

**The Annual General Meeting of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club**, held at 6.00 p.m. on Friday 14th February 2020 at the Kulm Hotel, St Moritz.

**Present:**

Mr & Mrs P. Achenbach, X.R.C. Albers-Schoenberg, Mr & Mrs M.G. Albers-Schoenberg, F. Albers-Schoenberg, P.F. Albers-Schoenberg, R. Allenspach, J.P. Angerhn, P.D. Atherton, I.W. Barlow, S.G. Bartley, T.R. Beckett, N. Bera, M. Berthod, A.A.H. Bodmer, D.A. Boller, A. Boller, M.R. Borsari, C.W.A. Bott, O.H.F. Bott, Mr & Mrs P.N.D. Broadhead, C.M. Bruppacher, R.A.H. Buchanan, N. Buechi, H-J. Buff, J-J. Buff, Miss E. Bunting, F. Burkard, J.A. Callander, G.B. Camenisch, G.C. Cattaneo, M.L. Child, P.J.R. Chishick, Ms G. Crowhurst, T.G.C. de Boinvillle, B. De Hond, P.G. Diethelm, P. Droulers, M.D. Eagles T. Eckelmann, M.T. Eger, H. Elmering, Mr & Mrs V. Erdmann, Mr & Mrs M.M.K. Fischer, D.H.R. Freytag, F.G. Gansser, K.G. Gardner, R.H. Gatehouse, Mrs D. Gatehouse, Mrs C. Glattfelder, Mr & Mrs P.C. Goddard, Mrs K. Grandl, Mr & Mrs M.C. Greenland, Mrs C. Hagmann, A.M.H. Heald, R. Hess, Wg Cdr T.J. Hill, A.M.D.M. Hilleary, A.G.S.M. Hilleary, C. Hitz-Vass, Mrs C. Hoare, R. L. Hoare, C.J. Hobbs, C.N.G. Hobbs, L.S. Hoefer, S.D. Horowitz, H.J. Hosch, H. Hunkeler Jnr, J.M. Jacob, M.G. Jankovich, A. Jordan, N.P.B. Juelich, G.M. Kasper, A. Kefalas, A.T. Keller, D.C. Keller, A.C. Kelly, Maj J.R. Kelly, Mrs A. Kettler, U.B. Kiesewetter, Ms K. Kisby, A. Knapp Voith, Mrs P. Knott, C.W.A. Kopp, Mr & Mrs R. Kuhn, T. Kurer, Mrs N. Latscha, J.W. Law, K.E. Leimer, H.W. Leimer, D. Lipman, H.H. Loew, G.A. Lowe, D.L. Maeder, R. McKenzie, Miss M. Michel, Ms M. Minvielle, Ms U. Moos, R.P. Morgan, P.A. Mueller, B.A. Mueller, M.A. Mueller, Anatol H. Mueller, P.J. Mullen, S.A. Nash, H. Niedermann, Y.P. Oswald, J.T. Payne, D.G. Payne, S. Perani, K-D. Rauenbusch, M. Rehfeldt, T.J. Reid, A.S.D. Robinson, H.N. Robinson, Mr & Mrs N.R. Robinson, C.E. Rohrbach, A.M. Rossi, F.V. Rueda Jnr, Count F.V. Rueda, R. Sachs, R. Salomon, A. Schmidt, U.E. Schwarzenbach, T.L. Seccombe, G.J. Sharrigan, A.M. Shepherd, R.D.A. Sheppard, H.C. Sheppard, Ms T. Slotkin, G.J. Smith, I.R. Smith, Count J. Sotto Mayor Matoso, F.Y. Spautz, G.F. Stahel, Mrs G. Steiger-Fuchs, Lt Col J.A.E. Summers, James B. Sunley, J.P.F. Townley, G.G. Trivella, D. Vincze, S. Vitalini, A. von Bohlen und Halbach, C. von Graffenried, Graf F. von Rehbinder, R. Wagner, K. F. Weissmann, N.W.S. Whetherly, B.F. Wichmann, Sir Brian Williamson CBE, Lord Wrottesley, Ms H. Yusuf-George OBE, H.M. Zimmermann, Mrs T. Zimmermann, Mr & Mrs A. Ziros, A.H.E. Ziros.

**Apologies:**

T.C. Abegg, H.G. Albers-Schoenberg, Mrs F. Angehrn, M.B.D. Biancotti, G.R. Botha, Miss N. Bott, Miss A. Bott, O.H.F. Bott, M.A. Bozzolan, Lord & Lady Brabazon of Tara, Mr & Mrs P.J. Broadhead, Mrs S. Bruppacher, C. Buelte, M.J.E. Bunn, W.S.R. Bunn, N. Challinor Halford, J. de la Motte, J.U. Degiacomi, E.E. Degiacomi, M.U. Diethelm, Miss C. Duncombe, M.F.H. Eger, A.C. Emson, C.J. Emson, H.J. Emson, Capt A.N.P. Essenhigh OBE, Mrs N.J. Evans, R.E. Fischer, A.R. Fischer, M.D.C. Gimlette, E. Guggiari, D.J. Harkin, S.F. Hayward, Mrs S. Hill, D.R.D.M. Hilleary, K.P. Hoefer, Andreas Keller, Joy Keller, Julie Keller, R.W. Kessel, J.J.R. Kettler, O. Kroeger, Miss C. Leimer, Mrs H. Leimer, T.S. Leininger, A.E. Lloyd, E.W.H. Lowe, Dr J.P.C. Lowe, C.F. Lowe, Miss J. Mackeurtan, D. Mackie, R.P. Meier, P.F. Michel, Miss O. Michel, Hon B.R. Moore-Brabazon, Hon A.M. Moore-Brabazon, Alex H. Mueller, E. Nuzum, P. Ohlin, Mrs V. Pedroni-Ostrowsky, G. Pitsch, Dr D. Potter, S.S. Riegger, Mrs L. Schuster, A.M. Schuster, I.A. Scotti, E.J. Shipton, Col A.W.G. Snook OBE, W.H.A.G. Snook, B.F.M. Steiger, Miss M. Steiger, Miss F. Steiger, D. Streve-Muelhens, Mrs L. Sunley, C. Tesdorpf, Prince Clemens von Croy, K.G. von Furstenberg, B. Vracas, J.M. Wakeham, C.R. Walti di Castro, C.R. Walti, M. Weston, R.D. Wilson, L.A. Ziros.

