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Archery Action

Editor's feature:

**Bowhunter of the Year
Ben Chambers**

*The impossible
dream*



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THE ARCHERY ALLIANCE OF AUSTRALIA

Officially recognised by these organisations

Australia's largest circulation archery and bowhunting magazine

ABA National Safari and IFAA National Field Archery Championships

The running of
this event is
conditional upon
government
health directives:
Please check on
the ABA website
for updates



**Rescheduled to now take place
September 29 to October 4, 2020**

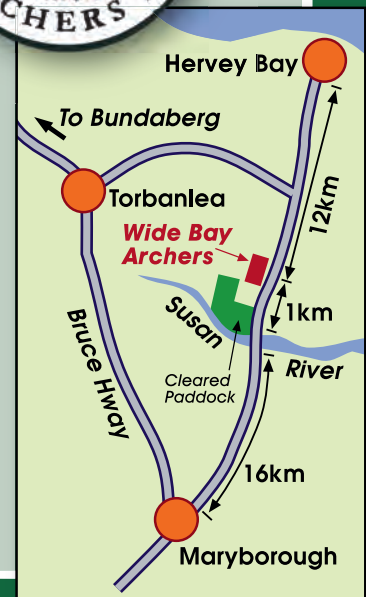


**Hosted By
Wide Bay Archers**



Format

- 29/9/2020 Tuesday - Registration and bow checks
- 30/9/2020 Wednesday IFAA – 28 Targets Field/Hunter
- 1/10/2020 Thursday IFAA – 28 Targets Hunter/Field
- 2/10/2020 Friday IFAA – 28 Targets Animal (Afternoon bow checks if required)
- 3/10/2020 Saturday ABA (3 and 1 arrow)
- 4/10/2020 Sunday ABA (3 and 1 arrow)



Champion of Branches team competitions will be registered prior to Muster for both competitions, (numbers permitting).

Camping and hot showers are available at the club. Motel and cabin-type accommodation is available in Hervey Bay or Maryborough.

Breakfasts, lunches and evening meals will be catered for.

Further event details will be released on the ABA website and Facebook page.

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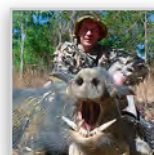
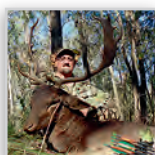
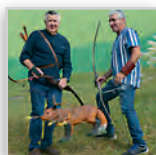
▼ INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

ABA MEMBERSHIP FORM	82
ABA NATIONAL SAFARI/IFAA NATIONALS	02
ABBEY ARCHERY	84
ABBEY ARCHERY Photo Competition	33
AFRICAN GEAR	17
APEX HUNTING	03
ARCHERY ACTION – Deadlines	05
ARCHERY ACTION Gold Pen Award	23
ARCHERY ACTION Subscription Form	22
ARCHERY ALLIANCE Shoot Calendar	80
ARCHERY EQUIPMENT WA	43
ARCHERY ESSENTIALS	10
AUSBOW INDUSTRIES	64
AUSSIE TARGETS	09
BCY BOWSTRING	15
BENCHMARK 3D postponement	43
BENSON ARCHERY	50, 51
BOWHUNTER GEAR	17
DAN SMITH SAFARIS	59
DARRYL REEKS ARCHERY	81
DOCTARI SAFARIS	55
FULL DRAW ARCHERY	31
HUNTER VALLEY TRADITIONAL ARCHERS	44
NORSEMAN TRADITIONAL BOWS	29
OZHUNTING AND BOWS	63
POLLARD INSURANCE	53
PRIMITIVE ARCHER	18
QLD BOWHUNTING SAFARIS	26
ROYELL SAFARIS NAMIBIA/AUSTRALIA	44
TASMANIAN ARCHERY SUPPLIES	36
3DAAA	67
TROPHY BOWHUNTS AUSTRALIA	83
TUSKER TROPHY OF THE MONTH	71
TUSKER JUNIOR PHOTO COMPETITION	58
URBAN ARCHERY	75



▼ REGULARS

5	Editorial
12	ABA newsletter, Game Claimed listing, TBA column
28	Traditional Trails
33	Photo Competition entries
52	Bushcraft and Survival
58	Game Claimed pictorial
60	Around the Trads
71	More Best of Species
74	Meanderings
78	Outside the Zone



▼ FEATURES

06	Deer hunting: Nothing but good times and lessons so far	Adam Thomas
16	A kid and a scrubber	Jett Harch
17	Vale Darryl Perrett	
18	Vale Del Archer	
19	What archery means in my life	David Luxford
20	Archery in isolation	Graham Newell
24	One great day	Troy Morris
34	Happy 40th anniversary, West Gippsland Field Archers	Tim Opie
38	The impossible dream–Bowhunter of the Year Ben Chambers	Jenel Hunt
61	Percy's first rabbit	Brian Duynhoven
62	Hoyt GM rebirth	Luke van der Plaats
66	Cape York hogs	Scott Brown
72	Branch B Bowhunting Awards	Graham McComiskie
76	Poets' Corner	Glenn Varona
77	First hare and rabbit	Tomas Long



◀ COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Perth man Ben Chambers has done the impossible–claimed all 18 ABA species within the space of one year. This toothy boar was the first. See story on Page 38.

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Late in 2019 when I was writing about how I thought 2020 was going to pan out, I said I could feel it in my bones it was going to be a great year. I, uh, may have spoken too soon. In fact, my bones may have been totally mistaken. In their defence, my skeletal parts didn't know just how challenged the world was going to be. They certainly didn't forecast that people would die, jobs would dry up overnight and economies would be crippled. After this, I'm not sure I could even get a free gig as a crystal gazer at a fair. But maybe the Bureau of Meteorology would still give me a job? I'll tell you what I'm not going to do. I'm not going to attempt to foreshadow how things are going to go in the second half of the year!

Oh my goodness, we have a biggie for the Bowhunter of the Year feature. West Australian man Ben Chambers won the

DEADLINES

Please submit articles and advertisements by these dates:

editor@archeryactionmagazine.com

ISSUE		DEADLINE
2020		
Vol 46 No. 1	September-October	1 August
Vol 46 No. 2	November-December	1 October
2021		
Vol 46 No. 3	January-February	1 December
Vol 46 No. 4	March-April	1 February
Vol 46 No. 5	May-June	1 April
Vol 46 No. 6	July-August	1 June



coveted title when he took all 18 of ABA's claimable species within a single 12-month period. This has never been done before in the history of the ABA and you have to wonder if it will ever be done again. Even if you don't hunt and that side of archery has no great interest for you, you will find some gems within this story. It is like all true success stories, with ups and downs along the way. And running through it like a backbone is the singlemindedness of the man to accomplish what was, in his own words, a totally mad mission. So strap yourself in and get reading. Maybe it will inspire you to go to some outrageous lengths to accomplish something you've always wanted to do in your own life. Maybe your own hopes and dreams aren't as impossible as you think.

Obviously there are no field archery stories to be had just yet, but people have written in with some interesting stories so that you can still have your *Archery Action* fix. We try for a balance between field archery and bowhunting and I'd like to think it will be back to normal next issue. But I won't promise ... and you know why.

Jenel Hunt
Editor



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FREELANCE CONTRIBUTIONS

are welcomed by this magazine and articles should be addressed to: The Editor, Archery Action, at the above address. The Editor accepts no responsibility for unsolicited material. Colour photographs or high resolution scans are suitable for publication. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your articles to enable notification of acceptance or otherwise and return of article if required. Photographs returned only if stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Emailed contributions should be sent in plain (editable) text only and any photos should be sent as separate attachments, not embedded in the story text.

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REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS
Traditional Trails—Nick Lintern
Bushcraft and Survival—Scott Heiman

Deer hunting:

Nothing but good times and lessons so far

ADAM THOMAS

Deer Hunt 1.0

I gut-shot a deer and she bounded off with what looked like a dart flip-flopping about and hanging out of her gut.

In a cold sweat, I jolted upright. I was still in my swag. It had only been a nightmare, thank goodness. It was the night before my first ever deer hunt, and boy was I nervous.

I didn't sleep another wink. It was ten past two; I tossed and turned until three o'clock and decided to just get up. First light wouldn't be for another two hours but I was so eager that I

decided to head out early.

Having e-scouted the property on every map and app known to human-kind, I had a plan laid out. I made my way to a gully entrance that would have the predicted day's wind in my face. I sat in a great glassing spot and I froze. Like never before, I froze. I swear the frost that rolled in was icing up my jacket as I sat there.

First light came not a minute too soon. Until the sun rose I couldn't hold my shivering hands still enough to make any sense of what I was looking

at through my binos. (Note to self: On Deer Hunt 2.0, bring more layers.)

Now, when the landowner is a mate of your Dad's and he laughs at the thought of an arrow killing an animal in the year 2019, you know you've got your work cut out for you. But he's a great guy, very welcoming and quickly responded to my request to hunt on his property as part of his pest management program.

"Mate, you know the arrow flingers got wiped out by those who shot guns, right? But go on, go get up 'em."



Beautiful deer country.

With landowner forms signed and a future date set, I went about shooting at the range like a man possessed.

I did see deer that first trip, albeit over the boundary fence.

On departure, the embarrassingly hard conversation had to happen with the landowner and it occurred just as I expected.

"No, I didn't get close enough to anything to warrant a shot with the bow."

With a good belly laugh, he replied, "No worries, mate, as long as you had a good time. You'll quit that and take up a .308 soon enough. You're welcome back to go 'bushwalking' anytime you like. Ha ha!"

Undeterred, I set a date for Deer Hunt 2.0 and went about improving not only my shooting but also my hunting education.

Deer Hunt 2.0

Chasing fallow deer up in the New England ranges sure is beautiful, even if you don't get to take one home. I did, however, get in on a herd of goats and take a small-framed billy—my first animal with the bow. (Note to self: When you think you're walking slowly, you're probably running as you're so excited.)

I will admit I spooked two herds of deer that were both inside the boundary on this trip, which gave me another

lesson—wind in gullies is different to wind on ridgelines. Go figure.

Walking out at the end of the trip, I managed two bunnies, which was great because I didn't have that empty feeling of not being helpful to the landowner again.

The rabbit stew was heart-warming and the farmer's dogs loved the goat I left them, but I couldn't shake the disappointment that my freezer wasn't full of venison. I wanted more.



Delicious meat cooked in a campoven is one of the perks of hunting.



It's not a deer, but it's better than nothing.



One of the bunnies taken.

Deer Hunt 3.0

A few months later, I checked in with the landowner and lined up Deer Hunt 3.0.

On my arrival he told me, “We haven’t had pigs here for a few years but they’re back. Get into them if you see ‘em.”

As sure as spring follows winter, I got up to the rough backcountry on this property and there was pig sign everywhere.

I saw deer every day of the trip but they were all over the boundary fence. With my heart set on deer hunting, I pined like a lonely dog and longed to have a chance at a deer.

I gave myself a good talking to. It went along the lines of ... the grass isn’t greener over the fence; the grass is greener where you water it. Pigs!

There aren’t any pigs where I live and I’m glad I gave myself an uppercut and got into my first ever pig hunt.

I took my first small sow that morning and a boar later that weekend

on Deer Hunt 3.0. Actually, I’m beginning to think I should have called this story ‘Animals other than deer— Parts 1, 2 and 3’ or perhaps it could also be known as the ‘Learn From Your Mistakes Trilogy’.

Three deer hunts over the space of a year on the same property and the tally so far was a billy goat, two bunnies, a sow and a boar. I’m sure now you deer hunters must be trained ninjas!

I’ve read accounts of people shooting deer with a bow on their first-ever hunt and have also read of people taking years to ethically shoot a deer with a bow. I grew up in the 1980s, and Steve Irwin’s energy for the conservation of native Australian wildlife penetrated my soul. His enthusiasm for biodiversity and native animal management resides deep within me still. If you were to throw in some Sir David Attenborough, a few John Williamson lyrics and your best mate owning fer-

rets and catching rabbits together as teenagers, you’ve got the recipe for my fantastic childhood.

I’ve placed a lot of pressure on myself to hunt with a bow, not only for the welfare of the animal but also for the operations of the working farm to which I have access. There has always been a mental mantra on repeat in my mind: “Either you’re all in, or you’re all out.” There is no ‘maybe’ when animals’ lives are at the end of my shot. I’m a conservationist at heart.

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Deer Hunt 4.0

My bow was tuned and shooting better than ever and I had practised more than ever, plus I was feeling strong in the legs and ready to walk for miles. This hunt was the one, my first deer. This trip was to be different; I was sure of it.

On my previous three trips I had spotted deer, worked the wind, shadows, tree lines, crawled on hands, knees and belly to within 30m. Each time, I'd stuffed up in my unique way. I'd sneezed (pretty much on top of a deer), I'd tripped on a fence wire and made it rattle the length of the paddock from inside 60m after a two-hour stalk. I'd forgotten that there were more than one set of eyes to keep watch and that wind could swirl at the drop of a hat. You name the mistake, I've made it—and blown an opportunity with it. As the saying goes, you either win or you learn ... and I've been doing a lot of learning, it seems. What more could there be to learn?

I gave myself an early mark from work and headed off earlier than planned. I knew this property better than ever; I knew exactly where to go in, depending on the wind and at what time of year. There was no reason this



The pigs were a consolation prize.

hunt couldn't be executed perfectly.

