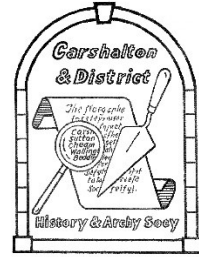


# Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society

## Local History Note 3



## Archery in Beddington Park

Beverly Shew

Revised 20 October 2020

### ***An acknowledgement:***

*My particular thanks are to Mr. Bill Terry of West Kent Archers for his hospitality; for an opportunity of viewing his amazing collection relating to all things archery along with giving unprecedented access to his extensive library.*

*To Mr Neil Dimmock for thirty years Secretary of Southern Counties Archery Meeting for his expertise and advice, his facilitating the above and for seemingly endless photocopying of the Archer's Register.*

*And to John Phillips who has scanned the photographs and prepared these notes for publication.*

**Introduction:** Archery is one of the oldest sports still practiced. From earliest times spears and bows and arrows were used for hunting and inter-clan warfare. The earliest known bow was found in 1991 with a natural mummy in the Ötzal Alps on the border of Austria and Italy. It was made of yew and dated to around 3300 BC. A yew bow dating from 2690 BC (give or take 120 years either side), was recently found in England preserved within peat in the Somerset Levels.

Archery was a known favourite sport of the Egyptian pharaohs during the 1st Dynasty (1567-1320 BC) and seemingly remained so as bows were found among the treasures in the 18th Dynasty tomb of Tutankhamun (born c.1334 BC) when his tomb was excavated by Howard Carter in November 1922. In 1200 BC stone tablets also show that the Hittites and Assyrians were fearsome opponents in battle. It is known archery took place during the Chinese Zhou (Chou) Dynasty (1027-256 BC) as had probably taken place for centuries before.

In this country it was only after the Norman Invasion in 1066 the long bow was developed into a weapon of war and archery became widely practiced in Britain. The English longbow however was to earn fame or notoriety during the Hundred Years War with France notably in the English victories at the Battles of Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356) and Agincourt (1415). Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were both competent archers.

The introduction of gunpowder eventually made the bow and arrow obsolete as an instrument of war in all but primitive societies, and is now used purely as a sport either for hunting or static target based. Archery had been in decline following the Puritanism that

followed Cromwell's tenure of office (1649-1660) but gradually regained popularity. To the great benefit of the sport the Prince Regent, later King George 1V (1762-1830) was a dedicated archer and became royal patron of several then existing archery societies thus promoting the sport. It was a pass-time particularly favoured by the Victorians and Edwardians, especially the ladies as it was looked upon as an appropriate healthy open air activity for women developing not only grace but stamina. For them it was also an escape from the confines of the Drawing Room.

**The foundation of Beddington Park Archers.** Surely must indirectly begin with, in c.1813-14 the coming to Beddington of Henry, later Sir Henry Bridges of 'Beddington House' a mansion located in a road now known as Bridges Lane. Born in 1798 he had inherited 'Ewell Court' and the Ewell Gunpowder mills as a twelve year-old child. On his coming to Beddington he brought with him wealth and influence. Of his two sons, the younger sibling Alexander Henry who had been born in Epsom in 1811 and ordained into the Ministry at the age of twenty-five, on the death of his older brother who had been on naval service in India and that of his father in 1861, he inherited the Beddington estate along with widespread lands in England, Scotland and with interests abroad. Having inherited a fortune Alexander Henry, later the Rev. Canon A.H. Bridges became Lord of the Manor, and in 1864 on the death of the then incumbent became Rector of Beddington.

In about 1863 he purchased land in the northern fields of Beddington Park totalling some 15.9 acres to house a cricket ground for the choir boys of St. Mary's, the nearby parish church, and perhaps foreseeing the possibility of a housing estate overwhelming the area, in March 1871 he purchased the greater area of what was to become Beddington Park from the would-be developer Joseph Atkins Borsley. Borsley had already made inroads into the park with substantial building along Croydon Road, some of the substantial houses that remain today. Bridges let the park to Mr. Thirlby who lived in the farm cottages opposite the Dovecote and who grazed his dairy herd on the rich pasture of what is today's park.

It would appear that as soon as he had purchased the land the Rev. Bridges set about 'improvements' infilling the canal-like lake in front of the Orphanage; he altered the course of the river and unified the various streams independent of but eventually flowing into the River Wandle one of which divided the area of today's cricket club grounds. The only crossing of the river into these northern fields was then via an iron bridge that are still accessible by this relatively narrow bridge even today.

**The Cricket and Archery Pavilion.** Having purchased the land, in March 1871 the Rev. Bridges commissioned J. Sotherton to lay out a ground for cricket and archery on ten acres north of the river. An elaborate pavilion to become the home of a private Cricket & Archery Club in Beddington Park was also planned in the then not inconsiderable sum of £3,000. This stood slightly to the east of but near the site of the present tea rooms, later described as 'one of the most charming and well-appointed of archery grounds'.

The work was carried out from the design of Joseph Clarke FSA (Canon Bridges favoured architect) of 13 Stratford Place, London, and was timber framed with a thatched roof in a French rustic style reminiscent of the Hameau at Versailles. The builders were Messrs Roberts of Islington and the Clerk of the Works Mr Thomas Booth. On the chimney breast of the pavilion was the legend 'Cricket and Archery Club' along with a set of stumps and bat and the date '1873' the same year the Rev. Bridges was made Honorary Canon of Winchester. The whole of the extensive ten-acre ground was later enclosed by fencing.

