

# BLUNDELL'S MAGPIES RIFLE CLUB

President: G.H.H.Brooke Esq. (NC 1949 - 54)

## NEWSLETTER, MAY 2017

Dear Magpie,

Spring is now upon us, and despite the political upheavals which the World seems intent on thrusting our way, I can once more offer you the gentle, familiar fare of the Magpie shooting season to mull over without fear of unwelcome surprises...

Our first event in the 2017 programme was the London Lunch, organized as ever by the redoubtable team of David Bentata (who chaired the gathering) and Linda Smith, until recently a school governor, which took place in the Special Forces' Club on 14th March, and at which we were fortunate enough to have as our principal guest Mrs Nicola Huggett (Head of Blundell's). There is a separate report on the event on the OB website, from which the well-established tradition of bonhomie and (occasionally) subtle humour may be perceptible; the drawback of these merry meetings is that there's never enough time fully to exploit the rich mine of memory lying under the surface! Some who attend still work for a living, and some have long return journeys to embark on (the others know who they are), but all seem to enjoy themselves hugely in the company of friends of up to sixty or more years' standing. Shortly after this Lunch, OBs were greatly encouraged to learn that Barry Dawe, SSI at Blundell's, had been promoted to Captain and appointed OC the school cadet force. Well done sir!

The next item on the programme will be the mini-range shoot scheduled for the morning of OB Day, Saturday 17th June. In deference to the more devout elements among us, the range will be open for firing from 10.30, so that at least one detail can be through before the chapel service starts at 11.00; it is planned that a prize giving will be held at 12.45, shortly before the marquee lunch, to bring the match to a close. It is hoped to have at least one Magpie table at the lunch; details as to how to secure a place are provided elsewhere on the website, but the contact person is Mrs Janet Wooff, OB Club Administrator. The Magpies' Chevithorne Captain is Lt. Col. Tim Courtenay – who, as guide on recent battlefield tours, will also have fellow pilgrims on nearby tables. Col. Tim will be working with Capt. Barry Dawe in the mini-range at what we hope will be a hard, closely fought encounter between youth and experience, though it must be admitted that youth has had the edge (to put it mildly) in recent engagements. However, a number of younger OBs are showing interest in this fixture, and there is reason to hope the tables could be turned some day soon...

A Magpie team has been entered for the Schools' Veterans match at Bisley on Thursday 13th July, which will be shot on the Century range. In order to make the day easier for those who have appreciable distances to cover, we arrange to meet at midday for a leisurely snack lunch, after which there is time to visit the various ranges and other interesting features of the camp. For those concerned, there is the chance to have a practice shoot at 16.00, and the match proper starts at 17.15. This is usually concluded before 19.00, following which those who are able to stay a while may enjoy further socialising. As we are fortunate that some of our number are also members of the North London Rifle Club, we will foregather at their invitation outside the main entrance of that club.

As many Magpies are now unable to shoot by reason of 'Anno Domini', we would be happy for any more recent leaver to join us on the day. Although actual shooting has to be restricted to those with experience on the open range (including as supervised by James Postle or Barry Dawe since 2009),

there is a significant group of supporters already in being, and any OB who'd like to have a day out with a difference, or is curious to know what goes on at Bisley, would be more than welcome to join the party. If you'd like more background information, please get in touch with me, preferably sooner but at the latest by 10th July. For those who have taken part in this event before, I need hardly re-emphasise the wisdom of preparing for wet weather on the firing point; supporters, however, have the option of remaining in the comfort of the clubhouse if the elements are too wild! As ever, I must also mention that all firers must be 'certificated', or be coached by someone who is...

At the time of going to press, the Veterans' event is the last formal fixture of the season. However, it is still relatively early in the summer, and there are still other possibilities; should any crystallize in due course I shall be in email contact with club members nearer the time. Until then, may I offer best wishes for health and general well-being to all scattered Magpies and their ever-increasing clans, all the while echoing politicians of all persuasions with promises of broad, sunlit uplands ahead, and of limitless handouts to every deserving sector, which can pull a few votes.

Yours with effusively generous feelings;

Peter Ward,  
Bisley Captain.

PS: Who, where, when?



(Courtesy George Tilley)



(Courtesy Di Chandler)