



Longbows on the Mary Rose

At 11 o'clock on the 9th October 2004 a small group of Bowyers met at the old Main Gate to the Royal Naval Dockyard Portsmouth before moving on to the Mary Rose Museum to look at the many artefacts that had been recovered from the vessel and in particular those associated with longbows, arrows and archers.

Our guide for the day was Mr David Childs the development manager for the Mary Rose project. We moved to the small educational area where we had coffee and were given a short talk on the project. He highlighted the discovery of large timbers, which were probably the remains of the missing bowcastle and bow, a consequence of the recent survey of the site which had been required as part of the preparatory study required by the Royal Navy to deepen the channel into the harbour for the two new aircraft carriers. However, when the timbers had been recovered from the mud a small mite with a voracious appetite had been discovered putting the preservation of the timbers at risk. It was of note that this mite is normally associated with warmer waters. It is planned, once finance is available, to lift the timbers and reunite them with the remainder of the ship hopefully within the next two years.

After this introduction the party moved to the dock where the hulk is currently being sprayed with a special solution that penetrates the timbers replacing the water with wax. This process whilst it causes the wood to retain its appearance reduces its density thereby weakening it considerably.

Among the weapons carried on board the Mary Rose were a large number of longbows and arrows, together with a unique collection of Tudor archery equipment.

More than 3,500 arrows and 137 whole longbows were recovered from the ship. Most of these were found in chests, either stored on the orlop deck or ready-to-use on the upper deck below the aftercastle. The bows staves recovered from the Mary Rose were made from a single baulk of yew. This was cleft into triangular billets. The bowyer retained the sapwood layer to preserve the

natural laminate of the timber. The staves were shaped to a D-section with a flat back of sapwood and a rounded belly of heartwood. Tillerling notches were cut on opposite sides of the bow at each end enabling the bow to be braced and the upper limbs to be shaped.

The discolouration on the tips of the bows indicated the existence of horn nocks, but the environmental conditions on the wreck site have not been favourable to the survival of horn. One however was discovered while examining a section of concreted armour in 1998. The average length of the bows is 1.98 metres (range 1.87m - 2.11m). Unfortunately there were no traces of bowstrings, even in the barrels in the hold.

The majority of the arrows were made of poplar, others were made of beech, ash and hazel. Draw lengths of the arrows varied between 61 and 81 centimetres with the majority having a draw length of 76 centimetres. Only small fragments of the feathering survives. These have been identified as either goose or, more probably, swan. The arrows had a nock cut into the ends, with a horn rein forcer inserted at right angles to it. The arrow heads have completely rusted away. Other items of

archery equipment recovered include arrow spacers - leather discs with holes for 24 arrows in them.



The London Tavern

The Bowyers didn't always eat their dinners and carry on their Court business in Livery halls. Over the centuries they patronised coffee houses and a variety of Inns in various parts of the City. One day the Muniments Committee will research our meeting places, but one stands out - The London Tavern.

The Bowyers met here from the early 1850's - maybe earlier, until 1873. Previous to that we met for several years in the George & Vulture, off Cornhill, immortalised by Charles Dickens in "The Pickwick Papers." More of Dickens anon.

Anyway, back to the London Tavern. It was in what was then called Bishopsgate Street Within, and it was famous. Cast out any visions you may have of cosy, low ceilings, panelled rooms, flagstone floors and the roaring fires of Merrie England's coaching inns. This place was huge. Its nearest relative today would be the Connaught Rooms. The London Tavern's main dining room could seat 355 people to dinner. The tavern was rebuilt in 1765 after a fire and its exterior was elegant regency refinement. It was famous for its excellent meals. The Bowyers mostly ate dinners with dessert, for 8/6d a head, plus wine. That's 42.5p for the young among us. We know from Court minutes that: *during Mr Arding's year* [early 1850's - and it was two years] *the Court dined off turtle variously at an additional 2/6d, 3/6d and 4/6d plus ice cream at 1/- extra.*

Many Livery and other companies used the London Tavern including some of the biggest and best. Prominent among their patrons was the East India Company.

