



Bury & District Muzzle Loaders

1. Application for New / Renewal of Membership

This sheet should be completed and returned to the secretary by:

1. Existing members when renewing their annual subscription in 2010, please attach your cheque.
2. By all new applicants prior to being granted membership.

These notes are a guide as to the behaviour expected of club members. In renewing your membership or applying for new membership you are confirming that:

1. You have read this document.
2. You agree to abide by the principles of this document.

If after reading, you feel that you can not conform to our requirements, you must notify the Secretary and your membership will cease. Safety and compliance is of a greater importance to this club than any one membership.

I..... (Print Name) agree to abide by the Bury and District Muzzle Loaders rules of membership and safety protocols and am aware of all safety guidelines laid down in these notes. I hereby apply for membership / renewal* of membership. (* Delete as appropriate)

Signature: Email:

Date:

Note:

We have over 100 members and the costs of sending out mail shots can easily exceed £50 per exercise as well as the time and effort given to assembling and despatching said items. Hence; the club intend to launch a Web Site in the near future and use email to communicate with members wherever possible.

If you have access to email, please send a brief note to ----- . We will acknowledge receipt of your email.

Your email details will neither be disclosed to other club members nor to external bodies. We will contact you by email to notify you of developments in the club and aim to reduce the club's expenditure on postage

Please Note: your application for membership / membership renewal will not be processed unless you complete and return this sheet.

You will be deemed to have withdrawn from BDML



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Requirements and Responsibilities of being a member

Website www.bdmlshooting.org.uk

Email contact@bdmlshooting.org.uk



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2. Welcome

This club started life in 1962 as a Muzzle Loading Club but has since developed and expanded to encompass other forms of the modern shooting sport. Our ranges include:

- Pinner Quarry- a 100 yard outdoor range, the land being on a long lease from the Local Authority. This range supports all our shooting activities.
- Bury Drill Hall – an indoor 25 yard range for .22 LR rim fire only
- Nortex Mill – an indoor shooting complex that we hire twice a month for .22 LR rim fire, pistol calibre carbines and Black Powder
- Sealand – a 300 metre military range that we hire monthly for centre fire rifle.

Members are encouraged to have regard to their own capabilities in determining which ranges they attend, in particular their ability to cope with the more strenuous activities on an outdoor range.

The range calendar gives details of all shoots. Please note Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday shoots require members to engage the services of a key holder / RCO. The club secretary, whose details are on the reverse of the range calendar, hold members contact details, but may not be aware as to who plans to attend on any particular day.

We try to cater for all and hope that you will enjoy shooting with our other members within the parameters of the law and range rules. We try to respect the environment, people/property on or near all the places we shoot and aim to leave the ranges clean and tidy.

This booklet outlines the good practice and guidance which must be adhered to by all those wishing to be a part of the club.

The following pages explain:

- The aims of the Club
- Your responsibilities
- The role of the Range Conducting Officer (RCO / RO)
- The behaviour we expect from our members
- Some high level safety guidelines and principles to help the newcomer get started.

We hope you will participate in the various shooting activities sponsored by the club and also take an active interest in how your club operates. The Club committee meets monthly and all members are encouraged to attend and express their views. Please remember, it is your club and the committee want to ensure it meets your needs.

As a member of this club you will become a part of a team of people who share great pleasure in their sport, and will welcome you into the fold.

The club is affiliated to the “National Rifle Association” (NRA).

For simplicity, throughout this document, reference is made to the masculine forms he/him. Such references should be taken as applying equally to she / her.



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3. Aims of the Club

The aims of the “Bury and District Muzzle Loading Club” are:

- To bring together like minded people to enjoy the recreational use of firearms in a lawful, safe and orderly manner subject to any rules laid down by the elected Committee.
- To encourage the members to develop skills in the use of firearms using training facilities and coaching made available by The Club
- To provide facilities at which firearms may be safely used as required by the members thereby enabling them to participate in various disciplines of the shooting sports, subject to any restrictions imposed by the Military Authorities and in accordance with law.

