

London Swiss Rifle Team

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LONDON SWISS RIFLE TEAM

From time immemorial rifle shooting has been the national sport of our country, in fact one associates the name of Swiss with that of a good shot. Every weekend, throughout our country, shooting practice is taking place at hundreds of shooting ranges.

This sport is by no means confined to men alone, it is quite a common sight to see ladies carry a rifle over their shoulders instead of a handbag.

Every five years a Federal Shooting competition takes place in Switzerland, these festivals are not only an important sports event, but also great patriotic demonstrations, where innumerable speeches are made, and still more bottles of Swiss wines are consumed.

It is, therefore, not surprising, that those of our compatriots, who leave Switzerland to try their luck in foreign lands, keep up this sport which requires a keen eye and a steady hand.

At the periodical International Shooting Competitions, Swiss teams have always been at, or near, the top.

Going back in the history of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain it is reported that rifle practice has taken place in this country at least two centuries ago.

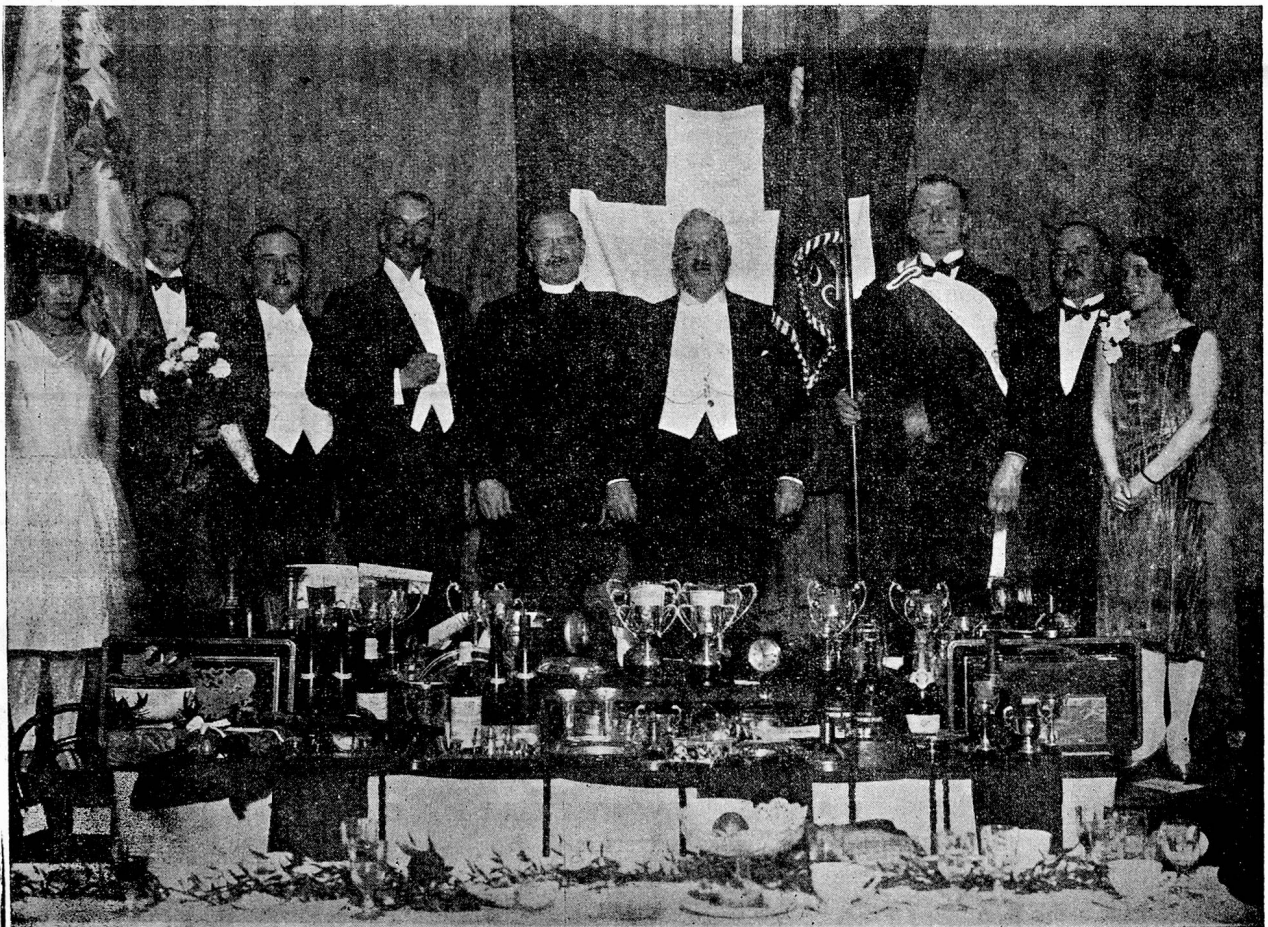
It might interest our readers to hear, that the