I got a quick hunt in before dark on my first afternoon. I had shot two pigs previously up the back of the property in the thick scrub which had ample opportunity for cover but this one played out a little differently. In an open dry paddock that was ploughed but not planted, I spotted a small boar making his way along the topside of a swale bank. The bank provided the only cover for my approach uphill.

I ran my checklist: Wind? It was in my face, Cover? Bugger all. Shadows? There were none. Sun? It was on my back. Things were looking pretty good.

With a crawl and belly crawl, I got inside my ethical range of 40m, stood up, drew back and sent the arrow. It hit a little higher than planned but was effective. He went down after a short wobbly dash.

I had the dream nor'easter the next morning, which would allow me to walk from the ute straight into the wind. I arrived before first light and made my way to a wallow I had scouted on previous trips. To my delight, it was still showing fresh sign. I sat, waited, got hot, got agitated and I left. Never fear, I'd be back in the afternoon.

With the wind swinging around



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in the mid-afternoon, I used a different approach to the same wallow. I went up past the top dam where I had stalked and failed on some does previously. I made sure I was slower than what I thought was slow, and silently tiptoed through waist-high grass that was thriving after some much-needed rain. With the wind in my face and keeping inside the shadows, I approached an opening, which had a view down to the wallow.

This is where Deer Hunt 4.0 took a turn. Suddenly and unexpectedly, a big-bodied fallow stag sprang up from within the waist-high grass not metres from me. He scared me as much as I scared him! Like steel, I stood still. I was eye to eye with him from inside a few yards. He had been sound asleep, he blinked a few times as if to say, "What the hell did you wake me up for?" and after what seemed like an

eternity (probably three seconds), his brain registered the threat and just like that, with a few bounds, he was off—not to be seen again.

I was livid and pumped at the same time. I was now hooked. Bowhunting had provided me with an experience that would have me hunting for many more years to come.

I sat quietly, awaiting the sunset and replaying the experience over in my mind a million times. What could I have done differently? How could I do it better next time? Over and over it went in my mind and honestly, I don't even remember the sunset that night. The earth turned, the light disappeared and I started my walkout by torch and headlamp. As far as the hunting of deer was concerned, that was it—the last chance of the trip, done and dusted. Deer Hunt 4.0 was notched forever in time as another learning curve.

I did take those pigs on that trip, but it was a consolation prize as I was intending to target fallow deer specifically. The landowner has changed his tune about bowhunting and is asking for me to come back more often. I'm starting to believe that there's no such thing as an unsuccessful hunt ... just an educational one.

If you want to face the best and worst of yourself all at once, a solo bowhunt is a way to do it. You learn more about yourself in one trip than years working the same job.

Now, armed with more knowledge and even more enthusiasm, I'm counting the hours until Deer Hunt 5.0.

The writer of this story
wins a threepack of
TUSKER SPIRIT
broadheads





Australian Bowhunters Association INC



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COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

The protocol for contacting officers is: Member speaks to relevant club officer. If the club officer cannot answer the query the officer passes it to the Branch representative who then contacts the relevant National Officer if required.

If you have any queries for National Officers, please direct your communication to the National Office (contact details as above).

NATIONAL OFFICERS

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Central Queensland	Andrew Little	0420 925 834
South Queensland	Brett Willaton	0401 326 132
North New South Wales	Peter Stubbs	(02) 6743 1559
South NSW and ACT	Rod Moad	0417 695 316
Gippsland, Victoria	Mark Burrows	0419 550 510
Central and Greater Victoria	Steve Old	0418 177 980
South Australia	Brett Raymond	0418 810 598
Western Australia	Ken Neill	0418 926 862
Tasmania – see Victoria		
Trophy Bowhunters of Australia	Ralph Boden	(02) 4392 6810

BOWHUNTING DIVISION REPORT

by Allan Driver

(Vice-President Bowhunting Division – *appointed*)



Quiet times

We have had quiet times over the past few months with the COVID-19 virus affecting us all in so many ways. It has restricted us all in our archery pursuits including the hunting side of the equation. But things are improving in slow steady steps across the nation.

Bowhunting and archery has returned in a small capacity but under strict rules that we all need to abide by and respect.

All States and Territories have put in place what you can and cannot do. Please work within your respective State's requirements and hopefully down the track we will all be back enjoying the great activities of field archery and hunting feral animals.

More Best of Species

In the previous issue we featured the TBA Bowhunting Awards for

2019 in the magazine, but we missed a hunter who claimed a Best of Species feral cat in January. He is Luke Hebb and he will be receiving a trophy for his cat. Our apologies, Luke. Because the glitch was at our end—somewhere between club and Branch—we are awarding all three hunters who shot a 7 10/16pt cat during the year as it would be unfair to take the award off Christie Pisani and it would be equally unfair to not recognise the third person to shoot the same size cat, David Wallace. See Page 71 for the photos of Luke and David with their cats. This is a one-off as an apology for the mix-up, and it'll be back to normal and the hunter who shoots the biggest measured animal earliest in the year will be the only one to receive the award next year.

Incidents with animals

There have been a couple of incidents of 'persons unknown' using the bow and arrow to illegally shoot domestic animals and a reptile. Field points were used, so it's unlikely that they would be ABA

members. They would be your average Joe Blow who has no idea what they are doing and causing pain to animals that do not deserve this treatment.

If anyone sees or hears about such happenings, please contact me so I can further investigate. This is especially important to our cause. We are a responsible hunting body and want to educate others so this does not happen.



Claiming game

Hunters must get their claims in on time and to the correct ABA person. There is a process—please follow it as we do not want anyone to miss out on recognition for taking feral game.

Get those claims coming in for this year once you're out hunting again. Hopefully things will improve soon.

T/C and upward and/or First Kill/Species

Bnch/Hunter	Club	Game	Award	FK/FKOS	Size
A Troy Bullen	Freds Pass Field Archers	Rabbit	GA	FKOS	0
B Lynda Fell	Cape York Archers	Shark	TC		19 2/8
B John Fell	Cape York Archers	Shark	TC		19
D Kurt Begoihn	Grange Bowmen	Goat	GA	FK/FKOS	42 2/8
D Jack Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Goat	RC		112 7/8
D Jack Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Goat	TC		101 1/8
G Jacquie Hollingsworth	Phoenix Field Archers of Sale	Rabbit	GA	FK/FKOS	0
H Wayne Atkinson	Ballarat Bowhunters	Fox	RC		10 3/16
H Matt Huggins	Western Melbourne FA	Fox	TC		9 6/16
J Vaughn Armstrong	Peel Archers	Pig	GA	FKOS	0

Summary of Australian Bowshot Records

Species	Holder	Australian Record	Record Class	Trophy Class
Boar	Michael Dacre	37 2/8	29	25
Goat	James Finlay	151 2/8	110	95
Buffalo	John Lopes	108 2/8	86 4/8	80
Camel	Kimberley Nicholas	32 6/16	29	25
Fox	Graeme Duff	11	10 2/16	9 3/16
Cat	Tim Pitt-Lancaster	8 5/16	7 10/16	7
Red Deer	Dan Smith	315 3/8	200	175
Fallow Deer	Darryl Bulger	276 4/8	190	150
Chital Deer	Dan Smith	204	160	140
Hog Deer	Stephen Tilley	111 7/8	70	55
Sambar Deer	Dean Scott	203 5/8	162 7/8	140
Rusa Deer	Jay Janssen	236	170	150
Shark BHFF	Barry Feeney	35 2/8	20	15
Shark BF	John Van Den Heuvel	51 6/8	41 4/8	15
Stingray BHFF	Barry Feeney	11 3/8	7 4/8	6
Stingray BF	Gleewyn Butson	14 3/8	11 4/8	10

Ladies Best of Species

Boar	Kristan Bell	34 4/8pt	2017
Goat	Katherine Agale	127 1/8pt	2010
Buffalo	Christie Pisani	87 4/8pt	2017
Camel	Christie Pisani	30 7/16pt	2014
Fox	Helen Duff	10 14/16pt	2016
Cat	Lorna Hopkins	7 12/16pt	1984
Red Deer	Christie Pisani	268 3/8pt	2014
Fallow Deer	Elissa Rosemond	205 7/8pt	2019
Chital Deer	Elizabeth Proctor	161 3/8pt	2019
Hog Deer	Cheryl Morris	60 5/8pt	2018
Sambar Deer	Nil		
Rusa Deer	Emma Johnson	195 6/8pt	2016
Shark BHFF	Lynda Fell	25 4/8pt	2016
Shark BF	Lynda Fell	23 5/8pt	2000
Stingray BHFF	Carolyn Rundle	9 7/8pt	1987
Stingray BF	Gleewyn Butson	14 3/8pt	1986

Bowhunting achievements to end May 2020

Master Bowhunter

Nil further since last report

Trophy Bowhunter Award

Nil further since last report

Bowhunter Award

Dan Podubinski 150

Bowhunter Royale

Nil further since last report

Bowhunter Imperial

Nil since last report

Bowhunter Supreme

Nil further since last report

Senior Member of TBA

Nil further since last report

Members Admitted to TBA Club (membership granted after taking first Trophy Class or better animal)

Nil further since last report



Trophy Bowhunters of Australia Club



Introducing TBA MEMBER Orbin Wilde

Where do you live?

Perth, WA.

How old are you? Are other family members interested in archery?

I'm 14. Yes, we're an archery family. My stepdad got me into it, my Mum and my step-siblings do archery as well.

How long have you been hunting?

I got my first animal when I was eight—a goat.

How long have you been an ABA member?

Nine years.

What got you into bowhunting?

The fact that the family was into bowhunting. When I started, I liked it right from the beginning. I enjoyed the challenge.

Are you a member of an archery club?

Yes, Western Plains Archers.

How often do you get to go hunting?

Mostly in the school holidays, with the occasional weekend as well. It's not that easy on weekends, because we have to travel to hunt. I've hunted in South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland as well as WA.

What equipment do you use (compound/recurve/longbow)?

I'm a compound shooter. I use a Hoyt Ruckus.

Has this encouraged you to do more hunting?

Yes, it has encouraged me. It has boosted my confidence and self esteem to know that I can accomplish bigger things. I already have an animal in mind for my next TBA-worthy animal. A big goat would be nice!

Do you have any hunting goals that you would like to achieve/bowhunter awards et cetera?

Since I was little, I've always liked badges. I like getting the badges for the new species I've shot. I have a special place (in a drawer) for them. A few more badges would be really good.

Did you know much about TBA before this?

I've seen the awards my stepdad has gotten. I've always hoped that one day I'd have awards like that.

The TBA Committee congratulates you, Orbin.

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sport





Orbin Wilde, TC feral pig, 25 2/8pt. This was also Junior Best of Species for 2019.

The hunt:

“

I was at Cape York with my stepdad Ben with Kayuga Adventures at Strathburn Station. The guide was well known bowhunter Brad Smith. We were looking at the GPS and saw there was an old swamp off the road, so we decided to go and have a look to see if there were any pigs. We walked to the swamp and saw what looked like a young boar quickly coming out of the swamp. It went and bedded down—it was during the hot part of the day—so we stalked in, but it winded us. It got up and walked 20m then bedded down again. We stalked in close again by going around to the right side of the wind. It was a pretty long stalk—I probably spent 40 minutes trying to get into a good position to get a good shot. It was during the dry season, so the grass was dry and crunchy and there were a lot of leaves that would make a noise underfoot as well. I had to be really careful. But eventually I got close enough and I drew back and took the shot. The pig got up and ran back into the swamp, so we followed it and I gave it a follow-up shot. It ran out of the swamp then died close by. I'd been pretty nervous and it was a big adrenaline rush.

I'd been hoping it would be bigger than the first one I'd shot ... and it ended up being Trophy Class. We were there for a week and I had taken other animals leading up to that one. I'd taken a young boar and a sow. It was a bit of a triumph getting such a good animal near the end of our time there.

”



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Scrub cattle are massive, totally unpredictable and even dangerous—but how could I say no to trying my hand at one? Central Queensland is one place I can't get enough of as a hunting ground and when one day we spotted a mob of scrub cattle during a hunt, I thought I was dreaming. As soon as I saw them, images of a big set of horns on my wall raced through my mind ... but first I had to get one.

We were out of the car and the stalk began. My sister was accompanying us on this trip and she was told to wait back by a pile of sticks to watch the hunt unfold. We were about 500m from the mob but the stalk was taking exceptionally long. We were stalking at a snail's pace—two cows would stare at us for ages but, it seemed, not quite directly at Dad and me. It was quite difficult to make headway when we were being pegged by these cows. To make it worse, they chose to stare at different times so really made me work for a chance to get close. We had been stalking for about 30 minutes and I cautiously looked behind us to see my sister jumping up and down, waving at us to come back. Well, now I knew why the cattle were alert! Thanks sis.

After 40 minutes of stalking, the scrub cattle started to feed off. Now with all eyes in other directions, Dad and I went from inching our way closer to running to close the gap.

I went one side of the mob to target an old cow that had funny looking horns and Dad went the other way to target the mob's dominant bull.

I have read a lot of stories where the hunter is in the zone and the animal feeds broadside right on cue but I was totally surprised when the cow actually did just that. Out with the rangefinder, I pressed the button ... no, no, no, don't be flat!! I spammed the button and finally saw a faint indication that I was exactly 30yd away. I slowly drew back the whole 43lb (yes, I was about to shoot a scrubber with a 43lb bow) and released. The arrow flew true and slammed into the centre of the magic triangle and my Outback Xtreme arrow penetrated three quarters of the way in. The cow bucked and kicked then started running, blood pouring from her side.

