

# New Member Handbook

*Prepared by Steve Humphrey for and on behalf of Sway Bowmen.  
Revised August 2023*

## **General Information for New Members**

### **When can I shoot?**

- **Saturday Mornings (Summer):** Beginners and Juniors (limited shooting on longer distance bosses may be available at the discretion of coaches)
- **Saturday Afternoons:** Free range shooting, members are encouraged to come along to shoot and submit a recognised round
- **Sundays:** Free range shooting, members are encouraged to come along to shoot and submit a recognised round
- **Wednesday Morning:** Free range shooting as above
- **Wednesday Evening (Summer):** Coaching evening for beginners, juniors and seniors who want coaching only.
- **Tuesday Evening (Winter):** Brockenhurst College
- **Whenever you like!** Once you are safe to shoot without supervision the coaches will supply you with the padlock and clubhouse codes so you can shoot whenever you wish.

### **What do I do about equipment?**

You will be provided with club equipment until you are safe to shoot outside of coaching sessions. You can then rent a club bow for the short term but will be encouraged to get your own equipment as soon as the coaching team think you are ready. Details of the bow rental scheme can be found on the website in the 'equipment' section.

Club shirts can be purchased via the website also in the 'equipment' section.

### **How do I get into the members area of the website?**

A password will be generated for you by our website guru and e mailed to you.

### **What are rounds, classifications and handicaps?**

**Rounds:** This is the name given to shooting a specific number of arrows at a specific distance on a specific size of target face e.g. a 'Warwick' is 48 arrows, with 24 shot at 60 yards and 24 shot at 50 yards, on a 122cm (full size) face.

Rounds are many and varied and the full list can be found in the 'all about scores' section of the website under 'rounds'. There is a round to suit all distances, strengths and abilities. They are also pinned to the noticeboard in the clubhouse.

It is important to shoot established rounds if you wish to chart your progress, earn badges or compete in handicapped competitions (which are explained further down). You can use an app on your phone. There are many to choose from but the recommendation is 'Archery scoresheets' or 'Expert Archer' both of which are free to download.

If you do not have a smart phone (or don't want to use this method), use a paper score sheet from the clubhouse to record your score. Paper can be left in the folder on the notice board and electronic (or photos of paper) can be sent to [records@sway-bowmen.org.uk](mailto:records@sway-bowmen.org.uk) Electronic scores will generally be entered more quickly than paper.

**Please note** you must shoot the round with someone else as a witness and then both of you need to sign it. You must complete all the information requested on the score sheet or the records officer will not know how to record it.

**Classifications** : As your scores improve you can aim to achieve classifications. This means you become a third class archer, then a second class and so on.

*Example: for a lady recurve archer to get a third class score on a Warwick round she must score 146 or more.*

The relevant score for Archer 3<sup>rd</sup> class must be achieved in 3 shoots over the year and submitted to the records officer (they don't all have to be the same round, just to have reached the score for a third class in whichever

round has been shot). The Records Officer will then award you a badge to put on your quiver. The archer can then progress on to earn second class (on a Warwick this would be scores over 233), or, at longer distances, first class and bowmen levels. To gain the master bowman, grand master bowman and elite master bowman classifications they would need to compete in record status competitions. On the website, go to 'all about scores', then 'about rounds' and consult the tables to find the score you need for each level relevant to you as it varies by gender, age and distance shot.

**Handicaps** : Each score you submit to the records officer is awarded a handicap value. Think of it as what you would get if all scores were from 1-100, e.g. our lady shooting 146 on her Warwick has shot it at a 65 handicap while a lady shooting a score of 335 would be awarded a 45 handicap.

**You don't need to understand this immediately.**

What you need to understand is that in order to shoot in a handicapped competition you need to have submitted 3 scores from established rounds. The records officer will then average these to give you your handicap. Handicaps are then used to level the playing field when archers with different levels of ability shoot against each other in different rounds.

The allowance for someone with a handicap of 65	The allowance for someone with a handicap of 45
	Your expected score if your handicap is 45
Your expected score if your handicap is 65	

The handicap is used to work out what score is expected for you (in blue) and then an allowance of a whole lot of points (in green) is added so that if you shoot to your handicap you will score 1440 no matter what round you are shooting. Someone who is further along their archery journey and therefore has a lower handicap is expected to score more and is therefore given less of an allowance. If both archers shoot to their handicap both should end up with an adjusted score of 1440 i.e. they would tie!

Don't worry if you haven't understood this at this point because as long as you submit 3 qualifying scores this will all be done for you.

**Please note**, the 252 rounds are a great way to chart your progress and learn to record scores, each one is a real achievement, but they cannot contribute to your classification or handicap on their own as they are not official rounds. Having said that, they can be shot as part of a round if the round requires 4 dozen at the first distance – you just take the first three dozen and submit that to the 252 scheme. Again, please note, it **has** to be the first three dozen and can't be the best three!

Finally, everything you could ever want to know can be found by clicking the members handbook red button on the 'home' page of the Sway bowmen website.

