

# *The Australian Junior* **SHOOTER**

An introduction for Junior Shooters & Hunters

Issue 25

## **ARWEN CASLEY- PORTER**

Class act and  
youth leader  
empowering  
her peers

**Win the SSAA Prize Pack  
worth more than \$100!**

See back cover for prize details and  
how you can win!

## **Swamp Fever**

Joseph Nugent tells us  
tales of boar hunting

[ssaa.org.au](http://ssaa.org.au)

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# Contents

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>2 Editorial</b>  | <b>12 Swamp fever in search of boars and barra</b> |
| <b>3 Deer hunt a learning experience</b>                    | <b>16 Juniors-only competition</b>                 |
| <b>8 Scout Jamboree a winner all round</b>                  | <b>16 Sponsor a junior</b>                         |
| <b>9 Class Act Arwen puts shooting on school curriculum</b> |  |

## Contribute to Australian Junior Shooter

If you are a young shooter or hunter and would like to share your experiences with others, consider writing an article for *The Australian Junior Shooter*. Send an outline of your proposed article to [edit@ssaa.org.au](mailto:edit@ssaa.org.au) and we'll be sure to get in touch.

# Editorial

**A**rwen Casley-Porter is a go-ahead young lady who gets things done - and then some. An avid shooter, Arwen was keen to introduce her school classmates to the joys of the shooting sports but her school had no provision for such.

No shooting team? No problem to Arwen who put the wheels in motion with a 'come and try' day which led to the formation of the Trinity Anglican College shooting team. Said Arwen: "The 'come and try' day was a real success and now our new team will be competing and training from this year onwards."

Arwen enlisted the expert assistance of Gemma Dunn, SSAA Coaching and Membership Development Manager, who guided her through the logistics of setting up the 'come and try' day and helped make sure the event was a roaring success all round.

Elsewhere in this issue we hit the road with Joseph Nugent

who shunned the traditional 'schoolies' celebration as he completed Year 12 and chose instead to go bush with dad Derek as they went in search of boars and barra on the banks of the Alice River.

Mark van den Boogaart's son is a young hunter in the making and in a trip with dad to the aptly-named Hunter Valley in New South Wales, he was in on the action as an impressive fallow deer was taken for the table.

Also in this issue we take a look back at last year's Australian Scout Jamboree in South Australia where around 10,000 scouts enjoyed 150 different activities, many of them opting to try the shooting sports where they competed for the coveted 'Bang' badge.

So plenty to keep you entertained in this edition and, as always, if you have a junior-related shooting story to tell, please get in touch with us at the email address in the panel above.

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# DEER HUNT

a learning  
experience

Mark van den Boogaart

Following the success of our first hunt together, it wasn't too hard to build enthusiasm for a father and son deer outing. That fervour soon became a plan that would dominate dinner time conversation and I'll readily admit the threat of not going was used on more than one occasion to motivate a certain 6½-year-old to clean up his toys.



Moving between the blackberries I had my mind set on the next patch as it would give me a great observation point, but while making my way towards it I saw three deer on the move...



3

- 1 | The 'roughie' and the boy's first wall mount.
- 2 | Morning fog meant a waiting game.
- 3 | An interesting wallow worth visiting next time.



**M**y youngest at 4½ was also a willing participant. It was a blessing, though also a cause of some sadness as he was really still too young to spend days away in the bush. However, as he clearly told me when he grows up and is “not little any more” he’ll be coming along too.

We’d be exploring a property in New South Wales’ Hunter Valley which holds good numbers of fallow. As suburbanites a hunting trip requires some effort, all of which we made part of the shared experience, thinking about how cold it would be, what we would eat and what gear to take all part of the process.

Six weeks later we were up early and heading to pick up good mate Tim before travelling south. Rolling into camp we had about 90 minutes of daylight left to have things set up and with everyone pitching in it wasn’t too hard a task and just before dark we had the fire lit and dinner on the go.

Being winter in the Hunter it was a cold night, though we were well prepared and had a restful sleep. The next morning around 6.45 there was enough light to see so we started moving but hadn’t accounted for the fog and had to wait until 8.30 before we could see more than 100m beyond our camp.

