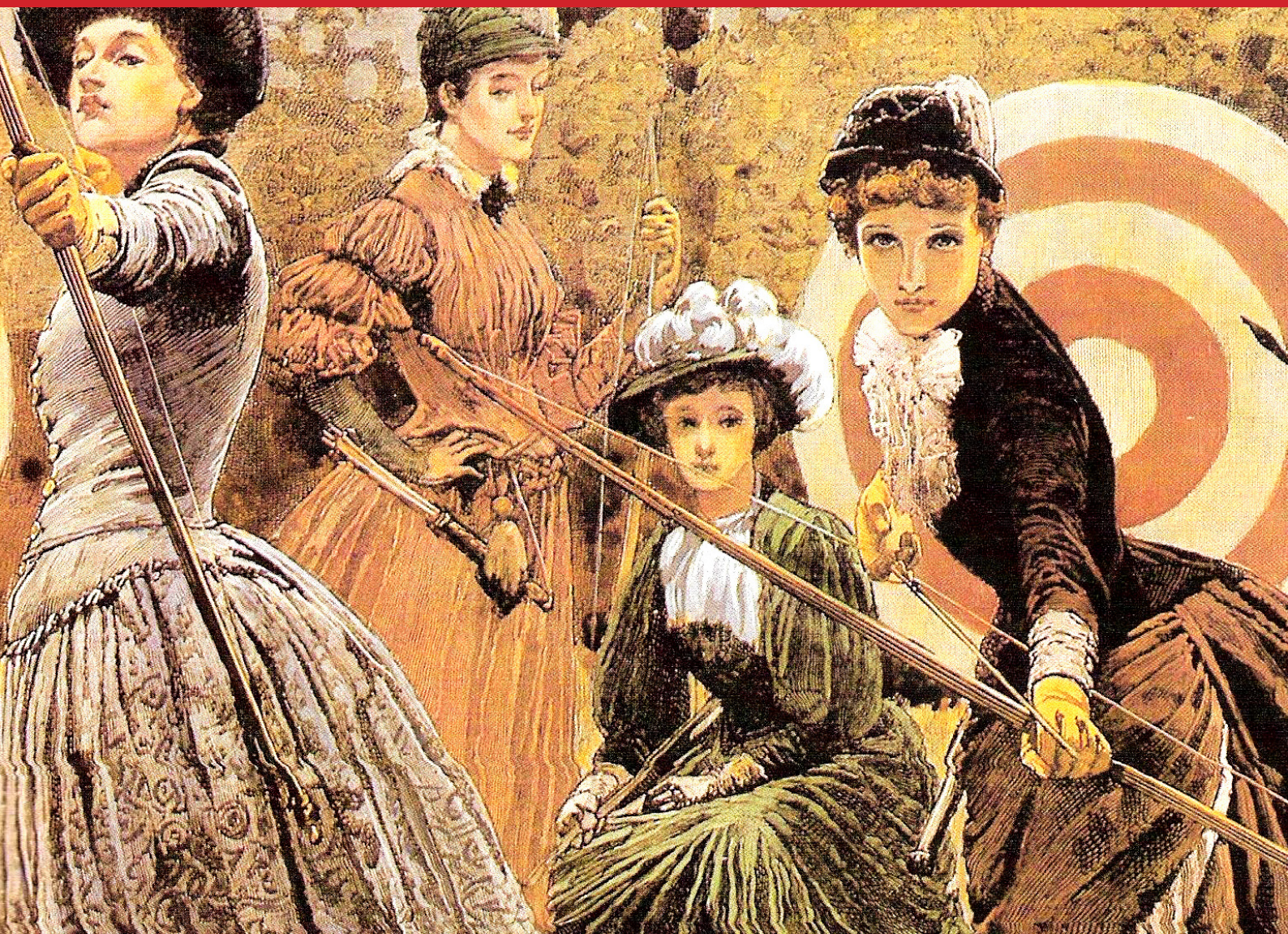


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THE AMAZON ARCHERS OF ENGLAND

LONGBOWS, GENDER AND ENGLISH NATIONALISM 1780-1845



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ABSTRACT

In the 1780s the medieval weapon of war; the English longbow, enjoyed a renaissance, as historical archery became a fashionable recreation among the English aristocracy. Later, during 1819-1845, longbow archery developed into a mass movement, as it spread downwards in the English class system, into the burgeoning middle class. During the entire time period of 1780-1845, the "English warbow" was instrumental in producing a specific English (i.e. not British) nationalistic memory culture regarding the medieval military triumphs of the "English bowmen" in battles of old, against French and Scottish forces, as well as reproducing a nationalistic narrative surrounding the English national hero and master-archer Robin Hood. The English longbow, as an object, became a manifestation of English nationalism. An important fact was that both men and women were included as archers, despite the masculine context of the memory culture surrounding military archery, the celebration of medieval English battlefield victories and the manliness of the English "bowmen". How did England come to view the female archer as an ideal for English women, while at the same time publicly upholding a patriarchal doctrine of a feminine "private sphere" womanhood, whereby women should be constrained to the domestic space as housewives, mothers and daughters? How was the English inclusion of females in the nationalistic public sphere of longbow archery made possible, communicated and reproduced? In summary, this study is about how longbow archery was manifested in the context of the rise of English modern nationalism and how women were included – or rather included themselves – as English longbow archers. As the study shows, the answers exists in an inter-relating web of English memory culture regarding warfare and historical archery; gender constructions and female agency; constructions of English national identity and English nationalism within a British context; and class developments in English society. This accounts for how the *Amazon Archers of England* came to exist from 1780-1845.

Keywords: nationalism, gender, national identity, archery, longbow, warbow, women's history, feminism, England, Britain, Robin Hood, Maid Marian, nineteenth century.

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“The bow was the singular gift of God to the English nation.”
The English Bowman (1791)

“MARIAN: These are the good old days (folks may abuse 'em),
When girls have muscles, and know how to use 'em!”
Little Red Robin (1900)

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1789, the *Hainault Foresters* archery club was founded in England, northeast of London, alongside many more English longbow archery societies during the 1780s. A society for the local aristocracy, the club published a booklet; *Rules and Regulations of the Hainault Foresters*, stating that “the arms of this Society” shall be “supported by the dexter by an old English Archer”.¹ Thus, the society explicitly stated that its purpose was historical military archery, referring to the famous English medieval battlefield longbowman – the “old English archer”.

So far, the *Hainault Foresters*, seem nothing out of the ordinary for today’s scholars of modern nationalism. Nationalism often uses the masculinity of historical warriors, in order to produce manliness as a part of “our” national identity. But the *Hainault Foresters* also included women in their activities. Their leadership included a “Lady President” and the independence of the society’s women was guaranteed:

That the Ladies do subscribe, annually, the sum of One Guinea. The idea of this Law is to secure to themselves the independent management and election of their own Members, subject to the general rules of the Society.²

As a matter of fact, unlike most other European historical manifestations of battlefield nationalism, the inclusion of women became common in the impressive development of English archery 1780-1845, during which the *English longbow* – also known as the *English warbow* – became instrumental, as an object, in the construction of a specifically English nationalism, within a British context.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine a historical process from two theoretical perspectives; *nationalism* and *gender*, arguing that the development cannot be comprehended

1. *Rules and Regulations of the Hainault Foresters* (1789), p. V.

2. *Rules and Regulations of the Hainault Foresters* (1789), p. 11.

without an understanding of both these dual fields. In the historical process studied, they are intertwined and closely related to each other. Therefore, both the concepts of nationalism and gender will be extensively discussed and examined, throughout this thesis.

Already in the 1780s there was an English longbow archery society solely for women, which took its name from a mythical and ancient tribe of female archer-warriors; the Amazons. Thus, the title: *The Amazon Archers of England: Longbows, gender and English nationalism 1780–1845*.



*Archer by the Fairlop Oak, Hainault Forest.
Engraving by G. Trent (1800).*

2. APPROACH

2.1. Theoretical framework and key concepts

The purpose of part 2.1. is to explain how the key concepts of *nationalism* and *gender* will be used in this thesis. As these concepts are broadly discussed in scholarly studies, it is important to define how they are used in this specific study. Firstly, the concept of *nationalism* is discussed; secondly, the concept of *gender* is discussed, focusing on the special relation between gender and war; thirdly, the gender-historic concept of *separate sphere ideology* is discussed, concerning the ideological idea of separating men and women, during the nineteenth century.

2.1.1. Nationalism

This study will use the concepts *nation*, *nationalism* and *national identity* as theoretical entities describing specific power-relations between states (both *empires* and *nation states*), societies and individuals, over time and space. The scholarly production regarding modern nationalism is enormous and therefore hard to condense. Still, and generally, today's nationalism is a part of modernity – manifested during the French revolution of 1789 – and remains the main ideology of the modern nation state.

Nationalism and the politics of identity

Modern nationalism is based on the construction of a collective national identity, which makes the nation state different from early-modern forms of state construction such as territorial states and empires. Within an empire or a territorial state (or indeed within a medieval *Personenverbandsstaat*), the state's relationship to the citizen can be described as a socio-political contract, lacking the primacy (although not the existence) of identity discourse. For example; an empire is constructed upon notions of difference. Empire-theorists Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper use the concept "politics of difference"³ and defines empires as "large political units, expansionist or with a memory of power extended over space, polities that maintain distinction and hierarchy as they incorporate new people".⁴ Nationalism, on the other hand, uses collective emotional senses of identity as the prime method of constructing and legitimising itself.

3. Jane Burbank, Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World history: power and the politics of difference* (Princeton, 2010).

4. Burbank-Cooper, p. 8.

Thus, in the words of prominent sociologist Benedict Anderson, creating the nation as “an imagined political community”:⁵

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.⁶

Before modern nationalism, the idea that – for example – a country’s aristocrats and peasants would share a common identity would seem repulsive for the aristocracy and unthinkable for the peasants. The individual member of a society had a social contract with a state (or a lord), not a membership of a nation. But during modernity, after the French revolution, in the words of Anderson, the concept of nationality gained human universality, as “in the modern world everyone can, should, will ‘have’ a nationality”.⁷

The practical problem of nationalism – not least regarding scientific studies – lies with the collective decision-making regarding nation membership, as the boundaries of the nation itself (inclusions and exclusions) seem part of an on-going process, evading clear-cut definitions.⁸ Scholars generally note that criteria such as *citizenship, language, religion, history, territory, culture* and even *biology* or *race* can be considered, approved, disputed or rejected by *nationalists* continually. Historian and political theorist Miroslav Hroch writes:

In every attempt to define the nation there lies concealed a contradiction between the demand for an exhaustive definition on the one hand, and on the other the relatively rapid development of the “distinguishing features” and their union to form the nation. [...] The nation is differentiated from class above all by the fact that membership in it is not determined by links arising from a single kind of relation.⁹

Thus, the boundaries of the nation remain elusive. Nationalism’s “we” – being the nation – is an ongoing creation of complex internal and/or external boundaries. Producing these frontiers is impossible without a process of continually defining the relationship towards “the others” or “them”. In this way, nations do not invent nationalism. Instead, nationalism continuously invents – and re-invents – nations.¹⁰

The history of the nation

Since the birth of modern nationalism, the use of *history* has been an instrumental part of nationalisms power arsenal, when producing national identity. The idea of a *nation’s common past* proved highly efficient, not the least during the nineteenth century, in terms of manufacturing national identity. When available, nationalisms mobilised state power production facilities such as universities, schools, archives, museums, popular culture and

5. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities* (1983).

6. Anderson, p. 6.

7. Anderson, p. 5.

8. Hobsbawm quotes Ernest Renan (1882): “Why is Holland a nation while Hanover and the grand-duchy of Parma is not?” Ernest Renan, *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?* (France, 1882). Quoted in Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 24.

9. Miroslav Hroch, *Social preconditions of national revival in Europe : a comparative analysis of the social composition of patriotic groups among the smaller European Nations* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 3f.

10. As was stated in 1867 in newly born Italy; “We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians.” Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 44. The quote is generally ascribed to the piedmontese politician Massimo d’Azeglio. However, the notion of nationalism inventing the nation is not agreed upon. For example Hroch writes that he considers “the origin of the modern nation as the fundamental reality and nationalism as a phenomenon derived from the existence of that nation” (Hroch, p. 3).

mass media in fostering a nationalistic interpretation of history in society.¹¹ The past itself was connected to the nation via linguistic discourses (concepts of history being “English history”, “Swedish history”, etc.). Furthermore, national history was linked to collective national historical traditions understood as common national historical heritage. Historian Eric Hobsbawm writes about “inventing traditions”:

What benefit can historians derive from the study of the invention of tradition? First and foremost, it may be suggested that they are important symptoms and therefore indicators of problems which might not otherwise be recognized, and developments which are otherwise difficult to identify and to date. They are evidence. [...] Second, it throws a considerable light on the human relation to the past, and therefore on the historian’s own subject and craft. For all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion.¹²

The national hero

In these processes of conceiving national traditions, there regularly emerge the instrumental figures of the nation’s historical *heroes*.¹³ The important role of these heroes, in nationalisms, is representing, communicating and reproducing certain qualities and values into the present or future nation. Historian Ulf Zander describes the political significance of the creation of national heroes:

The need of security and community is amplified, if you equal the heroes of the past and those who worships them. The point being that the timeless and sought-after qualities of the heroes will be transferred into present and future generations.¹⁴

The national historical hero can be a real person or fictional. It matters very little. The national hero can also be an individual or a representative of a collective, such as “the proud warriors”, “the dutiful workers” or “the virtuous women” of the nation’s past.

Nationalism and “state-bearing” peoples

All nationalisms does not necessarily equate with an aspiration for one’s own nation state, as the nation may already feel security in existing state systems, such as within empires. Sociologist Krishan Kumar writes that “nation and empire have not always been so opposed. Or rather, national identity and empire have not always stood on opposite sides.”¹⁵ Empires, though in principle opposing claims of nationality, may be founders of a certain kind of national identity in which the dominant groups possess a unique sense of themselves and their destiny. Such groups, known as the “state-bearing” peoples (*Staatsvolker*), will sometimes be careful not to stress their “superior” ethnic identity; rather they will stress the political, cultural or religious mission to which they have been called, according to Kumar.

11. Peter Aronsson, *Historiebruk: Att använda det förflutna* (Lund, 2004), p. 43.

12. Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge 2008), p. 12.

13. In this study the national hero studied is primarily the English archer-hero Robin Hood and his female companion Maid Marian. It is still uncertain whether the figure of Robin Hood is fictional or has a historical origin, in a real-life person.

14. Ulf Zander, *Fornstora dagar, moderna tider: Bruk av och debatter om svensk historia från sekelskifte till sekelskifte* (Lund 2001), p. 28.

15. Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 33.

2.1.2. Gender and war

Gender studies examines the interdependence and relational nature of masculine and feminine identarian categories,¹⁶ or in the words of Joan Wallach Scott, gender is “the social organization of sexual difference”.¹⁷ Historian Anders Ahlbäck writes:

Gender can be defined as an ideological process that organizes human beings into different gender groups and produces knowledge about the perceived differences and relationships between these groups.¹⁸

Regarding the history of warfare, scholarly work normally does not discuss gender.¹⁹ War is not only a masculine (gender) social institution, but even generally male (sex). Gender researcher Joshua S. Goldstein writes that “the areas where gender roles tend to be most constant across societies – political leadership, hunting, and certain coming-of-age rituals – are those most closely connected with war”.²⁰ War is both symbolically and practically linked to the norms of masculinity.²¹ At the same time, most wars throughout history have included female participation. Traditionally, scholars have interpreted women primarily as victims of war. The academic study of war “often frames women in some limited role (like helpless civilian) or discusses womanhood as a logistical problem”, according to political scientist Laura Sjoberg.²² Gender researcher Carol Cohn writes that “women are sometimes present, but remain peripheral to the war itself. They raise sons they willingly sacrifice for their country, support their men, and mourn the dead”.²³ However, the gendered reality of war is far more complex than this traditional story suggests, continues Cohn. The overall theory of “violent men and peaceful women” can be questioned from many perspectives. Historian Linda Grant De Pauw writes:

Women have always and everywhere been inextricably involved in war, but hidden from history. During wars, women are ubiquitous and highly visible; when wars are over and the war songs are sung, women disappear.²⁴

Historically, women who have participated in combat usually did so disguised as men (cross-dressing).²⁵ The form of female participation found least often is the isolated individual female soldier who, without gender disguise, fights among her male comrades. Although numbering few and far between, this situation has arisen throughout history. These female warriors were regularly perceived – or wanted to be perceived – as masculine, as masculinity “can be attached to persons perceived as ‘masculine’ women as well when certain traits in a woman’s physique and/or behaviour are understood as expressions of a larger pattern of her being ‘like a man’”, according to Ahlbäck.²⁶ Goldstein concludes that “the gender-war connection is very complex and that nobody can claim to understand it well or fit it into a simplistic formula”.²⁷

16. Sue Morgan (red.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 4.

17. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the politics of history* (New York, 1999), p. 2.

18. Anders Ahlbäck, *Manhood and the making of the military: Conscription, Military Service and Masculinity in Finland, 1917-1939* (Farnham, 2014), p. 20.

19. Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, War & Conflict* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 3.

20. Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 7.

21. Carol Cohn (ed.), *Women and Wars* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 22.

22. Sjoberg, p. 3.

23. Cohn, p. 1.

24. Goldstein, p. 59.

25. Goldstein, p. 106.

26. Anders Ahlbäck, *Manhood and the making of the military: Conscription, Military Service and Masculinity in Finland, 1917-1939* (Farnham, 2014), p. 20.