Charles Dickens presided at a meeting there in 1841 - for the benefit of the Sanatorium for Sick Authors and Artists, and in 1851 at the annual dinner of the General Theatrical Fund. It is in the London Tavern that in "Nicholas Nickleby" the



public meeting was held: *to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning Parliament in favour of the United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company.*

On his way to attend this meeting: *Mr Bonney elbowed his way briskly upstairs, receiving in his progress many low bows from the waiters who stood on the landings to show the way, and followed by Mr Nickleby, dived into a suite of apartments behind the great public room in the second of which was a business-looking table and several business-looking people.*

How easily one can imagine our Bowyer forbears around the Court table in such a room. Business-looking people indeed!

The Bowyers moved from the London Tavern to the Albion Tavern, Aldersgate Street "as a trial" to dine on 29 September 1873. It was the end of an era, and the Bowyers were still dining at the Albion 27 years later. The London Tavern was demolished in 1876 and the site is now nos 1 - 3 Bishopsgate - and still a handsome building.

John Hayton

continued from page 1

Stitch marks round the edge of the disc indicate that there was a fabric sleeve attached to protect the shafts. The sleeve was single ended and only protected the lower part of the shafts. There would have been a drawstring at the lower end, enabling the archer to withdraw the arrows by pulling them downwards through the disc.

What was of particular interest was the impact of individuals on the artefacts. Of the large number of combs found no two were the same, similarly the archer's wrist guards designed to protect their forearms from the bowstring were made of decorated leather and no two were alike. The party were taken in to look at the reserve collection where the bow staves looked as if they had been made the day before.

Having been shown the reserve collection the party moved off to another building and enjoyed a glass of wine and lunch where one had the opportunity of talking to many of those involved in the project.

After lunch the party were given a personalised tour of the museum where one had the opportunity of looking at the great cannon, navigational instruments, musical instruments, games and other items associated with life on board.

For the future the Trust is planning to raise money to build a museum over the dock with associated educational facilities so that the entire collection can be housed in one place. On our departure we wished them all success for the future and hope that they will raise sufficient funds to ensure that this aspect of our national heritage is preserved.

Presentation of Bowyers Gold Certificate to Mr George Thorley

The Master and Clerk travelled to Hull and then to Burton Constable on Wednesday 24th November 2004 to award the Bowyers' Gold Certificate, being a life time achievement award, to Mr George Thorley, on the recommendation of the Traditional Guild of Bowyers and Fletchers. They were met at Hull Station by Graham Stark the Deputy Warden and Secretary of the Burton Constable Company of Archers. Lunch courtesy of the Guild was enjoyed at the Stag Inn, Lelley. They were joined by some senior members of the Guild, who had travelled some considerable distance, including the Warden, Mr Malcolm Grady and his wife Yvonne, together with Mr Alan Rogers a Past Warden and the Treasurer.

After Lunch the party drove to Burton Constable Hall, the home of John Chichester Constable, the Warden of the Burton Constable Company of Archers. The Hall is an impressive Jacobean Country House set in a magnificent park. It is now owned by an independent trust which is doing a magnificent job in restoring much of the fabric including the outbuildings and managing the surrounding estate. Mr Chichester Constable an elderly man now lives in one wing of the house.

The party moved into the magnificent sitting room/library for the presentation ceremony. About twenty five people including George Thorley's wife, son, daughters and members of the Burton Constable Company of Archers and the Traditional Guild of Bowyers and Fletchers attended the ceremony.

The Master said a few words about the background to the awards that the Company makes on the advice of the craft guild. The presentation of the gold certificate was then made for George's outstanding service to the craft of bowyery and archery since the 1940s, he was also given a copy of the Company Book 'Such Goodly Company'.

It was a most enjoyable event, in magnificent surroundings. The Master and Clerk then returned to Hull station into the capable hands of Hull trains which whisked them back to King's Cross, with the on board team of Jed and Kelly. For railway buffs, Hull trains run these three car turbo units between Hull and Kings Cross and the service and trains were immaculate.



