

Winter, 1996  
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# INSTINCTIVE ARCHER

M A G A Z I N E

The Lore of the Bow—The Flight of the Arrow...

**Jack Thompson Wins  
Eagle-Eye Championship!**

**Chester Stevenson  
(The Old Bowhunter)**

***A Stick...  
Without a String  
(Errol Flynn's "Robin Hood" Bow)***



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# INSTINCTIVE ARCHER™

Winter, 1996

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**REMEMBER: We offer all traditional archery organizations 100 FREE words to advertise their events, benefits, fund-raisers, etc, in each issue of Instinctive Archer™ Magazine.**



# INSTINCTIVE ARCHER™ MAGAZINE

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Rik Hinton, Editor

## From the old ~~oak desk~~ canvas tent of the Editor

While sitting inside our small, wet, wall tent waiting out the first winter storm of the year, I contemplated the passion and loyalty those of us who shoot longbows and recurves have toward our equipment, and to our sport. That loyalty is due in large part, I believe, to the history and romanticism of archery passed down to us in the writings of famous authors throughout the ages.

The Iliad, Beowulf, Robin Hood, The Grey Goose Wing, and numerous other books, plays, and poems written over the centuries have all, in one way or another, created a fascination and respect in many of

us for the rugged, adventurous life of the archer.

Waiting out this storm in a canvas tent, camped on the top of a heavily-forested mountain, far from roads or civilization, I feel little removed from the hunters and adventurers who waited out mountain storms just like this one in centuries past.

My equipment is much the same as theirs was; a simple bow meticulously crafted by a bowyer/hunter, wooden arrows crested and fletched by a master arrow-smith, and a tent skillfully sewn by a local tentmaker. Like the adventurers of old, a heavy wool shirt keeps me warm, a fact I am thankful for as I lift the tent flap and see that the cold rain has turned to snow that is now beginning to blanket the ground and the antlers of the five-point bull my wife arrowed yesterday afternoon.

Yes, this truly is the life of the archer. Braving the weather, seeking challenge and adventure in the wilderness after a long season of practice and tournaments, and bringing home meat for the winter. . . Throughout history this has been the life of archers from Africa to Siberia, from small villages to Emperors' palaces, from common men to warrior kings. They all shared, as we do, a passion for well-made bows, adventure, and the flight of an arrow.

One of them lived right here in the Northwest, and at least in this small corner of the world, his skills as a hunter and archer became legendary. His name was Chester Stevenson. You will read about him in this issue, and many of you will, for the first time, learn of an exceptional archer, and of his adventures afield with bow and arrow. Born in the late 1800s, Mr. Stevenson experienced adventures that most of us can only dream of, and in the process of living those adventures, left a legacy that to this day, influences the way many of us think and feel about archery.

Some of you will be enjoying this issue of *Instinctive Archer™* in your late-season hunting camps, or in the comfort of your favorite reading chair as winter begins in earnest over much of the northern hemisphere. As for me, well, the weather outside the tent seems to be letting up, and I can hear the bulls bugling nearby as the skies clear and the sun begins to trade places with the moon. Perhaps in the morning as dawn begins to break over the peaks, just as Chester Stevenson would have done long ago, I'll slip quietly into the forest and have an adventure. . .







## Letters to the Editor:

I didn't even know your magazine existed until the World Longbow Shoot in Wilsonville, Alabama. It's good to see a magazine that has down-to-earth and different aspects of archery instead of the lifestyles of the rich and famous. Good Luck!

Chris Denty, Vincent, AL  
C/O Creek Bowhunters  
Founded by Howard Hill, 1967

Dear Sir,

As a novice longbow and recurve collector, can you tell me where I can contact other collectors so as to trade or buy? You have a great magazine!

Fred

Dear Fred:

Here are two great contacts:

**Gary Alstaetter** at 1-800-484-5372 (PIN #2651), and

**Tom Baldwin**, *Toxophilite Collector*  
2219 Apache Ct., Ft. Collins, CO 80525

Dear Rik,

As an interesting aside—ref. your request for photos of “buddies” (Summer/Fall issue, 1996)—you may like to know that the name derives from the pairing of archers at the butts, in competition, who were then called “butties.” This expression is still used by the Woodsmen of Arden. . . By the way—if you hear an Englishman talk of a “butty” he means a sandwich, as in “bacon butty”—not to be confused with the archery team.

Veronica Soar, Bristol, U.K.

Dear Instinctive Archer:

I'm just getting started and I'm looking for a video on the Howard Hill style of shooting. Do you know where I can get a copy?

Tom Laskowski, Seven Hills, OH

Dear Tom,

*John Schulz has an excellent, top quality video on the Howard Hill style of shooting. No archer's video library should be without this one. You should be able to purchase it from most traditional archery suppliers.*

Hello,

My Christian name is David, but my earned name is Grey Wolf. The Nez Perce gave me the name Grey Wolf.

I was looking through one of my brother's magazines when I saw your ad. I could not believe my eyes when I saw the words “Instinctive Archer.”

I've been an instinctive archer since I was ten years old, but this is the first time I've ever knew that there was a magazine for such as I am, an instinctive archer.

I have never subscribed to any magazine personally as I've received many as gifts. This will be a first for me.

Grey Wolf, Caro, MI

Dear Sir/Madam,

Congratulations on your new magazine! If we can help here at the StickBow News, the magazine of the Traditional Bowhunters of Florida, let us know. We have over 350 members, many of whom would probably find your new publication worthwhile.

Sincerely,

Jay Campbell, Editor, T.B.O.F.'s Stickbow News  
2601 W. Fountain Blvd., Tampa, FL 33609

Dear Sir,

I hope this finds you in good health and great spirits. . . My hope is that you'll run a great many how-to articles on the fletcher's craft. Articles of this nature are surprisingly few in number in recent years.

I say surprisingly because the vast majority of archery texts agree that one's arrows ought to be supremely well made and that a well-made bow, though obviously not a bad factor is nonetheless not as important as well-matched and skillfully-made arrows. As a traditional archer I'm talking about wood arrows, not what I consider impersonal, high-tech, junk metal or plastic arrows!

But, alas, I've digressed. My point is that there are more bow-building articles than fletching articles out there and this is a situation I'd like very much to see, at least partially, remedied in the pages of Instinctive Archer™. . . Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I'll be anxiously awaiting my first issue.

May your arrows fly true,

Timothy Hills, Depew, NY

Dear Tim,

*Thank you for the letter, and for the great list of possible articles on different aspects of the fletchers' craft. Keep an eye on future issues, I think you will see several of your suggestions come to fruition. As for this issue, turn the page. . .*

## LEARN

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COVER PHOTO: Jack Thompson, 1996 McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout Grand Champion, being congratulated by





## An Alternative to Cedar Shafts and The Standard Shaft Finish

by Bob Adler

Photos by Jameson Adler

S omewhere around four years ago I swore off cables and wheels as I threw my squeaky techno-bow out of a tree. This emotional reaction happened after an aluminum shaft squeaked along a rest/plunger set-up and chased off a very large doe for a third time on the final sit of the season. The "Tie Down Tree" where this occurred has since been rendered off limits due to a lightening bolt. The techno-bow was repaired and joyfully sold at a bargain price along with a ton of frustrating accessories.

All had been in balance and harmony for me since then, archery wise, traditional style, of course, until the cedar crisis reached me personally. Cedar, I have been told by some very expert arrowsmiths, had gone downhill in quality. This left me with only a half dozen semi-finished cedar shafts in my back-up arsenal. Everything I had owned was set up for 11 /32 cedar shafts spined from 65 to 70 pounds to match my four custom-made longbows. And then the unthinkable happened. The quality supply of cedar shut down, and most alternative wood shafting comes in 23/64 above 60-pound spines. The hundreds of 11 /32 field points, blunts, and nocks will have to be relegated to my offspring as they grow and strengthen into higher poundage. So I was at the end of my shaft(s), so to speak.

The hunt (pun intended) was on in earnest for "the" replacement wood shaft. I was finally caught in the middle of this quest with the rest of the traditional wood hounds out there. Somehow, and this is only my opinion, aluminum and/or carbon, for me personally, just don't make it—with a longbow. Wood, and only wood, is the ticket for me.

The first thing I did was read as many books and articles as I could find about all the different types of wood available for shafts and their unique qualities. Then I spoke on the

phone to all sorts of arrowsmiths to find out their opinions. I learned there are negatives with virtually every wood type, and/or quality of shafts, and/or quantity of supply. One type of wood, Sitka Spruce, however, supposedly had the characteristics I was looking for. It was as light in weight as cedar; stronger by some opinions; maintained its straightness well; and had consistency of spine. One drawback, this once hard-to-find wood shafting had, was that it was only available in 23/64. I could live with that.

To confirm the findings of my investigation, I sought out the authority, Jay Massey, per an old article I found. Looking at one of Jay's advertisements for guided hunts, I thought he lived near my time zone since he was located in AK. AK stands for Alaska (not Arkansas) so I woke up Mr. Massey at around 4:00 AM his time. Well I have to tell you, traditional archers are the nicest folks. Jay wiped the sleep from his eyes as I profusely apologized. He answered my questions about the elusive Sitka Spruce most graciously. Seems Jay Massey hand forms his shafts in a most primitive style... compared to anything I ever intend to do. Jay previously had written "*I thought I'd finally settled on Sitka Spruce as being the finest arrow material I'd ever tried - until I discovered river cane.*" During our phone conversation Jay told me he now prefers river cane shafts to anything else. Cane is way out of my realm of arrow building, so I decided to stick with Sitka Spruce. Jay and I also spoke for a while about traditional bowhunting in general, and his special Alaska wilderness float trips, which sound incredibly awesome. I hope someday to make that journey.

It took me about four months and a whole bunch of phone calls to locate Bill Boneczar of Allegheny Mountain Arrow Woods, who had experience with Sitka Spruce. Bill has



located a reliable supply of quality Sitka Spruce wood to make into shafts. I ordered a test dozen: Greybark stained, sealed, grain weight matched (to within 10 grains), properly hand spined (against the grain) at 65 to 70 pounds, cut to length, and tapered for nocks and field points. Bill puts on a special field point taper upon request that has a little shoulder on it making a very smooth "shaft to back of point fit." I believe it's really worthwhile to have your target practice shafts made with this shoulder on the point taper for ease of pulling arrows out of targets. Broadhead arrows should be ordered with the standard point taper.

When the shafts arrived I instantly noticed how straight, beautiful, and consistent the grain of the Sitka Spruce was shaft to shaft. My wife got a little upset when I spent the next two nights exclusively fletching up the shafts and getting them ready to shoot. They looked spectacular, but how would they fly?

The first shot was perfectly straight, and I'm certainly no Howard Hill. The rest of the dozen flew like guided missiles. I was thrilled, to say the least. After three months, and I don't know how many thousands of shots later, with that original dozen, only one shaft had broken. They hold up like iron. I'm completely sold on Sitka Spruce, so much so that I ordered ten dozen. You read that right. Ten dozen matched shafts. I don't want to get caught short again like I did with cedar.

My original decision to do my own staining and dipping was to save on the cost of finishing all those arrows. Another important reason for finishing my own arrows was that I wanted a finish that would last longer and make it easier to pull my arrows out of targets. As it turned out the overall cost (including some new workshop supplies) is slightly less than having them done professionally, but the result is, in my opinion, worthwhile. I had never undertaken this involved a project before because I'm not very "handy," but I wanted a better finish on my shafts than what had been professionally done for me in the past. This staining and dipping process, I believe, is the most frightening part of arrow building, especially for "all thumbs" people like myself. It is also probably the most confusing part as well. If I can figure it

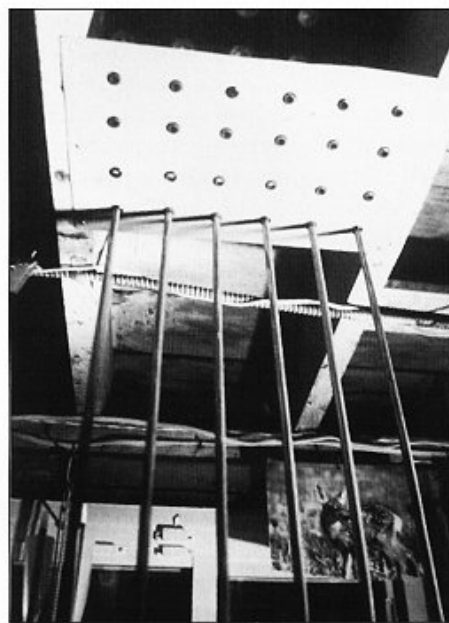
out, and produce a beautiful set of arrows, I'm sure anyone can do it, and do it well. Here's an easy soup to nuts method:

1. Order your shafts. Do this first since it takes a while for orders to be processed due to availability and hand matching. When ordering, consult with your arrow shaft supplier to determine the spine and grain weight best suited to your needs. I strongly suggest you order select shafts, closely matched for spine and grain weight, that are cut to length and tapered for nocks and points/broadheads. The purchase price of machines needed for cutting, weighing, nock and point tapering, and spining far exceeds what the average individual will ever pay for having this finishing work done professionally.

2. Find a place to stain and dip. Look for a location that will be undisturbed, has excellent ventilation, and is dust free. A place with an overhead set of beams, like in a cellar near your workbench, will make an ideal work station for your drying rack. Make sure, though, that the area can be well ventilated.

3. Make a drying rack. This took some very minor ingenuity. Take a piece of sheet metal 16 1/2" X 9 1/2" and drill 24 7/16" holes (4 rows of 6). Also drill along the edge of each of the 9 1/2" sides of the sheet metal three evenly spaced 3/32" starter holes to screw the sheet metal into the rafters. In each of the 7/16" holes put a 5/16" rubber grommet (i.e. Midwest #2699C). When you stain or dip your 23/64 shafts you can easily stick them into the rubber grommets to hang and dry. Have a good supply of newspaper nearby and place multiple sheets underneath everything to handle any dripping. I also strongly recommend that you place a glass baking pan directly underneath the drying rack.

4. Order stain, sealer, and thinner. Although one manufacturer of arrow making supplies (stains, sealers, and colors) has been the "standard" and around forever, I chose to analyze some options. I'm glad I did. I found a distributor who has 1990s technology with regard to some arrow making supplies. Frank Mezzapelle, Jr. of Duncan Distributing Co. in Stuart, Florida (Duncan Direct) spent a good deal of time on the phone with me explaining how their moisture cured urethane, Van-Flex would work and how to use it. Van-Flex produces an extremely smooth finish that is very flexi-



Arrows suspended from the ceiling in the drying rack.

ble and heat resistant. These properties are ideal for finishing flexing arrows that then enter targets and create huge amounts of friction. (This friction causes some other arrow finishes to literally hot-glue arrows into certain targets making arrow removal very difficult.) Frank also offers a variety of colorful oil-based stains, compatible with Van-Flex. I suggest ordering a quart of Van-Flex, a quart of thinner, and a half pint of oil-based stain (I chose Penchrom English Oak). This will be more expensive than the "standard" supplier's products, but since only 2 coats of Van Flex are needed, the durability is amazing, and will be enough for many dozens of shafts, I'm convinced it was a very good choice.

5. Order other supplies. It is a very good idea to think through carefully what else you might need, so you can be that frugal person who orders certain items in bulk (hundreds) to save on quantity discounts and shipping. Order broadheads, field points, blunts, judos, feathers (36 per dozen shafts), nocks, fletching jig(s), dipping tube (Pro-Dipper), Duco cement and dispensing bottle, alcohol lamp (denatured alcohol for those of us who took a year to figure that one out), hot melt adhesive, etc., if you haven't ordered them already.

I prefer to keep arrows simple. I use one color of fletch per type of arrow. That is to say, broadhead hunting arrows all have white fletch only; field point tar-

get arrows get only yellow fletch; blunt, out of the tree, practice arrows have blue fletch only; etc. This concept, plus the fact that my shafts are very plain with no crown dips or cresting keeps me sane (not hung up on artistic arrows), my arrows are simplistic, and very easy to see where they hit. Blue, by the way, is a color not readily found in nature. Since I shoot practice arrows with blunts from the tree before afternoon sits and after morning sits, the all blue fletching (with white nocks) makes it very easy to find my practice arrows. One other preference of mine I'd like to share, is for Stottler Mid-Nocks. In my opinion, this nock is easy to properly align on an arrow shaft, provides consistent release tension from the bow string, and comes in a 23/64 size.

For dipping your stained shafts, you may wish to use a "Pro-Dipper," which is made from a solvent-resistant plastic. The mayonnaise jar size lid allows you to easily and positively close the urethane mix you don't use right away. You can easily fashion a Pro-Dipper holder by drilling a 1 3/8" hole in a piece of board and affix it to your work bench. The Pro-Dipper holds about a pint and a half of fluid, so be prepared to mix a little more than a cup of Van-Flex and an equal amount of thinner. I strongly recommend you make up a glass measuring jar with a tight sealing lid for just this purpose. Use a permanent marker on the jar to indicate measures up to two cups with quarter-cup increments. Have another glass jar ready for discarding run off.

**6. Staining.** Select two dozen raw shafts and set them close to the drying rack. Put down plenty of newspaper to work on. Find a dry, clean, rag. Wear latex rubber gloves. Mix the stain thoroughly using a clean stirrer, like a section of a raw shaft. Dip the rag lightly in the stain and wipe it on the shaft in long strokes. Start sparingly, to get a feel for how much stain to wipe on. Cover the entire shaft including point and nock ends. Once the shaft is completely stained, push the point end of each shaft into the rubber grommets. Let the stain dry about 18 hours before dipping.

**7. Dipping in urethane (sealer and coating).** Make sure the area you intend to work in has excellent ventilation, this stuff is really strong, and uses a xylene-based solvent. A chemical respira-

tor (mask) with charcoal filters per the Van-Flex warning label (MSHA and NIOSH Approval No. TC-23C) is absolutely necessary. Don't try this job without the respirator (also available from Frank at Duncan Direct). Add a fan that will vent fumes out of the area you are working in. Wear latex rubber gloves. Again, cover your work station with plenty of newspapers. Opening the can of Van-Flex with a screw driver can be very difficult as it is sealed well to keep out moisture. With a paint can opener, and a little determination the can will easily open. Mix 1 1/4 cup of Van-Flex and 1 1/4 cup of Van-Flex Moisture Free Thinner in the glass measuring jar. A section from an unfinished shaft may be used as a stirrer. Then pour the mixture into the Pro-Dipper. Bubbles don't seem to be a problem with Van-Flex. Hold the point end of the stained shaft between your finger tips and dip up to about an 1/8" into the point taper. When you pull the stained shaft out of the Pro-Dipper, the urethane mix should run off rather freely, back into the Pro-Dipper. When it has basically slowed to a slow drip, insert the point end of the arrow shaft into the overhead drying rack by pushing up from the nock end. This is where those latex rubber gloves come in very handy. Also you may wish to have a rag around to wipe off your gloved fingers after every dip. At times, you should use the next stained shaft you are about to dip as a stirrer to maintain a consistent mixture. Don't be surprised by the amount of dripping. I strongly recommend you find a glass pan to catch the dripping urethane that runs off from the shafts, which is quite substantial. Discard the runoff in the extra glass jar mentioned previously, as it has been exposed to more moisture than that in the Pro-Dipper and could cure at a different rate. Clean up with the thinner, especially lids and threads of the Pro-Dipper and jars so you can open them again.

After 24 hours, when the first coat of Van-Flex is fully cured, you need to sand the shaft smooth with 3M Tri-M-Itte paper, 400 grit, a non-silicone type sandpaper. Then wipe clean with a clean, dry rag. Do this before applying the second coat of Van-Flex which cures beautifully smooth. I recommend that second coated shafts be hung in the drying rack nock-taper up. This is because as the Van-Flex drips and dries, it is ever so slightly

thicker towards the direction of the drip. This method of two coats drying in opposite directions produces an even coating along the entire length of the shaft. After another 24 hours the second dip will be cured and might possibly need a very light finishing touch with "0000" grade steel wool.

I think you will find that not only are these Van-Flex finished Sitka Spruce shafts beautiful, but they are easier to pull out of targets and will last longer than any other wood shaft you ever used. Also, it may be, from a hunting point of view, that the combination of a stronger and smoother shaft provides some advantage.

**8. Install nocks, fletch, and points.** If you have never fletched an arrow before, having someone show you the ropes is the best way. If no one is around to show you how; it really is easy. I suggest you read everything you can get your hands on first and watch a video if possible. Practice on some old broken shafts to get the hang of it. To fletch and install nocks on Van-Flex dipped shafts, use Duco Cement from a dispensing bottle. Use Ferr-L-Tite or other hot melt glue to install field points, blunts, judos, and/or broadheads.

**9. Shoot your arrows with personal pride.** Amazingly, you will find your hand-crafted arrows are personally satisfying just to look at. After you shoot them repeatedly and they last a long, long time, you'll show them off for their durability. Eventually when you retire them, you will save them for other uses. Somehow they just don't deserve to be thrown away.

To sum it up, professional arrowsmiths charge quite a bit to produce their finished products, and rightly so. It is a very time consuming process in general, and an art, if crown dipping and cresting are involved. We not so handy traditionalists can produce very self gratifying arrows of a simpler and more modest look using some "modern" products. It really is easy and satisfying. Give it a try and I'm sure the next deer you get will be that much more of a trophy for reasons only we "all thumbs, do it yourself" bowhunters will understand.







# Crazy Horse and Geronimo

## *An Archer's Saga of Disaster, Recovery, and Narrow Osage Bows*

by  
Paul King

### **P**ART ONE - DISASTER

It is four fourteen on a foggy January morning, and my wife and I cuddle deep inside a thickly-covered winter's sleep. Suddenly we are awakened by knocking on our front door. This is not ordinary knocking; it is heavy pounding, a panicked cadence that would have probably awakened the dead. Trish says, "What in the world?" as I reach across her to turn on the nightlight that sits on our bedstand. The light does not come on. We are in total darkness. Completely awake now, I get up and feel around for the blue jeans I had hours earlier, dropped at the foot of the bed. Gratefully, I find them, little knowing that these jeans would soon be the only items of clothing I had left to my name.

At the door there is no one, and I am mad as hell. Yelling terrible invectives into the foggy darkness, I declare what I would do to whoever has done this if I caught them or if they ever dared to do this again. Little did I realize that I was cursing the man who had just saved the lives of my entire family. I try turning on the porch light, and it does not

respond. None of the lights will come on, and I do not yet understand. Then we notice an eerie sound coming from my bow shop. A year earlier we had converted out attached double garage into an office and shop, and now a noise came from that area sounding like water running loudly, wildly. My first thought was that some water line had broken, and I rushed to open the door. It was at that moment, the moment that the doorknob scalded my hand, that I realized what was going on. The unthinkable. A nightmare. The entire east end of our house was completely engulfed in flames.

Realizing that the two beautiful German Shepherds that had been allowed to sleep in the shop in the bitter cold of high desert winter were already gone, I dared not open that burning door. Trish was rousing the boys, Ian and Brandon, digging around for clothing, heading for the front door. I grabbed up our dachshund, Max, who slept on the couch,

Photo: Dave Doran (left) holding "Geronimo" and author (right) with "Crazy Horse"

handed him to Trish, and then began fumbling around in the cabinets for our fire extinguisher. Our next-door neighbor, the man who had banged on the door, had already called the fire department and the police. The fire extinguisher was of no help, the garden hoses were uselessly frozen, and the fire department arrived too late.

As my family sat across the street watching our house burn to the ground through a kindly neighbor's picture window, we were in a state I could never adequately describe. We were detached, still not comprehending or believing what was happening to us. We were witnessing the disappearance of so many things that could not be replaced, it was simply more than our emotions could absorb. The dogs, Koda and Zoe, who we doted on and all loved dearly, my little parrot, Rosie, who loved to sit on my shoulder and pick at the shavings when I was scraping bows; the stacks of photographs that chronicled our children's lives; the heirlooms that were all we had left of relatives past; my hand made bows, thirty of them, a labor of love, all gone. The loss was total and complete. All we had left were ourselves, the kids' pajamas, the wife's house robe, and one pair of too-tight Wrangler blue jeans.

## PART TWO - RECOVERY

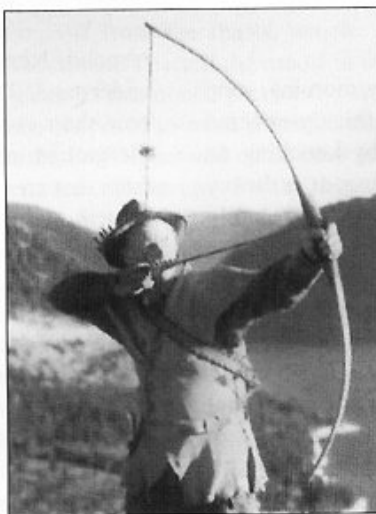
The fire was about a year and a half ago, and as of this writing, I can happily report that our recovery is nearly complete. In fact, we are, in many ways, better off than before. Things were lost that cannot be replaced, but good things come of bad events. Thanks to good insurance and a lot of "sweat equity," our overcrowded suburban house that was just like every house on the block has been replaced by a two-story house overlooking the Deschutes River (there is a great fishing hole about two-hundred yards away). A year spent designing and building much of this new home ourselves has enabled us to enjoy a considerable "upgrade" from the house we lost in the fire. We were even able to replace worn and tattered furniture and clothing with new things, a luxury we certainly had never enjoyed before. I've set up a new bow shop, restocked my attic with yew, vine maple, juniper, and osage

staves, and started cranking out hand-made bows and conducting workshops again.

But far more important than the recovery of our material possessions, the "Great Fire of '95" has enabled me to regain something that no insurance policy, no matter how thorough its coverage, could ever hope to replace: my faith in human nature. Before our disaster, approaching my fiftieth year of life, I had begun to see the world as a dog-eat-dog, every-man-for-himself kind of existence. It seemed that everyone I knew had abandoned their personal integrity. No one did what they said they were going to do any more. People tried to rip you off in business dealings. Craftsmen and service people were content with shoddy products and services (our fire was the result of cut-rate, poorly-installed electrical wiring). Even a couple of my old hunting buddies had started flaking out on me. In days gone by, these guys would rather have hunted with a terrible case of the flu or a sprained ankle than stand up a friend. The old American values, clichés like "an honest day's work for an honest day's pay" and "a man is only as good as his word" had become pathetic jokes. Or so it seemed to me.

I was wrong. People really do care about others, but I had simply lost my ability to see it. In the dark days right after our "disaster" people came out of the woodwork to help us. Volunteers from the Red Cross were there before the fire was even out. They provided blankets and clothing and were already making arrangements for things we hadn't even thought of, things like prescription drugs and eyewear, and even the keys for our cars. A couple days later, when I returned to my job at the small college where I teach, an envelope sat in my mailbox filled with checks and cash collected by my colleagues. There was even a check for a hundred dollars from a part-time instructor I hardly knew, a man that I know could not afford such a generous gesture (a couple of months ago I tried to pay him back and he refused to take my money). Likewise, when my wife returned to her job at the private school where she is an administrator, she found that her co-workers had opened a bank account in her name with a balance that still makes me blush. At the motel where we stayed while we were looking for a rental there were dozens of phone calls, some from people we didn't know, offering all

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kinds of help. Load after load of things like clothing, home-cooked meals, and reading material showed up at our door. One lady brought us her "extra" VCR as a gift, so we could watch rented movies. A computer drafting instructor from our college, a guy whom I had never met, offered to help design our new house when we started to rebuild, an offer he later followed up on. A former student arrived one evening, grinning, holding a box containing about fifty pounds of elk meat. *"I knew you lost the game you had in your freezer, and I thought this would make you feel better,"* he said. This wasn't just plain old hamburger and sausage, either; this was a huge box of ham steaks and backstrap. I'm sure it was the best he had, and yes, it did make me feel better.

The response of the traditional archery community makes me especially proud to be associated with such generous and caring people. Hari Heath stopped by on his way from the Glass Buttes Knap-In to a shoot in Washington State and restored the charred bowyer's vice that he had sold me a year or so before. A fellow from England, One Ian Bickerstaffe, with whom I had corresponded for a few months, sent me a beautiful English Longbow. "Little compensation," he said. Little does he know

how much compensation that bow was at the time.

The list of good deeds goes on and on, but the topper, the gesture that brought me to tears, came one evening when I got a call from Steve Allely, asking if he might stop by. Steve Allely is, of course, the illustrator on all three volumes of *The Bowyer's Bible*. Considered by many to be this county's foremost knapper, Steve is also a superb artist, bowyer, and reproducer of Native American Artifacts. He is, in my opinion, a great hero of the primitive archery scene. And there he was, an hour or so later, standing at my front door. He was holding a box about twice the size of a shoebox and a long, slender bundle wrapped in butcher's paper.