27. Goldstein, p. 413.

Cohn remarks that the differences in women's experiences of war are due to both diversity among women and diversity among wars, as "women of course, are not a monolithic group".²⁸ Gender is a social structure that shapes individual identities, how people perceive themselves and how they are seen by others. Cohn writes:

Gender insists that, however much is biologically given, societies construct a much greater set of differences than biology dictates, and that those socially constructed differences, in turn, legitimate a social order based on the domination of men over women, and some men over other men.²⁹

In war, the normative masculine male is historically seen as the standard persona. But, as has been the case throughout the history of warfare, non-males are able to produce agency. Cohn concludes that "war's masculinity can be seen not as a 'natural fact,' inherent in war, but rather as a carefully produced and policed social construction".³⁰

2.1.3. Gender, women and "separate spheres"

A much-discussed concept in gender studies is the notion of *separate-spheres* that divided women and men. In particular, when concerning the coming of modernity, industrialisation and modern capitalism during "the long nineteenth century"³¹ 1789-1914. Historians Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall writes:

Something significant changed at the end of the eighteenth century; there was a historic break and a realigned gender order emerged, more characteristic of modern times, associated with the development of modern capitalism and urbanisation. [...] Between 1780-1850 enterprise, family, home, masculinity and femininity were re-drawn, negotiated, reformed and reinstalled.³²

The concept of separate spheres ("separate-spheres ideology") has been a topic of scholarly debate, as it was "one of the most dominant organising tropes of European and American women's history for thirty years or more", according to historian Sue Morgan.³³ As gender scholars agrees, there was a manifested existence of a nineteenth century European discourse regarding proper environments for the sexes.³⁴ According to this discourse, women were expected to exist within a *private sphere* (the home, the family, motherhood), while the *public sphere* (wage labour, business, politics, economics, sports, etc.) was be reserved for men. During modernity in the nineteenth century, women were expected to "retreat to a domesticated life in their suburban villas and gardens" where they could enjoy shelter "in an unstable and dangerous world", writes Davidoff-Hall.³⁵ Males, on the other hand, were expected to prosper in the public sphere, where "rich new opportunities were opening up for men in the world of commerce, manufacturing and the professions", says Davidoff-Hall,³⁶ while "'public' women were seen as anomalous".³⁷

28. Cohn, p. 2.

29. Cohn, p. 7.

30. Cohn, p. 23.

31. The term "the long nineteenth century" was coined by historian Eric Hobsbawm.

32. Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (Oxon, 2019), p. xvi.

33. Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 7.

34. Yvonne Hirdman, *Genus: om det stabila föränderliga former* (Malmö, 2001).

35. Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (Oxon, 2019), p. xxxviii.

36. Davidoff-Hall, p. xxix.

37. Davidoff-Hall, p. xi.

Critique of separate-spheres theory

Critics agree that there was *separate-spheres* discourse during the nineteenth century but argue that the ideal of separating gender roles was seldom reached. In reality, women found ways of negotiating themselves into the public sphere. This phenomenon has almost always been the case during the long history of patriarchal human societies, according to historian Estelle B. Freedman, who writes that “even when men held formal power, however, women across cultures found myriad ways to transcend or resist patriarchal rule”.³⁸ Industrial modernity meant that the traditional roles of men and women were being separated and re-assembled, in ever changing ways. In reality, men and women would not conform themselves to the wishful thinking of the patriarchy. The ideas of what was deemed to be “natural” and “unnatural” for a woman were constantly changing and undergoing re-negotiation. The feminist scholarly debate during the 1990s saw critique against the “the pervasiveness of the separate spheres ideology”, which was “assumed rather than interrogated”, according to historian Amanda Vickery, who wrote in 1993:

In the attempt to map the breadth and boundaries of female experience, new categories and concepts must be generated, and this must be done with more sensitivity to women’s own manuscripts.³⁹

It is easy to find traces of separate-spheres society in the rhetoric of ideological arguments, regarding the “woman question”, during the nineteenth century. Critics of separate-spheres theory argue that “the foundation of the separate spheres framework was established through a particular reading of complaint literature”⁴⁰ and that the 1800s actually saw an expansion in women’s public role, thus limiting the separation between men and women (Vickery).⁴¹ As such, in the studies of nineteenth century politics concerning separate spheres, there is really no contradiction between patriarchal thought wishing for separate spheres, and non-patriarchal practice not succumbing to such wishes.

2.2. Time period, source material and method

2.2.1. The time period 1780-1845

In this study, the time period 1780-1845 is chosen to limit the amount of source material in a manageable way. The 1780s saw the birth of a new kind of recreational archery societies in England (as opposed to medieval and renaissance English archery societies linked to the concrete use of archery in war and military practice). At the same time, the 1780s marks the birth of modern nationalism, and also a renewed debate regarding women and men in society. The end of the time period 1845 is chosen, as – by that time – archery (including the archery-related activities among the many Robin Hood-societies) began to peak, as a leisure activity in England, and had also spread outside England, into other parts of the Britain. In the 1870s tennis and croquet were beginning to compete with archery as popular leisure activities in England.

2.2.2. Source material

As the English longbow enjoyed its renaissance from 1780-1845, the abundance of interest resulted in the production of a steady flow of source material during the time period,

38. Estelle B. Freedman, *The Essential Feminist Reader* (New York, 2007), p. xi.

39. Amanda Vickery, “Golden age to separate spheres?” (1993), Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 86.

40. Amanda Vickery, “Golden age to separate spheres?” (1993), Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 76.

41. Amanda Vickery, “Golden age to separate spheres?” (1993), Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 74.

which is to be used in this study. The many archery societies produced leaflets, rulebooks and other printed materials, starting in the 1780s and continuing in the nineteenth century. Publishers produced literature related to both English longbow archery and the English legend of master-archer Robin Hood. Poems were written and songs were sung. The point here is that archery and the English longbow integrated into a broad spectrum of English society. As such, these main types of sources will be used in this study:

1. Material produced by archery societies during the time period, primarily rulebooks and regulations.
2. Non-fictional archery books. These books typically try to educate the public regarding the history and use of the bow-and-arrow, as well as the benefits of archery in society.
3. Fiction (novels) about the English national hero and master-archer Robin Hood, being a public mean of teaching English society (boys and girls, men and women) proper Englishness, via the use of the example of historical national heroes, such as Maid Marian (female hero) and Robin Hood (male hero).

The selection of source material raises, as is always the case in historical studies, the question of representation. To what degree were texts about archery representative, in relation to contemporary society? As archery developed from 1780-1845, as a public activity, I would argue that the archery texts identified for this study offer a high level of societal representation. Archery enjoyed public attention and therefore texts about archery had to be written in compliance with common thought, in order to be able to communicate with general society. Even more so, the texts were commercial products within a new kind of mass popular culture, typical of the capitalism of modernity. Since the source material generally engages with the political fields of nationalism and gender, the sources are also essential to the study, from a theoretical-representative perspective.

Four contemporary books, dating 1791-1845, will be studied to a larger extent and merit special attention, as source material:

- George Agar Hansard, *The Book of Archery* (London, 1840)
- Ely Hargrove, Alfred E Hargrove, *Anecdotes Of Archery: From The Earliest Ages To The Year 1791* (York, 1792 and 1845)
- Thomas Roberts, *The English Bowman. Or, Tracts on Archery* (Yorkshire, 1791, re-published 1801)
- Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (London, 1819)

Most important of these is *Anecdotes Of Archery*, by Ely Hargrove and his son Alfred Ely Hargrove.⁴² This book was first published by the father in 1792, then extended and re-published by the son in 1845. The edition from 1845 is divided into two parts, the first containing a history of archery, the second consisting of “an account of the principal existing societies of archers” in Britain, including, to a large extent, their rules and regulations. In other words, Hargrove publishes an extensive collection of texts, from numerous societies. The many regulations that Hargrove published seem to be unedited and provide this study with wide-ranging source material.

Lord George Agar Hansard was a member of parliament (House of Lords, 1797-1833, Baron Dover, 1831-1833), whose book about archery reached a large readership in the nineteenth century, and remains wide-spread today, via paperback and print-on-demand-editions, along with his book *Trout and Salmon Fishing in Wales* (1834). Hansard can therefore be seen as typical of the expanding British publishing market of the early nineteenth century.

42. Publisher Alfred Ely Hargrove was also captain-commandant of the Yorkshire Artillery Volunteers.

enth century, reaching a mass readership among primarily the British bourgeoisie. In *The Book of Archery*, Hansard – like Hargrove – published texts from contemporary archery societies and writes to a large extent about “female archery”.

Thomas Roberts’ book *The English Bowman* is the earliest among the principal books studied in this thesis, the first edition having been published already in 1791 (re-published in 1801, with the title extended with “To Which Is Added the Second Part of the Bowman’s Glory”). The book was a part of the sudden “archer mania” of the late eighteenth century, according to historian Sharon Harrow.⁴³ Roberts writes specifically about female archery (“In the Hands of the Fair Sex”), as well as providing an extensive history of English long-bow archery.

Sir Walter Scott’s bestselling novel *Ivanhoe* will be examined, in terms of its remarkable influence on contemporary conceptions regarding the English national hero and master-archer Robin Hood.

Further contemporary sources have been re-published by the *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries* (in short referred to as the *SAA-journal*), for the years 1958-2002. Volumes 1-45 of the journal are available as PDF-files on a CD, via the Society of Archer-Antiquaries, Bath, England.⁴⁴

The source material seems to offer good representability and quality, being used in a historical study regarding national identity and gender. There are, however, remarks to be made. Above all, most source material was written by men, even when with the subject matter was female archery. As a result, this paper’s source material tells the story about how female archery was perceived by contemporary males, representing the patriarchy.

2.2.3. Method

In the science of history, method is where theory and sources meet; where the source material is filtered through the theories applied to it. In this study, theories of nationalism and gender are applied to source material relating to archery in England from 1780-1845. The paper will analyse the discourse in written material, via the theoretical approach. The methodological concept of *discourse analysis* is often described via studies made by social psychologists Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter:⁴⁵

Discourse analytic studies encompass a broad range of theories, topics and analytic approaches for explaining language in use. They ask, “What is social life like?” and “What are the implications for individuals and/or wider society?”⁴⁶

The theoretical framework of this study, being the dual fields of nationalism and gender, specifies what this study is looking for in the source material: *the historical expressions of nationalistic and gender discourses*, primarily searching for answers to the question “how?”. How were notions of nationalism and gender relations constructed, reproduced and communicated in the source material? Studying historical source material using *how*-questions, rather than *why*-questions, is discussed by Joan Wallach Scott:

43. Sharon Harrow, *British Sporting Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London, 2015), p. 69.

44. Website www.societyofarcher-antiquaries.org (accessed 30th April, 2019).

45. Margaret Wetherell, Jonathan Potter, *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* (London, 1987).

46. Wetherell-Potter quoted by Sara E Shaw and Julia Bailey in “Discourse analysis”, *Oxford Journals* (2009), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2743732/#bib1> (accessed 4 march 2019).

Perhaps the most dramatic shift in my own thinking came through asking questions about how hierarchies such as those of gender are constructed or legitimized. The emphasis on “how” suggests a study of processes, not of origins, of multiple rather than single causes.⁴⁷

In this study’s methodology, the use of *how*-questions when looking for discourses regarding nationalism and gender, enables the historian to discover agency in certain fields of historical *politics*; politics being, in the words of Joan Wallach Scott, “the process by which plays of power and knowledge constitute identity and experience”.⁴⁸

2.3. Research space, questions and disposition

2.3.1. Research space

There is little research to date which has studied the connection between English nationalism and the rebirth of longbow archery from 1780-1845. There is even less research regarding the gender perspective of the renaissance of the English longbow, during modernity. This study aims to decrease this research gap.

I would argue that knowledge about organised historical re-enactment of battlefield history, in the perspective of nationalism, is of interest not only to historians but also to contemporary society. Furthermore, as this type of activity was quite common in nineteenth century Europe, English longbow archery stands out as being a very rare example of such activities which include both men and women. The history of *The Amazon Archers of England 1780-1845* should therefore be of interest to several fields of scholarly study.

2.3.2. Questions

The following questions will be asked in this study:

- How were notions of Englishness (English national identity), related to the renaissance of English longbow-archery in England, starting in the 1780s and continuing into the Victorian era?
- How was the inclusion – or exclusion – of women as English longbow archers motivated, legitimised and practically undertaken?
- How was the persona of “the lady archer” communicated in relation to patriarchal doctrines regarding the “private sphere woman”, in which females should be contained and restrained in a domestic space, as housewives, mothers and daughters.
- Can other notions of difference – for example class – be found or seen in the source material, regarding archery?

2.3.3. Disposition.

- In the introductory chapters, a theoretical view of the concepts of nationalism and gender is discussed, as well as methodological problems. Research questions are specified, and previous relevant research is presented.
- The study chapters begin with a table, containing archery societies, the year of their foundation and whether they included women as members. The following study chapters are organised chronologically, beginning with an aristocratic phase of the renaissance of English longbow archery (1780-1793), followed by a middle-class phase (1819-1845).

47. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the politics of history* (New York, 1999), p. 2.

48. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the politics of history* (New York, 1999), p. 5.

- The last chapter begins with a summary of the study's results, followed by concluding remarks.

2.4. Previous research

The purpose of this part of the thesis is to show how the key concepts of *nationalism* and *gender* have been interpreted in previous research, regarding the specific areas of the study in terms of *English nationalism*, *gender politics in Britain* and the relationship between *English nationalism and the English longbow*. Firstly, the notion of English nationalism, in relation to British identity, is discussed; secondly separate-sphere ideology in Britain is discussed; thirdly, the relationship of the English longbow with English nationalism is discussed.

2.4.1. English nationalism and English national identity

The importance – and even existence – of English (i.e. non-British) nationalism during the nineteenth century is a question of academic discussion. Firstly, historian Linda Colley must be mentioned, along with her highly influential study *Britons: Forging the nation 1707-1837*, published in 1992. Colley advocates the overall importance of Britishness on the British Isles – including England – during the time period when modern nationalism was developing in Europe. According to Colley, British identity was forged to override and reconcile mainly English-Scottish national feelings, during the eighteenth century.

This British construction used as its hostile “other” Catholicism and the French, during the long wars between Britain and France, until the defeat of Napoleon in 1815.⁴⁹ The importance of British identity overshadowed the importance of English national identity, according to Colley. In an email, regarding studies of English national identity, Colley commented to me that “I think it is not profitable to look for too clean a division between English/British identities, because many people had multiple identities as you know”.⁵⁰ Colley writes in *Britons*:

Patriotism in the sense of identification with Britain served, as we shall see, as a bandwagon on which different groups and interests leaped so as to steer it in a direction that would benefit them. Being a patriot was a way of claiming the right to participate in British political life, and ultimately a means of demanding a much broader access to citizenship. Looking critically and comprehensively at patriotism in this period is also vital if we are to understand the evolution of what must be called British nationalism.⁵¹

Colley makes a strong argument, which accounts for her importance in the continuing scholarly debate regarding the relationship between British and English identity. Colley does not deny the existence of English nationalism within the creation of Britishness. Instead she argues that Englishness was overshadowed by Britishness. Until 1815, protestant Britain was continually at war with Catholic France in “what has been mis-called Britain’s second hundred years war with France”, referring to the rivalry between the two states. Colley writes:

49. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the nation 1707-1837* (Yale, 2012, first print 1992).

50. Email from Linda Colley to the author, 30 April 2018.

51. Colley, p. 5.

It [Britain] was an invention forged above all by war. Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it. They defined themselves as Protestants struggling for survival against the world's foremost Catholic power.⁵²

The sources used by Colley exist within the fields of British wars and British Protestantism within the context of the establishment of a transnational, globalised and maritime British Empire. In particular, the Scots became important in the establishment of the global British Empire, which Colley even describes as “a Scottish empire” (although she adds a question mark to the end of this description).⁵³ Ambitious Englishmen did not generally need to venture to – for example – colonial India in order to get their career underway, according to Colley: “Well-born and/or well-educated Englishmen usually had the pick of jobs back home.” It was another story for Scots and other non-English Britons:

By contrast, even the rawest frontiers of the empire attracted men of first-rate ability from the Celtic fringe because they were usually poorer than their English counterparts with fewer prospects on the British mainland. Having more to win and less to lose, Celtic adventurers were more willing to venture themselves in primitive conditions. [...] And the rewards could be considerable. As would be true until the twentieth century, Britain's empire, especially its Indian empire, gave the talented, the lucky and the high-ranking a chance to experience luxury as well as squalor, and the opportunity to build up a substantial personal fortune. [...] Investing in empire supplied Scots with a means of redressing some of the imbalance in wealth, power and enterprise between them and the English.⁵⁴

Thus, Scots became the administrators and bureaucrats of the global British Empire, due to some sort of discrimination “back home” on the British Isles. This is highly interesting, as it suggests that English national identity and an English sense of superiority was actively at work, at the very heart of the construction of the Britishness within the global British Empire.

Research about Englishness

After the 1990s, during the first decade of the 21st century, research on nationalism found its way into the study of Englishness in new ways. This process was inspired by the studies of non-English British nationalisms (Scottish, Welsh and Irish nationalisms). In some ways, this later research formulated itself as a critique of Linda Colley's study *Britons*, which is still a standard work in the field. However, it cannot be said that the newer research dismisses Colley. The eighteenth and nineteenth century construction of British identity – and of the Britons – was real, and is well described by Colley. But there are more sources, more historical experiences and more versions of identities at work, hailing from the golden age of the British Empire. In 2003, political theorist Bernard Crick pointed out that “while the Scottish, Welsh and Irish have had, for a long time, a formidable literature of nationalism, the English strangely have not”.⁵⁵

As examples of research upon English nationalism during the nineteenth century, there can be mentioned the following three studies: Stephanie Barczewski's study from 2000,

52. Colley, p. 6.

53. Colley, p. 118. See also Tom Devine, *Scotland's Empire: The Origins of the Global Diaspora* (London, 2011).

54. Colley, p. 130.

55. Bernard Crick, “The friendly face of nationalism”, *The Guardian* (April 23, 2003), <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/apr/26/highereducation.politicalbooks> (accessed Dec 10, 2018).

researching the English legend of national hero Robin Hood,⁵⁶ Krishan Kumar's *The Making of English National Identity*⁵⁷ from 2003, and the anthology *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*,⁵⁸ edited by Robert Colls and Philip Dodd, from 1986.