## **All about Shooting**

### Contents:

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## 1. Safety Commands

Archery is a safe sport so long as the safety rules/disciplines are adhered to at all times. The following safety commands are universal throughout the world of Target Archery:

- A **SINGLE** whistle blast from the field captain or most senior coach on duty signifies the field is clear and it is safe for you to commence shooting. All arrows must be shot from the designated shooting line.
- **THREE** whistle blasts signifies that all arrows have been shot and it is safe to cross the shooting line to score and collect your arrows.

- When under tuition you may be asked to "**COME DOWN**" this means, if at full draw, tilt the bow forward, pointing the arrow at the ground immediately in front of you and gently relax the tension on the bow. This command is used if your coach thinks you are doing something wrong or wishes to give you further instruction

- The command **FAST**, or a **SERIES OF WHISTLE BLASTS** signifies there is a hazard in or around the shooting area and you must immediately "Come Down" and put your arrow back in your quiver, remain on the shooting line until the all clear is given by the field captain or the most senior coach on duty.

## 2. Archery Etiquette

### A Good Archer:

- (a) Does not talk in a loud voice whilst others are shooting.
- (b) Does not talk to another competitor who obviously prefers to be silent.
- (c) Does not make any exclamation on the shooting line that might disconcert a neighbour in the act of shooting.
- (d) Does not go behind the target to retrieve their arrows before their score has been recorded.
- (e) Does not walk up and down the shooting line comparing scores.
- (f) Does not touch anyone else's equipment without permission.
- (g) Does not leave litter.
- (h) When calling scores does so in groups of three, for example '7 - 7 - 5' pause '5 - 5 - 3'.
- (j) If they break another's arrow through their own carelessness, pays for it in cash on the spot.
- (k) Thanks the Target Captain at the end of each round for work on their behalf.

### 3. Warm-ups and Stretching

#### Background

Warm-ups and stretching should be part of our preparation routine before shooting starts and at other times both in tournaments and in practice. The most important reason for warming up is that it can help to prevent injury. Stretching after shooting will help you to relax and will reduce the onset of soreness. If done on a regular basis, stretching will also increase flexibility, which will improve the range of movements, will help protect joints against damage and will reduce resistance to movement by conditioning muscles.

#### How does it work?

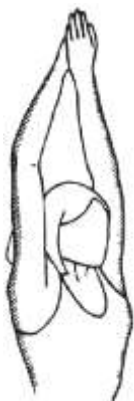
Firstly, we warm up by moving our limbs, gently at first, to increase the muscle temperature (by up to 2 degrees). This will improve the blood flow and blood saturation of the muscles. Muscles and soft tissues have both plastic and elastic properties. The increase in temperature increases the extensibility of tendons, ligaments and other soft tissues. (Plasticine stretches easier when it is warm and is less likely to break or tear). It also reduces the internal resistance therefore lowering the energy cost of an activity. The increase in temperature also reduces the viscosity of the fluid in joints so there is less resistance to movement.

When the muscles are warm we can start the stretching exercises. By stretching, we increase the length of both muscles and tendons and therefore also increase the range flexibility over joints. When stretching, it is important not to 'bounce' the muscles but to apply a steady stretch for at least 10 seconds. Work on all the muscles you are likely to use when shooting - Don't forget the legs!

#### Examples of stretching exercises

*Take care when doing these exercises – **IF IT HURTS, STOP***

##### Shoulder stretch



The arms are extended above the head with the hands together as shown. Breathing in, stretch the arms upwards and slightly backwards and hold at the point of slight discomfort for 10 - 12 seconds. Slowly return to the starting point

##### Shoulder Stretch



Bring the elbow of the right arm across the chest with the left hand towards the left shoulder until slight discomfort is felt in the middle of the upper back, the shoulder and upper arm. Hold for 10 - 12 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position. Do the same for the left arm.

### Shoulder and Arm Stretch



With fingers linked together and palms turned outwards, extend your arms out in front of you at shoulder height until slight discomfort is felt in the shoulders, middle of the

upper back, arms, hands, fingers and wrist. Hold for 10 – 12 seconds. Slowly return to the start position.

### Shoulder and Back of Upper Arm Stretch

Hold just below the elbow of the right arm with the left hand and pull the elbow behind your head as shown until slight discomfort is felt in the back of the upper arm and the top of the shoulder. Hold for 10- 12 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position. Do the same for the other side.



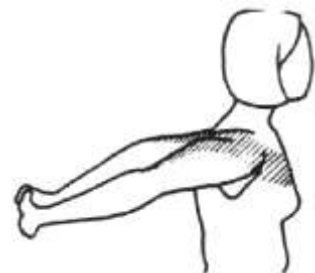
### Shoulder and Neck stretch

Lean your head sideways toward your left shoulder. At the same time, pull your right arm down and across your back as shown, until slight discomfort is felt in the top of the shoulder and side of the neck. Hold for 10 – 12 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position. Do the same for the other side.