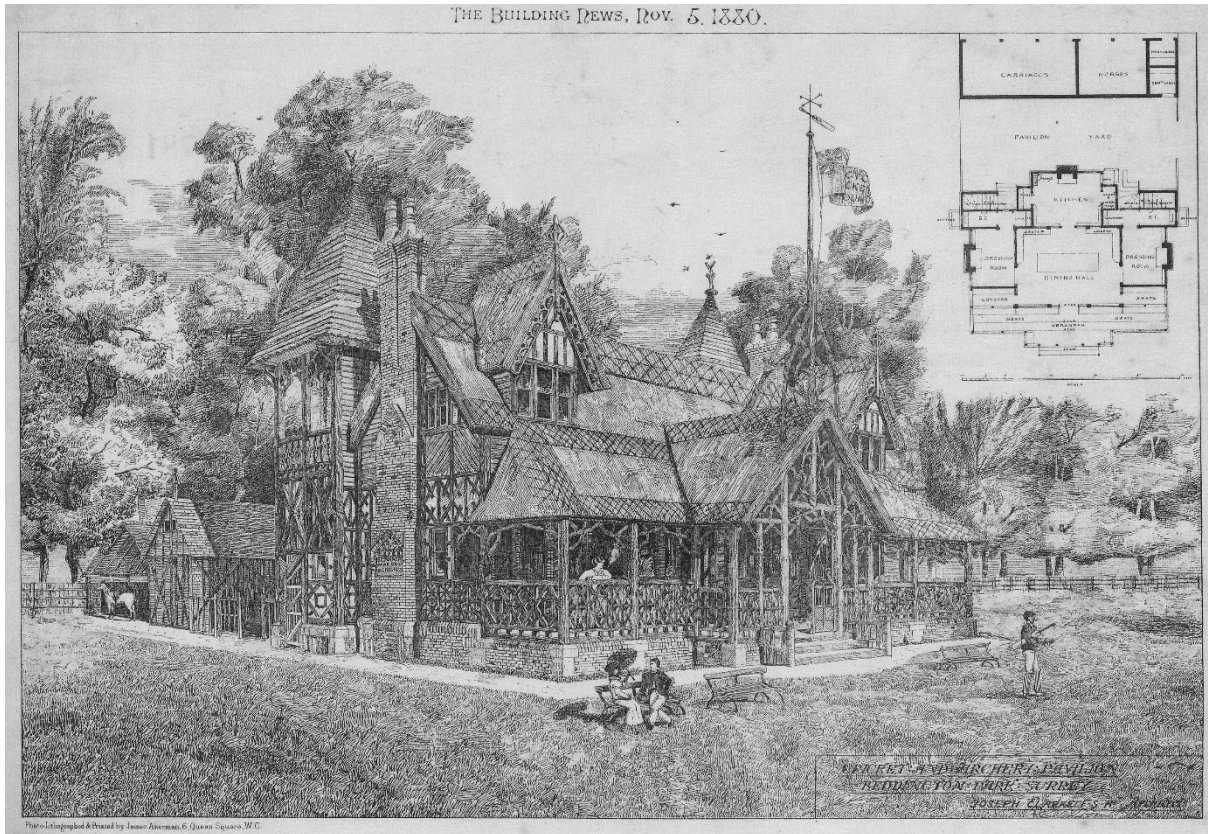
The building was constructed on a brick foundation with concrete under, having stone quoins and chimney also in red brick and comprised a covered open veranda with raised seats and railed round. The floors were planked throughout and the roofs covered with Norfolk reed. The ladies' and gentlemen's dressing rooms with lavatories adjoining and water laid on, were located on the ground floor as was the large central dining hall with panelled walls. The ceilings were lined with pitch pine. The kitchen, pantry and ice well etc. stood to the back of the building. There were a large range of lockers, hanging closets, and every requirement designed for comfort and use. The furniture in the hall was of solid oak and in character with the room. Two rooms occupied the upper floor, one of which was used as a club/smoking room, the other, a store room. The towers that afforded 'beautiful views over the park and surrounding countryside' carried large tanks supplied by force pumps for the purpose of watering the sports field and supplying the conveniences. Provision for carriages and horses along with two urinals, one marked 'men' the other 'gentlemen', along with an equipment shed stood to the rear. In 1924 the pavilion roof was tiled though the thatched stables remained unaltered.

The first official sporting fixture to take place on the new Beddington Park ground was cricket on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1873 between the 'Gentlemen of Beddington' his father's team, and twenty-one year old John Henry Bridges team from the parish of Caterham. He was still studying at Oriel College Oxford for the Master of Arts Degree he attained in 1875. The Rev. Bridges' own gardeners came from 'Beddington House' his home in Bridges Lane to maintain the grounds.

**The new home of Cricket.** The rustic pavilion and its playing field was not the home of Cricket for long; they played their last match there in 1879 at about the time Canon Bridges sanctioned the beginning of a lawn tennis club on the existing ground; it was no longer for cricket. (Some years later Jarvis Kenrick formed a Croquet Club there adding Croquet to the Beddington Archery and Lawn Tennis Club title).

To the south of the rustic pavilion and centrally located on the northern boundary of the lower field, another timber and thatched cricket pavilion from the designs of the same architect but simpler in form had been erected on what became the cricket ground. This field formerly known as Dog Kennel Mead lay immediately north of the river. The foundations of this pavilion re-appeared as a ghostly outline, a 'crop mark' during the dry summer of 2019. By now separated from the archery ground by a pale oak fence it was on this field in 1880 the various local cricket teams eventually came together as the Beddington Cricket Club.

As part of the overall scheme the Rev. Bridges also had his architect Joseph Clarke design the terra-cotta bridge with the initials AHB on the central arch that was wide enough to take a Four in Hand across the river that led to the Beddington Park ground. This part of the project took three years to complete though the delightful Tudor style half-timbered brick and flint lodge also designed by Joseph Clarke that stands at the northern end of Church Road came slightly later – above the lintel of the carved open porch is the date 1877.



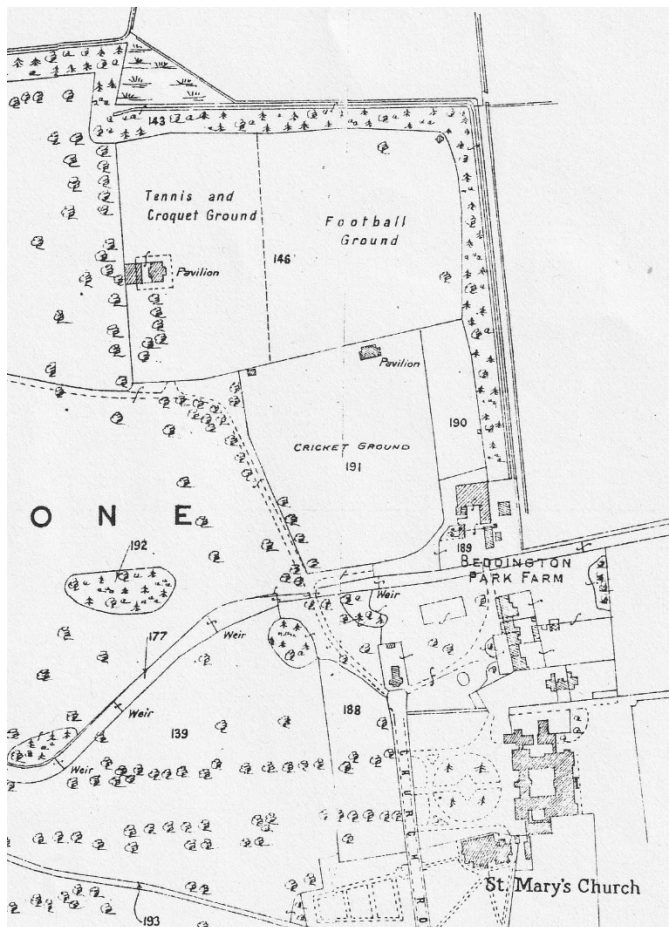
Cricket & Archery Pavilion as published in the *Building News* November 1880.



The front of the Cricket & Archery Pavilion in 1910.



Side view of pavilion in 1938, only the outbuildings remain thatched.