One important point made by scholars of English nationalism, is that in the debate about English nationalism, the word "nationalism" is often shrugged upon. Kumar writes that "the idea that nationalism is something pathological, something at the same time deeply foreign, is part of the English understanding of it. Hence the unwillingness to accept that there is or can be such a thing as English nationalism."⁵⁹

In an English context, the word *patriotism* is also preferred by scholars. Kumar remarks that "other nations have nationalism; the English, it has been conventional to say, have patriotism".⁶⁰ The difference between nationalism and patriotism remains, however, unclear and can itself be interpreted as a sign of identarian contextual unease, in which English nationalism continues to exist.⁶¹ Historian John Armstrong is quoted by Kumar, stating that "the English-speaking world has tended to treat nationalism as something disturbing, alien, irrational, as contrasted to the healthy 'patriotism' of the English".⁶² However, there can be little serious scientific doubt that English nationalism actually existed during the nineteenth century. The interesting question regards its importance. What role did English nationalism actually play on the British Isles, compared to – and co-existing with – British identity?

Historian Stephanie Barczewski writes, about the turn of the century 1800 (1789-1815), that the "relatively flexible definition" of Britishness within England "had largely been supplanted by a far more exclusive 'Englishness', which demanded that its constituents adhere to certain ostensibly objective standards."⁶³ Barczewski concludes:

A Briton could be made, but one had to be born English.⁶⁴

This is an important thought regarding the difference between English versus British identity. Britishness, as an imperial construction on the British Isles, may have been an example of state politics using a specific socio-political agreement, as its primacy. Producing British citizens meant establishing a social contract between the British state and people, in a British version of "politics of difference", which is the term used by empire-theorists Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper.⁶⁵ Linguist Philip Dodd theorises upon the creation of "the dominant version" of Englishness, in the 1800s:

56. Barczewski compares the English hero Robin Hood with the British hero King Arthur. Stephanie Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford, 2000).

57. Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge, 2003).

58. Robert Colls, Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London, 2014, first print 1986).

59. Kumar, p. 20.

60. Kumar, p. 18.

61. Merriam-Webster states that "although treated as synonyms, there is a distinction. But it's more complicated than 'patriotism' good; 'nationalism' bad". The main difference being that "*patriotism* is more often used in a general sense, often in conjunction with such words as *bravery*, *valor*, *duty*, and *devotion*. *Nationalism*, however, tends to find itself modified by specific movements, most frequently of a political bent." <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/patriotism-vs-nationalism> (accessed 14 february, 2019).

62. Kumar, p. 276.

63. Stephanie Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford, 2000), p. 6.

64. Barczewski, p. 6.

65. Jane Burbank, Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World history: power and the politics of difference* (Princeton, 2010), p. 8.

Such representation worked by a process of inclusion, exclusion and transformation of elements of the cultural life of these islands [Britain]. What constituted knowledge, the control and dissemination of that knowledge to different groups, the legitimate spheres and identity of those groups, their repertoire of appropriate actions, idioms and convictions – all were the subject, *within the framework of the national culture* and its needs, of scrutiny, license and control.⁶⁶

One difference between Colley (the notion of hegemonic dominance of British identity) and scholars of English nationalism (the notion of English nationalism playing an important and neglected role) is the choice of source material. Colley studies sources within a British context – of British wars, British Protestantism and the glory of the globalised British Empire. Thus, the identarian element of Britishness becomes evident. Other researchers focus upon English contexts – such as race biology, notions of a British non-English “Celtic fringe” or the English cult of national hero Robin Hood. Thus, in these studies, the identarian element of Englishness becomes explicit. And as Colley remarked, a person can have several identities at the same time. A British Englishman could experience both Britishness and Englishness during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But more can be said, regarding the enigmatic kind of nationalism, that Englishness represents.

English nineteenth century nationalism may be an example of *banal nationalism*, that is, in the words of Michael Billig (1995), “everyday, less visible forms” of nationalism, “through routine symbols and habits of language”, compared to “the orthodox conceptions” of explicit flag-waving nationalism.⁶⁷ Kumar points out that Britain was a product of England’s status as an imperial nation that created “a land Empire, Great Britain or the United Kingdom”.⁶⁸ As such, when the British Empire was firmly established at the end of the eighteenth century, the English political elites were aware of the need not to declare the Empire as an English achievement, “but to see it as a joint effort of all the British nations”, according to Kumar:

To do so [explicitly declaring English supremacy] would be in fact to threaten the very basis of their commanding position. When you are securely in charge it is best not to remind others of this fact too often or too insistently.⁶⁹

This is an interpretation of historical silence (*argumentum ex silentio*), but it has implications. For example, the English political dominance of Britain never attempted a thoroughgoing Anglicisation.⁷⁰ The English power-elite could, for example, have tried to transform Scotland into an extension of northern England, but didn’t. At the same time, the *real-politik* of English empire building within the British Isles was confronted with the experience of an existing English national identity, according to Kumar. This identity gained much of its definition and contours from its clear contrast to an existing English discourse of “the Celtic fringe” or “the Celtic other”; the *barbarous Scots* (especially the Highlanders), the *wild Irish* and the *lazy Welsh*. During the nineteenth century, the division between English and non-English Britons even took on a dimension based upon race biology, whereby Englishness was defined by the concept of “Anglo-Saxon blood”. Kumar writes:

66. Robert Colls, Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London, 2014, first print 1986), p. 26.

67. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London, 1995).

68. Kumar, p. 35. Colley comments upon this, but she dismisses the idea of Britain having “an English ‘core’ imposing its cultural and political hegemony on a helpless and defrauded Celtic periphery”. Colley, p. 6.

69. Kumar, p. 37.

70. To be compared – for example – to the tsarist Russian empire of the nineteenth century, which engaged in a political project of *russification* of imperial peripheries, such as the grand-duchy of Finland. The failure of this project proved counter-productive, instead encouraging Finnish nationalism.

Only the English, and perhaps the Scottish Lowlanders, were the heirs to the freedom and manly qualities bequeathed by the Anglo-Saxons; Welsh, Irish and many Scots were excluded from that fortunate legacy. [...] Celts, whether in Wales, Ireland or the Scottish Highlands, were seen as fanatical and unruly, idle dreamers who were responsible for the disorder and backwardness of their societies. Thus considered, the future of England might seem to lie in a returning itself, to its true Saxon nature.⁷¹

Another non-English Other was named “the Norman yoke”. According to the construction of an Anglo-Saxon identity, before its destruction by the 1066 Norman conquest, England had enjoyed a Saxon golden age. Nineteenth century Anglo-Saxonism acted primarily as the vehicle that separated English non-Norman people as a whole – as a *Volk*. “An elaborate racial hierarchy was erected which placed the Anglo-Saxon peoples at the top”, according to Barczewski.⁷² The pure-blooded Saxons of old had been *Germanic*. Barczewski writes:

The most important text in the early development of Saxon racialism in Britain was Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1820),⁷³ which focuses upon a still-pervasive conflict between the Saxons and the Normans a century after William the Conqueror had landed on English shores. In the first chapter Scott writes that “four generations had not sufficed to blend the hostile blood of the Normans and Anglo-Saxons, or to unite, by common language and mutual interests, two hostile races”.⁷⁴

Thus, non-English Britons could be called “Norman” or “Celtic” – it mattered very little. This allegedly brutish, treacherous, lawless and immoral Other was a stereotype which provided the English with a reassuring self-image of Anglo-Saxon superiority (confronting Normans, the Celtic fringe or the Celtic periphery). Furthermore, one important gender feature in the construction of Englishness, in contrast with the stereotypes of the Celtic or Norman *other*, was notions of gender. Englishness was equated with “manliness”. According to Dodd, a core construct of English self-identity was masculinity:

“Manliness”, a substantive widely favoured by prelates on speechdays and headmasters on Sundays, embraced antithetical values - success, aggression, and ruthlessness, yet victory within the rules, courtesy in triumph, compassion for the defeated.⁷⁵

The identification of “our” nation as masculine is by no means unique for Englishness. On the contrary, it is commonplace in nationalistic narratives, as is constructing the Other as feminine.⁷⁶ However, Ahlbäck points out that the notions of ideal manhood during modernity – of what is noble and admirable in a man – has “strong connotations to elite or middle-class Victorian ideas”.⁷⁷

2.4.2. Gender politics in nineteenth century Britain

There is a rich scholarly production regarding the British debate over a “woman’s proper place in society”, which increased in intensity during the late eighteenth century and

71. Kumar, p. 207.

72. Stephanie Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford, 2000), p. 124.

73. The novel *Ivanhoe* was actually first published in 1819.

74. Stephanie Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford, 2000), p. 124.

75. Dodd, p. 29.

76. Anders Ahlbäck, *Manhood and the making of the military: Conscription, Military Service and Masculinity in Finland, 1917-1939* (Farnham, 2014), p. 22.

77. Anders Ahlbäck, *Manhood and the making of the military: Conscription, Military Service and Masculinity in Finland, 1917-1939* (Farnham, 2014), p. 20.

peaked during the Victorian era. Research about nineteenth century Britain seem to have a privileged status in women's history and gender history. Its object of study exists within a complex historical environment where the fabric of gender roles was changing rapidly, at the same time as the effects of these changes were subject to attempts at political control. "The early nineteenth century in England was a time of heightened fear about both social and economic chaos", writes Davidoff-Hall.⁷⁸

The temporal term "Victorian"⁷⁹ has served as a synonym for oppressive domesticity and repressive prudery, states Vickery.⁸⁰ According to Colley, the British *Laws Respecting Women* summed up the misogynist dogma already present in 1777, stating that "by marriage the very being or legal existence of a woman is suspended".⁸¹ The husband acquired power over the person of his wife, who was considered to have no legal persona and could not possess neither citizenship nor political rights. Davidoff-Hall writes that "women, like children, were (and to an extent still are) defined by relationships to others [men]", thus existing primarily as being "the Mother, the Wife (the Mistress)" or – as should be added – the daughter.⁸² Colley refers to Jean Jacques Rousseau's work *Emile* (1762), which via sexual politics proved immensely influential in Britain.⁸³ The woman was born to obey; the confines of the home were to be the boundaries of her acceptable existence; women who neglected their home and family for the outside world endangered society and violated their own natures.

Women and boredom

An interesting point made by Colley is that, due to a combination of being subject to misogynistic politics and possessing an elevated status, women of the British aristocracy faced another problem: boredom. Upper-class women had almost nothing to do, according to Colley, who quotes Georgiana, duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806), who complained that she was "fundamentally bored".⁸⁴ She lived "in a continual bustle without having literally anything to do", writes Colley, as servants took care of the everyday duties acceptable for women. What could aristocratic women do to remedy the curse of life-long boredom, in late eighteenth century Britain?

Vickery, on the other hand, is critical of the notion of nineteenth century women, being a "near prisoner in the home" living "a sheltered life drained of economic purpose and public responsibility".⁸⁵ Vickery advocates a different view, stating that women were "sentient, capable beings rather than as passive victims", emphasising "the ways in which women shaped their own lives within a male-dominated culture".⁸⁶ According to Vickery, Victorian society was not unique. All that was needed to break out of the misogynist cage was a public sphere suitable for female agency.

One of the spheres which was found, according to Colley, was patriotism. In 1793, war broke out between Britain and France. Colley writes that this was "a marked expansion in

78. Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (Oxon, 2019), p. xxvii.

79. The temporal term "Victorian" refers to the reign of British Queen Victoria 1837-1901.

80. Amanda Vickery, "Golden age to separate spheres?" (1993), Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 77.

81. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the nation 1707-1837* (Yale, 2012, first print 1992), p. 243.

82. Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (Oxon, 2019), p. xl.

83. Colley, p. 245.

84. Colley, p. 248.

85. Amanda Vickery, "Golden age to separate spheres?" (1993), Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 77.

86. Amanda Vickery, "Golden age to separate spheres?" (1993), Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 78.

the range of British women's public and patriotic activities, as well as changes in how those activities were viewed and legitimised".⁸⁷ Francophobic sentiments opened up a fresh space for female agency, as the Revolutionary wars and the Napoleonic wars proved to be an enormous undertaking for Britain, and other European powers, until France was finally defeated in 1815.

Female patriotism

Read in the context of the theoretical model of "separate spheres", the British female participation in patriotic anti-French wartime activities was a paradox. The French revolution's radicalism was seen as a threat towards the natural sexual spheres of women and men, writes Colley. British discourse insisted that political stability was necessary to maintain the separate spheres. However, in a fight for this, female Britons were becoming more involved in the public sphere than before. "British women were able to discover in patriotic activism in this conflict an outlet for their energies and organisational capacities, and a public role of a kind", writes Colley.⁸⁸ Vickery agrees: "The conservative backlash of the 1790s offered opportunities for greater female participation in a new public life of loyalist parades, petitions and patriotic subscriptions".⁸⁹ Herein lies, for Vickery, an explanation regarding the strong Victorian rhetoric regarding separate-sphere society. The "ideal of the domesticated Madonna was simply an irrelevance" and, in fact, a sign that the patriarchy was under attack, writes Vickery:

The stress on the proper female sphere in Victorian discourse signalled a growing concern that more women were seen to be active outside the home rather than proof that they were so confined.⁹⁰

But despite its martial bravado, the war-time patriotic activism of British women was mostly confined to a traditional domestic sphere. The women were sewing clothes, flags, and banners for the male soldiery. There seems to exist a scholarly consensus that most British women continued to acquiesce in the rightness of separate sexual spheres. For example, female fighters or warriors were deemed unnatural; they were seen as "improper", or so it has been said. This study will challenge that notion.

2.4.3. The English longbow and English nationalism

The medieval *English longbow* – or *warbow* – was around two metres long and made from the yew tree.⁹¹ The English military tactic of using longbows against French forces, during the hundred years war 1337-1453, was effective due to the way in which the bowmen were utilised. The longbows were deployed in mass formations of thousands of specialised archers, who shot 10-15 arrows each minute and reached effective volley ranges of 200- 300 metres. Thus, 7,000 English archers on the battlefield could produce a storm of some 1,000,000 projectiles in ten minutes against an attacking enemy. According to some military-historians, when the sky went black with English longbow arrows, the dominance of the medieval mounted knight ended, and the early-modern infantry revolution began.⁹²

87. Colley, p. 256.

88. Colley, p. 264.

89. Vickery, p. 82.

90. Amanda Vickery, "Golden age to separate spheres?" (1993), Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (Oxon, 2006), p. 83.

91. There is some discussion whether the English longbow was actually Welsh, but the longbow never acquired the same status within Welsh identity as it did within English identity. The yew tree is perfect for longbows. The outer layers of the yew tree consist of the heartwood (able to withstand compression) and the sapwood (elastic by nature). Both tend to return to their original straightness when the bow is released.

92. Historian Martin Neuding Skoog discusses the introduction of a new kind of infantry distance-weapon tactics (longbows, crossbows and later muskets) during late medieval times and the renaissance in his dissertation *I rikets tjänst: Krig, stat och samhälle i Sverige 1450-1550* (Stockholm, 2018).

The importance of the English longbow in the creation of a modern English national identity during the eighteenth and nineteenth century is all but invisible in British historical research. A highly interesting exception is an article from 2004, by historian Martin Johnes, who writes:

At the end of the eighteenth century, archery was revived as a fashionable pastime amongst the English aristocracy thanks to a nostalgic taste for the gothic and medieval. Archery societies were set up across the country, each with its own strict entry criteria, outlandish costumes and extravagant dinners. In a period that saw the making of the modern British upper class, as landowners became more powerful, more unified and more status-conscious, archery societies were havens of exclusivity and a way of reinforcing and reassuring one's own position in society. Furthermore, women could not only compete in the contests but retain and display their 'feminine forms' whilst doing so, and thus the clubs also acted as a forum for introductions, flirtation and romance.⁹³

Johnes highlights gender mechanisms and the social functions of English archery societies, starting in the 1780s. Johnes also mentions the importance of English nationalism, but does not elaborate on the subject, which is natural, given the short space given in the format of an article. As such, Johnes article remains one of few scholarly studies of the importance of English longbow archery, during the time period of this thesis (1780-1845).

There are more mentions of the English longbow's medieval political-identarian importance, that underline the societal significance of this weapon-of-war. Historian Adrian Hasting writes:

The longbow, the main instrument of English victories at Crecy (1346) and Agincourt (1415), itself becomes a tool of nation-building, absolutely vital for both the construction and the achievement of English late medieval nationalism, whipped up particularly by the exertions of the Hundred Years War.⁹⁴

The English army and navy continued to use the longbow throughout the sixteenth century, while other European states replaced bows and crossbows with gun-powder weapons. It wasn't until the seventeenth century that the longbow disappeared from English armed forces. Nevertheless, the 1780s and onwards saw the renaissance of the English longbow as a leisure activity within the English aristocracy. This longbow-aspect of Englishness was contemporary to the birth of modern nationalism. In *The Romance of Archery: A social history of the longbow*,⁹⁵ longbow archery expert Hugh D.H. Soar describes how the late eighteenth century and onwards into the nineteenth century saw the formation of several archery societies with a strong English identity; the members shot English longbows, engaged in the English history of medieval warfare and took a passionate interest in English master-archer Robin Hood. The Robin Hood tradition has been the object of study of the historian Stephanie Barczewski, who writes that Robin Hood and his merry followers were used in constructing a specific English – not British – history:

In the first place, the past they were used to construct was a narrowly English one which left out the other constituent parts of the British Isles. And furthermore, they

93. Martin Johnes, "Archery, Romance and Elite Culture in England and Wales, c.1780–1840", *History* (2004, Volume: 89, Issue: 294), pp. 193-208.

