

BLUNDELL'S MAGPIES 2010 SEASON

The first occasion of note this year was the Magpies' London Lunch, hosted and organized at the Special Forces' Club in the Spring by David Bentata. This was attended by 9 members (accompanied by 3 ladies), which despite the overpowering historical associations of the place, proved very relaxed and enjoyable. There was a period of silence in respectful memory of Robin Wellesley, shooting master during the 1970s, who had attended the 2009 Lunch, but who had recently died.

The OB shooters (or 'Magpies', as we are commonly known) did not appear at the school on OB Day, as for some reason there was no match. However, we were extremely impressed with the Blundell's cadets' performance in the SW schools' open range meeting in May, where the coaching of both James Postle and Col. Tim Courtenay succeeded in producing convincing winners in both the cadet and reserve pairs competitions. We look forward avidly to seeing how those involved are able to develop their marksmanship in future years.

The Magpies entered two teams in the Public Schools' Veterans match at Bisley on 15th July, and though a little disappointed not to be able to see a return of the school team, the 8 men who shot (average age now not too far from 70!) managed to hold their own despite a strong and very variable cross-wind which affected the performance of the righteous and unrighteous alike. Mike Chandler was the top scorer with 47 ex 50, and Ian Anderson followed closely with 46. David Willoughby also performed very creditably, his score of 45 marking a gradual ascent to form after a mere year or two of returning to the open range after a gap of some 50 years. The A team score of 209.9 was insufficient to challenge the leaders of the field, but was nevertheless enough to secure the return of the Anstey Salver, as Clifton Old Boys had achieved the lesser total of 199.

Apart from those already mentioned, other Magpies who shot included David Bentata, Col. Tim Courtenay, Richard Price, Hugo Brooke, and Peter Ward. Ben Wrey was on hand to give us his valuable services as wind coach, which clearly influenced the higher average scores of the B team... We were also very pleased that James Postle managed to spend some time with us prior to the shoot, despite the intensive task he was engaged in, before the various school teams disappeared for home following the Ashburton, of trying to select a national cadet team to shoot against the Canadians later in July.

The pattern of traditional socializing then ensued, the bonhomie of a round or two of drinks on the verandah of the North London Rifle Club being well cemented by a pleasant dinner at the nearby Fox pub, during which the problems of the NRA, the new government, and most of the universe were effortlessly solved by the increasingly jovial company.