

# *UTUWAI SMALLBORE RIFLE CLUB*

## **1956 – 1994**

In 1956 a local farmer, Arnold Haynes, was the main instigator in forming a smallbore rifle club in the local Utuwai Hall. The official opening was on February the 2nd.

Foundation members were P Beswick, T Bell, J Blackmuir, J Cumings, K Cowan, S Dalziel-Kernohan, R Dalziel-Kernohan, P Dunlop, B Dobson, J Enright, T Foot, L Gibbs, A Haynes, P Haynes, Miss B Haynes, L A Martin, A R Pettigrew, N Martin, J H MacKenzie, J M O'Hagan, E Prince, B Prince, H Rutherford, C Searle, B Searle, Mrs E Searle, Miss J Searle, E Signal, J Wingate, D Wingate, Mrs V Wingate, P Forbes, R Griffiths and R Stevens.

The first few years, after becoming affiliated with the Manawatu Smallbore Rifle Association and entering the interclub series, the shoots were mainly postal until about 1965 when the town clubs decided to start paying a visit to Utuwai.

After the first visit, the trip to Utuwai was the highlight of some of the town club's year, with many a tale being told of opossum shooting, wrong turns being taken and ending up at a dead end road at the bottom of the Ruahine Ranges, and of taking a wrong turning at Apiti and heading back down Ridge Road to Colyton, before finally turning around and heading in the right direction to Utuwai - arriving with a van load of very green faces.

But there was always a very warm welcome at Utuwai with a big open log fire (which was much appreciated when there was a fall of snow outside), and a lovely country style supper.

As a small club, the members shot to a very high standard, with the club winning the Manawatu Interclub series six out of the last eight years it was in existence, and coming second on one other occasion and also winning numerous other competitions.

At the National level, members to gain New Zealand honours were Trevor Henson and Crellan and Betty Hooper in the Open team, with Pam Roberts, and Betty and Annette Hooper in the Ladies team as well as Annette in the New Zealand Juniors team.

For their many years as Selector and Statistician, Crellan and Betty Hooper were made Life Members of the Manawatu Smallbore Rifle Association.

Sadly, in 1994 the club was forced to go into recess due to several members moving from the district to live elsewhere, leaving only about 4 or 5 shooters to carry on.