94. Kumar, p. 54.

95. Hugh D.H. Soar, *The Romance of Archery: A social history of the longbow* (Yardley, 2008).

show that even within this attempt to create a relatively limited “Englishness”, there were tensions and conflicts over what precisely that meant.⁹⁶

Robin Hood played a key role in the nineteenth century construction of Englishness as Anglo-Saxon, functioning as a symbol of patriotic English resistance to foreign Norman oppression. This was largely an effect of the successful writings of Scottish author Walter Scott (1771-1832). According to Barczewski “Scott’s influence upon subsequent treatments of the legend of Robin Hood can scarcely be exaggerated”.⁹⁷

During the French revolutionary wars, and later during the Napoleonic wars, the English archery societies decreased in membership. Nonetheless, after 1815, the societies regained their numbers and soon surpassed pre-war levels of participation. Within the context of English longbow archery, the Francophobic discourse seen in pre-1815 shifted to a rhetoric less bloodthirsty, while maintaining its non-threatening and non-British banal English national identity (especially regarding Scotland), which may explain why English longbow-archery became a mass movement. It was English, but had no flag attached to it.⁹⁸ Soar describes how, during the 1820s, the historical manifestation of the English longbow spread downwards in the English class hierarchy, reaching the successful and growing English bourgeoisie, whose fortunes were benefiting from England’s early industrialisation and capitalism. During the Victorian era, the activity of shooting the English longbow in homage to the Robin Hood tradition became more widespread. According to Soar, in 1865, the total archery population of Great Britain exceeded 15,000.⁹⁹

Maid Marian in the nineteenth century

A key figure in the lore surrounding Robin Hood is the hero’s female companion Maid Marian. Barczewski writes, regarding Marian:

From her earliest appearances Maid Marian has embodied a bold, unabashed sexuality that was a far cry from the Victorian model of feminine decorum. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries she was first introduced to the legend in the context of the May Games, ostensibly a religious holiday.¹⁰⁰

The interesting feature about Marian is that her character did not change to adapt to nineteenth-century ideals regarding normative female conduct. When modernity was approaching, Robin Hood himself was re-branded, according to scholarly writing. The outlaw freedom-loving peasant was turned into an aristocrat (Earl of Huntington), in some stories approximately as early as around the year 1600. Later, Robin Hood was standardised as the noble Sir Robin of Locksley. During the class conflicts in early nineteenth century England, the former rebel peasant became a conservative royalist activist, fighting for the return of the “rightful king” Richard the Lionhearted, rather than acting like a medieval socialist. During early industrialisation, Robin Hood’s task in English society changed to ease growing class-conflicts.¹⁰¹ The English longbow was instrumental in this propaganda,

96. Barczewski, p.2.

97. Barczewski, p.130.

98. To be specific, during the 19th century, the longbow had no flag of an existing modern nation-state attached to it. However, there are many representations of longbow-archery in conjunction with the English flag (a centred St George’s Cross on a white background).

99. Hugh D.H. Soar, *The Romance of Archery: A social history of the longbow* (Yardley, 2008), p. 143f. These numbers include Irish, Scottish and Welsh archers.

100. Barczewski, p. 190.

101. The political use of Robin Hood during the early 19th century reminds of the English invention of modern Christmas, a time when both aristocracy and commoners meet almost as equals at the village church and sing Christmas carols together.

as the weapon was shared by English aristocracy (Sir Robin) and commoners (the Merry Men of Sherwood) alike. Historian Dick Harrison writes:

Robin Hood developed in this way into an element in English national identity. He was basically a deeply conservative and nationalistic figure who the children were to like, whether they wanted to or not.¹⁰²

Contrastingly, Maid Marian was not re-branded during modernity. Rather than attempting to subdue Marian's sexual exuberance and free-spiritedness, Victorian English authors emphasised, and even embellished, it. Furthermore, the relatively masculine character of Marian was communicated to be an ideal for English women and girls. Again, the longbow became instrumental. Barczewski writes:

This characterization of Marian was in keeping with her function as an exemplar of female participation in the sport at which she excelled: archery. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries archery clubs sprang up all over Britain which welcomed the membership of upper-and middle-class ladies.¹⁰³

Barczewski underlines how Marian constituted – or embodied – the female half of the English nation. Just as Robin Hood represented male Englishness, Marian symbolised female Englishness. The mystery of this being that Marian was a far cry from the confined housewives and mothers of separate-sphere ideology.

102. Dick Harrison: *Mannen från Barnsdale: Historien om Robin Hood och hans legend* (Stockholm, 2000), p. 83.

103. Barczewski, p. 193.

3. STUDY: THE AMAZON ARCHERS OF ENGLAND

3.1. Table: Formation of Archery Societies

3.1.1. Explaining the table

In order to achieve an overview of the development regarding longbow archery in England, this section presents a table regarding the formation of 60 archery societies 1673-1845, shaped by three parameters:

1. When was the archery society founded?
2. Where in Britain was the archery society active (England or elsewhere in Britain)?
3. Did the archery society explicitly include women?

The main source is the listings of archery societies in the 1845 edition of the book *Anecdotes Of Archery*, by Ely and Alfred Hargrove.¹⁰⁴ Hargrove's book is by no means a complete overview of the archery societies in Britain up to 1845. When mentioned in other sources, I have added further societies to the material.¹⁰⁵ A total of 60 archery societies are included in the table, which is by no means a complete list, but enough to show tendencies.

3.1.2. Table1: Archery societies in Britain (1673-1845).

Name	Founded	Location	Women
Scorton Archers	1673	Yorkshire	-
The Edinburgh Archers	1676	Edinburgh, Scotland	-
Richmond Archers	1755	Yorkshire	-
Darlington Archers	1758	Darlington	-
Middleton Archers	1777	Manchester	-
Royal Toxophilites	1780	London	Yes

104. Ely Hargrove, Alfred E Hargrove, *Anecdotes Of Archery: From The Earliest Ages To The Year 1791* (York, 1792 and 1845).

105. Soar mentions several archery societies not listed by Hargrove, including prominent and well-known ones, which proves that Hargrove's listing isn't complete. Alfred Hargrove mentions that the method of compiling the material was writing letters to the secretaries of the clubs, and complains that many did not reply.

Woodmen of Arden	1785	Warwickshire	Yes
(Royal) Kentish Bowmen	1785	Dartford Heath	Yes
		Flinthsire, bordering	
Royal British Bowmen	1787	England and Wales	Yes
John O'Gaunt's Bowmen	1788	Lancaster	Yes
The Robin Hood Society of Archers	1788	Bath	Yes
British Amazons	1789	Kent	Yes
Hainault Foresters	1789		Yes
Union Society of Harlow	1790		Yes
Old Sarum Archers	1791	Salisbury	-
Neville's Cross Archers	1791	Durham	Yes
Hatfield Archery Society	Late 18th century		Yes
Hertfordshire Archery Society	Late 18th century		Yes
Loyal Archers of Lewisham	Late 18th century		Yes
Robin Hood Society of Gloucestershire	Late 18th century		-
Royal Surrey Bowmen	Late 18th century		-
Derbyshire Archery Society	1828		-
Carisbrooke Archers	1829	Isle of Wight	Yes
Kingston Archers	1830	Hull	-
Bowmen of the Border	1830	Kelso, Scotland	-
West Berkshire Archers	1831	Newbury	Yes
Forester's Archery Society	1831	Horsham	Yes
Royal Sherwood Archers	1833	Nottinghamshire	Yes
Queen's St. Leonard's Archers	1833	Hastings	Yes
Albyn Archers	1833	Edinburgh, Scotland	-
York Archers	1833	York	-
Vale of Mombray Archers	1835	Bedale	Yes
Fraternity of St George	1835	London	-
Salisbury Archers	1836	Edinburgh, Scotland	-
St Mungo Archers	1838	Glasgow, Scotland	-
Glasgow Archers Society	1840	Glasgow, Scotland	-
Worcester College Archers	1842	Oxford	-
Dairy Archers	1842	Dairy, Scotland	-
Perth Archers	1843	Perthshire	-
Archers of the White Rose	1844	York	Yes
Toxophilites of West Kent	1844	London	-
Partick Archers	1844	Glasgow, Scotland	-
Kilwinning Archers	1844	Kilwinning, Ayrshire	-

Outwood Rangers	1844	Wakefield	-
Hull Archers	1845	Hull	-
Cheetham Hill Bowmen	1845	Manchester	-
Kilbirnie Archers	1845	Scotland	-
Richmond Archers	1845	Liverpool	-
Sherwood Foresters	-		-
Heath Common Archers	-	Wakefield	-
Herefordshire Bow Meeting	-	Hereford	Yes
East Berks Archers	-	Reading	Yes
Pilkington Archers	-	Lancashire	-
Queen's Park Archers	-	Brighton	Yes
East Surrey Bowmen	-	London	-
West Essex Archers	-	Harlow	Yes
Leslie and Wotton Archery Society	-		Yes
Beverley Archers	-		-
St John's College Archers	-	Oxford	-
Bronghton Archers	-	Manchester	-

Table 1, "Archery societies in Britain 1673-1845".

3.1.3. Initial remarks regarding the table

Interpreting the table's data above, the following remarks can immediately be made:

- There was a strong increase in the foundation of archery societies, starting around the year 1780.¹⁰⁶
- After 1791 and until the 1820s, there was a decrease in archery activity, strengthening the existing thought that archery activities in England suffered from the British war effort on the continent from 1793-1815.
- After 1820, there was again a rapid increase in organised archery activities.
- The societies mentioned at the end of the table, which lack data regarding time of foundation, seem mostly to have been founded from 1820-1845.
- The archery societies mentioned vary greatly in size, according to the source material. Some clubs are described as extremely small, consisting only of a handful of people, while others had hundreds of members.
- Starting in the 1780s, women were regularly – but not always – included as members of the archery societies. 25 of the 60 clubs in the table (42 percent) mention women as active members.
- Please note, regarding the table, that female inclusion is only noted when explicitly mentioned in the listed societies' records, rules or regulations. More of the societies above could have included women but do not mention it specifically.

106. The Middleton Archers society founded in 1777 did not survive the early 19th century, according to Hargrove who writes in 1845 that it "do[es] not appear to have had any organised society". Hargrove, p. 137.

- With the exception of *The Royal British Bowmen* (1787), which was an English-Welsh border society, the British archery clubs were mainly English until the 1820s and 1830s when suddenly a number of Scottish archery societies appears in the lowlands of Scotland.
- None of the Scottish clubs' regulations state that they included women.

3.2. Rebirth of the English longbow (1780-1793)

3.2.1. The longbow as the “gift of God” to the English nation

Until the 1780s, the source material witnesses that longbow archery was all but forgotten in England. Hargrove states in 1845 that “until the latter part of the last century, archery appears to have been almost forgotten, and then was only resumed as a fashionable and pleasing amusement”,¹⁰⁷ after which “the practise of Archery was kept up, with great spirit”:¹⁰⁸

English Archery, once the terror of foreign enemies, now changed into a pleasing, elegant and healthful amusement.¹⁰⁹

In 1801 the second edition of the book *The English Bowman* (first edition published 1791), by Thomas Roberts, tries to explain the “late revival” of English longbow archery.¹¹⁰ Roberts claims that a “mister Waring” is “the father of modern archery”. In 1776 mister Waring practised archery when residing with Sir Ashton Lever at Leicester House.¹¹¹ According to Roberts, the nobleman was much impressed by the art of archery, gathered his aristocratic friends and founded a society in 1780:¹¹²



“The Archers”, by Henry Raeburn (1789).

[...] under the title of *Toxophilites*, and met regularly at Leicester House, having butts erected in the gardens belonging to it. And this society was the parent stock of the numerous societies of Archers, known at this day.¹¹³

As such, the renaissance of the English longbow in the 1780s may have been coincidental, but it certainly made an impression on elite society, as archery butts became fashionable on the lawns surrounding mansions and castles of the English aristocracy, as the longbow

107. Hargrove, p. 64.

108. Hargrove, p. 70.

109. Hargrove, p. 101.

110. Thomas Roberts, *The English Bowman or Tracts on Archery* (London 1791, re-published 1801).

111. Roberts, p. 79. Mister Waring “contracted an oppression upon his chest, (arising principally from sitting too closely to his desk, and pressing his breast too much against it, and which the most eminent of the faculty had in vain endeavoured to remove), resolved to try the effect of the bow in affording himself relief. He accordingly made it a regular exercise, and in a short time derived great benefit from the use of it; and ascribes his cure, which was perfect, solely to the use of archery”. Leicester House was situated close to Leicester square, in today’s London.

112. Some sources claim the society was founded in 1781.

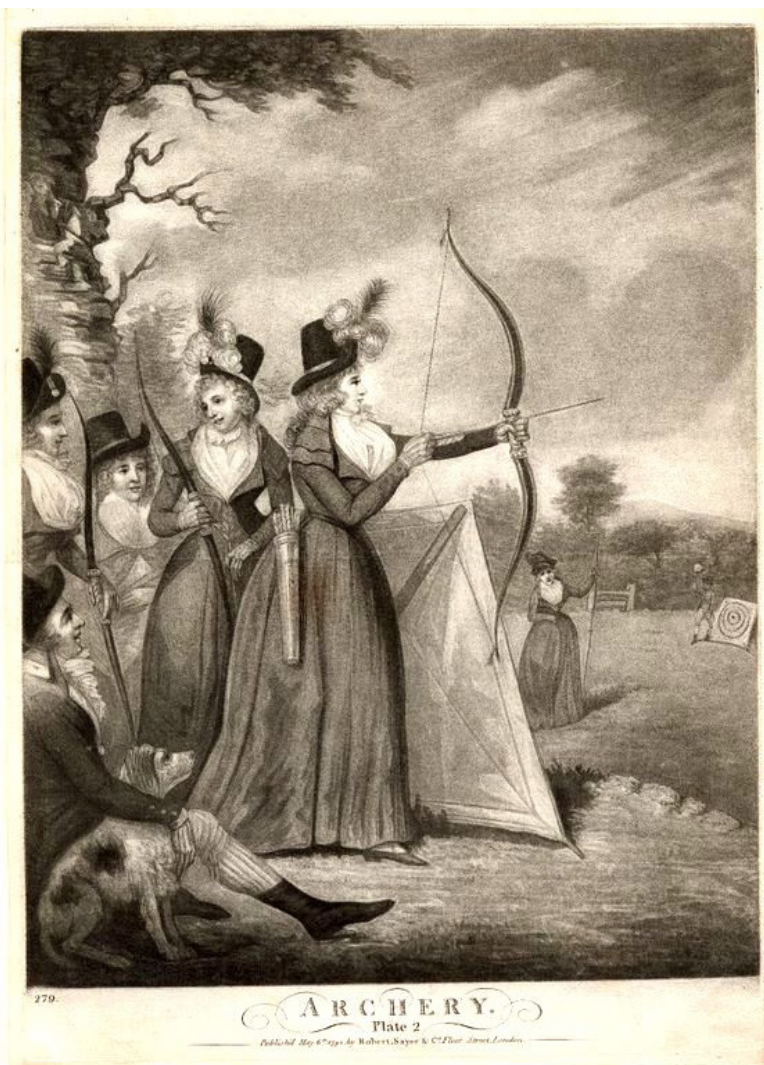
113. Roberts, p. 79.

became a manifest expression of English nationalism and national identity. The longbow and its relation to Englishness was communicated by Roberts as the very essence of what was “so glorious to the English” in wars of old, when the English army fought the French, which Roberts rhetorically associates with contemporary Anglo-French hostilities in the late eighteenth century:

[...] may not the advocate for the bow, fairly ask those who have recently served in France, if the old proverb, (which our archers so often won) that one Englishman would beat three Frenchmen.¹¹⁴

Hargrove agrees, arguing that “the splendid victories” during the middle ages “have been, with universal consent, ascribed mainly to the archers”.¹¹⁵ The longbow was not only communicated as decisive in fighting the French, but also as purely English, in a British context, according to Roberts:

[...] the bow used by the inhabitants of this island, has always been distinguished by the title of the *English* long-bow. [...] Although the English do not claim the merit of its first invention,¹¹⁶ yet the wonders it has performed in the hands of our ancestors (who we find at a very early period adopted and fostered this their *darling* weapon,) very naturally and significantly annexed *their* name to it. [...] The bow was the singular *gift of God* to the English nation.¹¹⁷



“Archery”, etching (London, 1792).

Being English – and not British – the longbow is not only mentioned as the prime medieval weapon fighting the French, but also instrumental in combatting the Scots. Hargrove writes, regarding the introduction of massed archers into the English army in the 1200s, that this was a military decision made by the English king Edward I (“Edward Longshanks”, 1239-1307). Hargrove specifically mentions the battle of Falkirk, when “Edward divided his army also into three bodies, and, by the superiority his Archers, defeated the Scots with great slaughter”.¹¹⁸ The tradition of English longbow archers fighting Scots was upheld by Edward II (1284-1327), “invading Scotland in the year 1314” making “particular mention of the Northumbrian Archers”, writes Hargrove.¹¹⁹

114. Roberts, p. 21.

115. Ely Hargrove, Alfred E Hargrove, *Anecdotes Of Archery : From The Earliest Ages To The Year 1791* (York, 1845), p. 39.

116. This is probably a reference to the notion of the English longbow’s supposedly Welsh origin.

117. Roberts, p. 14

118. Hargrove, p. 34.

119. Hargrove, p. 35f.

Thus, the longbow is portrayed historically, in the contemporary sources, as a specifically English weapon in the context of fighting both France and Scotland. But its use against the Scots is much less emphasised in the literature, compared to the space given to the epic medieval battles against the French (especially at Crécy and Agincourt), which were won by the English longbow.

3.2.2. The “lady archers” of the late eighteenth century

There seems to have been little controversy regarding the almost immediate inclusion of women, in aristocratic English archery activities during the 1780s. Roberts argues that the presence of women is something wonderful, that would have pleased the medieval English bowmen of old, as he compares contemporary women archers to historical warriors:

Our sturdy ancestors, whose steady well braced nerves enabled them to draw to the head their *yard-long* arrows (which pierced the strongest armour, and struck their fiercest foe to the ground) would have been proud, to have witnessed so flattering an attention to their favourite art; to have seen the neatly trimmed shaft loofed from the fair hand of an English Female, giving an example of *skill* to the rougher sex, and wanting but the strength, to contend with the enemies of their country.¹²⁰

This quote is interesting, as it positions contemporary English women archers as explicit warriors, being the representatives of the continuing martial abilities of the English nation. The “English female” is communicated as an able, deadly and potent fighter – as she equals the “sturdy ancestors” of the English, the battlefield bowmen, who “struck their fiercest foe to the ground”. Thus, the women are being communicated as masculine.

