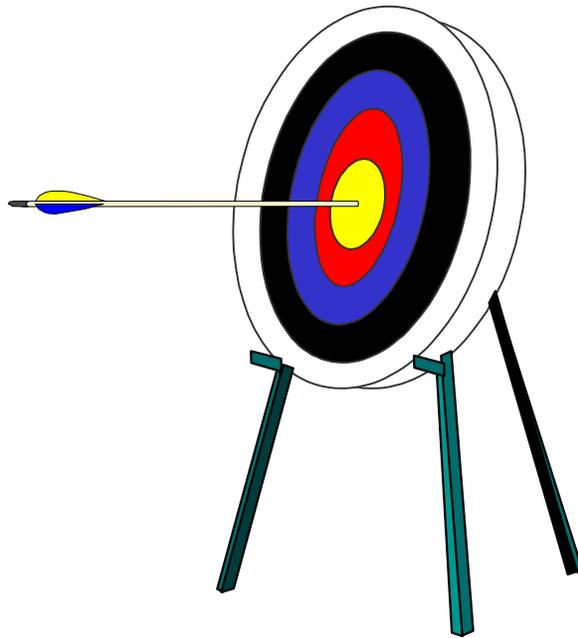


## ***Friars Gate Archers***



## ***Beginners Guide to Archery***

## **BEGINNERS GUIDE TO ARCHERY**

Congratulations, you have just entered the world of '**TOXOPHILY**' (Archery to you and I), one of the oldest and most traditional of all sports. We have been shooting in the bow since 'Neolithic times' (early Stone Age), maybe earlier than that, so not a lot has changed over the last 4,500 years!! except the equipment, the way we use it, the rules and our approach towards the ancient art of Toxophily (sorry, Archery ). So, I think the first thing we must do is look at the Basics, don't you.....?

### **FIRST STEPS**

You have been fitted out with a 'BRACER' (this is the leather Arm Guard which is fitted to your Bow Arm) on your Left arm if you are right handed, or to your Right arm if you are left handed. This will protect your arm if the string of the bow decides to catch you, which sometimes happens!!

On your Right hand (for the right handed archer) or the Left hand (for the left handed) you will be wearing a 'TAB'. This is a leather patch shaped to your fingers which will protect them when you 'LOOSE' (let go of) the bow string. An essential piece of equipment to protect your pinkies!

Your upper body clothing should be close fitting, thus giving as much clearance to the bow string as possible. If the string catches on your woolly jumper, then the arrow will not go where you intended it to!

Before you were fitted with your Bracer and Tab, you were tested for 'Eye Dominance'. Don't worry; this is not catching, but essential to Archery. During this test you would have been asked to keep both eyes open and point with your finger at someone facing you. Or, to point at an object (a distant tree for instance) with one eye closed and then to close that eye whilst opening the other one. This would then show your finger pointing either Right or Left of the object.

Both these tests show us which eye is DOMINANT. In most cases, if you are Right handed your Right eye will be Dominant (Left eye for Left handed). However, in some cases this does not run true. A Right handed person may have Left eye dominance which would make it a little difficult for them to Aim accurately. So, in these cases we suggest the archer try to shoot with the opposite hand. Or, if this is not working, an eye patch may be worn over the Non-aiming eye. Don't worry, we will advise you in these matters.

The Bow you have been given to learn with (I hope you remember it's number!!) has been selected according to your physical size and the length of arrows you will be using.

The Arrows you have been given to learn with (do you remember which ones they are??) were measured from your breast bone to the tips of your (touching) outstretched fingers. This gives us a starting point for your Draw Length. The arrows would be dangerous if they were shorter than your Draw Length!

The 1 Bow 1 f 1 Arrows 1 and last but not least the 1 Archer 1, f form the shooting set-up and all should match to compliment one and other!

### **SOME BASIC SAFETY RULES**

- 1: Never point a Bow (with or without an Arrow) at another person.  
Do not draw up an Arrow unless you are on the shooting line facing the Target.  
Do not stand on the shooting line until the Field Captain blows his/her whistle.  
When not shooting, wait behind the Equipment line in a quiet and orderly manor.
- 5: Do not go to retrieve your Arrows until the Field Captain has blown the whistle.
- 6: Do not run up to the targets. There may be Arrows in the ground which were short of the target.