Then I heard Dad's shot and heard a big bellow. I turned to see Dad's bull take 10 steps and collapse in a heap—he'd made a perfect heart shot on his bull. Once the photos of Dad's bull were taken, I started tracking mine. Now my sister paid me back for making the stalk go for so long by helping me track my cow. After a nervous time finding little blood, I finally heard a faint noise and I walked the way I'd heard the noise, just in time to see my cow taking its final breath. Yahoo! I had just taken a scrub cow at the age of 14, how cool was that? The cow had made it about 100 yards and piled up. Checking shot placement, I couldn't think of a much better place to put an arrow. What a great first kill for the 2020 year.

Vale

Darryl Perrett

29.12.1943 – 01.06.2020

Darryl's introduction to bowhunting came through the formation of the Roma District Bowhunters Association club in 1974 when he was elected treasurer at the inaugural meeting. Previous to this he never held a 'real' bow and arrows, contenting himself with home-made equipment with which he annoyed the local feral wildlife.

Over the following two years, Darryl became more involved in the sport through attending field archery shoots in Brisbane and involvement in the Trophy Bowhunters of Australia of which he was appointed a zone representative in 1976. The following year, Darryl was elected National Executive secretary of TBA at the Tamworth ABA/TBA Safari. In 1978 Darryl was appointed a zone representative for ABA. In these roles he extended TBA representation throughout Australia, introduced new game species and extended the Game Award system, with appropriate badges. The TBA newsletter (Pow Wow) which he printed and distributed, informed all representatives of ongoing activities and was a means of communication between far-flung hunters.



About this same time there was a growing move to bring all the archery/bowhunting bodies under one umbrella and Darryl was part of the National Bowhunting Council formed to achieve this end. In 1979 the goal was reached with Darryl taking over the role of interim ABA National President and shortly thereafter elected to this position, which he held until his resignation in October 1981. It was not long after that burnout forced Darryl to also relinquish his chairmanship of the Trophy Bowhunters of Australia Club.

Bowhunting and field archery in Australia owes much to Darryl's expertise and administrative input into the early years of the formation of our sport. He was one of the few who by their own determination and efforts provided the springboard for the growth and consolidation of all aspects of archery and bowhunting that we all enjoy today.

Darryl's services to the Australian Bowhunters Association were aptly recognised when he was awarded life membership.



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Vale

Delma Archer

Del Archer began her extensive involvement in archery in 1978 when she, along with her children Gary and Kerry, joined the newly established Towers Bowhunters club and the Australian Bowhunters Association. Her husband Alan followed the rest of the family in joining the club and the ABA in 1981. There would be very few members of the ABA who have a two-digit membership number (Del's is 91), coupled with 42 years of continuous membership.

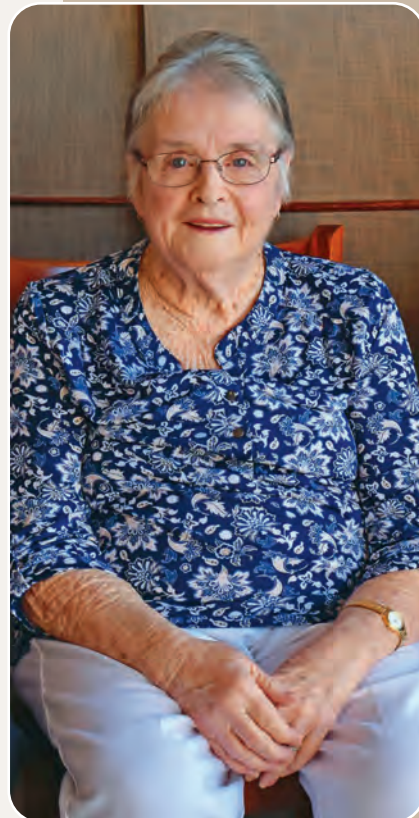
In 1983 Del and Alan purchased a few acres of land on the outskirts of Charters Towers and offered the use of their acreage to the Towers Bowhunters to set up an ABA course. Today this property supports four 2D target courses and an impressive 3D range set up in the natural environment on the creek. Over the years, and with a great deal of hard work, the club has gained the reputation as one of the best in North Queensland.

In the early years of ABA, Del volunteered her time and effort to ensure the North Queensland Branch of the ABA was well represented, with Del being the Branch Secretary for a period of six years. For her dedication to bowhunting and the ABA, Del was awarded life membership of the ABA at the National AGM in October 1985.

As well as being involved in the Branch activities, Del has held many positions within the Towers Bowhunters including the positions of secretary, treasurer and score recorder. In recognition of her services to the club she was also awarded life membership.

At the 2013 National AGM of the ABA, Del and Alan were jointly awarded the Syd Green Memorial Award in recognition of their services to the sport.

In the last few years of Del's life she developed dementia, which was difficult for her family, but she was just happily confused and always had a smile and a gentle word for everybody.



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What archery means in my life: Family

In the May-June issue of *Archery Action*, the Editor gave a few suggestions about short stories related to our sport of archery/bowhunting. I pondered the suggestions and ideas mooted.

In 2007 I wrote a foreword for a book about bowhunting, 'Bowhunting Australia'. The foreword started simply by stating: "This story is about passion, love and dreams: the passion of bowhunting, the love of the outdoors and the dreams of men." Apart from various chapters relating to the hunting of various species of game across the continent, it focussed on the comradeship between three men: Greg Hansford, The Frog; Mark Burrows, The Bear' and me, Mr Sparrow. We three, from diverse backgrounds, were drawn together by a common denominator, a love of Adventure, Hunting, The Outdoors and Arrows.

My passion for the sport of archery/bowhunting has never faltered over the past 30 years but rather evolved to an extent that every aspect associated with the sport comprises a certain percentage of everyday thought. But what has become paramount above all things associated with the sport is my archery/bowhunting family.

As one gets older, one reflects on life. I am now in the situation that I don't have many older friends but feel extraordinarily privileged to have an extended family that crosses over three generations and is spread across the continent. We all have different backgrounds and interests but communicate regularly and come together every now and then and share our passion of archery and bowhunting.

I would have never met such an exceptional group of dynamic, adventurous and passionate friends that I am proud to call family if it had not been for my beloved ABA. Four lines penned in the late 1990s on a lonely mountain road sum up my journey and are directly related to ABA, all it offers and what it stands for.

*I have seen things that not all men see,
I have been places that not all men go,
I have done things that some men only dream of: why?
Because I hunt with a bow.*

David Luxford
May 23, 2020

Staying sane during the archery club lockdown

A running fox, festooned with arrows. The target was brought along by Brett Stokes for a sanity archery meet.

GRAHAM NEWELL

By early June 2020, most archers—be they bowhunters, target tragics or just arrow flingers—were probably suffering a level of form and technique slump due to the lack of any real practice because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

However, all was not lost for a few lucky ones. The bowmen and bowladies who have huge backyards, live on farms or on acreage could, with a little imagination, continue to hone their archery skills.

Prior to the pandemic, Grange Bowmen had a regular Wednesday gathering affectionately titled Old Goats' Day (mind you, we encouraged a few young billies and nannies to attend too). We miss those days.

On an irregular basis, a few bowhunting mates also have an afternoon hunters' management meeting (H.M.M.) at either my home or Robbo's. These (ahem) meetings are attended from time to time by Dave Littlejohn, Alan 'Pod' Podlich and Eric Creighton (and Robbo and me). It was at one such meeting—sadly reduced in numbers, it must be admitted—that the suggestion was made that we could set up a few targets in my backyard.

Safety-wise it was as safe as houses, for out the back I have a 20m to 28m area suitable for just such an opportunity. Across the backyard is a structure that is actually a 4m high solid concrete block wall. Additionally,

the slope from the second level to the back wall is steep.

Anyway, the suggestion was made that 'we' (meaning I) should install a running target just like the ones used at Lakeside and Grange ABA shoots. Being an archery tragic (along with most of the guys I know in archery), I got to work engineering the first version of a running target. A few stationary targets were duly installed too.

Now, my background prior to retiring was finance and retail (think, soft white hands), so engineering was not my strength ... as Mark 1 of the project was to show.

With the COVID-19 conditions of attending being 1.5m distancing and



Graham with one of the incarnations of the running target.



A different version, with Robbo in charge.

only two guests in attendance at any one time (at that time), we started the challenge. A condition of attendance was that any shooter was to use only a recurve bow.

Mark No. 1—the slide target—was not heavy enough. The running cord was not tight enough and the (cheap) pulleys were too loose. So despite the slope being very steep, the target would stop halfway down the hill (great for us old guys) of the 22m-plus run.

Mark No. 2 boasted new pulleys (quality ones this time) and some

heavy lead sheeting bolted to the downside end of the running target. Lube (Vaseline) was applied to the cord. The first trial run, with Robbo in charge, was scary. The weight was excessive and the new pulleys were so efficient the target bolted down the slope at breakneck speed and smashed into our cane mulch slide-stopper. It was so fast that even Pod would not have been quick enough to draw and shoot.

For Mark No. 3, it was decided to remove the lead sheeting. It was an engineering and financial overkill

anyway (anyone want a sheet 400 x 400 of lead?). We did another Robbo-supervised test-run ... this was now a perfect set-up for both ideal speed and running smoothness. We could even regulate the speed of descent to suit the old goats' reaction time!

The need to have a good supply of arrows on hand was soon to be obvious to us all, well, except dead-eye Dave Littlejohn.

When we tested the archery skill levels of the attendees (the above-mentioned Grange Bowmen members), we found there was a great deal of variation in skill when it came to hitting the A zone of the ABA-Action Graphics Group 1 running rabbit. As we well expected, sometimes these were good, never great, and sometimes well below any level of competence; however, it was indeed great fun ... most of the time. These Group 1 rabbits are bloody small, especially the speed at which they took off. Eric's releases of the running rabbit truly caused havoc. (Thanks Eric.)

It is always of interest that with the three shooters we had, we also had from time to time three coaches, three experts all keen to 'help' with a few sly (but mostly very accurate) comments.



Eric takes his turn at a moving target.



Robbo and Dave check out how well they fared.

The misses—and there were misses aplenty—hit the grassy slope behind the running rabbit below the high concrete block wall. Robbo reckoned he was helping me aerate our lawn with his misses! The cement block wall also claimed several of our arrows. They were just the unlucky shots, of

course. Considering the hundreds of arrows shot over our COVID isolation shoots, not too many were broken or damaged.

Robbo the wrecker

The running target can get a severe and exaggerated wobble-up. On one

such occasion, Dave had two Gold Tip 400 carbon arrows in the target. Robbo came to full draw and with great precision managed to smash—yes, smash—both carbons completely in half. That was a first for us! I don't think Dave was impressed but I did not mind, really, as Dave keeps hitting the rabbit's kill zone and wrecking the targets. I find it hard to keep up the weekly repairs and am thinking that I may have to limit his shots or ban him from a few meets.

The recurve re-learning curve

Whilst none of us is an expert recurve hunter, except maybe Eric, and we are shooting only 16m to 18m, we all found we needed to relearn some basic, normal technique. Get to full draw and hold for those few seconds, lead the target (hard to get correct, consistently, as the target releaser could and did vary the downhill speed) and revisit the clean finger release. This would suggest we still have a long way to go to get some level of competence at this challenge.

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Graham ... arrow in flight.



Brett and Pod with Brett's running fox.

Compound re-skilling

I had purchased some targets from Action Graphics and one of these was the Group 2 watering pig. This was ideal for my target butt to shoot at 20yd to 30yd. The backstop was the concrete block wall—very effective but terminal on all types of arrows that miss the butt. Correct, Eric?

We all found it interesting as to the effects this long lay-off has been inasmuch as even pulling the bow back to the valley *and* holding steady on the kill zone. After a few shots, the memory muscles kicked in again, thankfully.

Target build

The current running target is a 400mm x 350mm face with a depth/thickness of 260 mm. The target was a cardboard box with layers of foam, paper and heavy cardboard glued in place with Bondcrete and was quite heavy, really. We put hooks on top to attach the two pulleys, attached a slide rope to a dropper at the bottom end and the concrete wall at the top end and added another hook on the front of the target to pull it back up the slope. We soon found that with two archers shooting upwards of 14 arrows

each run getting a majority of kills, the targets got a tad shabby.

So I built Mark No. 2 of this target. Unfortunately the next archery testing session showed that it was no good at all—too heavy, too thick and too hard to extract the arrows. On to Mark No. 3!

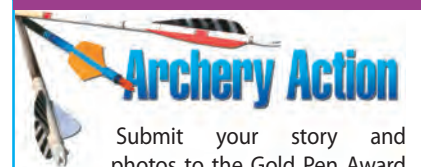
The benefits

These archery-in-isolation mornings last about four hours and often include a nice high tea afterwards—can't have it beforehand as we run a dry range. The practice sessions have been a huge help to us all, not only in keeping up some level of shooting

form and practice on a good variety of bowhunter target activities, but also the social contact (even if socially distant!) with mates, thus probably saving our sanity as well.



Oops. Sorry, tree.



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One GREAT day

TROY MORRIS

Crack, crack, rattle! Graham McComiskie smashed his rattling antlers together as I stood, arrow nocked, 20m down the mountainside and 15m up from the main game trail that led to where Graham was positioned.