We switched to another part of the property which worked and, while still foggy, our visibility improved to the extent that we soon saw deer on the move, three small fallow cutting from our right to left with about five or six spotted a bit higher up.

Thinking about an approach there was nothing for it but to head uphill so we moved south along a creek line and turned up into a gully system. The climb wasn’t hard but proved tricky for the young bloke, so we took it easy and stopped frequently.

After a couple of good climbs we

came across a break in a paddock fence and took it as an opportunity to swing north and once through the fence we began crossing one side of a steep gully. Eventually we spotted a well grassed clearing almost at the top of the gully - if there were deer about, this clearing was the place so we stopped and made ready.

We were moving slowly, glassing often and eventually spotted six or seven young fallow on the opposite face of the gully. While clearly active they didn’t seem too bothered so we crept forward until I found a suitable shooting lane at around 120m away. Lying on my left side with feet pointing downhill, my son sat behind me cross-legged while Tim watched proceedings through the binoculars.

It was a good position and picking my target I let them know I was about to fire. Tim leaned forward, fitted hearing protection for the little bloke and let him know dad was ready to shoot. I struck the fallow on the shoulder and watched it roll down before coming to rest in a blackberry patch. We waited and with no sign of movement decided to cross the gully.

We took an easy zig-zag approach and with Tim and the boy near the top I cut across to retrieve the deer. Dragging it back my son was excited, asking plenty of questions and after a rest and answering his queries we gutted the animal and began the carry-out.

Cutting a path downhill towards a vehicle track I was carrying the deer on my shoulders with my son close by while Tim remained on the lookout. Out of nowhere a couple of deer burst from cover a little below our position. Both managed to move on before Tim was ready but the third, a straggler, wasn’t so lucky and Tim landed a clean kill shot. That was now two on the ground and a little too much to manage as a carry-out so, dropping my deer, I headed for





## Deer hunt a learning experience

the ute while my son and Tim relived the recent action.

A few hours later with the gear cleaned, knives sharpened and game meat on ice, we decided to go out again, the idea just to drive around and have a look. That's what we did for all of 15 minutes, the odds definitely in our favour as we spotted more deer. Tim jumped out and into position while my son and I watched from the ute. We saw him take aim and on hearing the report of his .30-06 he turned and gave us the thumbs up, making it three deer for the day.

It was time for dinner and with cooking under way we had the young bloke focused on the fire. Kids love a campfire and collecting kindling is a great way to teach them outdoor skills. After gathering a decent pile of sticks we had him stack them and with the help of a barbecue lighter my son did the honours.

After dinner it was time to grab the shotgun and spotlight and go after some bunnies but unlike the deer our success rate wasn't so good. While we spotted three, and a couple of foxes, we couldn't bring it together with the shotgun so decided to head back and on the way spotted a hare. This time Tim was on the money and with the 12-gauge loaded with No.4 he despatched it in quick order as we called it a night.

The next morning I was up and about while the others slept. It was cold and foggy so with coffee in hand I sat behind the spotting scope and peered into the gloom. I spied some shapes but as quickly as I saw them they were gone. They were deer and, importantly, sporting a bit of timber and with the others up and about I told them I was off down to the flats as quickly and quietly as possible.

I had to navigate a couple of paddock fences but the creek line and heavy blackberry bushes provided cover on the otherwise open flats country. Moving between the

blackberries I had my mind set on the next patch as it would give me a great observation point, but while making my way towards it I saw three deer on the move.

They were heading uphill towards a broken fence line and as I dropped to a sitting position the deer stopped and looked me over. Maybe due to my position in the fog they didn't appear too threatened as they continued to look on. The order was buck, doe and trailing buck, both males carrying scrappy headgear but either would certainly make a great first set for a young lad.

Playing the odds I aimed at the trailing fallow, a deep chocolate coloured animal, busting his shoulder and while the other two bolted uphill to the break in the fence, he stumbled downhill. He was certainly down but I waited to make sure he wasn't able to get back up. The other two were about to cross the skyline and with them out of sight I moved to check him out. He was a good animal and after making sure he was done I turned back towards the ute and the others.

My son was again full of questions and on sighting the buck immediately asked if we could keep it. Of course, was the answer so we took some meat and the messy antlers which I planned to clean up and mount on a shield for the boy.

