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SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION
"Grümpelschiessen" Dinner at the Glendower
Hotel, on Friday, November 22nd, 1957.

Riflemen, whenever I meet them, seem to me a very jolly and peaceful crowd although they handle a deadly weapon. Proof of this was the annual dinner of the Swiss Rifle Association, which took place as usual at the Glendower Hotel, their headquarters, where "Gemütlichkeit" reigned supreme.

Amongst the many sports which are practised in our country, rifle shooting is, if not *the* most popular without a doubt one of the most popular.

Shooting festivals ("Schützenfeste") are innumerable, and are occasions when patriotic speeches — often lasting for hours — are one of the main features, apart from the actual shooting.

No less important, judging from experience, is the eating and drinking, which invariably leads to the creation of a jovial atmosphere.

The "Grümpelschiessen" dinner of the Association followed very closely the pattern of similar functions held "back home". There were speeches — of reasonable length — and there was much "lubrication".

Before the company sat down to dinner, cocktails were served in one of the ante-rooms, during which the visitors were introduced to the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Armin Daeniker, who honoured the Society with his presence.

Much has been said and written in the past about Rifle Association dinners at the Glendower Hotel. They are known as feasts fit for Kings, let alone for Republicans. This year's dinner was no exception, as to both quality and quantity, and the 80 members and guests — tightly packed — thoroughly enjoyed all the good things the efficient chef of the Glendower had provided. The *Menu* consisted of "Le Jambon Cru", "Bündnerfleisch" and "Salami", followed by "Le Filet de Sole Frit, Sauce Remoulade", "Berner Platte", "l'Ananas au Kirsch", Cheese and "café".

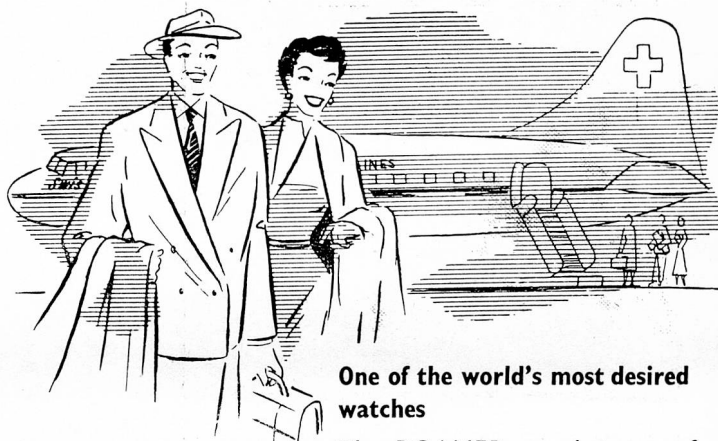
Amongst the beverages were "Châteauneuf du Pape", "Volnay", "Beaujolais", "Neuchâtel", "Johannisberg", "Chablis" and "Macon Blanc" — a most stimulating collection.

Unfortunately the popular President of the Association and host for the evening, Mr. Alfred Schmid, was unable to attend owing to illness, and his absence was much regretted. If all the glasses which were emptied wishing him a speedy recovery fulfilled

their purpose, the President should by now be as fit as a fiddle.

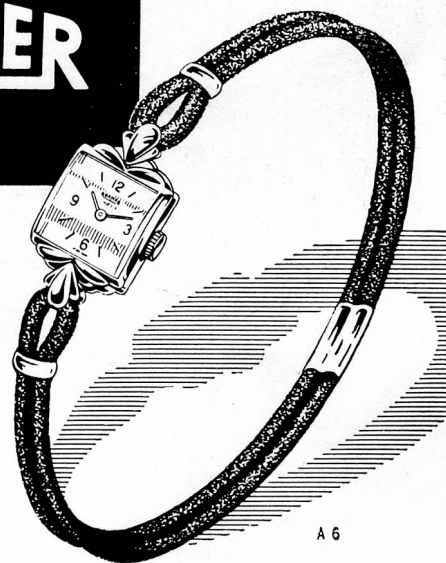
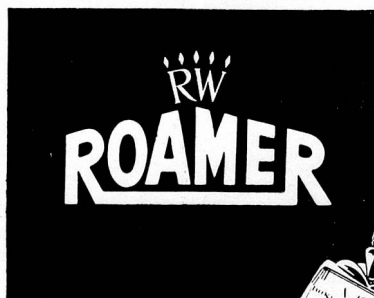
The Chair was taken by the Vice-President, Mr. J. C. Wetter, who proved to be a worthy and efficient substitute.