The croaking fallow buck we had been watching at the bottom of the gully spun at the first rattle sound and was now running flat out towards Graham on the game trail. I drew my bow quickly as the buck approached fast and then lost sight of him. Everything happened a little crazy from here as the buck suddenly crested over a steep spur straight below me at about 7m. The buck propped and was looking further up the hill for the opposing buck. All I could see was his underbelly, brisket and underside of neck. I locked my pin in between his front legs. I heard a loud thud and the buck spun around, veering off

straight down the steep hillside and disappearing out of sight.

I was a shaking mess by the time Graham made it down to me. Graham was concerned, as he had not seen the shot ... but he had seen the buck disappearing down the hill. I walked forward and pointed—there was the widest blood trail I had ever seen, heading down the mountainside. My buck only travelled 70m straight down and expired at the bottom of a small offshoot gully. The broadhead had entered through the front of the brisket into the chest cavity and lodged itself into the spine. We were pumped about how the morning had unfolded. The deer had followed the script close to the plan and now I had myself an awesome-looking buck. I was so grateful to have shared this experience with Graham McComiskie. We kicked back and soaked up the moment.

Graham and I were hunting on the

Getting this fallow deer was an amazing experience.







Troy, sharing the special moment with Graham McComiskie.

opposite side of the station from the hunting camp and we decided to drop into the main homestead to finish caping my deer and to hang the meat. On arrival at the homestead, I was told that I needed to ring my son Nigel. What was wrong? That was my only thought, but thankfully instead of dire news I was greeted by one pumped up and excited bowhunter. "Dad, I shot a red stag and he is a cracker!" I was so happy for him and proud. Nigel was hunting with Glenn Carlson, number one red deer man of Queensland Bowhunting Safaris. And from the

sounds of it, they were having a great time celebrating their success. I told Nigel that I was also successful and had taken a good fallow buck. The emotions flowed over just a little as we spoke about our triumphs of the morning.

I finished talking to Nigel and confirmed with him I would stay over the other side of the property and hunt the afternoon on the red deer before heading back to camp. All I

wanted to do at that moment was to head back and be there with Nigel to enjoy his success ... but I still had a job to do and it was day four of the hunt.

Graham and I had a great afternoon catching up with old friends and we even managed to get a little shuteye before we headed back up the hills in pursuit of a red stag for the afternoon.

We decided to go back to the mountain range that we'd started on that morning before we had veered off chasing croaking fallow bucks. The large gully system had had roaring red stags bellowing in the lower section of the gully system all morning, so we made our way down the main gully side and parked up about a third of the way down. The plan was to sit and listen for the afternoon and plan our hunt from there. Thirty minutes later, we could hear our first stag roaring halfway up the adjacent gully face. From what we could work out, he was moving down the mountainside and heading in our general direction. We slid our backpacks on and slowly made our way down the mountainside and through the timber-thickened



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Nigel had a lot to smile about after taking this superb red deer.

valley floor. We then decided to veer off up the adjacent gully face so we could look back at the stag that was still going off roaring. He was still high up the mountain and hidden by the thicket bush mountainside.

Over the next 30 minutes, we played a cat and mouse game roaring back and forth trying to get the stag moving our way. Then there was silence; the stag had decided it was time to take his girls and move further back up the mountain range away from any approaching stags or us. With this, we decided to slowly make our way down the gully system, contouring over a dry rocky bush-covered spur. Then another red stag gave a mighty roar very close to us. I quickly nocked an arrow and Graham moved back behind me about 10m and then hit the game caller.

What happened next was a simultaneously amazing and scary experience. We now had three stags roaring and moving around us. A double-four stag suddenly appeared 35m broadside to the left. I drew, but could not get a clear shoot at his vitals. Graham hit the caller again; now a large-bodied deer was crashing through the light timber heading straight towards me!

Drawing my bow back, I had no time to waste checking out what he was because he suddenly appeared less than 15m front-on to me and his eyes glared into mine. My arrow vanished down into his throat. The stag spun and crashed off back down the gully and out of sight. Recovery of the stag was quick as he had expired only 50m away at the bottom of the gully.

Talk about an adrenaline-packed

way to finish the day! The stag was no monster, but he was my trophy and I was stoked. Unfortunately, it was now late into the afternoon and daylight was fading fast. By the time we had done a quick photo session and removed the cape it was pitch black. We had a big walk out of the valley in the dark and I was glad to see Graham's truck.

Arriving back at camp late that night, we soon made up for the time we missed celebrating the triumphs of the day. We shared each other's stories of the day and celebrated well into the night as we enjoyed a great moment that I will cherish forever as a bowhunter and a father.

To harvest great trophies with a bow and arrow is a privilege. To share this experience with my son Nigel and the great crew at Queensland Bowhunting Safaris is something else.



Troy's red deer, taken on the same day.



Nick Lintern
TRADITIONAL TRAILS

Hello to all and welcome to another Traditional Trails column. A lot has happened in the world since my previous article. These lockdowns we've had to endure have been tough. Thankfully this whole coronavirus thing has been easier for Australia than some other countries, but with that said, I hope you are all well and are back to normal life. It was really bad that archery clubs were completely shut down along with many other clubs and businesses, and even roaming in the bush became a no-no ... hard to get your head around that one. Some of these lockdowns were very hard to understand. I hope we can get the economy back on track ASAP. As clubs start opening back up, I hope you are all out shooting and enjoying life again.

In the previous article we started on the journey of building a yew English longbow. Now on to stage two of this process.

Building the yew English longbow

Part 2

We now have our raw stave sitting here ready to go. Before we venture into cutting into our (very expensive) stave, we need to get our tools in order and ensure they are sharp and ready to go. Firstly here is a list of the tools you would need:

HAND TOOLS

- draw knife or bandsaw
- jack plane
- block plane
- spoke shave
- cabinet scrapers
- sandpaper and cork block—80, 120, 180, 240, 400 grits

Those of you who have read my older articles on bowmaking will be familiar with these tools and how to sharpen them. For those who aren't, here's how to proceed with sharpening.

Before we do this, there's a few things to think about. If your tools aren't very sharp, you will severely reduce the chance of doing quality work in any area of bowery. Secondly, taking 20 minutes or so to sharpen your tools gets your mind in a good place ready to work.

To sharpen planes, the first step is to remove the blade. Next, using a



Scrapers of various sizes.



Spokeshave, jack and block planes.

quality oil stone or diamond stone, you need to sharpen the bevelled edge while trying to maintain the angle of the bevel. There are jigs that assist with this. (*see photos next page*). Basically, the jig allows you to set the blade so that the blade meets the stone at precisely the right angle to hone the existing bevel. The jig will normally have a wheel that allows the blade to be run up and down on the stone. When the edge is well honed, lay the blade *flat* on the stone, bevel up, and run it up and down a few times to remove the burr and put a good final edge on the blade.

Spoke shaves are very similar. As

with the plane, remove the blade and sharpen the exact same way. The spoke shave blade is very small, though, and will have to be done by hand as the blade will not fit any jig.

Cabinet scrapers are very easy to sharpen: Simply clamp them in a vice, then using a single cut mill file, file the edge flat at 90 degrees. Once this is done you will feel a sharp, burred edge on the two edges of the scraper. Next, grab a heavy screwdriver and run it along the edge as you did with the file. This burnishes the edge and creates a small 'hook'. You can use your oil stone instead of a screwdriver if you wish.

Now we have our yew stave and sharp, clean tools, we are ready to start on our yew English longbow.

The first thing to do is to look at your stave. This will almost certainly not be a perfect flat, even stave. This is a natural thing; nature created it and not a factory. Our skill as bowyers is to 'find' where our bow is in this stave, much the same as a sculptor finds a statue in a piece of stone. Look at the accompanying photos. You will see the white sapwood and reddish heartwood. The bark will have been removed in an imported stave for quarantine reasons. There will be dark coloured pits here and there where

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You can see the bevel on this plane blade.



A small and simple sharpening jig, very effective for sharpening plane blades.



Plane blade clamped into the jig.



Jig in use, rolling up and down on the diamond stone.

there is some residue from the bark. It usually sits in the little crevices. Don't be tempted to make it look pretty by trying to flatten these out. If you break through the sapwood, the bow's back will have been compromised. I generally get my scraper and gently clean off the last of the bark residue where I can, being mindful not to penetrate the sapwood. It's fairly easy to see, as the bark residue is brown in colour so you'll be able to see it against the sapwood. There will be areas as I just mentioned, that you can't get it off due to it being in deep craters et cetera. Don't worry, it's all part of the beauty.

Just a quick safety note when working with yew. It is actually quite toxic. While scraping or planing you won't have a problem, but when sanding it, be sure to wear a mask.

When you have cleaned the residue off the back as much as possible, it's time to examine your stave. Look for the location of knots and pins and see if the stave has any twist in it. You need to lay the bow out on the bow's back (just as with any bow). You will need to make sure that any knots are either going to be outside where the bow will be cut out or well inside the bow. You don't want knots, particularly big knots, on the bow's edge. That would almost certainly be fatal to the finished bow. If knots are inside the finished bow's limbs, they can be supported by leaving more wood all around them to strengthen the area. On an edge though, there's no wood there so trouble will be on the horizon. Be sure you know the width your bow will be at its widest in the handle area, so you know there's going to be enough wood there when working out the bow's location in the stave. If you allow around 1 1/2in total width in handle area and about 3/4in at the nock ends, that's more than enough for any weight bow. That won't necessarily be the actual layout, but is just a good safety margin for planning your bow at this point.

Once I feel I know where the bow will be in the stave, I get a string-line and stretch it down the stave as a centreline. I don't mark anything straight away; I just look at where the centreline would be and move it around to accommodate knots and blemishes. Sometimes this is a compromise. Sometimes your stave won't be straight. You might find that the straight edge runs through the centre of the mid-section of the stave but is near the edges at the top. All these things need to be taken into account. Most staves I've worked with are plenty wide enough to get a good straight bow, even if the stave is curved laterally. Be sure your string-line is not hanging up on anything and is giving you a good look at what's what.

Once you feel you are comfortable with where the bow is coming from, the next thing to do is mark the centreline. I mark the ends where the string-line is sitting, then remove the line and use a long aluminium straight edge to mark the centreline.

Now it's time to mark out your bow. Measure your stave's length then divide that by two. At this point on the stave, mark a centreline across it. You may need to adjust this line up or down depending on blemishes in the stave et cetera. Once you have a centreline marked, measure 2in each side of it and mark two more lines. Now measure up from halfway to get your bow's length. This will depend on your draw length. If you have a draw length of 28in, make the bow length 72in or 6ft. If you draw more than 28in, for every inch over 28in add two inches to the bow's length. So a 30in draw would add 4in and so on. The same is true with shorter draws. If you draw 26in you would have a 68in bow and so on. You need to add 3/4in to that again to allow for wood above the nocks or for the horns. So let's say this bow you are building is for a 28in draw archer, you want a 72in bow,



Using a draw knife to reduce a stave. This is good if a bandsaw is not available.

A yew stave with the residue of the bark still on and marked out.

which means that will be 36in up from the centre plus $\frac{3}{4}$ in for the nocks, so measure each side of the centreline 36 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Mark that across your stave. Now you can cut your bow to length with a good sharp saw. I like a Japanese pull saw for this job. Next is marking the bow's width at the nock ends. No matter what poundage you are aiming at, a nock width of $\frac{1}{2}$ in is going to be right. I mark $\frac{5}{16}$ in each side of centre for this to give me a small margin for error if needed. Now comes the handle width. This will vary depending on the poundage bow you're after. ELBs should be made to a width to depth ratio of approximately 8/5, so slightly less than two times as wide as deep. This makes for a very deep bow. Naturally, if you want a bow that is 80# or more, it'll need to be wider on the back, which then accommodates greater depth. Plus, all in all that means more wood in the bow, which means more poundage. In the previous article I wrote about growth

ring density affecting poundage. This will determine a lot. As a good guide, design a tad wider at this point as you can always narrow it if necessary later. In any design though, you won't go wider than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in or the grip becomes too thick to be comfortable. If you are aiming for a bow around 50#, then generally 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in will suffice. We'll aim this one as if for a 50# bow or so. So

then at each of the handle transverse marks we mark $\frac{5}{8}$ in each side of the longitudinal centreline. Then using a small rule, join these marks. Now using a longer rule or straight edge, join these marks to the nock end marks and now you can see the shape of your bow marked on your stave.

The next move is to cut out the bow from the stave. A bandsaw with a

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The bow has been reduced to width and ready to work the belly to depth.



Note here how the plane has been used to smooth the sides ready for marking. You can also see the clear relationship between the heart and sapwoods.

good carbon steel blade is really good for this. If you are using a bandsaw, always leave the line on when cutting it out. You will work down to the lines accurately later with a hand plane. If you don't have access to a bandsaw, a draw knife will be a handy tool. If you don't have a draw knife, you can actually plane the excess timber away down to the lines, but it's going to be very labour intensive.

Next, grab your large jack plane and plane the sides of the bow down to the lines. At this point, the bow is now roughed out width-wise. The next step is to rough it out to depth. There should be a nice smooth, side on the bow now from the planing that has just been done. The next move is to lie the bow on its side and to transfer the lines from the back of the bow down the sides. You should have three lines in the handle area, the centreline, and two lines 2in each side.

