

Northampton Archery Club History

Michael and Pamela Bull's Story The Late 1940's to 1956



Michael and Pamela Bull

Pam Swindall and Michael Bull first met at Northampton Archery Club at Franklin's Gardens, Weedon Road, Northampton where they were both shooting. The Club had not been going long then, having been formed in 1948. Michael obviously took a shine to Pamela and offered to help her carry her archery kit home for her one day. The offer was taken up time and time again.

Pamela recalls, “ I lived in Overstone Road, where I was born. We would walk from Franklin's Gardens. He would take me home to Overstone Road. Then he lived in Semilong, off the Barrack Road – and he'd walk back. We didn't catch buses.” *Have we now become lazy, or do we have just loads more kit – imagine walking far with two people's archery stuff these days?*

In May 1953 Pamela became Pamela Bull and this year (2013) the couple celebrated their Diamond Wedding. They live in Northampton with their Boston Terrier dog, Penny. Congratulations to you both.

Michael explained that the club had been formed by one Major Hogg – the headmaster of a private school. He had a caravan at Overstone Park. Sid Cato was a member of the club, but he was very tied up with his business. “Major Hogg moved and took a position at the other side of Oxford. He invited us over. We had a coach trip over on a Sunday. We set the targets up and some prizes were awarded. I came away with a Victorian longbow – which I still have.” On this trip the group paid a visit to a local pub, which by the sounds of things was quite *upper class*. Sid asked for a pint of beer

and was told firmly that pints were not sold. Sid asked for two half pints in one glass. So he had his pint.!!!

Michael's introduction to archery at the age of around 18 years was soon after leaving school, when he took up work with Raphael Tuck, a company specialising in post cards and other graphic artwork set up in 1866 in London. The company established a branch in Countess Road, Northampton after the second world war. Working at the local branch was George Stockham, already a member of NAC. George and Michael became friends and George suggested that Michael go to the club to have a go. Photography was a substantial part of Raphael Tuck's work and this was the niche that George and Michael's speciality. Michael is responsible for many of the great photos that Northampton Archery Club have of the early years.



©Michael Bull

George Stockham and Michael at Raphael Tucks

George Stockham was shooting at Franklin's Garden one day when whilst at full draw his bow snapped at the handle and hit him on the head, knocking him out momentarily. He was O.K. And the bow was replaced by the manufacturer.

George was responsible for making a lot of club kit including fletching and bow string jigs, bow sights and ground stands. Quite an innovative chap.



Michael still has his Accles and Pollock bow along with his arrows, home made quiver and bow box. The picture bottom far left shows the bow sight made by George Stockham

Pam is not quite sure how she chose to join Northampton Archery Club, as she had not shot before she joined. Michael was already a member when she joined.



NAC at Franklin's Gardens, with Weedon Road in the background.. 3rd from left is Sid Cato, 4th is Don Ainge, 6th Ian Knight and 7th George Stockham

In the days after the war kit was in short supply and it was not possible to get green shirts to shoot in. Archers would have to dye their clothing to suit club colours.

Storage for the club was an issue, as it is now, and *“Les Higgins' (an NAC member) dad was moving something – he'd got a garage. A group of us went over – dismantled it and brought it back from somewhere near Birmingham and put it at the club to put our targets in.”* The couple explained that Les Higgins created many miniature figures (military and otherwise). When Pat Higgins was in hospital he actually created a miniature from which you could recognize the doctor. He also created many miniatures for Hornby Model Railways. Les and Michael had a common interest in military miniatures and were good friends.

NAC also like today, took part in providing entertainment at fetes. Michael and Pam recall that targets included balloons filled with talcum powder and a picture of a knight upon which an apple was placed. *“They were great fun”*

The Club's first six gold end was shot by Paddy Flynn in a around 1949-50. Michael's bow was a British made steel Accles and Pollock, and he used silver Silver Streak arrows (probably aluminium) made by Sherwood Archery Products. The bow had a fair kick to it, and although pulling just 36lbs, Michael regularly shot York Rounds. His Victorian longbow was a much smoother bow to shoot.

A favourite shooting ground was at Cambridge Archery Club, close to the colleges which made a great backdrop. Alongside the River Cam on a warm Sunday afternoon was an excellent experience. Other tournaments, Michael recalls, were shot at Allans' Park, Bedford, Spttlegate and Leicestershire.

Date & Place		BULLS GROUND 29-5-54 Round ST GEORGE												Range		
Yards	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	Hits	Score	Gold	Score
100	51	-	-	-	-	-	55	3	3	-	-	-	6	20	0	
	75	5	-	-	-	-	53	3	1	-	-	-	7	29	0	
	77	5	3	1	-	-	31	-	-	-	-	-	7	27	0	
													20	76	0	
80	51	-	-	-	-	-	55	5	-	-	-	-	5	21	0	
	77	3	-	-	-	-	75	3	1	-	-	-	8	34	0	
	55	5	3	-	-	-	77	1	1	-	-	-	10	46	0	
														101		
60	77	7	5	1	-	-	75	5	3	-	-	-	9	47	0	
	73	3	3	1	-	-	99	7	5	1	-	-	11	53	2	
	75	5	3	3	-	-	77	5	5	3	-	-	12	60	0	160
														337		Remarks P.T.O.
GRAND TOTAL														337		

Michael's scorecard for his first shoot of 1954 on the 29th May with his new Silver Streak Arrows. A St. George Round shot on a fine and warm night.

A nationally known radio comedian, Charlie Chester was also a visitor and archer at Northampton Archery Club in Michael and Pamela's shooting days. "Ian Knight who was an optician in the town would close his shop on Thursday afternoons (it was early closing day in Northampton) and went down for practice. When he was on tour and appearing at the New Theatre in Abington Street in the town, Charlie Chester would come down. He was a nice fellow."

By the end of 1956 the Bulls had ceased to shoot having moved home, changed jobs and having a young daughter, Jackie, to raise.

Michael's other hobbies have included other sports such as cricket, badminton and athletics. He also enjoys wood-turning, model figures and cars, growing orchids and family history and heritage research.

Other Members Michael and Pam knew:

- Ian Knight - Optician
- Don Ainge
- George Stockham - Photographer/Engineer
- Bill Day - Fish and Chip Shop Proprietor
- Les Higgins - Artist/Modeller
- Pat Higgins - Hairdresser
- Paddy Flynn - Achieved first six gold end at NAC
- Sid Cato - Jeweller
- Major Hogg - President / Headmaster
- Don Ainge ?
- ? Langley

David and Heather Major
December 2013