

# The Bowmen Bulletin

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Valley Bowmen of Muddersfield Bulletin. Our aim is to keep you up to date with news, forthcoming events, results and anything that we think might be of interest to members of the club. Please feel free to give us your feedback and get in touch with articles and content you would like to see here.

January 2025



## Increasing Membership Numbers

We see a sizeable churn in the membership twice a year, in March/April when we collect the club subscriptions and again at the end of September when the Archery GB membership becomes due.

We started the club year last April with 175 members and gained 55 new members, mainly from beginner courses, giving a total of 230 (as at early January). By October our membership stood at 208, of whom 25 didn't renew their AGB membership leaving the current count of members permitted to shoot standing at 205.

	April 24	Joined	Club Members	Didn't Renew AGB	Loss	Members insured to shoot
Adult	147	40	187	23	17%	164
Junior	28	15	43	2	5%	41
	<b>175</b>		<b>230</b>			<b>205</b>

## AGB Membership Changes

Late last summer Archery GB announced a number of changes to the way their membership system would operate in future. Previously, all membership renewals were on 1<sup>st</sup> October each year and the club were responsible for creating your membership and collecting any fees (including those for Yorkshire Archery Association and Northern Counties Archery Society).

Going forward AGB had intended members would maintain their own membership accounts and renew their fees directly with AGB each year. They have also changed the membership renewal date such that going forward all new members will hold membership for a full 12 months and have a personal anniversary date (just as house or car insurance operates). AGB have since reversed the decision that all members would be direct and Clubs will be able to retain control of AGB renewal should they choose, however the personal anniversary date remains.

As a result of these changes our committee is considering how best to structure the Club to mitigate the additional risks resulting from these changes. Some clubs (typically those that are smaller or don't have 24/7 access as we do) are able to continue with little change, however, some clubs are creating a second, unaffiliated, Club for all members which has separate insurance keeping the original club for those members that wish to retain AGB membership. The committee is examining all options and will present their findings to the club for a final decision in due course.

## Fundraising

Raise **FREE** funds for us every time you **shop online**

Find out more

It seems it is becoming a "thing" to give you a review of your previous year's habits as we move in to the new year, and easyfundraising is no different. If you already have an account with them, you should already have received your 2024 Highlights email but for those who haven't, or don't have an account, here a quick summary.

I won't embarrass myself about how much I've raised but I will mention that I received donations to the club on 66 of my online purchases.

I obtained donations from 27 different retailers and the three most used were Amazon, Morrisons and M&S

7 New supporters signed up to easyfundraising.  
27 members generated donations.

A total of £533.36 was raised by supporters of the club in 2024. Could I remind all member just how easy it is to raise money for the club – and it costs you nothing! It is three easy steps.

Sign up with easyfundraising on this [website](#).

Install the Donation Reminder on your preferred browser/mobile – this will pop up a reminder whenever you visit a retailer that will make a donation if you buy from them.

Whenever you are about to buy online - just one click to activate your donation - then carry on with your shopping as usual.

If you have any questions please ask.

Since June 2020 a total of 83 people have signed up to support the club via easyfundraising and they have raised a total of £2,572.28.

## New to the Sport? Less than a couple of years' experience?

If this is you, then we have a few things that might help:

**Saturdays:** The Saturday morning session from 9 till 12 are an ideal time for new members to come and meet other members, learn about the club, about equipment or get help and advice on all aspects of archery. There are almost always two or three coaches and other very experienced archers present that are all willing to help you.

**Coaching:** If you would like some help and advice about your shooting technique why not sign up to one of the two sessions, we hold every month (Sunday morning and Monday evening). Coaches will be available to help you and can even put you under the cameras to see how you are shooting in slow Mo! To book your session please visit: <https://valleybowmen.co.uk/beginner-to-intermediate/>.

**Tuesday Club Night:** These are sessions where like-minded archers can get together and support one another. They have jokingly been referred to as "junior night for grown-ups!". Coaches and other performance archers are usually in attendance to help you work on technique, to guide you through bow tuning, or simply provide moral support.

We usually have a game or two, but this needn't stop you simply shooting a round if you're working on your next Classification (these sessions are Target Days so scores will be eligible for Bowman classification).