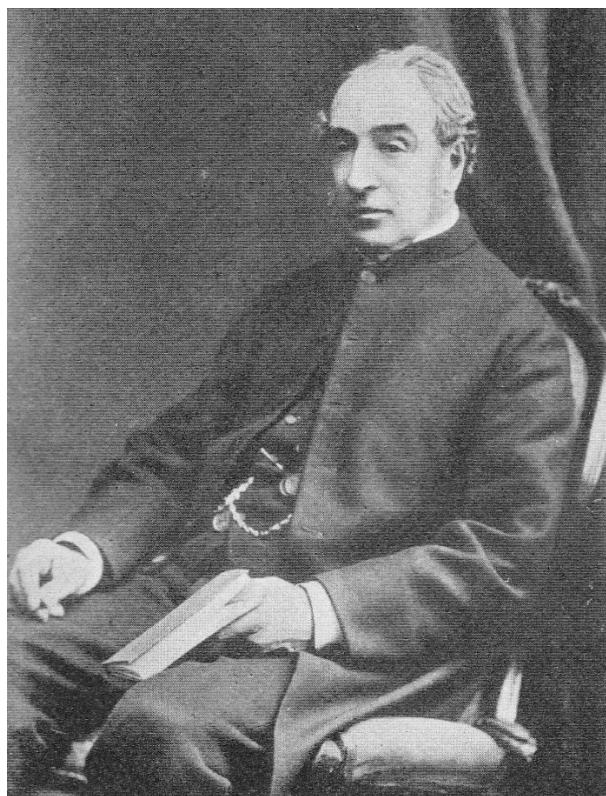


The northeast corner of Beddington Park from the 1919 sales particulars showing the layout of the former archery ground then utilised for tennis, croquet and football, the cricket ground and the two pavilions.

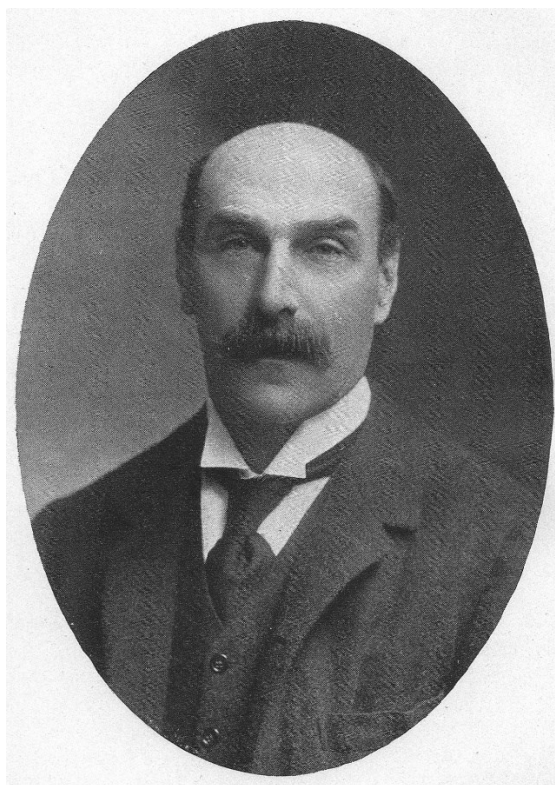


**The Beddington Park Archers.** The Archer's Register suggests 1876 as the year of formation of the Beddington Park Archery Club though archery would have taken place as a sport on private estates long before the official date of formation of the Beddington Club. Indeed with the Pavilion having been built perhaps during the autumn and winter of 1873 the date it bears, archery well may have taken place on the ground in 1874 two years before being officially recognised. Perhaps it was the return to Beddington from Oxford of John Henry Bridges after his graduation in 1875 that prompted the formation of an official archery club. At this date many of the Beddington Club members were already members of Clubs elsewhere.

On its formation the Rev. Alexander Henry Bridges who provided the ground became President and John Henry his son, Chairman, though Minutes of meetings are no longer in existence. The only records now available are those in the annually published 'Archer's Register' the first volume of which had been published in 1864 recording details of Prize Meetings held throughout the country the previous year.



Rev. A.H. Bridges landowner and President of the Beddington Club.



John Henry Bridges Chairman, Champion of the South 1905 and Olympic contestant 1908.

Members were admitted to the Beddington Club by invitation of the Committee only. It was the recreational province of the wealthy; the leisured classes; the elite. Initially practice days and competitions only took place during the week when the working classes were earning a living and had neither the time nor the finance to take part. Members were divided into three groups according to ability; a minimum score of 270 at any Public, Prize, or Practice Meeting qualifying for the First Class and 170 for the Second Class. Later a Third Class for less experienced archers was added. The ground at Beddington Park was open for practice daily throughout the season but by the following year 1877, Practice Meetings were also held during the summer months at 3.30pm each Saturday until the end of May and on each Thursday during the rest of the season at 4.30pm.

Two Prize Meetings were held annually, usually in June/July and in late September/early October. At first, as a type of handicap Members were to lose a scoring circle at every Prize Meeting at which they gain first prize though no more than a maximum of three outer circles were to be taken away. Members who have lost circles win back one at each Prize Meeting in which they do not gain the first prize. A Handicap Prize Meeting was to be introduced shortly after.

**Targets** have changed little over the years. The standard size target is round, 4ft or 122 cm across. The rings, once in alternative black and white later varied in colour according to whatever was decided upon by individual clubs. The more popular archery became as a competitive pastime and the more clubs and archery societies came into being hosting shoots all over the country, the more this inconsistency of the rules was considered a problem. It was finally agreed to standardise both the distances over which competition was held and the number, colour and scoring of the rings. First the number of rings was decided upon and the colours adopted. It is believed the colours were taken from the Coat of Arms of Arthur, Prince of Wales, heir to the throne of King Henry VII and older brother of Henry VIII who died young, equally those of the then Prince of Wales the future King George 1V who was an enthusiastic and greatly supportive bowman. He became the first Royal Patron in 1787. They were also the colours adopted by the long-established Finsbury Archers in use since at least 1754. In concentric rings the central gold (at one time covered with gold leaf) of 24.4cm in diameter is the highest scoring followed by red, blue, black and white. For international competition each colour is divided into half by a thin line to give ten scoring zones reflecting the scores achieved of 10 down to the outer white, scoring 1 point. This set of scoring rings became known as 'The Prince's Colours'.

The target face at one time usually of linen is now of sturdy paper reinforced with nylon mesh. It is attached to the butt with the centre 130 cm above the ground angled back about 10 degrees off vertical usually supported by a triangular shaped three-legged stand. The butt itself can today be made of any number of modern materials (Olympic targets are made of high density foam covered with a printed target) but compacted straw drawn into lengths, bound and sewn together in concentric circles is of traditional material and design.

Both men and women use the same size targets. In British rules they remain the same whatever distance over which competition takes place. Shooting usually takes place over 100, 80, 60 or 50 yards though men only compete over the longer distances. Arrows are shot both ways, in one direction first, then, after scoring and pulling are shot in the opposite direction before final scoring.

