

A short history of Cleadon Archers

CLEADON ARCHERS was founded on the 12th of August 1949 by Mr Cliff Atkinson. It was this club which was instrumental in forming the Durham Archery Association, now the Durham and Northumberland Archery Association. Members of Cleadon Archers have represented Great Britain in teams competing in a number of World Championships and also at the Olympics; it would be difficult to mention a year in which the Durham and Northumberland County Team did not contain one or two members of the club.

In administrative capacity, members of Cleadon Archers have played an active part at International, National, Regional and County level.

During it's existence the club has had its share of ups and downs. There has been a falling off of membership and problems with finding a shooting range, but, while other clubs have come and gone, Cleadon Archers remains a strong club. There is nothing quite like it when the whistle blows for sighters and, as the archers take up their places on the shooting line, it can be seen that an entire detail consists of the contingent from Cleadon.

What follows is in no way intended to be a complete history of the club, for such a project would fill many pages. It is simply a selection of items from the Cleadon Archers scrapbook. This marvellous tome, which someone had the foresight to begin all those years ago, provides a wonderful picture of the changing face that is Cleadon Archers.

1949 Cleadon Archers is formed. Originally the club is formed as a section of Cleadon Village Drama Club but later it is thought advisable to the run the club on an entirely separate basis. The first range is at Boldon Lane, Cleadon Village. By October 1949 the number of members has risen above the 50 mark. The secretary and trainer is Mr. Clifford Atkinson and the captain is Mr. Alan Laws.

1950 Club membership rises to 64 including 22 who are under 18.

Mr Jack Flinton, of Scarborough, Flight Archery Champion of England, accepts the vice-presidency of Cleadon Archers. Ken Bowman attains the national classification of Third Class Bowman and becomes one of the first archers in Durham to do so. Later in the season John Lawes also gains Third Class Bowman. To gain this classification three Western rounds must be shot. One of the oldest English archery rounds, the Western consists of four dozen arrows at 60yds and four dozen arrows at 50yds. A minimum score of 420 points must be attained.

Miss Jean Towning becomes Durham County Women's Champion only five months after joining Cleadon Archers. Mr Clifford Atkinson is the Men's Champion. Cleadon also take the team prize.

1951 Cleadon Archer's new clubhouse opened by Councillor T Brown.

Mr John Keirs of Whitburn becomes the first man in Durham County to qualify as a First Class Archer and ranks among the foremost archers in the country. Later in the year Miss Mary Brownlee becomes the first woman in Durham County to qualify as a First Class Archer. Kathleen Filter is Durham County Women's Champion this year and Mr John Keirs is Men's Champion.

1952 Kathleen Filter retains the Durham County Women's Champion title.

1953 Stan Patterson wins a prize for the highest score at the inaugural shoot of the Bowmen of Acklam. Cleadon also win the team contest. Cleadon Archers take part in the Coronation celebrations at East Boldon with a display of troxk shooting by Messrs Miles, Patterson, Williamson and Miss McCabe. First Annual Dinner Dance at The Marsden Grotto. Price of a ticket - one guinea!

1954 Cleadon Archers are required to vacate their old ground which is needed for building. Boldon Cricket Club offer the use of a piece of land which was once tennis courts.

"Bullets v. Arrows". Cleadon Archers compete against Seaham Home Guard in a novel tournament at the Whitburn Rifle Range. The riflemen shoot from 200yds and the archers, using longbows, shoot from 60yds. The event is televised by the BBC.

1955 Cleadon Archers open their new ground at Boldon Cricket Club on Easter Monday 1955. Mr Jack Flinton officially opens the ground at 10.30am by unfurling the club flag. More than 70 archers take part in the first open tournament by shooting an Albion round.

1956 Mrs Sadie Miles - in only her third season as an archer - is selected as one of the three women who will represent England in the world archery contest this year in Prague. She holds the British Records for the long and short Western rounds. She is interviewed by sports commentator Arthur Appleton and the interview is broadcast by the BBC Home Service.

1957 Cleadon Archers host their third annual tournament at their new ground, Bow Meadows. The Cleadon Open is the first outdoor tournament of the season and is now one of the biggest events in the county. Mrs Sadie Miles sets a new Open English Record with a score of 646. She also gains her MB this year.

1958 Stan Patterson, club Secretary, wins the Cleadon Open this year.

1959 Cleadon Archers host an open clout shoot. It is the first time a shoot of this kind has been held in the North of England and it attracts 24 entries. Sadie Miles wins the International Trials at Chester and represents England in the world championships in Sweden. She finishes in 13th place and is also a member of the England team which finishes in 2nd place. Cleadon Archers host the DNAA Annual Championships.

