

News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION

"Grümpelschiessen" Dinner 1965

That the Annual Dinners of the Swiss Rifle Association in London are some of the most popular events was proved once more when on Friday, 12th November, about sixty members, guests and friends assembled at the Glendower Hotel, London S.W.7.

Rifle shooting has been and will remain traditionally our most patriotic sport and hobby and this happy gathering of sharp-shooters, Swiss and English and from all walks of life, from Colonel to Embassy officials and from business tycoons, hotel proprietors, merchants, bankers, exporters and importers, to clerks and office workers, was indeed an unforgettable evening that went far too quickly.

Centuries ago, our forefathers in Switzerland fought the invading Hapsburger with bow and arrows. Today, the bow is replaced by the missile ramp and the arrow by the rocket with the deadly warhead. Nevertheless, the simple army rifle with which we faithfully and regularly exercise our skill still proves to be one of the most indispensable weapons in any war. We are proud to be the only band of foreign sharp-shooters allowed to fire our army rifles at Bisley, thanks to the kind and warm hospitality offered to us by the Surrey Rifle Association.

As usual, to kindle the right atmosphere, cocktails were served before dinner. On entering the dining room, one could not help noticing two tables laden with an amazing variety of prizes of which any gourmet would have been envious. Moreover, the top table was embellished with many silver cups and trophies, all of which had been won in many hard-fought competitions.

Towards the end of a most excellent dinner, the President, Mr. J. C. Wetter, proposed the Toasts to the Queen and Switzerland. He then extended a hearty welcome to the company and especially to our guest of honour, Colonel Werner Koch, Defence Attaché at the Embassy and to the two representatives of the Surrey Rifle Association, Mr. D. F. Cantlay, Vice-Chairman of that association, and Mr. R. S. Hadfield. The President also conveyed greetings from our Honorary President, H.E. the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Béat de Fischer and his sincere regrets at not being able to join us for dinner. Moreover, he warmly welcomed our Hon. Past President, Mr. Alfred Schmid, Dr. H. Rast, and various officials from the Embassy, Messrs. Tosio, Burgunder and Ansermoz. Mr. Wetter then announced that two of our most popular and well loved members, Mr. Alfred Stauffer and Mr. Freddy Suter, had passed away and it was only fitting that we all stood in silence for a few moments, in memory of their great services and loyalty readily given for so many years.

During his brief review of our activities during the shooting season, the President thanked the range officers for the efficient services rendered and expressed a special word of thanks to our Hon. Secretary, Mr. F. Magnin, for the fine work carried out so conscientiously and ungrudgingly at all times. Last but not least, a vote of thanks was expressed to the family Schmid for the generous hospitality our Association always enjoys at the Glendower Hotel. Needless to say, the President's address was greeted with much applause.

The next speaker was our guest of honour, Colonel W. Koch, who, on rising, received a great ovation and

whose interesting and constructive address was as follows:

His Excellency, the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Béat de Fischer, has asked me to convey to you his sincere regrets at not being able to be amongst us to-night and to take part in the celebration and distribution of prizes in connection with the "Grümpelschiessen" and the Handicap competition, which close our 1965 shooting season. Our Ambassador is compelled to attend another function out of town and asks you to kindly excuse his absence, wishing you at the same time a gay evening and, in particular, wishing our Association all the best for the future.

Personally, I wish to thank you very much indeed for having invited me as a guest of honour to take our Ambassador's place. I have accepted your invitation with the greatest pleasure, the more so, as rifle shooting has always been one of my favourite hobbies and dates back not only from the time when I was a young "Rekrut" and had the first rifle placed in my hands, but goes back much further to when I was a cadet during my "Kantonsschulzeit" or, in other words, when I was 14 years old. In addition, my father and my two brothers, whom I had often occasion to accompany to their practice camp on Saturdays or Sundays, were to me a living example of true rifle marksmen, which shows clearly that shooting is a family tradition with us. — Allow me, in my capacity as regular officer and representative of the Federal Military Department to address to you a few words in connection with off-duty training in rifle shooting.