But they are not overly masculine, according to Roberts, who notes that “some” disapprove of female archery being “too masculine” and argue against the notion. Archery is a splendid cure for the boredom which haunts contemporary – and supposedly aristocratic – women, according to Roberts:



“An Archery Lesson” (England, c. 1800).

120. Roberts, p. 87.

This new area as it has been stiled, in the annals of archery, is condemned by some, as introducing to the other sex an amusement, too masculine to accord with the gentleness of manner, which should at all time characterise it. But this censure seems to be somewhat unmerited and ill-timed: for as a late writer (Moseley) justly observes, it is unfortunate, that there are few diversions in the open air, in which women can join with satisfaction: and archery seems to be an admirable antidote to the sedentary life, which is incident to the general employment of their time.¹²¹

In 1785, *The Woodmen of Arden* was founded, and was “indebted for the introduction of archery, as a perfectly unexceptionable recreation for ladies”, according to George Agar Hansard, writing in 1840:¹²²

The ladies associated with the Woodmen, were originally limited to their immediate family connections. Soon, however, the admissions became more general; and they complimented the fair members of other societies with freedom of access to their grounds.¹²³



“Mrs. Crespigny”
(*European Magazine*, 1804).

In 1793, the Lady Jane James was elected Lady Patroness of the *Royal Toxophilites*, being the daughter of the “1st Earl Camden” and the wife of a baronet.¹²⁴ She was succeeded in 1801 by Mrs. Crespigny, who is mentioned specifically by Hansard as “the handsome, witty and accomplished Mrs. Crespigny”, residing at Grove House, Camberwell. Mrs. Crespigny was “an early and enthusiastic advocate for the adoption of the bow as a becoming recreation for her own sex”.¹²⁵ Mrs. Crespigny wrote songs about archery, to be sung at social occasions, and – above all – organised “archery breakfasts”, where “the company ‘shot games’ as they are termed in archery language”.¹²⁶ At the same time, Mrs. Crespigny was praised for her prowess with the bow-and-arrow, showing her “superior skill in this elegant and fashionable science”, according to the *Royal Surrey Bowmen*, organising a contest in August 1791.¹²⁷

121. Roberts, p. 87. During the eighteenth century, the fox hunt developed as a leisure activity in Britain. Sometimes women participated, but it was unusual, as hunting was an activity of “the mainly male elite” as “women’s participation began to be actively discouraged”, according to historian Jane Bevan. One of the bio-political entities practically hindering women from participating in hunting was the introduction of the side-saddle. Jane Bevan, *Foxhunting and the landscape between 1700 and 1900; with particular reference to Norfolk and Shropshire* (University of East Anglia, 2011), pp. 225-232.

122. George Agar Hansard, *The Book of Archery* (London, 1840), p. 150.

123. Hansard, p. 152.

124. Peter A Gerrie, *From Quill to Computer: A History of the Royal Toxophilite Society* (Chichester, 2006), p. 17.

125. Hansard, p. 153.

126. Hansard, p. 155.

127. Arthur G Credland, “Royal Surrey Bowmen 1790-95”, *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries*, volume 46 (2003), p. 44.

Female archers in Lewisham even organised a club of their own in 1788, called *The British Amazons*, the name referring to the mythic female archer-warriors of antiquity, mentioned by Homer in ancient Greece.¹²⁸ A news-cutting from 1789 refers to:

The elegant and beauteous assemblage of Ladies Archers established last Summer at Blackheath under the name BRITISH AMAZONS, on Saturday last gave a splendid supper and Ball to a Society of Gentlemen who practice the science in the vicinity.¹²⁹

Not much is known about *The British Amazons* as they have no preserved records or regulations. According to Soar, the society seems to have been connected to *The Kentish Bowmen*, which benefited from Royal attention. In 1789, the Prince of Wales (the soon-to-be King George IV) became a longbow archer and patron of the *Kentish Bowmen*, who thus renamed themselves *The Royal Kentish Bowmen*.¹³⁰ Despite the masculine name of the society, *The Kentish Bowmen* included women as members – as many archery societies did, during the 1780s. In 1787, the society *The Royal British Bowmen* was founded on the border between England and Wales, and their regulations show ambiguity towards the role of female archers, however inclusive of women. The leadership of the club was divided between “a President, Vice-President, and Lady Paramount”, thus manifesting female agency and leadership. However, as stated in rule 18:

XVIII. That the husbands of those ladies, who are members, and likewise the wives of these gentlemen, under similar advantages, become members without ballot; but that no lady do remain a member of this society, after marriage, unless her husband consent to become a member.¹³¹

This rule has to be put in the context of the British *Laws Respecting Women* (1777), stating that “by marriage the very being or legal existence of a woman is suspended”.¹³² It can also be suspected, that the female archers of the late eighteenth century, primarily were supposed to be unmarried, thus putting the “splendid supper and Ball” of the British Amazons in 1789, mentioned above, into a certain perspective. Such social occasions were commonplace in the archery societies of the 1780s, suggesting that archery became a field where unmarried aristocratic women and men could meet, in a socially accepted environment.¹³³ Archery expert Arthur G Credland even claims (2004) that “it was commonplace of the period to regard the archery club and its social activities as something of a marriage market”.¹³⁴

The discourse regarding class was often very explicit, as in the case of *The Royal British Bowmen*, which stated that only neighbouring families “of quality” were allowed to join.¹³⁵ Hansard writes that the “example of the noble and the wealthy had, no doubt, considerable influence on the spread of archery”.¹³⁶ As such, archery societies became social institutions of importance, to the nobility. The married or non-married status of female archers

128. In the eighth century BCE, Homer writes about the Amazons, an all-female archery warrior people. The Amazons of Greek myth were an all-female people who not only participated in fighting and controlled their own politics, but exclusively made up both the population and the fighting force. Homer referred to them as *Amazons antianeirai*, an ambiguous gender-related term that has resulted in many different translations, from “antagonistic to men” to “the equal of men”.

129. *Journal of the Society of Archery Antiquaries*, vol. 39, p. 23.

130. Hugh D.H. Soar, *The Romance of Archery: A social history of the longbow* (Yardley, 2008), p. 88.

131. Hargrove, p. 219.

132. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the nation 1707-1837* (Yale, 2012, first print 1992), p. 243.

133. This practical use of archery, as a social activity, is also advocated by Soar.

134. Arthur G Credland, “George Eliot and Archery in Nineteenth Century Literature”, *SAA-journal*, volume 47 (2004), p. 44.

135. Hugh D.H. Soar, *The Romance of Archery: A social history of the longbow* (Yardley, 2008), p. 78.

136. George Agar Hansard, *The Book of Archery* (London, 1840), p. 150.

is mentioned in the source material. For instance, the Lancastrian *John O'Gaunt's Bowmen* (founded 1788, an "important society", according to Hargrove), states that "at the general annual meeting, a Patroness and Patron shall be nominated for the ensuing year" and that "the Patroness shall be alternately a married and a single lady".¹³⁷ Furthermore, *John O'Gaunt's Bowmen* organised a separate "Lady Archer's Society", stating in 1861:

That they shall be subject to all the rules and regulations of the Bowmen : and shall have no vote in the affairs or management of the Society; except in the election of their own members, which will be their own exclusive right.¹³⁸

Therefore, at least in some societies, policies concerning inclusion of women seem to have been the object of much thought. If women were welcomed as members, the male archers had to solve questions regarding female power. Thus, the questions of inclusion and exclusion of "lady archers" were considered a problem, which needed to be solved and specified in written regulations.



"Hertfordshire Society of Archers", diploma illustration dedicated to the Duchess of Leeds, the Marchioness of Salisbury, the Honble. Miss Grimstone, Miss Seabright (1789).

Considering the minimum space given to the women of the time, in terms of public agency, how was the inclusion of females as archers conducted, in practice? There is a clue from 1790, mentioned by Hargrove, when archery societies began organising competitions:

In 1790, a match was shot at Mr. Wyborough's, Branhope Hall, Yorkshire, at one hundred yards, between Miss Littledale, Mr. Gilpin, and Mr. Wyborough, in which Miss Litt-

¹³⁷. Hargrove, p. 156.

¹³⁸. John O'Gaunt's Bowmen Rules (1861). These rules are of later date than the 1780s, as can be seen.

Littledale was victorious. During the shooting, which lasted three hours, Miss Littledale hit the gold four times; and, what evinced superior skill, the three last hits, made by Miss Littledale, were all in the gold.¹³⁹

An important point to be made regarding this “match”, is that the distance of shooting is impressive. Shooting at 100 yards (91 meters) is quite demanding and requires considerable skill and strength. In later more organised competitions, women usually shot at much shorter distances than men. Even so, there seems to be nothing curious for Hargrove about a lady archer manifesting superiority in competing against male archers.¹⁴⁰ The source implies that the inclusion of women was mainly due to female agency. It seems, when reading the source material, that the aristocratic women shot the longbow because they wanted to – and nobody stopped them. Archery was a novelty without given gender rules and norms; therefore, women could exercise agency. Shooting the longbow was simply fun, and as long as the menfolk did not mobilise patriarchal power to stop them, women would continue to shoot.

As such, inclusion of females during archery competitions seem to have become common, as this type of activity was established. In 1791 “a grand meeting” of English longbow archers took place at Blackheath, as 13 societies shot at 32 targets.¹⁴¹ A strong aristocratic influence is evident; one society (*The Woodmen of Arden*) having as their patron the Earl of Aylesford and another (*The Bowmen of Chevy Chase*) the Duke of Northumberland.¹⁴² The archers “were all dressed in green, with half boots. Numbers of ladies were likewise dressed in the uniform of the societies”, according to Hargrove:¹⁴³

Robin Hood himself never surpassed, and which appear so marvellous, that some, perhaps, may dispute them altogether. Two persons were slightly wounded, by standing too near the targets.¹⁴⁴

After the shoot, “the Archers afterwards returned to town, and dined together at the Thatched House Tavern”.¹⁴⁵ Another Grand Meeting was held in 1792 and organised archery activity in England continued into 1793, after which there seem to be far fewer archery activities being organised in England. There is also a pause in the foundation of new archery societies, until the 1820s. Why? One existing idea is that the outbreak of large-scale war on the continent – the revolutionary wars against France and the following Napoleonic wars, lasting until 1815 – meant that the male archery population of England put on their uniforms and disappeared from England, as officers. Johnes quotes contemporary sources, referring to “when on account of the War, most of the Gentlemen were obliged to give up the Bow for the Musket”.¹⁴⁶ But this shouldn’t have stopped English women and non-fighting men from continuing to organise archery activities – or could it have done, as archery events could have been considered inappropriate during wartime? The source material doesn’t tell.

3.2.3. The Hainault Foresters (1789)

As an example of a typical late eighteenth century archery society, this chapter studies *The Hainault Foresters*, founded outside London in 1789. The club published the leaflet *Rules*

139. Hargrove, p. 66.

140. At the same time, it can be noted that Miss Littledale was an unmarried woman.

141. Hargrove, p. 66.

142. Arthur G. Credland, *Journal of the Society of Archery Antiquaries*, vol. 68, p. 70.

143. Hargrove, p. 66.

144. Hargrove, p. 67.

145. Hargrove, p. 67.

146. Johnes, p. 204.

and Regulations of the Hainault Foresters, stating that “the arms of this Society” shall be “supported by the dexter by an old English Archer”.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the male heroic figure of Englishness – the historical English bowman – was made the figurehead of the society. The rules also stated that the leadership should be elected on the first Wednesday in February. The heads of the club consisted of “a President” and a “Lady President”, thus actively including women in this society of “old English” archers.¹⁴⁸ Apparently however, this was not enough to secure female independence and power in the society, as rule eleven was added:

XI. That the Ladies do subscribe, annually, the sum of One Guinea. The idea of this Law is to secure to themselves the independent management and election of their own Members, subject to the general roles of the Society.¹⁴⁹

This rule is interesting, as it explicitly establishes “the independent management” of women, in a public role in late Eighteenth century England. In the patriotic historical context of English longbow warriors, closely connected to medieval wars against France and Scotland, women were not only included but also empowered by *The Hainault Foresters*. The men of the society dressed in certain uniforms, as did the women, which was stated in rule 20:



”Meeting of the Society of Royal British Bowmen” (18th Century). Both the lady archers and the gentlemen archers are wearing society uniforms.

147. *Rules and Regulations of the Hainault Foresters* (1789), p. V.

148. *Rules and Regulations of the Hainault Foresters* (1789), p. 7.

149. *Rules and Regulations of the Hainault Foresters* (1789), p. 11.

XX. That the Ladies' Uniform be as follows: Nankeen great coat, black silk collar, dark green silk cape; lappels, cuffs, and pockets, bound with black; full green sleeves down to the elbow, tied with black ribbon in the middle of the arm; a single row of uniform buttons, the front of the coat bound with green: black beaver hat, plain green band round the crown, buttoned up on the right side with uniform button and gold twisted loop, with green cockade and feathers.¹⁵⁰

The complicated uniform described above is clearly expensive, thus underlining the identity of the English late eighteenth century archers as an elite in society. Almost all archery societies of the time period insisted on members wearing uniforms at shoots.¹⁵¹ The archer uniforms of the 1780s were clothing worthy of the aristocracy. Becoming “a lady archer” and joining a club was an economic investment (uniform, membership fee and archery equipment) in social capital. But as such, it could be profitable. The uniform of the archery ladies of *The Hainault Foresters*, being typical of contemporary archery societies which included women, is also a negotiation between masculinity and femininity. The idea that these female archers would dress in uniforms, with “uniform buttons”, in an almost paramilitary way, is masculine. But at the same time, the ladies' uniform is far from being as masculine as the men's uniform, in the same society.

3.3. Longbow archery as a mass movement (1819-1845)

This section studies the time period 1819-1845, when English longbow archery ceased to be an exclusive amusement for the English aristocracy, and became a mass movement,¹⁵² involving the growing middle class.

3.3.1. Songs of the longbow (1819-1822)

When English longbow archery societies were founded, the social events connected to the shoots (luncheons, dinners, balls, etc.) became as important as the shoots. Several sources mention songs being sung at these events, and many of these songs were written down and preserved, for example *Songs from Bowmeetings of the Society of the Royal British Bowmen* (1819-1822), collected by Chris Hassal.¹⁵³ In this part of the study, these songs will be examined, in terms of gender.

The “lady archers” of the society are mentioned in the very first song, by “Mr. Hayman” at “the first Acton Bowmeeting”, June 25th, 1819: “There's the Ladies ‘full caps’ for the gentlemen's mirth”,¹⁵⁴ acknowledging the female presence in the society. After that, the songs commonly make reference to the women of the society, as “Mr Parker” sang on June 9th, 1819:

The Ladies twirl their hats about
With looking – glasses and without
And jeer the dresses Stuff & stout
– Of the Royal British Bowmen

150. *Rules and Regulations of the Hainault Foresters* (1789), p. 14.

151. Soar, p. 79. If a member participated in a shoot without wearing uniform, there was usually a fine.

152. In this study, the concept of “mass movement” is used to describe a populist (non-elitist) social phenomenon, counting thousands of participants, and also establishing an acknowledged presence and collective identity in broader society. In England during the 19th century, even people who were not archers, were well aware that archery societies existed and that thousands of people were active archers. In 1865, the total archery population of Great Britain exceeded 15,000, according to Soar (p. 143f).

153. *Songs from Bowmeetings of the Society of the Royal British Bowmen* (1819-1822), “from a handwritten book owned by Captain & Mrs. Theo Sax, transcribed and researched by Mr. Chris Hassal with an addendum by Mr. Hugh Soar”, private archives of Hugh D.H. Soar.

154. *Songs...*, p. 1.

But they will find they need not care
For worth & beauty ev'ry where
Will through the green & buff appear
– Of the Royal British Bowmen. [...]

In days of yore 'twas Cupids part
To aim his arrows at the heart
Who still perhaps may cause a smart
– 'Mongst the Royal British Bowmen
But modern practice will unfold
The secret is to hit the "Gold"
Although the hearts shall ne'er be sold
– Of the Royal British Bowmen.

Let all fair Maiden Archers have
Spare strings for bows kept in reserve
And thus their charming empire prove
– O'er the Royal British Bowmen
For if one string should chance to slip
The heart, not gold, of a Dandy bit
– Of a Royal British Bowmen.¹⁵⁵

The song highlights simultaneously that the ladies of the society are active archers (they possess bowstrings), while at the same time that the social occasion is a gathering, where flirtation is a possibility. Many sources objectify the female archer as beautiful, rather than skilled with the longbow, which has been noted by Martin Johnes, writing that "the acceptability of women practising and watching archery was rooted in their presence adding to the pastime's aesthetics".¹⁵⁶ Interestingly for this study, a song by "Mr. Hayman at Leeswood", from July 23rd, 1819 tells about the origin of archery and "the society", in the context of a male and a female, mimicking the Bible's story of Adam and Eve:

In tracing the Society I find it first began
Like Paradise of old with a woman & a man
And contented they did go etc. [...]

He spoke to her of shafts & darts - & numerous stories told
Of colors "white" & black" & "red" & then he talks of Gold
And a tempting he did go. [...]

He ask'd if she'd ever heard of arrows & of bows
And what was more her dear good man sh'd not think her to blame
And a thinking she did go. [...]

Forth from a case of baize he draws a' bow of shining yew
Then from a loaded quiver takes an arrow oft prov'd true
And a shooting he did go. [...]

155. *Songs...*, p. 7.

156. Martin Johnes, "Archery, Romance and Elite Culture in England and Wales, c.1780–1840", *History* (89, 2004), p. 199.

