The Story of the Bowmen of Overdale

The First Forty Years 1949 - 1989
THE FIRST FORTY YEARS

from 1949 — 1989

FOREWORD

Forty years of successful growth and development is no small achievement, whether it be in the field of business, industry or sport. This is what the Bowmen of Overdale are celebrating in this anniversary year and it seemed to me right and proper that something of the struggles, the triumphs and the fun should be recorded, mainly for present members but also for posterity.

having the idea was the easy part. How best to do it?

What you read in the following pages is a mixture of formal Minutes, contributions from various newsletters and Publications, and memories. It is mainly in chronological order, certainly whenever this is important. One other point I must mention. In writing this account it was inevitable that my personal membership of 38 years and Sheila and Isi Creme’s membership of 34 years would cause us to feature prominently. I make no apology for this. You read about us because we were there. Where others have influenced the club’s progress they too are mentioned.

I hope this story of Overdale will hold your attention and help you to appreciate the tradition behind the club as it is today. The first seed was planted by one Richard Walker, in the shape of a notice in the Bolton Evening News, asking for interested people to attend a meeting with a view to forming an archery club.

Now read on . . . . . . . . .

Sheila D Kemp 24.9.09
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to:-

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John Hebb and Clive Morris for producing the photographic pages,

Mike Hart for designing the cover,

Sheila and Isi Creme, June Warburton and Wendy Hodkinson who dipped into their archery archives and memories for me.

Barbara Harding & Sheila Talbot for help with collation.

S D K
THE STORY OF THE BOWMEN OF OVERDALE

THE BEGINNING

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT OVERDALE YOUTH CENTRE, CHORLEY NEW ROAD, BOLTON ON FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4th 1949

Present There were thirty — seven present.

Chair Mr Freeman, of the Bolton Youth Movement, was in the Chair,
1. Mr Freeman introduced Mr John Yates, Chairman of the Northern Counties Archery Society and Major John W. Phillips a member of the Executive Committee of the same society. Mr Yates and Major Phillips spoke on the history of archery and on the possibility of forming a club.

2. The Chairman called for volunteers to form a committee.
The following committee was formed :-

   Chairman Mr T R Walker
   Secretary Mr A Thomasson
   Members Mrs T R Walker Miss B Meadows, Messrs B Latham, J Penney, and P L Martin.

5. It was suggested that a course in bowmaking and fletching be started and Mr Freeman agreed to make enquiries regarding this.

4. Mr Freeman proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Yates and Major Phillips for the trouble they had taken.
This concluded the meeting.

COMMENT

Mr Yates and Major Phillips were members of The Bowmen of Pendle and Samlesbury, one of only six or seven clubs in existence in Lancashire and Cheshire prior to the Second World War. I can think of John o' Gaunt's Bowmen, Barnacre Archers, North Lonsdale Archers, Wirral Archers and Mersey Bowmen, all very old clubs and still active up to the outbreak of war. So, six in all.

Returning to the two Johns from Samlesbury ..... they were both longstanding archers, delightful men and only too pleased to help with the renaissance of archery clubs which was taking place at that time. John Yates lived to be over ninety, shot until he went almost blind and was well - known to early Overdale members.

Our first Chairman, Dick Walker, was one of the Walker's Tannery family, an old Bolton family, and he had practiced archery at his prep school.

During the winter months many meetings were held. The club was named 'The Bowmen of Overdale' and club rules and shooting regulations were drawn up. At the same time the bowmen were busy buying' and often making their own equipment ready for the great day when they would be able to launch themselves.
Some made their own bows (These were- flat wood bows) and others decided to try their hand at making bowstrings, arrows (also of wood, namely doweling) belts, quivers and other equipment. Leather shoe tongues made excellent tabs.

Archery equipment dealers as we know them today were nonexistent. Slazenger and Jacques made flat bows and wooden arrows, also bosses and these items were available at local sports shops.

**MORE MINUTES**

22.11.49 Initial expenditure was calculated as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 targets and stands</td>
<td>£ 20.00.00.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 bows</td>
<td>£ 15.00.00.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrows</td>
<td>£ 7.10.00.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ground rent</td>
<td>£ 10.00.00.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subs to societies</td>
<td>£ 2.20.00</td>
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£ 54.12.00

Resolved that £55.00.00 be accepted as approximate figure.

Approximate annual expenditure was calculated at £22.00.00 so it was resolved that a 5/- entrance fee and £1.00.00 annual subscription be recommended to the General Meeting. It was suggested that the entrance fee should be paid immediately but that the sub could be paid in installments, up to March 1950.

23.3.50 The Chairman informed the meeting that a ground had been found, on Moss Bank Way, and its rent would be £7.00.00 for the first year.

The club now had 5 targets and the faces were being painted.

1.5.50 Resolved that a hut be purchased at a cost of £82.10.0.

22.6.50 Uniform for the team was discussed but it was decided that nothing should be done this season.

**OCTOBER 1st 1950**

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Pavilion, Moss Bank Way.

E F Smith (Mrs Ted’s husband) and P L Martin were elected to go to the inaugural meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Archery Association. (Mrs Ted is still with us as an Honorary member )

It was resolved that a Junior Section be formed.

Mr T R Walker was elected as representative to the Northern Counties Archery Society.
Below is an anonymous account of the club’s first year, taken from a booklet published in 1951.

As soon as shooting began the enthusiasm increased by leaps and bounds and the Bowmen could be seen practically every evening until darkness fell and indeed on several occasions even later although one wonders what those scores were like. At first the range was only 40 yards but as we improved and became more proficient the range went up until the ladies were shooting at 80 yards and the gentlemen at 100 yards.

Now that the club was definitely established we decided to issue challenges to other clubs, now springing up all over Lancashire. Fixtures were made and although some were cancelled owing to the bad weather we had some enjoyable shooting, and lots of useful tips were learned. In September two of our Bowmen went over to Ilkley to compete in the Northern Counties Championships. In the shoot for the Scorton Silver Arrow our Chairman Mr T R Walker succeeded in carrying off one of England’s most coveted archery trophies by scoring the first gold of the day. By becoming holder of this trophy, which was originally presented by Queen Elizabeth 1 to the Oxford Colleges in the 16th century, he became the Captain - elect for the following year with the responsibility of organizing the next meeting.

The early history of the Arrow is lost but in 1673 it turned up again at Scorton in Yorkshire and since then it has been shot for almost every year.

Shortly after this the Club sent team to compete at Wythenshaw at the inaugural Meeting of what was shortly to be called the Lancashire and Cheshire Archery Association. Here the club gained second place to the Bowmen of Birch who beat us by only one point. On the other hand, Mrs T R Walker distinguished herself by winning the first prize for the highest ladies’ score.

For a club in its first year we felt we had achieved a great deal and now that the season was drawing to its close we determined to keep together by shooting indoors in the winter months. As a result we rented the Drill Hall in Silverwell St. Bolton one night each week, and although it can’t be said to compare with outdoor shooting it enabled us to keep our hands in and to enjoy the familiar thud of a well-placed arrow.

A nationwide Indoor Archery League was soon started in which we participated. Postal matches were shot and the five best scores of those participating were sent off to our opponents.

About this time our first A G M was held, at which our secretary Mr Thomasson offered his resignation owing to pressure of work. His place was taken by Mr P L Martin, who is also secretary of the Lancashire and Cheshire Association. It was decided at this meeting to hold a Festival Tournament *(see note below)* in Moss Bank Park on June 9th to which archers from all over the country were to be invited. As our lease of the ground on Moss Bank Way was due to end at the start of the outdoor season we began another search for a suitable ground. After weeks of fruitless hunting we found an ideal spot close to Chorley New Road, which combined the advantages of being sheltered with those of pleasant surroundings which are essential to the enjoyment of archery.

And so with the difficulties and successes of the first year behind us we look forward with renewed enthusiasm to 1951.

End of quote.
1951 was the year in which the tremendous Festival of Britain was organised. It was designed to show the world how post-war Britain was recovering from the austerity years and organisations of all kinds were encouraged to stage exhibitions, festivals, pageants and so on.

For the Bowmen of Overdale, staging a tournament in their second full year was a very brave effort and more about that follows shortly.

BACK TO THE FIRST YEAR FOR THE MOMENT

This is personal comment. I feel that present members of the club, and indeed members through the years, benefit greatly from the good practical beginnings of the Bowmen of Overdale. The founder members were courageous and diligent. They quickly got the club into whatever archery was happening in the county and region, both on the shooting line and in administration. In all the years since then that pattern has been followed and I am sure it is why our club still flourishes when others have fallen by the wayside.

A list of Lancashire and Cheshire clubs from 1951 reveals that only six of them are still in existence. There were twenty-four then.

So the club began the 1950-1951 season with plenty to look forward to, in particular, removal to a new ground, an Open Tournament and hopefully some increase in membership.

The Minutes reveal that an Indoor Championship was held, that the pavilion was duly moved from the old ground to the new one on Chorley New Road, and that many meetings were held for the purpose of organizing the Festival Shoot.

QUOTE FROM 1951 BOOKLET:-
Along with others, Overdale was asked to put forward suggestions as to how they could best help in the celebrations of Bolton Town Council's Festival of Britain. In a very short time details of an archery tournament were drawn up and it was planned that this should take place in Bolton's Moss Bank Park on June 9th 1951.