On coffee being served the Toasts to H.M. the Queen and to Switzerland were proposed by the Chairman and duly honoured, after which Mr. Wetter opened the speech-making by voicing regret at the absence of the President, wishing him an early recovery. He greeted the company, and tendered a special welcome to the Swiss Ambassador, of whom he said that he has always taken a keen interest in the doings of the Association. "He has", he said, "come to Bisley not only as a mere spectator, but has also taken part in the actual shooting, achieving good results". (Applause).



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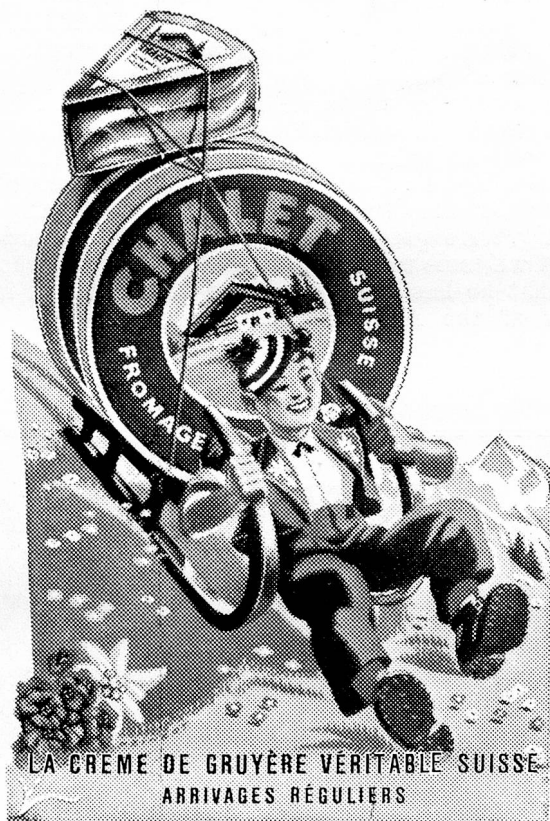
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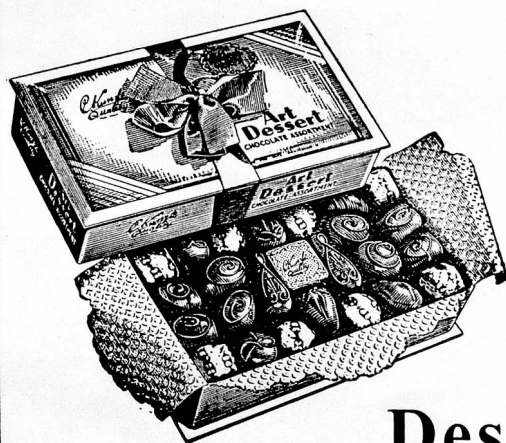
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The Chairman then welcomed the official guests, General-Staff Colonel Th. Mosimann, Military and Air Attaché at the Swiss Embassy, expressing the hope that he would follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, Lt.-Colonel Koch, who was a warm supporter of the Association.

He greeted the representatives of the Surrey Rifle Association (to which the Association is affiliated), Colonel G. B. Chetwynd-Stapylton, Major H. C. Patrick, and Major A. Talboth Smith. He voiced his pleasure at seeing amongst the guests Dr. H. Rast, and Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer"; of the latter he said, "he has been a rare visitor at Bisley, but has managed to attend the final shooting, no doubt with the intention of taking part at the *aphéritif* offered on that occasion to the Ambassador".

This "insinuation" was of somewhat a risky nature, as on that very day I had read in the daily Press that two well-known politicians were awarded heavy damages against a paper for making remarks about their drinking capacities. Being a close friend of the speaker, I have, however, decided to "let it go at that", and to attend in future shooting practices whether they are held with or without an *aphéritif*.

Mr. Wetter then, on behalf of the Association, tendered heartiest congratulations to Mr. Louis Chapuis, who was present, on his recent 80th birthday.