Once inside, he placed these things on my kitchen table and told me that he and John Strunk had decided that they didn't want me to use a little fire as an excuse to stop making bows, so they had put a few things together that they thought I ought to have. From the box, Steve lifted all three volumes of *The Bowyer's Bible*, all signed and personalized inside the front covers with beautiful drawings of different point styles of Native American arrowheads. He also handed me a lovely old drawknife, as sharp as a razor, saying *"These things are*

*from me."* Then he pulled out a scraper and a pair of beautiful old rasps from John Strunk. Inside the butcher paper bundle were four staves that John had sent as well. I was overwhelmed. If you are the sort who doesn't like to see a grown man cry, this was not a place you would have wanted to be. One man's faith in humanity is a wonderful thing to have restored.

### Part Three - Narrow Osage Bows

By this time, I am sure you are wondering what this article could possibly have to do with Crazy Horse and

Geronimo. The answer lies in the bundle of staves. There were four staves,



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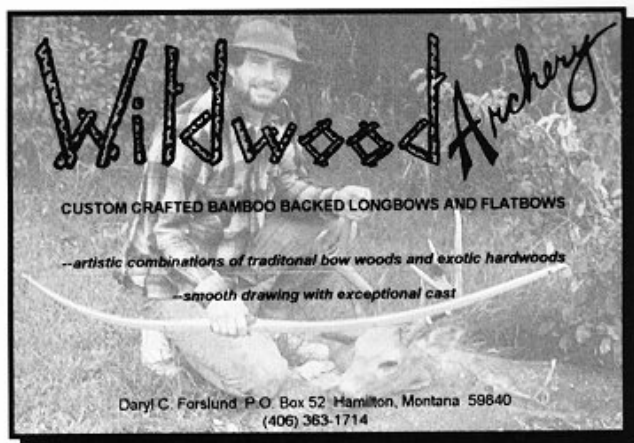
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remember. Three of them were of locust and they were just about perfect. String-straight and knotless, these staves were well-seasoned and just about as good as locust staves can get. But that fourth stave was anything but perfect. It was a crooked little osage stick of a thing that seemed too narrow to be made into anything but, perhaps, a bow for a child. I thought of reducing it to firewood, but some small voice in the back of my mind told me that if it had come from John Strunk it must be worth something. Little did I know that this little wisp of a stave would one day be worth a great deal (at least to me), that it would bear the name "Crazy Horse," and that it would fling arrows at speeds gratifying to any maker of primitive bows.

I made bows of the locust staves, one auctioned off as a contribution to a local museum, another rendered (through no fault of its own) into a pitifully-failed recurve. The little osage stave was mixed in with several dozen other staves in my attic, all but forgotten over a year.

Then, on a recent summer evening, I went over to Dave Doran's house to purchase a few Port Orford cedar shafts. Dave runs an outfit called Archery Past and is extremely knowledgeable about all things concerning traditional and primitive archery. He is also one heck of a nice guy, and I always enjoy talking to him.

Somehow, during the course of our conversation the subject of John Strunk's beautiful bows came up. Dave's face lit up as he said "*Here, I want to show you something.*" Then he went over to a dusty corner of his shop and picked up a velvet-cased bow. Before he pulled the bow out of its cover, he told me the story of how it had come to be in his possession. Apparently he had been at some shoot or other and had run into John Strunk. He told John about a Javelina hunt that he was planning on one of Geronimo's old stomping grounds. Then Dave told me that John just reached over and handed him a bow and said, "*Here. Take this with you. Maybe it will bring you good luck.*" The name of the bow? None other than "Geronimo."

As I saw Geronimo slide gently out of its case, I was quite surprised. It was not like anything I had seen before. Its finish and character were stunningly beautiful, but this is the characteristic of all of John Strunk's bows. The thing that was unique about this bow was that it was so narrow. I had no idea that an osage bow of such little width was even possible.



"Crazy Horse" on the right, "Geronimo" on the left. Arrow is a housewarming gift from Steve Allely.

Stringing up the bow, Dave handed it to me and said, "*Here, give it a pull.*" I was even more surprised. This was one stiff bow! On the bottom limb Strunk's beautiful calligraphy told me that the bow was 62# at 25", and this was the strength of a relatively short, unbacked osage bow no more than an inch wide at any point. The bow was as sweet as you please, with very little stack at the end of the draw. "Live and learn," I thought to myself, "Live and learn."





Left to right: Dave Doran, Paul King, Steve Allely, Jay Massey, and Steve Olsen admiring "Crazy Horse." Photo was taken at a get-well party held for Jay in my new home. Jay is recovering from major surgery. Steve Olsen is a traditional bowhunter and performed Jay's surgery.

Dave went on to tell me about the Javelina he had killed with "Geronimo." He was much impressed by how well it shot, and told me of how favorably the little bow had compared to his hunting companion's fiberglass recurve as they stump shot together, practicing for the hunt.

Then, several days after my visit with Dave Doran, I was rummaging around in my attic, trying to select a stave for my next bow when I noticed that skinny little stave Strunk had given me, the one I had almost rendered into

firewood. Suddenly it hit me. There was a bow in that little stave! Perhaps even a great bow, a bow much like "Geronimo." I have learned a great deal from John Strunk in the past few years. I've learned from his writings, from direct teaching in his workshop, and now I had learned a valuable lesson by simply observing one of his bows. The lesson? Osage bows don't have to be of the Jim Hamm "flat-bow" or recurve variety that I had always thought of in the past. Osage is an excellent wood for longbows or even narrow short bows. Inversely, yew, lemonwood, and hickory aren't, as I had always assumed, the only woods that make good, narrow-limbed bows. The revelation opened many doors in my knowledge of bowery that will always be of great value.

Within a matter of days John Strunk's crooked

little stave had become a bow, a bow even narrower than "Geronimo," a bow rich with character that cast its first arrow more swiftly than I had ever expected. As this first shaft exploded from my hands the little bow whispered the name "Crazy Horse" into my delighted mind's ear; and so its name had come to be.

One great advantage of narrower bows is that you can often times get more than one bow out of a single stave. By splitting a standard commercial osage stave that came from Bitter Creek Bow Works, a stave that would normally have rendered only one bow, I was able to make a pair of lovely little bows that I have named "Rocky" and "Bullwinkle." One bow was named "Rocky" because a number of small knots on the belly were filled with inlaid turquoise, and since the bows were a pair, "Bullwinkle" seemed like an appropriate name for the other.

So is there a lesson to be learned from the story of "Crazy Horse and Geronimo?" Perhaps. Perhaps the lesson is that the character of both men and wood may be capable of exceeding your wildest dreams.

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# BLUE MOUNTAIN BUCK

By  
**Robert V. Martin**

**T**he movement that had caught my eye materialized into a buck, a big mule deer buck! As I watched, the buck turned and started heading towards me, right towards me. My first thought was "yes!" my next thought was "Oh, no! If he keeps on that course he'll have me pinned down as he runs over the top of me!"

It was late September, hot and dry and the woods were like a tinder box in this part of eastern Oregon's Blue Mountains. The woods were so dry that it sounded like we were walking on corn chips as we moved through it. My hunting companions, Steve Layman, Joe Klapak, and I had been hunting hard for elk in these rugged mountains and canyons for going on two weeks. We had found elk and had bugled in several bulls but the odds had not been in our favor as yet. So far things had been in the "just one more step and I would have, could have, should have, gotten a shot!" category.

We had a base camp on the edge of some wilderness canyons and every day, long before dawn the age-old ritual of the hunt would begin. Day packs were checked and canteens double checked, bows and arrows gathered from their place in the corner of the cook tent. Hunters moving out into the darkness, the brilliant stars in the clear mountain air giving enough light to see the trail until reaching the dark timber. The faint

pink predawn glow would light our paths the last couple of miles of our daily trek that would lead us to steep high ridges where the elk would be headed towards north slope bedding areas. Most of the elk tucked in their beds for the day by 9 a.m. and then things would quiet down as the temperature would rise into the 90s.

Having expended much time and energy by the end of the morning hunt, we would usually settle into the shade of a mighty Ponderosa pine. Day packs serving nicely as pillows, we would snuggle in amongst the hummocks of bear grass to sleep the sleep of the hunter. The ridgetop breezes softly blowing through the pines that watched over us providing a soothing lullaby. The peacefulness of the mountain solitude was good medicine. Under such circumstances a man can hear that inner voice that is so easily drowned out in the hustle of daily life "down below."

Around midday a strategically-thrown pine cone would usually arouse the sleeping hunter that was contemplating the universe a little too soundly under his eyelids. Time for lunch and strategies for the evening hunt; time enough for stories acted out and told in whispered tones. Tales from a hundred other lonely places relived in the mind's eye as each of us would again settle in for another siesta in preparation of the many rugged miles of ground that were yet to be covered



before our heads would hit our cots that night. Later, we would each go our separate ways on our separate adventures and then find our way back alone, to rendezvous long after sunset.

We were into elk every day and had some good chases and bugling sessions, exchanging challenges with the masters of the mountains. Nothing touches the heart of the elk hunter like actually having conversation with his quarry! And oh what conversations take place, what magical moments, when the bugles echo and antlers thrash saplings, saliva is flung about and eyes search for ivory tips moving, floating above the alders, eight feet above the forest floor! Then the wind hits you in the back of the neck and you are left all alone, the only sound after the crashing subsides is the thudding of your heart! At such times one can truly appreciate the concept of "catch and release" bowhunting!

Darkness would find us usually about five miles from camp making that last stalk or hurling that last challenging bugle at some herd bull laughing at us from amidst his harem as he would travel down a ridgetop into a lush creek bottom to spend the night doing what elk do best this time of year. We would hit camp about 11:00 at night and throw some steaks in the skillet and make lunches for tomorrow, 4 a.m. would find us up and at it again! It was a familiar pattern that we loved and it suited our nomadic hunting style.

As the last few days of our hunt started to close in upon us, Steve and I decided to take the morning and go to another area to hunt for mule deer. As is often the case, although elk and mule deer are found side by side throughout Oregon, and the West for that matter, "good" mule deer country is not always "good" elk country. In the area we were hunting for elk, deer are rarely seen. A few miles away deer may be abundant and elk may be rare. Each lives a life with differing needs and preferences. Some areas have just the right "mix" and will produce results for both species, I'm still looking!

We left our base camp in Steve's faithful old pickup and drove about 10 miles to an area we had our eye on for some time, having seen several nice bucks there previously. We found a



Steve (left) and the author standing behind their artistic, mountain-top creation, "The Monument."

lot of sign and hunted the clearings and thickets along the canyon rim earnestly without success. We wondered where the deer had vanished to and in late morning decided to still hunt a possible bedding area on the flats above the canyon.

The terrain on top was just a rolling plateau covered with fir thickets and scattered stands of "older growth" fir mixed with outstanding Ponderosa pine monarchs. The fir trees in this area are dying like flies due to insect infestations and several years of drought. Denuded thickets everywhere had sprouted "forests" of five foot tall bull thistles.

They were everywhere, in some places forming impenetrable walls of needle sharp thorns that penetrated clothing like a broadhead through butter! In places the ground was covered like snow by their downy seed puffs. Years of fire suppression has created a fuel supply in these forests that will ignite one day and burn like Yellowstone did!

Steve and I split up and took different but parallel routes. A short while later, in a dead fir thicket, amongst the jungle of bull thistles, Steve first saw the buck. As Steve still hunted as silently as possible, he unknowingly had

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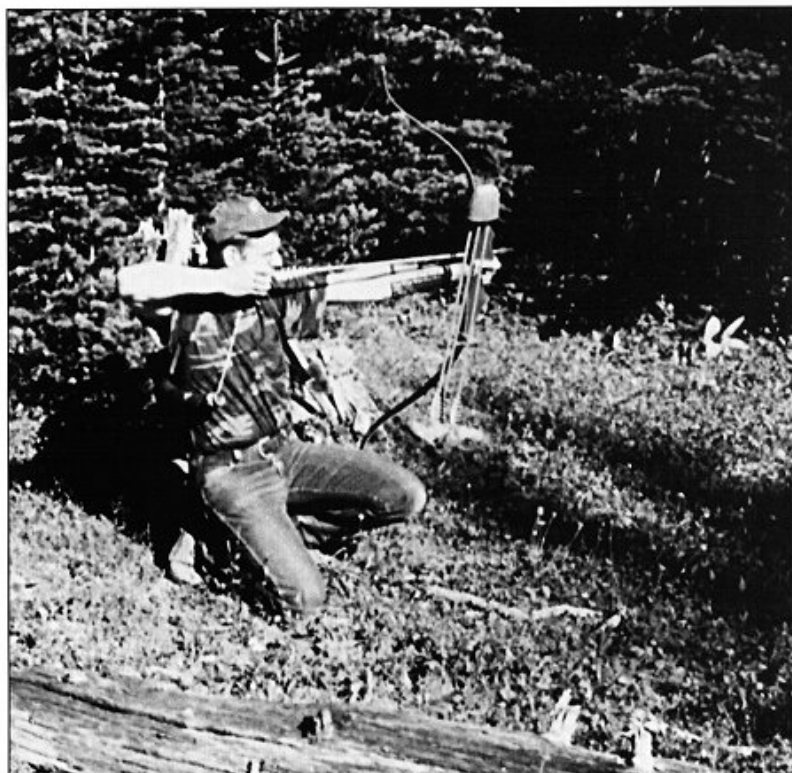
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I thought "this is it," and rose from my crouched position as the buck trotted to my left.

walked within 10 feet of the bedded buck! The buck rose majestically out of the ground just feet away! Steve said the dead saplings were so thick that they were an impenetrable screen and there was no way he could have gotten an arrow to the buck even at that close range. The buck looked back over his shoulder at the frustrated bowhunter 10 feet away and then without running, silently slipped away, swallowed by the forest.

Meanwhile I had observed the faint tan body shapes of several elk across the draw through the screen of a dead fir thicket and had put the big sneak on them. As I prepared to cover the last few yards to the edge of the thicket, I nocked an arrow in anticipation of getting a shot at my elusive quarry!

Through the screen of undergrowth and thistles I would catch a glimpse now and then of those tan col-

ored elk shapes above me. I finally reached my intended vantage point and leaning around a tree observed my quarry: several large rounds of Ponderosa pine! It had been a "buckskin" log that had fallen on a stock fence right-of-way and had been bucked into elk size chunks! Just the right size, shape, and color!

Just my luck! I smiled to myself, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. As I stood there admiring how elk-like the color of the logs were, I noticed movement along the edge of the stock fence in the distance. I crouched low behind one of the logs that was about 2-1/2 feet high.


The buck twitched his ear, flicked his tail and looked back over his shoulder the way he had come. I didn't know the buck was checking to see if Steve was still back there trying to count coup on him. As I watched, the buck turned and started heading towards me, right towards me. My first thought was "yes!", my next thought was "Oh, no! If he keeps on that course he'll have me pinned down as he runs over the top of me!"

At about 30 yards the buck turned to the right and jumped the fence effortlessly, with fluid grace, muscles rippling beneath his hide. The majestic rack floated up and over without a hint of a jar.

My luck had changed and so had my pulse! My heart was pounding hard as I drew back my recurve which still had an arrow nocked from my stalk on the "wooden" elk. As I came back to full draw I was still crouched low behind the log. I thought "this is it," and rose from my crouched position as the buck trotted to my left. I softly cow called to the buck who instantly stopped and looked my direction. As the buck stopped to look, the muscles straining in my arms relaxed and instantly the arrow sped on its way.

I will never forget the sight of that royal buck and how he looked standing there in an opening in the forest with the morning sun shining on him; what a fine animal! Of such things are dreams made!

The arrow flashed through the autumn air as time stood still for that unforgettable moment. The buck



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bounced away in that "all-four-legged" gait that is typical of mulies, disappearing into the woods. Afterwards I stood intently listening; the only sound was that of the wind as it softly whispered through the tree tops. The shot had been good and true.

I cow called for Steve and managed to meet up with him in a matter of minutes. As he approached he motioned with his hands forming a big rack over his head, he whispered: "Did you see that big buck?" I replied softly, "Yes, and I shot him right here!" Steve then told me the story of how he had nearly stepped on the buck in his bed and how the buck had slipped away into the tangled fortress of the thicket.

Ominous dark clouds were forming as we talked and we decided that we had better start on the buck's trail before it rained. The trail was easy

to follow but without it one would be hard pressed to find a downed animal in the maze of thickets and brush. The buck had run about 140 yards in a matter of seconds before going down.

At the end he had hit a five inch diameter fir tree head on. The tree was dead and the sudden impact of the buck had caused the rotting base to snap, the tree fell across his back and pinned one side of his rack beneath it, holding his head back with his nose to the sky.

I had told Steve earlier that year that I would prefer a nice big mule deer buck over an elk that season. I've shot several nice bulls and plenty of deer with my bow but had never gotten a truly big mule deer buck. I think they are harder won, at least they have been for me.

Sometimes dreams do come true!....." ouch!... Who threw that pine cone?"



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## The Memorial Osage Longbow

By Roy Day

*"Dear telephone Friend."* This is how the first and only letter I received from Dick Castillo of Springfield, Ohio in November, 1995 started. My friendship with Dick was as brief as my archery life. My brother Peter, an archer of many years, got me to shoot my first arrow on my 60th birthday just over three years ago in England.

Since then, I've jumped in with both feet and just love this whole life and the wonderful friends my wife Shirley and I have met throughout Canada and the U.S.A. I've been making longbows now for about two years. I'm British by birth and came to Canada in 1966, so maybe I was meant to fashion longbows, there is something just magical about them. To quote from the *Archer's Craft* by Adrian Elliott Hodgkin *"I'm sure that the longbow lies in us yet, did we not know it—and that our ancient skill lies just skin-deep waiting for another turn of time's wheel,—when once you have made a bow you will be hopelessly ensnared for life."* How true!

I joined the British Longbow Society (B.L.B.S.) because when I went to England for a holiday with my wife last year, I made an English carriage (take-down) longbow

and wanted to use it in B.L.B.S. meets. It is a 72" hickory-backed yew with rawhide backing and my own take-down sleeves. I'm a toolmaker by trade. I fitted the bow with buffalo horn nocks so that it conformed to the rules.

There are about 60 members in Canada and the U.S.. I am the only one of eleven Canadians west of the Rockies, however these bows are creating such a lot of interest, I'm sure more people will join.

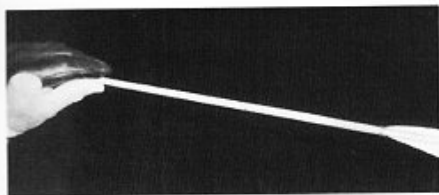
So, through the Society, I made the acquaintance of Horace Castillo in Quebec, Canada, who is the North American representative of the British Longbow Society, a most interesting man, totally enthusiastic in archery, particularly longbows.

The above photo shows some of the original archers who attended the first NFAA shoot held 50 years ago.

Back row from left to right: One of the Knoblock brothers, "Babe" Bitzenberger, the other Knoblock brother, and Dick Castillo.

Front row from left to right: Fred Kasch and Frank Scott.





Roy Day's memorial arrow for his friend, Dick Castillo. The inscription reads in part: "... to the memory of Dick Castillo, 1920 - 1996, Springfield, Ohio."

Then one morning, very early, I received a phone call from Ohio: "Hi, this is Dick Castillo, Horace's brother." Well, we began talking longbows and archery and Dick was saying how he was going to work on this stave for his next bow. It's funny how age does not come over the phone, from his voice and enthusiasm. I would have guessed Dick to be around 35 to 40 years old—wrong, he was 76!

He wrote me the one letter and sent me a couple of photos. One of him and his wife Mary Louise, and one when he attended the 50th anniversary of the first NFAA shoot in Wausau, Wisconsin, several of the original members showing up, including "Babe" Bitzenberger, the Knoblock brothers, Fred Kasch, Dick Castillo, and Frank Scott (Curator of the Bear Museum).

When my wife and I returned from England, having attended some wonderful shoots there, I sent Dick some photos and waited to hear what he thought of them. I didn't get a reply for a while, so I phoned and Mary Louise told me that Dick had died one month earlier, one day before my letter arrived.

I was shocked at this news, as I could still remember Dick chuckling over the fact that he lived on Archer's lane and that I live on York Avenue, both archery related. So I was just too late to share my good news with Dick. Louise and I chatted for a while over what might have been, as I would have loved to have met him and carried it to a wonderful friendship and I mentioned to Louise that Dick was going to start his bow and that I also make bows. Then this wonderful lady said "I'll send you the stave."

I told her I would try to finish the bow in time for the 14th North American Longbow Safari in Ovando, Montana, there I would get a group of

archers and we would shoot a memorial arrow for Dick to send him on his journey.

True to her word, a parcel arrived with the stave, some pieces of horn, a video of some of Dick's shoots, etc. The stave was of osage orange and not being at all familiar with this wood, I thought this was the worst piece of anything I'd ever seen!!

I couldn't believe this was actually wood until I trimmed about 1/8" off one end. What I saw almost appeared to be petrified wood, a beautiful rich translucent dark gold with very thin early wood and quite thick latewood rings.

I studied this for quite a long while as there was quite a twist on one end. I'm not yet skilled enough to untwist wood, so I made a decision, trim the whole stave down to about four feet, split it, and fishtail splice the two billets.

After a discussion with Gary Ellis of Legendary Longbows, he advised me to leave one ring of sapwood on, a wise move as the bow turned out just beautiful, 73 1/2" between the nocks, 77" overall to the horn tips, 50# at 28", and as smooth as silk to shoot, several thousand arrows have now been shot and the bow has no string follow at all!

The rest, as they say, is history because on the last evening of the

Longbow Safari, a group of us including Rik Hinton and Bob Martin of Instinctive Archer™ Magazine, my brother Pete Day and Pat Ballinger (both over from England for the Safari) and at least a dozen more did some clout shooting with everyone having lots of fun.

Then Bob Martin, Myself, and Trevor Johnson with his Gerald Welch English longbow loosed memorial arrows in the Montana's Blackfoot river by moonlight to send Dick on his way and to conclude a great gathering of friends and this wonderful sport of archery.

Dick Castillo—Toxophilite, 1920 - 1996.  
Bon Voyage!

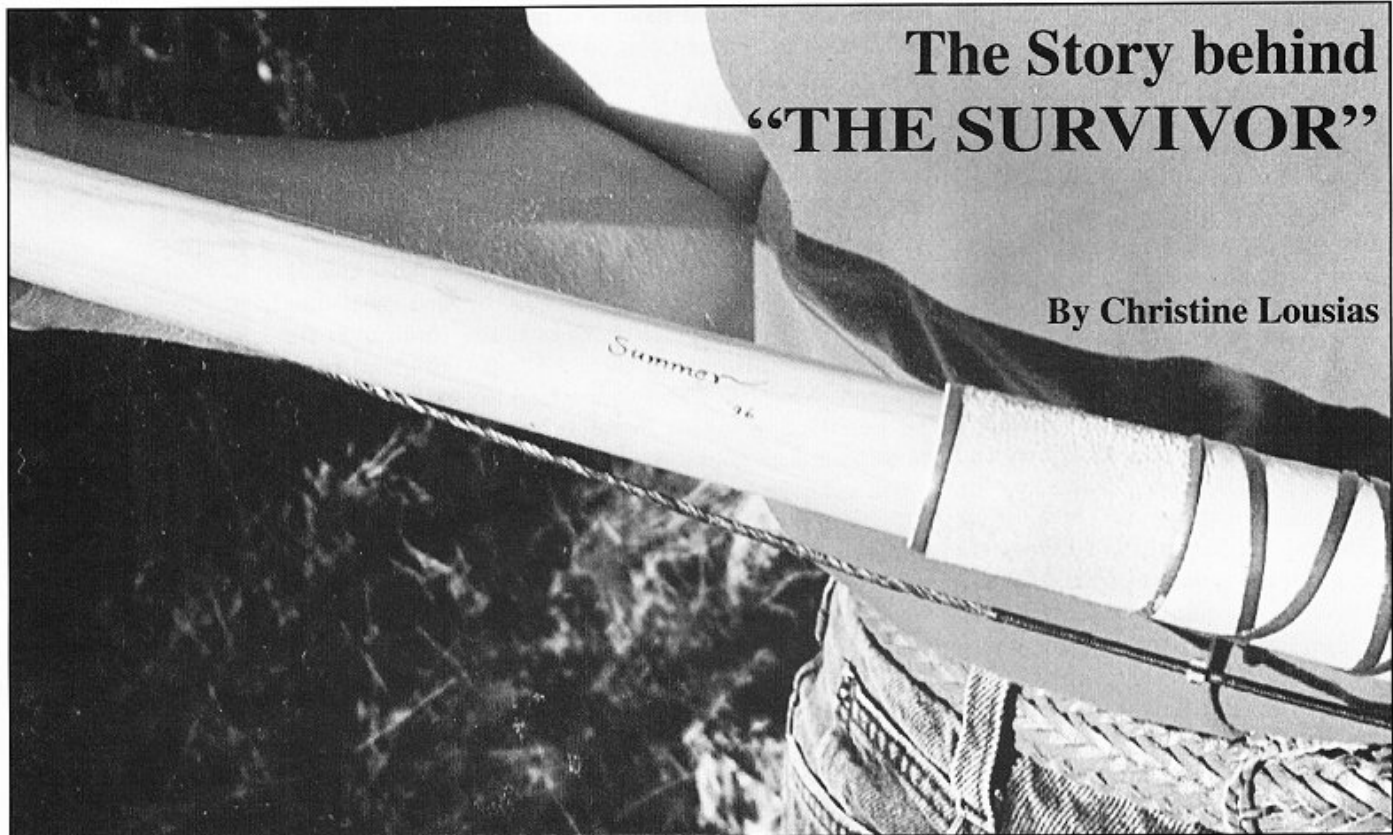


*As a final note, I was in touch with Horace, Dick's brother, and he tells me that Mary Louise has headed north to Canada and was going to scatter Dick's ashes in the Agawa River, near Lake Superior in Ontario, one of Dick's favorite fishing holes.*



Roy Day launches an honorary arrow at day's end for his departed friend through the twilight into Montana's Blackfoot River. "Farewell, friend."





## The Story behind “THE SURVIVOR”

By Christine Lousias

**W**hy build my own bow? I have the interest, and John has the class. I am referring to John Strunk's bow-building class. He travels the country teaching at local shoots, conventions, and anywhere he's invited. He helps novices like myself get addicted to unfolding a tree trunk into a work of art that doubles as a stick shooter.

My interest was initially a mental interest. I didn't have the tools or the confidence to develop it into a physical interest. The tools were a big part, I thought. Hand tools did not come naturally to me. I was raised in Detroit, and I was prepped for life with books and a college degree, not with a blue-collar slant for a vocation. When I did crowd around my father as he tinkered with the car engine or was fixing up the house it was *"Sweetheart I'm busy, go find something to do before you get hurt."*

I found something to do, something safe, something "little girl" oriented. Eventually I met people who had different interests, interests that were adventurous and fairly safe. Someone put a recurve in my hand. I was athletic. I played softball, volleyball, and I bowled. All of those things involved follow-through situations. Follow your shot, follow through on your swing, etc., etc. Archery was just an extension of my athletic interests, an adult sport at that point in my life and something I didn't need team members to accomplish.

The longbow came along as a necessity. I couldn't go to the Longbow Safari without one, so I picked one out of a catalog. I didn't shoot it all that well. It was the wrong weight, and the wrong fit for my hand. Kenny K. and John came to my rescue. They set me up with one of John's laminated bows that was sweet and true. It re-sparked my waning interest and kept me alive.

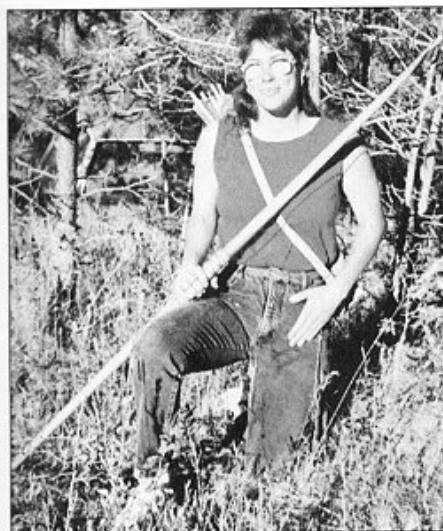
All around me, (bow)friends of mine were experimenting with making their own bows. They would read articles or books and just go at it. My personality and learning abilities are stagnant in that way, I can't read something about which I don't know terminology or jargon and understand it enough to work with it. I learn better by doing and/or repetition.

Opportunity knocked. I was already planning to go to the 1996 North American Longbow Safari in Montana, so when I saw the agenda and John's class was being offered, I just took a few more vacation days. I had never heard of John Strunk, but it's whispered that he's top gun in his field. It didn't matter to me if he was or not, I just wanted to see if I could do this bowmaking thing. It sure helped that John is patient and really nice.