The committee cannot stress too strongly that shooting sports are viewed with concern by a large proportion of the public and it is essential that members avoid any behaviour that:

- Endangers a member of the public.
- Endangers a member of the club.
- May bring the club into disrepute.

4. Your responsibilities

As a shooter, you personally are responsible for the safety of each shot you fire; it is your responsibility to ensure:

- Shooting stops if you perceive a danger e.g. someone enters the range by climbing a fence. Shout **“STOP, STOP, STOP”** it is better to be safe than sorry.
- Your Certificates are up to date and cover the gun(s), ammunition and propellant you are using.
- Your ammunition meets the requirements of the range approval certificate i.e. calibre, muzzle energy and muzzle velocity. These are displayed at each range and will be published on the club web site
- Your firearm is in good working order, properly maintained and you understand its’ mechanism.
- You have suitable clothing i.e. waterproof clothing and sturdy footwear for outdoor ranges.
- You follow the instructions of the RCO.
- You understand the rules of the event in which you are shooting.
- You assist in setting up and clearing down the range e.g. putting out and recovering flags, safety notices and target boards.
- You assist in re-instating the back stop i.e. shovelling back and raking sand.

If you are in doubt about anything, please consult a committee member or the Range Conducting Officer, we are there to help.

5. Youngsters

We welcome youngsters; they are the future of the club. However the law regards anyone under the age of 18 as a child and requires they are supervised, at all times, by a parent, guardian or CRB cleared adult.



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- Our licence to use the military range at Sealand prescribes a minimum age of 16.
- All other ranges have a lower age limit of 14.
- Youngsters must at all times be supervised by a parent, guardian or party authorised by their parent(s).
- Our members do not have CRB clearance.
- The RCO has absolute discretion as to whether a youngster should shoot a particular firearm

6. Guests

We welcome guests to the club but must ensure that we abide by relevant range rules and legal provisions.

- All guests must pay the appropriate visitor fee and abide by range rules.
- Guests who hold an FAC may shoot on production of their FAC and, if appropriate, a NRA certificate of competence.
- Guests without an FAC must be notified to the Club Secretary 48 hours before attending and sign a disclaimer to the effect that they are not prohibited from handling firearms.

7. Role of the Range Conducting Officer

All shooting events are under the control of a “Range Conducting Officer” (RCO / RO).

- The RCO will be an experienced club member who has **absolute** authority over the event.
- The authority of the RCO encompasses the whole area of the range e.g. loading area, danger areas, firing point, visitors gallery and butts.
- The RCO has to ensure the safety of the public, other club members, himself and yourself.
- The RCO will ensure compliance with Range Orders as required by the military authorities.
- The RCO will be an experienced shooter and generally knowledgeable in the type of firearms being used, however they may not be an expert in your particular model of firearm.
- If the owners of the range require it, the RCO will have attained any required qualifications.
- The RCO will provide an appropriate pre-shoot briefing to ensure everyone knows what will be happening.
- The RCO will require attendees to assist in setting up and clearing down the range.
- If appropriate the RCO will designate lookouts and butts parties.

Please remember the RCO is there for your safety and benefit. The RCO must be given the fullest co-operation by all members. The RCO will ensure that the range has been properly set up and direct individual shooters to the firing point, instruct them when to load and fire. You must not fire without the permission of the RCO as you may be endangering someone and you may face disciplinary action.

Remember, the RCO is trying to manage the overall event and may not see a danger; whilst it is only the RCO who may give permission to commence firing; **any member** who perceives a danger must call “**STOP STOP STOP**”. All shooters will immediately stop firing and the RCO will decide what action to take next e.g:

- No real danger; resume firing.
- Danger; instruct shooters to stand clear or unload and clear firing point.
- Serious danger or actual accident; instruct shooters to “Ground Arms” and clear the firing point. No one touches a gun until the range is declared safe by the RCO. At which point shooters will be allowed back to the firing point to unload their firearms and make them safe.