Arrangements went ahead with the approval of the Festival Committee and, at the time of going to print, it was anticipated that over 100 archers from all over the country, including members of the England Archery Team, would be taking part.

*See below.

The Tournament will provide Bolton people with a spectacle that will not be forgotten for many years. To cater for this number of archers will require a minimum of 25 targets.

The tournament will be comprised of three different competitions, or Rounds as they are known in Archery. These will be the York Round, for men only, which entails the shooting of 6 dozen arrows at 100 yards, 4 dozen arrows at 80 yards and 2 dozen arrows at 60 yards.

For the ladies there is the Hereford Round, consisting of 6 dozen arrows at 80 yards, 4 dozen arrows at 60 yards and 2 dozen arrows at 50 yards.
Thirdly there is the Western Round, consisting of 4 dozen arrows’ at 60 yards and 4
dozen arrows at 50 yards. This Round will be open to both ladies and gentlemen who
may not have attained the standard of proficiency to shoot the longer distances, and
also to boys and girls.

A total of approximately 120 will be awarded in trophies and in the Western Round
there will be special Prizes for the best performance by a boy or girl.

Shooting will commence at 10.30 am and will continue until 4.30 or 5.00 o’clock in the
evening.

The Tournament will end with the presentation of the trophies by the Lady Paramount
The Rt. Hon. The Countess Peel.

*End of quote.*

The shoot was advertised in the local press and on posters around the town. I saw them
and felt some small stirring in my heart. A friend travelled up to Moss Bank Park on a
rainy afternoon, paid our entrance fee of 6d each and then watched what was
happening. I had never seen archery before and knew nothing about it but as I
wandered up and down the behind the roped - off shooting line I soon realised that I
wanted to try it.

The scene was far less cluttered than it would be today. No tents, no umbrellas, no
individual chairs but there were some benches provided. No stabilisers, No long rods,
no ‘V bars’ but an assortment of longbows, one-piece composite wood and plastic
bows and the ultra modern take apart steel bows made by Accles and Pollock of
Birmingham or Seefab of Sweden. Many of the arrows were made of wood doweling
only, or doweling reinforced with a hardwood splicing or footing at the pile end, but
the new aluminum alloy arrows were also in evidence. Not that I was aware of all these
varieties of equipment at the time - they were all either bows or arrows to me!

Mention was made earlier of international archers shooting in this competition. There
were, I think, three in all. Mona Bailey and her husband Bill from Bowmen of Adel, and
Jack Flinton from Scarborough A C had all shot for Britain in World Championships. This
fact, again, I did not know on that rainy day in June 1951!

Whilst there I spent 1/- on a little green booklet which has been compiled by the club
committee specially for the Festival Shoot. We still have a copy among the club’s
archives and an excellent publication it was. It included short articles on the Festival of
Britain and Overdale’s part in this, the beginning of the bow, the ascendancy of the
English longbow and the superiority of the English bowmen, the decline of the bow as
a weapon and how archery fitted into law during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
It went on to talk about archery after the war, archery for the disabled and finally the
story of the clubs first year.

*I have quoted extensively from it on pages three and five.*

I believe the Countess of Pell gave a considerable donation towards the cost of
printing the booklet, which was printed for in excess of demand as things turned out.

However, I took my copy home that day and read it from cover to cover. That same
evening I put pen to paper and wrote to Gwendy Walker saying “Please may I join ?”
CHORLEY NEW ROAD GROUND

This ground was about four miles from Bolton heading towards Horwich, on the right hand side half a mile past Beaumont Road. It was a piece of meadow land belonging to a Mrs Taylor who lived in a large house called Hollywood, now converted into Bolton’s private hospital known as Beaumont Hospital. The ground had direct access from Chorley New Road via a five-barred gate, a stream ruining down the left-hand side, a disused tennis court at the target end, plenty of length to allow good overshoot, enough width for up to 80 yards but very little room for a 100 yards shooting-line. (At this time it was the shooting-line that was moved, not the bosses.) The old tennis court was raised about three feet and proved most useful as as arrow—stop behind the targets.

Placed in front of the stream was the pavilion, a single room building about 12 feet by 24 feet, with the luxury of an elsan toilet at the rear, Cars could be driven right up to the clubhouse and parked conveniently alongside, a facility the club has not been able to enjoy at any of the later grounds and our present home is by far the worst in this respect.

I think the bosses must have been in a separate tackle shed near the target line but have no clear recollection of that, There were trees on both long sides of the area, Mrs Taylor’s house rose up high at the back and altogether it was a most attractive ground.

Cooking arrangements were simple in the extreme, There was a Primus stove, belonging to a member, a teapot, a kettle and some mugs. Someone usually brought water in a container but failing that it meant an uphill climb to the water tap outside the back of Mrs Taylor’s house, Even so, it was way back in those early days that Overdale laid firm foundations for success in what could perhaps be called the second string to its bow ! I refer to success in eating and entertaining ! There was quite a lot of both done. Food rationing was still with us even in 1951, and the club had a catering permit for fats and sugar etc. One permit was kept for posterity - it was a permit to buy absolutely nothing !

BUT WHAT OF THE SHOOTING ?

Prior to 1949 all shooting had been two - way. That means targets were set up at opposite ends of the chosen distance and the archers shot first in one direction, walked up to the bosses to score and then shot back in the other direction. Not at all easy on windy days as you can imagine.

By the time Overdale got started things had changed. All shooting was one - way but there was no common shooting line. In a York round the men would be 20 yards behind the ladies until the last two dozen, when they would be just 10 yards behind. The bosses were always on a constant target - line, even for practice. When archers changed distances they moved forward with their tackle, not a great chore when they only had a bow, a ground quiver and some arrows.

However, there was a common practice which we would look askance at today. On days when archers were shooting different rounds they would shoot and walk up to score independently of each other, consequently a couple of targets might have archers round them, scoring, whilst the others were still being shot at. Space between bosses was greater than it is today but even so by our standards it must have been
dangerous. Host clubs shot this way and in researching for this document I came across a query in a GNAS bulletin of 1962, asking if GNAS insurance covered clubs which shot in this manner. The reply was that distance between targets would be the critical factor.

I can remember Isi Creme being very unhappy about the risks being incurred and we stopped shooting this way when one of our ranks, one Edith Fogg, was indeed pierced by an arrow which fell off the arrow shelf as our very experienced chairman at that time shot it. The arrow caught Edith’s skirt, which acted as a baffle, but it still broke the skin in a delicate place.

Returning to my own experience I recall how inadequate I felt on that first evening when I held an arrow in a flat degame practice bow, and endeavored to loose it. I remember, too, the huge and painful swelling that arose on my bow arm as I constantly hit it under my bracer. These problems disappear quickly as you all know and soon I was enjoying my archery immensely.

During that first season of mine there were several happenings which plunged me happily and irresistibly deep into the centre of archery. The British Archer volume 3 number 3, records that four ladies and three gentlemen from Bowmen of Overdale shot in the 52nd Grand Northern Archery Meeting on September 5th and 6th 1951 at Grasmere. It also records that Miss S D Kemp, shooting as a novice, shot two Herefords of 269 and 179 respectively, totalling 448 and taking 37th place out of 47, Humble beginnings!

Several of us also shot in the Lancashire and Cheshire Archery Association championships later in September. This shoot and the Northern were the important ones in this area and I have always felt grateful that I was led into county and regional shooting at such an early stage. Overdale’s experience in shooting long distances, particularly the ladies, resulted in five of us (myself included and unclassified at that !) forming part of the team for Lancashire and Cheshire shooting against Yorkshire in what the ‘B,A’ reports as the first Northern inter-county match, in 1951. Mrs L H Iddon 111 567 12 and Mrs T R Walker 117 541 8 were the top two scorers in the LCAA ladies team, whilst my 67 255 4 brought up the rear in 6th place. Our chairman Dick Walker was fourth in the men’s team with 104 422 4. So Overdale made a good impression in that first of many matches. Yorkshire won, by the way.
Soon after that occasion an income tax rebate came my way and I spent £10.00.00, a massive sum on a take-apart tubular steel Aecles and Pollock Kestrel bow, painted green. This replaced the flat practice bow I started with and I felt really equipped.

Lancashire & Cheshire Archery Team Association Team
which shot against Yorkshire in 1951
1st left on the Back Row:– Dick Walker
Left to Right front row:– Sheila Crompton, Sheila Kemp, Gwendy Walker, and Betty Iddon - Note the steel bows.

MASTER BOWMAN STATUS

This was introduced in 1951 with the first badge being awarded in 1952, which was also the year in which the Grand National Oxford Meeting was won for the first time by Double York and Double Hereford scores (four in all) each exceeding 700. The MB level was 700. Overdale can boast one of the very first Lady Master Bowmen, namely Mrs L H Iddon, who completed her scores in 1951 with wooden hardwood spliced arrows and a one-piece composite bow. Sadly she moved away from Bolton sometime in 1952 I believe, and the club lost its first really successful archer.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1951

a) It was reported that the club then had one Master Bowman, two 1st class bowmen, four 2nd class bowmen, eight 3rd class bowmen and presumably several unclassified bowmen.

b) Mrs T K Walker (Gwendy) retired from the post of secretary and her place was taken by Miss S D Kemp.

c) It was proposed that Mrs B H Iddon (Betty) should be made an Honorary Life Member, in recognition of the distinction she had brought to the club. This was carried.

d) A suggestion that there should be a newsletter during the winter to help to keep members interested was approved. Agreed there should be two issues.
The first mention of archery golf appears in the Minutes now, with matches arranged at Turton Golf Club. These were very popular with both archers and golfers at first and Overdale competed on most of the Bolton courses during the next few years. Two archers took on two golfers, the archers shooting at beer-mat sized cardboard discs on the greens and the golfers playing into the holes as they normally did. There were various penalties of strokes and shots but the matches were very one sided and the archers almost always won. As the venue always had to be the golf club and the hospitality likewise it was the golfers who seem to become bored with the fixtures and they gradually disappeared from our calendar.