I picked out a straight piece of Pacific yew that John had available and settled down for four days of whittling. That's really what it ended up to be too. John showed me how to pattern the wood and I started on it with a hatchet. It was awkward at first for fear that I would cut too deep. As it was, I drew blood, but nothing serious.

Next, it was pretty much alternating between a hand plane and various sizes of hand scrapers. John made it look easy, just like peeling a potato with a potato peeler. I wasn't that smooth until the middle of the third day. For the finer details all that was needed was a pocket knife. John said there were bows that he had made using only a knife and a file.

You are working the wood and constantly caressing it. You smell the shavings and it starts to become an extension of you. As you see it shape into a useful part of you, you become attached. Names for the bow start coming to mind



Christine, and "the Survivor," ready for a day of fun and excitement at the 1996 North American Longbow Safari.

after about the second day. I have never had a child of my own, but a bow growing and developing a character must be remotely similar, it just has to be.

The moment came for me to string it for the first time. Arms and back sore from constant scraping, the excitement was growing. Just before the string went over the upper nock I jokingly said "Now don't break it." Before I had finished the word "it" there was a sickening crack, the crowd that was milling about all turned in silent sympathy. I was really hard pressed not to cry in front of a couple dozen people.

John in his quiet demeanor just said "Well at least we'll get a chance to try out the cherry-bark backing." Whatever. I was depressed! Everyone assured me that the cherry bark was beautiful and that it would be stronger than ever. Okay, whatever you say. I was still depressed.

The next day John took the sapwood down to the injured point. I cut the cherry bark to pattern the back of the bow. We glued it on with a mixture of dry brown stuff and gooey liquid that acted as the catalyst for the drying agent. We taped the bark down with masking tape and "mummy" wrapped the bow in black inner-tube material. I put the bow in the sun for four hours. The mummy wrap simulated John's "black box" at home that holds a constant temperature of 90 degrees.

The wrapping came off and the bark looked as if it was naturally part of the bow. Then it was another day of sanding and minimal scraping to get the tillering just right.

The first coat of varnish went on with a breath of relief. The best part came when I got to put the bowyer's name on the bow. Only Pat (John's wife) can testify to the emotion that elicited. The finale was what to name the bow itself.

At first I was going to name it for some of the emotional trauma that I had personally experienced in the past years and came out of it almost unscathed. Making this bow was a personal accomplishment for me. It is a symbol of my inner strength, something I can hang onto when I get down. Proof so to speak that I can survive. I survived my pain and my bow survived its trauma. Hence "The Survivor."



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#### Acknowledgements:

John and Pat Strunk; Jim Smith from GTP Archery for the shafts; Chris and Kim from Double Eagle Arrow Design for taking the time to put together some arrows for me to throw; My fellow classmates for their support; Joe; Vic; Todd; Jim; Stan; Kelly; Rich; Rik, Tracy, and Bob; the guys from MN; and everyone of you who asked me about my bow (which was pretty much everyone at the Safari). *Thank you so much for your support. You are all terrific!*



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# DISTANT MARK

by Robert V. Martin

*As meadow larks, our arrows fly,  
away up through the azure sky.  
They race, they dance, they sail and hit.  
The distant mark we seek to split.  
We bend our bows, we strike a pose.  
We draw the string back to our nose.  
Sinew strains, white knuckles creased,  
muscles flexed, until release.  
Life's energy we do impart,  
into the waiting feathered dart.  
Oh unfettered flight, a sight to see,  
such freedom born within a tree!  
To sail, to hail, or to impale,  
our aim is to yon target nail.  
A miss, a hiss, we try again.  
A laugh, a poke, from our friend.  
A hit...what bliss, oh skill devout.  
A shout for joy, to win the clout.  
The score is in, the medals past.  
The Field Governor's said his last.  
What joy to hear "well done, quite smart,  
you've done your best, you've hit the mark."  
And then at twilight's glowing end,  
unstring our bows, no more to bend.  
There, in last twinkling evening light,  
may earthly soul take aerie flight.  
To heavens woods and meadows fair,  
I'll make a point to meet you there.*



# “A Stick .....Without a String

by Curtis Hermann



INSTINCTIVE ARCHER Magazine Winter 1996

**PRINCE JOHN:**

**ROBIN to Gisbourne during duel:** *Did I upset your plans?*

**GISBOURNE:**

**ROBIN:**

**PRINCE JOHN:**

*Any objections to the new tax, from our Saxon friends?*

*You've come to Nottingham once to often!*

*When this is over, my friend, there'll be no need to come again!*

*Ho, varlets, bring Sir Robin food! Such insolence must support a healthy appetite!*

**ROBIN:**

*It's injustice I hate, not the Normans!*

On our daily afternoon jaunt from the office to the yogurt machine at the company commissary we would pass the still unopened Warner Brothers Museum. Fancy modern french doors covered with sheets of black plastic were an ominous sign that what was going on inside was highly secret. "Reminds me of Alamos testing grounds in the forties," one of us would comment, and Karen would always look at me and ask, "When is the museum going to open?" "I don't know," I would answer. It was supposed to open a couple of months back but each time I see Leith he just shrugs his shoulders. He is always so busy we don't get to talk anymore and I think it won't be until sometime in June.

Martin Fox, our head librarian, Karen Neel, and myself, have a long acquaintance with Leith Adams, the Archivist for the new Warner Brothers Museum. We used to keep our eyes open for collectibles that we could send Leith when he was the Archivist for Warner Brothers at the Film History Division, University of Southern California. One never knew what we would find in the archives of the 75 year old stock footage film library. At one time, I came across several racks of the personal collection of Jack Warner. It was tucked away in one of the old double steel door vaults built in the twenties, to resist the explosions that could happen with nitrate film. I found some of the old large platter one side recording disks (about the size of a medium pizza) that had conversations with Jack Warner and Joe Louis along with some early footage of his fights. Others had a speech with the reigning Cardinal of the Los Angeles area. Over the years my friendship with Leith was always fun and had become important to me. I was always on the watch for things he may have an interest in.

Leith knew of my interest in archery, especially of traditional archery and of my position as the California State Chairman of the International Bowhunter Education Program, so I suppose it was not unusual for the call to come in. "Curtis, we're doing a display on the Warner Brothers 1938 classic *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, we've got Errol Flynn's bow but it needs a string, can you help us out?" Well of course I

was ecstatic, I'm sure I was convinced I had died and gone heaven!

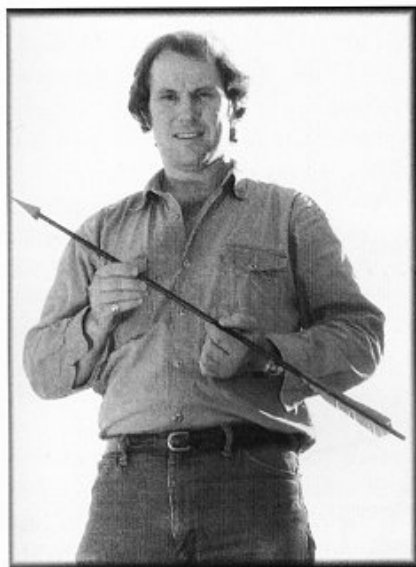
It was not long after this call that I attended the "Western Traditional Rendezvous" archery tournament in the Tygh Valley of Oregon. A modern rendition of the meeting in the greenwood of nearly three hundred longbows and recurves, with flights of thousands of feathered shafts for three days of merry making and ribald rivalry. It was during this event that I met Rik Hinton at the practice butts and was later introduced to Robert Martin, both of Instinctive Archer™ Magazine. Not being one to keep my mouth shut I had to repeat my "Robin Hood" story and the idea for this article was born.

At the time of its release, this was Warners' most expensive film, costing more than two million dollars. Bidwell Park, famous for it's Royal Oaks in Chico, California, 450 miles north of Hollywood in the Sacramento Valley, stood in for Sherwood Forest; the archery contest was shot at Busch Gardens, in Pasadena, and some scenes were shot in Thousand Oaks, at a small lake in the area now known as Lake Sherwood, because of this film. Currently an exclusive home development, it was a location for many films in the early days.



Previous Page: Errol Flynn (Robin Hood), fearless defender of the realm!

This Page: The movie's now famous targets butts, shortly before Robin Hood splits the Captain of the Archers' arrow in two! The Captain of the Archers was played by none other than Howard Hill.



Robin George Full with the arrow from his father's (Robin Winton Full) memorabilia collection. Photo by Victor Smith.

A beautiful warm sunny day in Sherwood Forest. The lands of Sir Robin of Locksley are being roamed by none other than Sir Guy of Gisbourne and his batch of tax collectors. Sir Robin of Locksley and his good friend Will Scarlet are on a pleasure ride, and Much the Millers son (the finest hunter in Sherwood), from a position on a limb of a massive old oak, has just sent a gray goose feathered shaft through the heart of a fine specimen of the King's deer. Upon reaching his quarry, Much is intercepted by Sir Guy of Gisbourne and is captured. Much is about to feel the blade of Sir Guy's dagger when an arrow from Robin's bow cleanly dispatches it. Robin claims the deer is his and that Much is but a servant sent to retrieve the deer. Sir Guy informs Robin that it is a death penalty to shoot the King's deer and as Robin comes to full draw he says "*Is there no exception, Sir Guy?*" As Sir Guy rides off in disgust, Sir Robin of Locksley, now branded a criminal, begins his career as "Robin Hood." A new life in the greenwood of Sherwood forest brings new friends in Little John and Friar Tuck and the gathering of the band of "Merry Men." In good fun Robin outwits Sir Guy, Prince John, the Sheriff of Nottingham, and even finds time to pursue the hand of Maid Marian.

As traditional archers, we know more about the film "Robin Hood" than

most. For instance one of the most important aspects to us, is that our own personal legendary hero, Howard Hill, did all the trick shots in the film. He also played the part of the Captain of the Archers. There are many stories about Howard's feats in this film. Too many for them all to be repeated here, but Howard did shoot forty-five stuntmen, who had a 14"x12" arrow stopper tied to their chest. The arrow stopper was 1/16" steel plate with 1" felt on the chest side and 3" of balsa wood on the contact side. They were shot with blunt arrows and Howard never missed a shot. Let's thank the great spirit of the forest for that! These stuntmen were very brave and it had to be of some reward to Howard to be able to convince them that they would survive the hit of a heavy feathered shaft from a seventy-pound longbow. Some of these shots even took place with the rider on horse back in the bouncing motion of full gallop.

Howard and Errol became life-long friends during the shooting of this film and Errol was a quick study in archery and started his bowhunting career by shooting a bobcat, while hunting with Howard near the Chico location. Later on they hunted wild boar and shared other opportunities that California has to offer.

There was another gentleman involved with the film, a young still photographer at the time, Robert Winston Full was invited by his friend Errol to spend several days on the set at Lake Sherwood. Robert too was taken in by Howard's Hill's presence on the film and became an archer. He was so impressed with this film and his experiences with Howard and Errol that many years later he was to going to name his newborn son Errol Flynn Full. After some discussion with the child's mother they settled on Robin George Full, split between Robin Hood and an uncle. Robin is currently a country western singer and works in the archery department at the Pony Express Sport Shop in Northridge, California, and was great to interview in the research for this article. In the shooting of the scene at the big table where one of Robins arrows strike the letter on the table in front of Basil Rathbone (Sir Guy of Gisbourne) the arrow began to lean to one side and then snapped off. As the property man discarded the arrow Robert Full asked if

he could keep it. That arrow is still part of the Full family collection of movie memorabilia. The arrow head had to be redesigned and the scene reshot several days later. Another instance that impressed Robert Winston Full was during a lunch break at the Sherwood location when Errol was waving a chicken leg in the air, while in active conversation, Howard shot it out of his hand. A show of the closeness and trust between Howard and Errol and a very impressive shot.

The Adventures of Robin Hood was released in Technicolor in 1938, and was still running when I saw it around 1949 at the age of seven. I can honestly say that it was the most influential film of my young life. It set in motion the morals that Robin Hood lived by, the sense of fair play and honesty by which one should live, and of course anchored in the sport of archery that I had been fascinated with as far back as I can remember. A great training for a young boy (bow in hand) growing up in the sagebrush prairies of eastern Wyoming.

I've worked in the motion picture business for 32 years and it is still an impressive movie to me. I think that I am but one of tens of thousands of boys and men that were set into a lifetime love of the bow and arrow by this film. In this industry we hear so much of how we are a bad influence on today's youth. Well this film kept many a young man off the streets and into the forest by giving him a lifetime love of the stick and string and of the greenwood, the king's deer, and a set of high morals with which to live by. You add Roy Rogers and John Wayne to Robin Hood and you have real heroes for a young man to grow with.

I'm not sure that Warner Brothers, or the industry, or the public as a whole, understand the special impact this film had on the legions of us that have a love affair with the bow and arrow. In our hearts, each of us who were moved to enjoy our life in archery just a little more because of this film are very grateful it was a part of our lives. A great thanks to Warners, to Errol Flynn, Howard Hill, and all involved!

Now, about that bow. At first I was not allowed in the museum or to even see the bow, in fact I got a second



call from Billie Blackburn in the property department. Billie had seen the bow and had been a traditional archer years ago, so he was able to help some. Billie was quite sure that it was a 6 ft. self long bow with a slight set-back near the ends. Not much to go on, but I have an 8 1/2"x11" picture of the original Robin Hood poster on my office wall and Billie's description matched the poster.

The Bowhunter Education Program attracts a lot of traditional archers, good ones too, and many of them are my good friends. One of those fine volunteers is my Region Five Chairman, Jon Rogers, who can whip out one of the finest flemish strings you can imagine in less than a third of the time it would take me and does a much better job. So I gave Jon a call and we discussed our little challenge. We decided to go with a synthetic sinew as it can be made to look very old and will stretch a lot if we need it.

It was some weeks later before I was allowed inside the museum to measure the bow, just to make some record on it. It is 77" long and 74" between string nocks. The string nocks are slightly off-set on each end and the string would only be in the center vertical line of the bow at the half way point between the limbs. It has a hanging hole in the upper limb above the string nocks. There is a slight set-back similar to a

recurve on each end approximately 12" from the outer tip. Many of the bows in this film have this same set. The handle or riser wrap is 4 1/4" long, made of a light weight thin glove leather and stamped in a small leopard pattern. The upper limb is 35 1/2" and the lower limb is 34 1/2". At the handle the limb is 1 3/16" wide and about 3/4" wide at the tips for both limbs. Both limbs are close to 3/4" thick at the handle and taper to about 5/8" at the tips.

Afraid to actually draw this bow( as it is very old and dry) I had to use my best guess and experience of feel in the stringing process to estimate the draw weight. I guess the draw weight to be in the 40# to 45# range. I am not a master of woods and spent a lot of time discussing the wood with others. At first thinking it was a lightly stained mahogany (which made no sense) to finally settling on the idea that it was most likely a darkly stained lemonwood. The bow had no identifiable markings and in my conversations with many others, was not able to identify the maker or where Warner Brothers purchased it. I wish my good friend Hugh Rich were still alive, he could tell me. Odds are Hugh had something to do with it and could have even built it because he furnished many films with archery equipment. Because the bow was much longer than we expected it to be the string was a little short and the fistmele (distance

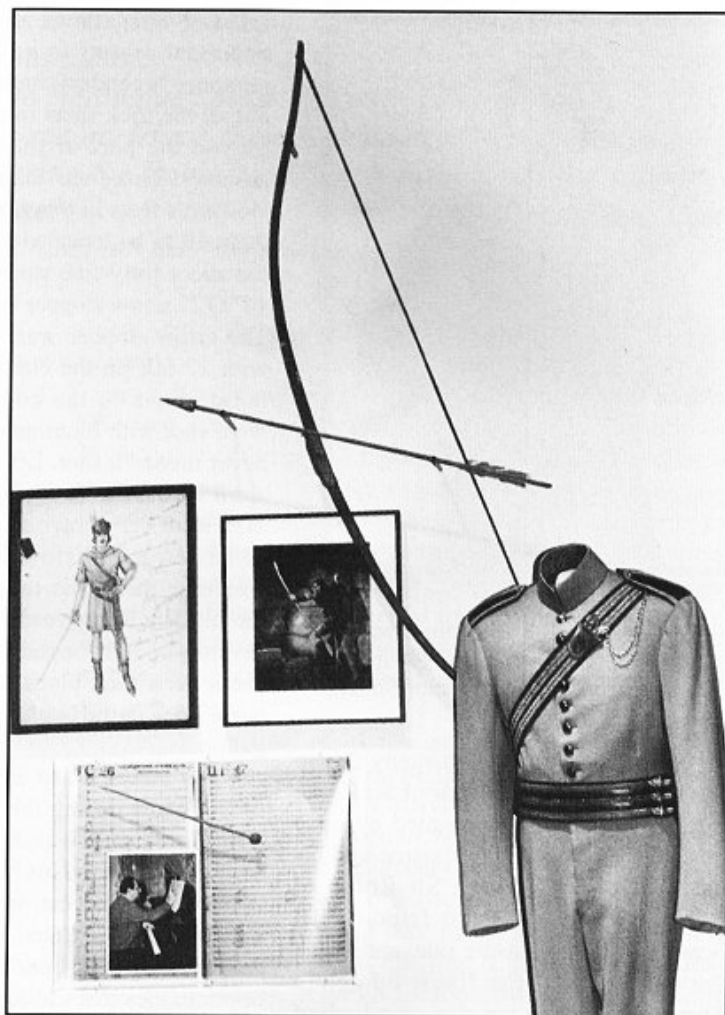


Photo by Louis Mahinay

between string and bow in the strung position) is about 10 inches. It did appear to help the looks of the display however. Jon's string was rubbed well to look old and the red linen serving with gold thread nocking point looks properly used. The display carries the bow and the arrow that the cast signed, a picture of Errol shooting, in fine form on the castle steps, and the original copy of the musical score to Robin Hood. We were able to make a second string that is of the proper length after the museum opening and for the photographing of the display.

The arrow shaft is 31" from the base of the 1" self nock to the back of the head. The arrow head was molded rubber made to look like cast metal and was 3" long by 1 1/8" wide and as thick as the 11/32" shaft. Each major cast member shaved a flat spot on the shaft in order to sign the arrow. The feathers

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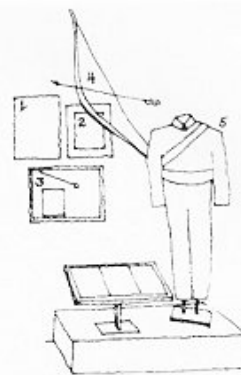
were dyed orange and faded badly (even in the film) looking mostly white. Each feather was 6 3/4" long and glued into rough grooves cut into the shaft (this was to protect the hand of Errol from the sharp point of the feather's quill as it passed over the knuckle of his left hand, there were no arrow rests on English longbows) and the feathers were moth eaten. The feathers were simply cut straight at a height of about 1". The shaft had an approximate 12" cap dip in white that was mostly worn or shaved off.

In preparing for this article I reviewed this film several times on video at home (obviously not the hardest part of this job) and became fascinated all over again. Different things effect you as you observe a film again forty plus years later, and it brought forth the fact that I still want to duplicate the back quiver that Errol wears throughout the film, except when he portrays a tinker for the tournament scene. I had approached the property shop years ago to see if it still existed as I wanted to take measurements on it, but it no longer exists. We have been in a search to see if a pattern still exists, but I think that too may be in vain, but a close duplication can be made from a picture and I have that. Another item that caught my fascination was the target butts in the tournament scenes. They are approximately

seven feet tall by five feet wide and are supported by half cone shaped crude reed or woven rattan basket. The face is wood (probably balsa glued to plywood covered with burlap) and painted in the traditional colors with the gold bulls eye in the 48" diameter on a stiff paper about an 1/8" thick. The broadheads would only penetrate a little over 1/2" in the tournament scenes and were somewhat difficult for the arrow pullers to remove. I think they make for a very attractive archery range and would be great fun to duplicate for one of our traditional meets.

Finally the evening of the Grand Opening arrived, the red carpet was rolled out, the stars began to arrive. Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway to represent "Bonnie and Clyde", Liz Taylor to represent "Giant" and many, many more from both in front of and behind the camera, and yes, yours truly was there too. Every square inch on both floors were covered by Hollywood elite or insiders or television news cameras. My friend Leith and his great staff were being the perfect hosts and introducing virtually everybody to everybody else. The "Robin Hood" display was now available for the public to see.


Should a trip to the left coast be a part of your plans or for your vacation, a stop at the Warner Brothers Museum, to see memorabilia from the many classic's of



THE DISPLAY CHART:

1. Original wardrobe sketch by Anthony for a costume used in THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD.
2. Errol Flynn as Robin Hood lets loose with an arrow from the interior steps of Prince John's castle, showing fine shooting form.
3. Original score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold for THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD, for which he won an Oscar. Accompanying the score are Mr. Korngold's baton and a signed photo of him composing at the piano.
4. Errol Flynn's bow and arrow, from THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD, used on location in Chico, California. The BOW and ARROW are on loan to WARNER BROTHERS MUSEUM from the personal collection of Steve Osborn, an employee of MGM Studios, business affairs. This bow was a gift to his father by Errol Flynn for his help in choosing the location for the film in Chico, California. The bow string is of artificial sinew and made by Jon Rogers, Traditional Archer and Southern California Chairman of the International Bowhunter Education Program. (Note: The arrow is signed by many cast and crew members including Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, William Keighley, Alan Hale, Patric Knowles, Tony Gaudio, Frank Gaudio, Larry Dolgen, Vic Johnson, Ned O. Nair, Colin Campbell, Sailor Vincent, Al Gordon, Gil Perkins, Don Turner, "Doc" McDermott, Una O'Connor, Roy Clark, Jimmie Stone and Harry Aubrindley). This is the way to get an autograph!
5. Uniform worn by Errol Flynn as Major Geoffrey Vickers in THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE, 1936, directed by Michael Curtiz. This film was nominated for three Academy Awards, winning for Best Assistant Director, Jack Sullivan.

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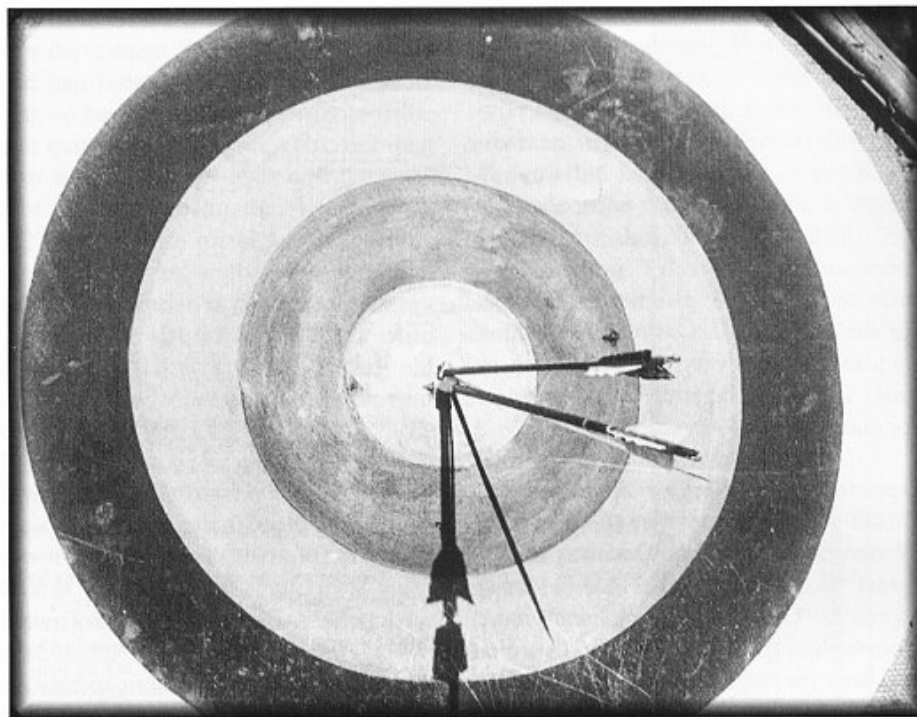
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the first 50 years can be a real trip down memory lane. I would like to invite you to come by and enjoy the nostalgia of the past.



#### MOVIE NOTES:

The Adventures of Robin Hood  
US 1938 102m Technicolor  
Warner (Hal B. Wallis)

Rebel Outlaw Robin Hood outwits Sir Guy of Gisbourne and the Sheriff of Nottingham, and saves the throne for the absent King Richard.

A splendid adventure story, rousing in treatment, with dashing action highlights, fine comedy balance, and incisive acting all around. Historically notable for its use of early three colour technicolor; also for convincingly recreating Britain in California.

This film was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Picture, winning three Oscars, including Best Original Score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

**Written by** Seton I. Miller, Norman Reilly Raine.

**Directed by** William Keighley, Michael Curtiz.

**Photography by** Tony Gaudio, Sol Polito, W. Howard Green.

**Music by** Erich Wolfgang Korngold.  
Editor Ralph Dawson.

#### THE CAST:

**Errol Flynn** as Sir Robin of Locksley (Robin Hood).

**Basil Rathbone** as Sir Guy of Gisbourne.

**Claude Rains** as Prince John (the evil).

**Olivia de Havilland** as Maid Marian.

**Alan Hale** as Little John.

**Patric Knowles** as Will Scarlet.

**Eugene Pallette** as Friar Tuck.

**Ian Hunter** as King Richard.

**Melville Cooper** as the Sheriff of Nottingham.

**Una O'Connor** as Bess.

**Herbert Mundin** as Much the Millers Son.

**Montagu Love** as the Bishop of Black Cannons.

**Howard Hill** as the Captain of the Archers.

A thank you to the following :

#### Museum Staff:

Leith Adams, WB Archivist

Carla Hanawalt, WB Corporate Archives

Ruth Gilliland, WB Director of Construction

Curtis Pat Koslowski, WB Corporate Archives.

#### Others:

Billie Blackburn, WB Property Department

Steve Osborn, Steve Osborn Collection

Robin Full, Robert Winston Full Collection

Jon Rogers, String maker

WB Photographer, Louis Mahinay

Photographer, Victor Smith

My Boss, Martin Fox for his tolerance in this project.

*"Without you, this project could not have happened. 'I thank you all' as a team, you came through."*

#### AUTHOR'S NOTES:

The Warner Brothers Museum is open to the public as part of our tour program from 9:00 AM to 4:00PM, Monday through Friday. The debut exhibit is of the first fifty years and the center piece is of James Dean who made only three films, all with Warner Brothers. Should you be in my neck of the woods and if you are an archer, especially a traditional archer I think your heart will bring you to this display on "Robin Hood" and the first fifty years of Warner Brothers. You will be glad this was part of your visit as it is part of your history too.

The WB Museum is 7,000 square feet of displays and a far cry from the days when Hollywood routinely erased its own history. Please contact WB Tours at (818) 954-1744, the cost of the personal tour is \$29.00 and lasts for 2 hours and is as educational as it is entertaining. It includes the Museum and the entire studio and a maximum of 12 visitors are allowed per group.

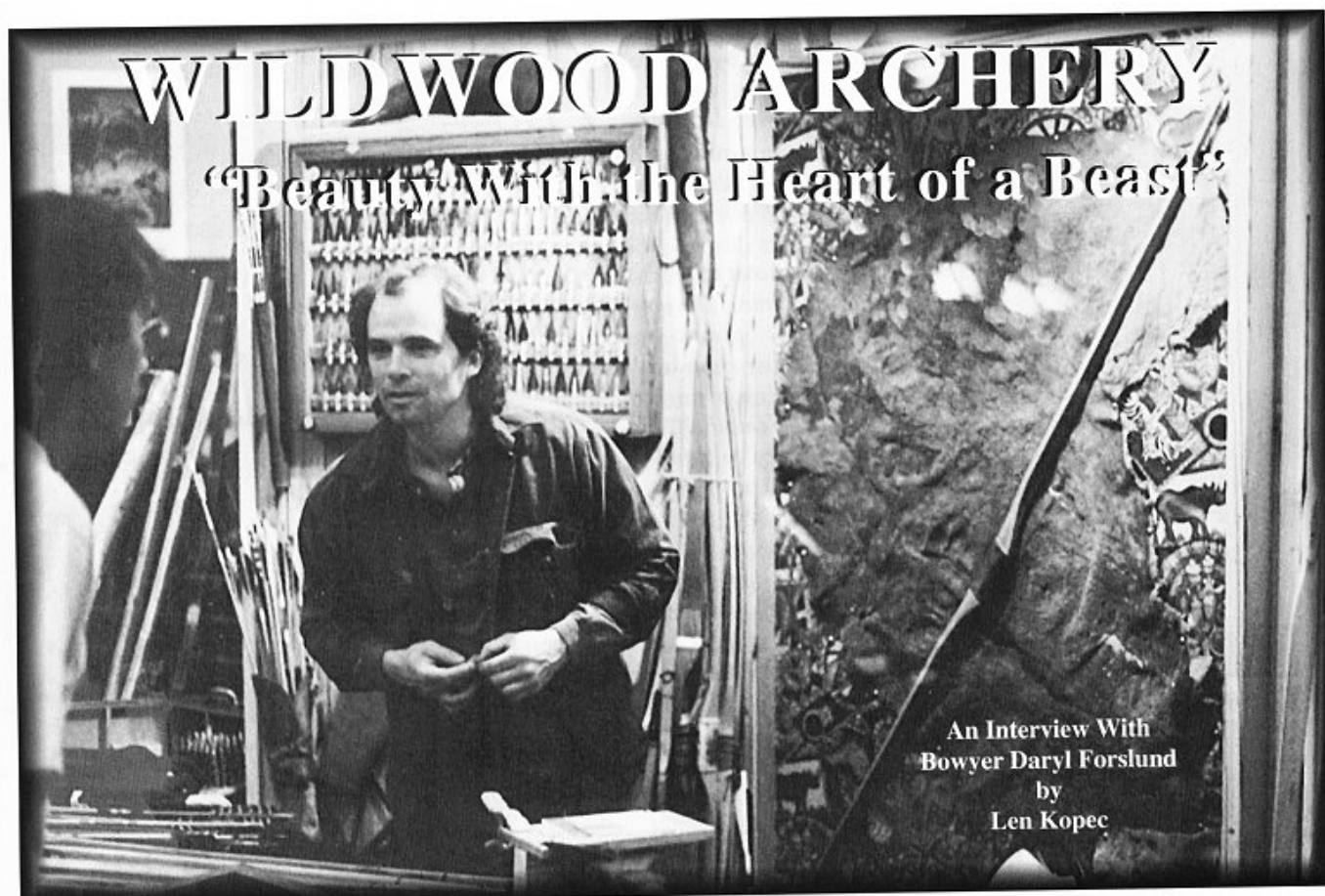
#### TED'S TIPS



Ted's Tips are provided by  
Ted Fry, of Raptor Archery.