The President welcomed those present to the meeting. As Ivon Brabazon was ill, Harriet Brabazon had remained in London; fortunately, Annabel Kettler had agreed to assist with the Minutes of the Meeting.

After the apologies had been read, the President called upon Lord Wrottesley to give his report.

### **Run and Safety sub-Committee Report.**

Lord Wrottesley said: “Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow riders of the Cresta Run. Before I start I would like to make a special mention of my colleagues on the Run & Safety sub-Committee: Franco Gansser, Rollo Hoare, Nico Juelich, Dr David Potter, our Secretary, Gary Lowe, Assistant Secretary, Andrew Mills, and our President, James Sunley (who sits in from time to time to make sure we are behaving ourselves). Without their help and guidance of these legend of the Run, I would find it even more of a challenge that it already is to carry out my duties as Chair of the RSSC. Even though some may accuse me of believing my own hogwash, I can assure you that they are all more than capable of pointing out any errors of my ways. Last year I apologised for the somewhat lengthy report and promised that it would be shorter and sweeter in the future. I hope you will find that this years’ report is shorter (an irrefutable quantitative assessment) and sweeter (a qualitative judgement that I will have to rely you, fellow Members, to make).

“To begin: housekeeping. I will briefly make a couple of statements that I will make every year when I deliver this report; something that will act as both a reminder and a cautionary note. Firstly, we all ride the Run at our own risk, in the full knowledge that we are engaging in a dangerous sport. Secondly, if anyone has an accident on the Run can they make sure to report it to the Secretariat, either verbally, or (preferably) in writing. Please do report any sort of accident, even if you feel that it is a minor one such as a crushed finger or knuckle. You might not go to hospital and might just rely on Matteo to patch you up before returning to the fray. The more we know about the type and severity of accidents on the Run, the better informed we are of where you, as riders, are having issues, and the better and more quickly we are able to respond, and (hopefully) make adjustments where we feel they might be necessary. A broken fingernail may be a little too minor to make it onto our accident log, but a Cresta Kiss certainly isn’t. Please allow us to make that judgement.

“Last year I made the point that the Secretariat and I and my colleagues would do whatever it takes to ensure the safety of our riders, even if that meant disruption to the daily operation of the Run. A little inconvenience is a small price to pay for ensuring that we are all able to enjoy the Run, irrespective of whether we are legends on the Run – or legends in our own lunchtime. On that note, I would encourage that anyone who has a view on how the Run is built, maintained or managed - not from an operational point of view – that should be directed to the Secretariat - but specifically from a safety or medical standpoint, that is worth bringing to the attention of the Run & Safety sub-Committee. Please do approach one of us.

“So, what is new this season? I am now going to request a little audience participation. In several of the last few seasons we have commissioned a 3-D scan of the entire Run from a locally based company called Geo Grischa. We will do the same on Monday and Tuesday next week, together with geo-mapping. The test is as follows: in scanning the Run in 2016, Geo Grischa reported over 23 million individual data points in Shuttlecock alone. There were 134 scans of the Run in total. The question is: how many data points were there to scan the entire Run from Top to the Camion Loading Point? *[Murmuring and guesses from the audience]*. Answer – over one **billion** points. This is essentially an x-ray vision which in aggregate gives an extraordinarily accurate picture of what our glorious Run looks like both with and without her clothes on.

“Just to give you an idea of the data we have at our disposal (which also involves a concept which was recently brought to my attention) – I am going to ask you all another (rhetorical) question: What is the difference between correlation versus causation? Well, casting my eye over

the riding statistics over the last twenty years (as one does when trying not to have nightmares about the terror of riding from Top), I noticed that in 2016 there were 226 falls. But in 2017, there were only 91. I asked myself, was there a correlation? Perhaps Shuttlecock was more difficult. This led me to the 'causation' bit. When I visited Geo Grischa the other day, with Martin Greenland, and pored over data that has been gathered over the past few years... guess what? In 2016, at its base Shuttlecock was 15-20 cms higher. At its zenith, it was 20-25 cms lower. This meant that not only was there less of Shuttlecock to play with, but it was also at a shallower angle. Causation: there was only going to be one outcome!

"I am sure that a number of people this season have asked themselves how much input I have had in the building of the Run? Once again, I can say with certainty that this season's masterpiece is all Natalino's. Why do I say this? It is simple. Unlike last season, when I was living in St Moritz (and rising from hibernation for a few hours each day in early December was a blessed relief), I was not even in the country during the entire building phase this year. I relied almost entirely on Gary and the Tower Team to keep me updated on progress. But because Natalino and his exceptional team did such an incredible job, very little input was warranted. Nor, I suspect, would it have been welcome. Although we had early and copious snowfall in November, which provided a wonderful base for the Run, and plenty of material for the build, unfortunately the start of the season was somewhat curtailed because of high ambient temperatures. We lost a few days early in the season and some days – including recently - were affected by water running down the Run. Natalino, throughout, has worked his magic and we have managed to make do.

"Last season I also told you that folklore has it that the Run is built from the bottom up – hence the way the riding season is structured. However, I can tell you that, more recently, when Christian Brantschen was building the Run, it was built from Stream down to Finish, and then up to Junction and then up to Top. Natalino tells me that when he took over, he changed the system, primarily in response to the warming temperatures he faced. Often, when building the Run, water would flow down the Run and affect the downstream sections, so it made more sense to build from Junction downwards, as he does now.

"So, what of the Run this season? Frankly, as many of you have already commented, Natalino and his team of superhuman colleagues have built what I would regard as the finest Run that I have experienced in the 30-odd years that I have been riding. It's testament to his brilliance and professionalism that Natalino would want to sign off his 40 years of building the Run with what I would regard as his crowning achievement. It is a Run that beguiles. It is simple in the way that it has been put together, with corners flowing and straights that aren't straight – almost without a wrinkle in its entire length down the valley. It provides a supreme challenge and extreme exhilaration in equal measure. Yes, one or two of us have felt her wrath. But ultimately, she is fast and inherently safe to ride.

