

MARVELOF TM Productions Presents

An Amish Farmland Lingo™ Production

By Steve McDowell

THE CUSTARD AVENGERS Cert 15

STARRING:

Sandy Walker AS The Human Bullet

On command self-guiding small parts of his own brain into the centre of the target -155 grains at a time. The brain is so large the commensurate drop in IQ is insignificant.

Steve McDowell AS The Incredible Accessory Man

Once poisoned by a radioactive pint of Guinness he now automatically produces a new and ever-increasingly expensive piece of kit the moment he fires a bad shot.

James Mehta AS Captain Custard

Magically selected to shoot for Great Britain he develops strange abilities. In moments of stress his entire left arm transforms into a giant custard cannon and propels big dollops onto someone else's target.

Jon Ford AS The Silver Shooter

With lightning reactions he can depresses a special button on his rifle stock which creates a time reversal spaectimecom interloop device™. Even though he is actually only 38, the device makes him resemble a 72-year-old man as he shoots like a 19-year-old cadet.

John Halahan AS Thor-Ass

A genetic Anglo-Moslem-Irish-Norwegian mutation gifted him with Buttocks of Steel™, rendering on command thunder and lightning from his very core. The device is destructively noisy at the best of times but at peak performance is an apocalyptic sensual assault allowing him to smite anything in the surrounding area, including the target.

Kim Pope AS Diddli-Dee

Always carries with her carries a magic penny-whistle which will at a single note instantly transform her into something vaguely Irish. Boijeysus.

Nigel Burnip AS Death-Ray

Killer sizzling ray eyeball which he synthesised himself from an isotope of pure Nigellium. His right eye ignites the moment he pulls a shot which builds deadly intensity as any poor shots go on. Misbehaving OFs can also attract a near lethal burst of the Nigellium Death Ray™.

John Horton AS Kneestool – Adj in chief - Automatic knees transform into a garden stool when the SuperAdj becomes The Shooter.

Seb Treacy AS Twodrinks – Gifted Atheling and OF shooter by day, extraordinary powers of recovery from English XX clubhouse ale by night.

Bertie Southworth AS T-Buster

The youngest member of the crew, gifted with powers of decisiveness, following a dangerous accident which made him drop his last shot in a 15-round national competition.

George Donsworth AS The Device

Lengthy periods of boredom see young George morph into a human version of Steve from Minecraft whereupon he has the ability to gameplay with himself.

Jonathan Thorp AS Hypno-man – Believes himself to be endowed with spectacular powers of persuasion where he can get OFs to pinch a glass of Rum Punch for him.

And Guest Starring

John Miller AS Dung Poo Panda – Mystical powers of communication from his alter- ego as the white-eared panda to all parts of the range to deploy dubious sense of humour.

Bisley, July 14, 2016. The Veterans

Assembled cast gather on the crowded firing point to take part in the Public Schools Veterans match. There are more than 15 of us giving three teams of five and some spares. After a long and largely unsuccessful OF shooting season – in which we won only the Lizard Cup against the Old Lawrentians – there is fresh hope in our hearts.

Even if the promise of some dubious weather gives us trepidation we advance gamely. The dozen members of the cast will all be staying on for another nine days to do battle in the ultimate challenge – The Imperial Meeting.

The forces of evil from Planet Bisley are massing against us in the shape of more than 100 other teams of public school veterans.

It is a delight to welcome three of the College contingent into the fold. Bertie Southworth after last year's triumph debuting for Suffolk, is to make a second appearance later in the meeting. Jonathan Thorp and George Donsworth make up the full contingent.

We are pleased to count among our brothers in right-doing the rarely seen but freshly retired David 'Muttley' Argent. Gathered with him was the equivalent of a mini-Fram reunion James 'Enterprise' Houston, Andrew "Slack Bladder" Slade, Chris "El Presidente" Essex. The elders of the band, Brian "His Royal Highness" Smith and Neil "That's it I quit" Joy are always a welcome sight to behold.