- 7: Do not stand behind someone who is pulling Arrows from the target. They may well pull back into your eye!
- 8: If during shooting, you hear the word 'FAST', Stop shooting. If you have an Arrow drawn in the Bow, lower the Bow so that the Arrow is pointing at the ground in front of you and slowly move the Arrow/String forward so it is safe. Remove the Arrow from the bow. ONLY resume shooting when the Field Captain gives the all clear.
- 9: Do not shoot on public land.
- 10: Do not shoot at all on your own.

WELL DONE - You've stuck with it so far, learnt some basic safety rules, been fitted with strange bits of leather and been given a lethal weapon to shoot with .....!  
Now it's time to get down to the nitty-gritty ..... How to shoot.

## **STANDING**

The first thing to do (after the Field Captain has blown the whistle for the start of shooting) is approach the Shooting Line. Once there, stand astride the line with your feet apart (shoulders width is just right to start with).

You should now be facing down the shooting line with your Bow Arm shoulder pointing at the target. Now, 'Stand Tall' with your shoulders back, chest out and stomach in (Don't Slouch).....

There you feel better already - don't you.....??

## **HOLDING THE BOW**

The Grip you adopt should be just enough to support and direct the Bow without being vicelike. Too tight a grip will only be uncomfortable and lead to bad results.

The pressure of the Bow should be felt through the muscle at the base of the thumb. The first finger should retain the Bow by lightly gripping it, while the little finger exerts no pressure at all. The second and third finger will only have light contact with the bow handle.

After some practice with this grip you will forget all about it and it will become second nature to you. Your Bow hand will now remain in this 'Grip' for the duration of the shot.

## **NOCKING THE ARROW**

This is the term we use to describe the act of placing the arrow on the Bowstring.

With your Arrow hand (the one that is not holding the Bow ), remove an Arrow from the ground quiver in front of you. Rest the shaft of the Arrow on the 'Arrow Rest' ( this is the plastic hooked shelf on the side of the Bow ), and insert the Nock of the Arrow ( this is the 'V' shaped piece of plastic behind the Fletchings ) onto the Bowstring. This should be done with the 'Cock' Fletching (the feather or plastic vane of a different colour to the other two [ the Hens ] ) facing towards you ie. away from the Bow. There should be a mark(s) on the string or raised sections (these are the Nock-sets ) showing where to locate the Arrow Nock.

## **HOLDING THE STRING**

The way we place our fingers onto the string is a most important step in shooting as this will control the action of the string relative to the Arrow.

The first finger goes above the Arrow with the second and third fingers below. Your little finger curls into the palm of your hand out of the way. The string should be on the top section of your fingers, just above the top bend. This is known as the 'MEDITERRANEAN' Loose.

The Tab on your fingers may feel a little strange at first, but without this the friction of the string would make your fingers sore!

## DRAWING UP THE ARROW

With Bow in 'Bow hand', 'Arrow nocked' and Mediterranean finger position in place on the string, you are now ready to Draw up your first Arrow. Turn your head towards the Target and then fully extend your Bow arm towards the Target.

Now, draw the Arrow back smoothly towards your face. Your string hand should Anchor - (locate in-position) underneath your chin/jaw bone (upper side of your first finger touching it).

The string should touch the side of both your chin and nose at full draw to form Reference Points ( points you can always return to which will give consistency to the loose ).

## LOOSING THE ARROW

This is a term used to describe the action of letting go of the Arrow.

The Loose should be a smooth and relaxed action. It is achieved by relaxing the hold you have ( via the Mediterranean finger position ) on the string, whilst still pulling back with your arm and shoulder.

## THE FOLLOW THROUGH

This is an important part of the procedure which is often overlooked !

After loosing the Arrow, the string hand should continue backwards until it comes to rest by your ear. The Bow arm remains raised and in line with the shot, until the Arrow hits the Target.

Once the Arrow hits it's mark ( which can be heard as a thud ) the Bow arm may be dropped, whereupon **the next shot can be prepared in the Bow.**

Simple **wasn't** it !! Well, it will become so after some practice.

## SIGHT PIN ADJUSTMENT

On your Training Bow you may have noticed a Pin which is situated approximately 2 - 4 inches above the grip section. This is your Sight Pin. They get more complicated on the more advanced Bows but the principle of adjusting them remains the same.