"Fortunately, it has been agreed that this season's Run should form the template on which all future Runs should be based. Natalino and I will be doing an extensive survey of the Run with the help of Geo Grischa, as well downloading all the data from Natalino's brain and his Little Red Book, committing all the reference points he uses to build the Run to bits and bytes. This is essential as Natalino is formally retiring from building and maintaining the Run at the end of this season, although he is not going to be far away during the building phases of the Run, and even during the Season. He will winter in Celerina and pop in from time to time to say Hello – but the day to day operations will be handed over to his already prepped replacements.

"As mentioned last year, Finish and the Finish banks have been singled out for particular attention. I also said that I thought we were close to a solution. Extensive earth works were carried out by Natalino during the summer to enlarge the platform on which the Run sits and extends into

the field after the Finish contacts. These works seemed to have had the desired effect. While speeds in this section have been fast, several people have told me that they find Finish far easier to ride and that Finish bank is far safer. It remains to be seen whether further works will be needed at Finish but for now everyone that I talk to is happy that we have a Finish that is fit for purpose. We still have the option to do more, but for now it seems that we can press 'pause' and see Natalino's hard work bear fruit.

"In this, Natalino's last season, can I ask all riders to contribute generously to the Arbeiters' Fund, either via the Secretariat or the boxes in the Bar and Changing Room. Natalino and his team work tirelessly for us. They really do worship us as Members of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club, the finest sporting Club in the world. They are part of our family and we are duty bound to make sure that this dedication is amply recognised and rewarded. Once again, thank you. This may not have seemed it but this was shorter; and (I hope) sweeter. Safe riding for the rest of this glorious season."  
[Applause]

The President thanked Lord Wrottesley for his report and said, "I think those few words give you an insight into Lord Wrottesley's brilliance as a rider. What you don't fully appreciate is that, by his standards, that would have been a relatively short email! [Laughter] He called upon Aris Ziros to report for the House sub-Committee.

#### **House sub-Committee Report**

Aris Ziros said that most people did not notice the work undertaken by the sub-Committee. It took a lot of effort to keep the Clubhouse well maintained. Over the summer there had been about 15 projects, with the major ones including new floor tiles from Junction Hut to the Clubhouse, brining the fencing of all the Terraces to the approved standard, new windows in the Tower staircase and new carpet on the stairs up to the Clubhouse Terrace. Next summer it was planned to renovate the ground floor entrance to the Clubhouse, including the Ladies and Gents lavatories, together with the stairs leading to the Bar. It was also going to be necessary to re-render the back façade of Tower, where large chunks of plaster were threatening to fall off. All of this would be expensive but Patrick Mueller and Alexander Kefalas were being enormously helpful with design, sourcing and providing materials at cost. [Applause]

The President thanked Mr Ziros – an unsung hero – and Robert Allenspach who helped look after the Club's property portfolio.

#### **Secretary's Report.**

Gary Lowe said: "Your Imperial and Royal Highness, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen: Pamela and I arrived in St.Moritz by motor car on December 7th to find the whole of the Engadine valley swathed in a covering of snow, a picture of beauty; as Keats said: a joy forever.

"My first task was to attend the Ice Sculpture Ceremony, and amongst these sculptures was our own traditional toboggan set against an ice wall outside the Monopole Hotel. This was part of our contribution to the Youth Olympic Games with ice sports being held in St Moritz.

"The next morning I went to the Cresta, where Natalino and the team had been busy constructing, nay crafting, what I too believe has already been recognised as the best Run in living memory - looking around I can see a few people do go back quite a few years-- so let's agree on the best Run since time immemorial. [Laughter]

"The usual preparations of the Tower Team were carried out smoothly - what could prevent the most splendid of openings on December 19th? The answer: weather. The mercury had risen to levels making it impossible to open as planned on the 19th December. It was the same on the 20th. Many students had arrived from some of the great universities around the world, and were left wandering about, seemingly with no purpose in life, a not dissimilar situation to the environment

they had just left. [Laughter] However, the first Shop 'Fire Sale' took place with Isobel Hobbs, David Vincze and Pamela Knott, a lady with unparalleled retail experience - although usually on the other side of the counter [Laughter] - doing a roaring trade, filling the void in activity for the students.

"Saturday brought more of the same, weather wise; however, a flash of inspiration visited The Guru - this was pre Big Bang - and he and Jamie Summers took charge of the serried students, giving them their first course of instruction, followed by a half day excursion to Shuttlecock. This was in anticipation of the Run opening on the Sunday.

"This foresight proved invaluable by saving time such that all Beginners were instructed before riding and we were able to hold a very enjoyable University Event, won by St Gallen. A big thank you again to all the helpers, donors, bed and breakfast proprietors for making this a huge success.

"After a few more days where riding was restricted to Traditionals, we were eventually able to ride on Flat Tops on Christmas Eve. On 28th December, we had our first open Race - the Nino Bibbia Challenge Cup with temperatures at -10°C. The race was won by Jean-Jacques Buff - a portent of things to come?

"After our first handicap race, the Baron Oertzen, I mentioned that this is one of the only sporting Clubs, if not the only sporting Club in the world, to operate under the Caesar's Wife Principal: The Handicap Committee must be, *and is*, above suspicion. [Laughter] The race was won by my eldest son, Dr James Lowe, [Laughter] after an enforced absence of many years whilst he tendered to the afflicted. However, the highlight of that Prizegiving was the attendance of the very generous and much loved prize donor, Uli Burgerstein - I doubt there has been, and probably never will be, a more emotional lunch, as Uli came up to help present the prizes, assisted by Gunde. It was a pleasure and honour to be part of it.

"The year came to an end in traditional fashion with the Fathers, Sons and Brothers Event on New Year's Eve. Charlie and 'Double O' Bott won the Father and Sons, and Timmy and Xaver Albers-Schoenberg took the honours in the Brothers. Thank you to the Cresta Kellers, for the magnificent lunch and superb prizes, fashioned by local silversmith, Roger Koenig. Federico Ferrari won the Bledisloe on New Year's Day, leading throughout the morning.