The average length of a longbow, originally made of a single piece of yew, is 5ft.6ins for men; 5ft. for ladies, the minimum length allowed. The draw weight used by men is up to 70lbs; by women up to 30lbs, more usually 20-25lbs. The targets are placed on a north-south alignment except in unusual circumstances and competition usually takes place though is weather dependent to a certain extent. The arrows used are of some 26-30ins. in length depending of the length of arm of the person firing the arrows and were made of wood, most commonly of pine or birch, ash, hazel or perhaps cedar, the traditional favourite. They are fletched with feathers originally of partridge or grey goose, today of turkey imported from wholesalers in America. Made up of three or more feathers fletching creates wind drag and causes the arrow to spin similar to that of a rifle bullet. They stabilise the arrows in flight to enhance accuracy. Today the arrows are weighted with steel or brass tips of uniform weight but in the past might well have been of the casing of bullets after the lead had been extracted or made from three-quarter inch steel rolled into a cone.

**Prize Meetings in Beddington Park.** The first of the two Annual Prize Meetings of the Beddington Park Archers held on July 8th 1876 was reported, though not in great detail. Miss Dalrymple (thought to be a cousin of John Henry Bridges) was noted as having gained the highest score for the ladies and for the gentlemen Mr S. C. Wilde. The second Prize Meeting took place on September 9th with Miss Sutherland winning the ladies competition and Rev. T.L. Sainsbury the men's though achievement such as most hits; most golds etc. were all noted and where appropriate rewarded with Club badges. At the end of the season Practice Prizes for regular attendance combined with improvement in shooting were also awarded.

In 1877 the year after foundation of the Club, the Archer's Register records the Prize Meetings in greater detail. At both the July and September meetings the ladies shot a National Round. This was held to be four dozen arrows at 60 yards and two dozen at 50 yards shot twice equalling 144 arrows. The National was named after the National Meeting of Archers of Great Britain and Ireland first held at York in 1844 by which time archery had become a national pastime. The gentlemen shot the so called York Round, six dozen at 100 yards, four dozen at 80 yards and two dozen at 60 yards. The National round was shot twice and the York round once, thus both are of 144 arrows.

Previous winners of first prizes thereafter had to bear certain percentage deductions, a handicap. A Handicap Prize Meeting was also held annually to which the entrance fee for competing visitors was 2s.6d.

J. H. Bridges was always a notable contributor to the scoring in these contests but it was felt his score following a private practice on the 18th September 1879 was worthy of publication. He shot 100 arrows at 60 yards – 100 hits, 584 score, made by 14 golds, 40 reds, 26 blues, 14 blacks and six whites, a no mean achievement! Twenty-nine years later he represented Great Britain in the 1908 Olympic Games when he came 5th in the archery competition.

In 1879 the then twenty-seven year-old John Henry Bridges married local girl and neighbour Edith Isabella Tritton of the eminent banking family. She lived at nearby 'Wandle Court' and was also a member of the Beddington Park Archers. Upon their marriage and a lengthy European honeymoon they moved to 'Avenue House' Ewell, the re-named 'Ewell Court'. He remained in close contact with and very much involved in the various sporting clubs he



supported in Beddington however and was a regular competitor in Archery Club Prize Meetings.

**Club Secretary:** The first reference we have to an Honorary Secretary of the Beddington Archery and Lawn Tennis Society (as it was referred to) is Albert Pulling recorded as such in the Archer's Register of 1886. Albert Pulling a Solicitor and Agent for J. H. Bridges was a long-time resident of the attractive East Lodge at the end of Church Road, Beddington. He was the eldest son of the late Rev. James Pulling, Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and God-son of H.R.H. Prince Albert, the Prince Consort. He died in 1914.

In 1889 he was followed by Rochdale, Lancashire born Brough Maltby (Secretary of the nearby Female Orphanage). In 1903 however the Register indicates his wife Alice Maltby had assumed responsibility. They lived in a house known as 'Wandleholm' in Beddington Lane down towards the railway. Mrs Maltby remained as such until 1910 when Miss Harris of 'Highview', Carshalton took over as Secretary. At the 1912 Prize Meeting two years after her retirement Mrs. Maltby was recognised for her twenty-three years as Secretary by being presented with a pearl and sapphire bracelet. She had obviously carried out the task over the years her husband was being acknowledged as having done so.

**Competition & Prizes.** Saturday June 2nd 1877 saw Beddington's first annual Inter-Club match with nine-a-side taking part in a friendly contest against Wimbledon. Beddington won by 26 points. In a return match held on July 19th again Beddington Park Archers triumphed, winning by 56 points. This was always a keenly contested annual event. By 1879 competition had widened to include annual matches against the Royal Richmond Archers, the St. Leonard's Foresters, Caterham (1884) and Mid-Surrey Club (1888). Beddington regularly hosted competing team matches from elsewhere, as on one occasion during a Surrey v Kent match at the Beddington ground it was noted that one of the Kentish ladies whilst scoring well unfortunately broke her bow!

At home, every winner with the highest score at a Prize Meeting in the First Class won a Gold Badge; in the Second and Third Classes Silver and Bronze respectively, the badge remaining the property of the Club and held until the next Prize Meeting. In 1880 the Society's Challenge Gold Badge was won by Mr. John Henry Bridges with 286 points only one point in front of his wife on 285. It would have been interesting to have been in the household that evening! Very generously, prizes even occasionally flowers donated for the occasion, were given to those perhaps less able for what they had achieved over the year.

The first reference to a silver bugle and silver quiver as awards was at the late summer Handicap Meeting in 1905 but no further information was given. There was no reference to the awards in 1906 but at the Meeting in 1907 the names to whom they had been awarded were noted; the silver quiver to Mrs. Jacomb for greatest improvement in average and Mrs A. Briscoe, the silver bugle, for the greatest number of attendances. These appear to have been perpetual trophies as opposed to a one off though no reference to either trophy is made subsequently.

**The Shillings.** In 1878 Mrs Marshall scored three golds on the same target thereby receiving what was known as the 'customary' shilling from all the competitors. In 1881 John Henry Bridges also scored three golds on the same target at 60 yards and won the shillings he afterwards "put up" to be divided between the two best golds, one in each team over the last two ends. At the Annual Handicap Meeting of 1907 (a then record meeting with 89 entries) two ladies, Mrs. Appleyard and Mrs Thackery tied – one shilling each from every

lady competitor. Others were to follow, Mrs Jacomb 1909 and Mrs. Dudfield Willis in 1911 the latter at 50 yards; they too received the reward, perhaps not a totally rare achievement but certainly something to celebrate. One would ask if this was something equivalent to the golfing world's 'hole in one?'