The A-team drop only four – with 50s from Captain Custard and Thor-Ass. Solid 49s from The Silver Shooter and The Human Bullet show their powers are in full flow and two off from Diddli-Dee leaves the A-side only 4 off from 250. Sadly, at this level that's too many and we come 10th. Even 49s from Accessory Man and Death Ray don't help the B-team either.

The Astor – next day

Early the following morning we proceed back to Century range where a stirring speech from Captain Custard leaves all our ears ringing to remind the Old Framlinghamians we are reigning champions and that we must smite all comers with our super-powers.

"He been smiting again," mutters Thor-Ass.

We channel our collective energies, Walker and McDowell in the coaching chair though there is more wind in Halahan's magic trousers and not a lot for us to do.

Still we deploy the magic penny whistle and perform with consistency, even though Kim Pope has grown a red beard. Regrettably though, young Seb endures a malfunction. Whether his rifle or his youthful power for absorbing over-indulgence we are not privy to know. Nonetheless we perform creditably with 104s from Mehta and Halahan and we leave, our heads held high only 16 off from a possible total of 630.

We are tenth from more than 25 teams. A few years ago we would have been pigeon-chested with pride. But now...

The Imperial Meeting.

Halahan is in the mood for more smiting and vanquishing, even though he announces he will only be shooting at short range due to pecuniary pressures caused by his daughter's recent nuptials. We think he's just chicken. And crap at long range.

Especially Accessories Man. There is a truism in this sport that very few problems cannot be overcome without the simple expedient of throwing large sums of cash at them. Having magically sprouted a new scope and stand over the winter due to a load of crap in last year's meeting, McDowell's results get only marginally better.

VADOOM! New shooting jacket! Blam! Sling! Blam! Glove! and instantaneously appears on the prize list for the dreaded 100-yard Corporation with a 48.6 (he comes 78th) alongside Captain Custard making a pair with a 49, and Baddam! McDowell's 49.6 in the 900-yard Conan Doyle puts him

squarely on the long range prize board. The rest of it is complete conkers but by the sound of him you would have thought he had single-handed conquered Kublai Khan's Golden Horde.

Meanwhile, the OFs are hurling themselves at prize boards as fast as they can make it up. The Human Bullet of course is on fire and appearing on almost every list imaginable, and then some that you can't. He is to finish 12th in the Grand Aggregate – the greatest test of consistency for rifle shooting in the world. Everyone would like to think he is a bastard. But we can't, because he's such a nice man. Bastard.

Day one proves interesting for Bertie Southworth who has been buoyed up by a solid placing in the Cadet 100. A 49.2 in the 900-yard Admiral Hutton gets him on the first prize list of the meeting yet is a mile away from that magic Highest Possible Score. The next day's Daily Telegraph 15-round shoot presents a new opportunity. The first 14 go straight into the bull, but wait... breathe, squeeze, Bang! Bollocks!

His 74.8 represents a fine score, and gets him on yet another list, but no-one cares about that when they've had a custard and he is spotted angrily stalking the woods behind Century range issuing a fearsome bollocking to himself, and is then immediately grassed up to the highly amused OFs by Thorp and Donsworth. Two more 49s before he finally gets the magic possible at the last possible chance – a 75.6 in the Prince of Wales.

Hypno-man Thorp has terrific success by deploying his immense mind-bending powers on himself in order to hit a fabulous 50.3 in the 300-yard Times to win his first Bisley medal.

A quiet year for The Silver Shooter, aka Air Cdre Ford, though he is among four OFs to make the second stage of St Georges where a second 74 means he is counted out. Yet after the excitement of last year's 21st in the Grand Agg and a second Queen's Final appearance everyone can have a bad day in the office.

Similarly for C. Death Ray has contented himself with giving dodgy butt-markers and recalcitrant OFs a stare that can make a sausage sizzle at 20 paces. Still, a 50.4 in the Times gives him his umpteenth Bisley medal.