Towards the end of 1952 there was an attempt to move the club to a field behind the Blundell Arms on Chorley Old Road, much nearer to Horwich. The Minutes report that the proposal was carried at the AGM and arrangements made for moving the pavilion before Christmas, but something went wrong (I can't say what for the Minutes don't mention it!) and the removal never happened. Whatever the reason, I feel the club was lucky it did not have to go through an upheaval at that time. Instead it was able to enjoy two more happy developing years on the Chorley New Road very pleasant ground.

The management of the club was changing a little now. John Waring, still in his late teens and studying accountancy, became Treasurer. This was to be the first of several responsibilities he undertook in the club and county administrations. John's father, Harold, became our Auditor. Dick and Gwenda Walker were still guiding us and hosting committee meetings and Ted Smith was a committee member with his own ideas. He it was who advocated starting a fund so that one day we could perhaps buy some land. We all agreed with this but it never came to fruition.

In 1953 it was decided to opt out of the Lancashire and Cheshire league because it caused too many people to be away from the club at weekends, leaving the beginners without help. There was no coaching system operating, one relied upon willing members giving up time to start off newcomers and there was no laid down procedure. About once each season a coaching weekend was arranged and a friendly successful archer would be invited to give some instruction. Opting out of the LCAA league may have helped beginners in 1953, but in 1954 we were back in there hoping for victory.

1953 saw the formation of a quite large junior section. Cyril Tickle's name appears about now, also Frank Draper's and they must have been about 15 or 14 years old. Both stayed until further education or work took them away, Cyril came back many years later then left to form Deane Bowmen and Frank visited regularly for many years whenever he could. He was a very successful archer and his name will crop up later in this account.

There was regular shooting indoors at the Drill Hall during the winter and the club obtained permission to erect a pulley system for hoisting up a backstop made from an old paper machine felt.

At the 1955 A G M Mr & Mrs J Harold Waring presented a Rosebowl for the Lady Champion and Mr John F ‘Waring presented a Cup for the Junior Champion.

Two social events were planned, an evening of archery films and later a Hot-pot Supper evening.

A sub-committee for the arranging of teas and social events was elected consisting of Mrs Waring, Mrs Ted Smith and Mrs Kemp. None of them shot and all worked very hard for varying numbers of years.
Early in 1954 a verandah was built onto the pavilion and this greatly improved the appearance of it. During the season 4 clubs were entertained to a match followed by tea and the verandah was much used.

At this time we were painting our own target faces, using sisal paper. This was a dreadful task and it was a good job there were no tolerances to be adhered to. Money, or shortage of it, was an ever present problem and there were jumble sales, pin boards and money-raising efforts throughout the season.

Sadly our time at Chorley New Road was to come to an end quite unexpectedly. Mrs Taylor decided to let her daughter build on our field, as building land was at a premium generally. This was a bitter blow. The club was poor, having carried out improvements it would not have done if it had been known a move was imminent.

So began another search for a new home, the third in the club’s short history. Golf clubs, farmers and cricket clubs were approached but it was Bolton Housing Committee who came up with a piece of land alongside Thicketford Road in Bolton.

The 1954 A G M approved this change of venue, trustees were appointed to deal with the signing of a lease with Bolton Corporation and estimates for removing the pavilion and target eked were sought.

**THICKETFORD ROAD**

The approach to this ground, for most members, was from Crompton Way down Thicketford Road and up towards Top o’th Brow estate. The 5 barred gate was on the left just past the bridge over Bradshaw Brook. There was a 50 yard stretch of rough ground then the path dropped down on to a large level field, bordered on one side by the brook and on the other by a hillside which sloped up to Top o’th Brow estate.
Cars had to be parked on Thicketford Road, out of sight, but not many members owned cars in those days. A lot of us used the buses! From the road to where we eventually erected the pavilion was quite a trek, probably 200 yards, downhill on the way in, so uphill on the way out. The actual shooting-area was considerably larger than we had been used to so that was a bonus.

1955 AND A NEW ERA

The pavilion was erected, complete with its verandah and elsan toilet and it soon became apparent that our venue was very different from the last one in one particular aspect, VANDALISM. Strong wooden shutters, bolting through to the inside were fitted on all the windows and proved to be most effective. It was quite impossible to keep a padlock on the field gate and I seem to remember that the roof was very vulnerable.

In spite of these problems shooting progressed inevitably. The field was large enough for shooting clout and this we did several times. Rounding up cows was something we became good at. A farmer had grazing rights on the field and it was felt that we must tolerate this inconvenience, rather than invite trouble with Bolton Council by complaining.

Membership stood at 30 full shooting members, 18 junior members and 10 non-shooting members. There was a move to change the clubs name, on the grounds that we had no real connection with Overdale Youth Centre and that perhaps we should incorporate 'Bolton' into our name. The Minutes report

Points against the change were:

a) That Bowmen of Overdale' was an attractive name.

b) That it was now well-known in archery circles.

c) That 'Bolton' was an ugly name to incorporate.

In the end, as you already know, no change was made.
Ron Hobson, an enthusiastic and likable fellow, had joined us by now, and quickly began to shoot well. Frank Draper, too, was making his mark. Both were experimental archers, full of ideas, Ron was also musically minded, and very soon he was organizing extra-mural activities which had nothing to do with archery. A barbecue was arranged for Guy Falkes Night, North Cheshire Bowmen were invited and Ron formed a glee club to provide the entertainment. Though I say it myself, we were not at all bad, either! The glee club continued for two or three years, confining its activities to carol-singing and party cabaret.

POINTS FROM THE AGM

1) New ground proving satisfactory except for interference by youths from the estate.

2) The club had 60 members and was in a healthy financial position.

3) Plans for a bow-making class were made.

It was decided to hold a Christmas Party at the Reform Club and Ron Hobson was to organise it. This was the first of two or three such parties and they were very enjoyable.

By now the Lancashire and Cheshire Archery Association had divided into two county Associations. Dick Walker and John Waring, from Overdale were Chairman and Treasurer respectively of the Lancashire group.

Early in 1956 Sheila and Isi Creme joined our ranks. Previously they had been members of Deans Bowmen in Swinton but that club had to close. Isi was already a good archer, having won the Lancashire Championships in 1955 and Sheila was following in his footsteps. They seemed to foster a wave of enthusiasm and there began, about this time, a period of nine or ten years during which our standard of shooting rose steadily. This was the time when equipment began to change and develop. Dave Mellersh of Liverpool invented the rubber ‘poper-upper’ (forerunner of the modern clicker) and there were many versions of it to be seen on the Overdale bows.

Frank Draper was experimenting with floppy fletchings made from Fablon long before any plastic ones were seen on the commercial market. Steel bows were being replaced by the, composite one piece wood and fibreglass recurve, with cut-out risers. All these inventions led to higher scores, but I think it was the sheer volume of shooting and the competitive spirit which existed in Overdale which raised the club’s standards so much.

Quote from ‘Northern News’ in the ‘British Archer’ In 1957 says ‘Although we have had a very poor season with regard to weather the Bowmen of Overdale shot more rounds than you would think possible. Total for the club was 1066 complete rounds. Included in these were 35 MB and 107 1st, Class. They certainly keep the Club Recorder busy. Another quote said “Overdale perforates its score sheets on a sewing machine!”

There was more initiative to come. Jack Memory made a shooting-machine for arrow grouping, wash leather’s were made into tunics to be worn under jerseys for warmth, Isi and Sheila Creme began to make bowbags, and as we all know, they are still doing so, not to mention tents, umbrella covers and other things. Large plastic bags, with cut out holes for arms and neck became standard wet weather wear under jerseys when Overdale archers took up their equipment and found their places on the shooting line.
It was a very happy period in the club’s history. Not many members had cars but those who had were generous in giving lifts to tournaments or to other clubs for friendly matches or perhaps to county matches for some of our members were enjoying regular selection for Lancashire teams.

We had a couple of car rallies, following routes set by John Waring, and ending with hotpot or fish and chip suppers. We had a whole week in Oxford before the National Championships with a dozen of us taking over most of an hotel. It was lovely weather and we boated on the Isis, went to Henley, flew kites by the river, dined out at the Bear Inn in Woodstock and had a splendid holiday. Then we shot the three days of the Championships at Worcester College.

Much has been written and said, in the past, about the special appeal and quality of the ‘National’ when it was shot on Worcester College cricket field, as it was for many, many years. All of it is true.

The Championship was always shot without leader-boards, or collection of scores. There were no cars allowed within the college grounds and the tented toilets were primitive to say the least, but there was an atmosphere which I never felt anywhere else. We really were on hallowed ground and the crowded streets of Oxford seemed miles away.