### Chest stretch

Interlace your fingers behind your back and lift your arms until slight discomfort is felt in the shoulders, chest and upper arms. Hold for 10 – 12 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position. Keep the back straight during the exercise and do not lean forward.



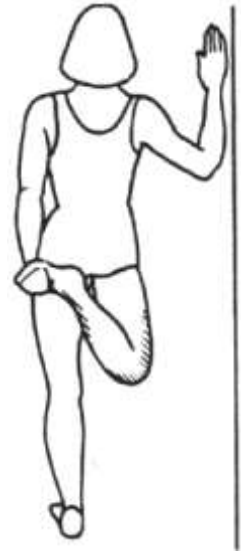


**Side Stretch** Stand with feet shoulder width apart and toes forward. With the right arm extended above your head, bend sideways to the left from the hip, using the left hand as support, until slight discomfort

is felt down the right side of the body. Ensure you can see your hand in front of you. Hold for 10 - 12 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position. Do the same for the other side.

### **Quadriceps and Ankle Stretch**

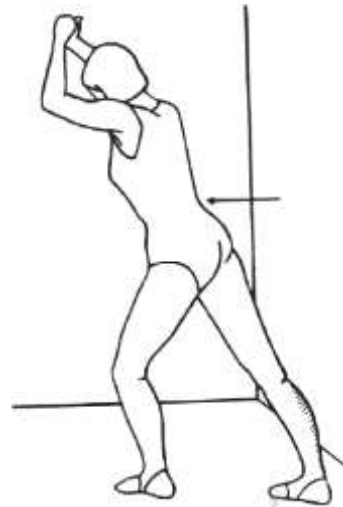
Leaning against a wall for support, gently pull the ankle of the right leg towards the hip until slight discomfort is felt. Hold for 10 - 12 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position. Do the same for the left leg.



*If you have a history of knee problems, take care not to flex the knee joint too much!*

### **Calf Stretch**

Stand a short distance away from a wall and support the body as shown. Keeping the back straight, move the hip forward until slight discomfort is felt in the right calf. Hold for 10 - 12 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position. Repeat for the left leg.



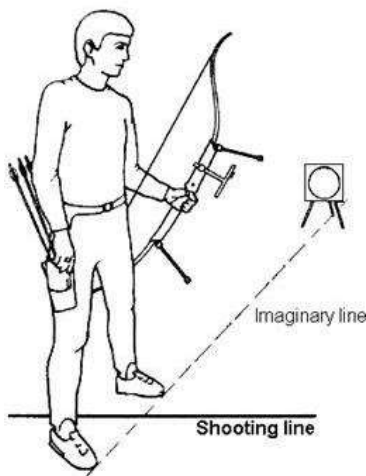


## 4. Body Geometry

Of all the tasks we will ask of you “Body Geometry” is at the top of the list in achieving the perfect shot time after time.

Good geometry provides the leverage for control and strength throughout the execution of the shot without building and dealing with body tension.

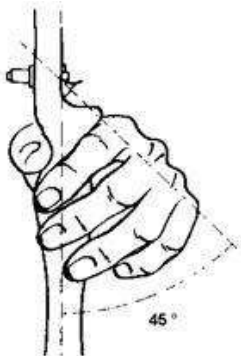
The following diagrams will help explain good posture/body alignment.



### Stance & Posture

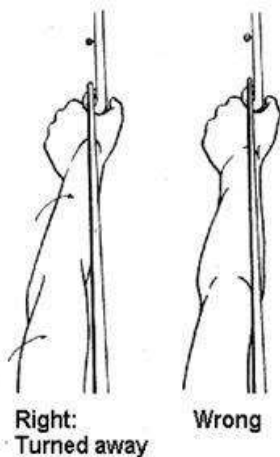
Right handed archers hold the bow with the left hand, so with your left side toward the target, stand at a right angle to the target, with the tips of your toes against an imaginary line pointing at the centre of the target. Your feet should be shoulder's width apart, straddling the shooting line.

Stand straight & tall, balanced, with ribs down, shoulders down and relaxed. Shoulders square to the target. Try to relax.

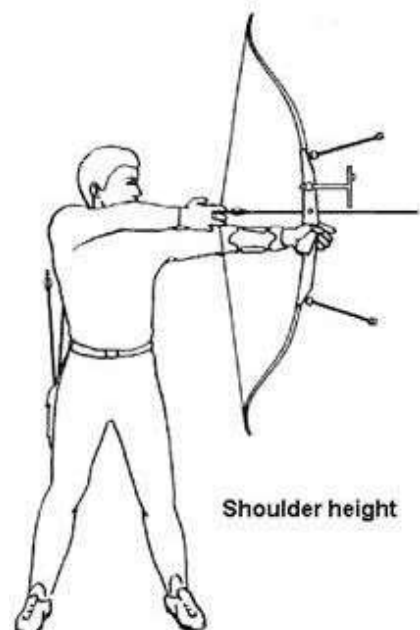


Set your bow hand on the grip on the inside of your life line, on the meaty part of your thumb. Thumb points toward target.