- When hunting, a pocket cigarette lighter makes an excellent wind detector. The flame will indicate the direction of even the lightest of breezes.
- To determine which wing feathers you have, hold the feather in your hand as though the feather is mounted on a shaft about to be shot into the sky with the base of the feather away from you. If it leans to the left, it is a right-wing feather. If it leans to the right, it is a left-wing feather.





# WILDWOOD ARCHERY

## "Beauty With the Heart of a Beast"

An Interview With  
Bowyer Daryl Forslund  
by  
Len Kopec

**P**art of the magic of owning a custom longbow lies in the fact that bowyers inject a bit of their own personality into each bow they craft. From simple, sturdy self bows to elegantly inlaid pieces of working art, the bow speaks of the bowyer.

A bow built by Daryl Forslund shows honor for tradition, an eye for art, a willingness to innovate, a belief in the mystical, and a genuine concern to match the bow to the shooter. The fine craftsmanship and sound bow-building technique is pleasingly accented by artistic touches that make each bow a unique piece of work crafted for a particular shooter. Holding one of his bows in my hand, I can feel the respect for the history of the longbow and an urgency to take it out to the woods for a hunt. These bows beg to be shot.

My friendship with Daryl began, appropriately, on a bow-only deer hunt in western Montana during a time when seeing another longbow in the woods was less likely than a parade of P & Y bucks going past your stand. We spoke briefly, noted that we both carried Howard Hill Tembos, wished each other luck and went our separate ways.

A few years later I took a two-day carpentry job in Helena and ended up partnered with Daryl. It didn't take long for the conversation to turn to hunting, then immediately to bowhunting and traditional archery. The memory light began to flicker and I asked Daryl if he'd ever hunted the Lee Metcalf Refuge. He looked at me for a second, then asked "Do you shoot a Tembo?"

We have been close friends ever since. Can't fight fate. Daryl gave me the second bow he ever built as a

Christmas gift, and with his assistance as a guide, I took the first big game animal harvested with a Wildwood bow.

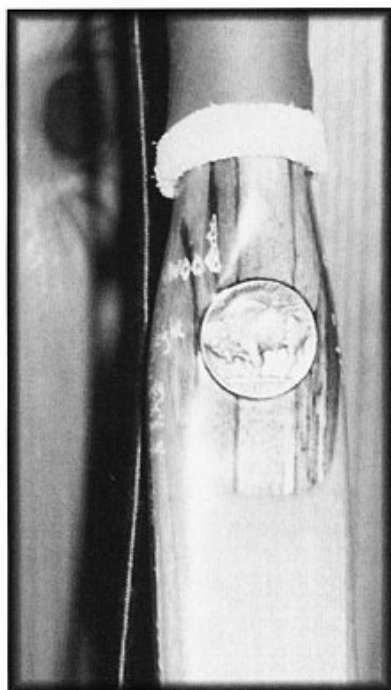
Daryl and his family now live in Hamilton, Montana, in the heart of the state's longest and most liberal bow hunting area. His son, Sam, is literally growing up with a longbow in his hand and is undoubtedly the finest 6 year old instinctive shooter for miles around.

The following is an interview with a rising star among the brotherhood of bowyers.

### *How did you get into bowmaking?*

I had been buying equipment from Craig Ekin at Howard Hill Archery. We made some trades - my artwork (which can be seen in the Howard Hill Archery brochure) for longbows, arrows, and gear for my wife and me. Every time I'd go to Hamilton to pick up some tackle, I'd tell Craig that if he ever happened to have an opening in the shop, I was the guy he wanted to hire. Well, persistence paid off and I got the call. I had been dabbling with building self bows and sinew-backed bows and had been reading everything I could get my hands on about the subject, so I already had a basic knowledge about building bows. I think that helped me progress quickly after coming to Howard Hill Archery.

Photo: Daryl Forslund talking with a customer at the 1996 North American Longbow Safari. Behind the bow in the glass display case is the ear of Howard Hill's "Tembo."



Buffalo nickel inlaid into the handle of bison-horn tipped "Bullthrower."

***How did you come up with the name "Wildwood?"***

One of the first books I read after turning to traditional archery was "The Witchery of Archery." Maurice Thompson's description of his forays "into the wildwood" really stuck with me. I did wildlife art under the Wildwood name, so it just seemed a natural extension of how I felt to call my company and my bows the same.

***How much contact do you have with your customers before the bow is built, and what do you like to know about the customer's needs besides weight and draw length?***

I like to get to know a person as well as possible and will spend as much time with each individual as necessary to make sure I know what they want. This is also how I feel about my dealers. I only have a handful across the country and I feel they know me well enough to know what to ask their customers.

***How do conversations with your clients influence the type of bow you build or recommend to them?***

This is very important to me. I don't send an order form with my brochures simply because I want the customer to

order his or her bow in person or over the phone. That way we can hash over any little nuances they might be looking for in their custom bow.

***You build bows to order, one at a time. Do you have any plans to expand your shop and start building bows for people "off the shelf?"***

I always try to build a few "stock" bows to have around to take to shows. My plans are to stay a one-man operation with a small shop and keep an intimate relationship with each bow I build. It seems that if I'm building a bow without a specific person in mind it's just lacking a certain added personality.

***What kind of comments have you had from clients who have hunted with your bows?***

They've all been very positive, whether people hunt or just enjoy themselves roving or target shooting. Probably the strangest comment I've had was that the customer said all he wanted to do was rip his clothes off and run naked with my bow through the woods. A little odd, but I got the message.

***What woods do you use, and which are your favorites?***

I think bamboo is the most incredible bow-saving material there is for backing an all-wood bow. As far as material for the belly, I would rate them in this order — first, yew for smoothness and cast; second, osage for durability and cast; third, black locust for the best qualities of yew and osage but lacking in the intense physical attraction of those woods; and fourth, bamboo for extreme smoothness, decent cast, and very high resistance to breakage.

***What kind of changes to your bows are you experimenting with?***

I'm always looking for a little "twist" to improve the performance of my bows. For me, the bottom line is shootability.

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Genesis 1:1

John 3:16

Matthew 5:16

***Do you plan to keep making longbows and flatbows, or will you get into custom recurves too?***

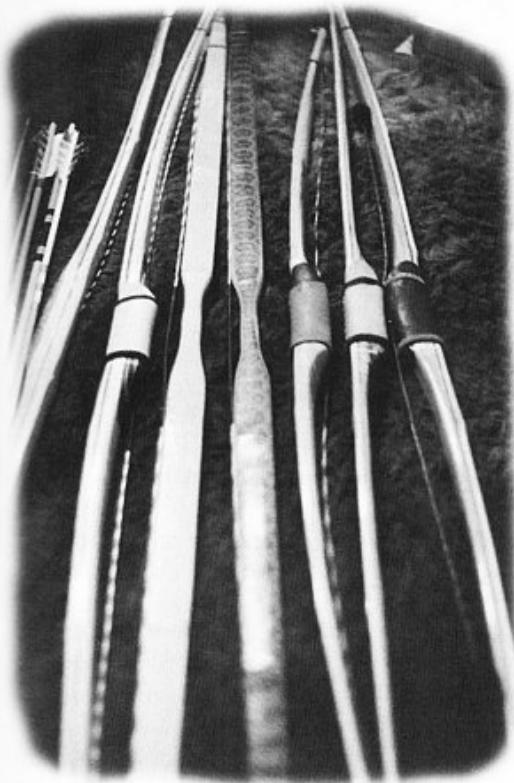
Probably no custom recurves for me. I prefer to stay away from fiberglass.

***What woods and style of bow would you recommend to someone who has not had much experience with longbows?***

In all honesty, I would have to say that a first-time traditional Bowman would be best off purchasing a laminated glass bow. Even though my bows tend to be more durable and less prone to breakage than a self bow, they still need to be



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*"Holding one of his bows in my hand, I can feel the respect for the history of the longbow and an urgency to take it out to the woods for a hunt. These bows beg to be shot."*

cared for much like a true self bow. Most first-time bowmen should worry about becoming a good shot, and then start looking for a bow they can become more intimate with. I'm not saying you can't achieve that with fiberglass, many people do, it's just that when you experience the relationship you can have with an all-wood bow, its like nothing else in the world.

***You have quite a collection of old bows and broadheads. Are any particularly notable, valuable, or just personal favorites?***

I just got lucky acquiring my broadhead collection, but I really treasure it. Some people have to collect for years to compile a collection this comprehensive. My favorites are the Pope and Young California By-Product from 1924, the Ben Pearsons from 1947 to 1965, and my son's favorite, a hinged Fange from 1960.

Most of my old bows are just wall hangers but they mean a lot to me. My favorites would have to be old

English-style yew longbows and an old archery golf set that I have.

***Your bows show excellent craftsmanship and artistic ability. How important is it to have a bow that not only shoots well, but looks good?***

To me, function and appearance are synonymous. If you're shooting a weapon that feels like its a part of you, its usually gorgeous AND a shooter. I'll put a satin finish on a bow if somebody requests it, but I always opt for the extra beauty that shows through a high gloss finish. If I'm worried about glare while hunting, I just slip a set of fleece limb covers on and disappear.

***Every bowyer has something just a little different in their bows to separate them from the others. What makes Wildwood bows different from other custom longbows?***

I would say that gluing techniques, tillering, and my flame tempering of the bamboo backing would make them stand out

from other bows with bamboo backing. Also, I take great care to get a fine finish on the bow.

***Do you have any views you'd like to share on the traditional versus high-tech argument?***

Traditional equipment is back with a vengeance and compounds will always be here.

We all know that the future of hunting, not just bowhunting, hinges on the neutral numbers of the world. The majority of the population has not yet formed a concrete opinion on the hunting/anti-hunting issue. We must all work together — traditional, compound, centerfire, muzzle loader, and any other hunting method you could think of to educate these people.

We must do our best both individually and as a group to show that hunting is and always will be the correct, humane way to keep healthy populations

of game animals. As bowhunters we need to continue lobbying to keep our seasons long and our quotas within what the local populations of game will tolerate. I think the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks does a very fair job of keeping track of individual game populations and distributing chances for harvest within those parameters.

***Finally, how can someone contact you if they want more information about Wildwood Archery?***

They can write to me at P.O. Box 52, Hamilton, Montana 59840, or call me at (406)363-1714.



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## *"Song of the Longbow"*

*To Set afoot on mossy trails in search of creatures wild  
To sally forth with bow in hand and heart full like a child  
To capture live the wild bird's song and whispers of the wind  
To leave the maddening world behind and find the man within*

*To bend the bow and draw the shaft and watch the arrow fly  
To see it plunge back to the earth from far and distant sky  
To follow steps of those before whose boots were bold and brave  
To smell the air as they did then and for their adventures crave*

*To sit upon a chestnut stump next to the whitetail's trail  
To listen for the footfall light or watch the raised flag tail  
To ponder our existence here with awe and much delight  
To hold our quarry in reverence deep with wonder at his sight*

*To have the "red gods" of the hunt come to us time to time  
To thank our God for all his gifts of nature's boundless rhyme  
To recreate in greenwood spanse and learn all that we can  
To teach our young ones how to prize the value of the land*

*To roam with those of yesterday who carried bows of yew  
To bring back stories of our treks and camaradeire renew  
To raise a toast to all of those whose bows have sung with glee  
To cast a shaft toward antlered deer with spirit wild and free*

*To loose the string at stump or leaf in sylvan glade so fair  
To feel the heft of longbow strong and breathe the mountain air  
To dream of times and heros brave to roam with Robin Hood  
Oh what a spell the longbow casts when carried in the wood*

*George D. Stout*

# "There's a Lot More to it"

By George D. Stout

I pulled the Bronco to the side of the dirt township road and shut off the engine. I had been driving the back roads looking for an area to do a little stump shooting with my longbow and it was the sound of the Wood Thrush that caused me to stop. The bird's song is not unlike the sound of an Indian flute. It is one of my favorite sounds in the woods. As I listened to him talking to a friend up the hollow, I could imagine a campfire of dried hickory branches with a wooden spit holding a grouse over an open flame. A Shawnee brave sits back from the flames with his flute made of river reed, blowing softly to the sound of the west wind. As he plays he stares into the flames, possibly dreaming of his ancestors or great hunts of the past. His music soothes and comforts the others in his party and gives them pause to reflect on their past hunts. All is well by the campfire.

I am brought back to reality by the distant drone of a truck engine. The highway is just a mile away and the sounds remind me that this is the twentieth century. The melodious notes, however, are enough to lure me into the woods where I can at least make a visual escape from my surrounding technology. I grab my maple longbow and quiver of assorted, wooden arrows and make a bee-line for the hollow. The thrush has chosen my spot for me and I prepare to stalk the wily stump.

As I meander up the side of the ridge I am serenaded by an assortment of wild creatures. A Common Yellowthroat cries out with his "wichita-wichita-wichita" from a thorn thicket. I'm not sure if he is talking to the other birds or warning them of a strange animal carrying a stick into his domain. He is joined by a cardinal, several robins, and a myriad of other feathered friends; the concert is underway.

I pick out a semi-rotten stump on the other side of the hollow and let loose with a blunt-tipped shaft. The arrow strikes with a thud and bounces back about ten yards or so. I don't bother with a second shot as I walk over to retrieve my arrow. It was a good shot so there is no need to try again. I am always amazed a bit at the accuracy of instinctive shooting with the longbow. Everything seems to go in slow motion as the string is drawn to cheek. Eyes are focused on the target as the back of the thumb hits the cheek bone and the string explodes from the fingers. I follow through and watch the white feathers spinning counter clockwise into the target; everything worked perfectly. I can't imagine doing this any other way.

As I top the ridge a grouse comes roaring from beneath a hemlock about fifteen yards in front of me. I'm always startled to near incapacity by those critters. I really

believe they enjoy scaring the daylights out of guys like me; they obviously know that I'm not a threat with my bow and arrow. Unless, of course, they decide to sit too long in one spot. I have been hunting with bow and arrow since the early sixties and during that time I have shot at grouse about a dozen times.....score 0! This is another great thing about this sport; I have shot black birds out of the air at thirty yards but have missed grouse on the ground at fifteen.....go figure!

I drop down over the other side of the hog back and spot a large stump across the ravine. It's a shot of at least sixty yards yet the arrow strikes exactly where I am looking. This time I take that second shot. It's a foot low! I walk over and retrieve my arrows. The first shot took the blunt tip squarely off the shaft and it's nowhere in sight. The second is unharmed, buried in the dirt and stones of the rocky hillside. The broken-tipped shaft goes into the quiver upside down to be cut off for my friend Scott Robertson. Scott shoots a twenty-six inch arrow and mine are twenty-seven and a half. So, consequently, Scott reaps the rewards of my inaccuracy.

While I'm standing there pondering what I will do next I hear the cry of a Red-tailed Hawk. He is soaring over Wilkins' pasture fields next to Buffalo Run, the small creek that transverses the property. I watch him as he makes his ever-widening circles and finally drifts over the top of Buffalo Mountain. I wonder if he carries with him the spirits of the great birds that used to fly over these hills and valleys; the great Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Osprey. More than likely it is only hunger, rather than a primal spirit that brings him over these fields in search of prey. As he disappears over the tree tops I am back once again to my modern world.

I decide to make a circle and shoot my way back to the Bronco. Whacking my way through some dead trees and stumps I come around to the top of the hollow leading back to the road. Below I see a pair of gray squirrels chasing one another around a Sheldark Hickory tree. They chatter as the race up and down the ridged outer bark. It's not squirrel season so I let them alone. My attention is on a discarded old wash tub in the bottom of the hollow. The first arrow flies over the top by about six inches or so. The second about that much to the right. The third, finally, hits with a resounding "thump" on the bottom of the tub and bounces off to the right. Roughly stepping off the distance I count ninety-three steps. The gadget folks would not believe it!

I can now look up and see the blue Bronco sitting on the edge of the road. Just below is a rotten Chestnut Oak with a hole in the bark about head high. The blunt-tipped cedar strikes within an inch or two of the spot; about a thirty-five yard shot, I guess. I am fairly pleased with my shooting for the day. But, more than the shooting, it is the aura of the place itself. The song of the thrush; the smell of the pines; the feel of the ground under foot as I slowly walk these woods. These are the things that are important. These are the things that bring me back with my longbow and quiver of arrows. Like the hawk's flight, our time here is fleeting at best. I choose to soak up as much of this time as possible with my longbow in hand and quiver on my back. My imagination will do the rest. . .





## The Old Bowhunter





# CHESTER SHEVENS

By Nick Nott

**A**lmost one hundred years ago, Chester Stevenson began roaming the hills with his longbow in hand and a quiver of arrows on his back. He was one of the pioneers among bowhunters in America. Not only did he build an incredible amount of equipment, but also a reputation as a great adventurer and story teller.

My first memory of Chet Stevenson was when I used to visit his home in Eugene, Oregon, with my father. I was about ten years old. Chet was a very old man, at least from my young perspective. He was born in 1883, and my visits to his home were in the 1960s and 70s. He died in 1978. Even then I knew that Chet Stevenson was somebody special. He had a den full of archery gear, hunting trophies, photographs from his hunts, and a far away look in his eye as he told stories. Many of his stories and writings were printed in *The National Bowhunter*, and a few other publications.

Because Chet was such a prolific bow builder, successful hunter, and winsome writer, his name rose up as a hero among archers. An editorial in *The National Bowhunter* in December, 1957, refers to Chet Stevenson along with a few other fathers of modern archery.

*"Up to 1940 the country's outstanding bowhunters could almost be listed on the fingers of one's hands. Will Thompson, Maurice Thompson, Chester Stevenson, Saxton Pope, Arthur Young and of a newer generation Howard Hill, Forrest Nagler, and our own Roy Case had all proven to be not only great bowhunters but also knew how to play the game. Only Stevenson, Hill, and Case remain to carry the torch of these immortals of a great sport."*

The "Old Bowhunter," as Chet was called in his monthly column, was well known for shooting heavy bows and arrows. He routinely shot 75 pound hunting bows, and on many occasions used bows up to 95 pounds. In the 1946 N.A.A. yearbook, it is recorded that Chet shot a 95 pound yew bow in winning a flight shoot competition at the 1936 Pope-Young shoot in Oregon.

*"Probably the best yardage ever made with a broad-head was that cast by Chester Stevenson. . . He used a 95 pound bent-end yew and made 329 yards, six inches. The same bow as the one used for flight competition had to be used by the archer throughout the whole weekend for the various events, along with hunting arrows of at least one ounce."*

Chet Stevenson shot many trophy blacktail and mule deer, as well as thousands of squirrels, rabbits, birds, and other game. For awhile, he held the world record for blacktail deer with a buck shot in southern Oregon. Chet travelled to his favorite hunting areas by train or by stage in the early days. In 1906, he wrote,

*"I left Eugene on the morning stage with food for six days in my pack, and of course the yew bow and quiver of arrows. Three miles short of Rainbow we ran into a slide over the road and the stage could go no further, so I took out afoot from there."*

The location of that particular hunt is now several hundred feet under water—Cougar reservoir in the Oregon Cascade mountains. He shot a wolf there, and many deer, bear, and small game.

One hunt up an isolated canyon resulted in Chet getting kidnapped by moonshiners, who kept him captive so he wouldn't squeal to the "revenuers" before they shipped out their brew. On at least two occasions, Chet and a friend went after bear in close quarters, determined to kill the critters with only a knife. The way Chet tells it, the experience of mad bears bawling and running around half crazed a few feet away was a simply wonderful way to spend a few minutes.

*"Chet and his hunting cronies seemed not to care about time or distance when out on their hunts. Distance meant nothing to us, we were on our own and in no hurry. We camped and loafed where the urge prompted us. We sat by the fire at night with full stomachs and not a care in the world."*

While on their hunts, they mixed in a little gold-panning, fishing, looking for Indian artifacts, cooking, and even loafing around for a day.

Early on, Chet began keeping field notes on all of his adventures. His tedious record-keeping made possible the retelling of stories years later, and the accurate and objective evaluation of his equipment. His notes on one particular bow provide a good example:

*"It has killed four bucks and two bear during the years, 248 squirrels one fall and in other years perhaps 600 more not tallied, also hundreds of rabbits and other small game."*

As a bowyer, Chet was an artist and experimenter. His bows vary so much in style and materials that it is hard to recognize a bow of his if he did not sign it. He tested various woods and backings. He loved to back bows with baleen, which he traded from eskimos for crossbows that he made.

Some of Chet's most beautiful bows were wavy-grained "snake" bows made of osage or yew. One time a package came to him in the mail containing an exceptional set of wavy osage billets. No return address was given, but he had a hunch that Fred Bear had sent them as a challenge to the Old Bowhunter's abilities. He made the bow, complete with rattlesnake backing. Sure enough, Fred Bear confessed that he had sent the billets, saying he thought someone of Chet's talents as a bowyer should get them.

In his writings, Chet revealed how thoroughly he knew his equipment. Consider this simple statement about a particular bow:

*"I was using a 65-pound yew wood bow with heavy arrows spiralled to one in five."*

That meant that he knew, from his experiments, that those arrows turned one complete revolution every five feet. Do you know your arrows that well?

Chester Stevenson, the "Old Bowhunter," and the result of another well-placed arrow: one huge-bodied buck!





Chet Stevenson was not just a happy-go-lucky shooter who flung arrows indiscriminately. He studied shooting. He was realistic at analyzing his own shooting. He came to be an avid promoter of close shots when hunting. In typical fashion, he tells of shooting one deer.

*"My shot was made at fifteen yards which is within bow shot range but still not down to where the Indian liked to shoot."*

He often coached his readers to be honest about their skills, and take closer shots.

*"We should figure out how to get closer shots. That long range is what fools us. A deer is not big at 30 yards and is smaller still at 40, 50, or 60 yards. When is he big and close enough for a sure shot? Perhaps 12 to 20 yards."*

On one occasion he tells of a day when he was into a real concentration of squirrels. He took many shots, but came away skunked at the end of the day. His friend Billie Armstrong reminded him not to settle for anything but close shots. The next time out, Chet got a dozen squirrels. *"Take close shots"* he wrote over and over.

Concerning modern equipment he really did not say much. About the closest he came to commenting on advances in the sport was in the context of a story he wrote about two old friends, Don Chuck and Fred Ward.

*"Neither Fred nor Don lived to see the glass powered bow or many types of precision arrows come into existence. I have often wondered how they would have reacted to a late archery catalog. Would they have put brush buttons on their bows? Don the Indian might. I don't know about Fred the white man."*

I wonder what Chet would think of a modern archery catalog today. Chet Stevenson was an adventurer, for sure. Someone once said, *"If you want to have an adventure, you must put yourself where one can happen."* Chet went to wild places, hoping for adventures.



*"... The next time out, Chet got a dozen squirrels. 'Take close shots' he wrote over and over."*

Many stories come to mind when I think of Chester Stevenson—killing a grizzly in southern Oregon, shooting ten deer in one day to help out some hide-hunters, camping with friends at the end of the stage route.

I would love to have ridden the stage with him, hiked the trails by his side, and carved a bow under his guidance. I guess the next best thing is to get out and have an adventure of my own.

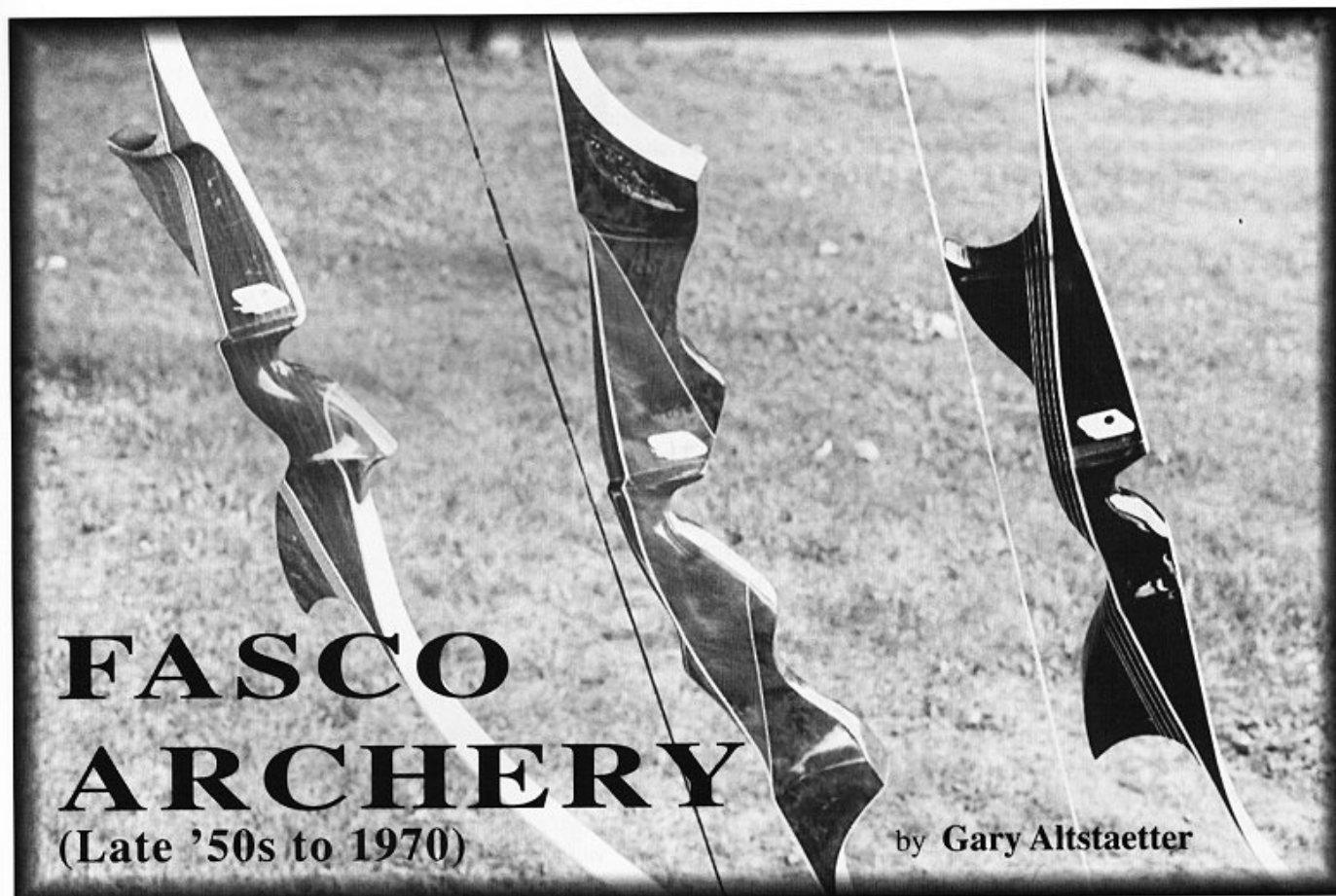


#### EDITOR'S NOTE:

A book full of Chester Stevenson's articles and photographs will be available soon. Nick Nott received permission from Chester Stevenson, Jr., of Eugene, Oregon, to edit and reprint this material. If you are interested in the book, write to:

Nick Nott,  
30811 Izaak Walton Road  
Eugene, OR 97405

Or look for an advertisement in a future issue of *Instinctive Archer™ Magazine*.



