

Swiss Rifle Association

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION

It is almost exactly 45 years ago when a small band of Swiss patriots living in and around London decided to form the Swiss Rifle Association of London. Although other societies and Clubs have since been created in our Swiss Colony, not all of them have been able to survive. But then the Swiss Rifle Association is no ordinary society, for its activity perpetuates the art of one of our dearest national sports, rifle shooting, a tradition which is followed and exercised by every true Swiss, irrespective of whether he resides at home or in lands far away from his own.

The Swiss Rifle Association in London is able to count today over 80 active and passive members, and many older and founder members (some of them over 80 years old) have in recent years regularly made an appearance on the battle ground of Bisley on Sundays during the summer months. This is, of course, a Swiss Society where class distinction has no room; there are no political, social or religious differences, for the aim of every member is to "reach the target", which in itself requires self-discipline, will-power and concentration, and there are plenty of competitions enabling us to attain these noble faculties.

As always, the shooting season of 1968 was wound up with the traditional "Grümpelschiessen" which took place on Sunday, 29th September. A grey Surrey sky and an occasional shower could not, of course, dampen the enthusiasm of many eager sharp-shooters, amongst whom we were happy to count our regular and always jovial supporter, Colonel W. Frei, Defence Attaché at the Embassy, not forgetting our founder member, Mr. Ad. Schmid. Many excellent results were again scored. Whilst live ammunition was obtainable until our rifles were hot, there was ample food provided for our hungry stomachs by way of a "barbecue" consisting of Swiss sausages from the grill and bottled beer from the coolness of the Surrey woods. And how I remember the frequent outbursts of laughter echoing through the adjoining woodlands whilst numerous jokes and tall stories were told in Swiss and English.

It has always been the custom to crown the end of the shooting season with a dinner, called the "Grümpelschiessen" Dinner, and this most popular event took place on Friday, 29th November, at the Glendower Hotel, London S.W.7, headquarters of the Association.

After the usual cocktails which no doubt stimulated the happy mood of many members and their guests, an excellent dinner was served, towards the end of which the customary toasts to the Queen and Switzerland were proposed by the President, Mr. John C. Wetter, and duly honoured. He then extended a hearty welcome to the company to whom he also conveyed greetings from our Hon. President, H.E. the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur René Keller, and his regrets for not being able to join us for dinner because of a prior engagement.

The President then greeted our Guest of Honour, Colonel Willy Frei, Defence Attaché at the Swiss Embassy, who has always proved himself by deeds and words a strong supporter of our Society. Unfortunately, said Mr. Wetter, Colonel Frei's intentions were to retire next summer and his departure would be regretted by one and all very much indeed. Mr. Wetter then warmly welcomed Dr. H. Rast, the two representatives of the Surrey Rifle Association, Brigadier G. Laing and Mr. Cannon, and the

Press Reporter of the Society, Mr. Hermann Schmid. Finally, he expressed his delight at having with us two of our senior and founder members, Mr. Adolf Schmid and Mr. W. Krucker.

The President then had the painful task of announcing the recent death of one of our esteemed members, Mr. Fred Schmid, jun., the son of our Hon. Past President, Mr. Alfred Schmid, who had always taken a special interest in all our annual functions. The entire company stood in silence for a few moments, in memory of his loyal services given for many years.

During his brief review of our activities at Bisley, the President thanked the very co-operative members of the Committee, especially the chief range officers Messrs. Marcel Bucherer and Peter Fischer, as well as our Hon. Secretary, Mr. Ch. Abegglen, for all their efficient and devoted work. In conclusion, Mr. Wetter expressed to Mr. and Mrs. Milani his and the members' appreciation for the generous hospitality the S.R.A. always enjoys at the Glendower Hotel and finally invited all the members to raise their glasses and drink the health of our guest of honour and all other guests and friends present. The President's address was greeted with much applause.

The next speaker was our Guest of Honour, Colonel W. Frei, who on rising received a great ovation. In thanking first all the members for the cordial welcome, he went out of his way to pay sincere tributes to the President and his committee and said how touched he was to witness at Bisley a great spirit and great work carried out by members like Messrs. Bucherer and Fischer, not forgetting our "barbicuer" Mr. A. Loetscher. Colonel Frei wished the Association every success for the future and it goes without saying that his address was loudly cheered.

After the two representatives of the Surrey Rifle Association had expressed their warm thanks and appreciation to the Company, Colonel Frei was asked to present the various Silver Cups; but there was one that never left his watchful eyes, namely the Ambassador A. Daeniker's Senior Cup, for it was Colonel Frei himself who won it in a hard-fought battle with the runner up, Mr. Charles Abegglen.

The distribution of the prizes followed under the able direction of Mr. F. Magnin and Mr. Ch. Abegglen, amidst friendly boos and cheers, for many top prizes went — as in the past — to the two chief range officers.

This concluded once more a most enjoyable evening in the pleasant company of our friends of the shooting fraternity.

H. SCHMID,

Press Reporter, S.R.A.

RESULTS 1968

Highest Scores attained during 1968 season: Marcel Bucherer, 59 points.
Minister C. R. Paravicini's Challenge Cup: 1st M. Bucherer, 2nd P. Fischer.
Ambassador A. Daeniker's Senior Cup: 1st Colonel Frei, 2nd Ch. Abegglen.
J. L. Revilliod Presentation Silver Cigarette Case: 1st M. Bucherer, 2nd B. Jaeggi, 3rd Ch. Abegglen.
Major Talbot-Smith Presentation Cup: 1st M. Bucherer, 2nd A. Loetscher.
Einzelwettschiessen Schweiz. Schuetzenverein: 1st P. Fischer, 2nd M. Bucherer.
St. Gall: 1st P. Fischer, 2nd M. Bucherer.
Zurich: 1st M. Bucherer, 2nd P. Fischer.
Feldschiessen: 1st P. Fischer, 2nd M. Bucherer.
Obligatorisches Schiessen: 1st A. Wiederkehr, 2nd P. Fischer.
Handicap Competition: 1st Marcel Bucherer, 2nd B. Jaeggi.
Grümpelschiessen: 1st A. Wiederkehr, 2nd P. Fischer.