

# BLUNDELL'S MAGPIES RIFLE CLUB

NEWSLETTER - MAY 2013

Dear Magpie,

Greetings again to you and your clan in whichever neck of the woods you happen to be! I hasten to bring you the usual annual update on the Blundell's shooting scene, which at present is effectively us. I enclose a copy of the final report on the 2012 season for those not in cyber contact with the Blundell's website - and in the interests of equality, also for those who are. There are no photographs of the 2012 Veterans' team at Bisley for very good reasons - mainly because it was so cursedly wet, no one would have wanted to pose even if there'd been a camera handy!

Our 2013 programme has already begun; sadly, I have to report the death in March of **Ian Anderson**, Captain of the VIII at Bisley in 1953, who for many years was a much-respected marine architect in the West Country (a full obituary can be seen on the OB website). Ian had not kept up with shooting after leaving Blundell's, but returned to the fold in 2006, when there was a shooting-themed lunch on OB Day. Since then he had shot each year at the Veterans' match and had made some excellent scores. With an irony at which Ian might perhaps have allowed himself a wry smile, the hour of his passing (in a Devon hospice) coincided exactly with our first event of the year, the London Lunch.

The 2013 London Lunch, the seventh such occasion organized by **David Bentata**, was held again at the Special Forces Club on 5<sup>th</sup> March, and attracted a healthy assembly of 13 Magpies with 2 lady guests. Present, in addition to David himself, were **Ben Wrey, Lt. Col. Tim Courtenay, Dr David Rutter, David Willoughby, Chris Barker (with Marion), Tony Ward, David Condy, Hugo Brooke (with Gilly), George Tilley, Peter Moore, Mike Chandler and Peter Ward**. The Magpies noted that good wishes had been sent by the new Blundell's Head, Mrs Nicola Huggett, and were duly appreciative. Ben Wrey presented Col. Tim with a fine antique Devon regimental shako badge in acknowledgement of his active liaison with the School. Col. Tim then took the opportunity to describe in outline the planned tour he intended to lead in April 2014 of the Great War battlefields in France and Flanders, with particular emphasis on the parts played by individual Old Blundellians in key engagements, including visits to CWGC cemeteries where appropriate. He pointed out that the timing of the tour was intended to avoid the anticipated 'rush' later that year, when accommodation would be likely to prove very difficult to find anywhere near the areas of interest.

**OB Day this year will be on 15<sup>th</sup> June.** Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of Col. Tim as Chevithorne Captain to arrange a mini-range match during the afternoon, the current pupils will apparently be far too busy with vital activities such as cricket, tennis, earnest pursuit of beneficial social projects etc. to allow time for a match with OBs. We were kindly offered the chance to shoot a card or so as individuals by way of practice activity, but as this rather missed the point, the suggestion was politely declined. However, Col. Tim has arranged with the OB Club that there should be a 'Magpie table' (also known as the 'Falling Plate table') at lunch in the marquee, and at the time of writing there are 12 of us probably attending. As each table notionally accommodates 10, and wives and partners are very

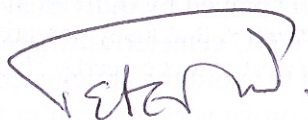
welcome, it is quite possible we could stretch our requirement to a second Magpie table if more interested diners materialize - anyone so inclined is urged to contact Mrs Amber Oliver in the School's Development Office (tel no: 01884-232324). There are several incentives this year, for beside the usual high-octane sociability factor, we will be able to hear at first hand the first lady Head of Blundell's, to hear Mrs Sue Beale (Colin Beale's widow) read the lesson in chapel, and also to hear the observations of the day's President, the redoubtable Robert Fox, MBE ("I counted them out and I counted them all back"), whose reflections on a Blundell's education were set out in his memorable 1992 letter to the Daily Telegraph.

The Schools' Veterans match this year will be shot a little earlier in the calendar than has been usual, at approx. **17.00 on the evening of Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013, on Bisley Century Range**. One team (of 5 firers) has been entered, although if I am given reasonable advance warning that enough OBs will be attending and wish to shoot, I shall book a second team to follow on with the same target. As in previous years, anyone able to bring a rifle and/or other shooting accoutrements will qualify for particular gratitude, perhaps in the form of a drink or two later on; all who assemble should be prepared for rain (think back to last year!) and also for the dreary task of register-keeping for the other teams. This last chore has long been tacitly acknowledged as superfluous, even by most range officers, but it remains a technical requirement which we are occasionally forced to go through with. Another lurking formality is the Certificate of Competence - as we can be disqualified if neither firer nor coach is able to produce one, the more of us who can carry one on the firing point, the better our chances of avoiding embarrassment with the NRA.

The Veterans' match is usually completed for most schools before 19.00, and it is likely that we shall head thereafter somewhere in the camp for a noggin, and after that to some eaterie for a relaxed dinner for those able to do so. It goes without saying that guests are more than welcome, and the supporting presence of OBs will be appreciated whether they shoot or not. The twin objectives are (a) to have a good time, and (b) to keep on maintaining the Blundell's presence at Bisley.

That seems to be about it. I hope to see some of our scattered number later on in the year, but regardless of that I wish you and yours all the very best, not least a much better Summer than we had last year .....

Yours with our backs to the wall and convinced of the rightness of our cause.....



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Bisley Captain

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