London Swiss Rifle Team has recently decided to resume their activities, and a new committee has been formed consisting of the following Gentlemen: Alfred Schmid, *President*; J. C. Wetter, *Vice-President*; F. Magnin, *Hon. Secretary and Treasurer*; Messrs. Captain Hurter, W. Fischer, and C. Nater, *Range officers*. Shooting practice will take place every Sunday at the Bisley Camp (Surrey) and all Swiss are cordially invited to join this Society. Swiss army rifles are at the disposal of the members.

We take this opportunity to report a few facts concerning Swiss rifle shooting in this country in recent times.

In 1923 (November 24th) the Swiss Rifle Association was founded under the Presidency of Mr. G. E. DeBrunner. Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the then Swiss Minister in London, was nominated Hon. President, and during the twenty years in which he was *en poste* in this country he always took a great interest in this and a subsequent Society.

Shooting practice was held regularly throughout the year at Hendon Shooting Range and that the endeavours of this Society met with the approval of the Colony was proved by the fact, that within a year of its foundation 90 members were enrolled.



Left to right: H. Senn (+), E. Werner, M. C. R. Paravicini (+), Pasteur R. Hoffmann-de-Visme (+), Chas Strubin, Alfred Schmid.

In 1929, for the first time, the Swiss Rifle Association took part, with a team numbering 30 members at the Federal Shooting Competition at Bellinzona, where they obtained 6th rank from 13 competing foreign sections; besides this honour quite a number of laurel wreaths were obtained by individual members. It was certainly a remarkable *début* for this young and active Society.

An important event took place the same year, which deserves special mentioning. The Society was presented with a banner by the late Mme. Cusi. The presentation took place on the occasion of the Annual Banquet on November 29th at the Union Helvetia Club, 1, Gerrard Place, W.I., under the Presidency of Mr. Alfred Schmid, the then Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, being in the Chair. The banner was blessed by the late Pasteur R. Hoffmann-de Visme. (See photo.)

For the next three years the affairs of the Swiss Rifle Association took its normal course. Many friendly matches, apart from the usual practice meetings were held with various English shooting clubs and highly satisfactory results were obtained.

In 1933, unfortunately, some trouble started, and the Association split into two camps. As this is now past history we need not go into the matter here, especially, as some years later the differences were amicably settled.

The direct result of these disagreements was, that a new Society was formed in 1934, with the name of the London Swiss Rifle Team under the Presidency of Monsieur W. de Bourg, Counsellor of Legation.

This team attended the Federal Shooting Competition in the same year at Fribourg where they obtained 5th rank amongst the foreign teams who attended, and again in 1939, they took part at the Federal Shooting Competition in Lucerne obtaining 6th place.

The activities of the Society came to a sudden end when the 2nd world war started in 1939, and shooting practice was not resumed until early in 1949, when once more a team of nine men participated in a Federal Shooting Competition, this time at Chur, obtaining a silver laurel wreath, an exceedingly favourable result, considering they had been unable to practice for over ten years.

We are indeed glad to hear, that this Society which has had such an honourable record, has once again resumed its activity, and we wish them the best of success in their endeavours to carry on one of our finest and noblest national sports.

ST.

SWISS CLUB, MANCHESTER.

On Wednesday, March 22nd, the members and friends of the Swiss Club, Manchester were privileged to hear a lecture by Colonel F. Erb, his subject being the special winter and summer training courses for the Swiss mountain troops.

The audience listened with growing interest to the impressive account which the speaker unfolded of the arduous task of organising and carrying out this training, and of the truly remarkable results achieved.

Colonel Erb then brought home his main points in a masterly way by unrolling before our eyes an excellent documentary film of the actual training courses. These thrilling action pictures — explained by him with the skill and enthusiasm of the expert soldier and mountaineer — illustrated his subject most impressively; and the views — all of which seemed to be taken from the loveliest spots in the heart of the Bernese and Valais Alps — enthralled the whole audience. It is indeed difficult to describe in retrospect the pride we felt in the feats accomplished by our mountain troops during their difficult and highly skilled summer and winter exercises, and the joy we experienced in having the wonders of our alpine scenery portrayed to us in such beautiful and arresting pictures.

The important role played by Colonel Erb in the training of our mountain troops was duly acknowledged by Mr. G. Senn, our President, and Mr. J. J. Huber, our Consul, who thanked the lecturer in fitting words on behalf of all present.

R.T.G.

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