George Thorley receiving his gold certificate from the Master

Annual Carol Service

On the evening of the 6th December 2004 some twenty members of the Company joined Members of the Worshipful Company of Tobacco Pipe Makers and Tobacco Blenders at their annual Carol Service held at St Botolph's Church, Aldgate. A very interesting liaison for Bowyers as a previous Master, Bill Sennocke, had been deeply involved at the Battle of Agincourt.

The Master, Clerk and Renter Warden preceded by the Beadle fully robed processed to their places in the Church to music that was provided by the Sennocke Concert Choir from Sevenoaks School in Kent whose singing was beautiful. The Master read the second lesson concerning Isaiah's prophecy regarding Christ's Birth and kingdom. The sermon given by the Rector Dr Brian Lee was suitably amusing with a slight verbal blow below the belt designed to provoke serious thought.



Warming up for Christmas

The service was followed by a buffet meal with wine in the Church provided by outside caterers.

The evening ended at about 9pm when a group of Bowyers adjourned to a nearby pub to finish the evening off.

Visit to John Grooms by Master and Clerk

John Grooms was known previously to members of the Company as the John Groom Crippleage and was extensively reported on in the Company's Autumn Newsletter 2002.

John Grooms is a national charity which together with its sister organisation, John Grooms Housing Association, works with disabled people, enabling them to have greater independence, choice and freedom. It has been supported by the Company for many years.

John Grooms believes it is the right of every disabled citizen to live a full and independent life. But thousands of disabled people are imprisoned in homes that do not suit their needs. There are not enough suitable homes and disabled people are losing out. A much greater investment in quality care homes and accessible social housing, and disabled home-owners need more help. For too many disabled people, finding a suitable home really is a lucky dip. John Grooms is campaigning for change

On a grey afternoon at lunch time on the 10th of September 2004 the Clerk and the Master met at the Kings Cross Thameslink Station to venture north of the North Circular Road to visit one of the homes located at Boreham Wood.

They were met at the entrance by Lucy Asquith the head of fund raising. A few other representatives from Livery Companies were also present. There was a short presentation given by the vice chairman of the trustees Alderman John Hughesdon and The Reverend Mike Shaw the Executive Director. There was an historical display outlining the history of the organisation which included some artefacts from the days of artificial flower manufacturing.

To ensure that the residents are involved with the local community the building was purposely sighted within a short distance of shops, a cinema and of course a pub!!!

The building was opened four years ago and was purposely designed for people with disabilities. The range of specialist handling equipment was impressive. The views of the residents had been taken into account in the design. Small details were incorporated with in the design such as the ability to draw ones own curtains and open ones front door



and windows which was considered to be important as was the detailed design of cupboards. Great care was given to the design of bathrooms with maximum adjustability for basins and showers.

Each resident lives on a colour coded street with their own front door. Each room has en suite bathing facilities and cooking facilities and a fridge. The rooms are larger than the minimum required by legislation which allows more than one wheel chair to manoeuvre with out causing traffic problems!! Most of the residents seemed to have pets; budgerigars being the most favoured.

Central facilities are also available such as a well equipped activities centre, central television area and catering facilities.

Whilst much of the funding comes from local authorities money needs to be raised to ensure that the facilities are created at a level greater than the bare minimum required by legislation.

Overall it was a most interesting visit and it was pleasing to see what the Company's donation is being used for,

RJW



Junior World Archery Championship

As reported in the last newsletter the Master presented prizes at last years Junior World Archery Championships. This picture shows the high level of competitive involvement and accuracy of those taking part.

Seminar Supper

St Botolphs without Aldgate followed by supper at the Rajasthan II Restaurant.

On the evening of the 9th September 2004 a small number met at St Botolph's Church Aldgate to listen to a short presentation given by the Rector the Reverend Dr Brian Lee. The party was met with a glass of wine and had the opportunity of absorbing the beauty of the beautiful Georgian Church which we found out later had been designed by the architect who later designed the Mansion House. The reredos of Thai Silk hangings and the carving attributed to Grinling Gibbons were much admired.

The Master introduced the speaker and thanked him in advance for giving the talk.

The Reverend Lee then introduced the audience to St Botolphs which he stressed was an inclusive church. It did not matter whether you were male or female, gay or straight, rich or poor all were welcome regardless of religion, class or race.