**Novice competitions:** Every year we hold an Indoor and an Outdoor novice competition where we invite members with less than (circa) 15 months experience to come and find out what it is like to take part in a Club competition – but in a relaxed friendly environment!!

**Club competitions:** It seems that no matter how much we try to tell people, the message doesn't seem to get through that **ALL our club competitions are suitable for members of all ages and all skill levels.**

Every competition has a Handicap/Novice class where you can shoot a round starting at just 30 yards!! Surely everyone can just about manage that! In its heyday pre-Covid, the club would regularly see 20 to 30 competitors taking part in competitions, whereas now, we rarely see more than a couple of handfuls of competitors – mind you that does mean that just about everyone goes home with a medal or trophy!! Check out the Club calendar and have a think about joining some of the upcoming competitions.

## Club House

Hopefully you will all have seen and paid attention to the recent email reminding members to clear up after using any of our facilities and leaving them in clean and tidy state. We would we also remind you that although the tea and coffee (and biscuits) are free of charge we would ask that you make an occasional donation into the tin provided. Just £1 per month would go a long way to covering our costs.

Please consider  
the Kitty



## Target Days

Although Acher 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Class badges can be achieved whilst shooting practice rounds the classification scheme (updated last year) now requires all Bowman (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Class) rounds to be shot in a "competitive event". When the changes were first announced we hurriedly created the Bowman Series competitions to provide opportunities for members to shoot in the required "competitive event" and thus gain their Bowman classification. However, as the year progressed, it became apparent that the regular schedule of competitions, plus 4 new competitions in 2025 (please refer to the competition schedule on the website), along with the 5 "Target days" each week gave most members sufficient opportunity to record Bowman scores that we have abandoned the Bowman Series shoots for 2025.

It has been recognised that the competitions and Target Days may be inconvenient for some members to attend and have therefore introduced the concept of "Impromptu Target Days". Via the website <https://valleybowmen.co.uk/target-days/>, you may now propose a date/time for an event that will qualify as a "Club Event" and other members can sign up to join you for the shoot. If you have any question about this, please speak to one of the committee members.

Please note that when submitting scores onto Golden Records you should normally use a score status of "Practice" unless the round is shot on a Target Days when you should use the status "Club Event".

## Coaching by County Coach & Bow Tuning Session

Having held a very successful coaching day last November we have arranged for Dave Shaw to return on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April. The booking page is now open on the website for you to select one of six sessions to attend. The original motivation for these sessions was to provide coaching for our "Intermediate to Advanced" archers. However, these sessions are suitable for, and open to, ALL club members.

Late last summer we had two trips over to the Thirsk Bowmen to have some Coaching from Danny Cameron (Archery GB Coach Developer and RCO for Northern Counties) and hope to organise a couple more visits in 2025.

## Dates for the Diary - (External and Inter-Club Events)

# Indoor Championships

(Junior & Senior)

## 16/03/2025

# Indoor Handicap

## 23/03/2025

Both these shoots are suitable for all members regardless of your level of experience.

There are multiple sessions available during the day for both shoots, you have to book your time slot online.

There will be a maximum of 8 archers per slot.

Please Note: Because of the complexities of the handicap system (too complex to explain here), the Handicap shoot massively favours new / novice / improving archers who have previously submitted to Golden Records at least 3 scores.

For those who entered one of the recent Novice Comps, this is your next logical step.



The Final Shoot of the Indoor Season!

Please Book your Slot Online for Both Shoots

Both Shoots: Portsmouth = 5doz @ 20yds

**Club Indoor Championships** - 16<sup>th</sup> March. This is a Portsmouth round and as we always have too many entrants to all shoot at the same time, you must book your shooting slot on-line.

**Club Indoor Handicap Competition** - 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Again, this is a Portsmouth round and you must book your shooting slot. This is a perfect shoot for new or novice members as you will have the advantage of a massive handicap allowance as a starting score.

**Worcester Week** - 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Feb: We are inviting everyone to join the "Worcester Week" by shooting and submitting scores for the Worcester round. At the end of the week any scores submitted to Golden Records will be collated, a results table for each bow style published and assuming we're feeling particularly generous, medals will be awarded. We also have Worcester badges (along the same lines as the Portsmouth badges) that can be claimed.

