

Randwick Archery Club



Randwick Archery Club has the distinction of being one of the first archery clubs in New Zealand. Established in 1944, it is still going strong. It is currently situated at 168 Randwick Road, Moera. Their website is <http://www.randwick-archery.org.nz/>. In 1944 Fred Savage and Brae and Peg Bartley began to take an interest in archery. They bought their bows for 27 shillings from Hugh Butel in Dunedin, and began to shoot in their lunch hour outside the Griffins Biscuit factory, and soon decided to form a proper club. After hunting around for a suitable ground, they were able to use the Randwick School grounds for an annual rental of £6. It was decided to name the club after the school, and so the Randwick Archery Club was born. Around this time, Norman Rodgerson, an established archer originally from Dunedin, had recently moved to Petone. Brae Bartley had written to Mr NJ Ryan of Dunedin Archery Club, requesting information about equipment. In reply, Mr Ryan suggested they contact Norm Rodgerson. In the meantime, Norm was sent a letter by Mr Ryan suggesting that he go and help the new club get set up. The current three members decided to have an open day in October 1944, and when Norm appeared at the club, they were hard at work making targets: wooden box frames covered on each side with scrim, and with the inner cavity stuffed with straw. Norm was able to show them a much more improved method of target making using a coiled straw snake. The targets were stored in the school's air-raid shelter that was also used for the first Club meeting. Other local clubs were invited to the opening that was attended by about 30 to 40 archers. In 1945 the Randwick Club joined with the Ngaio and Sherwood Clubs in establishing an archery range in the Wellington Sports Centre. A further move was made by Randwick in 1946 to an indoor range in the Moera Hall, where the club has been established for their indoor seasons since. In 1947 the club returned to the grounds of the Griffins factory, establishing an outdoor range there at no cost to the club, and it was here that the members had their first experience of shooting at ranges up to 60 yards. They remained there until 1948, when the management of



The Randwick Archery Club Women's team in 1949. Peg Bartley is second from the

Griffins notified the club that their grounds were required for staff cricket. Prior to this, the WCC town Planner, who had been requested by the Petone Borough Council to arrange sports grounds for the Borough, had seen Norm Rodgerson regarding the possibility of a ground at the end of North Street being used as an archery range. Norm inspected the wilderness of gorse-covered humps and hollows, agreed that it could be made into an archery range, but suggested that it be offered to the Randwick Club. The ground was incorporated into the Town Plan as an archery range (designated Archers Green). Club members took advantage of the new location and quickly established the range, all putting in money to build a very small clubhouse which cost the grand total of £45. In February 1949, Randwick sent a team of 18 archers to the National Championships, held in Carlaw Park in Auckland – one of the largest teams to attend. Their Women's team came 3rd in the teams event, with Dunedin A 1st and Gisborne 2nd. Most popular success at this meeting was the winning of the Jackson Shield for the best-dressed team, the Club's new uniform having been specially made for this event. The uniform for men was cream slacks, a white shirt, a maroon pullover and a maroon peaked cap, and for

women it was a white cap, white shirt and skirt, white shoes and a maroon tunic.

Randwick Club continued to achieve successes at both the National and District levels. The uniform has remained similar, although now it is a maroon shirt for both men and women, and black trousers or shorts. Development of the grounds continued to the point where the Club had a ten target, full 90m range, with clubhouse facilities.

In 2006, however, after 56 years of being at North Street, the Randwick Archery Club's lease ran out and they had to move. On June 10, a last official shoot was held, with around 40 archers attending the event. The new site was near the railway line, very close to where the club originated. It needed a lot of imagination to see it as an archery range, as it was overgrown with gorse and brambles. A lot of work by club members, including using heavy machinery to level the area and build a 1.2m high mound at the back of the butts, was used, but now there is a full 90m range and a shorter JAMA range on site.

Work is still in progress to create a range that meets the needs of all our members, with plans for clubrooms and an indoor range in the future. *With thanks to Bernie Fraser and the Randwick Archery Club website.*