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8. RCO Commands

For modern metallic cartridge shoots the RCO will use the following commands:

- **"Approach firing point and take up your position"** (This means literally that and that only! You carry your gun unloaded with the muzzle pointing to the ground and you approach the firing point placing your gun pointing down the range and that is all.)
- **"Load and make ready"** (Load your gun keeping it pointing down the range at all times with your finger clear of the trigger with the safety catch on. Make sure you are wearing ear protection, eye protection is also strongly recommended.)
- **"You may commence firing when ready"** (You remove the safety catch and shoot at your designated target keeping the gun levelled at the target at all times and being conscious of the surroundings in which you are shooting.)
- **"Cease Fire"** (You stop firing. Any person firing after this command will be dealt with very firmly they may be asked to leave the range and questioned by the committee who will decide what further action should be taken.)

YOU FOLLOW THIS ORDER WITHOUT EXCEPTION. (NO EXCUSE WILL BE TOLERATED.)

- **"Clear breach and make safe"** (You remove any magazine, all bullets and bolt from the gun leaving the breach open for inspection, all the time the gun is kept level with the target pointing down the range.)
- **"All clear - remove your guns from the firing point and store safely"** (You have had your gun checked to be clear. Do not re-insert the bolt or magazine. Collect any debris / spent rounds and remove your equipment from the firing point carrying your gun with the muzzle skywards.)

Once all guns have been "Cleared" the RCO will authorise shooters to go forward and patch / recover targets.

No one may go forward without the RCOs permission.

Black powder shoots differ in that guns are loaded with powder and ball in a designated loading area and then on instruction from the RCO carried to the firing point. It is only at the firing point that percussion caps are fitted or frizzen pan primed.

9. Good Practice & Range Etiquette

Range etiquette; this is simply Gentlemanly/Lady like conduct with politeness, consideration for others with reasonable conscientiousness to all e.g:

- **Never** pull the trigger unless you are at the firing point, aiming at the target and have the RCOs' permission to fire; your firearm may not be empty and someone could be shot.
- **Never** point your gun at anyone even if unloaded.
- **Never** sight in your gun even empty down range unless authorised to do so by the RCO.
- **Never** handle your gun at the firing point when someone has gone down range to patch a target.
- **Never** handle someone else's gun until they have proved it clear before handing it to you.
- If you need to bore-sight your firearm, you must get permission from the RCO who will direct you to take up an unused position on the firing point. You must act like any other shooter, obey the RCOs' orders and get your firearm cleared before leaving the firing point.
- If a range is open for 3 hours, you do not hog a lane for 3 hours if persons are waiting their turn to shoot.
- If a fellow shooter needs help and you have the ability to assist then do so.



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- If persons lack knowledge then you do not stand by watching them struggle but help, these are unspoken rules that all our members should not need to be told to do.
- If you are going to arrive late or leave early, inform the RCO in advance so that they can plan accordingly.
- Be sure to arrive early to assist with range set up.
- If you have a disability that restricts you in range setting up or closure arrange for someone else to do things for you and let the RCO know.

You are also personally responsible not only for your own conduct and condition of your gun but also for carrying the name of our club. No member should act in a fashion which would bring that good name into disrepute; as this would cause us all to suffer. There are elements in society who believe that we should not have the right to shoot and look for any excuse to take that right off us. We do not expect any member to give them the cause to do this.

10. Black Powder Notes

Due to the nature of the single shot muzzle loading rifle, when the gun is discharged it is clearly empty and quite inert and may be carried back to the loading area, again with muzzle skywards.

The RCO cannot examine the breach as would happen with a modern breach loading weapon hence muzzle loaders can automatically reload without such checking.

If however, the gun fails to discharge it must be re-primed at the firing point until it does discharge.

If after clearing the vent/nipple and numerous attempts have failed to discharge the gun keep it pointing down the range and obtain permission from the RCO to take the gun off the firing point to have the ball/bullet pulled from the barrel.

