

BLUNDELL'S MAGPIES RIFLE CLUB

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

NEWSLETTER, MAY 2019

Dear Magpie,

Greetings once more, as the season stutters to decide which mode it wants to adopt as it slowly advances...

Our programme has already begun with the latest London Lunch, held on 5th March in our favoured location - only possible through the kind offices of David Bentata, assiduous organizer and impeccable chairman of the occasion, helped by the good offices of his partner Linda Smith. There is a fuller report on the main shooting website, but the highlights of the occasion were speeches by the Headmaster, Bart Wielenga, and the Officer Commanding the Cadet Force, Barry Dawe, who had both made time from busy schedules to be with us. Honorary membership of the Magpies was confirmed to Diane Chandler, and awarded to Linda Smith and Barry Dawe - all by the presentation of new-style Magpie badges by the President, Hugo Brooke. Attendance at the Lunch was at near-capacity, and all enjoyed their opportunity to chew the fat with contemporaries from many years past.

Our first shoot this year will be vs the School, on **OB Day, Saturday 15th June**. As this has to take place in the morning, it will be necessary to try and fit range practices around other, more general events already planned, in particular the OB Club meeting at 09.45 and the chapel service at 11.00. Our Chevithorne Captain, Lt. Col. Tim Courtenay, has kindly arranged with Barry that the range should be open to OBs as from 09.30, and it should be possible for a reasonable number of Magpies to shoot a card between then and the chapel service if they wish to attend this. Those wishing to attend the OB meeting can do so, and come down to the range a little later. Those wishing to attend both have a slight dilemma! In fairness, a number of the Old and Bold are unlikely to wish to fire in any case, and can fulfil their civic roles without worrying about actually competing... There will be a formal prizegiving, I anticipate somewhere in the general vicinity of the Colin Beale Centre, later on during the morning (time t.b.c. on the day, possibly adjusted to numbers shooting).

I assume all addressees will already have received invitations from the OB Club (Mrs Janet Wooff) to apply for tickets for the day, and it is hoped that we shall be able to make up perhaps two Magpie tables for the marquee lunch. As this year we are privileged to have a distinguished lady (Jessica Mannix) giving the principal speech, our attention is likely to be pleasantly engaged. Perhaps the best news is that stirrings of interest have emanated from more OBs who were pupils in the 1980s and later, and it may be that the School team will have a more realistic opposition than the venerable Old Guard (no disrespect of course!) which has tried its valiant best in the last few years...

This year for some reason the NRA has decided to hold the Ashburton Shield competition on the first Wednesday of the Imperial Meeting, rather than as in previous years (the schools' meeting will actually now start on the previous Saturday); the Veterans' Match on the same afternoon will therefore

be held on **Wed. 17th July**. The Magpies will follow the same routine as last year, in that we will meet by kind invitation of Ben Wrey and David Bentata on the verandah of the North London Rifle Club at Bisley, at around noon, for an informal lunch. As the actual veteran shoot won't be until after 17.00, this will give plenty of time for cud-chewing, sauntering out to watch the closing stages of the Ashburton match itself, and even a bit of zeroing practice for those so inclined. Bisley is an interesting place, especially for those who may not have been there before. (For example, it's probably the last place in the country where they have proper, unashamed verandahs.)

One team of five has been entered; for ideal enjoyment of the occasion we'd need good weather, which unfortunately might not happen - so the bringing of wet-weather gear is advised! We'll also need competent coaches and at least one good target rifle, so although as far as possible these will be pre-arranged, any Magpie able to help in either respect will be especially welcome. For supporters the warmth of the clubhouse will always be at hand should any rain be too tiresome... If for any reason I am asked to enter an additional team, this can be arranged in advance; however, please remember that any competitor **must** have had previous experience on the open range, that anyone not 'certified competent' by the NRA (probably most of us) must be coached by someone who is, and not least, that there is a £20 share of the team entry fee to pay.

The Magpies have felt very encouraged during recent years by the support afforded to School shooting by Head teachers, and by the evident nurturing of huge interest in the sport by Barry Dawe and colleagues at grass roots level. There is, sadly, an apparent reluctance on the part of the MoD to facilitate open range activity amongst schools generally, which many former pupils feel is disappointing - in view of their experience that shooting offers valuable training in teamwork, time and resources management, effective personal administration, focus on specific objectives, and concentration on individual effort towards a common goal. Mere jargon? A point of view maybe, but nevertheless the part played by our shooting forbears in the nation's wars of survival is some evidence that their training proved to be priceless when it really mattered. A look at the former shooters' Roll of Honour since 1914 reinforces the point. We acknowledge the School's current effort and successes in the smallbore and service rifle fields, and wish it all best in future endeavours.

With all good wishes to those in the Magpie diaspora, wherever it now stretches;

Yours with all necessary, updated nuances of political correctness,

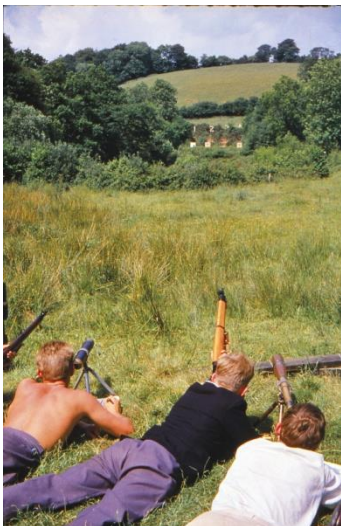
Peter Ward,

Bisley Captain.

Archive section. (Who, where and when?)



1. The Seven against Thebes...



2. Waiting for the marker to 'click'. 3. Inquest on someone's shoot (Photos by George Tilley).

4. Who was smoking in the butts? (Sadly, no photos available. But they know who they are.)



5. M. Le President visite des champs historiques.



6. Group of seasoned characters (planning their next heist?).



7. Group of keen young fellows, one and all.

8. For bonus points, does anyone appear twice in any of the above (A.S.D. excepted)?