"On the 2nd of January we enjoyed a very successful and competitive Children's event with Alice Lloyd winning the Christmas Cup and Valentino Buff winning the Junior Cresta Cup. We hope next season to hold Prizegiving over lunch in the Sunny Bar as opposed to the Clubhouse. Again, we could not manage this race without the assistance of so many parents and helpers - you know who you are - thank you. Later on in the season we held a similar event for local school children. I believe they all enjoyed it and we plan to do this again in the future.

"The private auction races have for many years been a feature of the Calendar, and this season's Fairchild MacCarthy was no exception, even if the Secretary, not for the first time, bit off a bit more than he could chew - cycling 160 km around Lake Como on his day off - arriving a little late (actually, mid-way through the auction) with Pam standing in for the team parade and no doubt thereby enhancing its value considerably. The team event was won by *Raaaaake*, with one of the constituent parts thereof, THE Nigel Broadhead, winning the individual prize from a factored in, (well, I say factored in,) lying start.

"We were able to welcome many descendants of Trowbridge Heaton for the Heaton Gold Cup, all of whom witnessed Maggi Eger hold off the challenge of Jean-Jacques Buff. For the first time we held a concurrent handicap during the Heaton in the form of the Heaton Adjunct, won by another of my sons, Ed Lowe [Laughter] - I know what you are thinking: *Honi soit qui mal y pense!* "Now moving swiftly on - or not so swiftly as it happened: The Lightning Cup, surely one for THE specialist, THE Nigel Broadhead. Unfortunately, Nigel had a big crash at Shuttlecock, parting company with his toboggan at Stream and setting off down Bledisloe, feet first in the prone position. The toboggan eventually caught up with him, having gathered a fair amount of steam, resulting in a blunt trauma injury to the front of his head. After a period in hospital our Guru returned but unable

to work his magic with the Beginners. I am deeply indebted to Jamie Summers and Martin Greenland who have come up to the mark wonderfully. We have seen a very large increase this year in the numbers of Beginners, in contrast to SLs, and Members in particular. Rides in aggregate are down. We think there are many reasons for this and indeed it has been happening over many years. However, with more Beginners and with Joe Townley also absent (but for happier reasons), the Team has had to work extra hard, missing days off etc. so well done to you all. [Applause]

"The Lightning Cup saw a very popular winner, with Patrick Diethelm just edging out Maggi Eger. I am delighted that following a decision taken by the Committee many, many years ago, Poldi Berchtold's name has been added to that of Doug Connor and Paul Arnold as the joint donors of the Cup.

"The Blue Riband Junction race, the Curzon, was held on the 11th of January with Timmy Albers-Schoenberg and Pascal Oswald finishing 5th and 4th on day 1, thus winning their Colours. Maggi, who was leading after the first day continued to lead throughout, winning by 0.64 seconds - some 2.85 seconds faster than last year's winning time. Ed Shipton was a popular winner of the Silver Chip, something he has done before!

"The Escalante was won by Ralf Schmid, the Calisch Grischun by Jean-Jacques, the Aris Vatimbella by Matt Jaeggi, on a day that saw Emma Sunshine Burkard represent Switzerland in the Youth Olympic Games - well done Emma.

"Ed Mendelsohn won the Swiss Championship, Nicolas Albers-Schoenberg won the Knapp. This happened to be the day that I was to entertain Susie Zuber to lunch. Unfortunately, Susie had fallen over the previous afternoon, breaking her hip, and had lain on the floor all night. Once discovered, she was ambulated to hospital in Samedan and is still there bearing up in her inimitable way; if she will forgive me for slightly betraying a lady's age, in her ninetieth year. We wish her a speedy recovery.

"Marc Fischer won the Stagni Cup, the traditional prelude to the Services Event. This year was a bumper year for Service riders, the Royal Navy winning the Ladies Event and the Army winning the Prince Philip Challenge Trophy.

"The first Top Colours race, the Morgan, was won in some style by Lord Wrottesley for the 15th time. The following day saw this year's Seniors' President, Giusep Arpagaus, victorious in the Bott Cup, with two other *Cucinatos*; sorry I mean skilful Italian riders, [Laughter] Federico Ferrari and Fabrizio Crespi-Morbio, finishing second and third respectively.

"In my absence, Maggi won the Hans Badrutt Challenge; however, the field was disappointingly small - the smallest I have ever known - any feed-back as to why would be appreciated; but not verbal feedback please, as I am neither a good listener nor assimilator of the spoken word. Email is better.

"The biennial International Match was won easily by Switzerland - again any thoughts, not on how to beat Switzerland, but the concept and how we can make it more fun, by email, please.

"Sadly, Lady Brabazon was not able to be with us for the Brabazon Trophy owing to Brabs being unwell. The latest news is that he is on the mend, and we wish him a speedy recovery. However, Lady Gibbs (Jane) was with us for the weekend which, of course, includes the Roger Gibbs Challenge Cup. Philip Goddard prevailed in the latter, and Lord Wrottesley won the former for the fifteenth time. As I said at Prizegiving, there have been 51 Brabazon Trophy races and eighteen winners. Clifton has held the trophy for 41 per cent of the time or 54 per cent of the time he has been eligible to compete. During the Brabazon, Patrick Mueller, coming 8th, won his Colours - thoroughly deserved.

"Giusep Arpagaus, as Seniors' President hosted a fabulous day's racing with Andrew Shepherd winning the Crawford Cup from Top on his birthday, and Mark Child winning the Julian Board Cup from Junction. Poor Julian has been rather unwell, having undergone a major operation to replace the mitral, or bicuspid valve in the heart. Quite a dangerous operation; however, once the surgeon was able to locate Julian's heart, [Laughter] he successfully replaced the offending

valve. Julian is so sad not to have been able to come this year to St Moritz, but he sends everyone his best wishes from Sheffield where he is convalescing, with his friend, Angela Guylee, administering succour, in full nurse's uniform. This is the first year in St Moritz that Julian has missed coming to St Moritz since 1962!

