

Peter Allday remembers the early days.....

As I remember, it all started at 108 Waxwell Lane, Pinner, Middlesex in 1949. This was the home of Dennis Cullum.

On the day I left the Parachute Regiment in Germany I acquired his address from MC Nokes MC (Military Cross). He was Master of Ceremonies at Harrow College.

As soon as I got home, I motorcycled over to number 108, and introduced myself as a possible hammer thrower. I said that I could throw 150 feet. Dennis said "you will certainly have to prove that on my training ground down the road". When this test was successfully over, he promptly put me down as a hammerthrower for his club (London Athletic Club). "You had better train with me here", he added.

I trained every Sunday afternoon for many months and the press soon got hold of the idea that I was being coached by Dennis. I saw no reason to contradict this because it would all be useful publicity for our event. Besides, I was grateful to be allowed to train at Pinner with such an educated and friendly chap as Dennis.

One day after training, still in 1949, I said to Dennis "why do not we form a British hammer throwing club and make Pinner a mecca for hammer throwing?". After all, Dennis had been trained by one Major Freeborne and I had been coached in Germany by Herr Christian Busch, the 1936 Olympic coach to Kart Hein and Erwin Blask (the world record holder). Together, we would make a fine coaching team.

There and then I sketched out a basic badge. It transpired that this badge would last for many many years, unchanged.

The 5 small circles of the top of the badge were allocated as follows:

- 1 circle equals 140 feet
- 2 circles equals 150 feet
- 3 circles equal 160 feet
- 4 circles equals 170 feet
- 5 circles equals 180 feet

140 feet was to be the joining qualification throw for the new Club and it had to be thrown in a bone fide competition.

Dennis accepted the design there and then, so the potential hammer throwing club was definitely in the making. Dennis was in fact a director of the Cambridge sports firm of Cantabrian, so he had plenty of experience of organising. It was not however until 1952, that Denis arranged that Alperton, which was handy for all London Athletic Club members and others in the London area, would be a suitable venue for the actual formation of the hammer throwing club. All those throwers who were there on that famous day were allocated positions within the Club and someone took the Minutes. All those who were there on the day would naturally feel that they were founder members, although the true founder members, if there are to be founders at all, were Dennis and

myself. Myself for the idea of the Club in the first place and for the design of the badge, and Dennis Cullum who was always making notes about the Club's aims.

Those throwers who came to Pinner to train were soon subjected to talks about: "it is a bloody dangerous event" and "the glory of gladiatorial combat which is ever present in hammer throwing". Camaraderie was nurtured here and at number 108: "it is not just another athletic event; it is hammer throwing and it is a really traditional and heroic event".