Just a quick note at this point: We are building a symmetrical bow here. Hence the even distances each side of

the centre of the bow. If going for an asymmetrical bow, the distances would be around 1 ½in longer on one limb than the other. In all my years making bows, I have made many asymmetrical bows, but I am yet to be convinced that they, hold, aim, or shoot any better than a symmetrical bow. So out of over 600 bows I've made to date, the lion's share have been symmetrical.

Now you have the delicate task of measuring the depth you want as a starting point of your bow. If you go too shallow and thus remove too much wood at this point, you won't get the poundage you're after. Conversely, if you remove too little wood, the tillering process can be much more labour intensive than needs be. *But* you can always take wood off—you can't put it back on. Experience guides a good bowmaker as to how dense and stiff the stave will be and gives a good indication of where to start. My strong advice is to err on the side of leaving too much wood on.

Also, you need to decide if you

want a deeper, non-working handle or a classic work-through-the-handle style bow. If the latter, you would make the handle a bit smaller at this stage. What I like to do if I'm not making a classic war bow is to leave a bit more on in the handle area to make a sweeter shooting bow. To that end, as we're aiming at about 50# @ 28in for this bow, I would measure down from the bow's side 2in. Now with a small rule, join these marks. Then at the nock ends, measure down 1in. Now join these marks with a steel rule. Once again, the bandsaw is great here. But, again, a good draw knife will suffice as well. As before, leave the lines on. We will work to the lines with a plane. Now what we have in front of us is a squared out, basic-looking bow. The next step is to sand and burnish the back and start the tillering process. We'll go into that in the next issue.

Once again, if you have any questions you can email me on: norseman_longbows@hotmail.com.

Until next time, keep traditional.

Entries

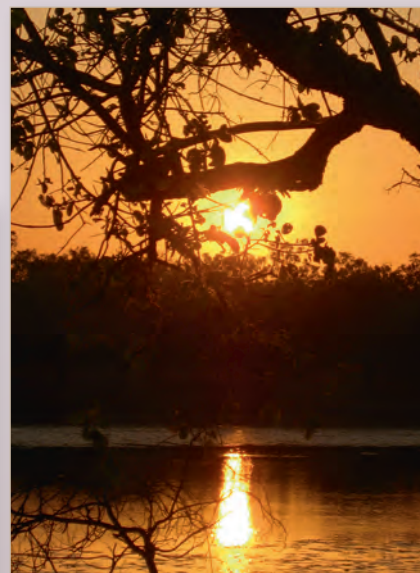
PHOTO COMPETITION



*The reward of Mt Larcom,
Tomas Long*



*Tranquillity of my kind,
Jett Harch*



*Magnificent sunset,
Eric Creighton*



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Happy anniversary, West Gippsland



Field Archers: 40 years old in 2020

by TIM OPIE

The year was 1980, and six people with one common interest came together to start a club. Those people were Mark and Ellen Burrows, Tony and Mandy White, Leigh Rees and Kevin Youngman. The club they started was West Gippsland Field Archers.

The first couple of years saw them shooting a 16-butt course. The butts were made with grass seed bags filled with dirt. They shot handmade target faces in a patch of bush belonging to Roy Cheeseman, on his Higgs Road property in Drouin, Victoria.

Most of the shooting was considered as practice for bowhunting without much thought to competition.

They soon discovered that they did not have the only field archery course in Australia and that there were specific ways to set out a course. Although not an affiliated club at the time, they obtained a set of standard ABA targets ... and the 16 targets became 20. The butts had also progressed to be made of cardboard and carpet. From the initial six founding members, membership had now grown to approximately 10 participants.

Towards the end of 1984, whilst up north on a bowhunting trip, a couple of members met up with Mal Thomas and Keith Goldsmith. Both Mal and Keith spoke at length, extolling the virtues of joining the Australian Bowhunters Association. Their arguments were persuasive. The following year saw this small band of people shooting under the name West Gippsland Field Archers join the national association.

By joining ABA, West Gippsland Field Archers were now able to 'play with others' by taking part in inter-club shoots throughout the State. (At this stage there was only one Branch in Victoria.) Membership was now floating around the 20 mark.



By the end of 1987, West Gippsland Field Archers had become an incorporated club and moved to Pryor Road, Drouin. The club's new home was about 100m west of its current location as the crow flies. This position was the buffer zone behind the target area of the Drouin Rifle Club. To prevent the two disciplines crossing over, it was agreed that Saturday was for the rifle club and Sunday was for archery.

When Tarago Water Board purchased the land in 1990, the rifle club moved out and West Gippsland Field Archers took over the whole area.

The first official shoot for the new area was held in February 1991. A second course was added not long afterwards. Monthly indoor shoots also commenced that year. These took place at Bellbird Park Recreation Centre, located a few minutes down the road from the clubgrounds. These indoor affairs proved to be a great way for the club to show new and prospective members a little of what happened in an archery club but in an environment that was not conducive to losing arrows (unlike the bush setting of the clubgrounds).

The following year the ABA decided it was the right time to trial a second Branch in Victoria. West Gippsland Field Archers was placed into this new region which, come 1994, was recognised as a Branch in its own right. Branch G was up and running.

With the exception of an indoor facility added to the clubgrounds, the next 15 to 20 years passed without major change, but the club continued to improve its facilities bit by bit, mainly modifying the courses and extending the indoor to cater for more archers. These continuous works and gen-



Photos this spread: The old days.

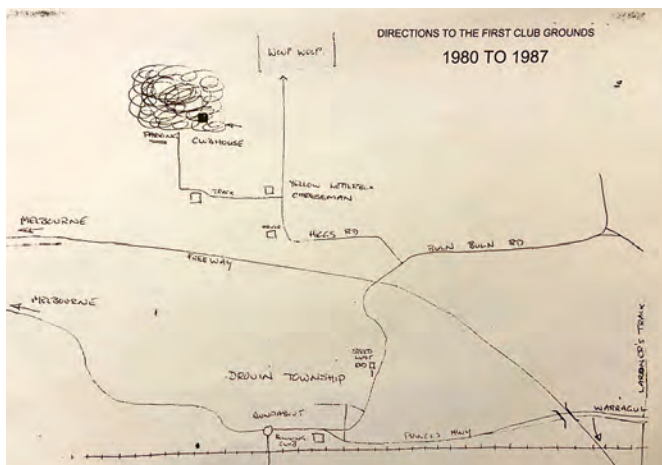


Aww, cute. They don't make targets like this these days.



eral upkeep of the club grounds were, like many other clubs, done by a handful of members, some of whom have been at the club from the very beginning.

The past five or so years have been a boom period for West Gippsland Field Archers. Membership levels have been on the rise, and with a rise in numbers has come a rise in participation in all aspects of archery and club life.



Early directions to the clubgrounds. Notice the arrow pointing towards Woop Woop.



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This rise is largely due to social media (Facebook and Instagram in particular), which the club has embraced as a way of promoting archery to a larger audience than was previously possible.

A sense of pride seems to be constantly around the members, with many wearing club apparel in daily life away from club grounds. In return the club tries to do right by its members by having information sessions on a semi-regular basis to cover such topics as coaching, bow maintenance, arrow building, bowhunting, butchery and taxidermy. Club hunts are organised yearly, and it is those members who have put in that little bit extra around the club who are the first asked if they would like to go.

At the end of the day, any club or organisation is only as good as the people involved, and it is fair to say that West Gippsland Field Archers currently have some exceptional people amongst their ranks. The club has a dedicated core of members who are always up for any challenge thrown their way and who readily give up their time for the benefit of the club. Some of the members have not only been involved with the club, but gone on to play major roles at Branch and national levels.

This year is the 40th Anniversary for West Gippsland Field Archers as a club. The celebration for this milestone was to take place at the Victorian State ABA Titles in May at the West Gippsland Field Archers home course. New club shirts had been made in celebration of the anniversary and 40th anniversary pins had also been produced. Due to the situation regarding COVID-19, the event had to be postponed. As restrictions start to be eased around the country there remains hope that the club may still be able to host the event during its anniversary year.

*This page:
West Gippsland
Field Archers in
later years.*



TROPHY BOWHUNTERS OF AUSTRALIA

BOWHUNTER OF THE YEAR

BEN CHAMBERS



1

“This pig was shot at Cape York on Strathburn Station, with Kayuga Adventures. I was there with my stepson Orbin. Orbin had shot a boar earlier in the day—his first good-sized boar—and later I spotted a boar tucked up in a little sand bed at the creek. I stalked down and found it relatively easy to get to within 20m of him so I could slip in an arrow. The boar went about 30m before piling up. It was one of two 30 pointers I shot on that trip. The swamps had bigger pig numbers but the dry creekbed walks, while harder going and holding less boars, always seemed to have better pigs.”

The impossible dream

When you talk to Perth man Ben Chambers, you can't shake off the feeling that the description of 'overachiever' fits him better than an archer's glove.

Take bowhunting, for example. He had accomplished the gold standard of taking all ABA-recognised animals by mid-2019. Still, that achievement was over a number of years and so he thought it would be a great idea to continue on and take the entire 18 species —but this time in a period of just one calendar year – January to December 2019.

That's not just a tall order. It's impossible, right?

Well, actually, it's not. But Ben admits quite readily that it took him 25 years of bowhunting to get to the stage where he had a fighting chance of pulling off the impossible dream. He also had to have the time, the money, an understanding and supportive wife, and the health to do it. And he very nearly didn't make it, facing a huge hurdle when he wasn't far from the finishing line.

But let's go a little further back in his history to get a feel for the person who won this year's prestigious Bowhunter of the Year Award so resoundingly. Ben grew up in northwest Queensland and was a member of the Mount Isa District Bowhunters Club from about the age of 13. At 16, he moved to Perth. After a break of about four years, he started archery again and I don't think he has put down the bow since.

He is a member of the Western Plains Archers, as is his wife Jane who

also bowhunts. Their five children (he describes the kids as a blend of yours, mine and ours) are also archers. The now-17-year-old son received a kids' longbow when he was four or five and that bow has now done duty for all three boys.

"The three eldest kids bowhunt. The youngest two are only four and two. They don't realise it yet, but they're going to be bowhunters too. Well, perhaps the four-year-old realises it, because he points to the animal head mounts we have in the house and tells everyone that he shot those animals with his bow and arrow!"

Ben and Jane both have businesses—in the rather diverse areas of day care and hydraulic hoses—and Ben said he was always trying to push goals as a business owner so it was natural he'd be like that with archery as well.

"I think I wanted to do something that people thought was impossible. I'm always trying to think outside the square," he said. "I'm lucky to have my own business where I can take time off to travel. You can't get all the ABA animals unless you're prepared to go long distances. Also, it's quite an investment doing this. In the past year I've been to every mainland State and Territory to go hunting."

The whole adventure was set off by a piece of paper that had innocently sat behind his computer on his desk for the past seven years. It said, Australian Bowhunters Association Youngest Grand Slammer Ben Chambers, and on it all 18 ABA animals were listed and crossed off as he had successfully

hunted them. And after seven years of that paper just sitting there with the animals slowly being ticked off, all of a sudden it became the catalyst for doing the grand slam in a year.

"The thing was, I'd stopped claiming for quite a while because I felt I was doing it for the wrong reasons. I was shooting animals just for the points, it seemed, so I stopped claiming them for several years. It was a good reset that got me enjoying the whole hunt again and not just the trophy.

"One of the animals I shot and didn't claim over the years was a hare. So I had to shoot and claim another hare and then only had a buffalo and donkey to complete the ABA slam. I rang my good mate Paul in Darwin and asked him if we could go and tick off the buff and donkey. Then I thought, 'I don't want to do all the big ones and still have a hare to do,' so I phoned a mate in South Australia and said I wanted to fly down on the weekend to try to shoot a hare. I flew to Adelaide, hired a car and drove up to my mate Macka's farm and spent two days hunting hares, being lucky enough to shoot two."

See, I told you he was an overachiever.

"I flew to Darwin the next weekend and spent three days hunting with Paul where I managed to shoot a donkey and buffalo on day two, completing the ABA slam.

If it sounds as though Ben has contacts in quite a few places, ain't that the truth! In fact, to him a big part of the joy of hunting comes from the people he hunts with.



Luke Maher, Ben and his stepson Orbin with Ben's chital deer.

This one wasn't a guided hunt. Luke was there (at Toomba), but he was hunting for himself. Orbin and I were hunting by ourselves that week. We both had close encounters. Orbin shot half a dozen pigs but wasn't getting lucky on a deer. On the last day, Luke took Orbin to see if he could help him get a deer. He dropped me off at a place where I could walk the creek all the way back to the homestead. The wind was choppy and stuffed me up. But it was the last afternoon and I was feeling confident, so I set off. When I got back to the little hunting quarters I took my pack off and thought I'd take a quick walk out to the horse paddock near the homestead. I took two 60m shots at the target set up there and continued walking. As I walked past Bill Baker's memorial, I was having a bit of a quiet yarn to myself and Bill. "Cut me a bit of slack! I've been putting in the hard yards, ya gotta give me something." I walked over the basalt. I didn't quite pop out at the spot I thought I would but I came out at this little U-shaped cutting. As I took a couple of steps, I saw antlers. If I had popped out where I'd thought, I would have been seen. So there I was, hidden away, and the deer was 80m away, having a sleep. It took me probably an hour, going through short grass on hands and knees to the edge of the basalt. I took heaps of photos and video while I was waiting for him to get up but then I saw that the light was going to beat me and it was now or never. He was nodding every five or 10 seconds, so with every nod I would move one more thing until I was standing. Nod. A foot. Nod. Straighten a knee. Nod. By then, I was completely out from behind the sapling I'd been hiding behind. My bottom pin was on him. He didn't make it more than 10m and fell over. I think it was because he'd been asleep. It was so calm; he didn't know what was happening. I ran over to him then sprinted back to the house, yelling at Orbin to get out of the shower so we could go take a photo. By the time we got back it was relatively dark, but I had my chital. The others did well too. Luke got a 36in chital, Orbin shot his third pig that trip plus he got buck fever. He missed a 30in chital at 30m, but once you've had a crack at a stag you've got the urge. Now he really, really wants a deer!