Fasco Archery Company was established in the late 1950s by three men with the last names of Fogerty, Alvarez, and Smith. I am not sure of the exact year, but Fasco ads first appeared in "Archery Magazine" in 1959. They arrived at the name Fasco by combining the first letter of each founder's name with Co. (for company).

The founders had little, if any, background in bow making and design. For this task they acquired the services of Wilson White (a west coast maker of bows), and he designed their line of bows. I have no information whether he was an employee or just an outside designer, but the looks of the bows carry his design features through 1962.

Fasco was sold in the early 1960s to Emmett Ries. From what I have been able to find out, Emmett was not an archer, but rather a businessmen looking for an investment. He owned Fasco for several years and about 1963 he sold Fasco to Bob Williams of Seattle Archery. Bob Williams moved Fasco from San Diego, California, to Edmonds, Washington, and it remained there until it went out of business in 1970.

Emmett Ries wanted to establish Fasco's target bows as one of the best custom bows available. For this task he hired a custom gunstock carver known only in the ads as "Nils." This gentleman was quite an accomplished artist. He had created works of art for the crowned heads of Europe and had been a gunstock carver for Weatherby Rifles. He would carve leaf patterns and basket weave patterns into the risers

just like those on the finest custom gunstocks. Another extra was inlays of animals done in real elephant ivory and ebony. I remember as a teenager writing for a catalog and drooling over those bows. I cannot remember the price, but I do remember it was more money than this country boy could ever hoped to have in his pocket. Fred Anderson tells me that there were a substantial number of these bows made. To discover one of these bows in excellent condition would be a rare find.

In 1961 Fasco ran ads stating that their bows were faster than any competition bow, and they had tests to prove it! They had their bows electronically tested by a timer for the American Power Boat Associations. A 45 pound 69 inch "Mark II" was tested at 243 FPS. Of course, that was accomplished with a 305 grain arrow. The Mark II pictured in the article is 40 pound 69 inch, it is fast, but nothing close to 243 FPS. Maybe the 305 grain arrow makes the difference.

I cannot say enough about the workmanship and design of the early bows (1959 through 1962). The unstrung bow has a rather straight profile, but as you can see from the photos everything seems to flow to and blend in with the handle. The early bows (1959-60) had a riser laminated from three layers of dark hardwood separated by two thin layers of maple. The riser was shaped so that when viewed from the side they have a thin line of maple that follows the contour of the back and belly of the riser. If you should notice this on a bow, you can be pretty sure you have an early Fasco in your

sights. The tips were another thing of beauty. They are small, rather delicate, and blend in very well with the limb.

Starting in 1961, the rosewood risers were another eye catcher. The bows that I have seen are a single piece of wood (not laminated) with very fine grain and deep reddish brown color. I think it is some of the nicest rosewood that I have ever seen in a handle.

In 1963, Fasco, like other makers, tried to stabilize their target bows by adding weight to the riser. To accomplish this, they attached a wood "nose" above and below the handle. Now that's a terrible way to describe it, but if you look the photo of a Decathlon Supreme on the previous page, you'll know what I mean. Every time I look at that picture it reminds me of Jimmy Durante's nose. The model 650 that first appeared in 1964 had a large wood protrusion on the belly side of the bow. The amount of wood that was used to accomplish this not only helped stabilize, but also absorbed any vibration.

Up to this point, most of this narrative has really been about Fasco's target bows. Fasco did make hunting bows, but hunting bows are meant to be

functional and we have been talking aesthetics. Most of their early bows were either 66 or 69 inches long except the model 45. It was 60 inches, but there was no mention of it being a hunting bow. In 1963 they introduced the 60 inch "Super Sonic" hunter with a rosewood handle and the 60 inch "Sonic" hunter with a walnut handle. They were basically the same bow - just different wood. They retained these two hunting models until they went out of business. I wish I could tell you more about the shooting capabilities of this bow, but I have never seen or shot one.

There is always one question on my mind when I see a bow for the first time. Is it possible to tell when the bow was made by the serial number? It is surprising how many makers used their serial numbers for this purpose. The only problem is cracking their code. Fred Anderson told me that he remembers putting those numbers on the bows, but can't remember if they were used for that purpose. Two of the early bows that I saw had serial numbers that ended in "59." I thought that maybe that meant the bows were made in 1959, then I looked at a bow made sometime in the mid-60s and my theory went right out the window. If anyone can enlighten me on this, please drop me a short note explaining their code.

How do these bows shoot? The Mark II that I have is a real sweet shooter. It has a nice smooth draw with no stacking at my 28 inch draw. When I first got the bow it had an endless string on it and it had some string noise. I replaced that string with a flemish string. It took some adjustment, but I reduced the noise to zero. I have never chronographed this bow, but from the experience I have had testing other bows, this



Nils, Fasco's master carver, shown here carving a Fasco bow. Nils learned his craft abroad, where he created works of art for the crowned heads of Europe. He won many awards at international art shows and was a former carver of gun stocks for Weatherby. All Fasco carvings, and inlays of ivory and ebony were created personally by this master's hands.

This photo is from an ad that appeared in a 1960 issue of *Archery*.

bow would be somewhere in the 175 to 180 FPS class, not a speed demon but very respectable for a 40 pound bow.

Fred Anderson - who was a bowyer at Fasco - told me that they produced about 3000 bows a year while he was employed at Fasco. Not all of those bows carried the Fasco label. They made bows for Eicholtz, Drake, Root, Morris and Thompson. Fred also told me that they sold a large number of their bows in the Midwest. I live in Ohio and have traded and collected bows all over the Midwest for about eight years. In all that time I have only seen four Fasco bows. A Mark II (which is pictured here), a Decathlon Supreme, and two Zephyrs. I can't understand this small number of Fasco bows. If half of those 3000 bows carried the Fasco label, there should have been 12,000 to 15,000 bows made. I can't imagine Wilson Brother's Black Widow making any more than that and I have lost count on how many Black Widow's I have seen.

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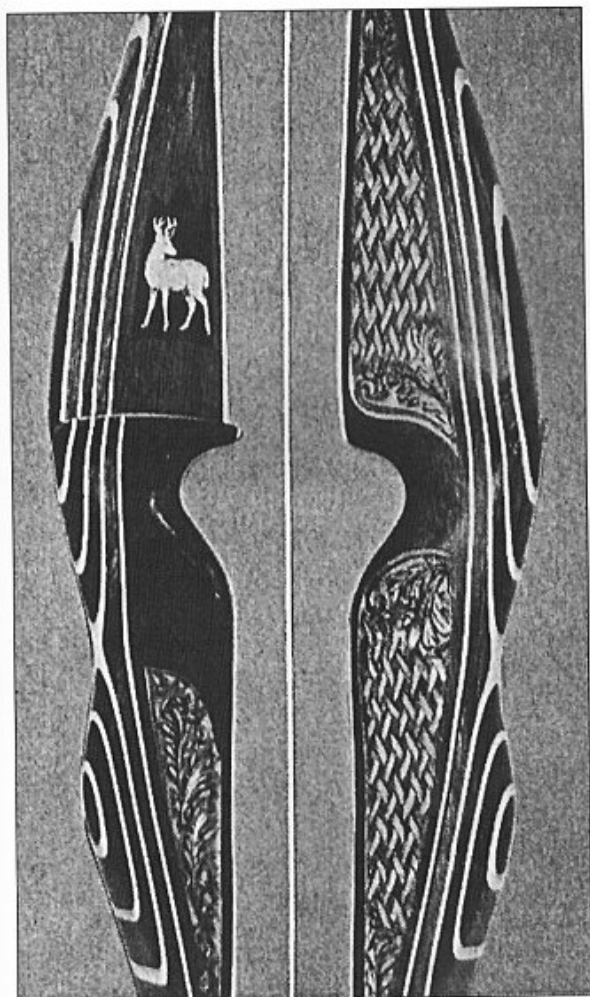
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Examples of basketweave and oakleaf carving and ivory-in-ebony inlays.

This photo is also from an ad that appeared in a 1960 issue of *Archery*.

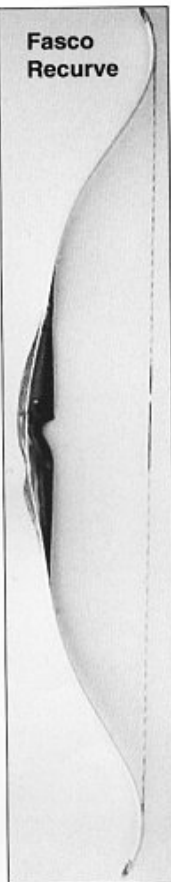
Anderson tells me that these bows were not of the same high quality as the originals.

As I have stated before, Fasco bows were not made all that long - just 11 years - and there are not many Fasco bows to be found. If you should happen to find one, I recommend that you put it in your collection. You won't be sorry! They are not only a pleasure to shoot, but the quality of workmanship and outstanding wood make them a pleasure to just sit and look at.

In closing, I would like to thank Fred Anderson, maker of Skookum Longbows, for the facts that I used in this article. Fred worked as a bowyer at Fasco from 1963 until the plant closed in 1970.



Fasco  
Recurve



#### AUTHOR'S NOTE:

I would like to invite people who have bows that they would like to have identified to send me a close-up photo of the handle section along with a full-length photo of the bow. If I cannot identify the bow, perhaps some of our readers can help.

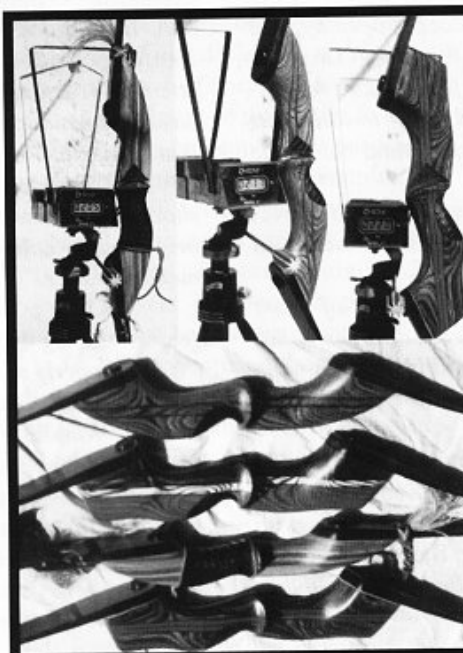
I would also like to have leads on any of the old archery companies from the 1950s to 1970s. If you can put me in contact with a former employee or owner of one of these companies, please contact Gary Alstaetter at 1-800-484-5372 (PIN #2651). I will contact that person and research the company for a future article.

Listed below are three companies that I would like to research in the near future:

Tice and Watts Archery  
Sanders Archery  
Root Archery

I have a standard questionnaire that I send out when I am researching a company. I always ask if any top pros or amateurs used these bows. According to Fred Anderson, Jim Bell won the N.F.A.A. National Instinctive title with a Fasco bow.

I cannot find any ads after 1965. I can find Seattle Archery ads, but there is no mention of Fasco bows in those ads. The ads only state that they are distributors and manufacturers. They ran the same add with the same prices in 1963 and 1965. Maybe Seattle Archery had made a decision to discontinue Fasco bows long before they closed the plant in 1970. After the plant closed in 1970 there were some Fasco bows produced. These bows were made on Fasco forms by someone in California named Graham. Fred



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WHAT  
OUR BOWS DO BEST!**



# THE PRIMITIVE PURSUIT

by  
Phillip Foss

*"The purpose of the static recurve limb on a self bow," Richard Brotzman explained, "is to force the power of the limb down toward the riser. The recurve doesn't open up, and consequently loads up the midsection of the limb. This puts more stress on the wood, but it creates a faster, more responsive bow. The bow's power is condensed down toward your hand and the arrow, rather than whipping around out at the limb tips."*

Bowyer Richard Brotzman (shown in photo above) was explaining the design of his "Konza Kurve" series of bows.

*"The static recurve design is perhaps thousands of years old," he continued, "but in the last several decades it has been basically ignored. What I am essentially doing is making a time-proven bow design available to those archers who are interested."*

Brotzman is a "self-bow" bowyer, building bows of solid, unbacked, wood — the oldest, tried-and-true bow design in history. To build his bows, Brotzman begins with hunting — tree hunting. From his home in Kansas, he goes in pursuit of trophy examples of the elusive *Bois de Arc*, *Hedge*, or more commonly called, *Osage Orange*.

*"Osage is my favorite bow wood," Brotzman explained. "Besides Osage Orange, I've worked with Yew, Ash, Elm, Black Locust, Cedar, Hackberry, Sassafras, and Kentucky Coffee. Some may have a better compression strength or a better tensile strength, but I don't believe any has the combination of both compression and tensile strengths that Osage has."*

*"Besides, I like the way it works, I like the way it shoots, and I like the way it looks. Young wood has a clean bright yellow color which ages, through oxidation, into a deep mellow orange."*

Once a suitable tree has been "bagged," Brotzman seasons the log until it is down to an 8-10% moisture content. *"If not properly seasoned, the wood can twist, barber-pole, or take a back set," he explained.*

Working from suitable staves, he begins the process of coaxing bows out of the wood. *"To make an efficient, durable bow," Brotzman said, "the bowyer is largely controlled by the grain of the wood itself; in most cases, you cannot lay a symmetrical template on the stave and cut out an idealized bow. Usually the grain wants to wander some, and you have to wander with it."*

Photo: Richard Brotzman shooting a "Konza Kurve."



Mr. Brotzman's "Calf Quiver," designed for use in tree stands.

In some cases, this "wandering" has been extreme. Brotzman has built numerous "character" or "snake" bows which, when clothed in an appropriate snakeskin, run the risk of having one of their antler nocks chopped off if found lying in the grass.

"The snakebows are fun," Brotzman continued, "but they are also difficult and unpredictable; the design is dictated solely by the wood. Snaky wood doesn't work well in my 'Konza Kurve' series of static recurves, so I use it only in my 'Prairie Spirit' series of longbows."

"The 'Prairie Spirit' longbows are built with traditionally-styled pyramid limbs. I like them at 66 inch, or longer, range. This seems to minimize hand shock and creates a more stable bow."

"With both bow styles, I can construct them with or without an arrow rest. Personally, I prefer to use a knuckle rest. There is something about having both hands in contact with the arrow that is more intimate; I feel like

*I'm shooting the arrow, not merely pulling a bow."*

Brotzman began Ol'e Buff Archery 10 years ago in St. George, Kansas. "At that time," he explained, "there was no source for any equipment for the primitive archer. If you were interested in traditional style archery, you either had to build it yourself or get it from someone who knew how to build it."

Since necessity is the mother of invention — or in Brotzman's case, re-invention — he set out on what was basically a quest, to learn all he could about the full spectrum of primitive archery.

"The bows are, of course, what you could call the 'glamour gear' of primitive archery," he commented. "They are pretty, efficient, and each one is unique, so they justifiably get the most attention."

"In reality, however, the bows are only one component in an array of equipment, that is all necessary to be a successful primitive hunter or archer. Every component is crucial — some may be less exciting or intriguing — but all must be functional, and all must be balanced to create a functioning whole."

"A bow without a bowstring isn't going to do you much good," he continued, "and an arrow shaft with improper fletching is going to do more harm than good, and a quiver which conflicts with your field conditions is going to become something like carrying around a suitcase — one thing leads to another, and I just decided to try to learn it all, or as much of it as possible."

As a result of this desire to learn it all, Brotzman has gone on to become a superb arrowsmith and leathersmith, in fact, Ol'e Buff Archery may well have the largest selection of quivers available in the country. Brotzman claims 25 styles of quivers, but since the possibilities are endless, he gave up counting.

While Brotzman hand-builds a full spectrum of traditional back quivers with an array of modifications — tooled, snakeskin underlays, sheepskin lined, etc. — he has also developed several unique quivers.

One of these is the "Calf Quiver." True to its name, the Calf Quiver straps on to the lower leg and holds four arrows. While obviously not

the best quiver to use while wading for gar, it may be the ideal stand quiver; arrows can be extracted from the quiver with almost no movement; you do not have to reach up and behind you as with a standard back quiver, or fumble around in full view of game trying to wrench a shaft from a bow quiver. Either seated or standing, the arrows are instantly available.

"I designed the Calf Quiver for hunting from a treestand," Brotzman explained. "Its easy-on and easy-off, its soundless, and the fastest quiver I know of for getting a second arrow on the string."

Additionally, Brotzman has designed another unique quiver, "The Arrow Wallet."

"The Arrow Wallet is purely a big game hunting quiver," he said. "It was designed solely with that function in mind. It only holds four arrows, but if you shoot four times at a bull elk and miss, I guess you've had your chance. The quiver is flat sewn, so it is absolutely soundless: no rattling shafts, no rasping fletches. I also designed it so it rides lower on the back, that way any bright colored feathers are behind the archer's head so the game is not flagged. Another advantage of being flat-sewn is that it lays flat on your back making it much easier to go through brush or limbs without getting snagged."

Brotzman also makes hip quivers, 3-D quivers, bow quivers and traditional Indian-style quivers out of deer skin. But he doesn't stop there; he also constructs shooting tabs and gloves, armguards, bowstringers, and encourages purely custom orders.

"You'd think that this primitive bow-and-arrow business would have been fully explored," Brotzman explained, "but, in fact, people seem to have unlimited creative and unique ideas, and I sincerely enjoy working with them to make their ideas into reality."

"If someone has an idea for a one-of-a-kind, never-before-seen armguard, and its humanly possible to make, I'll make it," he said.

This enthusiasm for all aspects of primitive archery has also lead Brotzman into the field of arrow-smithing. He cuts his own Dogwood shafts, knaps native Kansas agate into





"The snakebows are fun," . . . "but they are also difficult and unpredictable; the design is dictated solely by the wood."

arrowheads, and builds arrows out of river cane, or "American bamboo," as he calls it.

He has, in fact, recently authored a book on the subject of arrowbuilding, entitled, *Arrowsmithing: A Workable Knowledge from Primitive to Traditional*.

"The arrow is generally recognized as the single-most important aspect of archery," Brotzman observed. "In fact, Ishi made a comment to the effect that any old bow will work, but it is the arrow that does the actual killing."

ing, and arrowhead selection.

The "primitive" portion of the book is geared more toward building arrows from gathered, or raw, materials. Consequently, it focuses on such topics as stripping and shaping raw feathers to produce one's own fletches, and the processes by which one constructs foreshafts for use with river cane arrows.

The book is designed so that the individual, with no prior knowledge of arrowbuilding, can sit down and, with a minimum of tools and equipment, build lethal and beautiful arrows.

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"I agree with that assessment, but when I looked around, I found very little readily-available information on the subject of arrowbuilding. I wanted to put together a book that was truly workable, that a person could pick up and actually build functional arrows."

Richard Brotzman's book, *Arrowsmithing*, consequently covers all aspects of arrowbuilding. The "traditional" section — which is primarily concerned with building arrows from purchased materials - includes chapters on arrow spine, tapering, nocking, fletching, crowning and crest-

While Brotzman's expertise in, and knowledge of, primitive archery seems exhaustive, he looks at it otherwise. "There is so much to learn, and so much to experiment with, that I'll never exhaust the possibilities," he exclaimed. "Right now I'm building a bow out of Catalpa wood, I have no idea if the final result will even be worthy of the name, 'bow' — maybe it will be nothing more than an elaborate walking stick — but I'm going to find out, and I'm going to enjoy myself while I find out!"



For more information on Ol'e Buff self bows, leather goods, or the book, *Arrowsmithing: A Workable Knowledge from Primitive to Traditional*, contact Richard Brotzman at Ol'e Buff Archery, 3790 Pecan Drive, St. George, Kansas 66535.

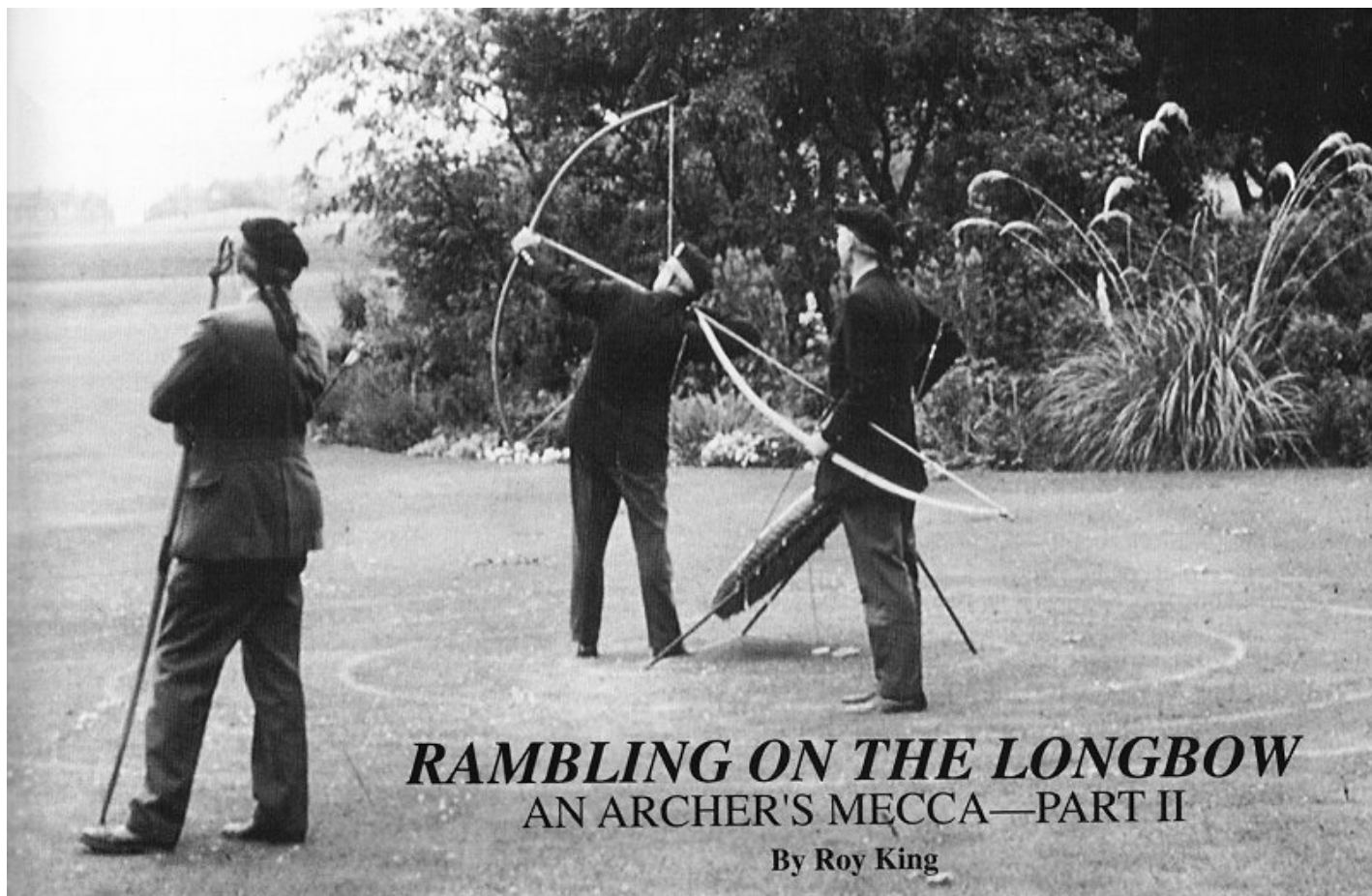
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## ***RAMBLING ON THE LONGBOW*** **AN ARCHER'S MECCA—PART II**

**By Roy King**

Reprinted from an article previously appearing in *British Archer*, Vol. 30, No. 4.

*THIS IS THE SECOND IN A TWO-PART SERIES ON ROY KING'S VISIT TO "THE ARCHER'S MECCA. . ."*

The bowyer's shop of the Royal Company of Archers is of uncertain age, though is thought to be older than the 1776 Archer's Hall. Set in a corner of the grounds of the Archer's hall, the "shop" is in actual fact a small detached house, which at one time, in all probability, housed the resident bowyer and his family, as the Royal Company had their own bowyer since their foundation until 1971 when the last bowyer, Charles Dowson, retired. He died, alas in February 1978, breaking the chain of time.

The workshop itself is one of the downstairs rooms of the house, the others now knocked into a double garage with a small store for bowtimbers that was once probably a coal place to feed the still remaining three downstairs fireplaces. One wonders just how many bows and hundreds of arrows have been turned out in this dim 18 feet by 12 feet bowyer's factory.

The past radiates from the walls and the central workbench must have seen many a master, judging by its ancient, well-used worktop. Peter Muir, regarded as the finest bowmaker ever, spent his 51 years employment with the Company in this small shop, starting at the age of 18 in 1827, learning the trade from his father at Kilwinning.

Around the walls are shelves and drawers, mostly empty now—the master bowyers gone, but as Jim Moir says, "If there are any ghosts at Archer's hall, they are friendly

ones." A box of a gross or more damaged arrows await the healer's hand, if they can be brought back to use. A collection of two or three dozen broken bows in a damp corner have given their all, being only "fragments" of their former active selves. Alas, their memories must remain in the past, their use gone, but what life and respect they generate when turned over to reveal makers' names like Fergie, Gordon, Law, Muir, and many more.

Perhaps I may be eccentric, but I can fondle half the remains of a 100 year old bow and give it respect, maybe more than it deserves, in a manner such that I could never experience in holding a modern carbon fibre stabilizer, yes, even including a TFC! When examining and shooting all equipment I am baffled as to why so many modern archers are interested only in "SHOOTING" and not "ARCHERY." Perhaps it would be well if one took out GNAS membership, then were pushed in at one end of the Archer's Hall and dragged out through the Bowyer's Shop, drinking in the atmosphere on the way. With such an apprenticeship the full potential of ARCHERY with its many more varied facets would be instilled in the "rabbit" to explore, experiment, and experience, rather than the single goals of X points for a FITA. I have a vague memory of someone once saying (was it me?) of Jack Flinton, a youngster of 84 years, that "perhaps he isn't the best shot in the field anymore, but certainly he's the FINEST ARCHER." Think about it!

Photo: Royal Company members at evening practice on the grounds of Holyrood Palace.

Nostalgia over, back to the Bowyer's Shop where pride of place is taken by a curious, ancient, treadle-operated metal turning lathe. A thin, set-less saw blade lies nearby, which when fitted in to the chuck is used to slot the footings for arrows. I brought some footings with me and was delighted to work in such congenial surroundings to show Jim how they are spliced into the arrow and ultimately turned into the finished shaft. Indeed, in Jim I found a willing pupil, in that I have never known anyone before to make a perfect spliced string in 20 minutes flat, with only as long again for prior instruction!

Few tools or bowyer's equipment are left in the workshop to indicate the manufacturing process of shooting "graith." Certainly from observations and examination of a few remaining partly-finished bows (now never to be advanced beyond their embryo stage), all work, much as expected, seems to have been by hand. One curious relic is still there, housed in a felt-lined mahogany box. It is a spine-meter of what appears to be nickel-plated brass. The whole thing is a Rolls Royce engineered one-off, and no doubt a valuable item of interest to archery heritage with its uniqueness and parentage.

An attractive stone spiral staircase leads from the bowyer's shop to the Ascham Room above. Here, three windows look out over the one-time shooting ground of the Meadows. Now a public park which comes right up to the Royal Company's boundary wall. Only one small box-sized room on this floor limits the size of the Ascham Room containing forty-eight "aschams" (archer's lockers) covering all the available wall space.

Mainly empty now, they are most used during the winter months when the members shoot at home in the adjacent indoor butts. Probably, with the number of bows in the Ascham Room, and in the Archer's hall itself, where a number of bows are stored that may be required by archers on parade when the Monarch is visiting, there are approximately 150 bows within the confines of the grounds.

The indoor butts, the outer wall of which forms a boundary wall to the grounds, has an actual range of 100 feet.



Imposing view of 180 yard clout at Holyrood Palace, with the extinct volcano of Arthur's Seat as a backdrop. Note the small clout in the far distance (the white dot beneath the trees).

The side of the butts facing onto the bowling green and garden has recently been refaced in cedar, with projecting alcoves at each end of the range for markers and observers to retire.

As mentioned in my previous articles on the Royal Company, shooting indoors and out is done in two ways. This uses targets at either end of the field, or in this case the narrow indoor range. Only two arrows are shot to an end, after which the archers troop down to the other end, retrieve shafts and then shoot in the reverse direction. Indoor shooting is confined to the winter months, usually two evenings a week.