The fog was still hanging around as we prepared for breakfast and with the buck on ice the eskies were now full. As we had plenty of time we jumped back into the ute to explore a little more of the property and along the way spotted even more deer, which we let pass, along with what looked like a good pig wallow.

Back at camp we packed up, loaded the ute and put some food together for the drive home. It had been a great experience hunting with my son and something I truly hope will become a family tradition. ●







1



2



3

- 1 | Discussing the hunt and answering a lot of questions.
- 2 | Some idea of the depth to the morning fog.
- 3 | Must keep the youngster well fed.
- 4 | Retrieving the deer while Tim and Mark's son look on (centre).



# SCOUT JAMBOREE

## a winner all round

Sam Talbot



It has been more than a year since around 10,000 scouts aged between 11 and 14 travelled from all corners of the world to take part in the 2019 Australian Scout Jamboree in South Australia. During the event scouts had about 150 different activities to choose from yet, despite the wide selection, each morning a stampede of eager youngsters headed straight to the shooting range.

On the morning I arrived at the jamboree, dozens of scouts were lined up eagerly awaiting 9am so they could race across an open field to the shooting range to give the sport a go and possibly earn themselves a much sought-after 'Bang' badge.

While there's no doubt the scouts had a blast, the thing I remember most was how good a time the many adult and SSAA volunteers had - coaching juniors is a rewarding experience which makes both parties a better shooter.

One of the most popular coaches at the event was Tabetha 'The Big Kahuna' Wilks who flew in from Port Lincoln to be part of the fun. Tabetha took me under her wing and offered some expert tips on how I can be a better coach to new shooters.

She explained the importance of creating a safe and fun atmosphere while making sure the junior shooters felt comfortable with the whole experience. With each scout who came through her lane, Tabetha carefully took time to slowly and deliberately make sure her junior shooter

understood all the safety rules and was totally prepared. In terms of coaching, creating a fun and safe atmosphere is more important than technical proficiency, which can always come later.

The importance and value of exposing thousands of youngsters to try shooting can't be overstated. Approximately 2260 scouts got to try out at the firing range which was staffed by more than 30 SSAA volunteers in hot and dusty conditions.

Many of the scouts hadn't used a firearm before but left the jamboree being able to tell their family and friends what a positive experience it was and it's likely more than a few will have tried shooting again since then. All in all it was an amazing event with grateful thanks going to SSAA South Australia as well as sponsors and, of course, the scouts.

With just two years to go until the next Australian Scout Jamboree we're already getting excited and can't wait to share the shooting sports with thousands more of Australia's eager youngsters. For the record, the 26th Australian Scout Jamboree will be held in Elmore, Victoria. If you have organised or been part of a junior shooting event and would like to tell us about it, please email the editor at [edit@ssaa.org.au](mailto:edit@ssaa.org.au)

- 1 | Lots of scouts lined up and ready to go.
- 2 | The popular but elusive 'Bang' badge.
- 3 | Experience and enthusiasm come together on the line of fire.





# CLASS ACT

## Arwen puts shooting on school curriculum

Sam Talbot

What do you do when you're a high school student who wants to involve their classmates in the shooting sports? Well, in Arwen Casley-Porter's case, simply organise your own 'come and try' day for your classmates then help establish the school's very own sports shooting team. Simple as that.

**T**he plucky and ambitious 17-year-old SSAA member is leading the way for junior shooters, showing them how fun and rewarding the shooting sports are and proving there's a place for shooting like any other sport on a school curriculum.

"The 'come and try' day was very successful. It gathered interest within the school and has now led to the formation of a Trinity Anglican College sports shooting team which will be competing

and training from this year onwards," said Arwen. Like many of us, Arwen was introduced to shooting by members of her family - all it took was a little encouragement from her dad and she's been hooked ever since. Yet that's probably an understatement, since Arwen has since become a spokesperson for the shooting sports.

"My inspiration for becoming a spokesperson comes from numerous different influences," she said. "Before going to compete in the National Junior Challenge last year I'd often hear some of my peers talking about the



## Class Act Arwen puts shooting on school curriculum

- 1 | Arwen at Wodonga with kidney donor 'Keyhole' and her prize for winning the Keyhole Kidney Cup competition for juniors. (Pg 9)
- 2 | Gemma Dunn gives Arwen some shotgun tips.
- 3 | Wherever juniors are having a shot, Gemma Dunn appears.
- 4 | We're sure the ballet probably helps Arwen's 3P shooting.

sport in a negative light. After asking them why they felt that way about sports shooting, the majority told me it was because that's all they see in the media.

