

Northampton Archery Club History Peter and Barbara Isaac's Story

Barbara Isaac is the widow of Peter Isaac, one of the founder members of Northampton Archery Club. She first met Peter at the age of 12 – this is their story.



Barbara Isaac

Barbara Bourton was born in Bletchley in 1933 and her father became a milkman for the Co-op Dairy in Ransome Road, Far Cotton, Northampton. Before moving to Far Cotton (when Barbara was seven) her father had to cycle all the way from Bletchley (and back) to complete his daily milk rounds for no less than nine months and in all weathers. Barbara also worked in the offices of the dairy later in her life.

When she was 12 she began to know a young lad, Peter Isaac, three years her elder, who lived in Penrhyn Road, Far Cotton. He was born in 1930 at Northampton. When she was 16½ whilst at night school, Peter asked her out, and on their first date she recalls he had a tooth missing following a game of rugby. He was quite a keen, but shy sportsman and he also took up fencing and of course archery. He was not what could be described as over-competitive. It would seem apparent that he had been shooting a couple of years at least when they started going out, as only a few years ago Barbara was shown a photograph by a previous lady archer, depicting Peter and others shooting at Delapre Park in London Road, when he was about 17 years of age (around 1947-48). Unfortunately this photograph has not been traced and regrettably the lady has now passed away. The field where the photo was shot is still known as the Archery Field.

Peter became acquainted with a fellow archer, Sid Cato, who was around ten years older than Peter and another young man whose name she cannot remember. He however worked in a radio shop in Gold Street in Northampton specialising in accumulators (batteries) for sets. These three young men

got together and decided that it would be a good idea to form an official archery club.



Peter Issacs & Sid Cato feature in the Chronicle and Echo 25th June 1949

The intention of forming an official club was announced in the Chronicle and Echo on 25th June 1949, when England was playing New Zealand at Lords Cricket Ground.

Peter was already playing for a Rugby club that played at Franklins Gardens (although not The Saints). The three approached a VIP (a Lord or someone of similar standing) with a view to formalising things and Northampton Archery Club was subsequently formed. At that point the newly formed Club started shooting at Franklins Gardens..

Barbara only visited Franklins Gardens as an observer on one or two occasions, but recalls watching the archers at Delapre Abbey on many occasions whilst she stood on a fence. Archery was not so organised in those days as it is today, *“it was a matter of enthusiasts who met together it was a playing thing that developed and why they decided to form an official club – I don't know”*.

Peter was by trade a wood machinist, but at 21 years of age was called up for National Service and served in Germany. On his return to England Barbara and he were married at All Saints' Church in Northampton, but unfortunately Peter did not return to Archery. At the age of 40 he was made redundant and became a technician for British Telecom and despite having to learn a new profession, continued to produce wonderful pieces of furniture which still adorn Barbara's home. Their son, Paul was born in 1963. He is proud of his father and treasures his bow, arrows and quiver. Peter died in 1999.

Although originally from Buckinghamshire, Barbara considers herself to be a true Cotonite and is an active member of the local history society and other groups in the local community.