St Botolph, an expert on draining the fens, was a monk who founded a monastery near Aldborough in Suffolk which was well known for its hospitality to travellers. He is the English patron Saint of travellers and consequently outside the four gates of the City (Aldersgate, Bishopsgate, Aldgate and Billingsgate) a church, dedicated to him, was built which allowed for travellers to and from the City to pray for safety on their journey and to give thanks for their safe return. The current church was the fifth on the site the first having been built in 950.

As the City expanded to the east with the arrival of immigrants who were unable to live in the city the Church acted as a bridge between the wealthier inhabitants of the City and those poor people who lived outside the City walls. This is a role that St Botolphs still fulfils to this day.

This led the rector on to his theme for his talk which was the 'The Dark Side of London – Aspects of City Life which are pushed under the carpet'. To illustrate his point he likened the City to a bright light but such lights always cast a gloomy shadow. The wealth and power of the City of London in the west casts a long shadow of poverty to the east encompassing the sink estates of Whitechapel, one of the most overcrowded wards in the United Kingdom. It is no surprise to learn that Jack the Ripper committed his crimes within a few seconds walk of the church.

This situation is exemplified with the increasing appearance of Tuberculosis among the population in the east end in particular within the Bengali community. In 1958 Father Appleton the then Rector of St Botolphs observed that a large number of alcoholics and homeless people were sleeping in the gardens behind the Church. He then opened the crypt to them and volunteers from the City came forward and helped feed and look after them, a ray of light from the sun.

This work continues today having been taken up by other agencies, nevertheless there remains an old lady sleeping above the kitchen who has been expelled from her hostel for abusing the staff. Such behaviour is unacceptable, but who will look after her? commented Rev. Lee.

St Botolphs was for many years known as the Prostitutes church. The women were not liable for arrest if they were walking so they 'street walked' around the church to avoid arrest. To-day with the firm anti prostitution policy being imposed in the Kings' Cross area the women have moved to the area of Aldgate where it is possible to indulge in fellatio at £10.00 a time within a stones throw of the church. This illustrates the point the problems cannot be swept away they are just swept elsewhere.

The Rector had four years previously stood and been elected to Common Council primarily to protect the Sir John Cass Primary School from developers. This area around Portsoken Ward is the only one where high rise buildings can be built. The school site was therefore a very desirable and valuable piece of real estate. The case against the selling of the site was based upon the will of Sir John Cass who left the money for a school to be built in the ward of Portsoken for the education of the children of the Ward. In the short term the developers have been kept at bay but the proposal has not gone away.



Bowyers and their guests at the Rajasthan II.

As a Common Councilman his ward includes two council estates mainly inhabited by Bengalis 60% of who are receiving housing benefit. As a member of the education committee and the community services committee he represents their interest. He highlighted his role with the example of a Bengali Lady who came to one of his surgeries who lived in a two bedroom flat. She and her husband slept in one room and their four children ranging in age from eighteen to two years old slept in one bed in the other room.

On this note his talk ended and a lively discussion followed.

On leaving the Church the party walked to the Rajasthan II Restaurant for an Indian meal. The food was excellent and washed down with copious amounts of Cobra beer.

Visit to Richard Head's Workshop

Richard Head is a Past Warden of the Craft Guild of Traditional Bowyers and Fletchers and is one of the founding members of the guild. He has also been awarded both the silver and bronze certificate of excellence from the Company. He began to make bows about 30 years ago initially as a hobby which developed into a full time business. His son, Philip, who was taken on as his apprentice, is now a full time bowyer and works within the business. Philip has also received a bronze certificate of excellence from the Company. Lindsay, Richard's wife, completes the family involvement in the business. She varnishes bows, polishes horn nocks and makes cloth bow bags as well as practicing the craft of fletching.



Richard Head

On Saturday the 19th June 2004 a small party from the Bowyers' Company visited Richard Head's Workshop at The Spa, Melksham, Wiltshire. The weather was beautiful and the party was warmly welcomed with tea, coffee and biscuits in the garden. Richard meanwhile outlined the history of the Spa, which it seems was an entrepreneurial ploy on the part of local business men to set up a rival to Bath for the taking of the 'waters'. It was to include places of entertainment, outdoor activities, and a ballroom as well as places to stay. Unfortunately for them it was not a success and the business failed. However some interesting indeed beautiful buildings remain.



