



President's Letter

14th February 2021

Dear Member

We all need heroes in our lives, now more so than ever in these peculiar times. My grandfather had two: **Sir Winston Churchill** was one, the **first Lord Brabazon of Tara** was the other. Bernard Sunley was no athlete and the closest he ever came to the Cresta Run was a family holiday at The Palace Hotel in 1946. I guess, however, that as a builder of runways Bernard's admiration for Great Britain's wartime Minister of Aircraft Production was of far greater import than Brab's Presidency of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club.

As for me, I know I would be at the back of a very long queue of those for whom **Sir Roger Gibbs** was their hero, a man for all seasons, for all people from all walks of life, and especially for all Cresta riders.

When you read the stories about these two extraordinary polymaths, you will not only be amazed, but wonder why they chose our colonial Alpine outpost as their favourite Club, one which might well not exist today but for their efforts.

In Brab's case, the three times Curzon Cup winner colluded with his great friend Ben Bathurst (later Lord Bledisloe) to enable the Cresta Run to reopen after the War in 1946, a Season when our Treasurer's grandfather won the Junction Blue Riband.

And in Roger's case, he miraculously guided us from financial ruin as our Treasurer in the exchange controlled 1960s, then as President in the aftermath of the 1970s oil crisis, always with the support and partnership of our friends in St Moritz. He also presided over our Centenary when we gave St Moritz the famous David Wynne "Cresta Rider". Three of the six maquettes of the statue have been sold to benefit the Club handsomely - might the Treasure consider auctioning the fourth in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Season? As creator of the FairMac auction, Roger would be definitely be a bidder.

The Brabazon Trophy is unique in so many ways. It is the only six course race from Top, and our youngest classic was first competed for in 1966 after the Members subscribed for the beautiful Cartier trophy in memory of Lord Brabazon. It was also the brainchild of my "Guru", Carl Nater, who was working for Cartier at the time, and in whose memory the fastest time is awarded. A gruelling race, Nino Bibbia and Franco Gansser's impressive tally of four was bettered by six time winner, Kik Bertschinger, in the 1990s, since when Lord Wrottesley has made it his own, winning last year for the fifteenth time by nearly four seconds.

When the **Roger Gibbs Challenge Cup** was first inaugurated in 1995, our then President, Viscount Bledisloe QC (Christopher – Ben's son), dusted down, polished and renamed the Bathurst Challenge Cup (a handicap on age that Gottfried Kaegi won annually well into his seventies). His immediate predecessor, John Shipton, was the first and very happy winner as the Cup was full of Glattfelder's finest. We are thrilled today that Jane Gibbs maintains Roger's incredibly generous support and send her Valentine's Day best wishes and freesias with our love.

This coming week would normally be the start of our big fortnight starting with Seniors' Day on

Tuesday. Those of us stuck in foreign parts might be jealous, but we are buoyed and thrilled to read the daily Run results and learn about the riders' achievements (well done Pascal!) and some mischievousness along the way.

The Tower team and Arbeiters are doing a fabulous job, so do let's all [sign in to the AGM](#) from every corner of the globe next Friday to tell them how much we care and how much most of us are missing our real mistress on Valentine's Day!

With my very best wishes and a request for **AGM questions to be emailed to me in advance** if possible.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James S.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HwM6O3qaQzOOgVMJBOl1Kw