"I'm not a solo hunter. I can do it and I have, but I don't like it. To me the whole hunting experience is about the camaraderie. I love hunting with my family and over the years I've also made a lot of friends in different areas. Having hunted with a lot of them during the year, they knew about my mad

mission and they were all on board with it. Actually, by the end of the year a lot of people were ringing and messaging me to find out how I was going with it all. They were as excited as me.

"The thing is, bowhunters are a good bunch of people. For instance, I went to Victoria and hunted with a

guy over there who knows sambar deer inside and out. He takes a heap of live deer photos. I only knew him from social media but when I contacted him and asked if he would help out with my mission, he was in. After three days of staying in his home and hunting with him, we are now great mates. As far

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Every year our club, Western Plains Field Archers, has a bowfishing group trip. It's something that Jane, the kids and I really love. The kids love bowfishing—they've really taken to it. It was the March long weekend up in Shark Bay. We'd taken the tinny out to the point where there's a really shallow area. We would be ankle-deep or knee-deep in the water and sometimes a shark would swim past with their back fin out of the water. I had Arian in a papoose and Jane had Eliza the same way. Jane's trying to shoot, I'm trying to shoot and we have kids on our backs. Not the easiest way to take a shot! Plus the other kids needed some help as well. Honestly, it was a no-nonsense hunt. I had polarised glasses on and I saw a stingray about 20m or 30m away from me so

3



Hey, Arian, wanna have your photo taken with a stingray?

4



I just quickly went over and shot it. Then Adina shot a big stingray and we were taking photos of that. We were on a sandbank—like a little island that shows at low tide—and I noticed some sharks out in the shallows. We were having lunch by then and I pretty much just ran out and had one shot at a shark. The kids had been spending a lot of time trying to get a shark but they were shooting too high and I was explaining about the refraction. Always something to learn! But it's a really good family event and the guys from the club have a great cook-up making curries with the stingrays and shark. It gives the kids a chance to try something new.”

as I'm concerned, that's what it's all about.”

But that was in December and we're getting ahead of the story.

Mid-year, Ben had 10 species under his belt and had finished his 25-year mission of completing the ABA slam. Then he had a new goal—all 18 in one calendar year. By the end of August, he had four months to go and just four of the 18 species to get. It was looking good ... and then he developed a bulged disc in his neck. The disc was pressing on a nerve that went down his right arm, and he was told that he needed an operation.

“I said I didn't want an operation if we could avoid it. So they tried a nerve

root sleeve injection to inject cortisone into the spinal cord area where the bulged disc was. That was day surgery for a guided needle injection. Push the needle in a bit then have an X-ray—that sort of thing.”

And that could easily have been the end of the grand project. He was told not to pull a bow back for a few weeks. Two weeks turned into two months. And then there were only two months left to pull off the greatest bowhunting coup of his life.

“I couldn't sleep some nights because of the pain in my arm. I went to the chiropractor and the physio to see if anyone could tweak it, but the end of November came, and it still

had not fixed itself. The doctor said again that I had to have surgery, but I explained my mad mission and he gave me some strong painkillers and away I went. I said to my wife that I wasn't giving up when I could see the finish line.”

Ben needed to go like a train to have any chance of reaching his goal, because now there was only one month left. He cleared his calendar as much as he could for December. He couldn't change three important business meetings but he basically decided to take the rest of the month off so he could hunt for his scaled fish, cat, sambar and red deer.

“Getting the scaled fish meant a

“

It was a four-day weekend away goat hunting and I was on Day 2 and I hadn't shot anything. I was trying for a 40in goat. There had been quite a few goats in the morning but not one I wanted. I was sitting on the ground in a great little hidey hole behind a shrub that was next to a part of the watercourse where there was a nice hole of fresh water. Animals like fresh water; they don't like murky stuff, so this was a good spot to see the parade of animals. They would walk past other water to get to it. Anyway this fellow came in, I thought he was about 36 1/2in—looked nice. There were other goats of a similar size but I really liked the shape of this one's horns. There would have been 30 billies all around the watercourse and he was by far the biggest goat. But he stayed out the back for hours while all the other goats came in and watered. He just wouldn't come anywhere near. I'd been there since sun-up and it was about 1 o'clock by now ... six hours watching the birds and animals come and go. It's great watching animals doing their thing when they don't know anyone's looking. They're really inquisitive creatures. Anyway, this fellow eventually came in after all the other goats left. I took him at 15m. And I took the horns home.

”

5



long trip—12 hours there and 12 back. I asked my mate Nic to help me drive. We'd drive through the night, get the fish and then drive home over a weekend. I was pretty confident I could get a fish because I had been spearfishing at this place and had seen a lot of these beautiful parrotfish swimming in the shallows. I only needed to get one. I took Jane's bow because it had less poundage so would be easier to pull back. It worked out perfectly and I managed to get a huge parrotfish after missing three. We drove back the next day."

That left three. And as he was leaving the week between Christmas and

new year as a buffer, he didn't have much time to successfully get his cat and two deer species.

"The hardest thing the whole year was a cat. I had whistled in two cats for a mate early in the year but I reckon I'd been on 20 trips before I eventually got a cat. And that was only due to my mate Andrew spotting it coming in from the side of me."

And when the cat was in the bag (so to speak), he flew to Melbourne where Josh picked up him at the airport and on day three of his deer hunt, he also had his sambar—with the added bonus that it was all caught on video.

A red deer was now the only thing standing between him and his audacious goal. He hadn't shot a red deer during the rut and now he had the tiniest window of opportunity. Ben travelled to Queensland, hired a car and drove up to his mate Luke's place in Imbil. They then travelled up to Queensland Bowhunting Safaris, a red deer outfit, with the hope of finding a red.

"It was exciting, and kind of full circle. My friend Luke had been at Toomba (Pacific Bowhunting Safaris near Charters Towers in Queensland) with me at the start of the year when I shot my 30pt boar and 30-inch chital

“I shot my fallow in South Australia. My mate Paul flew from Darwin and I flew from Perth and we met another fellow, Casey, there. We spent three or four days hunting fallow deer around Macka’s place. I had terrible luck. It was a slow rut—it was a bit hot and the deer just weren’t vocal. They were hard to locate for the whole trip. I was targetting one big fellow but he gave me the slip. Every day I knew where he was hanging out but he just wasn’t playing the game. I never even got a shot at him. He just outsmarted me. (He’s still out there.) I did have a couple of shots at other bucks but my bow was noisy and they jumped the string every time. The last afternoon, Macka and I were having a fish. While I was throwing a few lures, a fallow came down. It hadn’t seen us, so I said to Macka, “Listen to how noisy my bow is and watch this animal jump the string.” I chucked my shoes off, stalked in slowly to 30m and as the deer was feeding with its head behind a tree I drew back. It didn’t move an inch when I put the arrow in. Macka just shook his head and said, “Yeah, right. You’re telling me you missed those other deer?”

6



Why couldn’t it have been a 240pt buck? But never mind. I took all the meat back to Perth and Paul—who’s a taxidermist—took the skin to tan it for me. Now it’s in Arian’s room. It’s a beautiful skin.”

stag. My young fellow had been there and shot his first pig as well. Now here I was with Luke and his missus trying for the final piece of the puzzle. Plus, I was pleased to be finishing off a massive year with an old veteran bowhunter, Glenn ‘Carlos’ Carlson. That was pretty special, I love all the old school Australian bowhunters.

“But by this time the pain was

unbearable. I just sucked it up and took more painkillers. When it came time to shoot the red deer, I really struggled to pull the bow back. I nearly didn’t do it due to the pain. A few times I stuffed the stalk up because of too much movement drawing the bow back because of the pain, it was really frustrating. Jane had sent me a message saying, ‘You can’t give up now

babe, you only have one to go.’ She’d been through a lot—with me being in so much pain and also away a lot, so I’m grateful of all her support and understanding.

“Carlos spotted a red hind and I managed to take it. It was a very emotional moment completing my once-thought-impossible feat. Walking up to that deer is a moment I will



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For more information see website benchmark3dshootersassociation.com

7



“

As a kid, I used to read bowhunting and shooting magazines and I remember seeing the stories of Boole Poole and Blond Bay. They were renowned for hog deer—they still are. I went down in 2018 to hunt on a private block with Trophy Hog Deer Bowhunts Australia at Boole Poole, but there was a massive storm and no one could get over to the peninsula for three of the five days of the hunt. I spent the last couple of days there but didn't even see a hoggie. They're sooks—they don't like bad weather. The guy said he'd slot me in for the next year (last year) for free, so I got my permit and tags and went again. This time I saw six animals on day one and another six the next day. Two of them were stags and I took one of them from the tree stand at 25m.”

”

“

Two weekends later I was booked in at Macka's place to get a hare. Orbin and I flew to South Australia and I hired a car, drove up and we hunted hares for two days then went home across the Nullabor with a mate who had bought a car and was driving it back to Perth. Macka's a pro roo shooter so he works nights. During the day he was happy to take us to try to get a hare. But I believe he said at the time, "Holy shit, Ben and Orbin are flying out from Perth to shoot a hare. I hope they're everywhere!" I didn't get anything on the first day but managed two hares the second day. The paddocks had been cropped and there were thickets in the middle that were about 200m wide by 20m wide and the hares would be hiding at the base of trees and shrubs. The story of the second hare I shot is a bit unusual. I had spotted it from maybe 250m away. I was walking along the fenceline and the hare started running towards me. I was getting ready to draw and it went through the fence. Then suddenly there were two of them at 20m. They were running around and carrying on. One stopped at 20m and looked back at me and the other one kept coming. At 5m I shot it. So in the end, although it was 250m away when I first saw it, I only stalked 150m and it ran the other 100m towards me. And I never saw the other hare again.”

”

8





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“

The next weekend I flew to Darwin and my mate Paul picked me up from the airport and drove us out to the station—a good eight-hour drive. I'd picked up a bug the weekend before (I shared it with Orbin, Macka and his wife, which wasn't very nice) and I was still crook so Paul virtually had to drag me around. We'd spotted a buffalo—a really good bull—and I'd spent an hour or more on that one animal but in the end the hunt was unsuccessful. We went back to pick up Paul's bow which he'd left under a tree and out of nowhere a donkey was feeding and walking towards us. There were three of them. I let the first two go past and took the bigger one at the back. He was an old grey fella. I took him at 25m through the heart.

”

9



10

“

I got the buff that afternoon. He was the one animal I still needed to have the grand slam of ABA animals across 25 years of hunting. Paul spotted a couple of young cows first, up on a sand ridge. Then we spotted some more down in the watercourse about 100m from us. The wind was perfect—in our face—so I dropped off my pack and slipped down into the creek, sandhopping all the way to within 25m of the darkest and biggest buff. He was about to walk behind a tree. I ranged the tree and as he walked behind the tree I came to full draw. It was a perfect double-lung shot, and he only went 10m. There were high fives and man hugs galore. A 25-year mission completed! Jane and I own a hunting property with Paul. He's been a good friend for a long time, and it was great to be there with him. It was a pretty special moment. The next day I shot a massive boar and a massive scrub bull. Paul shot a buff, a donkey and a pig as well. It was an awesome weekend. And then I started thinking, I've got the grand slam. And, I've shot 10 of the animals this year. Far out, only eight to go. Maybe I could shoot the slam in a year!

”

never forget. It capped off 18 adventures with a bunch of absolute Australian bowhunting legends ... a year I will never forget. And thank God I got it done before Christmas because I don't think I would have been allowed out afterwards!" Ben chuckled when he said that, but you wonder if there was an ounce or two of truth in it.

As it was, he ended up in hospital on New Year's Eve with a stripped stomach lining from the painkillers. He spent two days in hospital and two weeks in bed. But for Ben, that was the price of success. Well, one of the prices. Ben said it cost a lot of money to travel to all the places needed to get all 18 species. Probably if he had lived

on the east coast it would have been a little easier, because more of the animals can be found there, but no single state has all the animals so there's an inordinate amount of travelling required to even try for all the animals. In fact, the only State he didn't visit in the year was Tasmania.