The Chairman then gave a short *résumé* of the activities of the Society during the past year, saying that excellent results had been obtained, principally by the younger generation, but that the older members also came up to scratch in spite of some "wear and tear".

In conclusion the speaker thanked the Ambassador and his collaborators at the Embassy again for their continued support, and the Family Schmid for having proved such excellent hosts. (Applause).

The Swiss Ambassador, in his short address, expressed the hope that Mr. Schmid would soon recover from his illness, and congratulated the Vice-President for having, at such short notice, so efficiently deputised. Monsieur Daeniker said that he very much enjoyed the shooting practices at Bisley, making a witty allusion as to the different "targets" diplomats and riflemen are aiming at.

In conclusion he referred to the rifle section of the Swiss Club Manchester, which, he said, has also registered good results, and mentioned that Colonel Gygli, who was a frequent visitor to the Swiss Rifle Association, had just been promoted to the rank of Divisional Colonel.

The address of the Ambassador was greeted with much applause.

Colonel G. B. Chetwynd-Stapylton, on behalf of the guests, thanked the Chairman and the members for the generous hospitality extended to them, and referred to the pleasant relations which exist between the two Associations. "Swiss and British", he said, "have much in common, not the least the love for Freedom and Liberty." (Applause).

Shortly after ten o'clock the prize distribution took place under the direction of Mr. F. Magnin.

This part of the evening was introduced by the Chairman in making a presentation to the Ambassador

of a large basket containing, I believe, some kind of bird covered with eggs and vegetables so that it was quite impossible to guess what was "underneath". A further presentation was made to Mr. F. Magnin, as Mr. Wetter said, "for his good and devoted services rendered to the Association".

The table on which the prizes were exhibited presented an attractive sight — there were many fine articles to be seen which could hardly be called "Grümpel"! At the back of the "Gabentisch" one could see the banner of the Association flanked by innumerable cups and shields won in many a hard-fought contest.

The guests, too, were remembered, each of them receiving a bottle of either Port or Sherry. This *beau geste* of the committee was much appreciated by the recipients. I could only wish that the Association's sister societies would follow their example. I calculated on a previous occasion that, if I had carried home a bottle each time I attended as a guest a dinner given by the various Swiss Societies for the last thirty years, I could now lay down my pen and establish myself as a wine merchant — providing I had kept them intact! On Christmas Day I shall open this bottle and drink a hearty Toast to the prosperity of my old friends of the Swiss Rifle Association.

Here are the results of the several competitions:

Challenge Cup. Winner, Marcel Bucherer, 309 pts.; Runner-up, W. Rüeger, 305 pts.; 3rd, Peter Fischer, 306 pts.

"Grümpelschiessen". 1st, R. Maurer, 53 pts.; 2nd, W. Rüeger, 51 pts.; 3rd, O. Grob, 50 pts.; 4th, J. Hess, 49 pts.; 5th Adolf Schmid, 49 pts.

Handicap Competition. 1st, H. Stettler, 59 pts.; 2nd, W. Altenburger, 58 pts.; 3rd, W. Rüeger, 56 pts.; 4th, R. Maurer, 52 pts.; 5th, P. Fischer, 50 pts.

Best average of the year. Peter Fischer, 52.166 pts.; Runner-up, M. Bucherer, 51 pts.

Highest score of the year, 57 points, shared by M. Bucherer and Peter Fischer.

With the approach of midnight this happy gathering dispersed, its members loaded with prizes and presents — and other good things which it would not be polite to mention.

It was an evening which will be gratefully remembered by all who were present, and especially by your reporter.

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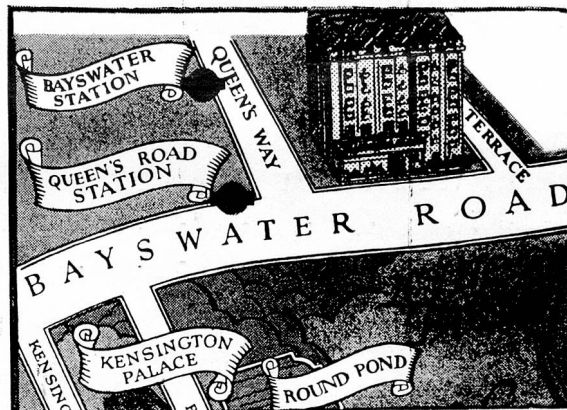
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