"We have just witnessed one of the most spectacular race/lunch/dinner events in many years with the Coppa and Coppetta d'Italia: a brilliant festival organised by Stefano, Emanuela and Giovanni Perani, all of the past Coppa Presidents, all the Italians and all Cresta Riders and friends. For me, this year's Coppa was a demonstration of what the Cresta is all about: great competition, great entertainment, great fun, and great friendship and camaraderie – *Grazie Mille*. [Applause]

"We have an unbelievable weekend of events to look forward to with the Grand National, the Johannes Badrutt, preceded of course by the auction - we will also auction a couple of special items: the bell from Top and a one-off Cresta watch kindly given to the Club by IWC - a unique, high end watch with a SMTC backplate. I give you fair warning, as the auctioneers say. Let's try and establish a big field for the Johannes ahead of Philipp Albers-Schoenberg's Shuttlecock Party. Philipp has gone to great lengths to try and accommodate everyone. As I know only too well, you can't please all of the people all of the time; and some you can't please at all at any time. [Laughter] It will be a great party for those lucky enough to be there.

"I trust you have all enjoyed the season so far. I should like to thank:

- Heinz and Jenny Hunkeler for everything,
- Luigi, Mario and Giuseppe in the Clubhouse,
- Enzo and the team in the Sunny Bar: Oscar, Giovanni, Giuseppe, Giuseppe and Matti,
- Matteo,
- Natalino and the Team,
- The Gurus,
- Harriet from afar,
- And all of the Tower Team, including the boys - thank you.

"In peroration, may I express the hope that you have a wonderful weekend and a wonderful Rest of Season. Thank you." [Applause]

### Election of Officers

There being no other nominations, the proposals for the various officers were read out by the Secretary and agreed by a unanimous show of hands; candidates being nominated and carried *en bloc* as follows:

<b>Office</b>	<b>Nominated</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
<b>Hon Treasurer</b>	C W A Bott	Sir Brian Williamson	C Thun-Hohenstein
<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	R Allenspach	P N D Broadhead	J P F Townley
	P J Achenbach	C W A Bott	T G C de Boinville
	Lord Wrottesley	R L Hoare	P F Albers-Schoenberg
	F Burkard	M M K Fischer	Sir Brian Williamson
<b>Elected</b>	P F Albers-Schoenberg	F Burkard	C Thun-Hohenstein
	R L Hoare	James B Sunley	C W A Bott
	M M K Fischer	J P F Townley	P N D Broadhead
	C J A Hobbs	R L Hoare	T G C de Boinville

### Hon Treasurer's Report

Charlie Bott said: "My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen. Oscar Wilde once said, 'A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.' You could possibly apply that quote to this Club's Treasurer. Sadly, it is my job to know the price, or cost, of everything. Sometimes the

financial position of this Club is Micawber-esque. For those of you not familiar with this Charles Dickens' character, Mr Micawber had a recipe for happiness. 'Annual income, £20. Annual Expenditure £19 19s 6d – result, happiness. Annual income £20. Annual expenditure £20 0s 6d – result, misery. This Club's finances have, historically, filled one of those two buckets. A very small profit or a very small loss. This year I thought it would be helpful (as I have in the past been accused of not telling the Membership very much about the finances) to be more open about how this Club's finances operate. I can see former Treasurers, Payne, Sunley and Lowe, looking very worried. Don't worry, gentlemen. More open does not mean completely transparent. *[Laughter]* This Club's income derives from three principal sources which are all, in their own way, equally important for the Club.

"The first is our subscriptions which consist of the annual fees and joining fees. Subscriptions are largely fixed and vary only to the extent that the numbers joining exceed or fall short of the numbers of deaths and resignations. As Treasurer, I am always doubly sad to see notices of Obituaries. The annual subscription of CHF 400 has not increased for a long time and we have no plans to increase it. More than £300 a year is a lot of money for people who don't ride. I would remind you that we have around 1,300 Members, but only around 300-350 consistently ride each year. Joining fees can vary enormously from year to year, depending on the numbers of people taking up Active or Non-Active Membership. Last year, for example, our revenue on this line item was less than half the previous year, when we had a large number of Active Life, and a record number of non-Active Life, Members.

"The second and biggest sources of revenue is riding and riding related income. This comprises four principal categories. Riding fees from Members represent just over one-third. Beginners (those who pay CHF 600 for their first 5 rides) represent just under one-third. A further quarter comes from returning SLs' or Beginners' extra rides in their first season. The balance is made up of rental income from lockers and toboggan slots. Over the past three years we have made significant changes here. We have increased the charges of lockers and toboggan slots both to raise revenue and free up slots and lockers for those waiting on the lists. Clearly the Membership value these highly, because despite the price increases virtually nobody gave up their slots. Last year Members' riding fees went up from CHF 36 to CHF 40 and we simultaneously lowered riding fees for returning SLs aged 30 and under, to try and encourage this important category of people to return to ride. We also, at Rollo Hoare's suggestion, increased the definition of 'young' from 28 to 30. I think Rollo was 28 when he made the suggestion.... *[Laughter]* Again, we have no plans to increase these fees. Over the past 10 years a British rider will have seen his riding fees effectively double when exchange rate fluctuations are taken into account. To push these up further would, we think, be counterproductive.

"Our third principal source of income only partially appears on our P&L statement. Without it, this Club would be a lot poorer both financially and spiritually. I call this 'Community and Membership Support.' Every year we receive a very significant grant from the St Moritz Tourist Authority, and also one from the Community of Celerina. A very big thank you to Martin Berthod, Adrian Ehrbar and Raymon Ferrari. They recognise that we, as a Club, are an important tourist attraction in the Engadine. Without these grants we simply could not survive. We also receive great support from two great hotels: the Kulm and the Steffani. The Hunkeler and Maerky families do a huge amount for this Club and we are very grateful. This is Community Support.