The National ‘is no longer in Oxford. It has became the GNAM and is now held at Lilleshall but I was pleased to read last year that the old Oxford feeling lives on.

For many years Overdale was represented at the National and we had plenty of success there, both individually and in team awards for the county.
INTERNATIONAL TRIALS (NOW KNOWN AS U K MASTERS SHOOT)

These were the main selection shoots for the British Team and invitations to shoot in them were issued to MBs and selected 1st class archers. Grand Master Bowman status was introduced in 1960 and so GMBs were included too. By 1963 Britain had 16 GMBs, 2 of whom were Sheila Kemp and Isi Creme.

June Heywood, Sheila and Isi Creme, Ron Hobson, Frank Draper and Sheila Kemp shot in many Trials and featured regularly in the annual Top Ten lists published by the GNAS Selection Committees.

1962 3rd Sheila Creme, British Record for 30m.
1963 3rd Sheila Kemp.
1960 or 61 1st June Heywood, who made history in dreadful conditions, with a score of 1000, the first to be shot in a Fita in open competition in Britain.

THE ‘NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS’ IN OXFORD

1958 2nd June Heywood - 1636 Double Hereford
1958 100 x 2 Isi Creme
1963 3rd Sheila Kemp
1963 1st Isi Creme
1964 Champion Sheila Kemp, who also made history, in good conditions, with a score for Double Hereford of 1929, including the first 1000 Hereford to be shot in open competition in Britain.

I have always thought that those two first open 1000s were a unique achievement for Overdale, even though they are now lost in history as far as the rest of the archery world is concerned. Not many such goals are left to us now.
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

This was the peak of achievement for any archer, before the sport was again included in the Olympic Games after a break of about 60 years.

June Heywood was our first international. In 1959 she was selected to shoot in Stockholm and in 1961 she competed in Oslo.

In 1963 Sheila Kemp made the British Team and travelled to Finland, coming 7th, having lost 6th place on golds.

Such was the the measure, then, of Overdale ‘members’ abilities. There were other successes, I know, but cannot recall details.

BACK TO THE CLUB

The Minutes reveal that much more organisation was taking place during 1956, and 1957. It was felt necessary to plan the layout of the field with regard to greater safety and to position special lanes for archers wishing to shoot the Fita rounds. These were new and very popular. Incidentally there were no sighters. It was straight in with the first arrows Sighters were not allowed until about 1965 then only in FITA’s.

Properly structured coaching was arranged for unclassified archers, but it was all done by the better archers of the club.

Disaster struck in the shape of the destruction of all our targets by fire. I think we all suspected that vandalism might be to blame, but finally put it down to spontaneous combustion.

Vandalism was with us continually. We were constantly paying out for repairs or replacements. Another move seemed inevitable. A disused sewage ground behind the Royal Oak at Bradshaw was inspected but nothing came of that. During August of 1957 June Heywood reported that a Mr Fletcher of Little Lever was agreeable to having us as tenants. The field was behind Fletcher’s Concrete Products in Settle Street, Little Lever, on the other side of Ladyshore Road from where we are now. The existing housing estate was not yet built.

An Extraordinary General Meeting approved the move, which was planned for the end of the season in October. A lorry was organised and members were to dismantle the clubhouse and move it to Little Lever all in one day. We dared not leave anything behind in an unprotected state.

That day is one that stands out in the memories of Sheila and Isi Creme and myself as one we would rather not have experienced. The rain poured down continually from start to finish of the exercise, adding to our misery as we became more and more exhausted. We dismantled the clubhouse, and carried it section by section 200 yards uphill to the road. There it was loaded on a lorry and ferried off to Little Lever, where it was piled up at the edge of the new field.

According to an item in the “British Archer” 20 of our members helped with the moves saving £36 contractors fees. We were of course apprehensive about leaving the clubhouse, our biggest asset,’ in pieces over the winter period, when there was no
outdoor shooting taking place, but there was little else we could do. The rebuilding would have to wait until the spring. We need not have worried, for the pile of sections, spars, roof timbers, shelving and shutters etc. remained untouched, giving us hope that we might be able to live peacefully in Little Lever, This was indeed the case.

During the winter plans for rebuilding were formulated. As parts of the old clubhouse had been damaged by vandalism before the decision to move was taken it was felt that this might be a good time to extend the premises a little. After perusing the newspaper adverts for a few weeks we found one relating to a henhouse, fairly new and about 18 feet square, I think. I remember going with John Waring to have a look at it and deciding that after a good scrub it would suit us very well. We asked the members to make £5 loans to the club to help with the purchase and transportation costs of the new hut, hoping to pay them back within the next year. Members responded well, the hut was bought and there we were with two buildings to make into one ready for the 1958 season.

It was not an easy job, one hut being square and the other one rectangular, and the roof, in particular, presented considerable difficulty. In the end, though, we had a sizeable clubhouse with a tackling-up room, a clubroom with a kitchen and servery, running cold water laid on from Mr Fletchers works, calor gas for lighting and cooking and the inevitable chemical toilet.

About this time John Waring resigned from the office of Treasurer to take up a similar position on the county Association committee. Tsi Creme joined the club committee and took over as Records Officer, with Sheila Creme as his assistant. John Shaw became Treasurer.
Not everyone had been pleased about moving to Little Lever, Mrs Ted’s husband Ted being one of these members -and he resigned from the club, Having been a ‘founder’ member and on the committee for several years we were sorry to see him leaving for such a reason, Mrs Ted has never lost her interest but now is unable to take any physical part.

Early in 1958 we were joined by a young Portuguese student who was studying textiles at Bolton Technical College. He was enthusiastic, likeable and worked his way up to becoming a 2nd class archers ‘When his term of study came to an end and he had to return home he showed his appreciation of his time with us by presenting to the club a trophy, asking that it should be awarded to a 2nd class archer. His name was Americo Concalves and the Concalves Trophy is still awarded on our Championship Day.

Late in 1958 Dick Walker resigned from the Chair, after 9 years in office, He had steered the club from its beginning and it was impossible to measure the leadership and assistance he had given. He said he was finding it difficult to give time to club activities and this led, in June 1959, to he and Gwendy leaving the club altogether. They eventually left the town for the Midlands, but as I have commented earlier, their influence stayed with the club.

John Waring was voted in as the new Chairman and June Heywood became a member of the committee. Before long Sheila Creme also joined the management. The club seemed to be moving into a new phase of its development.

LITTLE LEVER

The shooting area was flat and quite large enough for our requirements. We were able to park in Mr Fletcher’s works’ yard about 30 yards from the clubhouse. During the first season there many weekends spent in finishing off the construction of the building and target storage facilities, but there was still time to get plenty of shooting done. June Heywood was getting better and better and her efforts were rewarded by selection for the British Team in 1959, for the World Championships in Stockholm. This was the first major achievement by one of our members and we were all inspired by it. Later in the year at the AGM we celebrated our first ten years with sherry and a birthday cake.

It was in 1959 also that we experimented with targets made of a building material called Stramit Board. On her return from Stockholm June reported that the targets in the competition there had been square and made of this board, a kind of straw sandwich between two ‘hardboard’ pieces. They were reported to be long-lasting and June bought a target-sized piece for her own use at home. She lent it to the club and later we bought several different qualities to see how they stood up to shooting. Stramit targets were indeed considerably cheaper than Egertons, but were extremely heavy, needed new style stands and pulling out the arrows was strong men’s work. Nevertheless we persevered with them for a season or two.

Just about this time an elderly relative of mine rediscovered in his house some early archery medals and one arrow trophy which formerly belonged to the defunct Cheetham Hill Archers of Manchester. The arrow trophy had been presented to that club by a member of my relative’s family, one Henry Hilton, and the medals were early GNAS ones which he had won. Henry Hilton was an archer of some distinction and I was pleased to find his name appearing several times in the Archery volume of the
famous ‘Badminton Library’. The club must have returned the arrow trophy to Henry Hilton when it disbanded. To come to the reason for this bit of information, my relative Allan Morris kindly presented the silver arrow, now known as the ‘Hilton Arrow’ to Lancashire Archery Association and one medal to Overdale. Both of them dated from about 1860. We decided to award the medal as a monthly handicap prize and for many years it was open to both men and women. I think we are lucky to have such an historic and interesting trophy in our collection.

Towards the end of 1959 the Minutes of the AGM report that Isi Creme, as Field-captain, felt the club’s shooting was becoming less of a corporate activity and more of practice in small groups, with the better archers seeming reluctant to integrate with less experienced members. From this comment and the discussion which followed it came the organised shooting on alternate weekends such as we enjoy today. It was quite a few years before we issued a fixture list to individual members as we do now.

Early in 1960 John Waring resigned from the Chair and gradually we saw less and less of him. I think his fiancee won him over to tennis. He was the last of the founder members to go and one who had worked unstintingly for Overdale and County. With his departure I became the ‘oldest’ shooting member of the club! Ron Hobson became Chairman.

There was still no outdoor shooting organised during the winter months, and no indoor shooting either, but we met fort nightly at people’s houses, sometimes to play games and sometimes to make strings and such like. We were still holding jumble sales, endeavoring to make shillings grow into pounds, raising money in any way we could think of, because we seemed constantly to be short of money.

