GGWAS Chair report of the Society’s activities during 2016.

Year Two – The Gosling spreads its Wings.

Where has this year gone? It feels like only last week I was telling you all about the first year of the Grey Goose Wing Archery Society, and here we are at the end of year two, and what a busy one it has been. At the end of 2015 we had 8 full time members, as we close the books at the end of 2016 we can boast 32 on the books. With a few more from the last beginner’s course still making up their minds, this on top of losing 3 members from last year that have/or will be moving out of the area. Of these about a third has joined ANZ for 2016/17 with more to come once we have been able to take our novice senior Archers out to shooting 70 or 90 meters, or the juniors out to their respective JAMA distance.

I’m sure that some of the New Zealand Archery dealers have been rubbing their hands as the amount of new gear seen on the field must be coming from somewhere.

The year started on a well deserved note with Maria having the honour of receiving the Coach of the Year for 2015 at the 2016 AGM, and Colin being selected to act in the role of Coach to the 2016 Trans-Tasman Junior National squad. In Feb we ran a number of Coach Training sessions for 2 of our club members. This was done side by side with running a beginners course so that they also got to get their hands dirty during their training in front of real beginners. The club can now call on 5 qualified ANZ Coaches, plus one more starting to study for the Foundation level to help out with our School Holiday program and the odd have-a-go sessions that we host. This is very useful given our success rate in converting those on beginner’s courses to full society membership

Publicly we also hit the big time in July with Maria being asked on behalf of the club to take part in the Youths “Adam & Eve” TV show when they did an Archery Challenge. The presenters joined her for an “afternoon” of practice, before going head to head in the studio in front of a live crowd. Some of the more observant of you may have spotted Victoria and Lauren in the background if you saw the show. I’ve never seen an Archery Safety net look so good as under studio lights.

On the shooting front, we had 14 of our members take part in the ECBOPAA winter league, with 3 members shooting more than 1 bow type. For some of our members this was a first time getting to grips with scoring and pushing themselves. One of our members suffered the theft of all of his Archery gear during this competition and out of the 4 months he managed to shoot a full round did so with 2 new bows straight out of the box, plus a club bow and still managed a mid table result. At the end of the 5 months 5 of our members managed a top 3 placing in a range of divisions.

We have also hosted 2 RMT’s splitting the club into 2 groups, those with ANZ membership shooting their correct distances and targets, and the rest shooting on full 80 cm faces at whatever distance they felt was a challenge. On both occasions we had all the clubs targets in action and a full shooting line. Shooting timed ends to a whistle, double scoring and a bit more of a formal feel was a good learning curve for all the new members. We have been asked to host some more of these in 2017 as we get more members up to a competitive distance.

Competitively our numbers have grown with Keith Murphy joining us from the Trenthan Camp Archery Club, and Julia Harrison has begun to shoot a few competitive events in Christchurch. Her first shoot being the South Island Championships saw her being presented with the Archer of the Tournament award. This was the first time she shot rounds such as a Canadian 1200, National, Pacific and a Clout all over 3 days. She will be shooting her first Nationals in January and we wish her well.

The Club has also entered a team in both the Ryan and Fraser shields, and while we don’t expect a podium position this year, not many 2-year-old clubs, building its membership from scratch are able to enter teams in both disciplines, so look out for us next year, we can only go up.

Our JAMA co-ordinator has also been busy with our junior Archers and those that are able have come away with certificates or shown a steady improvement over the months. This will continue as they get more confident in there shooting and keep working on the regular points they pick up each week under the ever watchful coaches eyes.

One of the best days was when Maria let everybody that could wear it, have a go with a low poundage longbow and a thumb ring. The target was mostly safe, even at 18 meters, but the sound of non-stop laughter from all was just great to hear. Who said that Archery is all about the scoring? I’ll tell you get a thumb ring and a low poundage basic bow (less that 16 pounds at full draw) and give it a go.

Another memorable day had nothing to do with Archery, one of our members has a few Hazelnut trees and came down to the club with a large bag to share. So over lunch with the help of the clubs lump hammers a number of club members both young and not so young sat around for some Hazelnut Bashing. Its evidently good fun smashing the small round nuts between two lump hammers hoping that there is something left to eat. The laughs as the nuts escaped because of a missed “shot” had every one in heaps of laughter. A good time was had by all and improved the friendship between club members. However I think it took longer the clear way the nut carnage than it did to clear the Archery field that day.

The club still has a gear storage problem which is now preventing further growth and the field is not really suitable for full time 90 meters shooting. This can be done but requires a full time “watcher” to ensure that no rogue school teacher or caretaker walks into our roped off safety area, as most of them appear unable to read “Do not enter”, “Warning Archery in progress” signs, or realise that the roped off area applies to them. We also have the odd visitor, who happily walks by all the private school property and our society’s danger signs, under the ropes and walks up the path by the shooting lanes, with all of the members yelling at them to stop, only to hear the reply “Sorry we are not from around here”. Guess signs such as private property, danger, do not enter etc. mean something else in other parts of Christchurch/New Zealand.

We can also yell that them in a range of languages as our membership covers, English, Malaysian , Japanese, Samoan, South African, Chinese, plus a few others and of course some New Zealanders as well. However we insist that all our members can understand all safety rules and comments in English before they can shoot, but it really is multi-cultural line up most Sundays.

While it varies from week to week, we average 17 to 24 Archers from the full range of our membership on the shooting line over the full day each Sunday. Most Archer having a go at a distance that challenges them a little while still being fun.

Hopefully the storage issue will resolve itself soon and we can purchase some better targets which will enable us to shoot more competitions such as the Archery NZ Summer postal’s or invite other local clubs to join us for a friendly 720 or other competition in the not so distance future.

On a down note, due to a major chest operation, we have lost Victoria from shooting for at least 18 months, but she will still be at the club picking up more coaching skills and has also asked about what is needed to be a judge to fill in her time.

The society has also started looking for new premises and is working with the Christchurch Councils recreation team to see what land is available in our target area that will be suitable to our current and future needs, but this is a long term goal.

Wonder what 2017 will bring, maybe the Goose will learn to fly?

Colin Tucker – The Grey Goose Wing Archery Society