**Vegas Week** - 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March: The same format as the Worcester Week except shooting Vegas round. Please remember all the relevant "Rules of Shooting", i.e. use the correct faces, which must be oriented correctly on the boss and half the round shot on one face the second half on the other. Oh, and don't forget the Worcester is 5 arrow ends! If in doubt please ask.

## Report on the Interclub Competition Nova Bowman vs Valley Bowmen - 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024

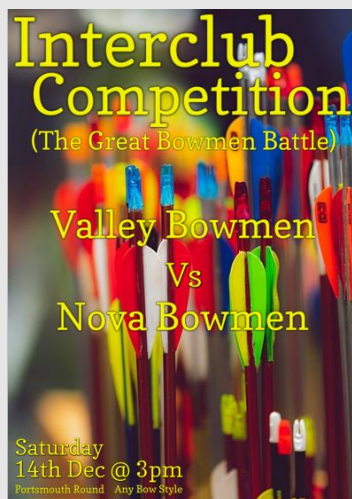
On the afternoon of Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December, the club hosted an interclub competition against Nova Bowmen in what we hope will become a regular annual challenge. On the day 7 archers from Nova took up arms against 9 archers from Valley - as this was a bit lop sided; we lent them Euan O'Connor to make it 8 per team.

The round was to be a Portsmouth, and to be fair to Nova, who are only able to shoot 15m because that is the size of the hall they can use for shooting during winter, we gave them an extra couple of ends of sighters.

Although there was an attempt to coerce all the archers into wearing Christmas jumpers, the die hard "grumpy" ones still managed to avoid the indignity, although a good few did get into the spirit of the season - helped along with sweets, crisps and baked goodies.

With a mix of longbow, recurve and barebow archers, including juniors and seniors, we figured the simplest way to decide competition was to just total the scores with the result being a win for Valley 3,685 points vs Nova 3,291 points.

Watch out once the outdoor season commences as we have been invited to Nova for a return match outdoors.



## Handicaps Explained.....

An archery handicap is a number between 0 and 150, that indicates the ability of an archer. The lower the handicap the better the archer. Every archer has an outdoor handicap and a separate indoor handicap for each bow style they shoot.

Handicap tables which give a handicap for every possible score for every round irrespective of the archer's age, gender or bow style used are stored in Golden Records (and available on the AGB website). <https://archerygb.org/>

The archery handicap system has three uses:

1. It helps archers to monitor their progress.
2. Enables scores to be compared between different rounds.
3. Enables archers of different abilities to compete on equal terms.



Calculating a handicap is the same for both indoors and outdoors. For archers without a handicap their initial handicap is the average of the handicaps for the first three rounds recorded rounded up to the nearest whole number.

For example, if an archer shoots 3 outdoor rounds with handicaps of 64, 70 and 69 then the initial handicap is 68.

When an archer has established a handicap, it can be improved after each round shot. If a round is shot with a handicap at least 2 handicap points better than their current handicap, then the archer's new handicap is the average of the current handicap and the handicap for the round just completed (rounded up to the nearest whole number).

At the end of an archery season, i.e. 1st January for outdoors, 1st July for indoors, each archer's handicap is re-calculated. If the archer has shot at least three rounds in the previous season then the new handicap is the average of the best three rounds in the previous season.

Luckily, Golden Records takes care of calculating your initial handicap and the handicap value for each score you submit and also tracks your current handicap value.



## Using Handicaps in Competition

Handicaps can be used to enable archers of all standards to compete against each other. This is achieved by adding a certain number of points onto an archer's score at the end of the round (this is called their 'Handicap Allowance'). The lower an archer's handicap, the fewer points will be added to their score. The winner is the archer with the most points after the handicap allowance has been taken into account.

The fundamental principle of a handicap shoot is that because an archer's handicap is a measure of how they are currently performing, all competitors in a competition "should" achieve a score that matches their handicap value and once their handicap allowance is added, all competitors should, in theory, score a total of 1440. So, who wins? It's the person who most exceeds their expected handicap score.

