

# MERDON WHITEBOARD

## EDITOR GERRY WILLSMORE

### NOVEMBER 2011



#### Dates for your diary.

- 9<sup>th</sup> December** Christmas Meal 7.30 p.m.  
**10<sup>th</sup> December** Christmas Fun Shoot 2 p.m.  
**11<sup>th</sup> December** Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.  
 Frostbite 10:30 a.m.  
 County Indoor Championships Fleming Park
- 2012**  
 7<sup>th</sup> January HMS Collingwood FITA18  
**8<sup>th</sup> January** Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.  
 Frostbite 10:30 a.m.  
 HMS Collingwood Worcester  
 15<sup>th</sup> January Guildford FITA25  
**21<sup>st</sup> January** Burns Night Fun Shoot 7 p.m.  
**12<sup>th</sup> February** Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.  
 Frostbite 10:30 a.m.  
 HMS Collingwood Portsmouth  
**11<sup>th</sup> March** Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.  
 Winter Championships 10:30 a.m.  
**18<sup>th</sup> March** TAM Shoot 11 a.m.  
**6<sup>th</sup> April** Good Friday Fun Shoot 2 p.m.  
**21<sup>st</sup> April** St George's Day Fun Shoot 2 p.m.  
**22<sup>nd</sup> April** Merdon Fun Shoot 11 a.m.  
**5<sup>th</sup> May** Set up field for Merdon Arrow  
**6<sup>th</sup> May** Merdon Arrow 11 a.m.  
 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May Southern Counties Archery Meeting  
 27<sup>th</sup> May Devizes Top Ten York etc.  
**5<sup>th</sup> June** Queen's Diamond Jubilee Fun Shoot 2 p.m.  
 10<sup>th</sup> June Lytchett Owl Shoot  
 19<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June Dunster Week  
**7<sup>th</sup> July** Independence Day Fun Shoot 2 p.m.  
 15<sup>th</sup> July Bournemouth Blue Lion  
**4<sup>th</sup> August** Olympic Shoot 2 p.m.  
**20<sup>th</sup> August** Abbey Shoot  
 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> August Devizes DWAA Championships  
 27<sup>th</sup> August Guildford Acorn  
**6<sup>th</sup> October** Set up field for Agincourt Arrow  
**7<sup>th</sup> October** Agincourt Arrow 11 a.m.  
**31<sup>st</sup> October** Halloween Fun Shoot 7 p.m.  
**7<sup>th</sup> December** Christmas Meal 7.30 p.m.  
**8<sup>th</sup> December** Christmas Fun Shoot 2 p.m.

#### Halloween Fun Shoot

Halloween was a mild and still night this year, a fact that was greatly appreciated by the club members who turned up to take part in the annual Halloween Shoot. Special thanks must go to Caroline for providing the refreshments throughout the evening, particularly the marshmallows before the shoot and hot chocolate at half time. Everyone I spoke to felt that it had been a great evening.

#### Barebow

Bill Tubbs	60	3	382
Dee Corlett	54	1	293

#### Longbow

John McCrea	59	4	431
Mike O'Leary	54	0	245
Rachel McCrea	48	1	234
Don Boddy	43	2	230
Scott Dyer	20	0	73

#### Recurve

Colin Whysall	59	34	560
Gerry Willsmore	60	28	555
Ken Hedley	59	3	456
Bill Jones	47	2	231



#### Frostbite – November

Once again the November Frostbite failed to live up to its name as November 13<sup>th</sup> turned out to be another mild day which may have contributed to another good turn-out of 16 archers. The full results are listed below. With three more qualifying rounds to go it is still not too late to qualify to win the Winter Championship even if you didn't shoot in either October or November, so why not come along and have a go.

		Hits	Gold	Score
Gerry Willsmore	Recurve	36	8	321
Ken Hedley	Recurve	36	6	298
Scott Dyer	Compound	36	5	286
Rob Norris	Recurve	36	3	284
Phil Sellwood	Recurve	36	3	283
Louise Willsmore	Barebow	36	2	273
Phil Stringer	Recurve	36	2	234
John McCrea	Longbow	35	2	226
Dee Corlett	Barebow	34	0	191
Julie Stringer	Recurve	32	1	178
John Martin	Longbow	31	1	143
Margaret Bunyard	Longbow	28	0	124
Ken Bleach	Longbow	24	1	124
Bill Jones	Recurve	23	1	111
Mike O'Leary	Longbow	22	0	93
Don Boddy	Longbow	20	0	56

#### New Club Records

- John McCrea  
 Gents Longbow Long Western  
 Gents Longbow Western  
 Louise Willsmore  
 Ladies Barebow Frostbite



*"I suppose you think that's very funny!"*

## Doreen Wilber

I don't know if they showed the archery from the 1972 Munich Olympics, but I doubt it. Even if they had, I wouldn't have seen it as Louise and I were on holiday in Austria at the time and didn't have access to a TV anyway. As those of you who are old enough to know those games were overshadowed by the massacre of the Israeli athletes, the stark reality of which came home to us when we passed through the bullet holed doors and the burnt out chopper on the tarmac on our way to the plane for the flight home.