**Set up (Extending the bow arm)** Bring the bow arm to shoulder height - keep shoulders DOWN.

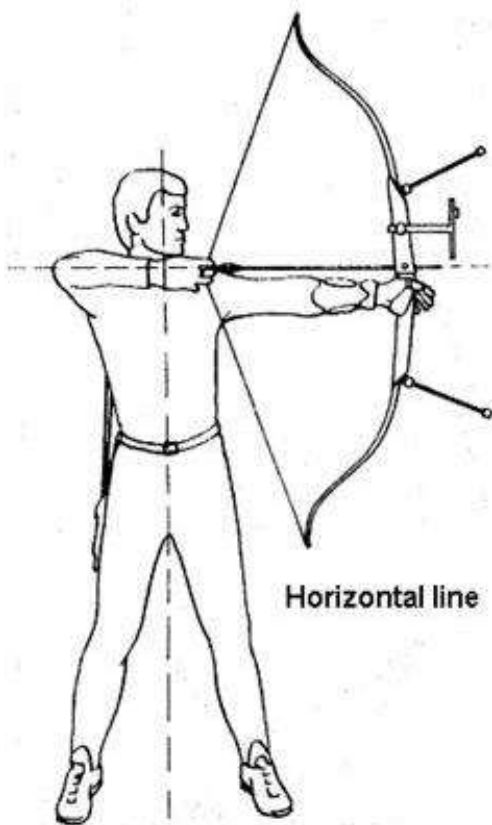
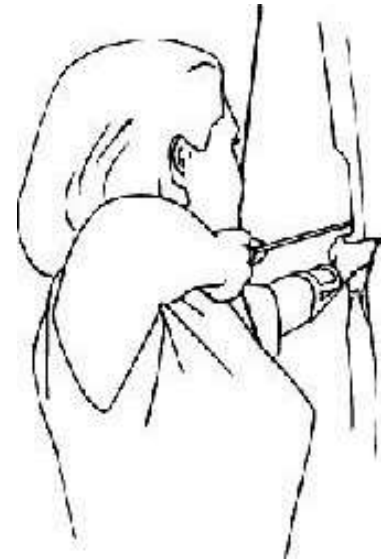


The elbow of the bow arm is turned away from the string.



### **Drawing the bow**

Draw the string along the bow arm in a straight horizontal line to the anchor point on your face.

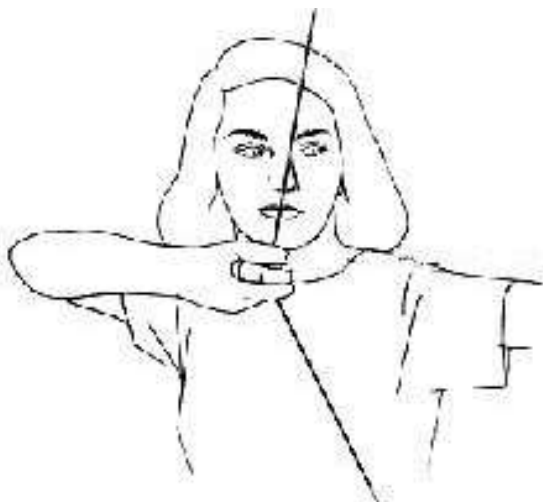


Draw with your back muscles, moving the shoulder blades towards each other.  
Stand straight up and relaxed  
Keep both shoulders as low as possible.



### **One straight line**

Bow hand, draw hand and Elbow should form a straight line.



### **Anchoring**

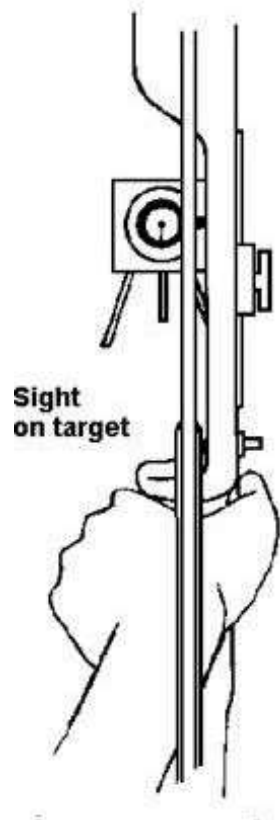
If using a sight, the string should touch the side of the jaw and the tip of your nose.

The index finger is curled under the jaw bone, the thumb is NOT used as a reference anchor point.

Keep your teeth together.