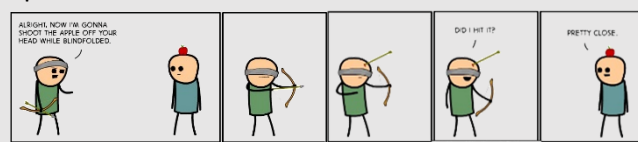
## Why do Handicap Competitions Favour New/Novice Archers

After a year or two shooting the performance of most archers will have plateaued and they will only see modest improvements in their scores which means most scores are at, or around, their handicap value. So, the likelihood of substantially improving their score is very slim.

On the other hand, new and novice members generally see regular improvements in their performance and thus often shoot above their handicap value, thus the chances of exceeding their handicap value score are much, much greater.

Therefore, in a handicap competition it is unlikely that an established archer will shoot above their handicap whereas a new archer, more often than not, exceeds their handicap value and thus achieves a higher score once their handicap allowance is added.

This also explains why new/novice members almost always top the leader board in the Club Grand Prix competition that runs across the whole outdoor season. This is because points awarded each period is based on how much each archer has improved their handicap in the period.



## Why do we ask for Volunteers?

Before we go any further, please be clear, we understand that some members find it difficult to find time to shoot let alone volunteer when they have the pressures of work, family .... or life in general.

All we ask is that you try to find a couple of hours every year to make your contribution to the operation of the club. As you are all aware, we are a completely voluntary organisation and thus rely on members helping out every now and then.

There are several events when just a couple of hours of your time would go a long way to putting something back into the club. Each year we spend a morning spring cleaning the field and facilities on our Field Tidy day (13<sup>th</sup> April this year). Then, every summer we open the club to well over 100 members of the public to come and give archery a try. This year the Big Weekend is on 11<sup>th</sup> May and just a couple of hours of your assistance would be much appreciated on this mammoth event.

Do you remember your beginner course? Remember how little you knew about archery and how to shoot a bow? So let me dispel the myth that *"I'm not good enough to help on a beginner course"* as you can be assured every single one of our members knows 100% more about shooting than someone on one of our courses!!

We understand that committing to three sessions can be challenging, and for newer members you may feel ill-equipped to help. If this is the case, why not come along to just one session to observe what happens and be Field Captain where your only job is to blow the whistle. The first session of every course is fairly chaotic as we try to get everyone equipped and bows set up – so the more hands-on deck to help out the better.

Finally, it may feel that we are constantly badgering for volunteers and some of you may feel we are pressuring people to help out. If this is the case, then we apologise unreservedly as that is not our intention. Whilst we have a reasonable pool of people prepared to help out, our two main challenges are a) finding enough people that are available on the required dates, and b) replenishing the pool of people as members come and go from the club. So, all those chasing emails are simply our way of finding people that can fit a bit of archery into their very busy lives.

There are many reasons to volunteer in archery but on the whole, people do it as they want to give back to the sport. Archery in the UK couldn't happen without our incredible teams of volunteers. Here are some benefits to volunteering;

- A chance to use your archery skills and knowledge.
- Develop new skills and gain valuable experience.
- Better physical and mental health.
- Improving your confidence.
- Sense of connection to others in the community.
- Making new friends.
- Giving something back to a sport you love.
- Turn volunteering into a coaching qualification.



**YOUR CLUB NEEDS  
YOU**

### The Big Weekend 11<sup>th</sup> May

We are running 4 Sessions 10:00, 11:30, 13:00 & 14:30.  
Could you help out with the morning or afternoon sessions?

### Taster Sessions

2<sup>nd</sup> February  
6<sup>th</sup> April  
24<sup>th</sup> August  
7<sup>th</sup> December

*VOLUNTEERS*  
**NEEDED!**

### Beginners Courses All sessions from 12:00 to 15:00

Course 1: 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> January. **Covered**  
Course 2: 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> February. **Covered**  
Course 3: 8<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> May.  
Course 4: 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> April.  
Course 5: 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> May.  
Course 6: 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> May 8<sup>th</sup> June.  
Course 7: 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> June.  
Course 8: 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> Sept.  
Course 9: 27<sup>th</sup> Sept, 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> October.  
Course 10: 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1<sup>st</sup> November.  
Course 11: 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

## Badges

We have more badges for you to collect!! Hopefully you are all aware of the indoor and outdoor classification schemes and the 252 badges that can be claimed/awarded. However, some may not be aware of the specific round badges that are available. Typically, twice a year (at the Xmas party and the AGM) we issue badges for your best Portsmouth round and this year we are expanding this to the Worcester and Frostbite rounds. Then, in addition next outdoor season, the Juniors will be able to collect 260 badges – these are the same as the 252 but shooting at distances in metres (and needing 260 to get the badge!). Although aimed at juniors no doubt one or two adults will get in on the act. For more information see the club website

<https://valleybowmen.co.uk/badges/>.