"Today, we find ourselves in the age of mechanized warfare, where high powered automatic weapons are being used or, even worse, where strategic and tactical weapons for mass destruction are available. This leads a great number of people to the conclusion that the "gezielte Einzelschuss" the well-aimed single direct hit has now become a thing of the past. However, the Federal Military Department is of a different opinion. The military authorities claim rightly that in future also the single direct hit is of the utmost importance, whether it be from the carbine or the automatic rifle. For this reason, large sums are still spent at home and abroad on off-duty rifle shooting, thus hoping that as many Swiss as possible, of all ages, should have the opportunity to benefit from these facilities.

It is now ten years since I first had the pleasure to visit Bisley. The fellow countrymen I met then, are still here today, with few exceptions. This is a fine proof of loyalty. However, what I do find missing today is young blood which should guarantee the continuity and survival of our venerable Association. Nevertheless, I do realise, of course, the enormous difficulties and problems you are faced with in connection of the recruiting of young Swiss, the so-called "rifle enthusiasts", and how very much the odds are against you. Nowadays, the majority of young Swiss come to Great Britain for six months only or a year to study English and only a minority of this younger generation know of the existence of the Swiss Rifle Association. But even so, I wonder if all possibilities to attract them have been explored. In many cases means of transport may play an important factor, and I feel that especially this problem could be dealt with quite easily as so many of the active members are motorised. This remark is not meant as a criticism, but I make it merely as a suggestion in the hope that it might help to remove one of the obstacles which are endangering a cause so dear to us.

As I shall probably leave England next spring, I shall not have the pleasure to continue my beloved hobby of rifle shooting in your midst. However, I shall always remember the wonderful times I spent at Bisley and, with my best wishes to the Association and my heartfelt thanks to you all for your true comradeship, I should like to lift my glass and toast the well-being of the Swiss Rifle Association.

Colonel Koch was then asked to present the following SILVER CUPS: The Minister C. R. Paravicini's Challenge Cup to Mr. Marcel Bucherer; The Ambassador Armin Daeniker's Senior Cup to Mr. Francis Magnin (runner-up was Col. Koch himself); The Major Talbot-Smith Presentation Cup to Mr. Marcel Bucherer.

As it is customary, the distribution of the prizes followed under the able direction of Mr. F. Magnin, Hon. Secretary, amidst friendly boos and cheers, for the top prizes went — as they have in the past with almost monotonous regularity — to Messrs. Peter Fischer and Marcel Bucherer.

And so concluded an evening in company with friends of the shooting fraternity; an evening of many happy memories and of good cheer with no evidence of class distinction. Therefore . . . "if stranger, such no longer be, for our comradeship will conquer thee!"

H. SCHMID,
Press Reporter, S.R.A.

RESULTS 1965

Highest Scores attained during 1965 season: 1st Bucherer, Marcel (59 points); 2nd Fischer, Peter (57). **Minister C. R. Paravicini's Challenge Cup:** 1st Bucherer, Marcel (310); Fischer, Peter (307). **Ambassador A. Daeniker's Senior Cup:** 1st Magnin, Francis (149); 2nd Col. Koch, Werner (143). **Monsieur J. L. Revilliod, Presentation Silver, Cigarette case:** 1st Fischer, Peter (53); 2nd Jobin, Lucien (52). **Major Talbot-Smith Presentation Cup:** 1st Bucherer, Marcel (54); 2nd Fischer, Peter (50); 3rd Burgunder, Fritz (50). **Einzel-Wettschiessen Schweiz. Schützenverein:** 1st Fischer, Peter (85); 2nd Bucherer, Marcel (85). **St. Gallen:** 1st Bucherer, Marcel (92); 2nd Fischer, Peter (90). **Zürich:** 1st Fischer, Peter (56); 2nd Christener, Peter (56). **Feldschiessen:** 1st Fischer, Peter (84); 2nd Bucherer, Marcel (81). **Obligatorisches Schiessen:** 1st Fischer, Peter (106); 2nd Magnin, Francis (105). **Grümpelschiessen:** 1st Leuzinger, Hans (53); 2nd Christener, Peter (52). **Handicap Competition:** 1st Fischer, Peter (score 53 — Result 53); 2nd Jobin, Lucien (score 52 — Result 53).