I was fortunate to be invited to watch the Royal Company members at evening clout practice at Holyrood Palace and observed at first hand this archery known no where else in the world! Due to public pressure within the meadows, the Royal Company have, since soon after the war years, shot in the private grounds of Holyrood and no finer grounds could be envisaged. At the Palace end the 180 yards clout target is set among the lawned ruins of Holyrood Abbey founded by David I, King of Scots, in 1128. The other distant clout has as a backdrop the 822 feet high extinct volcano of Arthur's Seat, rising suddenly from a flat plain. Couple these characteristics with the fine trees, bushes, and well-manicured flower beds surrounding

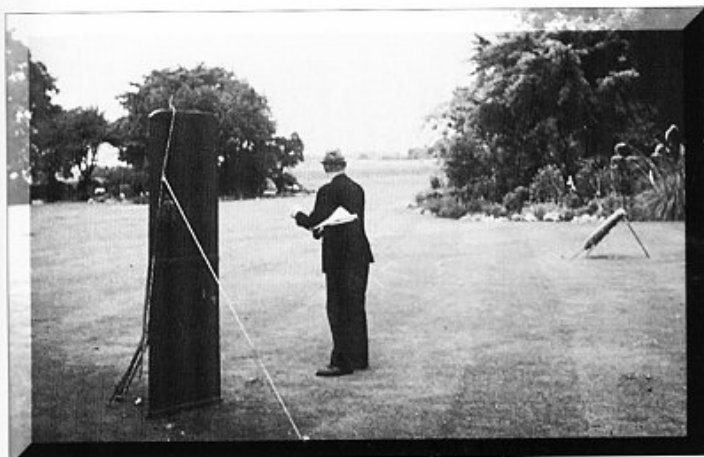
the lawns, and the Royal Archers stand incomparable in the world for situation and spectacle.

A small room to the side of the Palace serves as a store for the archers' equipment and here the season's tackle is left rather than in the little distant Archer's hall. As practice is informal, archers who start shooting at 5:30 p.m. three evenings a week, wear a green blazer and matching beret with red pom-pom. On more formal occasions, Royal visits, shooting for prizes etc., then the full field dress uniform is worn.

Shooting at 180 yards obviously presents its problems, apart from landing in the scoring area, following the flight of an arrow is reasonable enough but to judge oneself exactly where that arrow has landed is difficult. It is here that "Services of a Marker are not only desirable but essential," to quote Badminton. It is this respect that Jim Moir plays his enjoyable part in the proceedings, for he serves as Marker to the Company, and in doing so is able to watch the progress, or decline, of the Company members.

With the assembled archers at one clout, spot on time and fortified by a quick "nip," Jim takes his position at the other clout some 30 feet to the side. Armed with only a napkin on a stick Jim uses a simple system of semaphore to indicate the position of scoring arrows.





Mr. J. Moir marking a clout in the grounds of Holyrood Palace. He is signalling the distance of half a bow (3 feet) by touching his left elbow with the napkin. The "protective mantle" is also seen to his left. The shooting distance is 180 yards.

Archers shoot only one at a time and just two arrows to the end, each dutifully recorded in a large score book. Though this is only practice, there is a prize at the end of the year for the archer scoring the most clouts (30 inches diameter).

I was fortunate to see Dr. Finley score a clout, thus adding to his impressive lead and eventual winning of the year's prize. Shooting takes place at a fair gait, as each archer steps forward to shoot he takes a position in front of the clout. With arrow nocked and ready to shoot he signals his intention by raising his free arm above his head. Jim at the other end gives a brisk wave of the napkin to note the signal.

The archer shoots and Jim closely follows the flight of the arrow. If, however, he should lose sight of it he casually retires behind a slim, high, man-sized board, called a mantle, pitched alongside, this being the Royal Company's version of an air raid shelter. Not only are Markers desirable but they are hard to replace!

The distance of the arrow from the clout is signalled, the most distant marked being two bows (12 feet). A second signal indicates its position to the clout, clock face fashion, e.g. napkin held out vertically aloft, arrow at 12 o'clock. An arrow striking the clout is expected to result in a signal of jubilation from the marker. He may fall flat on

his back and wave his legs in the air, or do a jig, or, on casual practice nights do as Jim does and throw his hat in the air.

Jim tells me that he can now tell with constant marking who is shooting from the other end without seeing the archer. He says each has his own peculiarity in the flight of the shaft and flash-

ing action of the bow limbs.

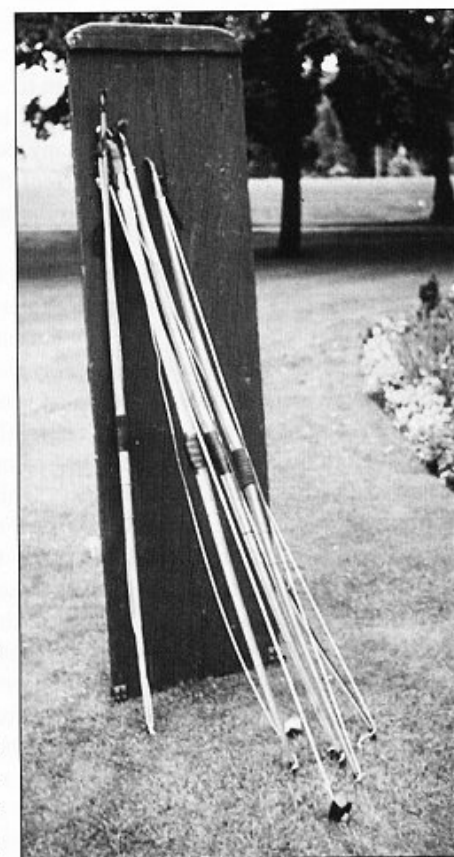
To facilitate rapidity of shooting, the archers shoot in sequence but only one arrow at a time, leaving the shooting spot in one direction while a fellow moves in with arrow nocked at the ready. When the second arrow has been shot the archer then proceeds to the distant clout, walking to one side of the shooting area. Almost as soon as the last archer has shot, the scores are recorded at the other end, this by means of each archer having his own set of colours on his arrows. Shooting is governed by the clock and not the number of arrows to be shot, so that after three quarters of an hour the archers "take five" and a quick "nip."

The difficulty of doing well at these distances is readily appreciated and in shooting in two directions the difficulty is doubled. The wind plays many tricks and constant notice of its fluctuation is all important. Naturally one must be aware of the many properties of one's equipment to compensate for this. Indeed, most of the members used two bows, one for up the field and one for down. In this manner each bow was braced just to shoot two arrows, then unbraced and left at that end, its partner being used at the other. Using a bow as respectfully and sparing as this, it is evident why some of the members used bows 100 years old and more!

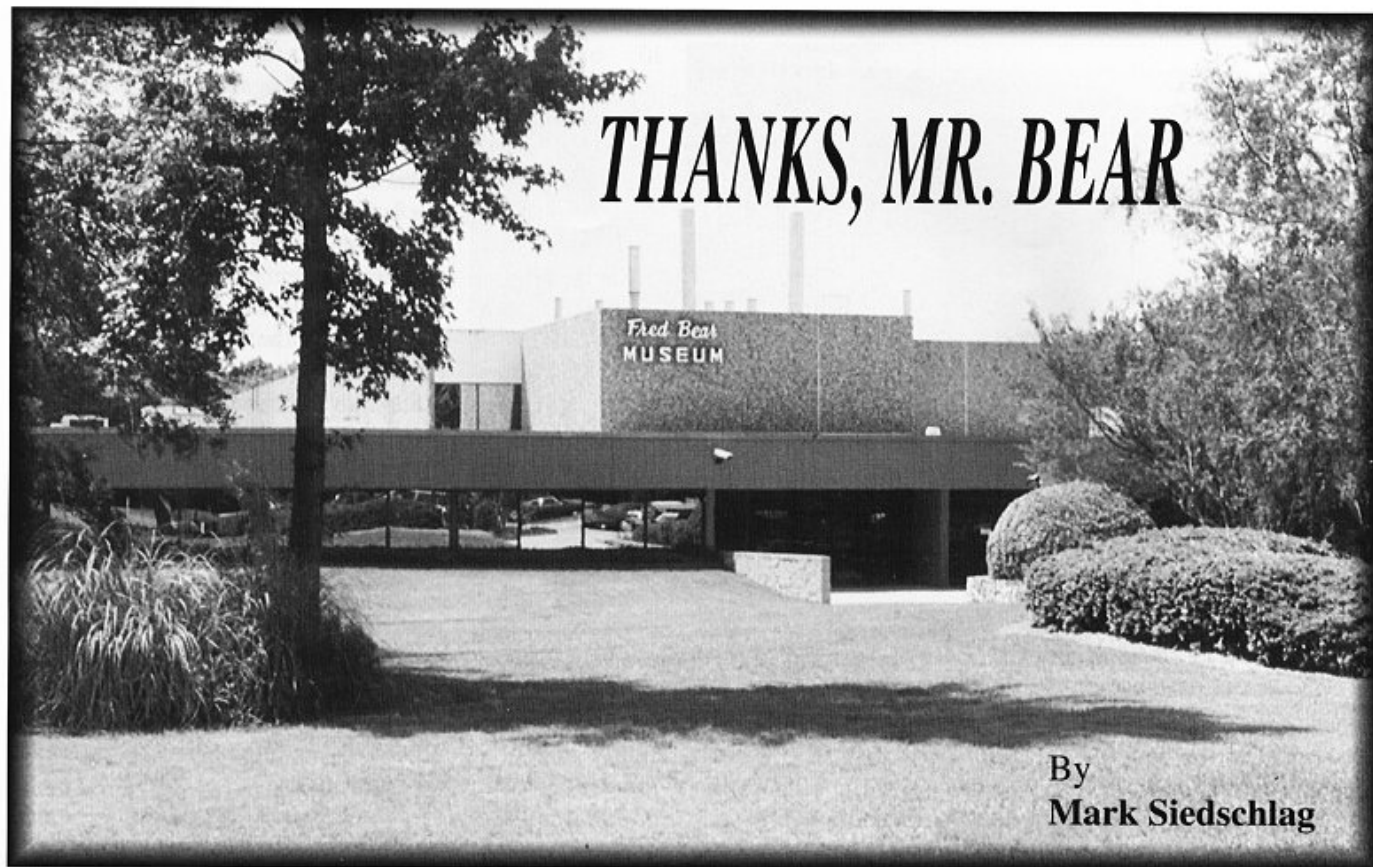
After the forced break, the archers are off again fairly sprinting up and down the field with little respect for age or infirmity. Then, one and a half hours after the first arrow was shot the last is loosed and the clouts and mantles quickly put away. The whole evening's shooting is accomplished impeccably, impressively, and quickly. Donning their city clothes, the members take a last "nip" and disappear into the other Edinburgh and home.

This was to be my last evening in the city, so it was back to Archer's hall for a natter with my head fairly buzzing with all I had seen and learned over this brief holiday.

I fairly revelled in these unusual circumstances, but with the new found friends north of the border (yet still 50 miles nearer than London) I look forward to my next visit to Mecca in the not too distant future.



The marker's mantle and bows awaiting use for the return end.



# THANKS, MR. BEAR

By  
**Mark Siedschlag**

*I*f there is anything in archery akin to sacred ground, then surely I'm standing on it as I walk the halls of the Fred Bear Museum. I don't think any bowhunter or archer could stand in these halls and not feel the history and the uniqueness of this place dedicated to the memory and contribution of Mr. Bear.

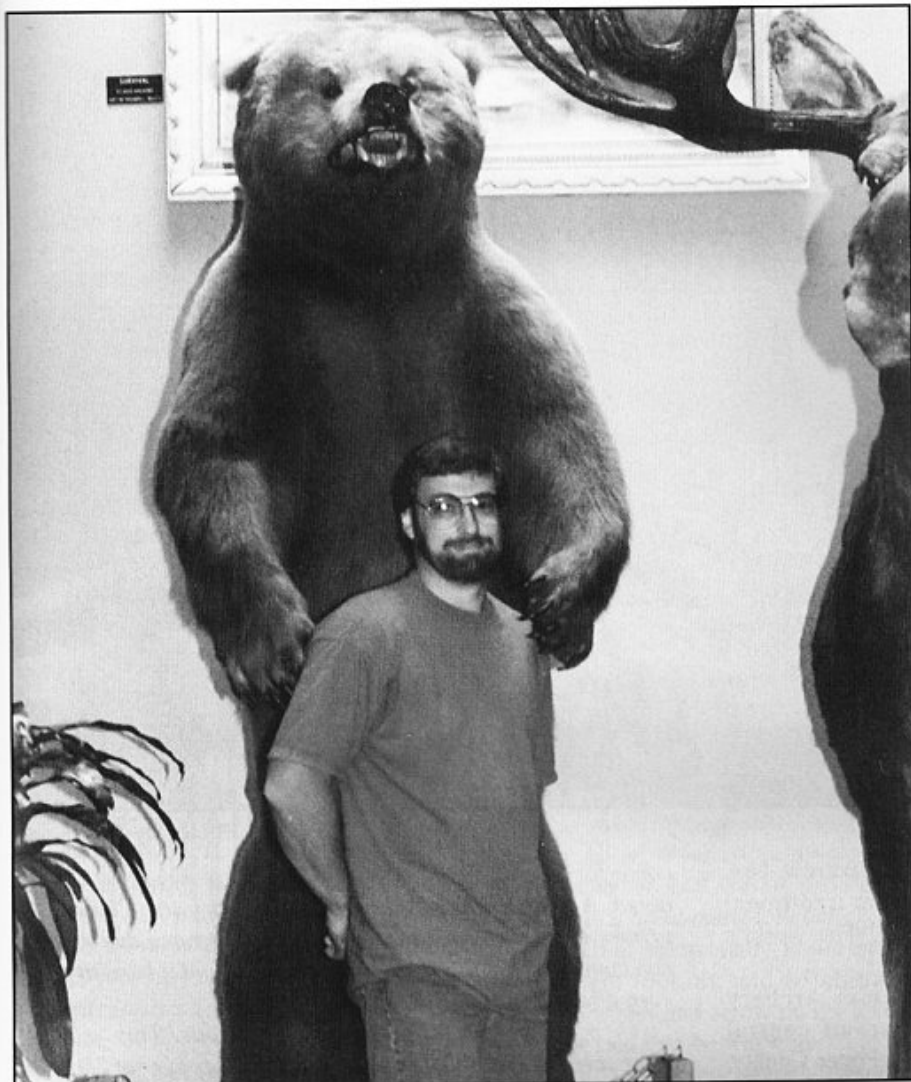
While most kids my age grabbed a football and went outside to be Bart Starr, I grabbed my fiberglass bow and pretended to be Fred Bear. The freshly-cut hayfield on our farm became the plains of Africa and the hay bales scattered about waiting to be picked up would be transformed by my imagination into a herd of wildebeest. The stalk was on and the action would usually last until the last of my twenty-five cent cedar arrows became hopelessly lost. Thirty years later and not much has changed, I still want to be Fred Bear. Much of what I am as a bowhunter today can be traced back to my early years and Fred Bear. I first watched with wonder as Fred took a grizzly and later a polar bear on the old American Sportsman show. It was his movies and later videos that stirred the spirit of adventure in me and lured me like a magnet to the romance of the bow. My pilgrimage to his museum was a long overdue chance for me to say thanks.

By watching one of his videos or reading his book of Field Notes, it's not hard to understand the spirit of Fred. Unlike so many today, his intention was not to promote himself or another product, rather he promoted the sport of archery and the spirit of adventure. His trophies were not just

the animals he collected on his many adventures, but also the friendships and memories he gained along the way. True greatness is not measured by trophies, wealth, or personal accomplishments. The best measure of true greatness is how you affect those around you. Fred was a great man. A lot has been said and written about Fred's contribution to archery, but Fred's greatest contribution was to those around him. Although I never met Mr. Bear, he played a major part in my love of hunting with the bow and arrow and my longing for wild places. This love has led to over 20 years of adventure in the forests and fields with my bow in hand. So now I come to The Fred Bear Museum, to remember and once again share in his adventures.

Although the museum is a tribute to the life of Mr. Bear, its focus isn't to bring glory to Fred. Much like the man himself, the museum is about archery and the spirit of adventure. Most of the trophies are Fred's, but not all of them. Others, such as Saxton Pope and Art Young, are honored there as well as are many of Fred's other friends and hunting companions. Even though many of the trophies are of record-book quality, you'll find no mention of Pope and Young scores on any of them. To Fred, the real trophy was sharing the adventure with good friends.

I had just finished reading the late Bob Munger's book, "Trailing a Bear," so the stories behind the trophies are fresh in my mind as I slowly make my way down the halls. I deliberately take my time, not wanting to miss a thing. Others



Me and Fred's Bear.

pass me by but I won't be rushed. I am here for a reason, even if I'm not totally sure what that reason is.

At the end of the long hall I find the display I was the most anxious to see. Fred's personal gear, including one of his famous hats. Twelve of his personal bows are also displayed and I mentally hold each one in my hand as I read the plaque that accompanies each. The bow he used to take his first deer is at the top. By following the progression of bows down, you can see the evolution of Bear bows. The last two bows are from my era and sparked my keenest interest. I remember as a kid looking in an old Bear catalog at that model and wishing I could have the same bow that Fred used. Those bows, his size fourteen boots, and his hat seem to be there

just waiting for Fred to return and take them on another adventure. Old notebooks worn and yellowed from age hold the notes of all of Mr. Bear's hunts from all over the world. Over 50 years of adventures were scribbled on the pages of those books. Behind me is his hard-won polar bear and just to my right is his record stone sheep, his favorite hunt of all. I have a hard time pulling away from this display.

The African hall displays the fruit of Fred's three trips to the dark continent. It's a trip I hope to make someday. I've carried this dream with me since I first watched "Mozambique Game Trails." It's an exciting film where Fred takes an elephant with his bow. At the end of the tour you'll find his tiger in full mount as well as his Asiatic buffalo. For

two hours I shared once again in the trials and adventures of a special man. It was over too quickly for me.

I'm still not sure of the exact reason why I felt I had to come here until I am leaving the building. The first parking space is empty and has a sign over it that just reads "BEAR." I realize that Mr. Bear is still here if just in spirit.

One of my greatest regrets in life was never meeting Fred in person while he was still alive. I guess I just wanted to say thanks. As I leave the museum, I realize that I just did.



#### AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The Fred Bear Museum is easy to find. Take the Archer Road exit (number 75) off Interstate 75 in Gainesville, Florida. The museum charges a small fee and the staff there can be very helpful, especially in relating humorous stories. I recommend reading Robert Munger's book, "Trailing a Bear," or Fred's book of "Field Notes," before you go. Either of these will add to your visit.

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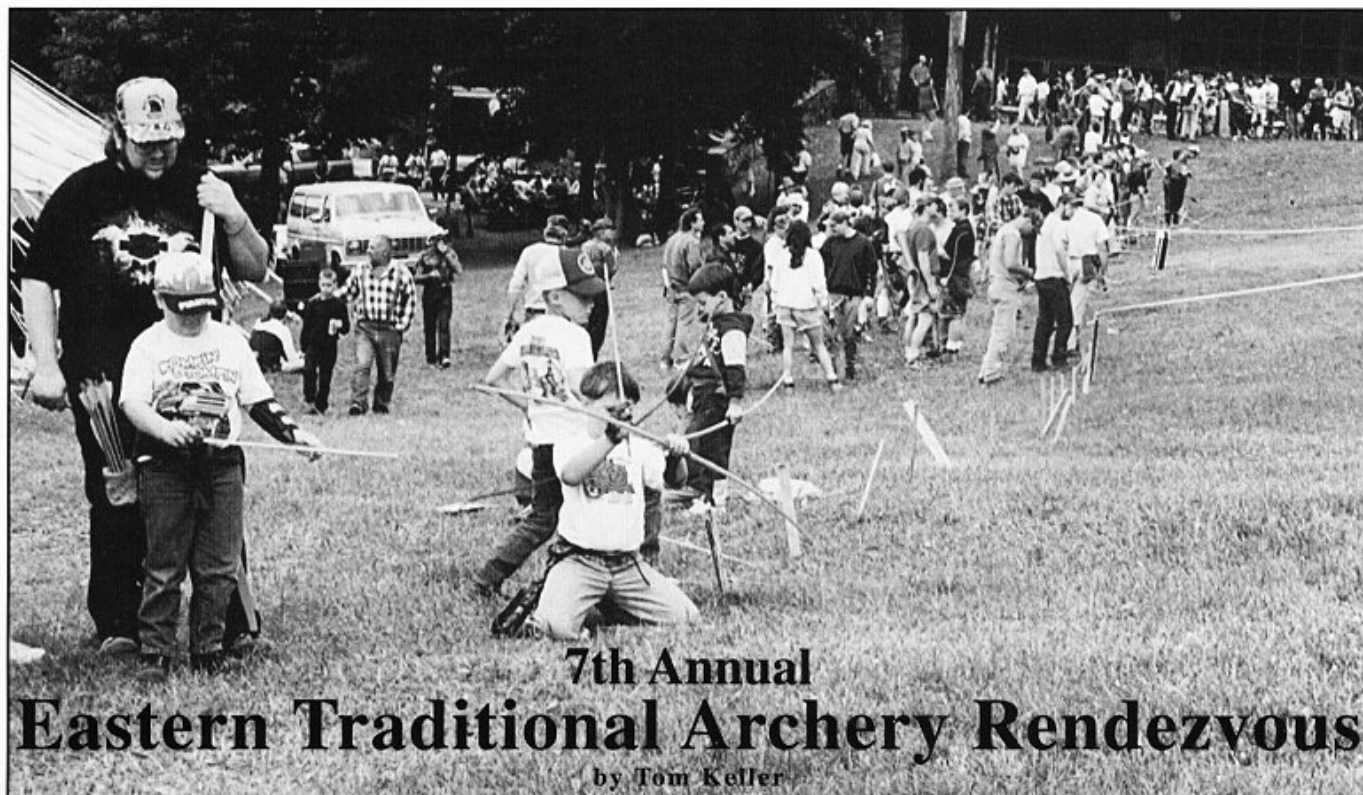
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## 7th Annual Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous

by Tom Keller

Photos by Tom Keller

**W**here in the world can you go to talk, borrow, buy, sell, trade, make, shoot, and dream traditional archery four days and three nights? The world's largest traditional archery rendezvous, of course!

The 7th Annual Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous (ETAR), located in the heart of central Pennsylvania, near Coudersport on Route 6 in Potter County, has had the distinction of being the largest traditional rendezvous of its kind in the world for three years in a row.

2,100-plus shooters and more than 8,000 archery enthusiasts visited the 7th ETAR from Thursday, July 25, to Sunday, July 28, 1996.

Mike and Joyce Knefley organized the first Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous at Ski Denton seven years ago from Mike's love of traditional archery. Ski Denton is Denton Hill, a 750-acre state park. ETAR is much more than an archery rendezvous, it's a family-orientated event where shooters of all abilities and visitors are welcome and will feel comfortable and accepted. It's a place where experienced archers seem eager and willing to help the beginner and it's a place where men, women, and children build friendships that last a lifetime.

ETAR is also one of the best events to discover the fun of traditional archery for the first time or to rediscover your lost-love because of so many other commitments.

Terry Mickey, Ski Denton Operations Manager, said, "ETAR has been designed to be a fun shoot for the entire family to enjoy without the high pressure requirement of most competitive shoots. ETAR is what you want it to be. You can come on Thursday and shoot until closing time on Sunday,

come for one day to shoot or just come to see what it's all about. A person can walk in for one day, try some bows and arrows and other equipment and leave the same day or they can come early and stay late. Most people find it hard to leave even after one full day.

"ETAR has something for everyone. This year we have seven different field courses located throughout 750-plus acres at Ski Denton. We have almost 200 full-bodied, life-sized McKenzie 3-D targets in a wide variety of North American wildlife replicas. Three courses are accessible only by riding Ski Denton's triple chair ski lift to the top of the mountain.

"The terrain of each course varies from being very flat and easy to the more difficult Potter County mountain side. Some courses are accessible for the physically challenged, others are not. All targets and courses are placed in natural poses and in realistic locations, similar to situations a bowhunter will find in any bow season."

Shooters receive a realistic workout as they attempt to judge the distance to the targets, the size of the animal, and the placement of the arrow. Targets are placed for up and down hill shots, wide open shots, behind-the-tree-shots, running shots, close shots, and not-so-close shots. Other challenging shots include facing and looking away, angled shots, and just about any other shot that would encounter during a day of hunting.

The average number of targets to a course is 20-28 (four courses of 20 targets and three of 28 targets) and shooting time depends on the number of people in your party, but a good estimate is 2-3 hours per course. One arrow per target is

the rule but when there are no crowds many shooters take a second or third shot at the target they thought they should have scored a "10" but missed completely.

Shooters have access to two large practice ranges from daylight to 11 p.m. when the lights go out, a bowyer's "try-out" range, an aerial target area, a running swamp hog, a nightly "coon" hunt, and other novelty targets.

Dealers from at least 42 states and Canada are located inside a large 80 ft. by 200 ft. tent. Other dealers are located outside the tent. Archers and visitors have the opportunity to see what's new in traditional bows and other hunting supplies and equipment. ETAR may be the location to find the best mix of traditional archery equipment in the world.

*"People come from all over just to browse. When they see a bow they like they have the opportunity to take it to the 'bowyer's try-out range' located on the upper side of the dealer's tent for a shooting session. Bowyers will spend the time explaining why their bow is the best, how they build them, and then let a person shoot the bow at the try-out range. Not just one or two arrows, as many as it takes to feel comfortable with the bow."*

*"If one bow doesn't feel right, just try another one. That's what ETAR is all about. There are many fine bowyers and bows here, and a person has the opportunity to find the ones he or she like."*

Mark Killar, from Mt. Pleasant, PA, had learned of ETAR from a friend and decided he wanted to see what a traditional rendezvous was and just what they do. Killar shoots his bow instinctively and has been considering going totally traditional. Killar is one of many compound bow hunters that are considering going back to traditional shooting because compound bow shooting is so high tech.

Killar said, "A few years ago I was deer hunting when it started to rain. About the same time a buck came close and I raised my compound bow and drew an arrow. The rain hit the sight and I could not see to aim. Since I could not aim I could not shoot at the buck. I swore that would not happen again.



Dealers from at least 42 states and Canada are located inside a large 80 ft. by 200 ft. tent. Other dealers are located outside the tent. ETAR may be the location to find the best mix of traditional archery equipment in the world

*"That evening, I took the front sight and peep sight off my bow and started to shoot instinctively. I have been thinking about a longbow for several years and never had the opportunity to see or shoot a hand-made longbow."*

Killar spent many hours in the dealers' tent looking and listening to what each dealer and arrow maker had to say. Killar said that he was amazed at the number of people, men, women, children, and families that were shooting recurves, longbows, and selfbows. He said that unless you personally see the number of people, the different traditional bows, and arrows, most people would not believe the number of people at the ETAR.

Killar spent time with Bill Bonczar, Allegheny Mountain Arrow Woods, talking about different arrow

woods, spine weights and choosing the correct wooden arrows for recurve, longbows, and selfbows.

Killar said that if he can find the time he would like to learn more about making a selfbow and taking it hunting.

Jake Levey of Nunday, New York, came to the ETAR looking for material to make a selfbow and found out it was much more affordable than he imagined. He bought "The Bowhorse" workbench and tools from the booths next door and the wood from Mystik Longbows and started to make a self bow.

Levey is a first time selfbow maker and anticipates his bow will have a draw weight of at least 50 lbs. Levey said that he doesn't hunt any more

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except gargoyles and dragons and that he will use the self bow to shoot as many gargoyles and dragons he can find. Levey defines gargoyles and dragons as stumps and logs he finds in the forests.

Many people stopped and watched Levey work on his self bow, assuming that he was a bowyer and that he has been doing this for a long time. Anyone walking around the dealer's area would see Levey working diligently to craft a bow that he only came to ETAR to learn more about but never thinking he would be making one that weekend.

#### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

Officially ETAR activities started at 6:45 a.m. Thursday morning with breakfast at the lodge and closed at 3 p.m. on Sunday. ETAR Operations Manager Mickey said that people started to arrive as early as Monday and by Wednesday night they had about 60 people present. He said that many families plan their vacation around the rendezvous.

Dealer booths were open from noon until 6 p.m. on Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday. More than 100 dealers presented new equipment and ideas including long and traditional bows, cedar and hardwood shafts, feathers, arrowheads, broadhead sharpeners, video tapes, and just about anything traditional shooters could want or think they need.

Thursday's activities included seminars by Jack Kaufman, Kaufman Longbows, speaking on Flemish String making; Jack Hildebrand on Rattling and Proper Use of Scent and Lures; Mystic Bows and the Stickery presented continuous demonstrations on how to make a self bow; Ed Frey and Mike Keeney presented shooting pointers for kids. Late evening had a video for kids, Gordy Mickens made a presentation on hunting in South Africa, and the night was closed up with a "coon shoot."