In 1961 June Heywood again made the British Team for the World Championships in Oslo, and once again we celebrated her achievement. The club could still muster eight MBs and several 1st class archers. Throughout the year, however, our financial position featured regularly in committee meetings, and it became obvious that subscriptions would have to go up quite a lot, and we considered staging an open tournament in 1962.
Even then, eleven years after the club started, there were very few tournaments compared with today’s number, and, not many were organised by just a club. It would be a financial gamble but the early Overdale spirit came to the fore and we went ahead with arrangements. Little - did we think that 27 years later we would still be staging tournaments.

IN THE COUNTY

Although we were very occupied with our own problems and plans, Overdale continued to play a large part in the affairs of the County Association. John Waring resigned from the Chair, but Beatrice Blackford became Treasurer, June Heywood was one of the Lancashire team selectors and I took over as Secretary. In my own case I volunteered simply because there was no one else in sight, and I had no intention of doing the job for long, as I was still Overdale’s secretary, and happily employed as such. However, that wasn’t the way things worked out. I am still the County secretary and have been since 1961, except for a short period of about 18 months.

BACK TO THE 1962 TOURNAMENT

Prior to the 1961 AGM, the Minutes of committee meetings reveal considerable anxieties about the wisdom of committing Ourselves to the preliminary expenses of putting on a shoot. The balance sheet showed that there was £1.7.10d in hand. Not exactly a fortune! However, the members present at the AGM listened to arguments put forward, heard that a suitable venue at Chetham’s School in Salford had been found, and eventually gave approval for the tournament.

The ground had been suggested by a member, who was the groundsman there, and it was certainly adequate, but it was a long way from our home base. For most members it was the first time they had been involved in organisation of this kind, but all went well. The round was an Albion and it was decided to bar club members from entry. This was because our standard of shooting was such that Overdale archers could well take many of the awards, and that would not have been politic. Our decision to use Stramit board for the bosses was less popular with the competitors because they experienced great difficulty in pulling out the arrows, and we never used them again except at the club. The Stramit company itself later asked us to try out various qualities of board, but, none proved really satisfactory and they disappeared from the archery scene.

A profit of £ 43.’00.00d is recorded from the shoot, but this did not include the cost of targets or faces. A donation of £5.0.0d was made to Chetham’s School for use of the ground.

A satisfactory result, then, but should it be tried again next year? Apparently there were divided opinions about this, particularly about- the venue. Subsequent recordings show that a new venue , namely De Havilland Sports Ground at Lostock, became the tournament base for some years, until complaints from competitors about the consistently strong winds blowing across from Rivington Pike, and one occasion when the field was an absolute quagmire following a period of heavy rain, forced us to look elsewhere once again. More of that later.

Fund-raising was bringing in much needed cash to swell the club’s coffers. Target fees, at 6d a time, were introduced, more raffles were held and those who attended winter evening activities at members’ houses were asked to pay 1/- each.
The target fees did not last long, though. There were grumbles that people had been shooting without paying the fee, that a few people were subsidising the club and so on. After one season only the target fees were dropped, and have never been tried again.

The 1962 AGM revealed considerable improvement in financial matters, thanks to members efforts and the tournament profit.

MORE GROUND PROBLEMS

Early in 1963 Mr Fletcher, our landlord, informed us that he intended to build on our field, but also was planning to re-locate us on the other side of Ladyshore Road in another field, part of a scheduled Green Belt area, This upheaval was to take place almost at once.

It was quite apparent that our combination clubhouse would be very difficult to move and re-erect, and we all felt we should put our efforts into finding yet another new building, or at any rate a second-hand one. This was done, being a sectional wooden hut which had been used as temporary offices by a firm which had suffered a fire. It was 20' by 24', plywood clad with & wooden floor, plenty of windows, 2 rooms and a kitchen, and all for £75.0.0.

But what about the old hut? Issy Creme said there was a customer for everything, so we advertised and, wonder of wonders, we found one. Whoever it was paid us £30.0.0d, according to the treasurer’s ledger. Consequently the new hut was a very good bargain. It is our present clubhouse but was first erected parallel to Ladyshore Road then moved to its current position when the bungalows were built. Almost certainly it is in its last resting-place now!

What about the ground? There was a hedge where the bungalows are now - and spare land on the corner in front of Mr. Rileys house. Someone else lived there then and we negotiated a gentlemen’s agreement which allowed us to park on the spare land and walk over to the field. As present members already know, the ground is bowl shaped and not ideal. The grass was very rough and tough, Little Lever Football Club were already occupying part of the area and the public were in the habit of exercising their dogs and sending their children to play there.

For most of that first season the only shelter was a derelict sub-station by the clump of trees at the side of the present shooting-line. It was brick-built with Just a door, no windows and a concrete floor. It served us as tackle shed and clubhouse alike and was, I suppose, better than nothing, but only Just. We shot down towards the big house, which had a railway sleeper fence round it, with our backs to the football field. It must have been a difficult season and one which only the dedicated survived, for it was about September before the new building was up and even then there was so much to do before it was decorated and equipped properly. I remember we were very disappointed to find that Mr. Fletcher would not give us a lease, not even for a couple of years, let alone a longer period. We paid a rent of £27.0.0d annually which was reasonable but we longed for security of tenure. We still haven’t got it.

Surprisingly, we finished the year with a healthy balance and an urge to find more recruits in 1964. Egerton targets appeared again on our field, for we were very weary of heaving Stramit board about. A toilet compartment was built on to the back of the clubhouse, a new Elssan was bought and we were ready for 1964.
Regular fixtures, such as entertaining other clubs to a shoot following by tea, which had been discontinued during 1963 were arranged again in 1964 and we got ourselves back to normal. For me it proved to be the second of my two best years, as far as shooting was concerned. Having shot in the British Team in the World Championships in Finland in 1963 I celebrated by becoming British Champion in the 1964 National at Oxford. On reflection I believe that first-ever open 1000 Hereford in Oxford gave me more pleasure than the 1065 2nd Fita in Helsinki, the round which brought me GMB status and the highest Fita I have ever shot.

The other interesting point about all my shooting at this time is that it was done with Reg Timms bow. Reg had been a member of Overdale for some years and at a time when amateur bow-making became quite widespread he decided to try his hand at it. In his early days the club had attended the bow-making classes in which solid alloy bows were produced, but the new Timms bows were quite different. They were one-piece composite wood and fibreglass bows and they shot beautifully. I had two and they did very well for me.

Reg also made a centre-shot bow, in which the arrow went through a central hole in the riser. A curiosity which he didn’t repeat! He tells me he made about 20 bows altogether.

Incidently, for some years June Heywood used a bow made by Ron Bishop of Merseyside, that Lancashire archer with an unparalleled record of shooting and archery craftsmanship, unparalleled that is, in Lancashire.
AUTOMATION

It was about this time that the automated archery range made its appearance in some towns. There was one called the Castle Vernon Range in Preston and several times a party of us went over for an evening out. It was indoor shooting, very short distance, as I remember, and the bosses could be wound back to the shooting line after each end. I seem to recall that they often broke down and in that case we ended up walking up and down as usual. It was also quite expensive and too far away to be very practical for us. In any case it didn’t become popular with the general public and only lasted a year or so.

LOOKING BACK AT THE SIXTIES

I have written that the late fifties and early sixties were very happy years for the club and produced some splendid shooting. On reading through the Minutes from about 1965 to 1970 I realise that the state of euphoria did not continue unchanged. For different reasons several of our successful members began to shoot less. June Heywood married Jim Warburton and found she had less time to shoot. Ron Hobson lost interest and left, Frank Draper was away teaching and later became involved in supplying archery equipment - under the name of Perris Archery, and even Sheila and Isi Creme seemed to easing off a little. Suddenly fewer people were participating in tournaments and the stimulus we had enjoyed for some years seemed to have faded.

History does seem to show that a club needs a balance of home shooting and tournament shooting, if it is to maintain enthusiasm. Not everyone wants to travel away to shoots and subject themselves to the nervous tension of shooting in-front of strangers, but if no one does the club becomes very parochial and without direction, heedless to say having too many people away for too many weekends means that the newer members are neglected, and that isn’t good either!
During this period we were shooting in the B.A. summer postal league, somewhat un成功地，and also were shooting in the winter in the canteen at Silcom’s Engineering Works. There was a Silcom’s club at the time. I remember that indoor shooting as being very enjoyable and lasting through several winters.

Our social activities were confined to bonfires with barbecues, held near to November 5th. and one or two shoots followed by a club tea, for Which we pooled the sandwiches and cake we had all brought. Occasionally we would have some pasties.

Cutting the grass became a worry. For some time the Farnworth Parks Department had been doing it for us, then informed us they could no longer provide this service. Once or twice they lent us an Allen Scythe machine for us to use ourselves, and that I well remember! Not only did we have to cut the grass, we had to rake it up as well! Eventually, of course, we were obliged to buy a mower of our own and this seemed to be a constant source of irritation and expense.

Mowing rotas were arranged but not always adhered to, the few doing the work for the many, and when a lot of people handle something like a mower things often go wrong. They did, and we were always having to repair bits and pieces. Mowing and shooting just don’t do well together, so it was a relief when we we eventually became tenants of Bolton Metro and one of our enterprising members persuaded them to cut our field as well as the neighboring football ground.

