

Newsletter

MLAIC funds and banking

There is currently the sum of 2650 GB Pounds held in one of my savings accounts. I have appointed Mr Gareth Callan (a member of the GB Team and a bank manager in Jersey) as the MLAIC Treasurer. He is in the process of opening an MLAIC bank account. I will inform you when this is active and the MLAIC funds have been transferred. This is unlikely to be before the European Championships in Valencia, I would suggest, for those of you attending, that you bring your annual subscription with you in Euros, for those of you not attending, I suggest waiting until the account is set up and then transfer the funds directly.

I believe it is time to review how the funds we hold are used, at the current rate of expenditure the funds will continue to grow significantly. Most of all I am concerned that the expenses for the Secretary General and, when necessary, the Deputy Secretary General are paid for by the host nation for MLAIC Championships. These expenses are added to the costs for the event and passed directly to the shooter. I believe it is now time to remove this burden from the shooter and pay the SG's expenses from the main fund.

I also asked the Commission for some suggestions on finance and they have been forthcoming. Some of their suggestions are:

- Appoint a professional web site company to re-design our web site. This would definitely improve the profile of the MLAIC but initial cost would probably consume all of our funds and there would also be ongoing expenses.
Please note; both Bucky and I have explored the use of volunteers for this but so far they have proved unreliable but I would like to keep this option open.
- Promoting the work of the MLAIC in our own e-magazine and also regular articles in current publications. Please see the following link from our good friend Balázs in Hungary for an example – you may not be able to understand the words but examine the concept.
<http://www.kapszli.hu/emagazin/FM%20eMagazin%2017.%20szam%202009.%20julius.pdf>
- Sponsoring young and gifted shooters who are not in a position to fund themselves. This is a grand principal and one we should embrace. However, setting up a scheme like this could be very difficult to achieve.
- The possibility of increasing the annual subscription to cover some of the above, if approved.

I would like you to give this matter your consideration, hopefully if there is time we can discuss this matter in Valencia.

Rifle Sights

Whitworth Free Rifle event; I have been asked a number of times whether the rear sights with windage adjustment are legal in MLAIC events. The author of a letter in the MLAGB's 'Black Powder' magazine claims that the Goodwin type rear sight was never manufactured with graduations.

The sights currently in use by the majority of rifles shooters are based on The American Soule rear sight, this was filed for patent in 1888 and the patent was granted in 1889. Even though patented after the demise of the muzzle loading match rifle it pre dates our cut off date of 1890 and would appear to be eligible under current rules. There are also examples of rear sights with windage adjustments dated 1867 in the NRA (GB) Museum at Bisley and elsewhere.

Whilst I am ever mindful that we should preserve the historic element of our sport, there are other similar examples of historic inaccuracies, repro European Matchlocks and shooting jackets for example. These sights should be regarded in the same way.

My advice to you is that the sights manufactured by Rex Holbrook, Pedersoli and others have been used for over twenty years and are being used by many thousands of shooters worldwide. In my view it would not be in the best interest of ML shooting to ban their use; I believe this would actively discourage ML rifle shooters from shooting in events under MLAIC Rules.

Flintlock Rifle Sights

At the Austrian Open Championships earlier this year a number of reproduction flint rifles were rejected because they had a ring fore sight, the rifle in question is the Pedersoli Manton. I was asked for my opinion and subsequently contacted the members of the Small Arms Committee; they all agree that English flintlock rifles were never fitted with anything other than a post or bead foresight.

My recommendation is that 'ring' type fore sights on English flintlock rifles should be forbidden and this should apply following the Valencia and Ontario Zone Championships this year.

For your information the members of the Small Arms Committee are:

- Douglas Wicklund: At one time, he was Curator of the National Rifle Assn. of America's Firearms Museum in Fairfax, Virginia. He is an expert in the field of all types of firearms.
- Rex Holbrook: Is a maker of fine reproduction firearms and has represented GB in many MLAIC Championships. He is an expert on English Flintlock Rifles.
- Robert Fisch: He was, prior to his retirement, Curator of Firearms at the West Point Museum in New York and also lectured to the cadets there on firearms and their history and uses.
- DeWitt Bailey: An expert in 19th century firearms and author of several books on the subject
- William V. Osborne II: Bill is an expert in 18th & 19th century firearms from all over the world.
- Shigeo Sugawa: Shigeo lives in Japan and is an expert on Japanese Matchlocks. He speaks good English and he has recently contacted me with the announcement of his organization of the newly formed muzzle loading organization in Japan, which is under the auspices of the NRA of Japan. He has his own website on Japanese matchlocks and has authored at least two books on the subject.

