



Towards the end of this newsletter you'll find some technical meanderings that occur to me from time to time which you are welcome to read or, equally welcome, to ignore, but interspersed with these details are some recollections that may give an idea of a different time in Archery.

I'll begin with a note of some recent successes. Elliott Reid won the Lady Paramount's Prize at the Malgrave Moonlight Shoot at the end of September. At the Racketts Indoor shoot in October, Mark Turner won, shooting Bare Bow, the gold Session Medal. We don't yet know where he finished overall. Reporting somewhat belatedly, Mark Turner also achieved a bronze medal shooting the Longbow York at the East Anglian Championships at Framlingham in August.



So, here we have the Class of October 2017 on the last day of our course series. We have Jason, Amelia, shy and retiring Ethan, George, Priti, Emma, Harry (he took part in the course we ran in April), Adam, Catherine and Colin.

Seven people took part in the course and on completion, seven have joined us, which is nice, so welcome to them.

Our thanks go to the members and their families for their help with the course sessions and we look forward to their continuing assistance to help our new members become "absorbed" into our Club. They have all been presented with certificates so have effectively been "certified" so they should soon fit in quite well!

These are the results of our first Essex Bray 1 League results, for October!

A Team, Recurve Division 1

US		CHELMSFORD TUDOR ROSE	
Chris Pollard	262	Martin Skinner	277
Mark Turner	251	Paul Greensted	273
Jason Horsley	243	Chris Higgins	270
Colin Vaughan (8 golds)	243	Chris Jordan	264
Paul Campion (7 golds)	241	Brian Whitley	238
Totals	1240		1322

This is another picture of Emma! In the time-honoured traditions of our Club, Emma borrowed a longbow and arrows. This really is the first arrow she ever shot with a longbow! Emma has the makings of an archer who is likely to become very annoying (in the nicest possible way, but still annoying!).

B Team, Recurve Division 3

US		RUSH GREEN 'B'	
Sean Hunter	237	Tony White	231
Dave Clegg	222	Andy Corbyn	221
Alan Kiley	219	Aaron O'Rourke	217
Janine Sittig	216	Ron Salt	206
Ken Dell	212	Miss Libbi Marshall (Jun.)	202
Totals	1106		1077



Longbow, Division 2

US		TUDOR	
Mark Turner	176	Alain Jacq	187
Terry Jones	138	Peter Warner	139
Totals	314		326

Ardleigh are presently 7th (of 8) in Recurve Division 1, 2nd (of 7) in Recurve Division 3 and 4th (of 7) in Longbow Division 2. Full results can be found on the Essex website at ecaa.org.uk but I will put a copy in the cabinet at the Club if you wish to see them.

Further to the note in the last newsletter regarding the Spoon Shoot Trophy for 2017, Ken Dell has already achieved the 6 shoots minimum required for the Award. If Dave Clegg, Chris Pollard, Mark Turner and Gary Prior shoot in the December Spoon, they will also have the opportunity to compete for this trophy.

For Newer members, you will receive "Archery UK" free from Archery GB but a subscription to "Bow" magazine is very worthwhile. If you are minded to gain knowledge about what all the different bits on a bow do, on the net there is a publication called "Archer's Reference" issued by Balbardie Archers. There is lots about Archery things you might need to know and many other things you didn't know you needed to know. It's very comprehensive and also gives a guide to fletching and string-making, if you are so inclined. If you wish to read about how to shoot then I recommend "Understanding Winning Archery" by Al Henderson. This was published first in 1983 but, in my opinion is still one of the best books on practical Archery. I don't seem to be alone in this, as Perris Archery stock a recent re-print and it's well worthwhile reading. Not all at once as it covers a lot of ground but good to pick up and read bits as questions arise. I always reckoned that if you just gained one bit of understanding of our sport from a book it was a good purchase. "Understanding Winning Archery" has lots!

I'm now dipping back into the past (as I'm liable to do on a fairly regular basis!) but these matters do still have relevance. I've always been keen on knowing why or how things work to better understand what I'm trying to do as the little details can make a big difference. These meanderings also may give the impression that Archery ain't such a simple sport! I leave you to be the judge.

