

**KAPUNDA RIFLE CLUB**

***SHORT HISTORY***

---

**September 1994**

The history of Kapunda Rifle Club appears to have begun as early as 1863.

Extracts from information supplied by the Army Public Relations at Keswich read as follows: *1866. On March 16th a new Volunteer Forces Act was passed under which the existing Forces were to be abandoned and a new one created supported by a reserve of men who had served for 3 years in local forces. This disbanding order was issued on May 3rd, 1866 and recruiting for the new force began at once.*

The composition of the new force as follows:

- SA Regiment of Volunteer Cavalry
- No. 1 Goolwa Troop
- No. 2 Milang Strathalbyn Troop
- No. 2 Robe Troop
- No. 4 Adelaide Troop
- Artillery No. 1 Adelaide Coy.
- No. 2 Pt. Adelaide Coy.
- Adelaide Regiment of Volunteer Rifles
- No. 1 West Adelaide Coy.
- No. 2 (Scotch) Coy.
- No. 3 Kapunda Coy.**

It would appear that this company consisted of men who had already served 3 years in local forces. This would probably indicate that Kapunda Rifle Club had got started as early as 1863.

From 1870–1876 no Volunteer Force was recorded, however, on May 3rd, 1877 an appeal was made for volunteers for a force of 1000 men. The Force was as follows:

- Adelaide Mounted Rifles (1 Coy.)
- Adelaide Artillery
- Port Adelaide Artillery

Adelaide Rifles comprised of a Company from the Metropolitan area and from Kapunda, Gawler, Saddleworth and Clare.

From 1877 to 1897 little is known of Rifle Club history. However, amongst a lot of other early records there is a Kapunda Rifle Club score book dated 24th March, 1897 – 14th February, 1906 which is in good condition and contains the names of local rifle shooters and the clubs and events which took place during that period.

Some of the clubs competed against were as follows (N.B. these were in some cases postal shoots and shot on the club's own ranges. The scores recorded and duly posted to the opposing club where scores would have been compared and a winner declared. This system of competition is still conducted today. Kapunda Club having recently competed against a team in Tasmania.):

Voral Rifle Club, 1897 (Port Adelaide) – won by KRC by 74 points

Orroroo Club, Aug. 1897 – won by Orroroo by 5 points

Watervale Club, Sept. 1897 – won by Kapunda 641 – 572

Renmark, 6th Nov., 1897 – won by Kapunda by 134 points.

HMCS Protector, April 20th, Fired at Kapunda – draw 670 – 670

HMCS Protector, May 1898, Fired at Pt. Adelaide – win for Protector, 106 pts.

The Register, 28th Dec. 1898, Fired at Pt. Adelaide – win for KRC, 31 pts.

In 1904 it appears that a Mr. J.H. Sampson reported having visited staff office (Army?) and Port Adelaide Range and exhibited a model of a shutter target which he was employed by Kapunda Rifle Club to make and erect at Kapunda Range. It is believed that this type of target carrying machine is still being used at Port Adelaide, but was replaced at Kapunda in 1988 when new type cantilever machines were built and constructed by voluntary labour. Six machines are now operating of this type. One of the old target machines is currently at Kapunda Museum.

It was in 1904 that all M.H. (Martini Henry) rifles were called in and returned to staff office. It was at this time that the first 4 MLE, Lee Enfield Rifles, were obtained on loan and were allocated to Messrs. Captn. Hooper, A. Paterson, C. Scandrett and J.H. Sampson.

Whilst there is no official information at this stage as to the origin of our Rifle Club property, it seems that it may have been a gift from a deceased estate, the land title for which is dated 1902. The Kapunda Rifle Club Incorporated became the official owners of the property in 1981 after the passing of the trustees. This makes Kapunda Rifle Club one of the few rifle clubs in South Australia, and perhaps Australia, to actually own their own property. This would account for the Club still being active where other clubs have unfortunately for them been on private land, and when ownerships changed, were left without a rifle range. Angaston, Eudunda, Truro and Tanunda Clubs possibly suffered this kind of end, and have now transferred their shooting activities to Kapunda.

Today, Kapunda Rifle Club has members from Angaston, Nuriootpa, Tanunda, Lyndoch, Gawler, Kapunda and Gomersal.

A new Clubhouse was built and opened in 1974 by the late Sir Condor Laucke. This Clubhouse is of Besser brick, and was built entirely with voluntary labour. It is regarded by the Rifle Shooting movement as being one of the best in South Australia.

Our property now has the pleasure of the presence of Kapunda Pistol Club, who are a very progressive and enthusiastic body. They have built at their expense excellent shooting facilities and are welcomed as fellow shooters.

It is hoped that on the 19th of November many people will come and visit our display and join us in a friendly shooting competition as you have seen advertised.

---