The Bowyers have arrived

After refreshment Richard gave a lengthy and very interesting talk on the making of longbows. He talked about the various woods used in their manufacture and demonstrated the use of some of his tools: the axe, draw knife, spoke shave, flote and scraper. A fuller copy of his talk will be available soon on the website. He also demonstrated the tillering process which is designed to ensure that the bows have an even bend.

Using one of his bows and a graduated arrow shaft he demonstrated the way in which a bowyer establishes the size of bow that is most suitable to his stature. The customer makes a steady constant draw to obtain an accurate measurement of draw length. Using a bow of appropriate weight, either a light bow for newcomers or a bow of the weight the archer is currently using, to obtain an accurate draw length, placing an arrow in the bow the archer draws to their desired anchor.

A mark is then made on the arrow at the back of the bow, the part facing away from the archer, then the archer comes down from the drawn position, the distance from the bottom of the nock slot to the mark made previously is measured on the arrow, this is the exact draw length.



Mr Peter Seaton loosening off

The archer then tries several bows of different weights, it is then possible to determine the draw length, thus giving the archer a good idea of what sort of weight of bow they would like to purchase and the bowyer can determine the length of the bow to be made. An average weight for a gentlemen's bow is 45-55lbs at an average draw length of 26-28", for ladies it would be in the region of 35-45lbs at a draw of around 24-26", these are averages based on experience over the years, and are not designed to be used as a hard and fast rule. The type of shooting the archer wishes to undertake also has to be taken into account.

After the talk the party adjourned to the 'Raven' near Devizes where we had a very tasty lunch and quaffed a few pints of Wadsworth 6X.

We then returned to the workshop where individuals were given the opportunity to loose off a few arrows at a target.

The party broke up at about 3.30pm at the end of what everyone considered to be very interesting and worthwhile day but not before some members of the Company ordered their new longbows.

The Modern Craft Guild of Traditional Bowyers and Fletchers

The modern Craft Guild formed in 1987, to some extent follows the form of the earlier Companies. They had, and still have a Master, or 'Warden' as their figurehead, - in modern terms the Chairman, who serves for one or two years. To help and advise him in his deliberations there is a Court of Assistants. They are in effect the Governing Body who decide policy. Looking after the day -by day running of the Guild is the Clerk.



The Gold award is rarely presented and is reserved for individuals who have with the agreement of the Guildmote and with the Endorsement of the Master, Wardens and Court of the Worshipful Company of Bowyers made a substantial long term contribution to the 'mistry' of bowery.

The present Guild has a Warden and an under-Warden with three Assistants, forming a Court of Five. The Warden serves for two years, when he returns to the body of the Guild, being replaced by the under-Warden. The position of under-Warden is taken by an Assistant, and a member of the Guild is then elected to replace him and maintain the numbers of the Court. A newly entered member of the Court might expect to become Warden in eight years

There are two methods of entry to the Guild:

- a. Recognition of long service as a bowyer or fletcher to the traditional archery community, coupled with an examination by the inner court of workmanship and subsequent acceptance by the guild at large.
- b. By service as an apprentice to a Guild Master Bowyer. On completion of their apprenticeship a Masterpiece has to be produced to be judged and approved by the full Guild in session at their guildmote.

There are two other categories of membership each requiring quality workmanship:

- a. Craft Membership which is open to those who make bows And/or arrows for a hobby to satisfy friends and family but who do not trade for profit
- b. Associate members from overseas who largely are professionals.

Quality and its maintenance was a prime object of the early Courts and remains a principal cornerstone of the present Craft Guild. Quality is maintained by personal pride, and the obvious commercial disadvantage of poor workmanship. In an endeavour to ensure quality work, each Guild member serves an 'apprenticeship' before election to full Guild status.

To encourage the development of excellence a certification scheme for the Guild's Bowyers has been established sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Bowyers. The scheme allows for the presentation of bronze, silver and gold certificates by the Master of the Worshipful Company of Bowyers.