Participants in the "coon shoot" take their bows and arrows and a flashlights to bag as many "coons" as possible. The "coon hunting team," usually partners "hunt" 10 "coon" on one of the courses. ETAR staff arranges the targets for fun and skill. One person holds

the flashlight while the other one draws an arrow and aims at the 'coon. Two reflective tacks enables the shooter to find an aiming point. "Coon hunts" are presented Thursday and Friday nights.

Friday's activities consisted of Ed Wentzler's seminar on "Protecting

Your Favorite Hunting Spots." Brian Oates, Journeyman Broadhead Co.'s seminar on "How to sharpen any Broadhead." Jim Ploen, two-time International Indoor Champion and 21st Century Bows presented an "Instinctive Shooting Clinic."



On Saturday Stacy Groscup (center) discussed Pointers and Tips on Improving Shooting Ability, Instinctive Shooting, and later in the day presented an Aerial Shooting Demonstration. Groscup is famous for shooting aspirins out of the air.



Jake Levey, Nunday, New York, came to the ETAR looking for material to make a self-bow and found out it was much more affordable than he imagined. He bought **The Bowhorse** workbench and tools from the booths next door and the wood from **Mystic Longbows** and started to make a self bow.



## ETAR Attendee Shoots Unique Penobscot Bows



Judson S. Bailey, from The Workshop, Saint Albans, Maine, displayed what may be the first compound bow with a history dating back to the 1600s.

Bailey's traditional compound bow has no wheels, cables, sights, or devices that are found on modern compound bows. It is a remake of the primitive hunting and/or warring bow of the Penobscot Indians of Maine. The Penobscot bow has two sets of limbs, three strings, and a system that produces a lighter draw weight than total energy stored.

Bailey first saw the Penobscot in a painting and became intrigued with it. The bow is a native American design and used by the Wabanaki Confederacy. The Wabanaki Confederacy consisted of the Penobscot, MicMac, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy tribes. Through research Bailey learned that the Wabanaki Confederacy used the Penobscot bows for hunting the large animals of Maine (moose and bear) and as a war bow.

*"The Penobscot bows were used from Massachusetts to Canada by the Wabanaki Confederacy. It's a very unique bow. All wood and very hard hitting. It's a double-limb bow that many people refer to as a primitive compound bow. The basic bow design dates back about 1,500 years. Trying to track down the history of the bow, we found that there are 12 variations of the bow. Six are very distinctive variations, basically different stages in the development of the bow. The other variations are minor variations between the different tribes.*

*"The bow has the main bow string and two back bow strings. There are two ways to make a bow hit harder. The first is to increase the draw weight the way the English did. English archers had bows with up to 150 lbs. draw. The Penobscot bow has an high draw weight during early and mid-draw. The draw weight climbs very fast. The last few inches has very little increase in draw weight. Later variations of the bow, such as the static recurve, pound-for-pound, will hold it's own against modern day laminate long bows or recurve bows."*

Bailey said the Penobscot shoots better with a heavier arrow, 650 grains and up. Bailey's static recurve Penobscot shoots a 650 grain arrow at 168 feet per second. This would be a hunting arrow.

Depending on the style, it takes Bailey about 30 hours to make straight limb style bows. It takes about 50-60 hours to make a static recurve. This does not include any drying time.

Bailey constructed one bow out of Osage orange which is usually great wood for bows. He later found out that the Penobscot Indians did not use Osage for their bows. Bailey now uses hickory for his bows. He said that the design of the bow puts too much stress on the limbs constructed from Osage orange.

For more information on Penobscot bows, contact, Judson S. Bailey, c/o The Workshop, 368 Todds Corner Road, Saint Albans, Maine 04971 or call (207) 938-3595.

Other Friday activities included a "Deer-Calling and Scent Usage" seminar by Tim Blose, Screaming Eagle and former PA-Deer-Calling Champion; a Kids Helium Balloon Shoot, a swap meet, and Bill Bonczar from Allegheny Mountain Arrow Woods question and answer seminar on "Wooden Hunting Arrows."

On Saturday Stacy Groscup discussed "Pointers and Tips on Improving Shooting Ability," Instinctive Shooting, and later in the day presented an "Aerial Shooting Demonstrations." Groscup is famous for shooting aspirins out of the air.

Bob Berg discussed the Atlatl and Primitive Skills and kids enjoyed another helium balloon shoot. Later in the

## ETAR Access for the Physically Challenged

The Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous (ETAR) at Ski Denton, Denton Hill State Park in Pottery County, Pennsylvania, has something for everyone including physically challenged traditional archery enthusiasts. Physically challenged individuals can enjoy and participate in many of the activities and events at the four-day rendezvous.

Terry Mickey, Operations Manager for Ski Denton, said, "Each year we improve the facility for the rendezvous. In 1995 we installed a ramp and safety railing for easier access to the lodge. Early in 1996 we installed an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) approved unisex shower with support bars and hand-held shower-head." The showers are open 24-hours a day. The ETAR staff wear blue T-shirts and are more than willing to help all.

The practice ranges and several of the 7 3-D McKenzie courses are accessible to the physically challenged. Three courses are located at the top of the mountain. The chairlift on the east side of the lodge is the only access to these courses.

The 100-vendor tent is also accessible with wide aisles and located on a level grassy site. Other vendors located outside of the tent are also accessible as is the log garage where Sunday Church service is held. Mickey stated, "This year they reorganized the camping areas to make them more convenient for everyone. Many people make the rendezvous part of their vacation. We want to make ETAR and their vacation the best we possibly can. Mike, Joyce, and myself will be glad to help make your visit to ETAR enjoyable. Please call to discuss our facilities and how we can help.

Not all courses are accessible to the physically challenged. Physically challenged individuals would need to have someone to accompany them on the courses to retrieve arrows and to help maneuver through the scenic courses. The practice areas are accessible but there are slight grades to these areas.

The Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous is scheduled July 24 through July 27, 1997. Physically challenged individuals are encouraged to be a part of the rendezvous. Mickey suggests that prior arrangements be made by early July.

For more information on how you can get the best out of ETAR, contact Terry Mickey, Operations Manager, ETAR, c/o Ski Denton, PO Box 367, Coudersport, PA 16915 (814) 435-2115.

NOTE: The PCBA will be featured in an upcoming Instinctive Archer™ Magazine.

evening Marv Cochran discussed the Professional Bowhunters Society and self-guided hunts for North American Big Game.

The highlight of Saturday's activities was the McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout.

Many seminars were repeated on Sunday for the shooters and spectators who did not get a chance to participate due to a conflict in activities.

The chairlift was open daily and took shooters to the top of the mountain for course numbers 5, 6, and 7. Average time to shoot a course on the top of the mountain was 2-3 hours as the shooter shot and walked a scenic mountain trail or road back to the lodge.

Courses 1, 2, 3, and 4 could be reached by walking. ETAR also has one special course for children under eleven.

Men, women, and children shot along side of each other from daylight until the lights went out at about 11 p.m. or so.

It is amazing just how long someone can pull a string and release an arrow. It seems like some people are shooting from the time it's light until there is no light left. Even more amazing is how long the kids can draw the string also. But isn't that why most people come to ETAR? To have fun and shoot until they drop?

Safety was a major concern for all shooters as ETAR staff periodically patrolled the rendezvous. Mickey said, *"The people who come to the ETAR are really great. We very rarely have any kind of trouble or problems. But we are concerned for everyone's safety and are prepared for emergency situations."* Mickey's staff patrols the grounds 24-hours per day during ETAR.

ETAR is a family-orientated rendezvous and activities are designed for the entire family. From family camping spots to kids activities, ETAR is a place where children will meet other young archers and develop their own friendships that will last a lifetime.

About 12:30 on Sunday afternoon Knefley and Mickey auction many of the 3-D McKenzie targets used for the rendezvous.

For more information on the Eastern Traditional rendezvous, contact, Terry Mickey, Operations Manager,



Stephen Rickvalsky steps up to the shooting line while his brother Scott and his father Bill keep a close eye on the target.

Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous  
PO Box 367, Coudersport, PA 16933 or  
call (814) 435-2115.

#### The McMahon Eagle-Eye Shootout

They came from all over the United States to the Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous at Ski Denton, in Potter County, Pennsylvania. They were male and they were female. They were young. They were not so young. They were confident and they were determined. They

used hand-made bows and arrows they made or they used a bow from their favorite traditional bowyer. They represented some of the best traditional bow shooters from all segments of traditional archery from across the United States, and they were at the Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous (ETAR) to win the "McMahon Eagle Shootout."

"They" consisted of the best traditional archers

who had qualified at various traditional shoots throughout the United States for the privilege to shoot in the grand championship competition schedule at ETAR in July. Hundreds of traditionalists attempted to qualify, but only 76 were good enough to compete in the final competition.

The "Dan McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout" was organized to honor Dan McMahon who won the Easton Eagle Eye competition at Flatwoods, West



One of many competitors, both male and female, taking a turn at winning the Eagle-Eye competition. Note his perfect shooting form and the arrow in flight just in front of his bow.



Virginia. McMahon was shooting against top qualifying compound bow shooters using releases, sights, stabilizers and shooting aluminum arrows.

McMahon used a 21st Century Longbow and wooden arrows (by Twig) to show the world who the "Eagle Eye" archers were. McMahon was shooting for all the traditional bow shooters and walked away with the Eagle Eye title. In honor of his performance, the McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout (MEES) was organized.

The McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout has two purposes. The first is to create one large, good prize for a great traditional archer. The organizers knew by getting the traditional archery equipment manufacturers together they could accumulate top-of-the-line prizes \$10 or \$25 at time.

MEES goals were to raise over \$5,000 in cash and several thousand dollars worth of merchandise for the 1996 McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout champion. Every qualifier for the MEES will receive an embroidered patch to wear proudly as a traditional sharpshooter.

The second purpose of the McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout is to raise money for the Wildlife Legislative Fund



Jack Otis Thompson, "Jack," from Ashland, Virginia, earned the 1996 McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout Grand Champion title in round two. The bust of Howard Hill (center) was one of his many prizes.

of America (WLFA) which fights anti-hunting legislation. As of the beginning of the MEES, traditional archers had raised more than \$3,000 for the WLFA through various qualification events scheduled around the country.



Qualifying for the Eagle Eye Competition.

The MEES rules are simple. All shooters must shoot traditional equipment and qualify at a recognized event. A 3-D deer target with a red dot about the size of a fifty-cent piece is placed on the vital area. The 3-D target is placed at an undisclosed distance 14 to 30 yards from the firing line. All shooters at the Grand Champion Shootout must use wooden arrows.

One-by-one shooters take their turn shooting one arrow at the red dot. Successful shooters hitting the red dot qualify for round two. The target is relocated for round two and the qualifying traditionalists shoot-off again. Dan McMahon was the qualifying judge at the grand championship shootout at ETAR.

Hundreds of spectators lined the shooting lane behind the ETAR main lodge to watch the top 76 traditional shooters compete for the privilege and the title of 1996 McMahon Eagle Eye Grand Champion. The top five shooters from the recent Howard Hill Championship Shoot also participated in the MEES at Ski Denton.

The MEES is the only competitive shoot that is offered at the ETAR. ETAR has been designed to be a "fun shoot" for all to enjoy with the pressure of a "high performance" requirement that most competitive shoots have.

Jack Otis Thompson, from Ashland, Virginia, earned the 1996 McMahon Eagle Eye Shootout Grand Champion title in round two. When asked what he thought about winning the MEES, Thompson said, "I don't know what to think about it yet. I haven't had the time. I had some terrible (extremely tough) competition!"

Thompson shoots a Bushmaster Long Bow with about a 55 lbs. draw at 27 inches. Thompson is 64 years old and has been shooting a long bow about 9-10 years. He said that he's so old that he sometimes forgets just how long he has been shooting a long bow.

Thompson won \$2,100 in cash and a bust of Howard Hill by Phil Cody, a bow case from TNT Textiles, Ribtek Broadheads from Hunter's Distributors, 100 Stotler mid-nocks and 100 cedar shafts, a quiver and one dozen Twig shafts from Twig Archery, one dozen finished arrows from Allegheny Mountain





Bonczar (left) and Knefley inspecting the wood before it is run through the lathe.

Arrow Woods and a 21st Century Longbow matched to Thompson's weight and draw length, and a matching belt buckle and other prizes.

#### ETAR's host, Mike Knefley

Some men dream and then forget about their dream. One man, Mike Knefley, co-owner of Allegheny Mountain Arrow Woods (AMAW) had his dream and then made it reality.

Knefley's love of traditional shooting sparked his dream of making quality wood arrow shafts and developing job opportunities for his seasonal employees at Ski Denton.

*"Allegheny Mountain Arrows Woods was started in the spring of 1992 to meet the growing demand for quality wooden arrow shafts and to develop employment opportunities for the many good people who work for us at Ski Denton during ski season," Knefley said.*

Knefley has sponsored the Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous (ETAR) for seven years and the Potter County Bowhunters Festival (PCBF) for thirteen years. ETAR is a rendezvous for traditional shooters only, while the PCBF is open to all archers.

Bill Bonczar is Knefley's partner at AMAW. Bonczar has bowhunted for 20 years and is a dedicated archer who went from shooting a compound bow to shooting a recurve bow and now

a longbow. Knefley and Bonczar met at one of the events at Ski Denton. He became a partner in AMAW and moved from New York state to the mountains of Potter County.

Allegheny Mountain Arrow Woods expects to ship 100,000 quality wooden shafts in 1996. All shafts are hand inspected and tested for spine weight. The hardwood shaft maker begins the manufacturing process by purchasing trees and then cutting the trees into 36-inch logs. The 36-inch logs are then cut into slabs and dried in the kiln. The slabs are then cut to a smaller size and run through the machinery to produce the shafts. The hardwood shafts were then sanded and tested for spine weight.

According to Knefley, AMAW is the leading manufacturer of hardwood arrow shafts and the second largest shaft manufacturer in the country.

For more information about the Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous or Allegheny Mountain Arrow Woods, contact Mike Knefley or Bill Bonczar, Allegheny Mountain Arrow Woods, 2 Damascus Road, Coudersport, PA 16915 (814)274-2282.



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## BOWHUNTING... BOSNIAN STYLE!



by  
Dan Simmons

**B**rown bear, European bear, goats, red stag, rousa deer, wolves and, of course, the ever present land mines. Everything in the world that you could possibly want to hunt.

Now, being an American with the International Police Task Force (IPTF) in Bosnia & Herzegovina has a tendency to stop some people from giving you a warm welcome. I've had people tell me that I could hunt land mines as much as I wanted and take as many as I like. Hunting land mines is close kin to Dall sheep hunting. You only get to do it once in a lifetime.

When I first came to the United Nations' Mission in Bosnia, I regretfully put all thoughts of bowhunting out of my head for at least a year. Then I met a man, Enver Ferizoiv, the Deputy Mayor of a town named Bosanski Petrovac. I met Enver through a mutual friend, Vladimir Mamula. Vlad is an interpreter for a large non-governmental organization in Bosnia & Herzegovina. I found out that Enver is an avid hunter and, as soon as he learned that a member of the IPTF was interested in hunting, he contacted me.

I attended several meetings with the Mayor and his office staff in my official capacity with the IPTF. Afterwards, the talk always turned to hunting. Specifically, how I managed to hunt with a bow and arrow. Enver greatly doubted my or anybody else's ability to take anything that way.

It was about this time that an urgent and maniacal call was placed to my wife in St. Louis. I asked her to send,

by priority mail, my bow, arrows, assorted materials and four dozen new heads that I was wanting to field test. In civilian life, I am a retired police officer running an archery-related business. Just maybe I could parlay this little excursion in Bosnia into an extended hunting trip.

It took about three weeks, but my recurve, arrows, and needed material to build more arrows finally arrived. I wasted no time stringing the bow and finding an appropriate target on which to practice. It had been about four months since I had let go of an arrow and you could bet your last dollar that the Mayor was going to see me in fair form.

Four days and three sore fingers later, I again attended a functional meeting at the Mayor's office. This time, afterwards, I let it be known that I had my bow and arrows in the vehicle. That was all it took! The rest of the day, any mayoral work was set aside, as were any official U.N. functions.

Ten kilometers out of town, we stopped and Enver stood there with his arms crossed, watching, as I strung up the recurve. Through Vladimir I told Enver to pick a target, preferably within 30 meters, and better yet, with no land mines around. To my pleasant surprise, I was informed that this area had seen no particularly heavy fighting and was not mined. The target Enver picked, however, was an arrow-eater if I missed. A fir sprig, a good 25 yards out, nestled in an outcropping of rocks.

Faint heart never won acclaim and I had already shot off my big mouth too often. I did the only thing I could do. I hauled back on the string two times and cut the fir sprig into three separate pieces. Enver was saying how impressed he was with my shooting, but I didn't hear all of it. I was busy thanking a higher power for allowing me to put two arrows within an inch of each other. Plans were laid for that weekend and my first bowhunting excursion in Bosnia.

Seven thirty Sunday morning found me halfway up one peak of the Diniari Mountains. Although I was assured later that this particular hill was not ten miles high, I still have trouble believing that to be true.


The first sign of wildlife we found was a wallow used by a real wild European boar. From the size of the wallow and the prints left in the mud, I have to say I was kind of glad the former resident was long gone. Both were huge!

After much labored walking and intense searching of the surrounding landscape, we had seen signs of boar, rousa deer, and one enormous bear track, but no game. Enver explained that our time climbing the mountain had put us into the hunting area too late. He was apologizing for my not already having gotten a shot! Either there was much more game in this area than I was accustomed to seeing on a hunting trip, or Enver was expecting things from me that I was not sure I could accomplish.

Around 2:30, Enver, who was leading our three-man group, dropped into a crouch and swung his 7.62 mm rifle around to his shoulder. Then he motioned for me to come forward. He was speaking Croatian, I was listening in English, but I understood what he intended. Plus, I had seen the rousa buck walk into the brushy flat and bed down. The animal was the size of a large fawn and sported a small branched rack, still in velvet. With Vladimir's help, I was told this was a nice-sized buck. Well, when in Bosnia . . .

Seeing where the buck had bedded, I planned a stalk. But, I needed to go back down the mountain, climb up and around and come in from the top. If I played my cards right and the wind

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held true, I could get within 20 to 30 yards of the bedded animal before the cover played out.

Slipping along in a black forest without making a sound is not especially hard. There was a six-inch carpet of fir needles on the forest floor, but I took my boots off anyway. I have to admit, I felt some trepidation, what with the reported mine situation in this country. But the duff on the forest floor could be read like a book and nothing had been through this area in a long time.

I eased up to the edge of the forest and the last of my cover. Looking downhill, I could just make out the top of the rousa's rack in the waist-high grass. The deer was still a long 40+ yards from where I hunkered. The wind was still good and I was confident that I hadn't been sensed. But I was going to have to backtrack a good 150 yards to come out in range of the bedded buck.

The last 20 yards of the stalk was the worst I have ever had to experience. The fir needles were poking through my heavy wool socks and I was sweating enough for three people. Inching up to the edge of the forest, I glassed the area, but I couldn't find the buck. I sat still for a good 15 minutes scanning where I had last seen him. I hated to think I had blown the stalk, but it wouldn't be the first time I had been too heavy-footed.

Just about the time I was going to stand up and walk back to my boots, I saw the buck's head snap up and look to my left, uphill from me. The bow came up of its own volition and the string started back when the buck blew out of his bed. He did not bound gracefully away. No sir! This guy was in a hurry to get someplace else.

I looked back up the side of the mountain where the buck had looked, but I couldn't see anything. Something other than me had spooked the deer, but, as yet, I could not tell what it was.

A glimpse of brown hair caught my attention and thoughts of brown bears raced through me like a jolt. Was I really going to get a shot at a brown bear in Bosnia? Nope!

One of the ugliest animals I have ever seen slunk into view at about 45 yards. I had been told that the forests around here held wolves and I had even seen a small one that had been hit by a car or tank. But this one was not small. It stood about three feet at the shoulder and its back inclined down to lower sitting rear legs. In overall appearance, it more resembled a hyena than the normal canine-appearing wolf I was used to. The color went from a dark brown on its sides to a grizzled brown on its stomach and chest. The muzzle was long and almost evil-looking and it had a long tail. Visions of the wolf from Little Red Riding Hood were immediately brought to mind.

At 30 yards out, it stopped and stood up completely, exposing the top half of its rib cage. At 25 yards out, it sprouted black feathers and a yellow nock just a little too far back, but still in the rib cage.

It took off before I could pull a second arrow out of my hip quiver. As it hit a clearing about 90 yards out in front of my location, I heard the report from Enver's 7.62 and saw dirt kick up over the wolf's back. Changing direction, it cut to its right and ran into heavier weeds on the other side of the clearing.

I could see weeds parting where the wolf ran through them. Then the force wave of the explosion sat me



on my back side. I remember thinking, "Geez! What kind of gun is that?" It took about five seconds for reality to set in. It took another 1-1/2 hours to pick my way back to my boots, and then, using rock outcroppings to step on, down to the rock road where I had left Vladimir and Enver.

Both of the men were excited, but about my shot, not the explosion! They had both watched as I had shot the wolf. Enver said he had shot because he did not want the wolf to get away. Neither of them said anything about the explosion! I lost it!

Trying to refrain from starting an international incident, I yelled, "I thought you said there were no land mines in this area!" Enver explained to me, through Vladimir, that although mines were not prevalent in the area, on occasion, a stray land mine was found. Further, if you wanted to go hunting, you had to accept the land mine threat.

Well, we did not go after the wolf. We did walk only on hard rock roadway back down the mountain. We did enjoy a picnic with the Mayor's family and the families of some of his staff, and I did completely enjoy myself with my new found friends.


While driving back to my residence in Bosnia, I thought to myself, "I know Pope and Young will not allow an animal to be entered with a gunshot wound. I wonder what their decision would be on wounds from a land mine if I explained the circumstances?"



#### AUTHOR'S NOTES:

The author uses a 75 pound Chastain recurve, handmade cedar arrows, and the new Ribtek 125W broadheads he imports from Australia. He plans on future hunts in Bosnia & Herzegovina, preferably in an area that does not go BOOM!

Currently bowhunting is not allowed in Bosnia & Herzegovina unless special dispensation is granted by the local governmental body. Since the author's first hunting adventure, and with the influence of the Deputy Mayor of Bosanski Petrovac, a possible change in this regulation is being explored by Bosnia's equivalent to a Fish and Game Department.



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# READERS' SPOTLIGHT

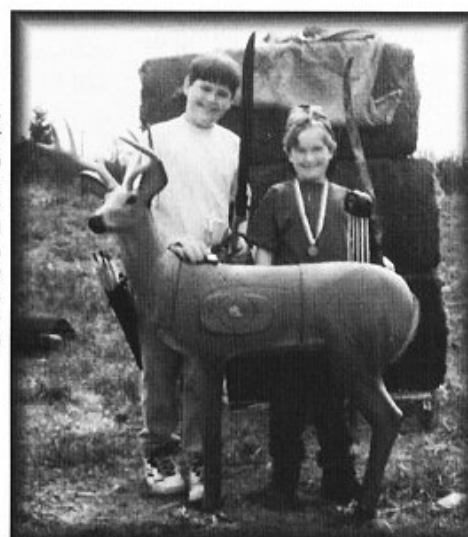
How did you do in the field this year? If you had any luck during hunting season, we'd love to see your photos. Send us your best photo and we'll feature it in our First Annual "SUCCESSFUL HUNTERS AFIELD" Readers' Spotlight.



Here's a picture of my favorite buddy, 3-year old Shari Swift. She is very discriminating, she shoots a longbow made by Hatchet Jack Keener, and sports a leather back quiver and custom arrows made by her adoring dad.  
-Tom Swift, Florida



This is my hunting buddy. His name is Jimmie, he is a 5-year old Arabian who loves to climb our Idaho mountains for elk. He will frequently spot elk before I do.  
-Bob German



This is a photo of me (Stephan Eatmon, of Burien, Washington) and my buddy, Patrick Buckmaster. I am the one on the right and Patrick is the one on the left. We have gone to a lot of shoots together since I was 5 1/2 and he was 7. I am 9 years old now.



Bowhunting camp, Modoc County, 1957, Peeling spuds. Left to right: My father, Wilson Stout, deceased; Gene Barrett of Redding California, lifelong hunting buddy; and myself, Jerry Stout, of Vale Oregon.



Here is my favorite buddy photo. It is of myself and my son Quentin (3 yrs) shooting at the 1996 Longbow Safari in Ovando, Montana.  
Bruce VanDusen

# THE FRATERNITY OF ST. GEORGE

(A Tudor Archery Society)

by  
Hugh D. Soar



ment in the British army, with a pedigree dating from the time when bows and bills were the proper weapons of armies, and foreign hand-guns were regarded with insular suspicion by honest English soldiery.

Since the days of King Henry III, London had its 'Marching Watch,' a well-armed Body of archers some 2,000 strong, clad in white fustian cloth, city arms emblazoned on back and breast, which regularly showed its strength by parading the streets accompanied by martial music on each Midsummer Eve.

In 1510, Henry VIII, accompanied by the Lord Mayor, one Giant, and two pages on horseback, paid a special visit to the City to see the . . . "pompous march of the City Watch, honest persons with bows and arrows, cleanly harnessed, together with pikemen, billmen and halberdiers. . ."

The "Watch" was maintained until the reign of Edward VI when, in a gesture all too familiar to the fighting Services today, bureaucrats and accountants abolished it on the ground of expense!

Returning to the Guild of St. George; although granted royal Patent in 1537 during the reign of Henry VIII, the "Fraternitie" had seemingly been around for some years before its status was exalted. There are enigmatic references in the royal accounts to payments made to a "Guild of St. George" as early as 1509 and even these may not be the first.

However, the shrewd archer-king knew well the awesome might of military arrowstorm and, whilst by then the bow was rapidly approaching obsolescence, he was understandably reluctant to lose the tactical advantage that well-directed volleys could bring.

The Guild was therefore approved to encourage this, "Scyence of Artillerie," for "Long-bowes, Cros-bowes, and Hand-gonnes." Four "Maysters" (Masters) or "Rulers," were granted rights to administer the business of the Fraternity, with powers that were considerable, and, in the case of the other potential archery Societies, absolute! None, but none, could be formed without their express permission.

The Rulers were empowered annually to elect four "under-rulers" (we might say deputies) Englishmen of . . . "good name and fame . . ." to do the day-to-day work of the Guild.

The Gentry who formed the back-bone of the Fraternity were especially allowed to:

" . . . use and exercise the shotying in their Longbowes, Cros-bowes, and Hand-gonnes, at Almaner

It was once said, - by heaven knows who - that if two Englishmen, two Welshmen, and two Scotsmen were left together, the Welsh would form a choir, the Scots a distillery, and the English a club!

Although to Scotland goes the honor of the earliest UK archery club (Kilwinning Archers, formed in 1485), England can claim, for 1537, the "Guild or Fraternity of St. George."

This brief story is about this Fraternity; a Guild from which emerged a corps of citizen soldiers, the oldest serving regi-



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Although this Group enjoyed privileges far above those of others, the royal personage stopped short of allowing them free access everywhere! Certainly they were allowed to take heron and pheasant in the King's forests, chases and parks; but they were specifically forbidden to hunt within two miles of the King's Manors and Castles on pain of the King's displeasure (something avoided by sensible folk in those far-off days).

At a time when lesser mortals were forbidden to keep arms of any kind in their homes, the Fraternity had express permission to do so, and to allow their servants to carry them on their behalf. Whilst they were allowed to carry the bows and guns, however, servants were not allowed to use them! One can envisage situations where this rule might have been relaxed a little, but Authority was adamant.

The following true tale exemplifies the usefulness of weapons to hand.

A serious feud between a Mr. John Hartgyll and Lord Charles Stourton, the local landowner, boiled over one Sunday in 1540 at Stourhead in Wiltshire.

"... John Hartgyll, a tall, lusty Gentleman, beyng told of the sayd Lorde Stourton's cummyng, went out of the church and drew his sword and

ranne to hys father's house adjoynynge but he was not hurte . . ."

"... When the said John Hartgyl was come into hys father's house, he tooke hys long-bowe and arrowes, and bent a cross-bowe and charged a gonne and caused a women to carry the cross-bowe and gonne after hym, and hymself with hys longe-bowe came forth and drove away the said Lord Charles and all his men from the house and from aboute the churches. So that not one of the companye tarried, savyng half a score that was entered into the church, amongst whome one was hurte with hayle-shott (buckshot) in the shoulder by the said John Hartgyll . . ."

Despite obvious heroism in the face of huge odds, and a scenario which would have passed muster as a "B" movie today, the lusty Mr. Hartgyll was eventually trapped by Lord Charles, tied up and summarily strangled. A sad end for a brave man.

Whilst possession of longbow, crossbow, and hand gun suggests that either John, or more likely perhaps his father, was a member of the Fraternity of St. George, there is no direct evidence of this. "Deeds of Admittance" to this exclusive body are rare in fact, but they do exist and moreover clearly define what members might and might not do or wear.