When I began in Archery, one of the first things new archers bought, after their gear, was a fletching jig. You really do need to invest at some stage in one so you aren't reliant on others to provide the service. They don't have to be expensive. I always do my own fletching so I'm confident about what's been done to prevent them falling off! If you are in a tournament field that you've driven some distance to get to and you've problems with fletchings being shot off and you have just the recommended set of 8, it's no good having your jig, spare fletchings and nocks (if indeed you got any when you purchased your first set of arrows) somewhere at home. (Just as a side issue, if you damage another archer's arrow by your arrow hitting it when it's in the boss or in the ground that's just one of those things. If you carelessly tread on it because you aren't looking where you put your feet walking to or around the target then you offer to pay for the replacement on the spot. (If you're lucky it'll just be an Easton Jazz!))

Strings are something that, most of the time, people now buy ready-made. When I started in Archery, the only string material readily available was Dacron. This is what we still use on most of our Club's beginners' bows. These lasted a long time but did tend to wear and they stretched a little as you shot them. This made a string that was nice to use but didn't usually throw the arrow as far as a low stretch material did. That said, I did a speed test in "Art and Archery" at Hoddesdon in the early 80s when it was run by Terry Goulden. I was shooting 30 inch Easton 2016 XX75s* with heavy (10%) NIBB ("New Improved Balance") points at the time using a 69 inch TD 75 Recurve take down bow made by Marksman Archery, 42 lbs. at 28 inches, with a green Dacron 10 strand string. The average speed over several shots came out at 198 feet per second, which Terry found quite surprising, and even now is considered pretty good, especially with the new materials being used now. A low-stretch material made from Kevlar followed on but these generally lasted only for around a 1000 shots so, again, more people made their own strings or got some-one they knew, sometimes me, to make them. Now strings are usually made of some form of "Fastflight" or similar material and, with proper maintenance, these will last a long time with little stretch. Less stretch means more power is transferred to the arrow and, with the right arrows, increase the cast of the bow (cast is how far the arrow will fly), so lighter bow weights and lighter carbon/aluminium arrows may now give the same cast as the heavier bows and heavier arrows we used to use. (That said, heavier arrows and points do have their advantages, either indoors or in a strong wind, when this affects them less). You should also always keep a spare shot-in string in your case. This ensures that if there's a problem with serving or whatever you have the option of continuing in a competition, rather than spending the rest of the day chatting (not that there's anything wrong with chatting!) or going home. It's considered unwise to use any low stretch material on bows made of wood and it can invalidate guarantees. Some of the wooden bows made by Border Archery are ok with these strings but it's best to check with the manufacturers first, and especially with longbows. (* Note for guidance. XX75 describes the aluminum alloy used to make the arrows, 2016 indicates the arrows are 20/64ths of an inch in diameter (don't ask me why!) and with a wall thickness of 16/1000s of an inch). The newer carbon/aluminium arrows have a different system now, with the "spine" numbers included. These indicate how "bendy" an arrow is. The lower the number the stiffer the arrow. Someone shooting a 44lb bow with a 28 inch draw will probably be using an A/C/C arrow with a spine number around 620 whereas a 36lb bow may need an arrow with a spine at 670. These are set for points weighing up to 100 grains. More or less than this means variations in the thickness of the arrow and the spine you need. Complicated or what?!

We cannot use arrow shafts that are all carbon on our field (except Clout) because you can't easily find them with a metal detector and we have to find them because our field is also used by footballers.