**The Michaelmas Goose.** The annual prize of a Michaelmas Goose was initiated at the Beddington Club in 1890 at the late Summer Prize Meeting. It was contested through from 1890 until 1907 and again in 1912/13. No reference is made to the goose during the years 1908 to 1911. Initially it was awarded to the nearest or most central hit on a white spot placed somewhere on the target but variations, for example as on two occasions it was given for the best score read backwards. Other times it was awarded for the best arrow at the last end; for the most whites (comment: not the greatest of scoring), or as prize for the worst white, (comment: it could have been worse, by missing the target altogether!)

**The Trevor Lawrence Challenge Prize for Surrey Archers.** The Sir Trevor Lawrence Trophy first awarded in 1875 is a silver-gilt casket made in Tours, France during the period of the Second Empire, Louis Napoleon (1830-1880). The trophy open to all Surrey Ladies Club teams is still being competed for and is currently (2019) held by a lady who lives in Sutton.

1880 saw Beddington Park's first home attempt competing for this prestigious prize as the Wimbledon Club, holders of the prize for the two previous years waived their right to hold the competition on their own ground. On this occasion teams of four ladies representing Beddington Park, Richmond, East Sheen and Wimbledon took part with East Sheen taking the trophy, followed by Wimbledon second, Beddington Park Archers third and Richmond fourth. The highest scorer in the winning team became the holder of the Challenge Casket taking with it the Gilt Badge, the three other ladies on the team each receiving a Silver Badge in the form of a brooch.

Beddington Park was obviously a desirable location as again, in 1884 the Mid- Surrey Ground Archery Club, holders for the previous three years waived their right to have the contest on their own ground in favour of Beddington. On this occasion there was a slight hiccup at the beginning of the contest when it was found that after two dozen arrows had been shot the distance was found to be incorrect and competition had to begin again.



The ornate Sir Trevor Lawrence silver-gilt casket first awarded in 1875 contested annually by a team of four ladies from Surrey Clubs.

During the period 1901-1914 five Surrey teams, including Beddington Park regularly competed for the casket with the Beddington Park Ladies being victorious in 1914 and in 1915. Miss Hodgson was Beddington's highest scorer on both occasions. As was customary the top lady of the winning team held the casket for a year and for monogrammed brooches to be awarded to each member. Names and the year were recorded on the plinth of the trophy. 1915 was the last time it was competed for until 1922 at which time Beddington Park Archers were no more.

It is interesting to note that Trevor, later Sir Trevor Lawrence 1831–1914 an eminent horticulturist, collector and politician initially qualified as a doctor. For ten years from 1853 he worked for the Indian Medical Service seeing much active service throughout the period of the Indian Mutiny (1857-58) the rebellion against the rule of the British East India Company that functioned as a sovereign power on behalf of the British Crown. In 1863 he retired from India and after inheriting his father's recently created Baronetcy in 1867, eight years later, in 1875 he was elected to the Mid-Surrey County Council and upon its abolition represented the Reigate Division of Surrey in Parliament.

Apart from an interest in archery his great passion was horticulture specialising in orchid collecting. For twenty-eight years he was President of the Royal Horticultural Society and upon his death some 580 specimens were donated to the R.H.S. for their collection.

**Southern Counties Archery Meeting.** A public meeting initiated by the Crystal Palace Company in 1859 under the management of Mr. Aldred resulted in 1860, the formation of the Crystal Palace Archers.

In 1892 a Meeting known as the 'Championship of the South' had been initiated and hosted by the Crystal Palace Club who met in the grounds of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. The meeting had continued without a break (but not without difficulty) until 1902. Problems had arisen with the conditions offered by the Crystal Palace Company that made it difficult to conduct Meetings and a decision made to accept an offer to move the competition to Beddington Park; thus was born the Southern Counties Archery Meeting (SCAM) who also became host to the Championship of the South. The Crystal Palace Archery Club was no more.

When the first Championship Meeting was held at Crystal Palace appropriate trophies befitting the status of the competition were needed and subsequently donated. They became known as the Bridges Jug competed for by the gentlemen and the Bridges Diamond Brooch by the ladies. Presumably these trophies had been donated by Mr. John Henry Bridges of Beddington then a member of the Crystal Palace Club and later on the Committee of Management of the new Southern Counties Meeting. The jug might well have been donated in memory of his father Rev. Canon Alexander Henry Bridges who had died in mid-October 1891 the year prior to the formation of the Championship of the South. The ladies competition was for a custom made diamond and pearl brooch. The trophies are still contested annually.

Owing to the difficulties being experienced with the Crystal Palace Company, at the invitation of Mr J. H. Bridges the Southern Counties Archery Meeting moved to Beddington. They conducted their first Prize Meeting on his private ground in Beddington Park on Tuesday and Wednesday the 23rd and 24th June 1903.

The Southern Counties Archery Meeting arrived with a very impressive Committee of Management that included one Knight of the Realm (Sir W.L. Self); four Reverend gentlemen; five high-ranking military men and eighteen other notables. Two judges were appointed along with a Lady Paramount (Mrs. Bridges) who had the deciding word if there was a contentious decision to be made; the Supreme Arbiter.

When they came to Beddington the Honorary Secretary of Southern Counties was the Rev. Guy Lockington Bates of Humphreys Cross, Playden, East Sussex. He had been Secretary of the Crystal Palace Meeting at the time the Club was disbanded. In 1914 at the time of the First World War and afterwards, then Captain the Rev. Guy Lockington Bates served in the Royal Army Chaplain's Department until his death at the age of fifty-six in 1922. The Local Honorary Secretary (Beddington) was recorded as A. Pulling Esq.

Competitors would regularly practice at their own Club but come together for the Annual Prize Meeting. The new "Southern" was shot at Beddington Park in

1903	77 competitors	11 ladies targets	5 gentlemen
1904	68 competitors	12 ladies targets	5 gentlemen
1905	65 competitors	9 ladies targets	5 gentlemen
1906	85 competitors	11 ladies targets	6 gentlemen
1907	86 competitors	12 ladies targets	4 gentlemen
1908	83 competitors	12 ladies targets	4 gentlemen

In 1908 the last year competition took place at Beddington sixty-two ladies and twenty-one gentlemen competed.

Perhaps a highlight was the Southern Counties Meeting over a two-day period the 27th and 28th June 1905, the third Championship to be held at the local Beddington ground. Contestants had come from in total twenty-three different clubs from as far afield as Shropshire; Gloucestershire; Worcestershire; Devon and Cornwall; Hereford; Berkshire; Wiltshire and Kent. Mrs Bridges acted as Lady Paramount throughout.

The first day of the 1905 competition was fine but rather windy. For the gentlemen a York Round at 100, 80 and 60 yards was shot both ways over a two day period. John Henry Bridges of the Beddington Club competing on Target 4 scored 13 golds becoming 'Champion of the South' with 782 points, 8 points ahead of his nearest rival. He was presented with the Bridges Jug. Likewise, Miss Bridges (if any relationship to the Champion is not known) also of the Beddington Club competing on Target C, in a National Round of 60 and 50 yards scored 10 golds over the two day period defeated her nearest rival by 7 clear points taking home the diamond brooch along with the title 'Championess of the South'.