"Member support comes in many different forms and guises. All our 30-plus races have prizes given by Members and in some cases these gifts have been going on for many, many years. Our Gurus, Nigel Broadhead and Joe Townley, give their time and expertise (unpaid) in all sorts of weathers to look after the Beginners. David Vincze completes his third and last season as our Shop Keeper and has done this for the love of the Club, and this season has even stood in as the Shop



Keeper when there was a hiatus in the Shop Girl cover. He may not be as attractive, but he was extremely effective! *[Laughter]*

“Fourthly: donations. Whether it is the Camion, Top or Finish Hut; these would not have happened without your generosity and key leadership from Rolf on Finish Hut, from the Swiss Abos and Gary on Top Hut and the anonymous donor of the Camion. You are all extremely generous. Then there are the donations to subsidise the University Week. It is impossible to name everyone, but Marc Fischer and Fritz Burkard have been consistently outstandingly generous.

“Although Clifton and Gary have paid tribute already to the Arbeiters, there are many occasions during the course of the season where they stay late or get up early to maintain the Run. They do this not for additional pay, but purely for the love of the Club. Overall, it is this last category of Community and Membership support that is frankly too valuable to put a price on. It is one of the things that makes this Club so special.

“Let me now turn to our principal costs: operating and capital expenditure. Operating expenses fall into three categories: Run Building and operation. Our biggest expense is with Seiler who build and maintain the Run. The next biggest expense are our teams in St Moritz and London. Under Gary’s leadership they do an amazing job, as we all know. The third category is ‘miscellaneous.’ There are no huge line items, but it all adds up. Things like Tower Team flat expenses, technology, Camion fuel, insurance, heating, electricity. Finally, there is capital expenditure. Unlike most companies, we take our capital expenditure through in the P&L in the year in which it occurs. Things like Top Hut (where Members’ contributions defrayed the Club’s contribution) or the Clubhouse, which Aris looks after so assiduously. The roof cost over CHF 100,000. Then there was recabling the Run. Switzerland and St Moritz are expensive places to get things done. Although the St Moritz Tourist Authority is extremely helpful, we have to bear much of the expenditure ourselves. If we have a decent season then, generally, with your help, we are able to meet these capital costs. But a high proportion of our costs are fixed, and our income is highly variable. As Treasurer I am extremely sad when I see small race fields, because it means our beautiful Run is not being used to capacity. The Lightning Cup this year had 8 riders, which included 2 Tower Team members and an A N Other.

“I must stress that our need and desire to regularise our affairs financially and make sure that we are compliant as our organisation should be, has cause a one step increase in our overall cost base. This will persist. Therefore, we need to utilise our most expensive asset – our Run – effectively and to the best of our abilities. We have therefore tweaked next year’s Fixture Card to extend the season by a week to finish on March 7th, rather than February 28th. This adds a week to the Services’ period and our premier Top season (from the Morgan through to Night Riding) will run from 6th-28th February. We are hopeful that this will increase the number of rides in the season and therefore our revenue.

“To summarise: each year we add up our income and our costs. Each year they are pretty close to one another. But without the help, support and time of many members of the Cresta Family, we would be in deficit – ‘misery’ as Mr Micawber said. We do not take your support and help, whether in money or time for granted. We really appreciate it and hope that you will continue to support this great Club. When, in my role as Treasurer, I start to worry too much about the actual price of everything, or the ‘F’ word (Finances) we are very lucky, because we have a President who knows the value of everything. He shuts me up and tells me that there are only three Fs that matter: Friendship, Fun and Family. They must always count for more than Finances, and when push comes to shove, the Club will always make decisions to enhance its values and spirit, even if makes our finances a little more precarious.

“In conclusion, we sail close to the wind in our Finances, but thanks to you, our Members and supporters in the St Moritz community, we are just about fine. But if we could all persuade those Members that we know and like to come out and ride again. If we could all ride a bit more and introduce our friends to our gorgeous Run ... I would sleep better, and our great Club would thrive.”

*[Applause]*

The President thanked Charlie Bott for all that he did for the Club.

### **Election of President**

The Secretary read out the nomination for office as follows and asked for a show of hands, firstly in favour, and then against:

<b><i>Office</i></b>	<b><i>Nominated</i></b>	<b><i>Proposed</i></b>	<b><i>Seconded</i></b>
<b><i>President</i></b>	James B Sunley	P J Achenbach	F Burkard

The nomination was carried unanimously.

### **President's Report.**

James Sunley said: “My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen; Thank you, thank you so much. It is a great honour to be elected to serve as your President for another year, in the footsteps of 18 predecessors. And very gratifying too that you chose NOT to impeach me first! *[Laughter]* However, whilst I have taken the precaution of printing two copies of my speech, be assured I'm not about to dish out a load of “fake news”, especially now our United Kingdom Union Flag is once again more closely aligned with the Swiss cross, or maybe, in some cases, cross Swiss. *[Laughter]*

“The main matters I want to address this evening are:

- our Constitution,
- Ladies Riding, and
- our Membership.

“But before I go any further, may I wish all the Ladies present a very Happy Valentine's Day *[Cheers and Applause]* and please would our wonderful roses, Annabel Kettler, Pam Knott and Melissa Michel come and receive their own roses as a token of our appreciation for all they do for our Club. *[Applause]*

“Our three musketeers, Andrew [Mills], Martin [Greenland] and Jamie [Summers] certainly don't merit flowers, but they do a terrific job to support Gary, (particularly on Guru duties in Nigel's absence, who also deserves our thanks), as have Tower Boys Jim Holt, Zain Mahmood and Alexander Mallinckrodt, all now fully qualified Top riders and aspiring Members.

“Last night, as I pottered down the hill after the most spectacular Coppa d'Italia day and night (goodness we are a dull Club!), I paused to reflect just how spoilt we are from dawn till dusk: in the morning, Matteo, (who may I remind you can never be tipped enough) dresses us and nurses us when needed. Then we go upstairs, where the ever-smiling Luigi, Mario, and Giuseppe administer fizz, beer and bullshot to celebrate our successes, or drown our failures; before we head to the joyful Sunny Bar where Enzo, Giovanni and his amazing crew apologetically produce our order from the day before *[Laughter]*; and then finally, still in the financial bosom of this great Kulm hotel, but up the hill at Dracs, it's the turn of Fabio, Costa and Mario and the girls to relieve us of the few francs we had been carefully saving for our girlfriend's Valentine's Day gift.