The Minutes reveal that from time to time ‘the’ committee was concerned about the future of the club and our inability to develop the premises. Mr Fletcher, our landlord, was most friendly but would not allow any further building and would not give security of tenure. He had plans to build more bungalows along Ladyshore Road, a project which meant we had to move the clubhouse once more, as the gardens would encroach on it where it then was. In addition, he talked of putting a brick pavilion somewhere on the field, to be a communal club-house for the footballers, archers and
perhaps other groups to share. It sounded interesting but never came to fruition. If we wished to develop, in the building context, it was plain we would have to find a new venue, and a considerable search was made, particularly in the Bury areas. Several grounds were looked at and re-searched but nothing suitable or available was found. Gradually the impetus to continue searching faded and we settled down again.

Our annual Albion tournament, for that was what it had become, gave us a welcome boost to our income for several years and had archers from clubs in neighboring counties seemed to look forward to it. We hired bosses from other clubs at first, then later from the Northern Counties Archery Society. Always a problem was arranging transport and paying for it.

After two or three shoots Reg Timms suggested that it might be a good idea to hold a General Meeting about one month before the tournament, for the purpose of sorting out who was to do what in the matter of jobs and catering etc. This proved to be a very good club exercise, and one that continued for almost twenty years.

In the middle sixties Brian Meller and Barbara Harding joined our ranks. Brian was to play a large part in the continuing development of Overdale and Barbara has eventually become our Treasurer.

Brian became Chairman in 1966 and held the position about 10 years. He guided the club through some difficult times when we were full of doubts about continuing with the annual tournaments and about staying in Little Lever, and at all times gave strong leadership accompanied by personal effort. It was our loss when pressure of work took him away from our ranks.

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Having served on the National Council for a few years, as Northern Counties' representative, I was considerably surprised to find myself elected GNAS Vice-President, serving three terms in this capacity, and discovering that it was no sinecure but a real job of work. Altogether I remained a member of Council for ten years, travelling to London four times a year and finding that there is a lot more to shooting than just being on the line.

In 1966 also, Margaret and Robin Thew joined us. They were already experienced archers and it wasn't long before Margaret was raising the level of our shooting successes once again. Whilst a member of Overdale she won the Northern and Lancashire titles, achieved considerable success nationally and she still holds some Overdale record scores.

Financially the sixties ended better than they began, I think. From a balance of £17.00.10d in 1961 we went to £169.00.0d in 1969, allowing us to face the seventies without financial anxiety.

**COMING OF AGE NOVEMBER 1970**

The highlight of this year was, of course, our twenty-first birthday; but before that was the tournament. This turned out to be the last we did at De Havilland, for the ground was dreadful and competitors grumbled, with justification. Worthy of mention I think is the fact that our Lady Paramount that day was one Pauline Edwards, in her first year at Leeds University and already a selected international. She shot in the European
Championships the same year. I know she still remembers the mud and the rain, for she has told me so!

Almost twenty years later Pauline is still one of our top three ladies, and goodness knows how many times she has represented Britain.

**TWENTY ONE TODAY AND OUR FIRST CLUB DINNER**

Our first club dinner was arranged as near to our birthday November 9th as we could manage, and took place at the Brooklyn Hotel in Green Lane. Brian Meller’s wife, Pat, baked us a cake and decorated it beautifully and Mrs Ted Smith, with Brian’s assistance, performed the ceremonial cutting. There is little doubt that everyone present enjoyed the occasion for we have had an annual dinner ever since.

**1971 NEW TOURNAMENT VENUE**

This turned out to be Bolton Cricket Club, in Green Lane, Bolton. It was a good venue in every respect, although never very cheap. We used it for several years until the rent became prohibitive. We even considered becoming a part of the Cricket Club and had meetings with the cricketers to discuss the matter, but, restrictions on shooting time made the amalgamation a non-starter.

The World Championships, held in York, were of interest to many of us. Several members went to help. June Warburton was hostess to one of the teams, I was part of the official scoring team and I think one or two others helped as individual target scorers.

Clubs were invited to offer prizes for the Championships and we were prompt in making our contribution. The prizes could be any design, and material, and were to be...
awarded down the scores as far as possible. Between 1140 and 200 were presented, according to the B.A. and many were highly original. Ours was a piece of Cumberland granite mounted on a wooden plinth. Crossed arrows were fixed on the granite. It was made by Ken Hodkinson, one of our members.

The clubhouse was moved to its present resting-place. Mr Fletcher provided man-power to help in the move at the end of the season and yet again we entered a re-decoration programme.

**NEW MEMBERS**

The seventies saw an influx of members, many of whom are still with us and have contributed considerably to the club’s welfare. Diane and Len Kitching, Olive Morris, Lilian and Arthur Timmins, Barbara and Ron Lomas, Sheila Talbot, the Eddie Higson family, and later Trevor Baynes and Bert Ogden, all came to pull the bow. How invaluable they have all been to us in one way or another.

**1972** The clubhouse was finished, the men dug through to Ladyshore Road so we could have water laid on, but we decided that the cost of having electricity laid on outweighed the use we could make of it.

Mr Fletcher’s wife died and he offered us a trophy in her memory. We felt we should do this ourselves and bought the first Fletcher Rosebowl. So began our President’s Day Shoot (Mr Fletcher being our President then) and later we purchased a - companion Rosebowl.

According to the Minutes we discussed levelling the-field but ‘dismissed the idea on two recorded counts,

1)  ‘it would be a very expensive exercise and
2)  the field would be out of use for some considerable time.

**1973** At last we acquired the ultimate. A flushing toilet! This was indeed luxury of the - highest order. June Warburton had dreamed about it for years.

Apparently we experienced again one of those periods when enthusiasm declined and club shooting became very fragmented. In an attempt to combat this we introduced organised club shooting every alternate week on Sundays, something we have continued to do right up until now.

**1974** Mr Fletcher sold his land to Little Lever - Council so the Football Club and ourselves became its tenants. Very soon after that Little Lever became part of Bolton and our landlord changed again. Then someone bought the piece of land we used for parking and Mr Riley bought the big house where the old man had lived, but recently died. The sleeper fence was pulled down and a bungalow was built on the corner, thus boxing us in very effectively. We tried to persuade the bungalow owner to leave us a pathway front Ladyshore Road but to no avail.

GNAS introduced a 6 lesson course for beginners, with an obligatory minimum fee of 50p, and whether this was the catalyst which sparked off Overdale’s surge of organised coaching I can’t be sure, but something did.

Isi Creme, Brian Meller and maybe one or two more had been taking archery courses at various sports centres for some time, particularly Isi, but now Overdale seemed to blossom with coaches and new recruits got a much better start than in earlier years.
NEW TROPHY

Robert Fletcher's Paper Mill, in Stoneclough, offered us a trophy, to be used in any way see liked. We decided to make it part of the annual tournament awards for the best score of the day by either a lady or gentleman. Up to this point all awards had been prizes except for one a salver which see had been given in memory of John Till of North Wales. John had Judged our shoot for some years before he died.

NEW SECRETARY

At the 1974 AGM I retired from the position of club secretary, having been in office for 23 years, and was Presented with a stainless steel tea set. I still use it. I was becoming increasingly busy with the LAA office and felt sure I had a capable replacement somewhere in the Overdale camp. It turned out to be Diane Kitching, who brought a professional look to the Minutes.

Cyril Tickle rejoined us after a long absence, having progressed from boy to man, but eventually left us again to-start Deane Bowmen, now a thriving club.

1975 TURNING THE RANGE ROUND

Losing the sleeper fence meant we had lost our backstop and the overshoot remaining was not sufficient on its own. Various types of fencing were considered but the problem of maintenance would obviously be a vexing one and we decided eventually to turn the range round through 90º and shoot from the canal towards the bungalows. So we arrived at our present layout.

1976 Having been without many juniors for some years we now found ourselves with an enthusiastic junior section. This caused us to extend our range of junior trophies and we now have quite a good collection, but sadly the junior section is very small at the moment of writing.

An innovative idea from from Isi Creme was introduced ‘at the Overdale Albion. He suggested that we should run a Bring and Buy Stall for archery equipment, primarily as a service to club and competitors alike. The tournament should provide & good market for secondhand tackle. The idea was an instant success and is now an integral part of the Overdale Albion. By introducing a small charge for the service it also brings in some profit.

1977 The Tournament venue changed again. Bolton Cricket Club raised the price again and also raised some objections about our hiring, so we hunted round once more and discovered Higher Lane Centre in Whitefield, A trifle small as far as the field was concerned but good indoor facilities.

Club Instructors were working hard, running courses for beginners Clive Morris produced some literature for hand-outs.

1978 An unusual item appeared in the Minutes to the effect that perhaps we have too many members. We were up round the 60 mark and it was difficult to get to know every one and keep a check on things. If all had turned up to shoot on the same day we could not have fielded enough bosses. Decided to try to keep to about 45 members in future.
1978 European Championships were staged at the GNAS headquarters in Stoneleigh and two minibus loads of club members went down to see what was happening.

Bury is twinned with Angouleme in France and took part in a multi-sport contest in France, a contest which included archery. Three of our ladies went. They were Sheila Talbot, Lilian Timmins and Margaret Lloyd. They came home with a trophy which they gave to the club and which is part of the Championships prize table now. It is given for the highest score shot by a lady 2nd class archer.

![The Archers who went to Angouleme](image)

Left to Right Lilian Timmins, Margaret Lloyd and Sheila Talbot

Inspections of prospective new grounds were still going on, according to the AGM.