County Mixed Teams also took part in competition over the same day with Surrey A & C teams coming first and second followed by Sussex, Surrey B and lastly Middlesex with each Surrey team sporting representatives from the home, Beddington Club.

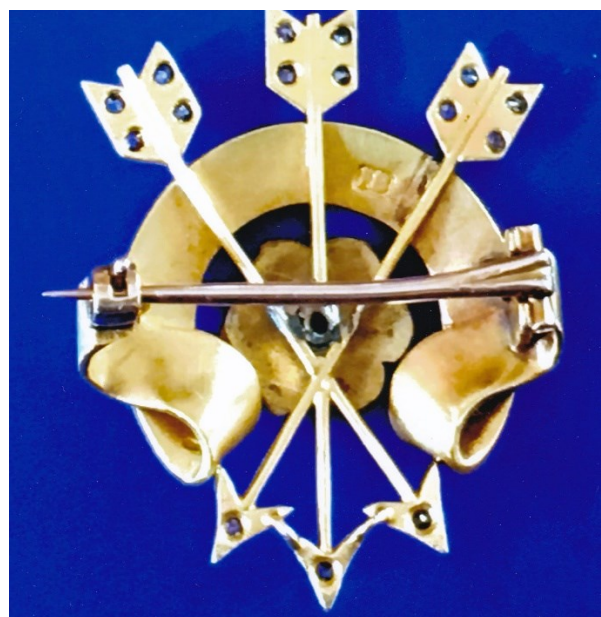
As had been noted in Southern County Minutes, obviously the infrequency and/or reliability of the trains to Hackbridge or East Croydon (the latter quoted as being two miles away from the ground) ultimately defeated them as on the 23/24th June 1908 the final competition took place at Beddington that by June 1909 had moved to Wembley Park. The Rev. Guy Bates went with them as Secretary. They had left what had been described as the luxury of the Beddington facilities to a reportedly good ground but the accommodation for

competitors and the general surroundings of which were 'not up to it'. The only Beddington Park Club member taking part in 1909 was noted as being Mrs. Du Buisson.

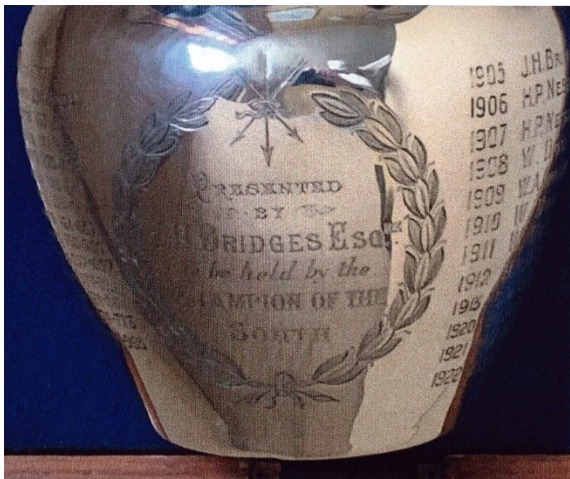
The Meeting subsequently moved to Stokes Poges (1910) and the Polo Ground, Worcester Park in 1911 before again moving on. Today, and for about the past sixty years Southern Counties have held their Annual Prize Meetings in Winchester. The prestigious Bridges trophies, the jug and diamond brooch are still awarded to the Champion and Championess that are currently (2020) residing in Romford and Winchester respectively.



The J.H. Bridges trophy competed for annually and presented to the Lady Championess of the South.



The brooch front and reverse.



The J.H. Bridges [of Beddington] jug still competed for annually and held by the Gentleman Archery Champion of the South. Details of the storage box are shown below.

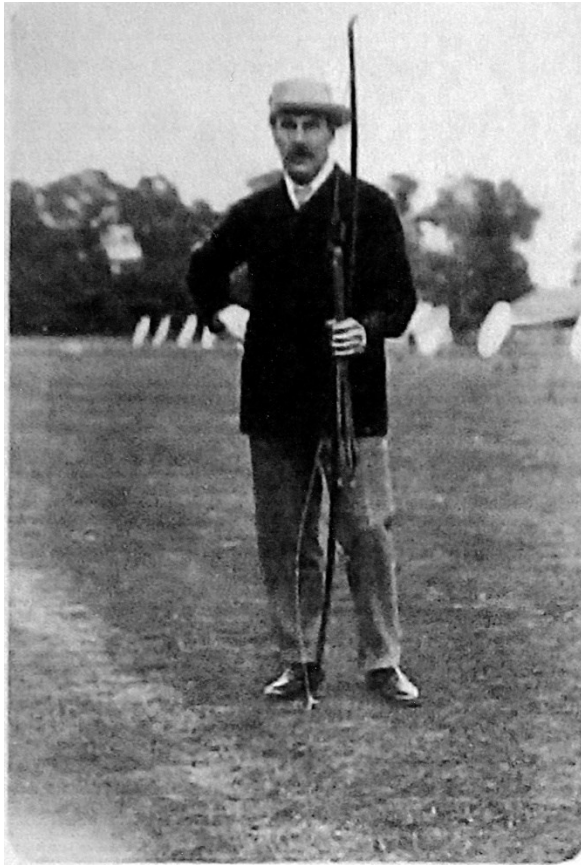




Lady archers and one gentleman, the Secretary of the Beddington Club, Brough Maltby in 1905.



Ladies at the Southern Championships in 1905.



J.H. Bridges and Miss Bridges, Champion and Championess of the South 1905.

**The July 1908 Fourth, Summer Olympic Games.** Archery first appeared in the Olympic Games in 1900; was contested again in 1904, 1908 and 1920, then again after an absence of fifty-two years, from 1972 to the present.

As reported in the *Archer's Register*, at a meeting in 1905 the International Olympic Committee selected Rome as the venue for the Fourth Olympic Games scheduled to take place in 1908. Early in 1907 however it was intimated that the Italian Council, for whatever reason, were unable to host the games leading to a Committee meeting and the decision to invite London to host the Meeting.

Finding a suitable venue with sufficient accommodation at such short notice was difficult but this was finally overcome by an arrangement between the Council and Managers of the Franco-British Exhibition that the Games should take place in a stadium to be erected by the latter adjoining the exhibition grounds at Shepherd's Bush.