HOLDERS OF BOWYERS CERTIFICATES

Gold	George Thorley
Silver	Richard Head, Malcolm Grady, Alan Rogers, Alan Pritchard, Roy King, Richard Todd, Bob Powell and Tony Lacey
Bronze	Alan Pritchard, Philip Head, Rod Lyons

The Company's Loving Cups

Designed by Anthony Elson

When receiving a commission Anthony Elson always tries to develop ideas based upon the idiosyncratic qualities of the patron.

The Bowyers and the Longbow are of course inextricably linked and therefore the challenge was how to use the bow in the design of the Loving Cup.

If it was to perform the function of a handle and yet keep its character it would have to span a distance in excess of 6 inches. This dictated that the lower end of the bow would have to be attached to the stem and this therefore decided the ultimate shape of the Cup.

What seems logical and straight forward actually took Anthony several weeks before he came up with a solution and felt confident enough to submit the design to the Company.

I think you will agree that the final outcome is a splendid piece of craftsmanship that will be admired by generations of Bowyers to come.



Visit to the Magic Circle



In the narrow back streets behind Euston Station up a small paved street behind a door illuminated with the signs of the zodiac is the headquarters of the Magic Circle.

On the 8th of March 30 2005 members of the Company and their guests were welcomed to an evening of magic, illusion and mystery. The evening started with a short sherry reception where we met old friends and all renewed old acquaintances.

The party then moved upstairs and split into small groups to watch a number of magicians/conjurors perform magic, literally under our noses. Table magic, as it is known, involved very few props but extraordinary deft hands. Cards appeared in pockets, money in wallets, and pieces of rope were apparently cut and knotted only to appear whole again. Every one of them had us spellbound.

After this we moved to the recent refurbished theatre for a series of performances on stage in the form of a variety show. There was a delightful mixture, from swords thrust through a barrel containing a scantily clad supporting lady, to the classic 3 cups and 3 balls tricks, where the minimal props were more than compensated for by superb showmanship. Even the compere appeared to tear up a newspaper before us, only to reveal at the end, with a flourish, a complete sheet.

Throughout the evening it was possible to admire exhibits presented to the Museum by Tommy Cooper and other well known members of the Magic Circle.

Overall, it was a most memorable night spent in the 'House of 10,000 secrets'.

Forbes MacDougall



Clerk's Corner

The new Members Directory is now published annually in August and will be republished annually and to ensure that it is current all are asked to keep the Clerk informed of their change of address, telephone numbers and e mail address. The preferred method of communicating to the Court and the Livery is by email. This will bring significant reductions in postal costs. However snail mail is not to be ignored and there will be four formal mailings a year in February, May, August and November.

Future Events

19th May	Company Supper Evening - Speaker Mr N Anstee
16th June	The Forrester Cup Golf Competition Pyecombe Golf Club, near Brighton
24th June	Election of Sheriffs and Lunch
2nd July	Bowyers' Prize Day - Royal Tox
5th July	Joint Shoot with the Fletchers'
21st July	James Wood Memorial Service - Common Hall and Supper
24th July	Longbow Plate Day, Royal Tox
5th August	Ray Jeff's Golf Competition
8th September	Joint Dinner with the Fletchers'
29th September	Election of Lord Mayor
25th October	Agincourt Dinner - Tallow Chandlers' Hall
17th November	Company Supper Evening
5th December	Carol Service (tbc)
2006	
12th - 15th May	Bowyers' Weekend - Normandy

Items for Sale

Single Motif Company Ties in blue silk at £17.50.
Postcards depicting the Bowyers window in the church of St. Botolph without Bishopsgate in beautiful colour. 35p each, 3 for a £1.00 or 16 for £5.00
History of the Company 'Such Goodly Company' a book written by Barbara Megson at £25.50.

Please contact me with any queries, booking functions, buying from the Clerk's Superstore, application forms for the Freedom and Livery and any other information that you may require: Richard J Wilkinson, 5 Archer Close, Vicarage Crescent, London SW11 3LF • Tel and fax: 020 7223 5224 email: clerk@bowyers.com