I started to make my own strings very early on as I could rarely buy one ready-made from a shop that was the length I wanted for setting up my bows, even with the AMO criteria. If you make your own strings you can also make them in different thicknesses, just to see what happens. This is the “what if” branch of Archery. For someone shooting a recurve bow or a longbow, a thicker string oscillates closer to your bow arm so if someone has a problem hitting their bracer using one with less strands sometimes can resolve it, although some attention should also be paid to shooting technique. I was shown how to do make strings by a man who then made them for, amongst others, some of the Great Britain Archery Squad. I’m sure he enjoyed making them, as do I, if people don’t want them quickly! I also read a lot of books. Now we have Youtube which shows all sorts of things to do with Archery, either making stuff or shooting it but I’m quite happy to show people how it’s done. If nothing else they’ll have spent an evening chatting and drinking tea and ending up with a custom-made string that will let the arrows clip on without the loud “click” that many do, meaning the arrow is too tightly attached to the string, as this alone can cause a few problems, especially with the less well-shot arrows we all get from time to time. You will see a string made quite quickly in most Archery shops and I’m not for a moment saying they aren’t very good, but, with chatting to people and drinking tea, or whatever, I find it can take me a couple of hours to make a “proper” string. Just as an aside, when we’d made our strings on a jig g-clamped to Peter and Joan Lewis’s dining room table, we used to shoot our bows in their kitchen, over the top of the fridge at a target placed in a lean-to. Quite a few of our then members did this (and some of them are still around!) when the earth was young! Peter’s wife Joan was very tolerant, and could rustle up a very nice pizza from scratch. Joan shot for Essex too!

Back in the day there were formulas about how many strands of Dacron you should use in a string. With Dacron B50 the breaking strain of a single strand was 50lbs. If you had a bow that weighed 40lbs at 28 inches, you multiplied the draw weight by 10 and divided it by the breaking strain of the string material used (400 divided by 50 = 8). You could therefore have a string with only 8 strands but this would have been very lively and probably give poor results. I used to make them 10 strands for outdoor shooting a 12 strand for indoor but eventually used 10 strands for everything. The string materials available now last as long as you wish them to and a Fast Flight string is apparently stronger than a steel cable of similar thickness and you could use strings with only a few strands if you wished. As mentioned above, these thinner strings don’t always work very well and most strings now have 16 strands of Fastflight but if you make your own there is room for experiment. I make them now with lots of twists. This introduces some stretch but they’re, for me, nicer to shoot. This is where the “what if” comes in, as buying strings with differing strands makes things more expensive. Making your own is also very satisfying and if anyone would like guidance I’m very willing to provide it.

We can also go through the bow tuning process in the same way. There is a standard way of setting up a modern bow which will get the arrows to come out quite nicely. Pressure buttons, arrow alignment, tiller adjustment (as most bows now have) and nocking point can all be set for reasonable accuracy. We have arrow selection charts to tell us which arrows we can use with a bow, according to draw length and weight and with a point weight guide also set. I used to use an arrow in the next heavier section of the tables as I found I got better groups. Heavier points carry an arrow better in the wind but I needed a heavier bow to propel the arrow to get the maximum 100 yards for gentlemen so it really is a question of “trade-off” to get the best results. In the “what if” department, although your bow is tuned using the standard set up procedure, in practice try shooting with different nocking point heights, or different pressure button settings, just to see what happens.

The perceived wisdom is to “Bare Shaft Test” your set-up tune the nocking point at a close distance (1012 yards) to get a bare shaft impacting with fletched ones. This means the fletchings have the minimum amount of work to do in guiding the arrow. I found this set-up is, for me, also slightly sensitive and preferred the arrow without fletchings to hit an inch or so lower and left of the fletched (right-handed archer) ones as it seemed to make the bow a little more forgiving when you had a less than perfect loose (which we all can get from time to time!).

Some of you will be aware I try to encourage shooting without a target face on the boss. Whether you are shooting a round or just practicing, with a face on the target you are still thinking 10s, 9s etc. When people start in Archery I do suggest, once they’ve settled in a bit that they shoot 3 rounds so they’ll get a handicap rating and be able to take part in Club Competitions but practice shooting at a target pin or a scrap of paper can be very beneficial. With suitable guidance, shooting with your eyes shut, enables your body to “feel” how you want it to shoot. Your conscious mind can concentrate only on one thing at a time so if you are wondering about how far you’ve drawn the arrow, where you are aiming, whether you are using your back muscles properly or if your finger pressure on the string is balanced this is not conducive to comfortable shooting. Your body carries on breathing and checks your weight is equally on both feet and does all sorts of other stuff without you thinking about it and, once you’ve trained it, knows how to shoot properly, if you let it!