But one thing he is adamant about:



11

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Orbin, Corey and I did a desert bash through a WA property which has some real desert country. They'd previously done a cull of camels so there weren't many around. A lot of bones, though. For two days we drove around. We'd drive up a sand dune, get up on the car roof, glass for 10 minutes, then drive to the next sand dune and do it all over again. By the time we'd done that for two days the boys were really getting over the getting-on-the-car thing. We'd seen a few tracks of hoofprints but on day three around 10am we saw a few more tracks than usual coming over a sand dune. I was getting excited about how many camel tracks there were on the goat track that we were following. When I got my binos on them, I could count nine. The boys jumped out and had a look and we hatched a plan. I'd take one UHF and they would have the other in the car. I'd drive 2km in front of the camels the way they were grazing. The boys would stay in the car and I'd trek it and meet them halfway. They were feeding really slowly, but all the same they were quicker than I'd imagined and I had no time at all to get into position. I had to rush the last bit to some shrubs and the camels were coming pretty fast. I let them go past. Then I started knocking some branches together. They're pretty curious creatures, and one came over. It was a bull—pretty aggressive—wanting to know what this thing was that was thrashing the tree. As he turned I drew back and got a double-lung at 45m. He ran 30m and fell over. I radioed the boys, and they were pretty excited to hear I'd got one. There'd been a lot of talk in the car about the three-day mission into the desert with no camel at the end of it. It was a good lesson in persistence for the boys. There are a lot of good lessons out there. We had camel steaks that night. The boys helped with the campoven—getting the fire going, peeling the potatoes. I think because they put in the effort they got more out of the whole campoven eating experience.

”

“

I'd flown to Sydney and hired a car to drive to Bathurst for the Archery Hall of Fame dinner/Trophy Takers weekend. I took my bow—just in case. I wanted to hunt rusa. It ended up we hunted at a mate's parents' place where there were foxes, rabbits and pigs. We spent two hours running—I mean, running—from place to place and whistling for foxes. A rabbit ran in front of me at 5m so I shot it, then got on with the fox whistling. We whistled in eight foxes that day. I would use the button whistle to start and then use the louder Tenterfield whistle. I was on the Tenterfield whistle at the last stand

12



He didn't do it on his own. Jane was incredibly supportive, looking after the kids and both businesses while he was away. His hunting friends rallied. And although Ben said he had worked hard to get there, he reiterated that he was lucky to be in the position where he had the network of friends all over the country he could enjoy a hunt with.

And it was a good year for others in the family. His stepson Orbin received Junior Best of Species for a pig when he shot his first trophy pig, a 25 pointer.

"Hunting is a family affair for us. I think a lot of people miss out by not taking their wife and kids," Ben said.

When they're not hunting fairly close to home, they have a campervan

complete with swags for the kids. Or sometimes it's a backpacking venture for a couple of them.

Ben has some advice for young bowhunters who can get caught in the treadmill of trophy hunting.

"I see young people these days thinking they've got to shoot the biggest trophy for it to be 'worthy' and

when Willsie started up with the but-ton whistle. I was wondering why he was whistling as well as me. I looked over and his eyeballs were popping out of his head. He was nodding towards me frantically. I looked back and there was a fox 10m away. Willsie continued to whistle. The fox had seen my movement but he wasn't sure what was going on because the whistle was coming from somewhere else now. He had to go behind a tree to get to the noise so I drew while he was out of sight and got him when he popped out just 8m away. I call him my marathon fox: I've never run so much in my whole life.

13



The next day I was going to try for a rusa even though everyone we talked to said we had no chance (just after the rut they go into hiding for a couple of weeks). We drove from Willsie's place to a property we'd organised on the fly and we weren't half an hour into the hunt when Willsie spotted the antlers of a rusa stag sleeping at the edge of a thicket. He said to me, "You're unbelievable! There's a stag 50m away. Off you go." I belly-crawled in to 30m and wasn't offered a shot. The stag ended up hearing me moving ... and away it went. We walked back and on the way a rusa hind came out and lay down out in the open. I decided to have a shot, but she saw me move and she took off too. We were walking back and had gone another 200m or so and saw a stag feeding broadside about 200m away. The wind was mucking around a bit but we made another 50m. Then Willsie sat down and I slipped off my shoes. I was going to go to a particular tree, range the stag from there and whatever the distance was—as long as it was under 50m—I was going to have a go. I got to the shrub, ranged the deer at 47m, then got up and around in front of the tree. Then it was at 42m, quartering away at a hard angle. I calmed myself down, drew back, put the pin on the last rib and sent the shot off. He ran 20m into some thick stuff. Just as he was running, he stumbled. Willsie walked down towards me and I told him I'd either completely missed or absolutely nailed it. We lay down and chatted as we waited for 20 minutes. Then we walked into the thick stuff and I still couldn't see him. Willsie said something about it only taking 10 years—he'd seen the stag on the ground from where he was standing. And then he said, "You're the tinniest arsehole out. You come out on the worst week of the whole year, we see two stags, and you get one of them!"

”

14



‘accepted’ amongst peers. It’s not just about the trophy. Don’t get me wrong, I love hunting big old wise critters, and so should everyone ... as long as you don’t get caught in the trap of thinking that a smaller animal than your mate’s is any less an animal. If you choose to shoot that animal it’s a trophy to be admired, ever after you run the

tape over it. For me, bowhunting is the smells of the bush, the taste of the bush and the sounds. It’s also about taking the time to travel around Australia finding new and exciting places and people to hunt with.”

At the moment, though, Ben is giving the bow a rest due to his neck and disc.

“I went back to the doctor in January but a specialist wasn’t available straight away. By then, without doing archery, the injury had calmed down a bit. I didn’t want to have surgery until it was really needed so I’m not pulling the bow back at all.”

But he fishes a lot. You just can’t keep a good hunter down.



15

“I was pretty happy with my parrotfish. It was a long way to drive just for a day, but all went according to plan and I had my scaled fish.”

“

I’d been out on hunt after hunt looking for a cat. I shot and lost one down a hole early in the piece then in December I missed a cat again. I was wondering if my chance was gone. One week I left work at 3pm every single day to try to get my cat. I had all the gear in the car ready for hunting. One afternoon I took a mate who was just getting into bowhunting. The sun was starting to go down and Andrew said there was a cat coming in. I did a weird draw and it saw me. I took a quick shot but completely missed at 20m. I thought, I’m done. It’s all over. It’s hard to find cats to shoot. But no, my mate whistled at me and signalled that another cat was coming in. This cat came across in front of me. I had just bought a three-blade Rage—a really expandable broadhead—and the cat dropped on the spot. It was one of those man-hug, high-five moments. I’d put in so much time and effort. And it was only because of Andrew that I got one. It was good for him too. He got to see how your emotions can be down one minute and the next you’re back on the job.

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16



“

I was with Josh in Victoria and we had two very big days in the bush. The second afternoon we saw about eight sambar. Josh stayed back with the video and I went in. There were small blackberries everywhere and I commando-crawled over them to get to the only tree in a clearing on a hill. There was low blackberry bush all around the tree; I was pretty well concealed as I knelt there in light rain waiting for the deer to feed to me. Eventually I drew back on the closest deer, which ended up being a buttonhead stag. He jumped the string massively and the arrow went high double-lung. He took off to my left and all the others went right. I waited 10 minutes then followed the bit of blood and his prints for about 400m—the prints were very clear on the sandy track but disappeared into leaf litter. Luckily he was only about 20m in. We spent the next couple of hours taking the meat off him.

”



17



18

“

It was exciting, and kind of full circle. Luke had been with me on the hunt where I took the first animal (a boar) and here he was on the final hunt for the last of the 18 species, a red deer. We'd spent a couple of days on Luke's parents property at Imbil but we'd had no luck. I'd had a shot but the deer had jumped the string. I had a couple of scenarios where I couldn't hold the bow when I drew it back because of my injury—the bow would pull forward—and the deer looked at me funny then scarpered. It was looking bad. Luke was heartbroken. (So was I.) Anyway, Luke had teed up a back-up plan at Queensland Bowhunting Safaris so we went there. I decided not to wear my harness. I ditched the binos altogether and just had the rangefinder in my pocket. That way I could engage my pecs and draw the bow closer to my chest then lift my arm up to anchor. It might have looked strange, but it worked. On the first morning at QBS we saw a hind by herself 100m from the car. I stalked in 50m then shot her broadside at 50m. She went 60m or 70m so I gave her a follow-up shot. You know, at the end, the pressure was phenomenal to get that eighteenth animal. I had invested so much in my mission and even when it was finished it took a while to sink in that I'd done it. It was all a bit surreal.

”

From left: Glenn Carlson, Luke and Arna with Ben Chambers, celebrating Ben's red deer—the final animal in his triumphant 18-species one-year challenge.



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BACK TO BASICS



Water woe

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These priorities are derived, in part, from the Rule of Threes which provides effective guidance for addressing each step. If the threats aren't attended to in the time frame suggested, your condition will deteriorate and you may die. So, how long will you last?

- a. Three seconds if you lack the will to survive.
- b. Three minutes if you have a catastrophic injury, eg, cardiac arrest, respiratory failure, haemorrhage.
- c. Three hours if you're unduly affected by the environment; eg, cold, heat.
- d. Three days. if you lose too much body fluid.
- e. Three weeks if you go without food.

We've been looking at PRWF in sequence in previous

issues. In this issue of *Archery Action* we'll focus on how to turn yourself into a water diviner. No, no. We don't want you to be on the lookout for spare fencing wire to make a dowsing rod (but wire will come in handy when we start looking at the final priority of survival, Food, or for building shelter). We want you to think about where water comes from, where it goes, and where is it hiding from you when you find yourself in a SHTF scenario.

Animal Indicators

As hunters we naturally look for what animals, and animal traces, tell us about our environment. That is: when we're seeking game, we're thinking about our quarries' habits, their routines and their need for water. Native animals don't generally make game trails but introduced species do. These trails will generally be heading downhill. As you get closer to the water source, you'll notice that different game trails merge. The new single trail will lead in the general direction of the water.

Birds are reasonable indicators of the presence of water, but not always—and certainly not all the time. Grain-eating birds (think cockatoos, budgies, finches and



A game trail can be a good source of information.



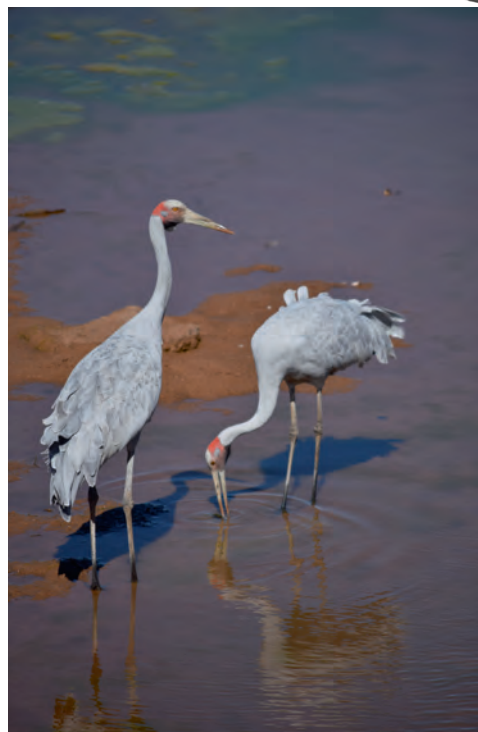
These guys will head to water at dusk and dawn.

the like), require daily intakes of water. By observing their flight patterns at dawn and before dusk, you may find the approximate direction and location of water sources. Fast, low-flying birds at dawn and dusk are often flying to water sources. Birds which are slow flying, going from branch to branch in small bounds at dawn and dusk, are generally flying back from water sources.

Insects also need water so think of bees. Not only will their flight path ultimately lead to a honey hive, bees are a good indicator that there's water nearby. In the mornings, bees gain their water needs from dew droplets. But from midday onwards, they'll fly to their work area (generally around 200m from their hive) and to water.

As a general indicator, experiments in a desert have shown that bees are able to fly up to 2km to find water sources. This may be a pond or even water trapped in hollows of a tree in temperate areas. In general, long distance flights are avoided to preserve energy. So if you're seeing bees busying themselves around you're likely not too far from water.

Kangaroos will not be far from a source of water though it's worth noting that these marsupials can go long periods without it. So watch for their habits. Kangaroos will dig for



Brolgas eat sedge tubers, fish and frogs so water is definitely close when you see them.

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A depression (a crater, actually) with greenery in a desert is a sure sign of water.



Can you see the watercourse in this picture?

water so look for their scratchings in dry creek beds. Also look for their lying-up places in the middle of the day. They will seek shaded areas and those in dry creek beds may actively seek out the coolness generated by a water table not too far below them.

Terrain Indicators

You don't want to be wasting energy (and water for that matter), but depending on your terrain it may be a good idea to seek some higher ground when you're on the lookout for water. There are a few reasons for this. As hunters, we are accustomed to going upwards when seeking a vantage point to see our prey. This time, instead of looking for goats roaming, we want to look for the greener bits of the landscape that might indicate water.

Examples may include a meandering treeline snaking its way through the geography: It most likely indicates a creek or river. If you are lost, this might also help you re-orientate yourself for a self-recovery. But it could also indicate areas such as soaks, springs, clay pans or billabongs. The explorer John McDouall Stuart did this to very good effect when he led the first successful expedition to traverse the Australian



From up here you can see the water courses and the game heading to them.

mainland from south to north and return, through the centre of Australia.

From up high you may also see bores/wells and windmills with water troughs. You might also see the game trails and track paths we spoke of earlier—these will be leading to the same thing you're looking for.

On your way up to high ground, keep an eye open for seepage near cliffs. The best way to collect this water is to take a shoelace off one of your boots and lay it in the seepage. Even creating a small 'weir' with it, the shoelace



Sometimes rivers look like this.



A seepage.



Depressions can collect water.



The base of cliffs is a good area to search for rock pools.



Once you find water, what are you going to carry it in? Consider a collapsible bucket.



Barren on top ... but water lies beneath.

