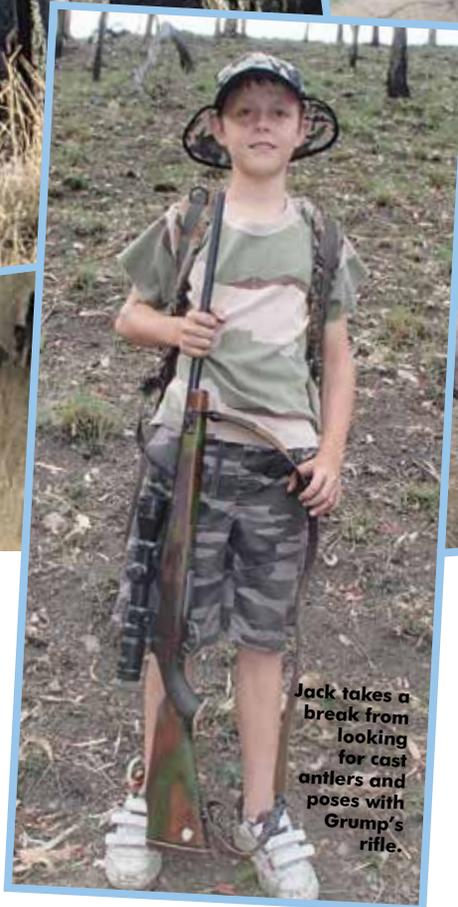
Two hours later, we had arrived at our destination. Boy, oh boy, was it a hot day! "Good thing you brought the esky full of cold water, Grump!" my little mate said. I laid out the blanket under a big shady blue gum and lay down for a long rest. Being so young and excited, Jack wouldn't settle. That being the case, we went out looking for cast antlers in the heat of the day. After walking around for an hour and a half, lots of cool water and putting up two red stags in velvet and only finding one old cast antler, we decided to call it quits.

We walked back to the car, I found another shady tree and then laid out the blanket for a well-earned rest. Half an hour later, Jack was scratching around again. I rolled over with one eye open to see what he was up to. He was setting up a target we had brought with us to shoot at. Earlier that day, I had given him an old two-cent coin to draw circles around then fill them in with a black felt pen on an empty carton. He had put about nine black dots on it. He put the target on the side of a small ridge in front of a big gum tree at about 45 yards away from the car. I thought to myself, "Time to get up, Grump!" I got out the .22LR and loaded it. Jack put a packet of rounds through the little rimfire and shot some really good groups too. After about an hour of shooting,





One of the group of six red stags.



Jack takes a break from looking for cast antlers and poses with Grump's rifle.



This young velvet stag was taken for its meat.

I said that it was time to pack up and start heading home.

While driving out of the property, I took a detour up a little track. Some 500m in, we saw a nice young red stag in velvet just coming up out of the creek after having had a drink. He slowly made his way up a well-grassed little gully, heading north to a big ridge. I said to Jack that we could shoot this stag if we could get close enough. I parked the car in the gully before the one the stag was in.

In our excitement, I grabbed my hunting rifle and a couple of rounds and we headed off up the gully, forgetting the backpack with the knife, camera and the other gear I usually take in. Halfway up the gully, I stopped and said to Jack, "We will go up to the top of the gully then slowly go over the ridge to try to cut him off." Well, by the time we got to the top, the stag was just walking off the saddle and starting to go down the other side. As quickly and as quietly as we could, we made our way to the saddle, where we saw the stag standing 150m away down the hill from us, feeding on new shoots of green grass.

I sat down with my knees bent and legs spread, loaded the rifle and rested my elbows on my knees. This is my favourite position to shoot from. I proceeded to whistle at the stag. Startled, he quickly turned sideways on to me and looked straight at me. The riflescope was already on him, so I placed the cross-hairs on his lungs and squeezed

off the shot. His reaction was immediate and told me that he had been mortally hit; he jumped up, spun around and ran up the big gully to the east and out of sight. "Come on, Jack. We have to go find him!" I said. Jack ran as fast as his legs could carry him as he followed me up the ridge.

At the top of the ridge, we looked down into the gully. We couldn't yet see the stag, but we could hear him; his breathing by now was very rattly, indicating he was well hit.

Slowly, he came up out of the gully on the other side. Before he could start his way up, he turned back down, fell over and didn't move again. He was ours!

Jack and I walked back to the car, grabbed the backpack and made sure we had plenty of water, tucker, my butchering knife and camera and then we went back up the ridge again.

By the time we reached the stag, we only had about 45 minutes of daylight left. Jack took some photos, while I butchered the animal and then we took as much meat as we could carry, before we packed up and walked back to the car.

My grandson and I had a feast of nut-bars on the way home and I thought to myself, 'Jack and Grump - what an awesome hunting duo'. My little hunting mate was quite tired by now and didn't say much on our two-hour journey home, but I know that he can't wait to go out hunting with me again.