As a consequence it was decided that the direction of each sport should be left to the management of its own governing body, and have them accept the responsibility of selecting the names of those to take part, subject to the general control of the British Olympic Council. The Grand National Archery Society met and decided to invite thirty ladies and thirty gentlemen to take part. Averages and public performance results were scrutinised and placed before the Chairman at which time both Mr. John Henry Bridges of Beddington Park Archers and Mr. Capel Pownall both members of the Royal Toxophilite Society should



be among those representing the United Kingdom. The latter Society, founded in 1781 by Sir Ashton Lever and Thomas Waring under the patronage of the Prince of Wales is the most influential English Archery Club; the equivalent of Golf's prestigious Royal and Ancient. Capel Pownall was a regular competitor as a visitor on Beddington Prize Meeting days from 1901 to 1910.

The Olympic rounds to be competed were a double York for the men (100, 80 and 60 yards), and a double National for the ladies over 60 and 50 yards.

Archery competition took place on the 17th, 18th, and 20th July 1908, the 19th being the Sabbath, a day of rest. On the first day the shooting was frequently interrupted by rain, and there was also a troublesome wind that caused some delay but the shooting was over by 2pm presumably then to allow other sports to take place on the arena. No-one began well under the prevailing conditions.

The following day was fine but bitterly cold with the wind again being very strong and trying as it eddied round the huge arena. On the second day John Henry Bridges scored a gold (or for the uninitiated, a bulls-eye) at 80 yards, one of only two scored that day under the prevailing conditions.

Of the competing men who shot the York Round on both days, Capel Pownall on Target 8 finished the competition with a creditable score of 532 comprising 144 hits and 7 golds placing him 11th in the competition whereas John Henry Bridges on Target 15, in total scored 687, comprising 165 hits and 15 golds that placed him 5th in the Olympic Archery competition, an excellent result.

A Continental Round (forty arrows, one at a time) at 50 metres was shot for on the final day in which fifteen French, one American and two English competed. At the request of the French competitors several of the English who had shot in the York Round, including both Mr. Pownall and Mr. Bridges shot with them though they did not compete for the medals. There was no world standard at this time and each country within which the Olympics were held had their own round. It was not until 1931 when F.I.T.A. (the Fédération Internationale de Tir à l'Arc, now World Archery) was formed that a standard world-wide round was formulated.

Miss Sybil Fenton Newall, also known as 'Queenie', of the Cheltenham Club who represented the U.K. won the Ladies' gold medal and Mr. Dod of Welford Park Club, Berkshire also representing the U.K. won the Men's competition.

Of the competitors, John Henry Bridges (born in 1852), who after his marriage lived in 'Avenue House' Ewell was very much a 'country gentleman' of independent means, land owner and local benefactor; a keen sportsman and annually elected President of both the Archery and Lawn Tennis Club and the Beddington Cricket Club. He also held a Commission in the Middlesex Yeomanry Cavalry and was a member of the Royal Company of Archers, King's Bodyguard for Scotland.

Interestingly, Capel George Pett Pownall, born in Pimlico London in 1869, apart from his connection with the 1908 Olympics is generally associated with the British Fascists and the Imperial Fascist League. He deplored the radical changes that were then taking place in society; the encouragement of smoking and 'coctailing' among young females and was unhappy at the decadence of female fashion after 1918 with its short skirts, low cut blouses, short hair and the more independent female.

He is also remembered as being the translator, from the German, of Theodor Fritsch's violently anti-Jewish book 'The Riddle of the Jews' Success', published in 1927, a book that helped illuminate the Third Reich's rise to power and the underlying beliefs held by many in that era.

The date is un-researched but he was subsequently expelled from the Royal Toxophilite Society probably owing to his extreme views. Might this have been about the time when in 1910 he stopped competing at Beddington though his wife continued to take part in competition until 1912. He died at Woking, Surrey on the 8th February 1933.

**In the meantime** the Beddington Club was still holding their Inter-Club matches, their own practice sessions, annual Handicap Meetings and twice yearly well supported Prize Meetings.

In 1907 however Edith, John Henry Bridges wife who in her time had competed at Beddington and acted as Lady Paramount, died. She was fifty-two and was buried in a family plot in Ewell churchyard. Two years later her husband married for a second time, to another local lady Dorothy Mary Jacobs and the couple moved away to Eastbourne. Competition carried on however though J.H.B. no longer took part.

The Annual Handicap Meeting in September 1907 saw 85 competitors. Listing included the names R. F. Bridges also a Miss Bridges but no John Henry.



Scoring and removing arrows at the 6th Southern Counties Prize Meeting at Beddington in 1907.



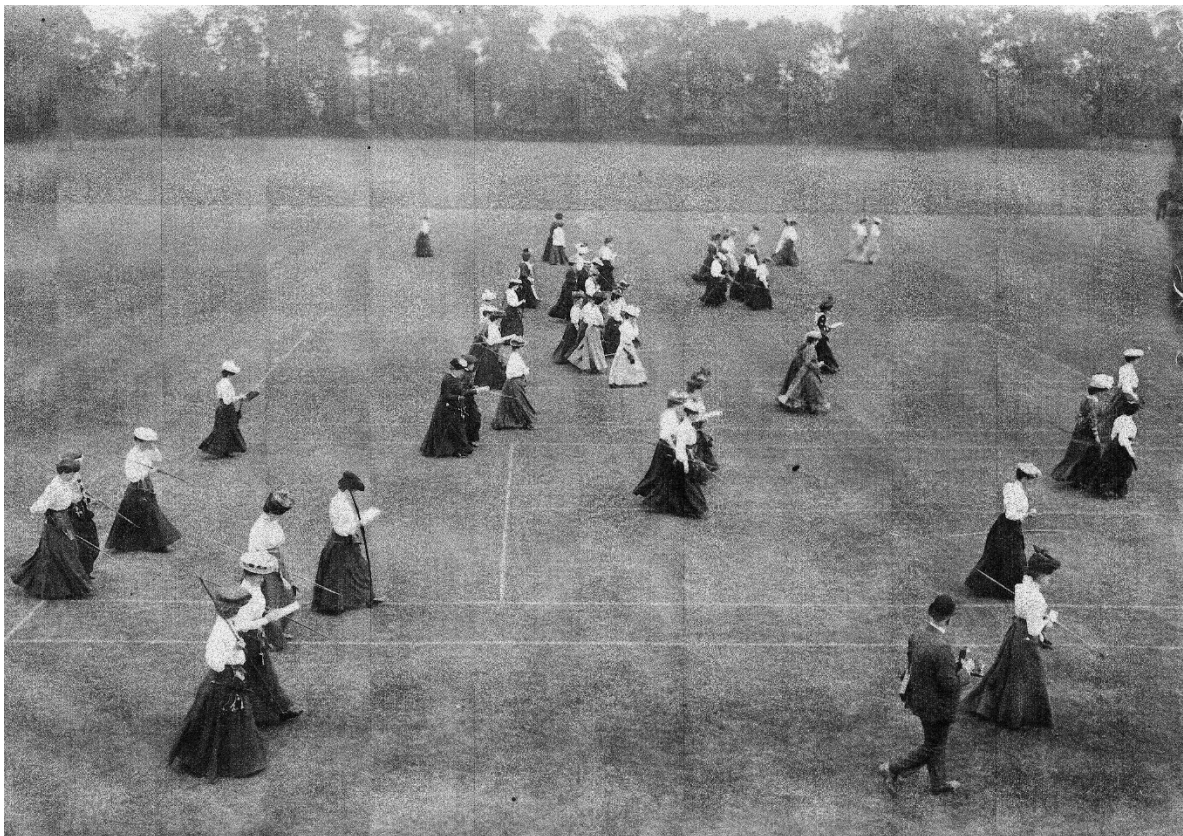
Twelve ladies' targets in the foreground and competitors shooting on the return leg of the competition in 1907. The four long distant targets in the background are for the gentlemen.