She urg'd him much to furnish her with bow & arrows too
That she might show her dear good man what now his wife could do
And to practise she did go.¹⁵⁷

In the song, archery is introduced by the man, but the woman is immediately interested and quickly shows that she is as able, as the man, in the art of English longbow archery. An interesting aspect of *The Royal British Bowmen* was their location, on the border between England and northern Wales. Despite that, it is the English identity of the society which is manifested in a song, celebrating English medieval wars and Robin Hood. The song, called "Ye Gentlemen of England", was written and performed by "Mr. Heber" in August 1820:

Ye spirits of our fathers
The hardy bold & free
Who chas'd o'er Cressy's gory field¹⁵⁸
A four fold enemy,

From us who love your sylvan game
To you the song shall flow. —
To the fame of your name
Who so bravely bend the Bow!

Twas merry then in England,
Our ancient records tell
With Robin Hood & Little John
Who dwell by down & dell

And yet we love the bold outlaw
Who brav'd a tyrant foe: —
Whose cheer was the deer
And his only friend the Bow.¹⁵⁹

3.3.2. Robin Hood, "Ivanhoe" (1819) and Maid Marian

From the very beginning of the revival of the English longbow, in the 1780s, the legend of the English hero and master-archer Robin Hood was closely connected to archery activities. *The Robin Hood Society of Archers* (Bath, 1788) took their name from the legendary archer,¹⁶⁰ several society uniforms were inspired by the green clothing said to have been worn by "the merry men" surrounding Robin Hood and the contemporary archery literature usually contained chapters devoted to Robin Hood. Hargrove insists that "our hero" Robin Hood was a real historical figure, "devoted to his country's rights, in that memorable struggle for liberty".¹⁶¹ Roberts agrees, underlining the importance of "this renowned bowman":¹⁶²

157. *Songs...*, p. 11ff.

158. "Cressy's gory field" being the battle of Crécy, where the English longbow triumphed against the French in 1346.

159. *Songs...*, p. 32.

160. Hugh D Soar, *The Arrowmen of Avon*, p. 13.

161. Hargrove, p. 22f.

162. Roberts, p. 96. Roberts devotes several chapters, celebrating the almost super-natural archery skills, of which Robin Hood was capable.

That such persons as Robin Hood and his companions did live, and gave the most signal proofs of their great skill in the use of the long-bow ; we have the testimony of several eminent historians, upon whose veracity we can depend.¹⁶³

Robin Hood and the English longbow was the very essence of Englishness, according to Hargrove: “Robin Hood differed from all other patriots—for patriot he was—whom we read in tale or history”, fighting against oppression, as “his bow was ever bent, and his arrow in the string”:¹⁶⁴

Robin Hood, whose true name was Robert Fitz-Ooth, or, at some authors have it, Robert o’ th’ Wood, was born at Loxley Chase, near Sheffield, [...] It is somewhat difficult to determine the precise date of his birth; but all authorities, worthy of reliance, place it in the early part of the thirteenth century, during the simultaneous efforts of the English people to establish their political rights [...] in those days of Norman tyranny and feudal oppression.¹⁶⁵

According to Hargrove, Robin Hood was of noble birth and fought for his “claim to the Earldom of Huntington”.¹⁶⁶ To summarise, at the end of the eighteenth century, the legend of Robin Hood was established within a context of English national identity, as a national hero, closely connected to the aristocratic re-birth of English longbow archery.

Sir Walter Scott and Ivanhoe (1819)

In 1819 the author Sir Walter Scott published the novel *Ivanhoe*,¹⁶⁷ set in twelfth-century England.¹⁶⁸ The main character is the knight Ivanhoe, but the true male hero of Englishness in the novel is Robin Hood. The novel became a huge success, reaching the fast-growing British middle class.¹⁶⁹ Most important for this study, “Scott’s influence upon subsequent treatments of the legend of Robin Hood can scarcely be exaggerated”, as Barczewski writes.¹⁷⁰

In the introduction, Scott establishes the nationalistic agenda of the book; the narrative is about England and “our Saxon forefathers”.¹⁷¹ Scott explicitly tells the reader that his aim is to “raise a spirit” regarding a specific English national identity, as “the patriots of England deserve no less their renown in our modern circles, than the Bruces and Wallaces of Caledonia”.¹⁷² Being low-land Scottish, and considering himself to be Anglo-Saxon, Scott compares Englishness to historical “wild manners, and a state of primitive society existing in the Highlands of Scotland”.¹⁷³ But even worse than this Celtic fringe surrounding England, was the invasion of the Normans in 1066, when the English became “slaves” under

163. Roberts, p. 94.

164. Hargrove, p. 24.

165. Hargrove, p. 23.

166. Hargrove, p. 23.

167. Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (London, 1819, the edition used in this study Winnetka, 2006). All first editions carry the date of 1820, but the novel was released December 1819.

168. Thus, Scott moved Robin Hood backwards in time, from the 13th century to the 12th century.

169. 10,000 copies of *Ivanhoe* were published in its first run, and they were all sold within two weeks. Scott was highly influential, not only in regard to the great number of people reading his novels. Together with authors like Jane Austen (who incidentally never mentions female archers in her novels), he is credited with the accomplishment of renewing the art of writing novels, for example inventing parallel storylines. His audience did not only consist of upper middle class, but also lower middle class, such as servants and, as the nineteenth century progressed, also working-class Britons. Reading novels became very popular during the nineteenth century and Scott was one the pioneers, satisfying the growing demand for fiction. Göran Hägg, *Världens litteraturhistoria* (Stockholm, 2000), p. 421f.

170. Barczewski, p.130.

171. Scott, p. 21.

172. Scott, p. 23.

173. Scott, p. 24.

the Norman yoke.¹⁷⁴ In the Twelfth century, the “tyranny” of the Normans, towards the Anglo-Saxon English, had become no less horrible:

Four generations had not sufficed to blend the hostile blood of the Normans and Anglo-Saxons, or to unite, by common language and mutual interests, two hostile races, one of which still felt the elation of triumph [...] The whole race of Saxon princes and nobles had been extirpated or disinherited, with few or no exceptions.¹⁷⁵

In the novel, Robin Hood is first introduced to the reader incognito, as an “archer” and “yeoman”, scaring the Norman lords with his superior skill with the dreaded English longbow. Thus, Scott radically positions himself in the debate regarding the class identity of Robin Hood, claiming him to be yeoman (middle-class),¹⁷⁶ and not a nobleman. This irritated contemporary writers, such as Alfred E. Hargrove, who writes that “the high blood of Robin seems to have been doubted by Walter Scott, who, in the character of Locksley, makes the traditionary Earl of Huntingdon but a better sort of rustic, with the manners of a franklin, rather than those of a noble”.¹⁷⁷ Scott must have been aware of this controversy and probably had an agenda. In *Ivanhoe*, the national hero Robin Hood, being a member of the English yeoman-class, becomes part of a populist idea – rather than elitist – in terms of the true heart-and-soul of Englishness. The commoner Robin Hood of *Ivanhoe*, unlike the English aristocracy, is a part of the “yeomen of merry England, in their more plain attire”, and as such part of the true English “splendour”, according to Scott.¹⁷⁸ This appealed the growing and ever-more prosperous English middle class. In *Ivanhoe*, the concepts of *Englishness*, *Anglo-Saxon* and being a *yeoman* (middle-class) becomes one single identarian political idea. At the same time, being “yeomanly” or “yeomanlike” equals English masculinity and manliness. Or as the merry men of Sherwood shouts in *Ivanhoe*, when trying to rob a fellow Saxon, who turns out to be able to defend himself:

“Well and yeomanly done!” shouted the robbers; “fair play and Old England for ever! The Saxon hath saved both his purse and his hide.”¹⁷⁹

In the novel, the English longbow is made synonymous with Englishness, the deadly effectiveness of the weapon being instrumental in fighting the Normans. Scott describes how “the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely” while the foreign Normans, fearing and hating the English longbow, threatens to “cut thy bowstring, break thy bow and arrows, and expel thee from the presence as a faint-hearted craven”.¹⁸⁰ Robin Hood excels above all others when “such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent”,¹⁸¹ for “never did so strong a hand bend a bow, or so true an eye direct a shaft”.¹⁸²

At the huge battle at the end of the novel, when the English yeomen forces storm a castle belonging to the Norman barons, the longbow is described as the very heart of English wrath and revenge in an almost biblical way, as “the archers muster on the skirts of the

174. Visiting the museum at the battlefield outside Hastings, I noticed that the exhibition used the words “English” and “Anglo-Saxon” completely synonymously, while “Normans” represented non-English otherness. “1066 Battle of Hastings-museum” (visited March 2019).

175. Scott, p. 36.

176. Merriam-Webster defines a *yeoman* of late mediocrity as “a person who owns and cultivates a small farm”, that is; a *yeoman* was not a nobleman (*gentry*), but certainly of higher rank than farmworkers, who did not own property. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/yeoman> (accessed 28 march 2019).

177. Hargrove, p. 26.

178. Scott, p. 113f.

179. Scott, p. 150.

180. Scott, p. 169f.

181. Scott, p. 169f.

182. Scott, p. 171.

wood like a dark cloud before a hailstorm”.¹⁸³ On the other hand, regarding distance weaponry, the crossbow is the symbol of foreign mercenaries, lacking the honour and patriotism of the English longbowmen, as the latter shout their battle-cries: “‘Saint George!’ he cried, ‘Merry Saint George for England!—To the charge, bold yeomen!’”¹⁸⁴ Scott describes:

The archers, trained by their woodland pastimes to the most effective use of the long-bow, shot, to use the appropriate phrase of the time, so “wholly together,” that no point at which a defender could show the least part of his person, escaped their cloth-yard shafts. By this heavy discharge, which continued as thick and sharp as hail, while, notwithstanding, every arrow had its individual aim. [...] the cloud of arrows flying so thick as to dazzle mine eyes.¹⁸⁵

At the end of *Ivanhoe*, Robin Hood reveals his true self to the rightful King Richard, stating “‘I am Bend-the-Bow,’ said the Captain, ‘and Locksley, and have a good name [Robin Hood] besides all these’” and he is duly rewarded by the king, as a true English longbow archer:

I will gladly part with to you—one hundred yards of Lincoln green to make doublets to thy men, and a hundred staves of Spanish yew to make bows, and a hundred silken bowstrings, tough, round, and sound.¹⁸⁶

To summarise, the novel *Ivanhoe* explicitly stated that the use of the English longbow and true Englishness were one and the same thing. Being English meant being an English longbow archer, and the other way around. But the novel also attempted to move the discourse of longbow archery in the English class system away from the 1780s monopoly of the elitist aristocracy, into the rising and self-conscious English middle class. This attempt by Sir Walter Scott proved highly successful. In 1847, the (Scottish) *Edinburgh Review* wrote, in regard to the English mass-movement surrounding Robin Hood, that “there is scarcely a county in England, or any class of ancient remains, which, in some place or other, does not claim a kind of relationship to this celebrated hero”.¹⁸⁷ In the 1880s, one of the largest affiliated Robin Hood orders, *The Ancient Order of Foresters* (formed in 1834), reached over half a million members.

Maid Marian

The character of Maid Marian, the female companion of Robin Hood, does not appear in the novel *Ivanhoe*. Instead, Scott celebrates the Anglo-Saxon noblewoman Lady Rowena, as the representative of true female Englishness:

Formed in the best proportions of her sex, Rowena was tall in stature, yet not so much so as to attract observation on account of superior height. Her complexion was exquisitely fair, but the noble cast of her head and features prevented the insipidity which sometimes attaches to fair beauties. Her clear blue eye, which sat enshrined beneath a graceful eyebrow of brown sufficiently marked to give expression to the forehead, seemed capable to kindle as well as melt, to command as well as to beseech.¹⁸⁸

The following analysis of Maid Marian in popular culture relies, to a large extent, on historian Stephanie Barczewski’s study, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century*

183. Scott, p. 308.

184. Scott, p. 351.

185. Scott, p. 329f.

186. Scott, p. 385.

187. Barczewski, p. 58.

188. Scott, p. 70.

Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood (2000). Barczewski quotes Thomas Love Peacock's novel *Maid Marian* (1822), in which Marian is depicted as vigorous, active and energetic. This displays itself in her prowess with the English longbow and via a general agency regarding independence, freedom and individuality.¹⁸⁹ Marian (referred to by her given name "Matilda"), argues with her father regarding going to the woods:

But through that loophole', said Matilda, "will I take my flight, like a young eagle from its aery; and, father, while I go out freely, I will return willingly: but if once I slip out through a loop-hole".¹⁹⁰

King Richard himself remark, regarding Marian's skill in combat, that "if this be indeed a lady man never yet held me so long".¹⁹¹

Peacock's interpretation of Marian is connected to him having read the feminist manifesto *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, by Mary Wollstonecraft.¹⁹² Thus the English longbow entered into the discourse of nineteenth century feminism, via Marian. In Pierce Egan's extremely popular novel *Robin Hood and Little John* (1840), Marian oscillates between conceptions of feminine and masculine conduct, according to Barczewski.¹⁹³ Even so, despite her masculinity, Marian became communicated as an ideal for English women, closely connected to archery. In the 1850s, archery champion Horace A. Ford wrote to the "fair Marians" of England, that is the English women, as a collective:

To you, then, fair Marians, and to you who, though not as yet enrolled in that band, may still,

it is hoped, some day be so, let me observe that Archery is a boon indeed. Your sex have few out-door exercises at all—none, with the exception, perhaps, of riding (which is accessible but to few), that at all brings the muscles generally into healthy action. You cannot say that mere walking or shop-lounging does this; still less that the heated atmosphere of a ball-room allows of it. But Archery does.



"Miss Julian as Maid Marian" (19th Century).

189. Barczewski, p. 191.

190. Barczewski, p. 191.

191. Barczewski, p. 192.

192. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792).

193. Barczewski, p. 193.

How many consumptions, contracted chests, and the like, think you, might have been spared, had its practice been more universal amongst you? It is an exercise admirably suited to meet your requirements— general and equal, without being violent—calling the faculties, both of mind and body, into gentle and healthy play, yet oppressing none—bringing roses to your cheeks, and occupation to your mind, —withal most elegant and graceful.¹⁹⁴

Ford addresses the problem of boredom, which remained a part of the life of upper- and middle-class women in England. Becoming archers, these inactive women should grow healthy muscles instead, according to Ford. In 1845, the book *Lady's Companion*, by “Miss Loudon”, listed archery as acceptable for women. The only other acceptable activities being “sketching, the garden swing, boating and skating”, according to Credland.¹⁹⁵

As the nineteenth century progressed, Marian came to be associated with more conventionally masculine modes of behaviour.¹⁹⁶ In the novel *The Life and Adventures of Robin Hood*, by John B. Marsh (1865), Maid Marian is portrayed as the very essence of female Saxon identity. Marsh writes:

Marian was a comely Saxon maiden, a favourite in many households—loved for her kindness of heart, and welcome for her skill in dressing hurts and her knowledge of herbs. This she had inherited from her mother, and from her, too, she derived that outward grace of form, and beauty of face, which made her a belle amongst the Saxons. Marian was also skilful with a bow, and could shoot a running deer, or a bird on the wing.¹⁹⁷

Displaying her deadly prowess with the longbow, Marian continuously negotiates herself between femininity and masculinity, as when she saves the males Robin Hood and Will Scarlett (Will Gamewell) from an attack by “a magnificent buck”:

After a moment's pause, during which the astonishment of all seemed about equal, the antlered champion shook his head and advanced towards Will Gamewell, who stood apart from Robin and Marian. It was evident that he meant mischief, and would, if possible, butt his antagonist. Will raised his bow and drew the string, but had no time to let the arrow fly, before the deer, bending his head, sprang forward, and Will was but just able to leap aside to avoid the blow from his horns. Robin called to him to run, but Will nimbly grasped a branch of a tree and swung himself out of reach. Now it was the turn of Robin and Marian. Seeing the fighting propensity of the animal, they had taken shelter behind a large oak. On losing Will, however, it turned in the direction where they were hiding, and slowly advanced. Not a moment was to be lost Marian raised her bow, and, as with bent head and increased speed the deer came on, an arrow pierced its side. The beautiful creature gave a sudden sound, and then fell dead to the ground.

“That was well shot!” exclaimed Robin, with much warmth.

“It was one of your arrows,” Marian replied, “and I would not on any account lose it.”

“Bravo!” shouted Will from his place of safety, as he saw his enemy fall to the ground.

“Well done, Marian! a woman's arrow has saved two lives.”¹⁹⁸

194. Horace A. Ford, “A Short Address to the Fair Sex”, *Archery, its theory and practice* (London, 1859), chapter 15.

195. Arthur G. Credland, *Journal of the Society of Archery Antiquaries*, vol. 68, p. 85.

196. Barczewski, p. 194.

197. John B. Marsh, *The Life and Adventures of Robin Hood* (London, 1865), p. 8.

198. John B. Marsh, *The Life and Adventures of Robin Hood* (London, 1865), p. 36f.

In this quote, Marian behaves in a more masculine way than the male Will Scarlett, and even excels in comparison to the hero Robin Hood. In *Little Red Robin*, by Vivian Matthews and Alick Manley (1900), Marian cried out for female muscular power:

MARIAN: These are the good old days (folks may abuse 'em),
When girls have muscles, and know how to use 'em!¹⁹⁹

Barczewski concludes that the treatment of the female characters from the legends of Robin Hood in the nineteenth century suggests that there existed a variety of responses to demands of British women for a more active role in the public affairs of their nation: "The treatment of Maid Marian shows that these cracks were not only present but even welcome in some quarters."²⁰⁰

Thus, longbow archery was instrumental in feminist development. The longbow enabled, empowered and allowed an English woman to transform herself – from being fundamentally bored in the private sphere of society – into the Amazonian *Maid Marian*, deadly master archer.

3.3.3. Middle-class archery societies (1828-1845)

As the wars on the continent ended in 1815 with the defeat of Napoleonic France, and Scott's novel *Ivanhoe* rising to success after 1819, a new generation of archery societies slowly began to take form in England during the 1820s, developing in the 1830s and 1840s (as shown in Table 1, above). The post-1815 archery societies differed from the earlier ones, in that they often became much larger. This was mainly due to the end of aristocratic dominance, regarding the bow and arrow, as the growing middle class engaged in archery.