"So it was from those conversations I decided I should help show the sport in a positive light and help people understand just how welcoming and enjoyable sports shooting can be. Once I was at the Nationals I had the mentality of not only competing for myself but of showing my peers that sports shooting is just like any other sport - it's a fun, community or individual activity.

"Another source of inspiration I have for promoting sports shooting is [SSAA Coaching and Membership Development Manager] Gemma Dunn. After meeting her at the Nationals and seeing what she was doing for the women's shooting community, I knew even more than before I could make a difference in the way people perceive sports shooting."

Another contributing factor to Arwen organising the school 'come and try' day came after she noticed how large the sports shooting community in her home town of Albury-Wodonga was, and that despite the number of adult shooters there were hardly any juniors and no schools involved at all.

"I wanted students at my school, Trinity Anglican College, to be able to get involved with shooting just like they would if they were on the basketball team," she said. This led to Arwen giving a speech at school about her passion for shooting,

a topic she hadn't spoken to her peers about much before but one which clearly had a big impact.

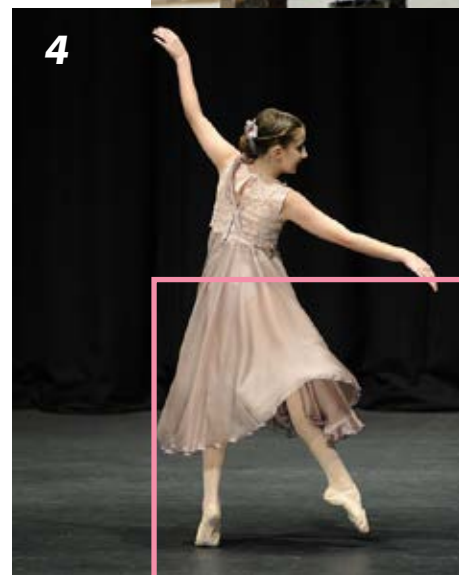
"For weeks after that I'd have students I didn't even know come up and ask me more about shooting and the experiences I'd had. There were teachers talking to me about how they themselves were shooters and had no idea I was involved in the sport - it started conversations with people I hadn't met before.

"It was such a positive reaction and, in a way, encouraged me even more to continue teaching people about the shooting community and show everyone this isn't a scary sport to be involved in."

Now, with teachers and students alike on board, the timing was perfect for a 'come and try' day. While Arwen was the driving force behind the project, she's also quick to acknowledge the generous support she received from parents, teachers and of course the SSAA's Gemma Dunn. "For the most part, coordinating the 'come and try' day went smoothly but the hardest part was setting up a day for it to actually happen and also sorting out the number of students who'd be attending," said Arwen.

In the end, new students attending were in double figures for the event held at SSAA Wodonga V06. It went so well in fact that the school will continue to hold regular 'come and try' days and will be forming their own sports shooting team which will compete and train for multiple disciplines including shotgun competitions and biathlons.

"I've received lots of positive







5



5 | We want to see more school shooting competitions like this.

6 | Getting the hang of things.



6

feedback from students as well as parents and teachers so hopefully this will allow Trinity to continue holding 'come and try' days as well as the successful formation of an ongoing team," she said.

Arwen is a wonderful ambassador for the SSAA and shooting sports and we owe her and her supporters a big thank-you for her persistence and organisational skills. Not only that, but as a former ballerina we reckon she must be in a very exclusive club of

those who can pirouette and shoot 3-Positional.

"The biggest thing I'd say to other students trying to get their schools involved is be patient and stand your ground," said Arwen. "It may take time for your school to accept the sport or what you'd like to do with it but don't stop trying. Keep telling people about your ideas and don't let an adult talk you out of pursuing something you enjoy."