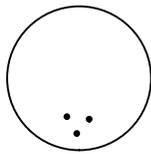
Once you have Nocked an Arrow and are at Full Draw you can Aim! This is done by aligning the Sight Pin with the Gold on the Target Face. Then you Loose the Arrow and all being well it will go where you aimed it!

If this does not happen, as is often the case during 'Sighters' ( the first 6 Arrows shot on a given round being shot, to enable you to set your Sights ) you will need to make adjustments to the position of the Sight Pin.

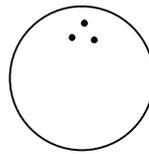
NOTE: Sight adjustments should only be made seriously once your Arrows are grouping (landing in one area of the target ) - Initial setting of the Pin will enable you to actually hit the Target and then let you concentrate on getting your Arrows in a Group.

## MOVING THE GROUP

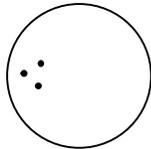
To move a group of Arrows around the Target, using your Sight Pin adjustment ( ie. 'UP' 'DOWN' 'LEFT' 'RIGHT'), is really quite simple. Just remember: - Follow the Arrow direction by moving your Sight Pin in the same direction.



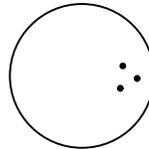
Arrows Low  
Lower the Pin



Arrows High  
Move Pin Up



Arrows Left  
Move Pin Left



Arrows Right  
Move Pin Right

A TIP :- If you lift your Bow to arms length ( as if you are going to shoot ) and place the Pin on Gold, you can see how far away from your Pin ( say, to the left ) your Arrows are ( maybe a 1/4 of an inch ). Now, move your Pin towards the Arrows (1/4 of an inch to the left) and then re-shoot.

This may be done between Arrows, so that at the end of the first 6 Arrows (Sighters) you will be on Gold!

### **ARROW RETRIEVAL**

Once the Field Captain blows the All Clear Whistle, you may proceed towards the Target to retrieve your Arrows. Please note: This should be done in an orderly manor ( not running ), looking at the ground as you go so that you do not kick or tread on any Arrows 'which may have fallen short. These should be carefully pulled out (straight back) in the direction they were shot from. NOT lifted up, as this will bend the Arrow.

Once at the Boss you will want to study where your Arrows actually landed and note the grouping. After this, the Arrows may be removed from the 'Boss' (this is the actual straw wound back-stop onto which the Target Face is pinned). This should be done carefully and with caution. Only one or two (one either side) Archers should do this, with all others standing well back from the Boss.

Never stand behind someone who is pulling Arrows from the Boss, because their arm may come back with a jerk and the end of the Arrow could go into your eye !

The non-pulling hand should be placed on the Target with fingers outstretched and either side of the Arrow being pulled. The pulling hand should take a grip of the Arrow close to the Target face and then pulled straight back. NOT UP, DOWN or SIDEWAYS.

Arrows should then be sorted out and returned to their owners. After this you can walk back to the equipment line and await the Field Captains whistle - to commence shooting again.

### **SCORING**

Once your Arrows are Grouping together you will want to start scoring - just for the fun of it to start with. This will also give you a record of your Arrows shot during one session. This will be something to reflect upon once back home again, sitting in front of the fire!!

There are generally two types of Scoring used for Target Archery. 'Imperial' and 'Metric'.

**IMPERIAL:** The Target Face is divided into 5 areas of colour. Gold = 9 points, Red = 7, Blue 5, Black = 3 and White = 1 point.

**METRIC** : The Target Face is divided into 10 rings ( 2 per colour area ) : Inner Gold = 10 points, Outer Gold = 9, Inner Red = 8, Outer Red = 7, Inner Blue = 6, Outer Blue = 5, Inner Black = 4, Outer Black = 3, Inner White = 2 and Outer White = 1 point.

Different 'Rounds' (the name given to a set number of Arrows shot over set distances) use different types of scoring, some 'Imperial' and some 'Metric'.

Arrows which land on the dividing line between one number and another ( even if it is just touching ) count as the higher number - this is known as a 'Line Cutter'.

This is an example of a standard SCORE CARD.

