



How we began...

Abbey Bowmen is now 50 years old. The club was born from a combined general meeting on 21st November 1967 of Bricket Wood Bowmen and Manor Bowmen, following a resolution of each club to amalgamate with the other. Rules were agreed and an annual subscription set of £2 for adults and £1 for juniors.

On the next page is part of the document proposing the merger, prepared by Ray Roberts, the Secretary of Manor Bowmen which explains the state of the two clubs at the time and the benefits of a merger. He also explains why the club should be called Abbey Bowmen.

Minutes survive of the earlier club, Manor Bowmen, which was set up at a meeting on 4th May 1958. The annual subs were to be 10 shillings (50p in new money) and the shooting fee 1 shilling (5p) The following extracts give a flavour of archery in that era:

2nd meeting 21st June 1958

"The equipment officer was asked to investigate the possibility of remaking the butt. It was decided that finally the butt should be removed and a hop sack curtain should be used instead."

"It was decided to award a bronze 'Medieval Archer' medal for the highest score and handicap. A postcard is to be sent to the winner"

3rd meeting 2nd August 1958

"the wording of the postcard to be sent to the winner of the handicap shoot was decided.

The secretary was asked to make enquiries into the possibility of obtaining hopsacks to make a protective curtain behind the target"

4th meeting 23rd August 1958

"It was decided that a second target boss should be purchased.

Mr Keating proposed and Dr Ashcroft seconded the motion that the evening shooting fee be reduced to sixpence (2 ½ p) as the evening shoots are now limited by the lack of light"

Nov 1959

It was suggested that Manor Bowmen should ask Harpenden Bowmen if they wanted to combine for friendly shoots

Mar 1960

Reported that Harpenden Bowmen had ceased to exist. As a result the club was able to obtain 3 targets, 5 faces, several stands and some score boards, all for £3.

And fast forwarding to the Abbey Bowmen meeting March 1968:

"10 shillings would be deducted from the next bill for the use of the hall as the foreman did not arrive on Sunday to erect the backcloth and four arrows were damaged beyond repair."

Maggie Johnston

TO THE COMMITTEE OF MANOR BOWMEN: Possibility of amalgamation with
another archery club

Manor Bowmen at present is an archery club with no more than six shooting members. The annual subscriptions from its total membership are not sufficient to meet the essential commitment of rent, rates and insurance and leave nothing for the renewal of equipment or other incidental expenditure.

Without going into reasons why the club should have become run down in both membership and funds at the same time, the remedy of increasing funds by increasing members can be a slow and hard job and would almost certainly require the present members to find a substantial supplementary subscription.

By a fortunate coincidence there is at this time in the St Albans area an archery club, Bricket Wood Bowmen, formed this year with a membership of 36, good equipment (3 bosses and stands, fibreglass bows and 6 dozen Super Sixty arrows), funds usefully in credit, and with affiliation to the GNAS. Bricket Wood Bowmen, however, have no recognised ground and only very limited outdoor shooting facilities.

One club therefore has a tenancy from St Albans Corporation of good ground facilities, indoor and outdoor, clubroom and equipment store, and experience - but an extreme shortage of members. The other club has a thriving and enthusiastic membership with good equipment and recognition by the GNAS - but no ground. An amalgamation could solve the problems of both clubs and be of benefit to the membership of each as well as to the general furtherance of archery as a sport in the area.

The resulting single club would be one of the largest in the county, with good ground facilities and a keen membership, as well as being financially sound and recognised by the governing body of archery.

Such an amalgamation, which is recommended to the members of Manor Bowmen by its Committee, appeals equally to the Committee of Bricket Wood Bowmen who wish to recommend it to their annual general meeting of members on 21st November. The amalgamation could be effected by a special general meeting of Manor members called for the same place and time.

Since neither Club may like to merge under the name of the other, a completely new name for the joint club would seem likely to be most popular. A name favoured by both Committees is ABBEY BOWMEN - which has been suggested because the shooting takes place in the sight of St Albans Abbey - and a beautiful sight it is on a summer evening - as well as being next to the Abbey Theatre at present being built and near to the Abbey railway station which serves Bricket Wood. Abbey Bowmen also comes easily off the tongue and sounds well. Such a name would also place the club on top of the alphabetical list of archery clubs in the county as sent to enquirers by GNAS and the Hertfordshire Archery Association.

To examine the changes of amalgamation in some detail:

- 1 - Both clubs would change their names
- 2 - Both clubs would merge their membership, funds, and equipment as Abbey Bowmen
- 3 - Manor members would have gained new membership with equipment, and the prospect of a strong and financially sound club capable of making a mark for itself in county archery.
- 4 - Bricket Wood members would have gained excellent and much-needed ground facilities as well as some members with experience in archery of benefit to fairly recent entrants to the sport.