There was a revival of winter gatherings in people’s homes. Four talks were arranged and were most interesting, I remember. They were:-

Tackle Maintenance by Isi Creme
Self — help by Brian Mellor
Archery Antiquaries by Wendy and Bill Hodkinson
International Archery by Paul Taylor

History seen’s to show that this kind of social activity has a definite place in the club’s life, but not as a regular thing. For the next year or two we had several winter visits, to Robert Fletcher’s paper mill, to Warburton’s Bakery, to the Simon Archery Collection at Manchester University Museum, and also persuaded Ron Bishop to talk to us about bow-tuning, a subject of great mystery to many of us at that time.

1979 This was our thirtieth year and had to be celebrated in some way. We chose to have a party, self-catered, at Deane Memorial Hall. Eva Higson, wife of Eddie; organised the food splendidly. Instead of one cake we had two to display our thirty years in icing. For me the occasion was marked by a most unexpected presentation of that lovely book ‘The Grey Goose Wing’s It was inscribed, in Trevor Baynes’ beautiful script to ‘Overdale’s longest serving member, and I treasure it very much.
1979 Our President Joe Fletcher died and we took the opportunity to formulate rules for future elections of Presidents, and these came into being at the AGM.

Isi Creme became our first shooting member President. Then it became an AGM of changes. Brian Meller resigned from the Chair, pressure of work leaving him with little time for the club and Clive Morris took his place. Pat, his wife, had already resigned from her unofficial but so important catering duties, and we thought a sub-committee might be the answer. Diane Witching resigned from the office of secretary being about to remove back to Blackpool, and Sheila Talbot stepped into her shoes. Barbara Harding gave up being Records Officer and Barbara Lomas took her place. Sheila Creme continued to be Treasurer.

Abraham Moss Sports Centre had been our base for indoor shooting for some years and Isi Creme held regular courses there in the winters from which we would gain a member or two. We were still having bonfires and barbecues but these were to peter out before long.

1980 Bolton Metro Council recognised us officially as their tenants, it took us two years in committee meetings to sort out the various clauses in the obligatory License, a document we have to sign annually. The problem was to agree with the Council just where our public Liability begins and ends.

Two more possible grounds were inspected and rejected, We bought ourselves a President’s Badge of Office. Barbara Lomas painted a panoramic impression of the Battle of Agincourt, presented it to us and it is now proudly displayed in the clubhouse.

Membership stood at 34 adults and 10 juniors.

We were to hold our last tournament at Higher Lane, Whitefield. Rising costs were to make it an impossibly expensive venue, and we were fortunate that sponsorship from Fletcher’s Paper Mill and Warburton’s Bakery were so kindly offered. It was another appalling day, heavy snow and bitter cold combining to eliminate competitors one by one until only 45 out of 100 completed the round.

1981 was not a good year, in fact it was probably one of the worst ever experienced as far as club spirit and unity are concerned. Serious doubts about the value of staging the club tournaments were expressed by some. The hard work was weighed against the profits and the result seemed discouraging. Was it really worth all the effort?

A potentially suitable amalgamation with Sedgeley Park Rugby Club was thoroughly investigated and actually put to the club as a proposition. It was carried, by no means unanimously, and it was obvious that the club was really divided about both these matters so later it was rescinded.

To cut a long story short we continued with the tournaments and stayed in Little Lever, and gradually the club began to pull together again.

Our shooting prowess had not been the greatest during the past few years but the wind of change was blowing. Trevor Baynes was invited to join the Lancashire team squad for winter training. Overdale was on top of its division in the Postal League and several men were improving rapidly, Eddie among them. Sheila Creme gave up the Treasurer’s chair, having kept us solvent for many years. Bert Ogden took her place.
1982 We had indoor shooting at both Abraham Moss Centre and Deane Memorial Hall. Lilian Timmins took on the job of our first Club Coaching Organiser. This eventually led her to volunteer for a similar post in the County, which had been without an Organiser for many years. Her efforts there have been greatly appreciated and have borne much fruit, and her recent resignation from the post was much regretted.

Bert Ogden had plans for building an indoor range next to the clubhouse. He consulted Bolton Metro, costed out lighting, materials, transport, secondhand buildings and so on, but the project failed when discussion with members showed that most were not prepared to commit themselves to the hard physical work which would be involved, and the inevitable rise in club fees which would be necessary to cover running costs of such a building. Those who were interested in shooting in the winter, ‘(and not all were) were happy to continue using our present facilities at Deane and Abraham Moss.

The 82 AGM is notable for the fact that it went on until 11.42 pm, followed by a general meeting which ended at 12.39am the next morning! Clive Morris ended his reign as Chairman and Trevor took it on. A long discussion on fees and when to pay them was the chief reason for the lengthy meeting, but our problems with tournament grounds also came under fire.

1983 ONWARDS

The crux of our tournament worries is the fact that our ground is unsuitable for staging such a shoot, so we have to rent one and transport whatever is needed from the clubhouse. To make enough profit to cover ‘the rent and leave some for ourselves demands superhuman efforts from all concerned.

After a rough ride, with one shoot at Sedgeley Park and another at Broughton Cricket Club, Salford, we have thankfully found a home at Bradshaw Cricket Club. Here we seem to be welcome, our so-important competitors quite definitely-like the venue and we seem to be settled here. The men have the organisation sorted out and support from members has been almost total for the last two or three shoots. In 1986 we celebrated the 25th Overdale Albion. A good record.

KEEPING INFORMED

Keeping members up to date is a problem most clubs encounter. I think we have gone a long way towards eliminating it. Winter newsletters written by volunteers, summaries of committee meetings posted in the clubhouse, individual fixture lists for indoor and outdoor shooting all help, but our Round Robin system of relaying urgent messages is a winner. Each committee member takes responsibility for phoning a specific group of members. Simple and effective.

SHARING THE LOAD

Erstwhile archers reading this document will no doubt remember that tournament. organisers have always complained about shortage of helpers when it came to setting out the ground. Region and County came to crisis point about this a few years ago. First the region, then the county, had to find a solution and Overdale pioneered a club
effort by setting out a grounds for the NCAS. More recently we did the UK Masters and Lancashire Championships, both two—day events requiring highstandard work. Arthur Timmins’ organisation coupled with excellent club support resulted in commendations from far and wide. Other clubs are now being asked to do the work in rota.

Δ
On page 6 I commented on Overdale’s early connections with region and county. Through the years these connections have been maintained, tenuously at times, but always there. When I record that Lancashire Archery Association, has had the following offices filled by members of Overdale you will see that we have done our bit to foster our sport.

Secretaries: Dick Walker, John Waring, myself.
Treasurer: John Waring
Chairmen: Dick Walker, John Waring
Coaching Organiser: Lilian Timmins
Selection Officer: June Heywood
President: Barbara Harding
NCAS Representative: Arthur Timmins
Dillon Award (for service to archery): Isi Creme, myself

Others have helped with scoring, attended meetings and helped where they could.

CHAIRMEN

Following the lengthy AGM previously alluded to, Trevor Baynes did a 2 year stint, Bert Ogden did the same and Sheila Talbot now guides us smoothly through committee meetings.

PRESIDENTS

Isi Creme was followed by Sheila Creme, Sheila Kemp and at present Eddie Higson.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Although the officers and committee decide policy and handle the finances, we have been very successful in recent years in Persuading all club members to help with the maintenance of clubhouse and ground. A house-keeping rota for keeping the clubhouse clean has been most successful, a sub-committee to run the tournament and organise the work needed on the day has worked splendidly for two or three years now. Eva Higson arranges all our catering and club dinners, and menus for club shoots range from pasties to cheese and wine and fresh salmon and chicken salads. Working parties, clubhouse repairs, painting etc. have been well supported. It is so much easier when everyone helps.

BACK TO SHOOTING

At the time of writing we have 57 shooting members, including 9 juniors. Our shooting programme includes organised rounds on alternate Sundays, two designated weekly club nights during the summer, four trophy shoots and an end of season fun shoot.
During the winter we shoot twice weekly in Deane memorial Hall and also have three
teams entered in the British Archer Postal League, for both the indoor Portsmouth and
the outdoor Frostbite rounds. These matches take place monthly.

Throughout the year there is a monthly handicap shoot. A small ‘Saturday club’ group
meets very early on Saturday mornings, usually to shoot a Fita. From time to time we
entertain groups such as the Round Table to ‘have a go’ sessions and provide similar
opportunities for disabled children.

Eddie Higson, a man of many parts and our equipment designer, has devised and
made portable backstop netting for these occasions. He is also second to none at
helping very disabled children to get the best out of the tackle.

Arthur Timmins arranges the beginners courses two or three times a year and will offer
coaching advice to any club member if it is requested.

CURRENT STANDARD

We are currently enjoying the best period of shooting we have had for some years.
During the last five years John Scholes and David Horridge have steadily improved
their techniques and brought themselves up to Master Bowman standard. John is
aspiring to Grand Master status. Both have shot for the county and in the J W Masters
shoot. David won the LAA Fita in 1986 and both he and John have been highly placed
in many important shoots.

As the saying goes, success breeds success’ and undeniably the club’s standard is
improving. The classification table in the clubhouse reveals that nine or ten men and
one lady have achieved 1st class this summer and there is a solid batch of 2nd class
archers behind them. We have also started to win team trophies again.