1960 Mr and Mrs Miles retain their titles as Durham County Champions. Cleadon also win the women's team prize. 75 archers take part in the Cleadon Open this year. Mr M Morpeth, who achieves a six gold end at 50yds, claims the traditional reward of one shilling from each of the other competitors and goes home with a prize of £3 14s. Ken Turner is second gent this year.

1961 Cleadon looks forward to increasing its membership this year. The initial membership of 70 in 1949 had dropped to only 9 shooting members in 1959. In an article to recruit members, printed in the Sunderland Echo, the club secretary Mr Leslie Smith says "A beginner could outfit himself with equipment that could last for many years for as little as £12 10s".

Mrs Sadie Miles, absent from the Cleadon Open last year, rejoins the club and wins the ladies title with a score of 756 for a Hereford round.

1962 Cleadon Archers send a team to Stavanger.

1963 Archers from Stavanger visit Cleadon.

Ken Turner (Grotto Bowmen) represents England at the world championships in Helsinki.

1964 Steve and Joan Slater are the Club Champions this year. They receive their trophies during the annual presentation evening which takes place this year at East Boldon Golf Club in December.

1965 For the first time in 11 years the Annual Open Tournament is abandoned after only half an hour because of torrential rain and snow. No prizes are awarded and the tournament is rearranged to take place in May. Mr Ken Turner, formerly of Grotto Bowmen, is the men's champion this year. He is selected to represent England in the world championships in Sweden.

1968 Ken Turner wins the 14th Annual Open at Cleadon but is unable to wait to collect his medal - he has to dash back to his farm to help with the milking.

Anne Patterson becomes a First Class Archer. Stan Patterson, County secretary, takes part in the Northern Counties Regional Championships and takes the bronze medal despite the fact that he took the wrong bow to the tournament and had to borrow one. Five members of Cleadon Archers travel to Stavanger to shoot in a friendly exchange match

1969 Malcolm Patterson wins County Junior Championship at Newton Aycliffe. He also wins at the Northern Counties championships and sets a new national record with a score of 986 and is in second place in the National Championships.

1970 21st Anniversary. Founder members Mr and Mrs C J Atkinson are presented with illuminated scrolls at a celebration dinner at the Sea Hotel. They are also made honorary vice-presidents of the club. Stavanger Archers send a gift of £21 to spend on prizes or equipment.

Once again the weather disrupts the Annual Open Tournament and the round shot is reduced to a Western instead of a Hereford. Brian Patterson wins the Northern Counties Junior Tournament. Anne Patterson represents DNAA at the five counties tournament held in Harrogate.

1971 The open tournament is held in May this year in the hope of better weather. Ken Turner wins the tournament this year. The Jack and Jill trophy is won by Mr and Mrs Harry Hope with a score of 1667. Ken Turner is also placed first in the 11th Annual DNAA FITA which takes place at the Reyrolle sports ground and is organised by John Smoult.

Mr and Mrs Hans Wright, Australian competitors at the 26th world archery championships held in Yorkshire, are the guests of Stan Patterson and make a visit to Bow Meadows to demonstrate their skill.

1972 Cleadon's Annual Open Tournament continues to be one of the largest events in the North East. 70 archers take part in the competition this year. Ken Turner is second gent and Anne Patterson is third lady. Anne Patterson becomes county champion despite shooting a nine and a seven on the wrong target. Brian Patterson takes the junior boy's title and is also the boy's champion at the Northern Counties and Yorkshire flight and clout championships. Cleadon Archers open an indoor range at Bolingbroke Hall in South Shields. Shooting takes place once a fortnight. Membership stands at about 50 but the club appeals in the local newspaper for more ladies to join the club. Annual fees are £4.

1973 Stan Patterson wins the antique gold medal for the highest score at the contest for the Antient Scorton Arrow. It is the 300th anniversary of the tournament. The same medal was won by another Cleadon archer, John Kiers, 23 years ago. The second match between Cleadon Archers and South Shields Pistol Club takes place at Bolingbroke Hall. Carol Slater, still a junior, is third lady at the DNAA 12th Open FITA Tournament.

1974 Cleadon Archers 20th annual Open Tournament at Bow Meadows. Entry fee is 80p. Backworth send 18 archers to the shoot and take the team prize with a score of 3748. A beginners course is held on Monday evenings at Boldon Comprehensive school. Demand for lessons is high and 19 people are enrolled on the course.

1975 Cleadon Archers challenge the Voyager Darts team. The Cleadon team consists of Stan Patterson, Ken Turner, Steve Slater and Brian Trotter. The event is televised by Tyne Tees.

1976 Gillian Patterson is selected for an advanced training course. It is hoped that she will compete in the 1980 Olympics. At only 13 years of age she is already a senior MB.

1977 Stan Patterson, president of the Grand National Archery Society, receives a Silver Jubilee Medal and letter from Buckingham Palace.