CELEBRATIONS AT THE SWISS BANK CORPORATION

It was virtually "open-house" at the City offices of the Swiss Bank Corporation on the 1st and 2nd of December when cocktail parties were held in the Bank itself to celebrate the completion of work on the reconstruction of the 99 Gresham Street office. Work on the latter really originated as far back as 1959 when exhumation began of remains from the churchyard of St. Stephens, Coleman Street (the church was destroyed during the Blitz) and piles driven for the foundation of the new section of the building. (The bank has had an office in the City since 1898).

Present at these celebrations were the Chairman, Dr. Samuel Schweizer, Dr. R. Pfenninger and Dr. E. F. Paltzer, General Managers, together with other personalities from Switzerland. The Lord Mayor of London, Sir Lionel Denny, M.C., in the company of his Sheriffs, also honoured the gathering with his presence.

The celebrations were concluded on Friday the 3rd of December with a cocktail party for the Staff.

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CERCLE GENEVOIS DE LONDRES DINER D'ESCALADE

On the invitation to the Escalade Dinner 1965, the organising committee announced that this annual event would take a different form from previous years. For one thing, the venue was changed. The function on 10th December took place at the Dorchester Hotel. For another, a "Soirée Dansante Discothèque" was added, and members and friends were promised dancing "de la valse au sirtaki". The invitation was obviously well received, for over sixty Genevèse and others gathered at the Orchid Room. Geneva colours were in evidence everywhere. Red gladioli and carnations mingled with the yellow chrysanthemums and *gerbera*. The blue and white of the Orchid room reminded one of the Lac Léman and the snow-topped Mont Blanc. A magnificent *marmite* in chocolate rested on a stand in front of the presidential seat at the centre of the horseshoe-shaped table. The yellow and red ribbons accentuated the colour scheme. To make quite sure, even the wines were golden and red, the right colours to drink to the heroes of 1602.

The new committee is chaired by Mr. E. Ribordy, and he is assisted by Messrs. Roesch and Mange. That other stalwart Genevèse, Mr. A. Bleiker, who looked after his fellow countrymen for many years, was present, too, with Mrs. Bleiker. Mr. Ribordy, accompanied by his wife, welcomed the Genevois, the confederates and their English friends. He was particularly pleased to extend greetings to the Ambassador's representative, Monsieur Heimo, and Madame Heimo. He also welcomed the Editor of the "Swiss Observer". Members and friends had travelled quite a way; there was even a contingent from Bedford.

Once again, as is customary, the President explained the meaning of the Escalade ceremony. In descriptive language and not without a good bit of wit and humour, he recounted the historic event, the "grande victoire" of 363 years ago. Mr. Bleiker then read the list of names of the seventeen Genevèse who lost their lives on 11th December 1602. This solemn act of remembrance was followed by the merry destruction of the *marmite* — "*qu'ainsi périssent les ennemis de la République*"! And the chocolate work of art lay well and truly smashed. A *marmite* had been sent from Geneva, twice, and both times had arrived in pieces. It was due to the prompt skill of the *Chef Pâtissier* of the Dorchester Hotel that, finally, another *marmite* was ready on time. Three attractive young ladies — all dressed in black, by accident, I presume — distributed pieces of chocolate and the traditional vegetables made of marzipan. How anybody was able to eat any of them after the excellent dinner with its items called by historic names appropriate to the Escalade, was a puzzle to me. Crackers were pulled and glasses raised. The "carnet noir" of the late Mr. C. Campart made the round, and £28.8.0 was collected in aid of the Swiss Children's Annual Christmas Party. There was some singing of the Escalade songs, and then the record player was put to good use. Dancing went on for some time, before the enjoyable evening came to a close. As one not of Geneva origin or association, I may be permitted to pass unbiased judgment. To my mind, whatever the form of the Escalade, as long as all the old traditional customs and ceremonies belonging to it are observed, it cannot fail to be a success.

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