You can probably already tell that to get your body to act this independently of conscious thought takes a lot of time practice, but it works! However, if you, because of time or circumstance, can’t put this degree of work in then just relax and enjoy your Archery. Don’t set too high your levels of expected achievement. When you can, put in some extra time for practice and, providing you practice shooting good arrows you will see an improvement. Shooting as many arrows as quickly as you can (like they probably did necessarily at Agincourt) is not generally to be regarded as good practice! Take your time; take some deep breaths and then put the arrow on the string. You have (officially) 2 minutes to shoot an end 3 arrows in competition and 4 minutes to shoot an end of 6 if that’s how the shoot is arranged. That really is plenty of time (until you’ve “come down” twice in an end and have 30 seconds to go!). To get the stamina to take part in the big competitions takes much work. I hope to cover more details about competition shooting in the next issue.

To get noticed and go on to greater things (if you wish it so) you will need to enter the bigger competitions at County, Regional and National level, and achieve the Rounds and level of scores required. Arleigh have generally had someone representing us in the Essex County Team, on some occasions several members at one time Mark Turner has already shot for Essex in the Bare Bow Team once this year and has just been selected a second time for an Inter-Counties Match between Essex, Kent, Surrey and Middlesex on 25th November 2017 so our good wishes go to him.

One last note for our newer members. Do feel free to ask our more experienced for guidance before buying anything. Equipment that's put together to suit just you is almost certainly going to see improvements in scores quite quickly. Our Beginners' Equipment is practical but are mostly of light draw weight, while our available arrows are mostly 1916s or are sets donated by members and most of those are intended for use in heavier bows. Do work your way through the bow weights, but only by a couple of pounds at a time as anything more than that can lead to "less than satisfactory shooting". (that wasn't what I typed first, but that included some euphemisms perhaps not suitable for younger eyes, or ears!)

Brian May has Archery equipment which he'd like to sell. This didn't really get a lot of use so if any left-handed archer would be interested in a "Fiberbow" do let me know. Only Brian's handle, quiver and tab are for the left hand and the rest would be suitable for any archer. The box especially is one of the best you can get but Brian would like to sell the lot in one go and he has indicated a very reasonable price for it (less than half the original cost and is willing to negotiate. I have a list so if you are interested do let me know.



This is a photo of the Manor House at Bretons, taken probably in the early 70s before the House began to be renovated in 1976. As you can probably see, the building was then virtually derelict and the lean-to toilet (it really did lean!) on the wing to the left of the house was the only toilet we had access to when we moved to Bretons that year. The renovations were completed and the House as we know it now opened in December 1978, when this toilet disappeared. We left our ground by what is now Ardleigh Green College in 1976 because even then, the College and other building work was making our ground smaller but we did continue shooting, with much assistance from the Ardleigh Green Community Association indoors in one of the halls there for a while. We found the barn at Bretons very useful, though as we could get 20 yards in there, and 25 or 30 if you shot through the opening that was there then, into the other barn. We also shot at the Old Windmill Hall in Upminster, which had heating. That's just been knocked down now as well!

The first official shoot we had at Bretons was our Annual Clout Championships, on the field where the mound is now. It was a lovely day, I think probably in October 1976, with ideal shooting conditions and a house in the Upper Rainham Road had a bright pink front door that, with the sun behind us, was ideal as an aiming point and I used it all morning to good effect. As I mentioned, it was a lovely day, so nice in fact that the people with the pink front door decided it was a good day to do their front garden, and left their door open, leaving it to blend in with the various vegetation that then surrounded the site. I decided then that I'd use something, warning boards, anything, on the field I was in as an aiming point. Tom Hall or Jann can probably regale you with a tale of a County Clout competition many years ago, held at Tilbury when the archers competing used the cranes in the docks to help with aiming, until someone realized the jibs were rotating most of the time, causing the arrows to move around the field in various directions!