## Aim

Aim at full draw, by settling the sight ring onto the target. Maintain the connection of drawing hand to the face

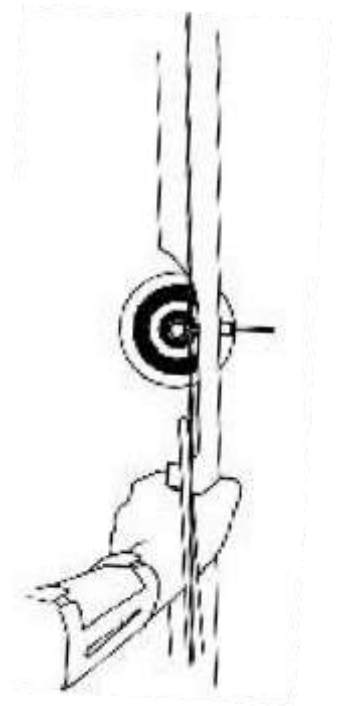


You should see the string line up on the top bow limb exactly at the same place each time and appear a little right of the sight ring.

If you are cross dominant- (right handed, left eye dominant or vice-versa) you must shut the other eye.

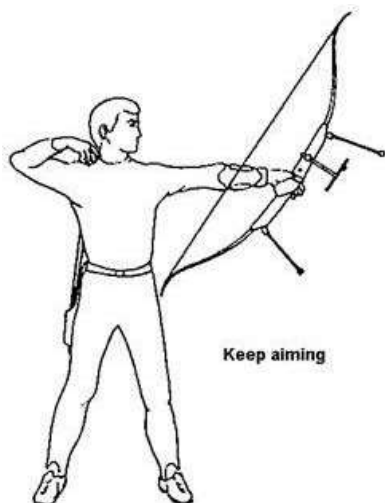
Keep the sight on the target.

"String picture" : the string lines up on the top bow limb and sight EXACTLY at the same place each time.



## Release

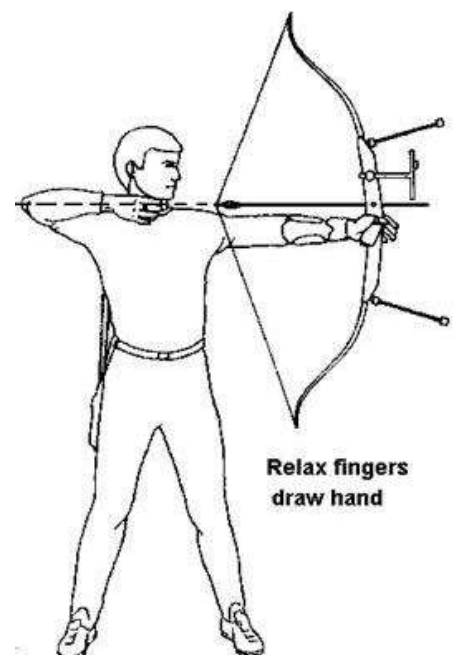
Keep pulling the shoulder blades towards each other, while relaxing the fingers of the draw hand .



## Follow Through

Your relaxed bow hand will let the bow drop.

You will feel your sling tug gently against your hand, letting you know the sling is catching the bow.



## 5. Preparation

When preparing to shoot, it is a good idea to get into a routine that gets you into the same position each time.