An early example of this development was *The Derbyshire Archery Society*, which, according to Soar, in 1828, was among the first to engage the burgeoning middle class.²⁰¹ The examples of this change regarding class are plentiful, in Hargrove's 1845 listing of archery societies. In 1833, *The Royal Sherwood Archers* was founded in Nottinghamshire (being a part of the English national craze concerning Robin Hood), which engaged "upwards four hundred ladies and gentlemen" as members, according to Hargrove.²⁰² Though not aristocratic, the wealthy upper middle class kept the elegant traditions established by earlier aristocratic societies, including elaborate society uniforms. The lady archers of the *Royal Sherwood Archers* dressed in a "green silk dress, white chip



"Archery dresses", *The Court Magazine* (London, 1831). Archery outfits for ladies became a growing fashion industry as archery increased in popularity during the 1830s.

199. Barczewski, p. 198.

200. Barczewski, p. 200.

201. Hugh D.H. Soar, *The Romance of Archery: A social history of the longbow* (Yardley, 2008), p. 108.

202. Hargrove, p. 223.

hat, with a wreath of acorns and oak leaves”.²⁰³ As can be seen, both men and women were welcomed as members, and were also equally included in the power structure of the club, which was governed by “a Committee of six ladies and six gentlemen”, appointed annually, as well as “a Lady Patroness and a President”.²⁰⁴ In Harlow, *The West Essex Archers* enrolled 253 “ladies and gentlemen” thus being “surpassed, in point of numbers, by few”.²⁰⁵ In Hereford, *The Hereford Bow Meeting* “is one of the largest and most influential societies in Great Britain”, including large numbers of women.²⁰⁶ There were differences between male and female members, though, as – which was the case in most contemporary archery societies – “ladies” only paid half the membership fee. Also, *The Hereford Bow Meeting* stipulated in rule 9:

IX. That in any family, where two unmarried sisters be members, they be enabled to introduce their other unmarried sister, provided they appear in the uniform of the society.²⁰⁷

This suggests that archery societies – and the social activities surrounding archery – remained an area of courtship, also when becoming a middle-class activity.

Some clubs included women as members but excluded them from voting rights, such as *The Carisbrooke Archers* (Isle of Wight, founded 1829), which stated in rule 17, “that no ladies or honorary members be entitled to vote”.²⁰⁸ In some examples, the policies regarding female archers ended in conflict and even catastrophe, such as in the case of *The West Berkshire Archers* of Newbury. It used to be “the principal provincial society in the broad realms of England; but of late years, it has gradually fallen away, and is now only the wreck of former prosperity”, writes Hargrove.²⁰⁹ This was apparently an effect of female anger:

In the year 1840, from some cause or other, the society was almost deserted by the ladies – a circumstance, which, as might have been expected, led to the secession of a large portion of the gentlemen, and left the society in a very unfortunate state. Since this period, the active members have consisted of a few old shooters.²¹⁰

The conclusion could be drawn, that if an archery society in nineteenth century England wanted to be successful, it had to take into account the agency of women. Contemporary writers, publishing literature upon archery, commonly wrote about female participation – and in a favourable way. In 1828, Pierce Egan published the *Book of sports*²¹¹ and wrote:

Another advantage attending the amusement of archery is that it is equally open to the fair sex, and has for these last thirty years been the favorite recreation of a great part of the female nobility the only field diversion they can enjoy without incurring the censure of being thought masculine.²¹²

203. Hargrove, p. 223.

204. Hargrove, p. 224.

205. Hargrove, p. 280.

206. Hargrove, p. 137.

207. Hargrove, p. 139.

208. Hargrove, p. 103.

209. Hargrove, p. 274f.

210. Hargrove, p. 276.

211. Pierce Egan, *Pierce Egan's book of sports, and mirror of life* (London, 1828).

212. Egan, p. 244.

Thus, Egan not only appreciates female archery, but also comments upon the English aristocratic archery of the 1780s being a cure for the fundamental boredom which remained a problem for upper class women. Egan's book is also typical of the time period, in devoting certain parts of his book to female archery.

George Agar Hansard's *The Book of Archery*, from 1840, has an entire chapter (40 pages) entitled "Female archery".²¹³ The first part of the chapter is an extensive attempt to write the history of women archers, since antiquity, as "the early existence of female archery cannot be questioned".²¹⁴ Thus, Hansard offers historical legitimacy to the contemporary phenomenon of women archers. Hansard, when describing England and the sixteenth century in his historical essay, underlines that both "Lady Anne Boleyn", wife of Henry VIII, as well as Margaret of Anjou, the Queen of England by marriage to King Henry VI, were keen longbow archers.²¹⁵ According to Hansard, archery is well suited for females:

Requiring no excessive corporal exertion, a combination of the most graceful positions of all the bodily exercises, and invariably associated with refined and polished society, the bow appears especially adapted for relieving the sedentary occupations to which women are still far too much devoted.²¹⁶

As a result, all archery events should welcome women, writes Hansard, objectifying female archers as superior in beauty:

The presence of women is now regarded as indispensable to the perfect enjoyment of these genuine fêtes champêtres; for the trim shaft, launched from the hand of some fair toxophilite, faultless in face and figure, inspires us with an enthusiasm which belongs not to the most adroit display of archery in the other sex.²¹⁷

Handbooks specifying proper conduct for women generally appreciated archery. Johnes quotes *The Young Lady's Book of Elegant Recreations* (1829), declaring that the:

[...] attitude of an accomplished female archer at the moment of bending the bow, is particularly graceful; all the actions and positions tend at once to produce a proper degree of strength in the limbs, and to impart a general elegance to the deportment.²¹⁸

There was, however, some opposition to the notion of females practising archery. Credland quotes an anonymous writer in the *Sporting Magazine*²¹⁹ of 1819, who regarded archery as "masculine" and thus unsuitable for women, who should confine themselves to "minuets and musicmaking".²²⁰ But critique of female archery is hard to find in the source material, while male praise of female archers is common. In 1828, "William Sparkes of Derby" wrote:

213. George Agar Hansard, *The Book of Archery* (London, 1840).

214. Hansard, p. 127.

215. Hansard, p. 246f.

216. Hansard, p. 151.

217. Hansard, p. 155.

218. Martin Johnes, "Archery, Romance and Elite Culture in England and Wales, c.1780–1840", *History* (89, 2004), p. 199.

219. The *Sporting Magazine* (1793–1870) was the first English sporting periodical to devote itself to every type of sport. By the early 1820s, the magazine was the fourth best-selling monthly periodical in London.

220. Arthur G. Credland, *Journal of the Society of Archery Antiquaries*, vol. 68, p. 85.

The exercise of female skill in the practice of this elegant, graceful and health-promoting recreation, is now becoming common in the higher grades of society; and affords undoubtedly an admirable relief from the sedentariness of the customary feminine occupations.²²¹

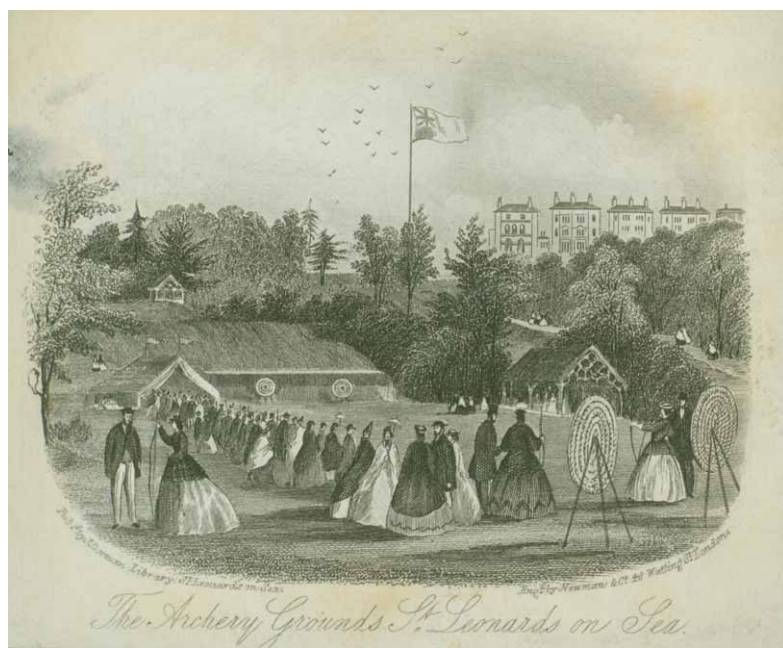
Another male contributor to the *Sporting Magazine* wrote in 1836 that archery is “peculiarly adapted to the gracefulness of the female form”.²²² As the English nineteenth century progressed, archery retained its popularity as “the favourite amusement in the country”, according to *The Grand National Archery Meeting* in 1846, which organised archery contests.²²³ In 1860, the meeting enrolled the largest number of contestants ever, “with 99 ladies and 109 gentlemen”. After 1860, tennis and croquet began to compete with archery, as fashionable hobbies. This caused some irritation, visible in the archery literature. In 1878, “an expert” wrote in the booklet *The Modern Archer*:

Ladies especially will find archery peculiarly adapted to the requirements of their habits and nature. Stooping low is an objectionable feature of any physical performance. It should be avoided as much as possible by ladies. It is not necessary to archery. It is one of the gravest defects of croquet. With head erect, chest expanded, lips closed, so as to breathe through the nostrils, is the way in which any healthful exercise is taken.²²⁴

3.3.4. Victoria, St. Leonard’s Archers (1834) and Scotland

In the late 1820s, work started on building a new fashionable seaside resort outside Hastings, called St Leonards-on-Sea. Identifying with the new village, the elite of the local society founded an archery club called *The St. Leonard’s Archery Society*, on 5th August 1833, at the St. Leonards Hotel.²²⁵ The archery society’s regulations – while written by “gentlemen residents at St. Leonards” – made no difference in power and influence, in terms of organisational members, between “gentlemen” members and “lady members”.²²⁶

No ballot to be valid unless ten members actually ballot. Every lady to be proposed and seconded by two lady members, and every gentleman by two gentlemen.²²⁷



The archery grounds of St. Leonards were famed for its beauty. Illustration from the records of the society (19th century).

221. Arthur G. Credland, *Journal of the Society of Archery Antiquaries*, vol. 68, p. 85.

222. Arthur G. Credland, *Journal of the Society of Archery Antiquaries*, vol. 68, p. 85.

223. Arthur G. Credland, *Journal of the Society of Archery Antiquaries*, vol. 68, p. 80.

224. “An expert”, *The Modern Archer* (New York, 1878).

225. St Leonards Archers, regulations 1833-1844, “Queens Royal St Leonards Archers Archives”, *British National Archives Reference SOC4*, held by Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Hastings.

226. St Leonards Archers, regulations 1833-1844, “Queens Royal St Leonards Archers Archives”, *British National Archives Reference SOC4*, held by Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Hastings.

227. St Leonards Archers, regulations 1833-1844, “Queens Royal St Leonards Archers Archives”, *British National Archives Reference SOC4*, held by Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Hastings.

Coincidentally, this new archery society was blessed with royal attention. Local historian J. Manwaring Baines writes:

The greatest year in the history of St. Leonards was undoubtedly 1834, when the Duchess of Kent and her little 15 year old daughter, Princess Victoria, came to stay during the winter. This established the town firmly as a fashionable resort. [...] A triumphal arch, sixty feet high, was erected across the roadway at the Hastings boundary near the Hare and Hounds public house at Ore. There on the late afternoon of November 4th, the royal party was formally greeted by the mayor and corporation.²²⁸

However, already on 8th of October 1834, in the minutes of St. Leonards Archers, there's a note regarding contact between the society and "their royal highnesses the Duchess of Kent and princess Victoria".²²⁹ Apparently, both the princess and the duchess were interested in English longbow archery, being a contemporary fashionable activity. Young princess Victoria became an English longbow archer as well as "Patroness of the St. Leonards Archers", and as such:

Presented two prizes, the Royal Victoria prizes, to be competed for annually as well as a banner, designed by the little princess herself. After her accession [in 1837], the Queen gave permission for the Society to be renamed the Queen's Royal St. Leonards Archers.²³⁰



En axample of the treasures provided by the Royal court; archery jewellery, gift to St. Leonards Archers by "Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent", according to text on the box. The material seem to be gold, silver, etc.

These royal gifts still exist. The archives of *The St. Leonards Archers* were deposited at the Hastings Museum & Art Gallery when the society ceased its activities in 1937 and contain, among the written records, a big cardboard box, marked "objects".²³¹ When opening this, the museum curator and myself found a magnificent treasure, containing objects of gold, silver, gemstones and ivory; the prize material given to the society by the royal court, from the 1830s and onwards. The medals, horns, jewellery and so on were made alternately by local jewellers and the royal jewellers of London. This priceless treasure is witness to the investment in social status, given by the royal court, to the local archery society of St Leonards-on-Sea.

228. J. Manwaring Baines F.S.A., *Burton's St. Leonards* (Hastings, 1990, 2012), p. 38.

229. St Leonards Archers, regulations 1833-1844, "Queens Royal St Leonards Archers Archives", *British National Archives Reference SOC4*, held by Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Hastings.

230. Baines, p. 40.

231. Objects, "Queens Royal St Leonards Archers Archives", *British National Archives Reference SOC4*, held by Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Hastings.

In the records of *St. Leonards Archers*, it can be seen, that most mentions of royalty after 1834 are about the Duchess of Kent, being in continuous contact with the society, as Victoria supposedly became busy with other affairs. However, Victoria still identified herself with the society, as is mentioned in the club records regarding her 1840 marriage to Prince Albert:

On the occasion of Her Majesty’s marriage in 1840, with His Royal Highness Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha, His Royal Highness was graciously pleased to become a Patron of the Society, in conjunction with Her Majesty.

In 1849, the Queen “honoured the Anniversary Meeting, on Her Majesty’s Birthday” at the society, accompanied by the king and queen of France, the duke and duchess of Nemours, the duchess D’Aumale as well as the prince and princess Augustus of Saxe Coburg.²³² This strongly communicated that the royal identification of the Queen with longbow archery had considerable consequences in British society. According to Soar, the accession of Victoria to the throne marked an upturn of the economic context for English longbow archery. The number of London bowyers advertising doubled between 1830 and 1840.²³³

Longbow archery and Scotland (1836-1844)

After Princess Victoria became a longbow archer in 1834, and continuing after her coronation as Queen in 1837, there was a surge in lowland Scotland of archery societies, as visible in Table 2, below:

Name	Founded	Location	Women
Salisbury Archers	1836	Edinburgh, Scotland	-
St Mungo Archers	1838	Glasgow, Scotland	-
Glasgow Archers Society	1840	Glasgow, Scotland	-
Dairy Archers	1842	Dairy, Scotland	-
Partick Archers	1844	Glasgow, Scotland	-

*Table 2, “Archery societies in Scotland 1836-1844”.*²³⁴

Regarding *The Salisbury Archers*, Hargrove writes:

The society was established in the year 1836, on very exclusive principles, by a few of the citizens, for their individual amusement; but, the number of applications for admission were so great, that it was found necessary to act in a more liberal manner, with regard to the admission of members, and, consequently, the club was re-modelled in 1840, and the present rules were formed.²³⁵

In Scotland, there had been a presence of longbow archery long before 1836. Already in 1676, *The Edinburgh Archers* had been formed, and in 1713, transformed into a Royal Company. In 1822, the Company, re-named *The Royal Company of Archers*, became the

232. The Queen’s Royal St. Leonards Archers Rules And regulations (1866), “Queens Royal St Leonards Archers Archives”, *British National Archives Reference SOC4*, held by Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Hastings.

233. Hugh D.H. Soar, *The Romance of Archery: A social history of the longbow* (Yardley, 2008), p. 133.

234. Table 2 is an excerpt from table 1, above.

235. Hargrove, p. 236.

official bodyguard of the British regent when visiting Scotland. However, as such, in the context of this study, *The Royal Company of Archers* was a part of an older tradition of archery, connected to the 17th century and the last remaining existence of longbow units in actual armed forces. The birth of archery societies in Scotland in the 1830s and 1840s was something different, being part of the contemporary bourgeoisie English mass movement of archery activities. Furthermore, it can be noted that the new Scottish archery societies were situated in the lowlands of Scotland, thus having an Anglo-Saxon identity – as opposed to the Scotland highlands. An example of this, in the *Ivanhoe* tradition regarding Robin Hood as the hero of the “Anglo-Saxon race”, strongly communicated by Scot author Walter Scott (born in Edinburgh), is visible in the Glasgow *The Partick Archers* uniform, which “is in the Robin Hood style”, according to Hargrove.²³⁶

One possible explanation of the development in Scotland can be a connection between the British Queen being a longbow archer and a therefore, making possible an expansion of the English longbow – regarded as a nationalistic object and symbol – into Britishness. Thus, the unexpected and sudden popular interest in longbow archery, being noted by *The Salisbury Archers* 1836-1840. The British subjects of lowland Scotland may have wanted to share the hobby of the British Queen as part of their social agency, not the least in context of the British Empire.

However, it seems that the tradition of English female archers was not inherited by the Scottish societies of 1836-1840, as none of them explicitly included women. The Scottish societies seem to have been exclusively male organisations.

236. Hargrove, p. 184.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1. Summary

During the time period 1780-1845, the medieval English longbow experienced an impressive renaissance in England, as a fashionable hobby of the English aristocracy and middle-class. This study is an attempt to investigate how this was done, via the theoretical frameworks of *nationalism* and *gender*.

4.1.1. The aristocratic era (1780-1793) of longbow archery

In the 1780s, aristocrats in England found a new pleasure; historical English longbow archery, which quickly developed into a fashionable pastime among the elite of English society. According to Johnes, archery became a favourite pastime, “amongst a group of people who had a lot of time on their hands and the money to enjoy it”.²³⁷ Suddenly, at the end of the eighteenth century, the lawns surrounding the mansions of the English societal elite were equipped with archery butts.