"We are so, so fortunate and blessed to have such a loyal and dedicated team who are all part of our Cresta family, and I haven't yet even mentioned Natalino and his extraordinary merry men. We thank them all. *[Prolonged applause]*

### **Club Constitution**

"Moving on to more mundane matters, although we briefly discussed the Club's constitution last year. The fact is we don't really have a legal existence anywhere, and this thorny topic has exercised the great minds of all three Presidents before me.

"I'm sure we all reluctantly recognize the world has become a much smaller and transparent place, and is compliance ridden. In the year 2020 we simply cannot run our Club as loosely as we did fifty years ago. We have taken extensive professional advice, and with the wisdom of a good lawyer on the Committee (thank you, Gian Marchet Kasper), we are nearly there. And by there, I mean the recommendation is to have a British London based Club, whose Members have access to the Cresta Run, administered by a Swiss operating company. We hope to be able to finalise the detail soon after the end of this season, so that we can have a July EGM to change our Club rules as is required. Although Gary has assiduously assisted the paperwork, could I ask any of you who have questions to direct them to Gian Marchet

"Gary has more than enough on his plate herding riding Members, SLs and Beginners on a daily basis, and that's before he settles down to all the back office work after lunch. He does a fabulous job, but it's easy for us to forget when we are on holiday, just how demanding it is running this Club, and all the egos within it. *[Laughter]* So please, next time you are about to bombard him with an opinion or question, applaud him first for all he does, not to mention what he wears, as I now encourage all of you to applaud him. *[Cheers and applause]*

### **Ladies Riding**

"I now turn to the issue of ladies riding. In July 2018 the Membership agreed to support a two season trial, during which ladies would be welcome to ride the Cresta Run at certain periods, and at the Secretary's discretion. From his operational vantage in Tower, the trial has been a great success, despite the changing room hiatus and some equipment teething issues - these can be easily resolved.

"A number of fathers and daughters, and brothers and sisters, have ridden together for the first time. There were some very gutsy girls in the University event, and four ladies have become Top riders, including one naval rider, Sarah Belcher, who remarkably was welcomed to Top Hut after only 17 Junction rides.

"Where do we go from here?

"As a Club we have three choices:

- we could allow ladies to apply for Active Full Membership and inclusivity to ride at all times;
- we could reject the trial as a bad experience; or
- we can continue with it for longer.

"It seems to me we have struck a fair balance for ladies to ride during the University period, followed by some family riding days over Christmas/New Year, then the Services' weeks, the International Match, and finally during the last week of the Season, which is often a quiet time.

"Although these opportunities total four weeks, and unsurprisingly we have not been overwhelmed with ladies wishing to ride, there is minimal conflict with the prime races, and those minority of male Members who prefer to ride without the distraction of ladies on the Run, have ample opportunity to do so.

"I hardly need remind Members that ours was not like a Brexit vote, requiring a simple majority, but that the Membership voted democratically by a ratio of over two to one to allow ladies to ride, just as they did during the first forty years of the Club's existence, when society was far more

bigoted towards women than it is today. As you all know, during that time six ladies won their Club Colours.

“Recently, a number of Members have written to Peter Achenbach, Chair of the Ladies Riding sub-Committee, to say they were wrong to oppose ladies riding and what a welcome addition it is to see them riding more regularly. Other Members have raised some concerns, for instance about publicity, perhaps forgetting that whilst a private Club, positive publicity is good for St Moritz, and good for us.

“Disappointingly, there continues to be a small minority whose gossip is acting like a pervasive cancer within the Club. This group claims the Committee purposely confused the democratic vote for its own vested interest, that ladies riding is the cause of the decline in our riding numbers, and that we are losing our spirit because of their reintroduction. It is daft to think that the members of your Committee, the majority of whom you have elected this evening, have any self-interest other than long term interests of this Club.

“I will return to the subject of numbers, but suffice to say, the downward trend (to which Gary has already alluded) has been happening for far longer than the last two years.

“As to Club spirit, this is what keeps me awake at night, for surely that is the flame that has to be kept alive if we are to survive in the twenty-first century.

“So let me be clear... in the year 2020 I firmly believe the USP of this Club is NOT that it is a male institution; our USP is, indeed it always has been, the thrill and passion of riding the greatest and most historic ice run in the world, and being part of an international Club, all of us bonded together by that beautiful ice Run. She is the siren call for our fear, fun, family and friendship!

### **The Membership**

“We may have incredibly generous Members to thank for so much of what we enjoy (as Charlie has said) - witness a gleaming new camion, probably the sexiest club car in the world, and a Sachs work of art for our Finish Hut - but the responsibility for the Club spirit, and the Club's future, lies with ALL of us.

“To paraphrase JFK: *Ask NOT what your Club can do for you - ask what YOU can do for your Club.* We are not a Disney World theme park, or a nightclub where you pay for your fun and go home. Since 1888 we have always been an amateur sporting Club. It is up to each and every one of **us** to introduce fun new Members, and particularly not just family members. Nepotism can breed complacency and mediocrity.

“The future of this Club is to attract an international cosmopolitan Membership of amateur Cresta riders who are not dull, and preferably young! And to this end, I'm delighted that Major Paul Chishick, head of the combined UK Inter-Services Teams; Brad de Hond, our faithful Chicago representative; and Nick Albers-Schoenberg, representing a large family, and being a young Swiss, are being co-opted onto the Committee.

“Let me share with you some numbers: in the 1990s we averaged 63 applicant members every year, and elected 36 (some 57%); in the noughties, applicants had reduced to average 47, from whom we elected 27 (57% again). But in the last ten years we have only had an average of 29 applications, and elected 20 (that's 70%). The net result over thirty years is: fewer applicants, fewer Members, fewer riders, fewer fun people.