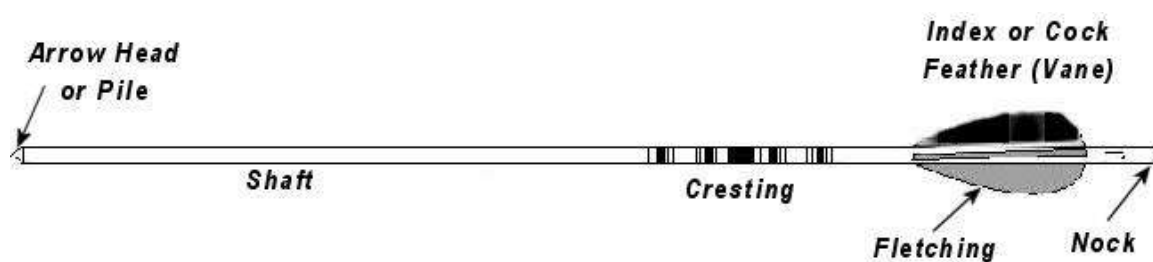
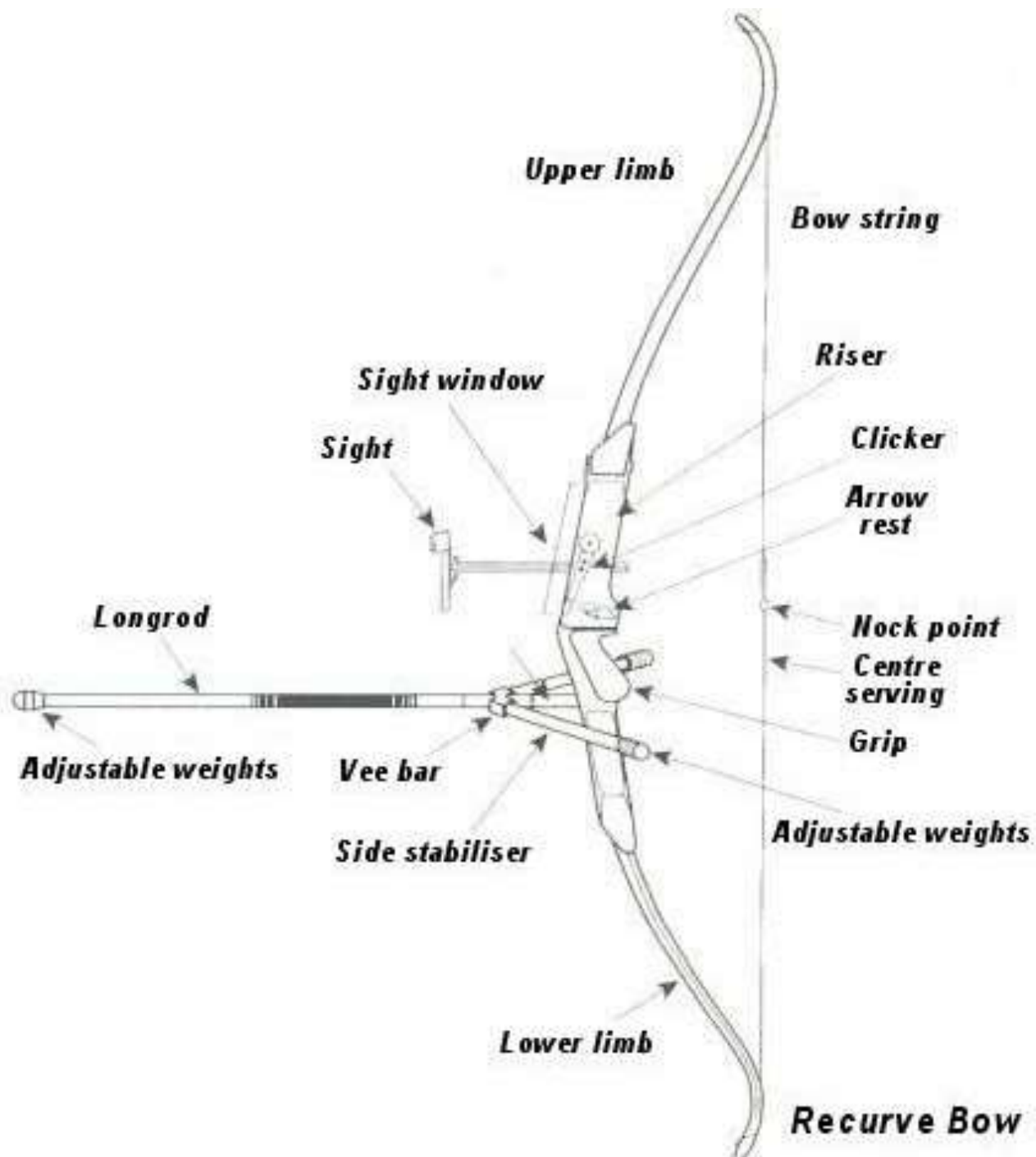
For example:

- Get your feet into the correct position on the line. You can use foot markers to help if you wish.
- Check your hand position in the bow grip.
- Place fingers on the string forming a good hook.
- Stand tall and turn your head to the target. (Note: from now on, your head should not move until the arrow hits the target!)
- Raise the bow and settle the sight pin on the gold. Draw the string back to you reference point.
- Ensure that the back elbow is on a line which runs from your elbow, through the bow to the target.
- (Don't allow the elbow to drop below your shoulder).
- Keep pushing the bow to the target whilst maintaining the line to your elbow.
- Release the string but ensure you keep the bow arm pointing towards the target until the arrow hits.
- If you have done this correctly, your bow arm should still be pointing at the target and your string hand should be behind your ear.

Adopting a routine like this will enable you to quickly check your form if things start to go wrong.

A good line through the bow to the target is important and care should be taken to ensure that your technique establishes a good line.

## 6. The Bow



## 7. Scoring

When scoring, it is imperative that the score sheet is completed both neatly and accurately, score sheets must also specify the Archers name, age group, his/her Bow style (either R to signify Recurve, LB to signify Longbow, BB to signify Barebow or C to signify Compound), the date and the round being shot.

The example that follows shows scoring after three dozen arrows have been shot, the first numbers entered are the value of your scoring arrows on the target, remember to call your arrows from the highest value to the lowest and in groups of three i.e. 9, 9, 7 pause 5, 3, 2 your target captain will repeat your call whilst writing them down (this should eradicate any errors). Those numbers in bold are totals, the first half dozen arrows (or END) score 35 (hence ET, End Total) the second half dozen scores 45, therefore the score for the first dozen is 80, number of HITS or scoring arrows is 12 and finally the number of arrows in the gold is 4.

The third half dozen is scored in the same manner but you will notice the 'M' this signifies an arrow that missed the scoring zones. This time we complete the TOTAL column which is the sum of  $80 + 49$  (the dozen totals) = 129, the third dozen total (64) is simply added to this and so on.

If you are using an archery score app it will do all the adding for you, you just input the scoring arrow values and misses.

At the end of the shoot don't forget to sign your scoresheet, a scoresheet that is unsigned will be invalid.