IN CONCLUSION

Maurice Thomson, an American, wrote in ‘The Witchery of Archery’

‘So long as the new moon returns in heaven a bent, beautiful bow, so long will the
fascination of archery keep hold of the hearts of men.’

That fascination finds us today, with our sophisticated equipment, chasing much higher
scores than in our earlier days, but the same skills are needed, the same frustrations
depress us and the same pleasure is experienced after the loosing of a good shot.

So the story ends, for the moment. Have we, the Bowmen of Overdale of 1989, in any
way let down our founder members of 1949? As the one member who has seen almost
all those 40 years slide away, I think not. We are still a friendly, forward-looking and
united club which endeavors to promote our sport in the approved Grand National
Archery Society way of:-

UNION, TRUE HEART AND COURTESIES
Enjoying the splendid 1989 summer at Litter Lever
Left to Right
John Hebb, Warrant Masson, John Scholes, David Horridge

Tackling-up for the Frostbite Postal Round
LANCASHIRE CHAMPIONS from Bowmen of Overdale

1955  Isi Creme  York
1956  Frank Draper  York
1958  Club Shield  York & Hereford
1959  Sheila Creme  York
1959  Club Shield  York & Hereford
1960  Sheila D Kemp  Hereford
1960  Sheila D Kemp  Fita
1960  Ron Hobson  Fita
1960  Club Shield  York & Hereford
1961  Sheila D Kemp  Hereford
1961  Club Shield  York & Hereford
1962  June Heywood  Hereford
1962  Sheila Creme  Fita
(tied with Shirley Lions)
1963  Sheila Creme  Hereford
1963  Isi Creme  York
1963  Isi Creme  Fita
1963  Club Shield  York & Hereford
1964  Sheila D Kemp  Hereford
1964  Sheila D Kemp  Fita
1965  Sheila D Kemp  Hereford
1965  Sheila D Kemp  Fita
1968  Margaret Thew  Hereford
1968  Club Shield  York & Hereford
1969  Margaret Thew  Fita
1976  Reg Timms  Field Freestyle
1977  Ron Higson  Bristol 1
1978  Steven Higson  Bristol 3
1979  Janet Lomas  Bristol 2
1980  Janet Lomas  Bristol 2
1985  Martin Welsby  Bristol 2
1986  Steven Horridge  Bristol 3
1986  Steven Horridge  Indoor Fita 1
1986  David Horridge  Fita
1989  Andrew Tonepohl  Bristol 4

TROPHIES OWNED BY THE CLUB

OPENING SHOOT - NATIONALS

Greenhaigh Cup presented by R W Greenhalgh 1951
Little Gem Trophy presented by Clive Morris 1980
Bob Barnes Trophy presented by R K Barnes 1977

PRESIDENT'S SHOOT - FITA AND METRICS

Elsie Fletcher Trophy presented by J Fletcher 1972
Joe Fletcher Trophy presented by J Fletcher 1975
Overdale Trophy presented by Mr & Mrs Timmins 1977
Classification shields presented by the club 1986
(four in number)
Young Trophy presented by Alf Young 1977
Hodkinson Trophy presented by Ken Hodkinson 1972
OVERDALE ARROW - ALBION

Overdale Arrow presented by John Greenhalgh 1951
Overdale Horn presented by E F Smith 1952
Junior Arrow presented by C J Morris 1978
Junior Horn presented by Timmins Family 1977

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS - YORK - HEREFORD - BRISTOLS

Challenge Trophy presented by the club 1951
Waring Challenge Trophy presented by Mr & Mrs Waring 1951
Kynaston Shield presented by Brian Kynaston 1978
Most Hits Cup presented by Mr M Creme 1956
Overdale Shield presented by Mr & Mrs T R Walker 1956
Best Gold Cup presented by Sheila D Kemp 1955
Best Gild Cup presented by Mr J Fletcher 1976
Goncalves Trophy presented by Ameico Goncalves 1958
Angouleme Trophy presented by Liliam Timmins, Margaret Lloyd & Sheila Talbot 1978

Classification Cups presented by Overdale

JUNIORS

John Waring Challenge Trophy presented by J F Waring 1951
Fletcher Trophy presented by Joe Fletcher 1976
Most Hits Trophy presented by R K Barnes 1977
Best Gold presented by T R Walker 1955

AMERICAN ROUND (HANDICAPPED)

Handicap Shield presented by Ces Payne 1984

GNAS HANDICAP AWARDS - INDOOR AND OUTDOOR

1855 GNAS Medal presented by Sheila D Kemp 1960
Glass Vase presented by Overdale 1989

GNAS Handicap Improvement Medal, on indefinite Loan from GNAS

A LIGHTHEARTED LOOK AT THE CURRENT COMMITTEE

by Barbara Harding

EDDIE HIGSON, President

Our President is Eddie and no nicer chap you’ll find.
He’s thoughtful and he’s generous and also very kind.
He helps with things mechanical, when needed at the club
And brings our “frostbite” pasties (included in the sub).
With Eva and some volunteers he fixes “Have a Go”
So that disabled people can come and use a bow.
They try to shoot the arrows and really have some fun
And show delighted faces at whatever they have done.
Yes, Eddies always been a man to help the lesser favoured.
From that resolve, I’m sure, his thoughts have never ever wavered.
SHEILA TALBOT, Chairman

Our chairman, Sheila Talbot, is a person lean and lanky.
She rules the roost at meetings and allows no hanky—panky
Outdoors she helps beginners just as much as she is able,
While indoors she’s been known to shoot an arrow in the table
She also shot two arrows towards the target in succession
And found them stack together, end to end, like a procession.
So if you ever venture to her house and cross the hall
An elongated “trophy” will be hanging on the wall.

CLIVE MORRIS, Retiring Secretary

Olive is our secretary and has lots of work to do,
with letters here and letters there and lots of phone calls too,
He’s busy writing Minutes when the meeting’s taking place
And types them up most neatly for the notice board to grace.
He comes to shoot on weekdays with son Robert by his side
But Sundays often see him in the role of trusty guide.
For walking is a hobby that his family do share
And Clive leads them on the rambles with their club - I know not where.

SHEILA KEMP, Committee Member

Sheila’s been a member of the club for many years
And must have pleasant memories of honors which are hers.
She keeps the club in order with the Archer’s Etiquette
In matters on the field or in discussions when we’ve met.
She’s Lancashire’s own secretary and maybe you can guess,
She’s a very staunch supporter of our own G.N.A.S.
But praise she gets, and well-deserved, for all that help of hers,
And especially this history of our first forty years.

JOHN SCHOLES and DAVID HORRIDGE, Committee Members

Now John is very serious and conscientious too.
He’s helped to run the Tournament for the last year or two.
So good a job he’s made of it, that it was very clear
The sub-committee needed him to help with things this year!
Not strictly true, you’ll say, of course for teamwork counts a lot,
But Arthur, David and now John, will know just what to plot.

Now David is a cheerful chap and gentle too, you’d reckon,
But get him driving in a car and zoom! he’s gone in seconds!
But in the club he’s keen to help and always very willing’
To change a lock, or mend a burst, or do a bit of drilling.

But- let’s get back to shooting and the skills of Dave and John,
I’ll tell you of their triumphs and some other thing they’ve done!
They’ve both worked hard to make the grade - top archers are they now
As Both are Master Bowmen and should rightly take a bow.
They nearly did in tie “Lance Chapms” at Chorley ‘neath the trees,
They shot in shorts, in sunshine hot, and showed some stunning knees!
ARTHUR TIMMINS, Committee Member

Beginners know the value of’ the person who’s named Arthur, He’s there to help and guide then just as if he was their father. He coaches then and cures their faults and even takes them shopping To Pro-shop and the like, but not, of course, to Wapping! Committee-wise he’s always sure to talk in A. O. B. And supplement his point of view with charts and maps, you see. But all-in-all you couldn’t find a chap with more endeavor Than Arthur T. of Overdale - a worker-shirker! Never.

JOHN HEBB, Committee Member, now Secretary

John’s always keen to work in any way that helps us all And does it with a cheerful smile, that never seems to pall, Not long ago, he won himself some arrows in a shoot. And also won a token for the club to buy some loot. He chose an arrow straightener, which you can rightly guess Is used a lot by members and helps save financial stress! He’s going to be in action soon and have more work to carry As presently he’s taking on the Job of Secretary!

LILIAN TIMMINS, Auditor

Now Lilian ie our auditor and keeps me up to scratch. She helps me if’ I need advice and can’t make figures match. Not only does she do this task but also helps to foster Instruction courses, coaching-wise, we’d hate it if we lost her! She’s done this for all county clubs a got the system going. A real achievement, yes indeed, and still it keeps on growing, And sometimes if she’s feeling fit she has a bit of pleasure In shooting with her compound bow, supposedly for leisure!

BARBARA HARDING, Treasurer

Myself? I’m just the treasurer of all this happy band, Prepared to do my best to help the finances expand. Even getting subs from members is quite an easy job For I never seem to have to push for extra pounds or ‘bobs’. I don’t suppose I’ll ever have the skill to make a million, Not even with financial help and good advice from Lillian! But never mind, I like the job and members seem in favor To let me carry on with it and leave them other labors. The worst I suffer is a jibe at my love of a football game And Bolton Wanderers’ lowly place in a division I daren’t name .

That’s all I have to say about the members of committee - I hope you’ve all enjoyed this rather dotty little ditty!