Zone Championships

I have received applications from both Finland and Poland to host the 14th MLAIC European Zone Championships. I have asked Jose Luis Perez Pastor to organise a Delegates meeting where we can discuss this and vote to decide the venue.

I have also received notification from both Hungary and Austria that they wish to host the 15th MLAIC European Zone Championships. We can decide on this at the same time.

MLAIC Grand Prix Events

Questions have been raised regarding who can attend these events; it is my opinion that although they should be organised under MLAIC Rules, they should be relaxed to enable new competitors to experience MLAIC events. Individual entries should be permitted, however, where a country enters an official team then all entries for that country should be via the "Official Team".

Shooting regulations should comply with MLAIC Rules, however, when range space is restricted, some events may be restricted. This should be clearly indicated on the invitation.

The New MLAIC Constitution and Rules

I am very grateful to Louise Van Greunen, the Delegate for Switzerland, she has worked very hard on the new Constitution. Inconsistencies and inaccuracies have been removed and it is now an effective legal document.

We will not be able to decide on this in Valencia but I am hoping to send you a copy before the championships so that you can raise any questions there and at least, let me have your opinions.

MLAIC Constitution Rule 205

There has been some confusion over the definition of the term "International Team". In 1987 Canada hosted the 12th World MLAIC Championships, at that time the Canadian Government were sanctioning South Africa and refused them permission to send an Official Team. However, individuals from South Africa could attend.

Naturally, South Africa (since it was not officially there) could not enter teams, so they were allowed to enter an International Team.

International teams can only be formed if a country is banned for political reasons.

I believe that if a country is not able to invite ALL members of the MLAIC, then they should not be allowed to host an event. This Rule would then be unnecessary; it is not included in the new Constitution.

MLAIC Constitution Rule 215

This Rule was established early in MLAIC history and was included to limit the events where there was insufficient range space.

I believe that if a country is not able to include ALL MLAIC events, then they should not be allowed to host an event. This Rule would then be unnecessary; it is not included in the new Constitution.

MLAIC Black Powder Committee

The committee has most of the information that it needs and is now busy compiling a database. However, it has been decided that it is probably best if the information was not published but made available on request to those interested parties that meet the MLAIC's approval.

Some Member Countries are currently in the process of having their explosive regulations changed, if you need any information you should contact the Committees Chairman, Mr Stale Helland on stale.helland@nofima.no.

If you are in discussion with your Government regarding the control of black powder it is vital that you contact other organisations in your country with similar interests, this particularly applies to The Foundation for European Societies of Arms Collectors (FESAC)

Commission Discussions

Since the last Newsletter the Commission has discussed the following subjects.

- I asked the members to consider whether we should seek recognition with an international organisation '<http://www.agfisonline.com>' to be officially recognised as the World Governing Body for Muzzle Loading Shooting, their response was mixed. It would be very difficult to achieve as we would need to increase our membership to forty (40) and have policies in place for drug testing, young vulnerable people and disabled people. It is not currently possible to set these up within our organisational structure.
- I was concerned that if an accident occurred at one of our championships the Secretary General could be named in any Court Action – this was confirmed by Legal Advice. We contacted other shooting organisations (NRA USA and ISSF) to find out what they did to indemnify their officers. We also made enquiries with insurance companies.

Neither of the organisations insures their officers as the cost is prohibitively expensive. They rely on the match organisers to provide cover. I believe this is what we should do.

- We discussed changing the programme at World and Zone Championships. As the number of events has increased the presentations are taking an unacceptable length of time; it was thought that we should cancel the Shooters Buffet – this has proved unpopular in recent years. Training and registration should be extended to Sunday and the Delegates Meeting could also be moved to Sunday.

These changes would enable us to have medal presentations on each day of shooting and competitors would not have to attend the buffet when they might have a long journey back to the hotel and the possibility of an early start the following day.

- ISSF type Shooting jackets; should they be banned? The commission was split on this. If a proposal is made then it is you that will have to decide. All I would suggest is that you ask your shooters their views before deciding which way to vote.

I believe that the ban on shooting trousers is causing us problems, there are already shooters wearing trousers that are outside of Rules. It would be almost impossible for us to monitor if jackets were banned. The ISSF has many many staff to check clothing at their events, we are not in a position to do this.

- If a firearm fails inspection the competitor's inspection for should be retained, this would prevent the offending firearm being re-presented – as has been done in the past. The Commission was in accord on this.

I look forward to seeing most of you in Valencia and hopefully having the opportunity to discuss some of these items with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized 'D' and 'B' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

David Brigden
Secretary General
Muzzle Loaders Associations International Committee