It is always a good idea to maintain a record of your own scores throughout the shoot in case of any mathematical errors, after all we are all human and mistakes in the addition could mean the difference between being awarded a medal/trophy or going home empty handed.

There are many different rounds to shoot in target archery, as your involvement in the sport progresses, so will your understanding and knowledge of these rounds.

Sample of a completed score sheet (10 zone scoring)

						ET							ET	Doz	Hits	Golds	Score
10	9	7	4	4	1	35	9	9	8	7	6	6	45	80	12	1	
9	5	4	2	M	M	20	10	10	6	3	3	M	32	52	9	2	132
6	6	6	5	4	4	31	7	7	7	6	6	M	33	64	11	0	196

196	32	3	196
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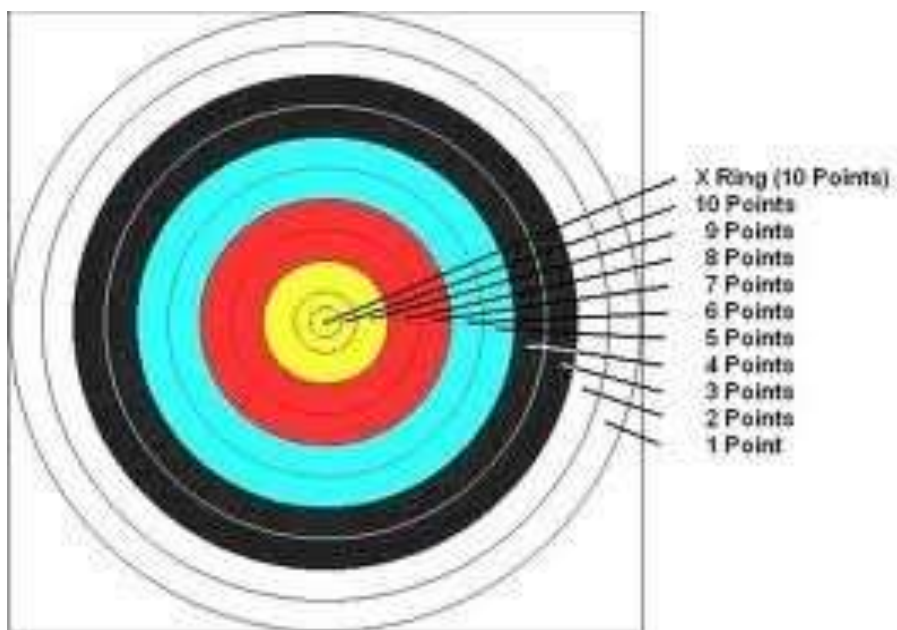
## Imperial Rounds

When scoring a 'Round' where the distance shot is measured in Yards we use 5 zone scoring ...



## Metric Rounds

When scoring a 'Round' where the distance shot is measured in Metres we use 10 zone scoring ...



## Line Cutters

If an arrow cuts the line between scoring zones you record the higher score.



## 8. Objective

Your objective as an archer is to develop a shooting technique that is simple and uncomplicated, all movements and actions should be performed smoothly and naturally, the body and bow moving and working together as one familiar unit.

From head to toe, strive to be composed and balanced with no unnecessary tension in any area, be mentally and physically relaxed but remain alert.

Here are some of the different bows you might find being used in the club



Recurve Bow



Traditional English Longbow



Compound Bow



## 9. Archery – Its history and its forms

The invention of the Bow and Arrow, the discovery of fire, the invention of the wheel and the development of speech were all fundamental in the civilisation of man.

This contrivance of sinew and stick was man's first mechanical invention and it was his first attempt at conserving energy. It enabled him to fight his predators at a distance; thus he was no longer forced into hand-to-hand combat for survival. The cave man used his Bow and Arrow to obtain food and to protect himself, thus elevating man above the beast, and the ensuing social and economic advantages were immeasurable.

From the Turkish short bow to the English longbow and from the stubby Arabian arrow to the spear like African arrow, archery has provided man with a weapon for survival, aggression and defence.

Over time, bows and arrows have become symbols:

- Cupid and his bow, symbolised Love,
- The huntress Diana was pictured with a bow,
- The bow is a Religious symbol for Zen Buddhists,
- Power is represented by the bow in the seal of the USA,
- Legend has it that the first Olympic games were held at the direction of the famous archer Hercules in 776BC.

Archery is an inclusive sport, allowing participation from a diverse range of adult archers.

Children reaching the 'age of reason' can be taught to shoot safely for the remainder of their lives.

The English Longbow developed from the crude bows and arrows of the dark ages and became established as a military weapon 'par Excellence' for the English armies from the 13th to the 16th centuries.

The successful deployment of the bow and arrow in warfare depended upon the co-ordinated mass of Bowmen fully trained in its use.

At Hastings in 1066 'William's' use of massed archery secured the final victory for the Norman's, but it was not until 1216 that the first mention of mass archery by the English is seen.