Diddli-Dee's early meeting begins with an uncharacteristic slump in form which cannot possibly have coincided with her visibility in clubhouses who consider open hours to be advisory. However, one blast on her magic flute – either that or more Guinness - and her form turns north with fantastic shoots towards the end.

A tidy 50.4 in the Times leaves Thor-Ass Halahan swinging his mighty hammer in the face of the two most deadly foes Bisley has to offer: St George and The Queen's Prize.

St George's

The second most sought after prize on Bisley consists of 15 rounds at 300 yards. If you don't get a 74 there forget about the second stage where the remaining 300 shooters fire 15 rounds at 600 yards. This year saw the highest cut anyone could remember. There were 50 scores of 150 and 50 of 149 so it was fantastic to see five OFs in the second stage. Ford, Pope, Mehta, Treacy and Walker.

Yet even with 148s both Treacy and Ford excused themselves and that left three to fight for the prize and the letters SM (for Silver Medal) after your name with 15 rounds at 900 yards.

Which, of course, The Human Bullet did. His aggregate score (600 and 900 yards) of 150 with 27 V-bulls is the highest in anyone's recollection, and he wins it.

Bastard.

The Queen's Prize

With 101 and 10 V bulls from 105 to qualify for the second stage of the Queen's Prize there is a considerable scramble. If there is one thing the season mediocre Bisley Marvelman wants to achieve it is to make Queen's 2. And this year we did – in spades.

Pope and Halahan. Walker (natch) and even McDowell make the second stage (though he cocks it up at 300 and comes nearly last).

Mehta deploys his Custard Cannon. Needing only one more V for a magnificent three-range possible 105, the chump unleashes a huge arcing jet of custard clean through the V bull... of the target next door. This leaves him with 100.14 and an early bath to wash off all the custard.

Yet it is Halahan who becomes the second only ever winner of the triple Custard award after dropping his last at 600 yards to eliminate himself from the second stage at the last possible moment.

Sandy, of course, makes the final again.

Bastard.

The Counties

With Seb Treacy no longer eligible for Suffolk being as he is a student at Exeter University, the OF cudgels are taken up (well, more like bits of tractor, if indeed that is what a cudgel is) by vice-captain Pope, Southworth, McDowell and John Horton as Super-Adj. The county deploys its new OF-inspired strategy of Accumulated Reduction in Serious Errors (ARSE) and is rewarded with 9th place in the Long range and 10th in the Short – coming 10th overall.

Mehta yet again sprays custard all over the range and misses for Essex – even though he denies it.

Essex are nowhere and Suffolk beat them. Ha.

The National Match

Here the OFs really come into the frame. Only three years ago not a single one of us was even close to a National team. Now, with some imagination and a lot of digging in parish records around the realm Halahan and Pope are regulars in the Irish team, as are Walker and McMehta in the Scottish. McDowell – though genuinely half Welsh - is not actually very good at shooting very often and so has found himself a niche as a reserve for Wales.

As it turns out this is the best possible strategy. Because, despite the remarkable feat that Walker, Mehta and Halahan all achieve 105s (and all have the honour to be selected for the Long Range McKinnon as a result of these performances) Wales win.

Yes, Wales, for the first time in the 142 year history of the National Trophy, Wales won it with a score of 2084 ex 2100, this means 20 shooters dropping only 16 points between them. McDowell is greatly relieved that he was not required to fire a shot.

So finally off we drift after gathering more silverware, medals and hangovers than we can shake a magic stick at. Paaff! Shazam!

“I smite thee,” says Halahan to no-one in particular.

Only James remains, polishing his custard cannot and his blazer, awaiting a plane to Vancouver... but that's a story for another time.

Final Grand Agg positions

Sandy Walker- 12

Jon Ford – 224

James Mehta – 264

Kim Pope 300

Nigel Burnip – 422

Seb Treacy – 436

Steve McDowell – 497

Bertie Southworth - 564

Jonathan Thorp – 610

George Donsworth – 758

Horton, Halahan – not classified