“This is clearly not just a ladies riding phenomenon but a cocktail of factors: shorter holidays, swiss franc strength, other cheaper holiday attractions, weekend visits, less Member / SL interaction, health and safety, to suggest quite a few ... we all need to come together to find a solution, and it is NOT by looking backwards. The greatest English statesman of the last century, Sir Winston Churchill, said “If we open up a quarrel between past and present, we shall find we have lost the future.” Were we to look backwards, we would still riding in leather helmets, standing around with no Clubhouse (freezing at the Fountain of Youth), and wondering why we only had half a dozen Swiss

members, an Italian grocer and a German playboy... *[Laughter]* Oh, and an exchange rate of 25 Swiss francs to the pound! *[Laughter]*

"I promised two years ago the Committee would not make any substantive changes to ladies riding *without* consulting the Membership. To that end, and upon the recommendation of the Ladies Riding sub-Committee, for at least next Season we propose **not** to change what we have done in the past two years, other than to add some very limited ladies' time during the family New Year period (to replace the International match days), including a Fathers & Daughters Race. *[Cheers]*

"Like all of you, I'd like clarity not hearsay - not just about the ladies but how Members hope the St Moritz Tobogganing Club will evolve. To this end, the main Committee have agreed to disband the Ladies sub-Committee and to organize an independently run survey in which all Members will be asked their anonymous opinions on ladies riding and many other matters about our Club. That information will be collated and presented to you all in a transparent way before next Season so we can have a long hard look at our future.

"It will also coincide with the publication of Annual Report Number 100 for which a very special edition is planned.

"Suggestions welcome, but no doubt the Club can do much more to organise fun events and races (eg a new Portago Race from Stream is planned on January 30 2020, 62 years after the record was last broken); more Top/Junction days like the Coppetta yesterday, support our wonderful Shuttlecock Presidents (good luck on Sunday, Philipp), and to encourage SLs.

"But at the very end of the day, the responsibility is yours. "The past is in your head, the future is in your hands." Or in language more familiar to some of us, "You cannot marry your past, without divorcing your future"!

"And so my rallying cry is to ask Members to desist from espousing the negative, and to focus much more effort to bring new exciting blood to this Club, and not to hesitate to put fun new riders up for Membership - we can't wait to meet them!

"Before you all start throwing bread rolls at me, I have a slightly sad but happy duty; but it is one that makes me incredibly proud, for I have known this gentleman for almost the whole of my riding career, back to 1982 when we were both in our early twenties. Without him, we might not even have a Cresta Run; and without a Cresta Run, we would have no St Moritz Tobogganing Club, we would have no fear, no fun, no friendships, and no cause to argue about our spirit. This gentleman officially steps down at the end of this Season. I am of course talking about the legend who builds our Run, and this Season it could be one of his finest ever, a man who is an undoubted leader of men, who has dedicated more hours to our Club than all of us in this room combined. Please will you cheer from the Kulm rooftops when I now award **Natalino Bera Honorary Club Colours of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club.**" *[Cheers, prolonged applause and a standing ovation for Natalino.]*

The President then called on Lord Wrottesley, who said: "Ladies and Gentlemen; to follow on from what James has just said. As Chair of the RSSC and having sat on the sub-Committee for some time before that, I know full well the dedication, the sacrifices and the brilliance of Natalino. I would ask all rider to please be upstanding. Let's show Natalino how much we love, appreciate and respect him and his tireless devotion to the Cresta Run and our Club. Let's pay him the ultimate honour that we can give, a Cresta Firework. As always, with a tailor-made twist, instead of 'Ah!' at the end, 'Natalino...!'" *[All those present then gave a rousing Firework in Natalino's honour followed by enthusiastic applause.]* James Sunley thanked Lord Wrottesley and added that he knew that

Natalino would be at the Run early the next day to ensure that the Grand National Twenty-One had the finest possible Run for the Club's finest race. He then opened the meeting to the floor.

#### **Any Other Business**

**Fritz Burkard** reminded Members that the film celebrating one of the Cresta's most loved characters, Adolf Haeberli, would be screened at the Palace Hotel on 27th February at 6 p.m. All were invited. *[Applause]*

**Giancarlo Cattaneo** had a suggestion for the RSSC, which he had mentioned to Lord Wrottesley. When riding, he was always scared of hitting the right hand bankina after Finish Contacts. He had had a long conversation with Alfred at the Bob Run who had offered to have a joint look at the Finish banks with a view to seeing whether they could be improved without the need for major earthworks. The President said that he appreciated the comment and he was sure that Lord Wrottesley had taken it under advisement.

**Fernanda Rueda**, who had enjoyed a dinner with Uli Burgerstein the previous evening, passed on a message from Uli to the Twenty-One – it was, “Be Careful.” Uli was in great spirits and wished he could be in St Moritz.

**Hugh Malim** said that he was sure that the Shuttlecock Dinner on Sunday evening would be a wonderful party. In the past the Shuttlecock Dinner had been an informal affair where people got together and had a bowl of soup. It had become an immense production and a lot of people had been put off by the cost. It would be worth considering whether to make it simpler and more affordable. The President said that he fully understood the point he was making. However, costs in Switzerland had gone up ten-fold and the Club was not (despite what he said earlier about the fall in riding numbers) such a small organisation anymore. It was a difficult call for Shuttlecock Presidents but it was a relevant observation.

**Sir Brian Williamson** said, “My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen; may I just say before we leave that it was 6 years ago, also on Valentine's Day, when James accepted the invitation to be President of this Club and said he would pour his heart and soul into keeping the traditions and camaraderie of the Club. A year later, at this meeting, Julian Board said that James had done just that. I rang Julian today to see whether he would still say the same thing. Julian said yes, but in his inimitable and teasing fashion, added, ‘Of course, it is a bloody awful job! It never ceases. Day after day, week after week, month after month and year after year.’ *[Laughter]* Well, James, I never felt that, and you show no signs of showing that. Maybe it's because I had Caroline and you had Lisa. As far as I know, Julian didn't... *[Laughter]* But it is clear from what our officers have said this evening that this is an immensely complicated Club to run, by a huge multiple. You have a large and representative Committee and it has never been better led. You not only pour heart and soul, but in classic Harrovian spirit, ‘blood, sweat, toil and tears.’ You always exhibit a marvellously sunny disposition. James: you are our Sunshine. Thank you.” *[Prolonged applause]*

The meeting was then closed.