When the gun leaves the firing point it must be un-primed – no cap on the nipple or, powder in the pan and the hammer at half cock (the safety position). Once the gun has been un-primed it is possible to check that it still contains a ball by inserting a previously prepared ramrod that is marked to indicate the depth to the breech plug.

Care must be taken with flintlock / snaphance / matchlocks when shooting as they may emit hot gasses from the vent hole and range etiquette for muzzle loaders with such guns means you take care of the shooters in your vent hole direction by off-setting your position as directed by the RCO. This ensures that you shoot in a fashion such that your hot gases do not hit the ear or face of the shooter to that side of you. Some shooters wait till the shooter to their right has shot and the path is clear to fire.

As Muzzle Loaders are loading all the time on the range with explosives, smoking is not permitted in loading areas and loading flasks are left at the loading point.

Priming flasks are permitted on firing point for flint lock / snap-hance / match locks but must be removed to shooting bag or placed in the pocket of the shooter prior to discharge of the gun.

The shooter must check Muzzle-Loading multi firing revolver pistols after the whole cylinder has been discharged.

By:

1. Rotating the cylinder in half cock and checking no percussion caps are present or un-fired and then
2. Rotating the cylinder with the pistol pointing down the range and viewing the cylinder face at an oblique angle to see all chambers are empty. The reason for this is that Muzzle-Loading pistols are prone to ejecting caps by recoil, thus giving the impression all cylinders are fired. In this event an inspection of the cylinder face will contradict this (you should count each discharge of your pistol yet still check carefully.)



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When all shooting has stopped, the multi-shot pistol should be checked by the RCO.

The single shot pistol, rifle and musket can only be checked by a marked ram rod indicating empty position and as with all Muzzle-Loading guns should be capped off/primed only at the firing point with the permission of the RCO and not at the loading point.

If any Muzzle-Loader fails to fire; re prime after clearing the nipple / touch hole and back prime if necessary, if still not firing keep the Muzzle-Loader pointing down the range with the hammer in the safety position and ask the RCO for assistance. If you are unsure do not attempt to repair yourself, wait for an experienced individual.

No gun may leave the range loaded, but it is possible the ball/bullet may not be pulled and the breach plug has to be removed in this instance flooding the powder with WD40 or water is essential to render it inert and safe for the gun to leave the range.

As guns are constantly being reloaded and fired at a Muzzle-Loader shoot, your RCO will shout "Make this your last shot. After all the shooting is finished and all guns have been cleared give "all guns cleared" the RCO will then authorise "clear and patch your targets" and that shoot is at an end until the next shooting detail is ready.

There is a great degree of complexity in gun design for Muzzle-Loaders from 1650-1870 and these notes cannot cover all questions, so if in doubt refer to the RCO and your questions will be referred to a member with the required level of knowledge.

11. Safety Guidance – Black Powder Target Shoots

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TARGET RCO.

A Target RCO shall be in attendance at all target shoots.

He shall be responsible for;

1. Overall safety of the range; minimising any risk to shooter and stopping any shoot that may be a danger to members of the public.
2. The designation of legitimate targets, firing points, the loading area for the various disciplines.
3. Indicate the duration of permitted firing periods.
4. Ensuring that individual shooters observe the safety rules and correct procedures.
5. Reporting to the committee any infringement of safety rules or any dangerous occurrences.
6. He has the authority to prevent any person from shooting for reasons of safety. Also see Section 13.

GENERAL SAFETY RULES.

1. The Target RCO will indicate the duration of permitted firing periods in the following manner-
 - a. FIRING MAY COMMENCE- Upon the authority of the RCO only
 - b. FIRING MUST CEASE- Upon the authority of the RCO or any member whom sees a potential danger.
2. Normally the Target RCO will give shooters the opportunity to discharge their guns prior to signalling a cease fire.
3. Any firearm remaining capped or primed when the cease fire order is given should be set down at the firing point with the muzzle pointing towards the target area and the RCO informed.



