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Swiss Rifle Association

London's Swiss Rifle Association held its 1975 Annual General Meeting on 10 April at the St Moritz Club, 55 Wardour Street. The great majority of regular members turned up for the meeting which was held in the wood-panelled *Stube* of the St Moritz. Some apologies were received and the President, Mr Marcel Bucherer, announced that Mr Magnin, a member of long standing, had been unable to attend because of sickness.

The Secretary, Captain P. Burgisser, Assistant to the Military Attaché at the Embassy, read the Minutes of the previous meeting. The Minutes referred in particular to the loss of the Long Siberia Range at Bisley, the Society's venue for years and to the problems of securing regular meetings at Bisley's Centre Range. Captain Burgisser also referred to the decision of inviting women for the first time at the Society's Annual Dinner. This Annual Dinner is scheduled for 28 November at the Piccadilly Hotel. It is hoped that 80 to 120 people will attend a function that will constitute a highlight of the Association's history! Later during the meeting, the President called on members to contribute to the success of the event by their presence.

Surveying the Society's finances, Mr Hans Straub, the Treasurer, announced that the Committee had decided to put up subscriptions from £3 to £4 and to charge 30 pence per packet of 10 rounds against 25 pence hitherto. Mr Straub explained that the increase was necessary because of higher marking charges at Bisley. The cost of hiring a good marksman for the afternoon, he said, had risen to £5 and this would increase the Society's burden by at least £50 a year. The cost of ammunition had increased considerably and the Society no longer made a profit on its sale to members. Mr Straub said that the Society's reserves of ammunition were sufficient for the coming season but supply problems would be faced the next season. The cost of ammunition is rising from 17 Rappen to 28 Rappen a round in Switzerland. The meeting was told that our Swiss ammunition was comparatively cheap, as some NATO ammunition was costing up to £1 per packet of 10 rounds.

The meeting was also informed of the growing difficulty and cost of bringing ammunition from Switzerland to Britain. Customs clearance had become exceedingly complicated because of the Northern Ireland troubles.

It was feared that unless facilities could be obtained from official channels, the cost of transporting the ammunition would be added to the Society's future commitments. Captain Burgisser explained that he was endeavouring to have the ammunition brought over with the

help of the Embassy, but stressed again the difficulties involved. The Society has traditionally relied, to some extent, on the Military Section of the Embassy for its ammunition. Military Attachés have more than once brought "ammo" in the boot of their cars and the Military Department in Berne sponsors the Society's activities by donating £5 every year to its insurance cover.

The problem of subscription fees gave rise to a long discussion on how to strike a right balance between these fees and the cost of ammunition. Some members claimed that the high cost of ammunition would discourage younger members who put up regular attendances, and thus compromise the Club's vitality. But the counter-argument was that excessive fees would discourage the majority of older members who hardly ever went to Bisley but continued their membership for "old times' sake". It was stressed that these members could not possibly sponsor the hobbies of young marksmen. The Association has 63 members, approximately 20 of whom turn up regularly.

In the course of the discussion, some members suggested drastic increases in subscription rates, underlining the much higher rates demanded by similar societies. One member suggested £10, but this didn't find much support. Eventually, the meeting was asked to vote on two proposals: £4 subscription fees and 30 pence for 10 rounds (Committee's proposal) and £4.50 subscription fees and 25 pence for 10 rounds. The Committee's proposal was adopted by a large majority.

On the matter of marksmen, a member working for a Swiss-linked shipping company said that he could recruit at least three of his colleagues to mark on shooting Sundays. The offer was accepted by the President, who said that it should at least be put to the test.

The Committee was unanimously re-elected with Mr Bucherer remaining President. Talking about the programme of the new season, he said that only two fixtures had been established: 20 April and 11 May. Tentative dates for the rest of the season were as follows: 25 May, 1 June, 22 June, 14 September, 21 September, 3 October. The difficulty of fixing the programme in advance was due to transformation works undertaken at the Bisley range. Mr Bucherer also referred to a medal-maker in Switzerland who had offered a prize to the Association. It was decided to send him a letter of thanks.

Duplicate copies of part of the rules were distributed around the table. The rules referred to the problem of scoring. The President recalled that no one could mark his own score and that it was not possible to mark a 10-point event on a five point card. He was referring to a particular case that had arisen during the last season. The meeting finally agreed to increase the cost of life membership from £25 to £75 and to fix the deadline for remittance of subscriptions three months after the AGM.

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