The choice of archery as a new vogue of the high-society of England may have been coincidental, but to the English aristocracy it had several advantages. The longbow was conceptualised as explicitly English, which fitted into both a patriotic anti-French discourse (in the context of British rivalry towards France, soon to erupt into war), but also as a part of an English – i.e. not British – national identity. Longbow archery was associated with an existing English national memory culture, regarding the victories of “the longbowmen of old”, in English medieval wars against France and, to some extent, against Scotland, as well as the already thriving lore surrounding English national hero and master longbow-archer Robin Hood.

During the 1780s, the construction of nationalistic memory culture surrounding the longbow was tightly connected to English medieval military history: wars, specific battles (particularly the battles of Crécy and Agincourt) and archer warriors. Being about warfare, this memory culture was masculine. But still, the women of the English aristocracy were included as archers. Or rather, the women included themselves.

237. Johnes, p. 208.

English elite women of the late eighteenth century were often bored. There were few – if any – physical activities, seen as appropriate for contemporary aristocratic females. Archery offered a remedy to this problem. When the noblemen engaged in longbow archery, the women seized the opportunity. They grabbed a longbow and joined the fun. Importantly, the contemporary patriarchy did not mobilise to stop female archery, which would have been possible. Instead, archery became an important social institution for the English aristocracy. Archery was not only about only shooting the bow, but it also involved social activities (dinners, luncheons, balls, etc.). Archery became a social space for interaction between the sexes, for courtship, flirtation and romance.

The “lady archer” was generally not only tolerated, but even appreciated and objectified as supreme in beauty, by the aristocratic males. However sexist, this male behaviour regarding archery did not contradict female agency from 1780-1793. On the contrary, female participation can be interpreted in the context of contemporary feminism, represented by influential writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793). The women archers were appreciated by male society, but no-one forced the females to participate in archery activities. The decision to become an “archeress” seems generally to have been an independent choice made by the aristocratic women of the 1780s and 1790s, and not by the contemporary men.

The aristocratic renaissance of the English longbow continued until the outbreak of war against France in 1793. The wars of 1793-1815 marked a downturn in organised English longbow archery.

4.1.2. The middle-class era (1819-1845) of longbow archery.

In 1819, Walter Scott published the novel *Ivanhoe*, set in the English middle ages. The book became a bestseller and had a considerable impact upon English society. Scott’s political agenda was to strengthen English national identity, through the use of history. *Ivanhoe* featured master-archer Robin Hood, the hero of Englishness (the “Anglo-Saxon race”), and the English longbow, in order to promote English nationalism. In the narrative of Scott’s novel, being English was synonymous with being a longbow archer, while being a longbow archer was synonymous with being English.

At the same time, *Ivanhoe* had an agenda regarding class. Scott portrayed Robin Hood as middle-class (a yeoman), and not – as contemporary elites generally preferred – a nobleman. This appealed to the middle class of the early nineteenth century England as they embraced Scott’s Robin Hood and his weapon of choice; the longbow. This had a societal impact, since the English bourgeoisie was growing in size, confidence and wealth. During the 1820s and 1830s, a new wave of archery societies developed, as the English middle class became longbow archers. They kept the tradition of female participation, as longbow archery developed into a mass-movement from 1820-1845. During this bourgeoisie-phase of the longbow, English society witnessed a large-scale production of popular culture regarding the longbow, archery and the legend of master-archer Robin Hood and his female companion, master-archeress Maid Marian.

Especially important in the gender politics of archery was Princess Victoria, who became an English longbow archer in 1834. After her coronation as Queen of Britain in 1837, archery moved into a slightly more general British identity, no longer being exclusively English. Several archery societies were founded in the Scotland lowlands. None of these, however popular, seem to have included women as archers.

4.2. Concluding remarks.

4.2.1. The longbow and English nationalism.

From the very beginning of its renaissance in the 1780s, the longbow was explicitly communicated as English, not British. The art of shooting the longbow manifested a memory culture regarding the medieval “English Bowman”, remembering historical English victories against France and – to some extent – Scotland. As the author Thomas Roberts wrote; “the bow was the singular *gift of God* to the English nation”.²³⁸

This study shows *how* the longbow became an object of English modern nationalism from 1780-1845. The question arises, *why*? During the 1780s, British society – having formed a specific British identity – anticipated, as always, war with rival France. Thus, the longbow could have served as an object to represent a historical pan-British identity.²³⁹ However, it did not.

To some extent, in English longbow nationalism, military archery manifested English superiority towards Wales. At one point, it was generally thought that the Welsh had invented the “warbow”, but had not possessed the tactical intelligence to use it effectively on the battlefield, in massed formations, during the centuries following 1066. Thus, the longbow manifested English superiority towards “the lazy Welsh”, to a minor extent. To a larger extent, the longbow manifested English superiority towards Scotland, as it was communicated as crucial in fighting “the barbarous Scots” in medieval battles.²⁴⁰ As such, the longbow demonstrated the notion of the superior English, being surrounded on the British Isles by an inferior Celtic periphery.

But generally, in English nationalism, the notion of the Celtic *other* was overshadowed by anti-French discourse. This was certainly the case for the English longbow, as it objectified English nationalism. The birth of aristocratic English archery societies in the 1780s represented a form of banal English nationalism, using the history of medieval English archery warfare in order to produce a suitable form of nationalistic English identity politics. English superiority was at the heart of the longbow-shooting English elites, but they did not want to disturb British co-operation from 1780-1793, as Britain was expecting more wars against France. Later, during the nineteenth century golden age of the global British Empire, the English enjoyed implicit privileges towards other nationalities on the British Isles. The English longbow, the object that created a mass-movement from 1819-1845, based upon the participation of the confident English middle-class, functioned well within this nationalistic discourse.

The British sea and the English forest

It can be noted that one difference between British and English identities relates to the role of the sea. British identity is largely maritime, Britain being geographically referred to as “the British Isles”, while English national identity is land-based. During the nineteenth century, *Britannia ruled the waves*, while Robin Hood ruled the Sherwood Forest.

The globalised British Empire was a trans-national imperial construct, celebrating maritime power. The identarian heroes of Britishness were admiral Horatio Nelson and the quest-driven and ever-travelling Arthur, king of the Britons, whereas the hero of Englishness was the land-based forest-dwelling master-archer Robin Hood. Regarding the

238. Thomas Roberts, *The English Bowman or Tracts on Archery* (London 1791, re-published 1801), p. 14

239. A pan-British interpretation of the longbow could have underlined its Welsh origin, its English golden age and its 17th-century use by Scottish forces, for example.

240. I have not seen any mentions of Ireland in the source material regarding the English longbow.

longbow, there is an interesting point to be made in terms of the fact that medieval military archery was used both in the English navy and in the English army. But in the field of English nationalism from 1780-1845, the maritime use of the longbow in naval warfare is hardly mentioned.

Instead, the English longbow is contextualised via the forest, far from transnational coastlines and imperial British maritime ventures. Longbow societies often named themselves *foresters* or *woodmen*, just as Robin Hood represented “the merry men of Sherwood Forest”. Robin Hood stories often contain a scene where the archer-hero openly criticises King Richard, for having ventured overseas on crusades, instead of staying at home in England, taking care of his people. Thus, despite being a weapon historically used both on land and upon the high seas, the English longbow was perceived as a land weapon in the memory culture surrounding it from 1780-1845. It still is today.

At the same time, the English bourgeoisie shooting the longbow 1819-1845 were largely benefiting from globalised – and therefore maritime – industrialised modernity, capitalism, liberalism and the dawn of a new age. Via the longbow, they found a romantic space in the forest, far from steam engines, urban smog and industries.

The English longbow united the low born “miller Much”, “John Little” and the other merry men of Sherwood, representing the common English people, with the high-born “Sir Robin”, in cooperation with the monarchy and “King Richard”, thus calming the growing class conflicts of early industrialisation, through a nationalistic narrative of Englishness, as a common and uniting identity. Via the ideal of “Maid Marian”, the women of England were also included in this *English longbow nationalism*.

4.2.2. Comparison: English longbow archers and Swedish rifle-men

It is implied in this study that the English inclusion of women as archers from 1780-1845 was something extraordinary in contemporary Europe. This was indeed the case. In order to highlight this fact, a comparison can be made with a movement, similar to the English longbow societies, the bourgeoisie Swedish “sharp-shooter movement” (*Skarpskytterörelsen*), which – like the English movement – peaked in numbers around 1860.²⁴¹

Both the English and the Swedish movements became nineteenth century societies of middle-class “weekend warriors”. The bourgeoisie of industrial modernity was given the opportunity to leave the urban environments of everyday life, often perceived as weakening for the body and soul (and thus promoting a dangerous feminisation), venture into forests and fields of agrarian masculinity, dress up in uniforms and participate in patriotic martial activities. Additionally, both movements were important social institutions, where members and their entourage could mingle, while having dinner or enjoying a picnic luncheon together, or maybe even flirting at a society ball.

Historian Mats Hellstenius writes that the Swedish shootings were part of a pan-European trend towards outings and picnics.²⁴² Starting in the 1820s, in conjunction with the development of steam-boat traffic, it became fashionable for families, friends and colleagues to venture out of towns on their day off, visiting historical sites and castles in the countryside, thus combining pleasure with cultural consumption, establishing national identity

241. Mikael Ottosson, Thomas Sörensen (ed.), *Borgerligheten i vapen: en antologi om 1800-talets milisrörelse* (Malmö, 2008); Mats Hellstenius, *Skjutande borgerliga revolutionärer: skarpskytterörelsen och 1800-talets liberala moderniseringsprojekt* (Malmö, 2008).

242. Mats Hellstenius, *Skjutande borgerliga revolutionärer: skarpskytterörelsen och 1800-talets liberala moderniseringsprojekt* (Malmö, 2008), p. 82.

via the cultural heritage of the nation. The inspiration of this nationalistic picnic-craze in Sweden was largely an import from Britain. Both the Swedish Skarpskytterörelsen and the English longbow archery movement fitted perfectly into these weekend-activities. In conjunction with the excursion, the family members could watch the father, the brother, the husband or the friend marching, parading and shooting.²⁴³

Contemporary imagery, picturing English longbow archers or the Swedish spare-time riflemen, is extremely similar. They depict straight lines of shooters in elaborate clothing, showing off before an admiring audience, in impressive rural environments (shooting-grounds being placed in parks and forest areas, often belonging to mansions and castles). But there is one striking difference between the English and Swedish imagery; the Swedish shooters are all male, while the English longbow archers include both women and men. It would have been unthinkable for a Swedish rifle-shooter of the Skarpskytterörelsen to be female, but it was considered natural for an English woman to be a longbow archer.

Why the difference? Why did the English longbow archery societies differ from other similar European movements, in including women as active participants? Why weren't the English women confined to the role of admiring bystanders, as were the Swedish and other European women?

There is no obvious explanation for this striking difference in the source material, but one possible answer could relate to the fact that the English longbow movement began early, being well-established by the 1780s; early English industrialisation may also have been significant, producing a modern bourgeoisie many years before there was one in Sweden. Maybe, the normative male dominance linked to these nationalistic martial movements did not have time to establish itself in England, before it was too late to stop the women from participating. Also, shooting the longbow was less martial than being a volunteer rifleman. The members of the Swedish movement actually planned to participate in future wars, should they become reality. The English archers did not plan to fight wars with their longbows, thus enabling female participation, based upon female agency. The Amazon archers of England from 1780-1845 were warriors without wars.



English longbow archers (Royal Toxophilite Society, c. 1860) and Swedish Skarpskyttar parading "in the presenece of ladies" (Illustrerad tidning, 1861).

243. Hellstenius, p. 83.

4.2.3. Archery, feminism and further studies.

In the scholarly debate regarding gender and nineteenth century British “separate-spheres ideology”, dividing society into a male “public” sphere and a female “private” sphere (the home, motherhood, family life, etc.), it has been noted that patriotism, during the British participation in wars against France from 1793-1815, constituted a societal space where women could resist patriarchal rule. Female agency was possible via wartime patriotism.

However, what has been described by historical research is primarily how British women supported the war effort against France by sewing flags, banners and clothing for the male troops. But sewing was compatible with the gender politics of female private spheres. Patriotism via the needle-and-thread had obvious boundaries, concerning femininity. During the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century, it was not appropriate for British women to be warriors, according to scholarly consensus in today’s gender studies.

This study challenges this presumed notion. Under the right and controlled circumstances, women could be given an identity as warriors, within contemporary discourse comparing the modern English longbow archers with the heroic battlefield “English longbowman” of old, as well as via comparisons with English master-archer Robin Hood and his female companion Maid Marian. The medieval English longbow archers of Crecy and Agincourt, as well as Robin Hood and Maid Marian, were national historical heroes 1780-1845. As such, they were an inspiration and role-model, the martial and masculine qualities of which were to be reproduced among contemporary English men and women, alike, in the nationalistic project of shooting the English longbow. As such, in the 1780s and onwards, English longbow archery became a new space of female agency, as women could become female “English longbowmen” and a modern English generation of Maid Marians.

Women in England from 1780-1845 were not always forcefully confined, by patriarchal power, to private spheres. Women had agency and knew how to use it, when opportunities arose, as in the case of English longbow archery. However, the opportunity for participation in a certain public sphere (archery) was not given to the women by the menfolk of English society; instead, I argue that women grabbed the opportunity, through their own agency.

Female English longbow archery from 1780-1845 can be interpreted as contemporary feminist thought in practice. Contemporary European societies could not help being affected by the birth of organised modern feminism, following the French revolution.²⁴⁴ During the nineteenth century 1789-1914, feminism struggled for inclusion in many ways. The battle for women’s right to vote would last into the twentieth century, but a woman could be societally included in more ways than via the ballot box. Through archery, English women included themselves in the political sphere, via English longbow nationalism.

244. See for example Dominique Godineau, “Daughters of Liberty and Revolutionary Citizens”, Genevieve Fraisse, Michelle Perrot (eds.), *A history of Women in the West IV, Emerging feminism from revolution to war* (Harvard, 1993); R.B. Rose, “Feminism, Women and the French Revolution”, *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (winter, 1995); etc.

Further studies.

Was there some sort of continuity of feminism following the renaissance of English long-bow archery from 1780-1845 and the suffragette movement of early twentieth century Britain? This would indeed be an interesting area of study.

It can be noted that *the Amazon archer* is very much alive in today's popular culture. She makes herself noticed via Susan of *Narnia*, Katniss Everdeen of the *Hunger Games*, Lara Croft of *Tomb Raider* and Merida of *Brave*. She also has a very ancient past, having been born in antiquity, as the hunter goddesses Artemis and Diana – not to mention the old legend of the original Amazons and their superior skill with warbows. Writing the long cultural history of the female archer warrior would also make an interesting study.

Meanwhile, it can be noted, that as long as archery was a part of an English memory culture linked to medieval wars and Robin Hood from 1780-1845, misogynist voices were fighting an uphill battle. But when archery entered the world of modern sports, with the birth of the Olympic movement in the early 20th century, female participation encountered resistance, according to Soar.²⁴⁵ It had been acceptable for a woman to be an *Amazon* archer in the 1780s, but it became controversial for her to be an archer *athlete* in the 1900s. That, however, is material for another study.

245. Soar, pp. 190-192.

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

På 1780-talet fick det engelska medeltida krigsvapnet; *den engelska långbågen*, en oväntad och plötslig renässans i England, när historiskt bågskytte blev en hobby på modet inom den engelska aristokratin. Efter Napoleonkrigens slut 1815 utvecklades skyttet till en folklig massrörelse, inom den växande och allt mer inflytelserika engelska medelklassen.

Under tidsperioden 1780-1845 blev den engelska långbågen (*The English longbow* eller *The English warbow*) instrumentell i produktionen av en specifikt engelsk – det vill säga inte brittisk – nationalistisk minneskultur, utifrån de medeltida engelska bågskyttarnas segrar på slagfälten, i krig mot franska och skotska arméer. Parallellt förstärktes de nationalistiska narrativen kring den engelske nationalhjälten och långbågeskytten Robin Hood. Den engelska långbågen, som objekt, blev en manifestation av engelsk nationalism.

En viktig del av den engelska långbågskytterörelsen var inkluderingen av både kvinnor och män, trots skyttets karaktär av maskulin krigiskhet och militärhistoria, angående medeltida krigståg, där ”*the English Bowman*” hade triumferat. Faktum är att den kvinnliga bågskytten hyllades som ett ideal för engelska kvinnor, samtidigt som patriarkal brittisk doktrin dikterade att kvinnor borde hålla sig innanför hemmets väggar, i den privata sfären, medan den offentliga sfären (yrkeskarriär, politik, idrott, etc.) borde vara ett exklusivt manligt utrymme. Kvinnor skulle vara fruar, mödrar eller döttrar – inte krigare. Hur var dessa bägge kvinnoideal möjliga att förena? I denna fråga återfinns denna studies kärna.

Hur konstruerades engelsk krigshistorisk nationalism 1780-1845 kring den engelska långbågen? Hur inkluderades kvinnor i denna maskulina nationalism? Hur producerades, kommunicerades och reproducerades kvinnlig agens i en militärhistorisk nationalistisk diskurs, som i andra europeiska länder (exempelvis Sverige) ansågs självklart exklusivt manlig?

Sammanfattningsvis visar denna studie hur den engelska långbågen blev central för den gryende engelska moderna nationalismen 1780-1845, och hur kvinnor inkluderades – eller snarare inkluderade sig själva – i denna nationalism, som långbågeskyttar.

Studien visar att svaren på forskningsfrågorna återfinns i en sammanflätad väv av engelsk minneskultur, angående historiska krig och bågskytte; genuskonstruktioner och kvinnlig agens; konstruktioner av engelsk nationell identitet och engelsk nationalism; samt engelska samhällsutvecklingar under introduktionen av modernitet och industrialism.

Allt detta berättar historien om hur de engelska bågskytte-amazonerna – *The Amazon Archers of England* – blev en realitet 1780-1845.

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