So, all in all, I was totally unaware of Doreen Wilber, the winner of the ladies individual gold medal until I started doing some research for a series of items on archery at the Olympics in next year's editions of the Whiteboard. Having read her history and her achievements, together with her selfless support for both juniors and her less fortunate competitors, I felt that her story could be an inspiration to us all.

At the time of winning her gold medal Wilber was 42 but a relative newcomer to archery, having shot competitively for only 15 years before Munich. She first started shooting in 1957 when her husband, Paul "Skeeter" Wilber, received a bow and set of arrows as payment for automobile repair work he had done. It quickly became evident that she had the natural talent for the sport. There were no professional coaches or commercial sponsors, however, and "Skeeter" was her only coach and advisor. Under his tuition, she honed her skills and sharpened her athleticism.

Between 1965 and 1975 Wilber was the top female archer in the USA. Participating in eight National Championships in that time winning four (1969, 1971, 1973 and 1974), was second twice, and third once. Although she was mainly a target archer, she entered the 1967 National Field Archery Championship and won it at her only attempt. Internationally she also distinguished herself. She competed in the 1969 (Pennsylvania) and 1971 (London) World Championships, finishing second both times, and her international record finally stood at four wins and three seconds and a third place in eight appearances. On the international stage she rewrote the record book establishing ten new world records and was the first woman to shoot over 1200 in world competition. In 1981 she was elected to the Iowa Sports Hall of Fame and is in the Archery Hall of Fame in the USA.

In her many years of competition, she would always carry extra archery supplies and equipment to give to competitors from countries where those items were scarce. In her mind, she wanted her competitors to have every advantage that she did so that the result would be based on skill, not on equipment.

Of her Olympic experience she said, "Actually, I've never started well in any tournament. After the first day at Munich, I was in seventh place. But, like in most other tournaments, I was consistent. I moved into first place on the last day." She spent three weeks in Munich, preparing for and winning the title. "I was staying just two or three blocks from where the terrorists did the shooting," Wilber said. "But I didn't hear the gunshots. We actually hadn't started our competition yet. It was to begin the next day. Because of the killings, we started a day late". In those days the medals were decided over a double FITA round and Wilber scored 1198 on the first day and a world record 1226 on the second to win by 14 points.

When Wilber returned from the Olympics she received a hero's welcome, greeted by the Governor of Iowa, Robert D. Ray, and a caravan of cars two miles long escorted her back to her home town of Jefferson. There she was welcomed by a crowd of around 2,000 gathered around the courthouse square.

She never considered entering the 1976 Olympics, feeling that she had achieved her goal, but spent a dozen or more years with her husband opening their home in Jefferson to young people in the JOAD (Junior Olympic Archery Development) group. She taught them the fundamentals of archery, sportsmanship and a strong work ethic. Their home was, apparently, a perfect setting for archery practice, and her only rule was that the youngsters couldn't aim at the house!

Asked about the secret of her success she said "I have a strong back and strong shoulder muscles. Plus that, I'm a very cool person. Nothing upsets me when I'm on that line." "Even when I shoot a bad arrow, I don't get angry. Some people shoot a bad arrow and blow sky-high. I never have."

After she died in 2008 Don Orris, one of Wilber's archery students, joined with Larry Fie and Jim Rose to develop a plaza as a permanent reminder of her accomplishments and ideals, to share the story of her impact on the archery world and on young archers and to tell her story to those who didn't know her. In 2011 the plaza became a reality, consisting of a circle of paving bricks with, in the centre, a marble pedestal on which is a life-size bronze statue of Wilber. A bronze target has been placed across the street at approximately 70 metres, to enable non-archers to better appreciate her achievements. Additional plaques detailing her archery career and permanent stone benches, donated by the Rotary Club of Jefferson and the Greene County Community Foundation, encircle the statue. Lighting allows visitors to enjoy the plaza throughout the day and evening. The total cost, \$98,000, was raised from a Greene County Community Foundation grant of \$25,000, with the rest coming from individual and business donations, together with donated services and labour to ensure the project was completed.

As far as I can ascertain this is the only statue to a modern archer anywhere, a mark of the respect from the citizens of Jefferson for the only woman from Iowa to win an Olympic gold medal.

*"Focus, believe in yourself and shoot only one arrow at a time."*

*Doreen Wilber 1930-2008*