Young shooters can follow Arwen on Instagram @acp.firebird ●



# SWAMP RIVER

A stylized illustration of a fish, likely a barra, jumping out of the water. The fish is depicted in a dynamic pose with its mouth open and fins spread. It has a yellow outline and is colored in shades of brown and tan. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a river or swampy area with trees and water.

in search of  
boars and barra

Joseph Nugent

After almost 12 years of education my school days were finally coming to an end. Rather than going to parties or traditional 'schoolies' celebrations on the coast, I celebrated my final year of school in a way I'll never forget.



**M**y dad conceived the idea when I was in primary school and started saving from then on, and so it was that after years of planning dad and I would head to the Cape over the holiday break for what could be best described as a 'Boar and Barra' adventure.

### Let's roll

Coming from south-east Queensland I grew up hunting red deer and the occasional wild dog, so the prospect of pig hunting and barramundi fishing brought with it excitement and a chance to try something new. Dad and I packed the ute for the two-day drive north, overnighting in Mackay before stopping in Port Douglas where our guide, Nick from NC Trophy Hunting, picked us up for a further eight hours of travel to our hunting location - Koolatah Station on the Alice River.

As the landscape changed from rainforest and sugar cane to typical red dirt outback to grasslands and swamp, my excitement grew as I sensed we were nearing our location. On arriving at the station and speaking to the manager, we headed to our camp. It wasn't long before we saw our first signs of game, as only 10 minutes from the homestead a mob of five pigs crossed the road in front of the vehicle.

It was time to prepare. I took my Tikka T3X chambered in .270 from the bag ready for another mob to present itself and, just 10 minutes later, another group crossed our path, stopping at the side of the track to look back. I dashed to the front of the car to get a shot away and, just like that, had my first Cape pig, an old beat-up sow but it signalled the start of our hunting trip.

After successfully dropping more pigs we set up camp and decided it would be a good idea to try our hand at fishing. As the light began

to fade we flicked hard-bodied lures from the boat until dark, landing dad the first barramundi of the trip and myself some saratoga and catfish.

### A handy hat-trick

The first morning brought immediate success. We rose with the sun and checked out some swamps as planned and after visiting a few smaller ones made our way to one of the larger ones. With a sizeable body of water in the middle, soft mud round the edges and heavy tree cover surrounding it, this looked a likely spot. Sure enough, after walking into thick vegetation, Nick pointed out a midsized mob of sows and suckers feeding towards us.

Following his instructions dad and I waited for the pigs to come to us, Nick scanning the mob for any boars travelling with them. Within five minutes we were surrounded by pigs and after realising there were no boars, dad and I each chose a pig and took our shots, resulting in two healthy sows grounded.

We spent the following day employing the same tactic, driving past and stalking into swamps in search of boars and had our share of bad luck, many times stalking into a swamp just as the resident boar(s) took to the long grass to bed for the day. Frustratingly, several times good boars were visible in the distance only to disappear before a shot could be taken.

After five hours it was time to eat and just as we were heading for the shade of a large lagoon I noticed a pig emerge from the grass on the far side. As it moved away Nick pointed out what he thought was the back of the pig just visible above the grass so I moved into position, steadying myself against a tree for a 150m shot across the swamp.

I took aim and was sure I'd hit the mark but nothing dropped or





## Swamp Fever

ran off. Nick and I dashed over to inspect what I'd shot - a pig-shaped log - but as we approached it I noticed a pig standing still in the grass just five metres away. I shouldered my rifle and brought the young boar down then, to our amazement, another boar ran out from behind it. As I fired two more shots in quick succession he stumbled and fell.

As we started heading back to camp a boar trotted out of the swamp next to the vehicle. After chasing him down for a few hundred meters we came to a dirt road which provided the perfect shooting lane for me to exit the vehicle and drop the boar as he ran out of the long grass on to the track.

### Like a locomotive

After our success in the swamps we decided to spend a day walking creeks. Much like the swamps, covering ground was crucial and as dad and I walked up the creek the potential for scoring a good boar was obvious - there was an abundance of diggings and tracks in the sand and in some places waterholes were still muddled.

We approached a fallen tree draped over the bank which offered shelter from the midday heat. Suddenly there was an eruption as a huge black shape darted from behind the tree like a locomotive. We each chambered a round and took aim, dad taking the shot and bringing down a quality pig with a respectable set of tusks.

