MAINLY FOR WOMEN by Gerda Paul

second class member.

Whether out on the summer season ranges, or in the club's premises off Deal High Street, the women shoot it out alongside the men. And the men are glad to

"I can't see why there should be any distinction between men and women," said Chris ..., the 24-year-old secretary. "In fact, we

have them.

Deal and District Rifle Club, founded in 1902 and one of the oldest in

may or may not play.

It's seven women and 40 men all pay the same

fee of £10 a head for

single membership. There is a reduced fee

of £15 for a married couple, but this is only

to encourage families to join. And it doesn't turn the woman into a

the country, has no discriminating "Ladies' Section," and no rules to say when women

out alongside the men

District Rifle unded in 1902 positively encourage women to take part."

own a gun. A rifle can dainty pistol down on the cost up to £450. A

The girls who shoot it

Chris is a teacher; his wife Barbara, also 24, is an engineering technician, and the club treasurer. Chris and Barbara were only 17 when they started going out together—and shooting together—

It is the increasing togetherness of intelligent young men and women that has brought about a gradual rise in the number of women in rifle clubs all over Britain. Women more and more are sharing men's leisure-time activities, and by and large the men approve.

Shooting is a sport, just like darts, or bridge, or fishing, to its devotees. But because their equipment happens to be lethal, they have to be extremely careful, and responsible.

It is also expensive to

own a gun. A rifle can cost up to £450. A licence, if you've got through the screening of the club secretary and the police, will cost you £25.

Why not go fishing instead?

Another member, Christine mother of two little girls, of tries to explain: "You are pitting your wits against yourself when you shoot. It's not like fishing — a matter of whether the fish are there. It is purely you. I can't tell you how elated you feel when your score is good."

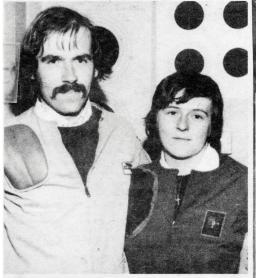
Christine's husband shoots with the club's pistol section — which has only one woman member, so far.

She is Sandy secretary to the manager of the Deal branch of Lloyds Bank. A slim, petite girl, she prefers handling a dainty pistol to rolling down on the ground with a more cumbersom rifle.

How do the girls measure up to the men?
Pretty well. They can be just as skilful.
Weight doesn't count—
it's all a matter of balance and co-ordination, and sometimes the slighter-built person is better in these maters than the heasure.

Which should put paid to any false impression that the girls with the guns are tough, pistolpacking mommas!

For shooting they naturally wear conventional slacks, jerseys and padded jackets. But when they go out socially, they like to dress in feminine clothes and look as attractive to the opposite sex as any other women.



secretary and treasurer, are in equal partnership.

-Basil Kidd photos

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Shooting it out with the men are these girls of Deal and District Rifle Club. On target, from left to right, are