1978 Stan Patterson is DNAA Open Clout Champion. Stephen James and Gillian Patterson become National Junior Indoor Champions. It is the first time that a club has contained two champions of Great Britain at the same time. Gillian holds all but one of the junior indoor national records. Both Gillian and Stephen are members of the Northern Region winning team. Gillian represents England in Milan.

1979 Gillian Patterson is the youngest archer to be selected for the Great Britain team. She competes in Germany at the world championships.

1980 Gillian is selected to represent Great Britain at the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

1981 Cleadon Archers face an unusual challenge - teaching 70 non-English speaking Dutch dandruff shampoo salesmen in the art of the bow and arrow. The salesmen from Proctor and Gamble are in the North East for a conference. Vivien Davies wins the Ascham Silver Arrow.

1983 Cleadon Archers become film stars. 15 archers spend two days filming at Alnwick Castle in a medieval fairground scene. The scene is from the film 'Robin of Sherwood' starring Michael Praed and Anthony Valentine. Stan Patterson is also called upon by the film's producers to give technical advice and historical information about archery.

1985 Cleadon Archers successful at the contest for the Antient Scorton Arrow. Jim Melvin wins the Lieutenant's Silver Bugle shooting a longbow. Peter Davies wins the Thirsk Insignia for the highest score by a Yorkshireman. He also wins the Gold Medal for the highest overall score. Stephen James wins the Gold Medal for the highest number of hits.

1986 Barry Cutting is the first junior at Cleadon Open. He is junior champion in no less than 9 open tournaments this year. Paul Cutting is DNAA clout champion. Margaret and Jim Melvin are Lady and Gentlemen club outdoor champions.

1987 Stan Patterson, vice-president of FITA, travels to Uganda to spend two weeks training teachers, university lecturers, lawyers and other professional people in archery. Later in the year he also travels to Switzerland, Australia and Luxembourg. Barry Cutting wins the South Tyneside Young Sportswinner of the Month Award. Carl Hanson breaks a total of 13 club records this year and sets anew county record with a score of 1229 at the Ayr FITA star. He also breaks the national indoor record at the championships held in Manchester with a score of 593. Cleadon win the team event. The other team members are David Short, Paul Cutting and Peter Davies. Ernie Woodhouse gains his 1000 and 1100 FITA stars. Cleadon Archers are forced to leave Bow Meadows.

1988 Cleadon Archers Annual Open Tournament is held at their new ground at Boldon Colliery. Shooting is halted after six dozen arrows because of the torrential rain. Cleadon Archers host the first Jim Melvin Memorial Longbow Shoot. Margaret Melvin is the lady paramount. Jim, a keen and skilful archer with the longbow, is sadly missed by club members. Peter Davies, a Yorkshireman by birth, wins the coveted 'Antient Silver Arrow' and other trophies. Carl Hanson breaks the national indoor FITA 25 record with a score of 584 at RAF Cosford.

1989 Vivien Davies wins the award for most blues at the Ascham Silver Arrow.

1990 Vivien Davies wins the Ascham Silver Arrow. She became provisional Second Lady with the best red at the first end. After this however the inner black seems impenetrable until one of the gentlemen present starts a rumour that lunch will not be taken until it is hit. Vivien promptly hits the black with her next arrow. Ann Rush shooting at the competition for the second time takes the award for the most reds.

1991 The lady members of Cleadon Archers excel this year. In the tournament for the Ascham Arrow, Vivien Davies wins the award for most reds and Ann Rush wins the award for most whites. Vivien is also first lady at the Gosforth Masters. At the NCAS and DNAA clout competitions Ann Rush wins both the Open and County titles setting a new club record in the process. Margaret Melvin is awarded a medal for best clout of the day when one of her arrows lands one quarter of an inch from the clout. Margaret is also first lady at Heugh Open. Stu Ritchie gains his MB and 1100 FITA star.

1992 Cleadon Archers continue to be one of the strongest clubs in the North East winning many team and individual prizes. Several club members are once again selected to represent the DNAA county team. They are Carl Hanson, Vivien Davies, Brian Patterson, Ann Rush, Jan Thornton, Ernie Woodhouse and Malcolm Patterson. Ann Rush retains her NCAS and DNAA clout titles and sets another new club record. Cleadon Archers host their first Christmas Cracker Shoot. Everyone agrees the event is a tremendous success. Brian Trotter becomes President of GNAS. He is the second member of Cleadon Archers to hold this post.

1993 Stan Patterson is awarded the OBE for 'Services to Archery' in the New Year's Honours List.

1994 Negotiations are complete and Cleadon Archers 'come home' to East Boldon Cricket Ground, the place where the first annual open tournament was held in 1955. Stan Patterson, honorary vice-president of Cleadon Archers officially opens the ground and unfurls the club flag. The event is attended by Brian Trotter who is currently President of GNAS. The round shot is an Albion. The day ends with a barbecue.