

Although the Ayre Club first started shooting on its Blue Point range in 1976, for a few years prior to that, clay shooting was organised in a gravel pit at the Point of Ayre. Shooting took place in the summer, on Wednesday evenings with a few manual traps and 10 clays each!!

A nucleus of those shooters decided that a more permanent site be sought. The present ground at Blue Point was located and rented from local farmer, John Sayle.

On the North West coast of the Island, the 22 acres is bordering the sea and backed on its inland boundary by the rising scarp-like bracken covered cliffs. Despite a lack of trees, the undulating dunes of this coastal land provide some degree of cover for both shooters and traps. No high towers required here where the bank provides numerous and various levels for the sporting clays.

In 1976 a hard working committee, under the chairmanship of David Skillan, met to get the Ayre Clay Pigeon Club up and running. Meetings were held once a fortnight and any committee members who missed two consecutive meetings were demoted! The remoteness of the new location had obvious advantages for a shooting club, but there were no services. All supplies of water and building materials had to be carried in. Initially membership rose quite quickly to 30 but everyone was expected to assist on the ground. A second-hand wooden shed, measuring 8' x 12' was purchased for £100.00 and this was the new clubhouse.



A DTL layout was installed and the club in its early days was regularly running shoots in sporting, DTL and double rise - all using manual traps. Under the guidance and enthusiasm of one of the founder members, Tommy Shimmin, the 1st skeet layout was planned. In 1981 a second hand generator was purchased, the two trap houses were sited and built, housing the manually loaded skeet traps. That summer, the club held its first 100-bird English Skeet shoot on the new range with a Tommy Shimmin shield going to the high gun. Shortly after that, the Ayre Clay Pigeon Club held the 1st shooting Manx Championship on the Isle of Man, for English Sporting.

In 1985 the inaugural Island Games was held on the Island and the Ayre Club held the Olympic Skeet discipline on their newly installed skeet range. This was closely followed by a DTL grand prix, attracting many visiting guns.

The wooden clubhouse was totally destroyed in a storm in 1988. And, after a press/radio appeal, a replacement port-a-cabin was acquired from Nobles Hospital. The old 'path lab' although in parts somewhat the worse for wear, served the members well. In the same year a second skeet range was proposed and started, to be completed in 1989, with fully automatic traps on 'layout 2'.

In 1990 yet a third temporary skeet range was built on 'layout 3'. This skeet range was essentially to facilitate the Isle of Man holding the English Skeet Home International in 1991, when 90 visiting shooters from England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Jersey and IOM competed for National honours.

In 1993, in order to secure its long-term future, the Club approached the landlord with a view to purchasing the land, and, with the help of a loan from Sports Council, the Club was able to achieve this. Over the years many more improvements have taken place. In association with the Isle of Man Forestry Board, the Club has planted trees along its seaward boundary and in two main areas close to the Clubhouse, through the 'small woods scheme'.

The Olympic Trench layout, completed in 1999, replacing the 3rd skeet layout. With a generous grant from Sports Council and Club funds, a 20-metre trench has been achieved, in no small way due to the efforts of the then Chairman, Alan Brew, and his hard working committee, with many Club members giving freely of their expertise and time. To begin with only 5 traps were purchased with the intention of adding a further 10, in time, to bring it up to the full Olympic Trap standard. The trench was officially opened in May in time for the Commonwealth Shooting Federation

Championships (European Division) in 2000. The remaining 10 traps were purchased in 2001 and Olympic Trap was shot when the Isle of Man hosted the Island Games in the July of that year.

In 2003 the Club reached another landmark in its development. Early that year a new clubhouse was started under the close supervision of Trevor Boyles who took over the Chairmanship. This building provides a truly comfortable venue for its ever increasing numbers of members. The clubhouse provides purpose built facilities for the administration and catering requirements of the Club.

The Ayre Clay Target Club has again hosted the CSF(ED) Championships in 2004 and 2009 and will hold them again in 2013. The disciplines shot are Olympic Skeet, Olympic Trap and Double Trap.

In 2005, the manual Down the Line layout was replaced by a fully automated new range, one of two DTL layouts at the Club.

The Isle of Man continues to do well in clay target shooting, both at home and internationally, due in no small part to the role that the Ayre Club plays in both encouraging new members and providing excellent training facilities. The club caters for all Olympic and domestic disciplines and prides itself on what is considered to be the best English Sporting layout on the Island.

The Club has always done its best to support local charities and organisations. The Isle of Man branch of the British Heart Foundation hold their annual fund raising Clay Shoot on the Club's sporting layout, and in August 2013 the Manx Game Preservation Society clay shoot was held at the Blue Point range for the first time. Both shoots were well attended and raised much needed funds for both organisations.

The Club will also provide clay shooting days for organisations wishing to hold team building days for clients and staff, as well as putting on shoots for stag/hen parties, birthdays and other celebrations.

The Club continues to grow, due to the untiring support of the elected committee and club members, who are continually upgrading and replacing equipment where needed.