Note that all scores need to be submitted on Golden Records.



## Members with disabilities

As you would expect, as our membership numbers increase so do the number of members with disabilities.



Whilst some disabilities may not be visible or apparent, others may be more obvious and may need fellow archers to be accommodating. Visually impaired archers may use floor mats and be assisted by spotters, others may have to shoot sitting down (thus requiring more space on the shooting line) whilst others may simply need more time to shoot each arrow.

I am sure you will be welcoming and accommodating to all your fellow archers.

## We Do Listen to You (even if you don't think so!)

Over the course of 2024 although the committee considered options for addressing the state of the car park, they were all postponed or delayed for various reasons. However, the wet weather has now exacerbated the situation and the committee are aware that many members now feel that something needs to be done as a matter of urgency. In the membership survey 25 respondents mentioned the car park, either the poor condition or the amount of parking available.

Yes, we have listened. We will be surfacing the car park with tarmac scapings which are simply shavings of tarmac from roads due to be resurfaced. This material can be reused to provide a suitable surface to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian movement. There will also be a drainage grid and yard gully incorporated into the works to alleviate the large puddling we get at the moment in heavy downpours.

This work is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of February from 8.00am until 5.00pm. Due to health and safety reasons members will not be allowed to use the premises at all during these hours. You will be able to use the range after 5.00pm on both evenings and from Wednesday morning the 5<sup>th</sup> of February as normal. You will not be able to use the car park on Monday or Tuesday so please park in the lay-by opposite.

If by any chance the weather prevents the work from going ahead an email will be sent out accordingly, so please keep an eye on your inbox

Although it may seem it has taken a long time agree and complete this work, please remember there is a significant cost to this project and the committee are always anxious to ensure they are spending the club's money wisely and obtaining best value for money.



### What riser do you have on your bow?

We are about to submit a bid for some free RCOE recurve grips that will be available for members of the club to try.

However, each riser manufacturer has a slightly different profile and fixing point for grips so, as part of the bid we need to specify which manufacturer of riser we require and RCOE will provide a selection of grips that will fit those risers only (we cannot request multiple manufacturers or request multiple free sets).

It therefore seems prudent to specify the riser manufacturer that is most used by members of the club. On the website there is a simple form for members to complete and I would appreciate if as many of you as possible would complete the survey.

<https://valleybowmen.co.uk/custom-riser-grips/>

### For Sale

- Full recurve kit (Left Hand) - £375
- Spiga Carbon Sight - £80
- W&W Stabilisation kit – £120
- 66-26 Wooden riser take down bow (with arrows) -£50
- Buck Trail (flatbow) bow bag - £18
- Legend LH quiver - £10
- Shibuya Dual Click Sight - £70
- 68-18 (RH) bow - £125
- 66-18 ILF full kit - £225
- Full ILF kit 68-34 plus arrows - £200
- Full ILF Kit 44-30 plus arrows - £175
- 69" one piece bow (38lb) – offers

Please see website for full details.

### The Beginning

Some time ago I like every other member of the Valley Bowmen of Huddersfield was just a normal everyday person going about my business as you do, then one day for some reason or another I got an urge to have a go at becoming an archer, why? I don't know but it happened, so to pursue this urge I contacted the Valley Bowmen of Huddersfield and joined a beginner course, I really enjoyed the course it was well organised and the coaches and volunteers couldn't do enough to make our time there knowledgeable and fun. Now I sometimes think back, if it hadn't been for all those coaches and volunteers giving up their time for us, there may not have been any beginner courses for me or for any of us to fulfil our urge to begin archery, and today we would still just be an everyday person going about our business still wondering what it would be like to become an archer.

So, I would like to ask all our members of the Valley Bowmen of Huddersfield to think about their beginning and maybe spare a thought for all those everyday people who are getting that urge to try archery now, but to achieve this goal will require today's coaches and volunteers to be there for them just as they were there for us back then.

*Mick*