

Thames Valley Deerstalkers Association

Club Information and History

Our club is situated in Paeroa and serves a membership that is predominately in the Thames Valley/Coromandel area but increasingly due to the diversity of the clubs activities and the excellent facilities, programmes and opportunities that we have and provide for our members and visiting sportspeople and general visitors alike, a large number of new members from further afield are becoming involved.

The club is in its 52nd year and over recent years the clubs extremely hardworking and proactive committee of volunteers along with a keen membership base, have instigated and successfully attained ownership of the 22 acres of land that surrounded our existing clubrooms which has been a huge boost to the club and our sports as well as giving us the freedom to develop the land that we have into what has become widely renown as one of the very best complexes and facilities of its kind on the world scene. This recognition does not come lightly but from our humble beginnings being coupled with drive, foresight and wonderful support, we have achieved and further strive to build on these foundations in the years to come as opportunities prevail.

It was paramount for our sport and its various disciplines, that to have a guaranteed shooting range and general facilities for our membership range which totals in excess of 320, along with the large number of other user groups that use our premises and facilities, the only option possible was to embark on a major fundraising drive to raise the \$150,000 required to seal the deal back in 2001. Such is the foresight of this club and the 'community nature' that abounds, our premises and facilities are used on an almost permanent basis but always totally affordable to the user groups as we strongly recognise the importance of smaller clubs in particularly rural areas having a 'home base' and for this to be well within the financial and physical reach of their members and hard working volunteers as well. This was a pledge that we made to the Hauraki District Council at the time of their support for the purchase of the land and as such, the ongoing relationship with our communities and various groups has been a delight to be part of.

This was accomplished due to funding from many angles with the Hauraki District Council being the major single funding contributor in the form of a \$50,000 interest free loan over 25 years. The balance of the funds came from donations, fundraising and debentures and we are extremely proud to say that well over 2/3rds of the loan is already repaid as are the debentures – a feat that we are extremely proud of given that only 7 years has elapsed since purchasing the land and it has been due to straight out hard work, dedication and commitment.

Since that time, TVDA has risen to the highest level on several fronts within our sporting codes on the National and International scene. We have held numerous Regional and Zone Championships, North Island and National Championships and an Oceania Sporting Clay Championships, such is the quality of the facilities that we have, the unequalled dedication of our commitment to this sport and the fabulous support that we have in both our local and sporting communities. In addition to these events, we have also been widely identified as leaders in promoting all forms of sport with the willing inclusion of so many other user groups to use and be based at our property.

The last two years has also seen TVDA embark on taking the coaching of clay target shooting to the rest of the country such was the lack of quality and availability of consistent coaching for all shooters on a nationwide basis – something that had never previously been done in NZ at a club or National Organisational level. It was through the outstanding support of Southern Trust, Pub Charity and Lion Foundation that we were able to provide such wonderful opportunities for shooters of the length and breadth of the country and of all levels of ability as we facilitated the Nationwide coaching programmes with Graham Browne from the United Kingdom. The outstanding testament of this commitment can be seen at shooting ranges throughout the country and also on the National and International competition scene. The World Championships currently being held in Ireland and at previous events since the instigation of these programmes, have never seen such a wealth of top class results which is something, that as a club, gives us immense pride.

Youth and continual learning are always of the highest interest for us here and TVDA is a club that promotes the integration of young and junior members on every front but never losing sight of the fact that

there are always opportunities for us all to learn, irrespective of age and gender. The rewards seen from people becoming integrated into sports and recreational activities and at the same time extending themselves and achieving personal goals is extremely rewarding and one that we thoroughly enjoy being able to offer to the wider community on as many fronts as possible. On the club front, our Junior members are of particular interest and a lot of time and effort is made to ensure that they have the basics for setting themselves a positive future and contributing factors to this are aspects such as the highly accredited National HUNTS programme and survival course weekends which cover topics such as first aid, map reading, leadership, water and boating safety, firearms safety and the general life skills that accompany the above. Of particular note on the health, strength and future of our club base is that four (4) of our current committee comprises of junior members – something of a rarity in clubs of any kind.

Whilst the deerstalking aspect of the club is usually partaken in amongst the hill, valleys and forests of our fabulous country, this aspect of the club also sees a very active participation as well as regular club nights, guest speakers, rifle range competitions and training programmes, judging at local and national events, involvement at National level with our parent body, the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association. Executive members of NZDA have in the recent past be drawn from amongst our membership which has provided a wealth of information and experience for those concerned as well as the club in general. Further to this is the fact that the Thames Valley branch has put forward a nomination for our club to be the host of the National Conference and Competitions in 2010.

We have in recent times also welcomed the bow hunters from the greater region into our midst and they have set up their extensive range and club events on our property and are fully integrated into the “TVDA family” which continually fosters the ongoing benefits of health, sport and recreation and we constantly strive to make as many of these opportunities possible to the wider communities.

Accompanying this wider integration of other clubs as well as our large membership base and the inclusion of the various sporting disciplines, has been the clubs willingness and keenness to introduce aspects of our countries historical past via Iwi Liaison with Iwi and Tangata Whenua from further afield as well as our own locality. There is much to be gained in life as well as in our sport and this has also proved to be a sound means by which more people can become more culturally aware than from text books and political avenues alone. We are all part of the larger family of Aotearoa and enhancing this aspect of our history has provided considerable value for everyone concerned.

The NZ Police, including the Arms Offenders Squads are extensive users of our rifle ranges that are already in place and we are one of the very few registered and certified venues left in the North Island where such a complete degree of training can be carried out by them. There has always been an excellent working relationship between the club, our members and the Police and as such, they have also contributed to various upgrades to our range shooting complex.

Our facilities are also home to other local groups for meetings, functions and activities such as Ohinemuri Fish and Game for meetings and events, the local scout and girl guide groups for events, ATC for training weekends, schools from around the Hauraki area, local church groups for school holiday programmes, the Ngatea and Paeroa Lions as well as business and private functions as and when requested.

The general membership is one that is very enthusiastic and enjoys a wide range of events and opportunities along with providing the hard work that has ensured that this club is not only one to survive but able to think and work outside the square and have our sights firmly set on the future and thrive on the possibilities and successes that these attributes have produced. The workforce that ensures that all these events are carried out and the extensive and ongoing maintenance and improvements are all done on a totally voluntary basis by members and club supporters which is something that we are very proud of. It is this strong community involvement and the camaraderie of all working together on projects that constantly promotes the bond that makes TVDA such a strength when comparing with so many others that have subsided or fallen by the wayside as time has moved on.

A very fitting testament of this commitment and the outstanding results that we have had from our dedication and hard work coupled with the fabulous support that we have received from the local Council, Southern Trust, Pub Charity and Lion Foundation, we have been the sole nomination of the New Zealand Clay Target Association in reply to the World Body’s invitation for New Zealand to host the 2011 English Sporting World Championships – this is enormous kudos for the club and will be the first time ever that this hugely renown event has ventured outside of the United States and the United Kingdom.