Round: Long Western				Date: xx/xx/xx			
Place:		Conditions:					
End Scores	ET	End Scores	ET	H	S	G	RT
997 755	42	977 775	42	12	84	3	84
977 755	40	777 775	40	12	80	1	164
777 531	30	777 51-	27	11	57	0	221
977 755	40	777 533	32	12	72	1	293
<b>4 Doz @ 80 Yards</b>							
997 755	42	977 775	42	12	84	3	377
977 755	40	777 775	40	12	80	1	457
777 531	30	777 51-	27	11	57	0	514
977 755	40	777 533	32	12	72	1	586
<b>4 Doz @ 60 Yards</b>							
<b>Totals =</b>				<b>94</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>586</b>

## **PROTOCOL**

When arriving at the club please follow these few simple rules:-

Arrive earlier than the actual start time shown for Sighters, otherwise you will hold up everyone else!

Once there, help the others in setting out the field with the equipment. There is a lot to do so if we all muck in it will get done faster, giving-us all more-shooting time!

Set up your own equipment and check your sight setting for the first distance to be shot.

When the Field Captain gives the all clear whistle to start shooting Sighters, proceed to the shooting line and continue.

NB. Should you unavoidably arrive late, when others have started shooting, please be as quiet as possible (don't shout out 'Hello' to your mates for example). Set up your equipment and join in the next convenient 'END' (usually 6 Arrows).

When you have finished shooting for the session, ALL the equipment should be put away again and every ones help, once again, makes this task quick and easy. Don't let others do all the work! Do your bit to help please.

Dress warm and comfortable for shooting, with solid footwear if it is wet. Colour is optional during Club Rounds but when shooting Tournaments, the colours are restricted to 'Dark Green' (Sherwood Green) and 'White'. A Club Sweatshirt of the correct Green (or White) can be obtained. If in doubt - ASK, we are a friendly lot us Archers.

## **BUYING YOUR FIRST BOW, ARROWS AND OTHER BITS**

**WARNING:** This is NOT a task to undertake on your own, without the help and guidance of an experienced member of the Club (or a specialist Archery shop) to guide you through the pitfalls surrounding this complicated subject.

**A wrong** choice at this early stage could either give you bad habits, due to a miss-match of equipment to Archer, or a lot of disappointments which will lead to you giving up Archery..... In either case, you will have wasted a lot of time and money.

Your First Bow and Arrows should be suitable for your needs at the present time, not the future. To say you will grow into a Bow is wrong, all that will happen during this period is bad habits and techniques will be formed which will be hard to break later.

Your First Bow and Arrows will serve you well for the first six to twelve months, whilst your body muscles and technique settle into your new found sport. After this time you may find a change is in order, which you will be able to plan for, enabling you to take full advantage of all the experience you will have gained.

Your First Bow will probably be one of the Basic types generally available. These are usually imported from Korea or other eastern countries. They are usually very well made and reliable to use whilst giving good value for money.

The Arrows you buy will probably be made of a basic Alloy material, which will be matched both to you and your bow.

Second hand equipment is a good choice for the beginner and improver alike as you can save a lot of money. Bows do not wear out if they are looked after properly. However, Arrows may not wear so well, so get some advice. In any case, they may not be the correct length for you or suit your set-up, but don't despair, if too long, they can be altered to some degree. Remember; get some advice before you buy.

The rest of your equipment can either be bought new or second hand as you wish. As these items will serve you well for many years to come, your initial expense may turn out to be an investment. The equipment covered by this category is as follows: - Bracer, Tab, Bow Stringer, Quiver, Score Book, and Equipment Case & Bow Sight (this could be a cheaper model to start with which can be sold with the bow at a future date).

## **SPARES**

When buying your Bow and Arrows it is worth spending a little extra on some spare items which will inevitably need replacement sooner or later!! (usually when you don't have any! ).

These items include :- Fletchings ( both 'Cock' & 'Hens, if a different colour ), Nocks ( for your Arrows ), Glue ( for both Fletchings & Nocks ), Glue ( for the Piles of the Arrows ~ a heat type is used on these ), Beeswax ( for the string ) & Nock Sets ( for the string Nocking Point ). 'Nock Set' Pliers can be bought if you wish, but you can usually borrow some to start with if you want to save some money or just use ordinary pliers.

## **NOTE**

DON'T buy any Stabilisers to start with. These may look good and impressive, but they will NOT help beginners at all. In fact, they would probably hinder the learning process and give you bad habits. When the time comes (usually after a period of 6 - 9 months), discuss this subject with the club coach who will advise you on this and other matters.

## **REMEMBER**

IF IN DOUBT, ASK.....

We are here to help you.

**GOOD SHOOTING**