An unidentified lady poses for the camera wearing a chatelaine and quiver at her waist. Note the 1880 thatched cricket club pavilion behind the dividing fence.



With the archery pavilion in the background ladies gather perhaps to discuss their scores.



Their bows unstrung hurrying across the tennis courts, is it time for tea?

**Then came the First World War.** Writing in 1914, Col. H. Walrond the third editor since the inception of the Archer's Register who (with the aid of Club Secretary's) had so assiduously compiled and annually published the results of prize meetings throughout the country, acknowledged that at the time of writing prospects for archery in 1915 'do not seem very favourable'. He suggested that perhaps public meetings, social functions and prize giving's could well be dispensed with considering the situation. He felt however that if the sport were to survive it was essential that honorary secretaries keep their societies going, that practice should go on and for the members to support their club during the anxious times throughout which they were living. Survival mainly relied upon the lady members at this crucial time. He suggested that at such stressful times some relaxation was clearly necessary, and none surely could be found better than the health-giving outdoor exercise afforded by the use of the bow.

The final Prize Meeting entry in the Register of June 23rd, 1914, was to be the last both for Col. Walrond who died at the end of 1915, but also for the Beddington Park Archers. Only ten Lady Members had attended and seventeen Lady Visitors. No men took part. At this last Prize Meeting to be held in Beddington, Club Member Miss Hodgson (the Rector's daughter) was the highest scorer in Class I; Miss Cressy (the local Doctor's daughter) in Class II and Miss Hamp (who is otherwise unknown) in III. Miss Hodgson as part of a team of four Beddington ladies competed and won the Sir Trevor Lawrence Trophy in 1914 and 1915. Was this Beddington's swansong?

Of the eight Archery Clubs registered in Surrey before the 1914-18 war, at the cessation of hostilities few survived though it was a sport predominately one in which ladies participated – the war had taken its toll. Beddington was one of those that didn't survive but perhaps it was because the land it had occupied since its' inception was to be sold and by then the wealthier inhabitants had already moved away.

**Post World War 1.** By the end of the War the death knell had effectively been tolled for archery in Beddington, for in June 1919 the Beddington Park estate came onto the market along with other properties both in Beddington and in Surrey the titles to which had commenced with the Rev. A. H. Bridges. The attractive Entrance Lodge at the north end of Church Road; the farm buildings with cowshed for forty-three cows; the Dovecote; the northern part of the park itself comprising 100 acres thereabouts including what were by then the lawn tennis, croquet and cricket grounds with their respective pavilions. It was noted that a portion of the lawn tennis ground had been ploughed up for the purpose of food production.

After having passed through the hands of would-be developers who well may have agreed with the sales particulars that the area would be eminently suitable for a garden city, a high-class sports club or something similar, in 1927 almost belatedly the area was purchased by the Council to be retained for public recreation and as a sports' ground.

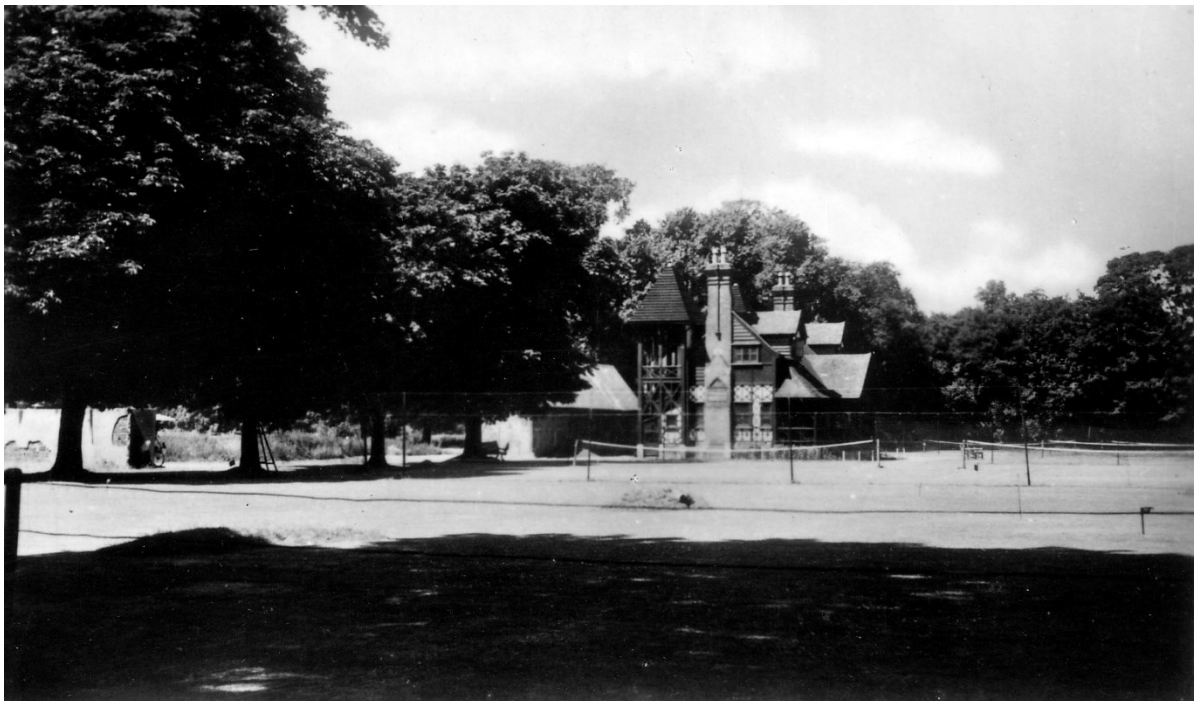
On February 12th, 1925 John Henry Bridges died at Eastbourne then aged seventy-two, thus forever severing his and the direct family connection with Beddington.

During the 1939-45 period of the Second World War the increasingly derelict archery pavilion was used as a Home Guard Training Centre and subsequently stood abandoned

until the early 1950s when, with all the memories, it seemed to disappear seemingly overnight.



The pavilion in decline with the Wallington Platoon of the 60th Surrey Battalion Home Guard during the World War.



The archery pavilion seen across the park from the south about 1949.