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4. During the permitted firing periods, no persons may approach or leave the range. All persons must remain either to the rear of the firing line or in the safe area in the target gallery.
5. No shooter may attempt to discharge any weapon whether fully loaded, partially loaded or merely capped until the following conditions are met:
 - a. The shooter is level with the firing line at a designated firing point appropriate to the particular weapon.
 - b. The weapon is deliberately aimed at a legitimate target.
 - c. A Permitted firing period is in operation.
6. Except in the unavoidable circumstances brought about as the result of an emergency cease fire, no percussion weapon, whether loaded or not, may be capped at any time other than when a shooter is positioned at an appropriate firing point and a permitted firing period is in operation.

THE EQUIVALENT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR OTHER FORMS OF IGNITION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- TUBELOCK- Tube unfitted.
 - FLINTLOCK- Pan open and unprimed, cock fired position.
 - SNAPHANCE- Pan closed and unprimed, match unfitted (lighted matches must be left adjacent to the firing point in a suitable container).
 - WHELLOCK- Pan closed and unprimed, Dog Head open.
7. There shall be no smoking or naked lights brought within 10 feet of any container of gunpowder. Similarly no container of gunpowder shall be brought within 10 feet of any smoker or naked light.
 8. Notwithstanding the authority and responsibilities of the RCO, every member has a duty to conduct themselves in a safe manner and to identify and make known immediately any potential source of danger.
 9. No gun whether loaded or not shall be pointed at any person.
 10. Any probationary member/ guest etc. participating in the loading and/or shooting of weapons shall be under the personal supervision of an experienced member of the club who holds a current FAC and that club member is responsible for the safety/ conduct of that individual probationary member/ guest. **"A one on one supervision only"**.

RULES SPECIFIC TO RIFLES AND MUSKETS.

11. Rifles and muskets shall be carried with the muzzle pointing vertically upwards except where necessary hands should be clear of any trigger, hammer or cock.
12. In the event of a misfire, the shooter should continue to aim the weapon at the intended target for at least 30 seconds. After that period has elapsed, the load must be re-rammed prior to any subsequent attempts being made to discharge the weapon.
13. No loading of rifles or muskets other than capping, priming or re-ramming may take place on the firing point.

RULES SPECIFIC TO PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS,

14. Pistols and revolvers shall be carried with the muzzle pointing vertically downwards. Except where necessary, hands should be clear of any trigger, hammer or cock.
15. No pistols or revolver may be discharged whether fully loaded or merely capped or primed, except when the shooter is standing at the firing point designated for the purpose with the table immediately in front of them. The approved position for all capping, priming and cocking operations is with the barrel pointing in the direction of the target and the muzzle in contact with the table. In the case of multiple shot weapons, the pistol or revolver must be returned to the approved position for subsequent cocking operation.



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16. In the event of a misfire, the shooter should continue to aim the weapon at the target for at least 30 seconds. After this period has elapsed, the weapon should be returned to the approved position on the table for the initial checking and subsequently may be recapped or reprimed as necessary to enable further attempts at discharge. Alternatively, the firearm should completely de-capped or unprimed prior to removing it from the firing point. If the shooter is unable to comply they must summon the Target RCO.

12. Safety Guidance – Centre Fire & Rim Fire.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TARGET RCO.

A target RCO shall be in attendance at all target shoots.

The RCO shall be responsible for;

1. Overall safety of the range; minimising any risk to shooters and stopping any shoot that may be a danger to members of the public.
2. The designation of legitimate targets, firing points and the loading area for the various disciplines.
3. Indicating the duration of permitted firing periods.
4. Ensuring that individual shooters observe the safety rules or any dangerous occurrence.
5. Reporting to the committee any infringement of safety rules or any dangerous occurrences.
6. The RCO has the authority to prevent any person from shooting for reasons of safety and also holds authority to eject any from the range or cancel the shoot.

GENERAL SAFETY RULES.