Walking creek lines was exciting, action-packed and productive as we were totally unaware of bedded boars until they burst from cover almost at our feet and hurtled through the trees in search of safety. Sometimes we got a shot away, sometimes not but we had several heart-stopping encounters with big boars I'll never forget.

### A trophy at last

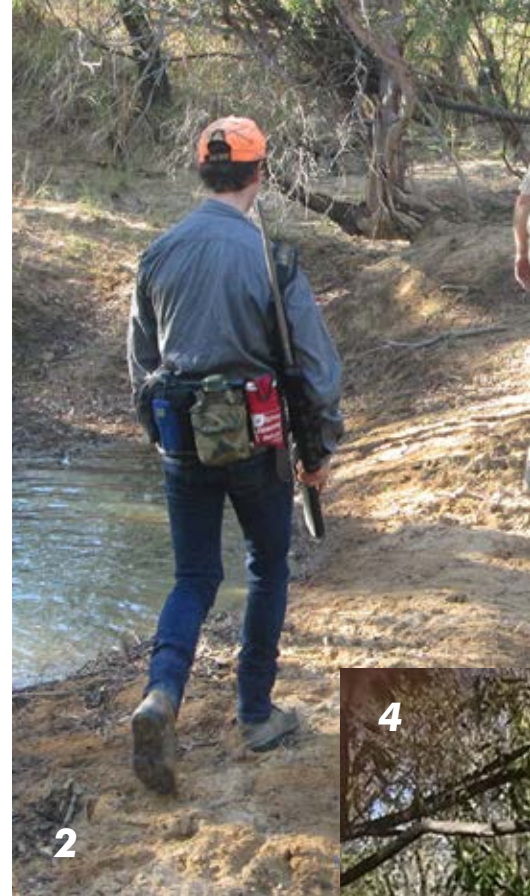
My trophy success came the following day while hunting new ground. We headed for a chain of swamps and had been stalking for half an hour when Nick spotted a black shape sunbathing on the far side. Even through the scope it wasn't until I noticed a wet hoof glistening in the sun I realised just what I was looking at - a quality trophy boar.

With the boar lying on his side, a shot from where we were would be too risky so, following Nick, I moved around the banks and into position. As we stalked into 80m the boar became aware something was up and had his ears pricked back. He rolled over, sitting in an upright position and with time running out I steadied myself and took the shot. He collapsed on the spot and I was chuffed to have scored myself a set of quality tusks as a lasting memory.

### Our northern safari

Overall our six-day trip was well worth the time and effort invested. Nick was a terrific guide and our nightly fireside conversations on hunting and game were a source of great information and entertainment as he's a hunter of real experience. Under his guidance we worked incredibly hard for our successes covering ground, walking creek lines and stalking tea tree swamps.

Some quality pigs, the added bonus of a couple of trophy boars and few barra each made for sweet reward. Having had the opportunity I'd love to visit this part of the country again as it provided a unique landscape and interesting hunting opportunities. The goal wasn't to shoot for numbers or take the biggest boars, but to strengthen our father-son relationship and forge lasting memories. I believe that's what dad and I did. ●



- 1 | Luring for Barra in the Alice River.
- 2 | Joseph and Nick walking a creekline - note the croc slide between them.
- 3 | Fun to catch but not quite a keeper.
- 4 | The smile says it all.
- 5 | A couple of boars shot off a lagoon.





but as we approached it I noticed a pig standing still in the grass just five metres away. I shouldered my rifle and brought the young boar down then, to our amazement, another boar ran out from behind it...



# 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 a piece of paper and mail it to us at:

**April 2020 Junior competition**  
**SSAA National**  
**PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061**

or enter online at [ssaa.org.au/win](http://ssaa.org.au/win)

*Competition closes April 30, 2020*

## SSAA Prize Pack

Bucket hat with  
fly net, earmuffs,  
and trigger  
combination lock



*Valued at*  
**\$119.85**



## Sign up a JUNIOR

SSAA National's 'Sign up a Junior' campaign was launched to help introduce youngsters to recreational shooting. Juniors are essential to the ongoing strength and vitality of the SSAA and **we are seeking your support to protect and ensure the future of the shooting sports in Australia.**

**[ssaa.org.au](http://ssaa.org.au)**