

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1978)
Heft: 1745

Artikel: Crossbomen
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-689710>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 28.03.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

*Should you feel that
your Business Travel,
Conferences, Freighting and
Holidays, could be better
than they are, we offer
two words of comfort
Rankin Kuhn*

Many people believe that Rankin Kuhn provide the best and most personalised services available today in Business Travel, Conferences, Freight-forwarding and Holidays.

Rankin Kuhn made their name in world travel. And they do everything with polish, flair and style.

Rankin Kuhn. Try them once. You will never go back to the old standards.



**RANKIN KUHN INTERNATIONAL LIMITED,
19 QUEEN STREET, MAYFAIR, LONDON, W.1.**

Please send details of your services for Business
Travel Conferences Freight-forwarding Holidays

Name _____

Position _____

Company _____

Address _____

SO

CROSSBOWMEN

The impressive Latin word "arcuballista" means catapult and although over the centuries this became the popular German "armbrust" or crossbow its principles of stock, bow, bowstring and trigger remain the same today.

No Swiss would like to deny his national hero the right to the weapon, even though William Tell was certainly not the first to use it. In fact the crossbow originated in China. Long before there was a Switzerland it was in use in the far and near east from whence the knights of the Crusades brought it to Europe.

Swiss warriors quickly saw the value of the range and accuracy of the crossbow and in 1235 the weapon appeared on a coat of arms and seal for the first time — on those of the Lucerne alderman, Johann von Hochdorf.

Until the invention of gunpowder the crossbow reigned supreme as a long-range weapon. It was improved. The yew-wood bow was superceded by horn and then by iron, and the bowstring was strengthened.

But as a weapon of war its importance had slipped to second place by the 15th century, elbowed aside by tempered armour and the small firearm. Soon it became obsolete.

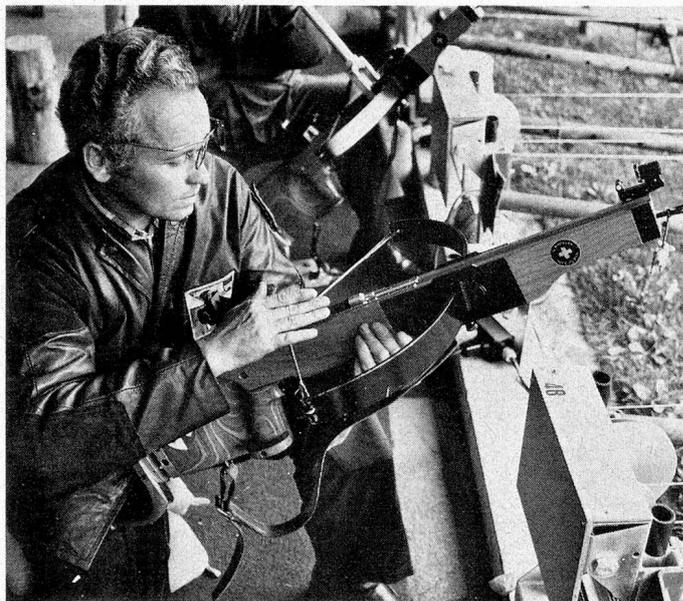
Today the crossbow is a sporting weapon, an expensive, pampered, precision instrument for target shooting — though its ammunition is cheap. Instead of boxes of non re-usable cartridges all it needs is one, or perhaps two "quarrels" or bolts — short arrow shafts — which can be used again and again.

A powerful hand-operated lever draws the steel bowstring back, setting it at high tension. A bolt is carefully placed in a groove against the bowstring. A steady hand and eye aims the 20 lb weapon at an 18 cm diameter target 30 metres away. A finger takes up the trigger pressure. Shoot! — The one ounce wooden bolt flies into the target. When the electric pulley returns the target to the bowman he can see how much of Tell's skill remains in him and if he has hit the bull's eye — the 14 mm centre circle.

So that the 2,600 members of the 123 branches of the National Crossbow Association can meet regularly a number of inter-regional and inter-cantonal competitions are arranged and every five years, there's a Swiss crossbowmen's championship meeting.

Crossbow archery is a sport without star players. There is no money to be won. The bowman competes for the honour of winning. Marksmen and onlookers alike are calm — the quiet congratulatory murmur at a bull's eye is praise enough.

Story and pictures by courtesy of SNTO.



The bolt is placed carefully in position in the groove. A careless move and the bowman can say "I shot an arrow into the air, it fell to earth, I know not where."

OF SWITZERLAND



Line up for a championship



Sidescreens of plastic or fabric are used to reduce wind effects.



Pouring lead for the targets

STÜNZI

Times and

Fashions change

but **STÜNZI** Silks

are as they have been

for more than

a Century . . .

beautiful, reliable, smart.

STÜNZI

L O N D O N ♦ P A R I S
B U E N O S A I R E S Z U R I C H

OBTAINABLE AT MOST LEADING STORES