1. The target RCO will indicate the duration of permitted firing periods in the following manor;
 - a. FIRING MAY COMMENCE- Upon the authority of the RCO only.
 - b. FIRING MUST CEASE- Upon the authority of the RCO and any member at the shoot if a potential danger is perceived by that individual.
2. Normally the Target RCO will give the shooters the opportunity to discharge their guns prior to signalling a cease-fire.
3. Any weapon remaining loaded when the cease fire order is given should be made safe and set down at the firing point with the muzzle pointing towards the target area and hands removed from the weapon.
4. During the permitted firing periods, no persons may approach or leave the range. All persons must remain either to the rear of the firing line or in the safe area in the target gallery.
5. No shooter may attempt to discharge any weapon until the following conditions are met.
 - a. The RCO authorises "Loading and firing when ready".
 - b. The shooter is at the firing point with the weapon level at their designated target only.
 - c. No contra instructions by the RCO or any other individual i.e. "Cease fire" or "STOP STOP STOP".
6. The RCO instructions must be followed to the letter by the shooters e.g.
 - a. The shooter should only approach the firing point when given the authority from the RCO i.e. "You may approach the firing point with breaches empty and bolts open, take up your positions and await authority to load and fire".
 - b. No one may get up or leave the firing point until told to do so. After shooting the RCO will inspect to ensure all breaches are empty and when satisfied will give the order "You may leave the firing point and stow your guns."



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7. Notwithstanding the authority and responsibilities of the Target RCO, every member has the duty to conduct themselves in a safe manor and to identify and make known immediately any potential source of danger. Good range etiquette and politeness must always apply.
8. No gun whether loaded or not shall be pointed at any person.
9. All weapons must be in good working order and any ammunition must comply with the range certificate or licence under which we use that range.
10. Any probationary member/ guest etc. participating in the loading and/or shooting of weapons shall be under the personal supervision of an experienced member of the club who holds a current FAC and that club member is responsible for the safety/ conduct of that individual probationary member/ guest. **"A one on one supervision only"**.

NRA RCO Instructions require:

- A bolt action rifle must be carried, when out of a box or a case with the breech open and a breech flag inserted, or with the bolt removed from the rifle. Other type of action, including magazines, must be seen to be empty, open and safe at the discretion of the RCO.
- Firearms behind the firing point should be cased.
- The breech must remain open until you are in the aiming position and about to fire. This is to avoid a "Slam Fire" or accidental discharge that could go over the stop butt and result in a ricochet or round exceeding the danger area.

13. Dangerous Ammunition

Only ammunition that complies with the range certificate in terms of Muzzle velocity, Muzzle Energy and Calibre is permitted.

Hand Loaded Ammunition

The principal dangers which may endanger the shooter or other are generally related to excess pressure caused by:

- Inappropriate powders.
- Inappropriate loads.
- Inappropriate components.

Common causes may include one or more of the following:

- Use of a powder with a faster than recommended burn rate.
- An excessive charge.
- Over length cases which have not been trimmed causing the bullets to be crimped when chambering.
- Use of old / damaged cases which may rupture.
- Bad loading practices.
- Incorrect seating depth.
- Incorrect ammunition for the chamber dimensions e.g.
 - Use of .308 ammunition / loads in a 7.62 x 51 NATO chambered rifle. (.308 can generate 25% more pressure.
 - Use of 5.56 x 45 ammunition in a rifle chambered for .233 Remington. (OAL of 5.56 can foul the lands of a.223 as well as pressure issues)

Signs of high pressure may include:



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- Extraction problems that only arise with hand loaded ammunition.
- Marks on the case head caused by metal being sheared off and often resulting in extraction problems.
- Damaged primers.
- Gas leaks around primers.
- Split cases
- Case head failure.

Any shooter experiencing the above should notify the RCO and withdraw from shooting until safe ammunition is obtained.

The RCO may dismiss any shooter from the range, until they can provide safe alternative ammunition, if they become aware of such problems.