In 1252 the Assize of arms officially listed the bow and arrow as a warlike arm and by this statute all males between the age of 15 and 60 years, were ordered to be equipped with sword, bow and arrows and a dagger.

The years that followed saw the rise of legendary figures.

Henry V became immortalised after his defeat of the French on October 25th 1415. The might of the French armies with their fully armoured, well trained and disciplined knights were demolished by the skill and courage of the English and Welsh archers.

Myth or reality, Robin Hood holds a place in every archers heart, his exploits and skill with the bow and arrow have surely inspired thousands to take up the sport. To be fully armed is one thing, but to be fully trained was another, to ensure that, the entire series of statutes of the Realm were published ordering archers to practice on Sundays and Holy days. Perhaps archery is the only sport, which is legally performed on Sundays. Ordinance no longer required trained archers in the military, but replaced them with musketeers. The argument between archers, cross-bowmen and musketeers went on for decades since all three were as accurate as one another, but the bow could be reloaded quicker. However, the military use of the bow and arrow declined, but its recreational use grew.

To protect Queen Elizabeth I after the Armada, a body of guards of archers was made and called the Royal Artillery Company. This was disbanded at the Reformation but reformed to be called the

Royal Company of Archers.

Shooting matches of any size, had, up to 1582, been held in London. In that year there was a great shooting at York. This was the precursor, 250 years later, to the English Championships meeting.

There were three types of shooting at this time:-

Prick/Clout, Butt and Roving.

Prick/Clout took place from 160 to 240 yards, the 'mark' being eighteen inches in diameter, made of straw and having a wooden peg in the middle. The object of this practice was to 'make a length' i.e. shoot all arrows the same distances, practice for battle. Clout shooting is still practised today.

Butt shooting required more accuracy. The Butt, being made of earth and covered with turf and a paper disc as an aiming mark were placed at 100 yards to 140 yards. This was the forerunner of modern Target Archery as performed in the Olympics.

Roving consisted of shooting at targets over varying contoured open ground. The distances were unknown except at Finsbury Archers. This form of archery is still practised today, being called Field Archery, and is part of the World Championships.

In the mid Eighteenth Century two gentlemen found archery to have a convalescent quality and to promote it as a healthy exercise they formed the Royal Toxophilite Society in 1781.

Following its formation there was a considerable increase in interest in Archery in England. The Prince Regent, George, and Prince of Wales enthusiastically encouraged this. He restored the prestige of the bow and arrow to where it had been during the reign of Henry VIII. A number of the regulations that he made are still followed today.

Prince George realised that in order to compare skill against skill a standard pattern or round of shooting should be carried out. Firstly, he decided that the centre of the four foot target be called the Gold, scoring nine points, the next annulus of colour would be RED and scoring seven points, the next ring of colour would be Blue scoring five points, the next ring would be Black scoring three and the outermost ring would be White scoring one point. This scoring system was known as the 'Prince's Reckoning'.

Having standardised the scoring, he then set the distances at which target/butt shooting would be carried out, these were: One hundred, eighty and sixty yards and these became known as the 'Prince's Lengths'. These scoring rules and distances became known as the 'York' round which was shot for the first British Championships held at York in August 1844. This meeting was called the 'Grand National Archery Meeting'.

Typically of the Prince Regent, he also insisted that all members of the Royal Kentish Bowmen, of whom he was patron, wear the traditional Green coloured clothing of the Woodsman and Huntsman of earlier centuries. This followed the tradition of the military during the Hundred Years War. This Dark or Grass Green colour for the jacket and white/buff colour for the trousers has been continued to the present day. It was a rule of shooting in the Grand National Archery Society's rule book up until a couple of years ago.

In the time of the Prince Regent it was not uncommon to see a record of fines imposed for not wearing the required colours. Nowadays the rules for archers are more relaxed but archers not adhering to the few rules there are are just stopped from shooting.

This first Grand National Archery Meeting was officiated over by the Royal Toxophilite Society. It was organised by a small self-elected committee. This committee continued to organise the match and in 1861 formed the Grand National Archery Society. This society is now the governing body for archery in the United Kingdom and recently has been 're-branded' as Archery Great Britain or AGB.

## Sway Bowmen

Sway Bowmen was formed in 1985.

Membership has grown steadily and currently stands at around 100 members. Some of our members have shot internationally representing the UK and England as well as shooting for the Hampshire County team.

We have target days on Wednesdays and Sundays and run coaching sessions on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. There is no charge for coaching by our qualified coaches. In the winter we also shoot indoors (check the website for details). As we have exclusive access to our range in Sway, members are able to shoot whenever they wish.

There are 52 Archery clubs in Hampshire and Sway Bowmen is affiliated to the Hampshire Archery Association and also AGB who are the governing body of the sport within the UK.

Most clubs hold open shoots each year where members of other clubs are invited to shoot. Sway Bowmen hold an open shoot called The Mushroom Shoot in August each year when we are joined by up to 70 archers from other clubs.



*Our resident Red Deer*



*Longbow and Barebow styles*



*A fun shoot on a sunny day*