Whilst there was an obvious need to keep out of the Royal way when the king was hunting, and the restrictions on clothing might have been irksome to a few, (proving perhaps that debate about archery clothing is anything but new) these were minor inconveniences when compared with the advantage of excuse

from jury service, and indemnity against prosecution if the general public, its wife or its progeny got skewered by a Member of the Guild whilst engaged in lawful archery practice.

The Patent of 1537 is the first known "official" reference to the use of the word "Fast" (Stand fast) still used by British archers to warn of danger. That the word was in common use by the 16th century is evident from the context.

"... as often as the . . . comonalte . . . shal use, pronounce and openly speke this usuall worde comenly used to be spoken before they shote, that is to saye this worde 'Faste' and afere this worde is spoken . . . if it shal happen any Person or Persons . . . runnyng, passyng or goyng bitwen anye suche Shoter and the Marke or Place wherto any suche . . . Commonalte . . . shall hereafre shote, to be kylled or otherwise hurte . . . any suche . . . shal happen not by that occasion to be attached, arrested, imprisoned, sued, vexed, troubled or otherwise disquieted. . ."

Although it was the Fraternity that was specifically excluded from civil action by irate dependents or other interested parties, there is evidence from the Reports of later Coroners that they were equally lenient when the grass-roots archer kebabbed a Commoner whilst at legitimate practice. For the general public, then as now, often wandered aimlessly around archery grounds, brains in neutral, and were occasionally despatched, as various tombstones in churches around the practice sites testify.

It is difficult for us to appreciate, in these "enlightened" days, when one is scarcely troubled by thoughts of

Authority whilst engaged with ones own agenda, that life wasn't always that simple. Take the matter of forming an archery Club. Not only did the Guild enjoy freedom to do whatever it wished more or less at will, but vested in their rules was a devolved royal responsibility for the oversight of any other archery Society which folk might wish to form. A sort of 16th Century F.I.T.A. in fact.

The ramifications of this particular clause in Henry's Patent are still not entirely obvious, but it may have something to do with the formation of the next significant London based archery society, the enigmatic "Prince Arthur's Knights," formed it is believed in 1542.

The reason for this overseeing is not entirely clear, and may seem obscure and petty today, but in Tudor times the long-bow was still a primary weapon, and a body of men (albeit called an Archery Guild, Club, or Society) was potentially a disciplined fighting unit. Authority raised its eyebrows and took more than a passing interest in organized bodies of archers, particularly those with bows strung and arrows nocked!

Incidentally, the "Prince Arthur" in the title was not the legendary ruler of Britain, victor over the saxon invader, but the eldest son, and heir to the throne of Henry VII. Although he died in 1502, aged just 16 years, in his short life he had achieved national recognition as an "elite" archer, and to such degree that it was said of other good archers that they shot "like Prince Arthur!" Accordingly, the leader of this Society adopted the title "Prince Arthur" (perhaps with the king's blessing since the name was close to home) whilst his archery "knights" may well have been Captains of the Marching Watch as well as members of city guilds.

The Fraternity seems to have shot at Mile End fields, common land outside the eastern boundary of the City of London, and its members may originally have come from the east end of that city.

Whilst the charter establishing it (said to be Royal) has seemingly not survived, there is a reference to it in a later prose.

"... and furthermore for the maintenance of the same laudable exer-

cise (shooting) in this honourable City of London by his (Henry's) gracious Charter confirmed unto the citizens of the same, this your now famous Order of Knights of Prince Arthur's Round Table or Society..."

Henry's love of the bow is well known, and he delighted in showing his ability. He regularly shot with his archer guard, and it was in keeping with his persona that he encouraged the "Knights" by visiting them at Mile End fields from time to time.

Although in its original form, "Prince Arthur's Knights" may not have survived much beyond Henry's death in 1547, the Guild of St. George certainly did.

Whilst military archery was virtually obsolete by the middle of the 16th Century (the battle of Pinkie Cleugh also in 1547 being about the last in which the arrowstorm featured significantly), the recreational bow thrived, and the archery grounds at Finsbury Fields were in almost daily use.

The "Artillery Company" (later the Honorable Artillery Co.) as the original Guild came to be called, had a natural and close affinity with "grass roots" archers, particularly those who shot at the practice Grounds of Moorfields, and Finsbury.

Although the Finsbury fields were in reasonable condition, Moorfields

were rather less salubrious, a waterlogged and stagnant marsh whose only architectural feature was a ramshackle privy for the common use of those who lived around it! This piece of medieval plumbing regularly overflowed, doing nothing whatever for the quality of life of resident and passer-by alike!

Accordingly, in 1497 the place was flattened, the marsh drained, and an 11 acre field created "... for archers and other military citizens to shoot in..." As an aside, the landscaping involved the removal of over 1,000 cart-loads of human bones from St. Paul's churchyard charnel house!

Finsbury Fields archery ground dates formally from 1554, although musters of archers, and "harnessed men" took place there much earlier.

Gatherings of archers at Finsbury were not always friendly affairs however. In September 1590, following the demobilization of Continental garrisons, a large number of discontented archers and others showed up there and informed a startled Mayor and Corporation that if back-pay wasn't forthcoming from the Crown, and quickly too, they would take it in kind from the local citizens! They added ominously that they weren't very worried about the opposition if force were used against them!

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Since these were severely aggrieved professional English fighting men, accustomed to decisive action when need arose, a justifiably worried Corporation passed the problem on smartly to the Privy Council for a positive and urgent solution. They obviously found an acceptable one, since the situation was defused and no one was molested.

Distance shooting was very much the order of the day on the archery fields. City Inns, Churches, Livery Guilds, and private individuals vying for the honour of sponsoring the huge number of "Roving Marks" which were set up for the purpose.

Each March had its name, "Egpie," "Sea Griphon," "Martins

Monkie" and "Thief in the Hedge" rubbed shoulders with those presented by the churches of "All Hallows" "Pillar of Paules" (St. Paul's Church) and The Lord Mayor provided others, whilst others such as "Stone by the pond," and "Stake by the stile" were topographical.

The distances at which we shoot today are puny compared with those between the various Marks.

Books were published listing these distances, and they make incredible reading. From "Saint Martins" to "Young Powell" was 18 score and 3 yards or 363 yards, and others were further. Even our flight champions would be hard pressed today to make the farthest at 19 score or 380 yards!

Although the bow and the hand-gun were thought to be broadly equal in efficiency up to the end of the 16th Century, those attending County Militia musters from 1597 onwards with bows and arrows were sent home! The bow was now obsolete as a primary English National weapon.

Nevertheless, there were those who hankered for its return, if only in a subsidiary role. The Artillery Company was no exception to this, and in 1627 King Charles I, having been persuaded by one William Neade "an ancient archer" that a combination of bow and pike was viable weaponry, the Company were given approval to practice with it as "double armed men," and this they seem to have done.

However, despite Neade's careful description, and drawings of the drill he had devised for the exercise, the combination was unwieldy; although probably enthusiastic to some degree, most pikemen were unused to shooting in a bow and the scheme had only limited success. Dedicating this book to Charles, Neade acknowledges the problem, but dismisses it!

"... You (Charles) were pleased to give Order that it might be practised in the two Schooles of Martial Discipline, the two Gardens of London and





Westminster (unto which two I gave unto each a Pike and a Bow placed unto it, and a sheafe of Arrowses) . . . I solicited those Societies for the practice and exercise of the Bow with the Pike; and accordingly that worthy Societie in the Artillery Ground in London hath practised it ever since. But because many of that worthy Societe have not heretofore exercised shooting, it doth not take that perfection yet, which I hope time and practice will bring it unto for it is the exercise of shooting that must make men perfect therein . . ."

Whilst there is some evidence that during the Civil War companies of "bows and pikes" were in fact formed, the concept didn't catch on, and like so many other bright ideas was quietly dropped.

Although the longbow had been replaced by "weapons of fire," and the term "Artillery" now bore its modern connotation of guns and nothing else, the Company continued its close association with archery in the form of the "Finsbury Archers," an ancient society which frequently shot on the Artillery Company Ground or "Garden."

Many of the Company's officers seem to have belonged to the Finsbury Archers, and they enjoyed certain privileges, including permission to erect butts on ground supervised by the Company.

With the enclosure of the Finsbury Fields towards the end of the 18th Century, and the loss of their Marks, this Society seems to have ceased shooting; two or three surviving members joining the Toxophilite Society (forerunner of the present Royal Toxophilite Society) on its formation in 1780.

In May 1784, the "Toxophilite Society," headed by the Earl of Effingham, applied for approval to shoot in the Artillery Ground, and this was granted. Moreover, it was decided that not only might they shoot, but that they should be incorporated within the Artillery Company as a "Flank Division" with all the privileges of membership, including the right which they subsequently exercised - to choose their own officers.

As an aside, amongst the Toxophilites who formed the nucleus of

the Archers Division was one named William Barlow. A name which has an unusual historic archery connection, for in Henry VIII's archery heyday, he created an archer guard of that name 'Duke of Shoreditch' for the excellence of his shooting.

The Regulations which were drawn up for the guidance of the archers required them to wear bayonet and gaiters when on duty. The rest of their uniform was distinctive and different to that of the rest of the Company however. As might be expected, green predominated, with white waistcoat and breeches. There were buttons in the "yellow metal" with whatever device took the Captain of Archers fancy (although the Prince of Wales' feathers were mandatory) but the piece de resistance was the hat! Round and jet black, with a button in the front, a green feather, a gold loop, and finished off with a cockade, it was smart enough to satisfy the most dashing dandy of the day. Nothing is mentioned about their equipment other than the bayonet which was de rigeur. One assumes, however, that they also carried bows and quivers when as an integral Division of the Company they attended Field Days and Ceremonial occasions, but the Regulations don't say so!

They also had their own special meetings or "targets" on the Artillery Ground for the honing of their skills with the longbow.

Although nominally on the "books" until 1842, the Archers' Division of the Company actually lasted for just 20 years, after which the members continued a separate existence, under their old name of the "Toxophilite Society." Thus, briefly, did the Honourable Artillery Company keep faith with the

ancient "Guild of St. George" from which it stemmed.

Curiously, however, the connection didn't quite end there. In 1922, when the now "Royal" Toxophilite Society controversially lost their shooting Ground at Regents Park, they were given permission to shoot for a full season on the Artillery Ground; whilst in 1983, in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of a great archery Tournament in the area, a group of longbowmen and women assembled there to shoot in the old style, and to drink the traditional toast of "*The Queen, Old England, and the Longbow!*"



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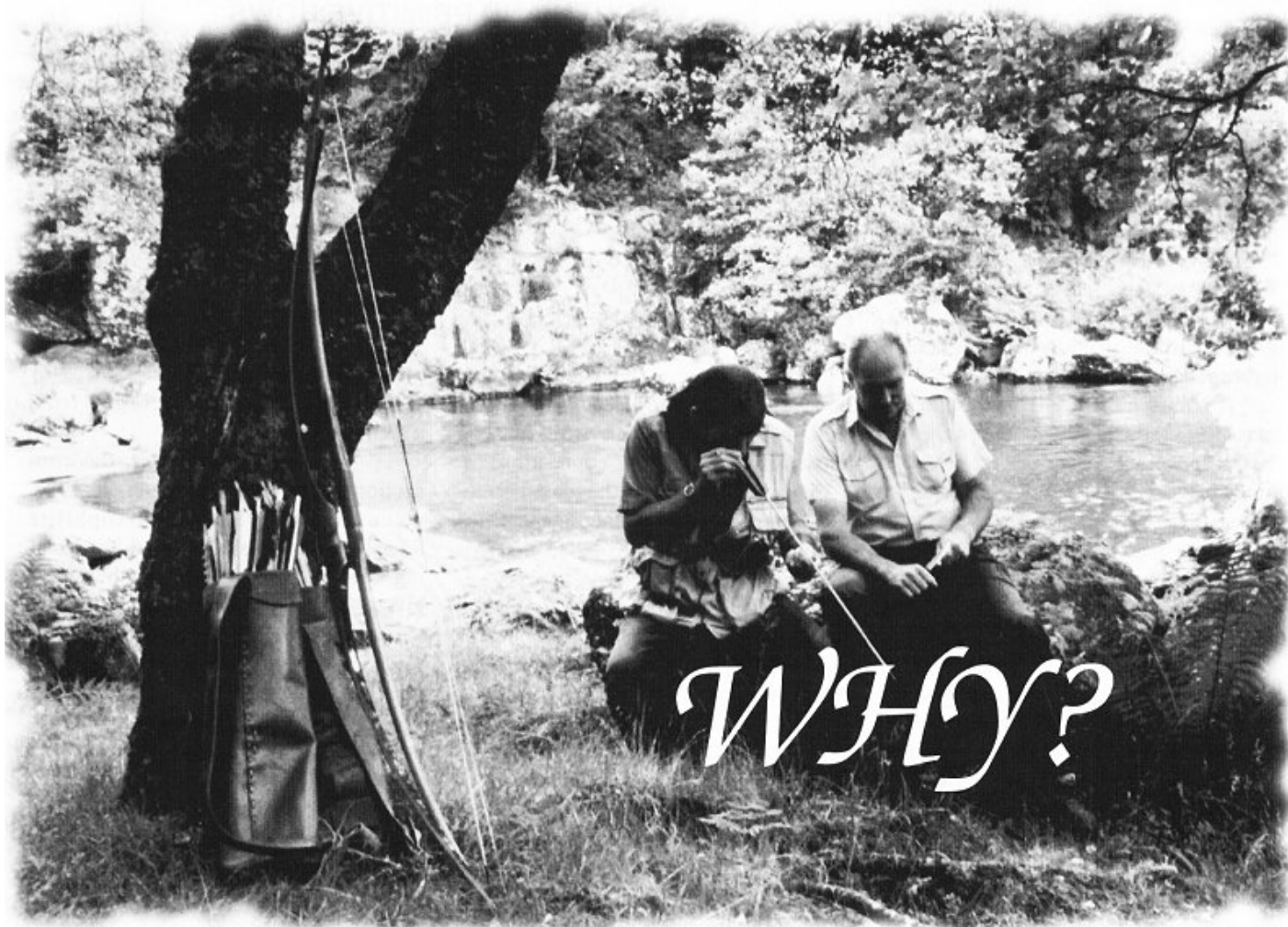
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By  
**John Durnford**

**I** am a technical idiot. I become absolutely confused at the mention of technical words like cam, stabilizers, bowsights, and grains. The sight of a compound bow horrifies me. I find enough difficulty in the technicalities of making my own arrows. Often there are daylight strips in the glue line betwixt feather and wood, and sometimes I sit piles on shafts in a way that would be handy for pulling corks from bottles.

The foregoing is one reason why I stick to wooden arrows and a simple bare bow; it seems that my soul refused to handle anything more complex. My very first bow was a wooden flat bow which, with two arrows, and in a weak moment, I bought from a colleague at work. He said that whilst he had no difficulty in getting himself to work, he found it impossible to get the bow to work. I found out later that there were originally three arrows. Apparently the third had broken after passing through the woodwork of his wife's china cabinet. In a similar weak moment (but he had been drinking), he bought the bow and its arrows in a jumble sale. Knowing less about the technical side of archery than I do, he judged them to be a mere toy and had loosed an arrow in the

house. This act, in addition to boosting the profits of the wood glue industry, successfully demolished a large part of his wife's best china dinner set. He was quite a clever engineer too, and had designed parts of the Comet airliner.

I must have bought some of his naivete with that bow. I thought it a toy too. With my very first arrow on earth (and last arrow on earth within the confines of civilization), I shot at a small bird taking a dust bath at the bottom of the garden. There is no doubt that the bird's life was not in the slightest danger. If it had been, then it would have been saved by a large garden plaster gnome set in a concrete base. The arrow bounced off the gnome, zipped across the fence, entered my neighbour's greenhouse via a pane of glass, and feathered a sack of slug pellets. The sack also saved a life, that of my neighbour who was in the greenhouse at the time. I still sweat thinking of it. Fortunately, the fence prevented my neighbour's hands seizing me by the throat, and the venture cost me two shillings and a sixpence (fifty cents) for the glass, a strained back putting the now severely chipped gnome out for the refuse collection, and a threatened arrest.

PHOTO:  
The author and fellow hunter taking a rest in the Welsh hills.

So why did I persist with this totally irresponsible conduct? I had already had a nasty brush with the local police for using an air pistol in public, supposedly shooting at a hawk perched on the top of a nearby telegraph pole. As it happened, I was totally innocent. The offender was no less than an off duty police officer, called Cork, who lived opposite the pole. A case of mistaken identity.

It didn't do Corky's police career much good, nor mine since once they take your fingerprints it means you've got a record. What with the stigma of that and the greenhouse con-tretemps, I became highly nervous of

at the fallen tree. I shall never forget the sight and hence am able to faithfully record it these 36 years later. The sunlight caught the arrow's twirling feathers for an instant, lit them so that they resembled a multi-colored spark arcing across the glade. Then there was a soft 'thwok' as the pile embedded in the tree where, for another instant, the arrow seemed to speak about all life in a kind of joyous quiver. In total unexpectancy and in total disbelief, I felt my mouth and soul fall open. I had seen it all before! I somehow felt I had come home. Having wandered the earth since the age of 16, I was no stranger to that most wondrous feeling when coming back to my childhood

and/or lose the arrows. Ensuring no one was in sight, I shot the first arrow aiming rather high, and towards the space between a pair of goal posts.

Since the goal posts were some 100 yards away, I assumed the arrow would land about halfway between me and my spatial mark. But the arrow disappeared. Then I shot the second arrow and it, too, disappeared. I couldn't believe it. In careless abandon, praying the bank manager wouldn't mind, I shot the other four arrows which also disappeared. In despairing gloom I started slowly walking up. Then the reason for their disappearance suddenly became apparent—I had been looking in the wrong place—there they were, way beyond the posts! All were colourfully stuck up out of the smooth green sward in the matching cant. And then another shock; but exactly as the first. I had seen it all before! I had come home again. The feeling of immense comfort returned.

I have shot countless arrows since, in all types of country, weather, and initially in all types of bow. I quickly found that, provided I was shooting in a bare bow with wooden arrows, these first feelings always returned. Somehow, all other bows, whatever design, left my soul dead. As Maurice Thompson, author of *The Witchery of Archery* would probably have put it: "Compound bows and stabilizers knock all the poetry out of the soul; aluminum arrows and bowsights ruin a deal of philosophy." Its another reason, and perhaps the strongest, why I won't swap my bare bow for anything more complicated.

So every time I watch the flight of my first shafts of the day, the feelings return. Time has tempered them, of course, but now into feelings of a kind of warmest astonishment. I think it is perhaps a reason why people ask to be buried with their favourite bows and shafts. Next to the girl I love, I can think of no better company for the long journey. For I would ever be in homely comfort.

I've spent much time puzzling over the "whys" of these feelings, and I still cannot understand why. My bow takes me to some beautiful places, some of which are quite remote. Now and

## **I can see archers toiling up the valley below on their way to the mountain pass which will lead them eventually to Agincourt, and a scouting party of Red Indian archers in easy moccasined trot, catching them up.**

anything to do with missiles; particularly wooden sticks about 28 inches long, I now knew that such sticks were quite capable of quickly and silently slaughtering the innocent, and without warning to me or them.

Well, my persistence with this totally irresponsible conduct was as a result of shooting my second arrow on earth. Quite simply, the result sent me into a state of euphoric shock. I was in a woodland glade, and my chosen mark was a fallen tree. It was early on a lovely spring morning, the low sun perfectly lighting the sylvan surroundings. The light gave the tree-top buds an astonishing luminosity, and a new life of clearest amber to the few dead leaves remaining on the upper branches. The air was fragrantly still, trapped by one of those light blue skies which seem to hang up there in some sort of expectancy of I don't know what. And, apart from the occasional drum of a woodpecker and bark of a grey squirrel, there was a perfect silence in which to admire this marvelous spectacle.

Very much aware of this considerable natural beauty, I unnaturally nocked my very second arrow on Earth, unnaturally drew, and unnaturally loosed

home. But this was quite a different feeling in that I felt I had found another home; one truer than my childhood home. Thus the euphoric shock lapsed into a feeling of an immense comfort putting its arm around me.

In some sort of a trance, I wandered on. My arrow was soon lost, of course (I hadn't the courage to ask my neighbour for return of my first). I returned home, to the earth and the 20th century. I kept my amazing discovery secret. It didn't somehow equate to clearing out the roof gutters that afternoon, followed by nursing my daughter who was teething, and then finally sat in bed reading an article on the recent success of the Cuban revolution (that rather dates me). To be honest, I wondered if I had had some sort of "funny turn" that morning, or was going senile; there was a history of senility in my family, so why not me?

Two weeks later, and in great financial hesitation, I bought a set of six arrows. I set off for the local school's playing fields decidedly early on the following Sunday morning. They covered an enormous acreage and I thought I'd better try this bow business in a place where I wasn't likely to kill anyone





The author hunting, with the backpack "saddled up!"

again, in the wild places, I find a spot which invites me to stop awhile. I always accept the invitation and, after a time sat with bow cradled across knees, I find my thoughts become abundant and astonishingly clear.

Armed with this powerful mental assistance, and intently studying that seemingly inanimate bent stick, I try to establish the root cause of these feelings. But it is no good; it still doesn't make sense. If I think about the past, I can clearly see it. I can see archers toiling up the valley below on their way to the mountain pass which will lead them eventually to Agincourt, and a scouting party of Red Indian archers in easy moccasined trot, catching them up. If I think about the future, I can clearly see it too. I can see archers like you and me toiling up the same valley, but wearing hard hats with mini-satellite dishes attached, and wearing coveralls of reflective orange which have a regulatory look. On the back of each coverall is a large white circular patch with the legend in red capitals: **Authorized archer no. XXXXX/X - permitted to carry a bow only on the first Monday of each month, from 0900 to 1000 (1030 in winter).** It is as if I have found

a time warp and am sat on its edge. Still, I'm sure it's all my imagination, most likely loosed by the waiting silence of such sacred places.

Nevertheless, my feelings are not my imagination. I wonder sometimes if it's the thinking behind that passage in Psalm 23 "... Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me." Odds are the translator got it wrong and it should have read "bow and staff." Actually, I always carry a staff (a thumbstick) in the wild places, and that gives me great comfort too.

I also had no idea in my earlier days of shooting in a bow that I was to make another amazing discovery. This discovery finally came some 15 years after the greenhouse incident. It came in the wilds of the British Isles. The mountains of Wales to be precise, where the Welsh tribes developed a longbow using elm, and which had a lot to do with the origin of the English medieval longbow. It was the day when I began to feather almost anything I loosed at. Nettle clumps, fern tips, bits of sheep's wool, rabbit holes ... coming off the mountains, I was approaching a road and spotted something glinting in the sun near the road's edge, and at about 70 paces away. I casually loosed at it and was astounded

to see the mark leap into the air and go somersaulting towards the tarmac. This was instantly followed by a metal clatter.

I walked up and found my arrow lying meekly on the ground with a split, and a drinks can lying on the tarmac with a neat hole in its base. I looked at my bare bow and the next wood arrow already in the string, and then at my reflection in a roadside puddle, and realized I had made another amazing discovery; by instinct alone, I had been shooting with consistent accuracy. I strongly felt that I had been granted some sort of gift that day.

It took a lot less to realize that the gift was only on loan, and is loaned infrequently, for there are times when I couldn't feather Pavarotti up a pole at ten paces. However, I now know that the gift definitely exists, but again, why? Two eyes, a bit of muscle, and a bare bow combining to send a wooden arrow through a drinks can at a guessed distance? Then it's got to be of the soul. I try not to question why any more, and am perfectly content to use the gift as and when it is loaned to me. In fact, it seems to be loaned more often when I don't think about it.

So the fact that I don't understand the technical side of things doesn't really matter. It certainly makes life with the bow less complicated, and therefore far more enjoyable. Oh, the simple things in life! Besides, many of us are here today because our ancestors shot in a bare bow, and no doubt thought the same way. And when the gift is taken back for a while, that doesn't really matter either. When the bacon starts sizzling in the frying pan over the hot embers of the evening campfire, and my bow and thumbstick are leant against a sheltering yew, some of whose branches are gently nodding in the warm uptake of that comforting red glow, then nothing matters.

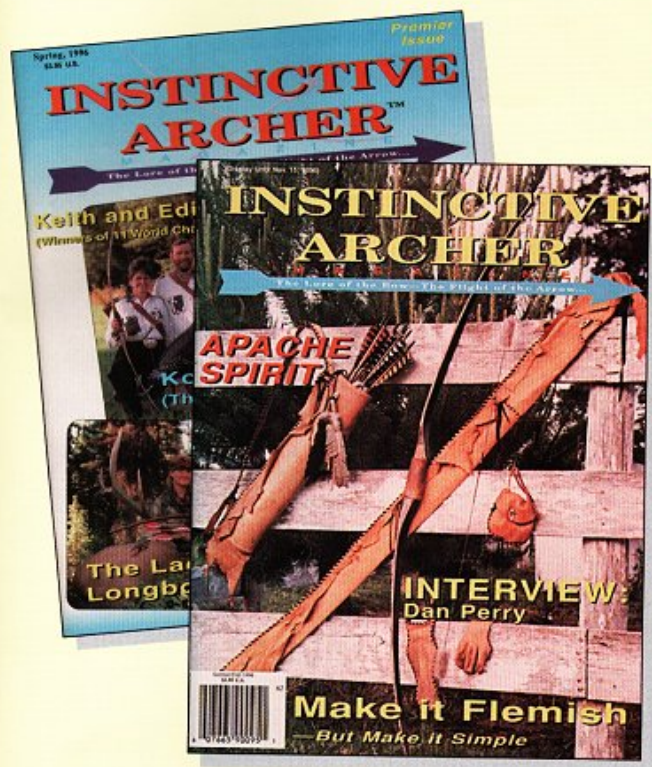
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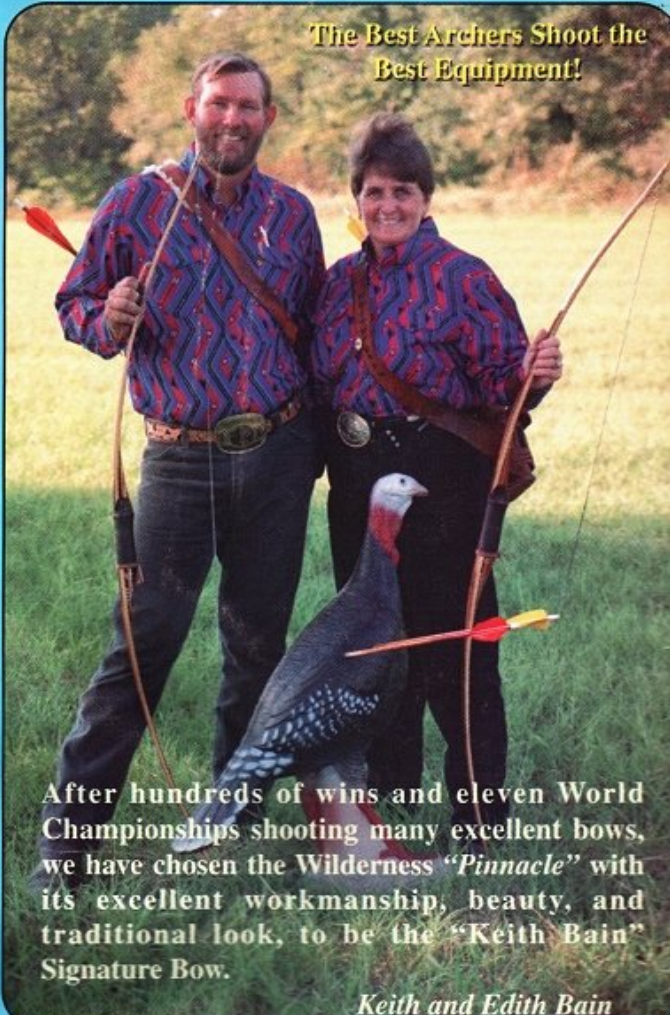
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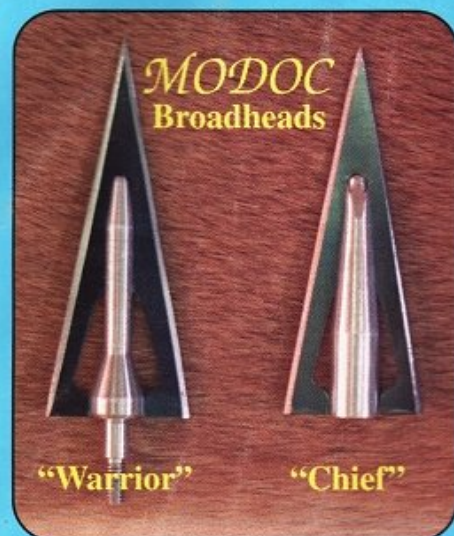
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