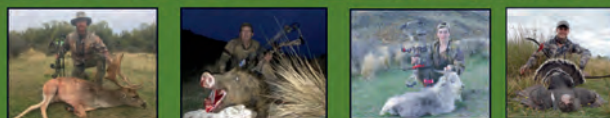
will become engorged and drip off the end of the lace into your waiting water bottle. Watch out too for other water indicators; like rock holes. These are natural collectors of rain. Some of them can be deeper than you think. Many people travel to Uluru to look at 'The Rock' but many don't know that there are many permanent waterholes surrounding this significant site; the indigenous people and animals relied on these for eons and still do.

Vegetation sources

You can obtain considerable moisture from many plants. In coastal and rainforest areas, consider for example fruits like the cluster fig, or the common coconut. The water from a green coconut is nature's gift. It's more than just liquid;



Wells are generally marked on quality maps.



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Coconuts are nature's Gatoraide.

it's a source of sustenance in its own right. In more arid areas, moisture-bearing plants are harder to come by, but watch out for species like the cherry-tomato-sized fruit of the desert nightshade and the succulent parts of purslane. Meanwhile, over on the coast you can look for pigface to chew on.

Plants can store water in many ways. Consider, for example, how water can be captured in the hollows of acacia plants. Another example is the water stored in the main lateral root of trees such as eucalyptus, grevillea and casuarina. Dig up the root and cut it into 20cm/foot long lengths and extract the water by either sucking the root, or allowing the root to drip stored water into a container for collection. This is similar to the infamous water vine you find in the rainforests of NSW and Queensland, which you don't have to waste energy (or water) to dig for.

Survival mode

If you can't find any of these sources of water, you're going to have to find it via other methods. This is where you'll find out if you were prepping before you left home and acted like a Boy Scout: 'be prepared'

Transpiration is a good and reliable method of obtaining water from the branches of a living tree. But it relies on you having a suitable garbage bag with you. And not just any garbage bag because most are thin and will readily wear and tear. Just think how many times you've torn a garbage bag at home. Now think of the same bag sitting in your quiver pouch or backpack for the last year and how you're going to use it in an emergency.

If you're planning to have a bag for transpiration, carry one with you *and* have a couple spare in the car. You need to buy a food-grade poly bag, at least 1.5m long x 1m wide x 100mm thick. This style of heavy-duty bag is strong enough to resist tearing and its multiple secondary



Know your bush tucker. You can chew on non-poisonous succulent leaves to get the moisture from them.

uses are restricted only by your imagination—for example, solar still, water carriage, tarp for shelter or an improvised flotation device.

To get the best results from transpiration, the bag must be airtight at the opening with a firm knot or duct tape (otherwise the water vapour will float out). Secondly—as any real estate agent will tell you—it's all about location, location, location. Try and identify a tree with a low hanging branch so you can reach it in the first place. You'll also have better luck by choosing a tree that is at the bottom of a re-entrant / valley as it's more likely to be closer to the water table and to be utilising more water. Your chances of getting water are also increased if the branch your bag's attached to is facing north; and the tree itself has an unobstructed view northwards.

Finally, remember that not all trees are going to produce the same amount of water through transpiration methods. And poisonous plants can produce poisonous water!

Solar stills can rely on transpiration when using branches, removed from nearby trees, and placed in a hole and covered with your tarp, survival blanket or transpiration bag. However, solar stills can be more than that. Again it's about location if you create your solar still in a soak you can harvest the evaporation from the soil itself.

Then start thinking outside of the box. Whilst we don't recommend drinking your own urine (leave that to Bear Grylls), urinating into your solar still is fine. The toxins will be left behind and only the evaporated water from the urine will be collected on the sheet as it condenses. You can take the same approach with the water from your vehicle's windscreen wiper reservoir or a brackish puddle. As it evaporates in the still it will leave the detergent and detritus behind.



Property owners maintain wells like this.

During the day it boosts your PLB signal. At night, it catches dew.



When erecting your shelter, think about how you might collect rain.

Dew collection

This is an oldie but a goodie. Many old survival manuals will tell you to wrap an absorbent cloth around your legs and walk around the grass and collect water this way. It works, but only in grassy areas ... and you don't get much water. Instead, try lying your transpiration bag down into a natural depression overnight and collect the dew.

Do the same with your survival blanket if you're using it as a shelter. Erect it with rain and dew collection in mind and place a container in the run off 'V' you've created.

Desalination

If you're caught in a coastal environment, you can create your own desalination plant if you have the available resources. When it's a case of improvise or die, you need to channel your inner MacGyver. Consider your metal water bottle; car's exhaust muffler or any other metal container; the tubing of your Camelbak; or even an alloy arrow. All of these can be combined with your transpiration bag to create a still.

Fill your container with seawater, affix the container to the tube. Connect the other end of the tube to your transpiration bag then bring the contents of your container to a slow boil over a fire. The steam will rise up the pipe and condense in the transpiration bag.

If you can't do this, look around for sand dunes and dig a beach well. Dig a well (or a number of them) behind the second row of dunes or on the landward side of the dune where the vegetation starts to grow. Dig down to where the sand becomes moist but beware to not dig down to the water table which will be salty. Line your well with bark or sticks to hold back the sand and restrict it from caving in. Try to cover it with some kind of lid like a palm leaf. While you are off trying to find another water source or food, fresh water from the moist sand will collect in your well.

So there it is. When the 'fit hits the shan' you have to be prepared with the right gear—and the knowledge to back it up. We'll give Luis Pasteur the last say: "Chance favours the prepared mind."



Transpiration bag—have one in the backpack and three in the car.



Adapt, improvise and survive with a homemade desalination plant.

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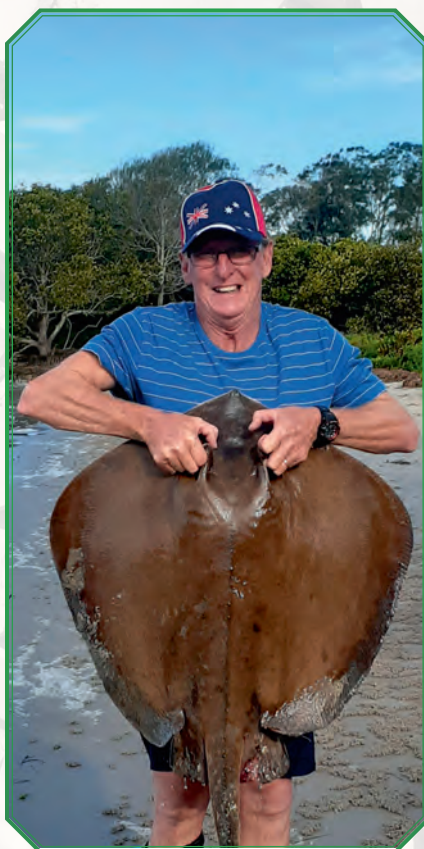
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Paul Withers, chital deer.



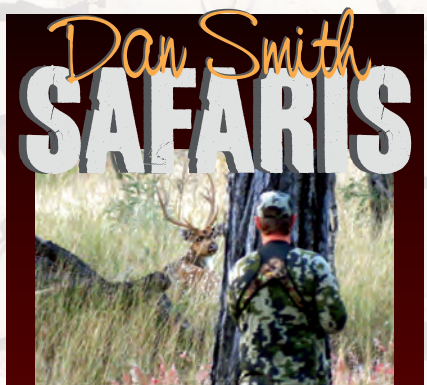
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Around THE TRADS



This little pest was an Easter target.



Bunny on a box.

*To receive trad shoot information direct, email a request to:
swallace@wallacetradwoods.com*

Sue Wallace

The coronavirus epidemic was starting to take hold. Notifications of cancellations were arriving, and by the middle of March pretty well all the archery ranges were closed to halt the spread of the virus. I must admit, the prospect of no archery for a few weeks wasn't something I was looking forward to, but ... what's a couple of weeks?

At least three two-day shoots had been cancelled. Then the borders were closed so the trip to Victoria definitely wasn't going to happen.

But for those who had been going to attend Roadie's White Rose Archery Klub Birthday Weekend in late May, there was a lifeline—a backyard shoot.

Chatting to Roadie on the phone, I listened carefully and took a few notes—dinner plate, beer carton ... Then I threw him a curve ball and asked him if I could take his idea and upscale it for the Easter weekend, seeing as his May shoot was still eight weeks away, whereas Easter was only a week away. With his blessing, I set about making some target faces with the use of free clipart. As it was Easter, the targets were all rabbits. I made up some rules and asked those who joined in to add their photos and a few words. I put the post up on Facebook with a note to ensure safe shooting. Much to my sur-

prise, quite a few people printed the targets the same night and used them on the weekend before Easter!

I went in search of a couple more animals, ending up with cockroaches, rats and cane toads. I had a very long name picked out for the Easter shoot but one of my friends suggested IsoTrad, and the idea stuck.

I had thought my distances of 5m and 10m might have been too easy, but who was I kidding? It also didn't help when we got to the 15m shot. My better half had placed an arrow in the centre and I asked him if he wanted to move it. His response was, "Nah. It's safe, I reckon." Well at that point I started laughing, and yep you guessed it, I couldn't even hit the piece of paper. So he was right—his arrow was very safe.

It was great to see so many of us taking the opportunity to rally and shoot together for IsoTrad, even though we were so far apart. There were people from WA, SA, southern NSW, Victoria and Queensland taking part. So regardless of the fact the State borders were closed we could all have the feeling of shooting together. Some shot at their own 3D targets, while others took the opportunity to compare the performances of their different bows at the same target over the

course of the weekend. The winner of the weekend was traditional archery. I would like to thank everyone who sent in stories with their photos which can all be found on the Travellin' Round the Trad FB page.

✿ Trad shoots for August-September at time of printing are: North Burnett Trad Shoot August 1 and 2, Tully (Qld) September 5 and 6, Chevallan Archery Park September 26 and 27. The following shoots have been cancelled due to the restrictions imposed by the Federal and State Governments: HVTa Gathering and Coffs Harbour (hoping to reschedule for later in the year).

✿ A report from Chevallan Archery Park TAA Queensland State Titles (July 18 and 19) should be in the next issue, providing the State restrictions are lifted as the guidelines are suggesting.

I look forward to seeing you 'round the trads, when once again we are allowed to travel.



The star of the Easter self-shoot.



Percy's first rabbit

BRIAN DUYNHOVEN

Percy's interest in hunting was sparked by my bringing home many species of feral animals after hunting adventures. Percy received his first compound bow and started shooting on his third birthday and from that day was driven to succeed as a hunter. His first hunting challenge was a small and fast target, a rabbit, so Mum and Dad did not think it would be successful. Poppy had been out earlier in the day and shot a rabbit. He'd propped it up in the bush for Percy to find and shoot at. After having four attempts at shooting the rabbit, he realised that it was already dead ... but he still carried it all the way home to show Mum with the biggest smile on his face; as proud as if he had shot it himself. This little trick did not deter him (he was only 4, after all) but rather grew his interest.

By the following year, he had become a pretty good shooter. We heard many stories about how he was going to kill his first rabbit on our annual drive down to Victoria from Queensland. To say he was excited was an understatement. The second we stopped at Poppy's farm, the first and only question was "Can we go shooting?"

The next morning he nagged and nagged me to go hunting, so I agreed,

but he had to practise and would have to wait until the late afternoon. His practice butt was a dirt mound with coke cans and he was hitting a can every couple of shots. I felt he might have a chance at hitting a rabbit, even with his cut-down 300 spine arrows (from ones I had smashed up). I'd ground down Stump broadheads to make them small and light enough from him to shoot with his Diamond Atomic 12lb bow.

The afternoon rolled around and we set off. We spotted the first rabbit no more than 100m from the house. Percy was so excited that any smarts about stalking had been forgotten he was yelling, "Dad, Dad! there's one!" We kept walking and he began to remember stalking skills after seeing about 10 rabbits run off on him (it was hard for him to control his excitement; after all, he's only young and it was only his second hunting experience.) He got his first attempt at a rabbit and the shot was high—straight into a post. He wasn't too impressed. I caught up to him and reassured him there were plenty more and that this was why practising was important. I let him go again, keeping my distance, and I was amazed as I watched him get to within 5m of some rabbits. I was lucky to get within 30m on a good day! He had no more chances that day.

The next day was much the same, with the refrain of "When are we going hunting?" all morning. He practised throughout the day and later in the afternoon we set off again in hopes his dreams would come true. We took the same path as the day before but this time he was focussed. He hugged the fenceline and concentrated on every foot placement. Actually, he was being pretty quiet. He turned his head and whispered, "Dad, there's one," and I

nodded my approval for him to go on, 10m, 7m, 5m, 3m I was willing him to shoot at it then the rabbit took off without a shot taken. I caught up to him and asked "What happened? You were so close!" I then gave him some advice on how to gauge his distance. He stalked up on a few more rabbits and the one shot he did let go was way off to the side and he was disappointed. I reiterated that hunting takes patience and concentration. I offered to take him down the hill where we hadn't been yet and he was still keen to have a go. Luckily, there were plenty of rabbits around this area, so it was game on again. His first stalk was busted by a rabbit he hadn't seen. It gave him quite a fright With the next one, he got so close and I was saying in my head to have a shot. He took one more step and drew back. I was so excited for him—a true proud Dad moment— and he let off his shot and hit the rabbit. This five-year-old had shown so much perseverance and it had paid off for him.

His excitement burst out with "I hit it! I hit it!" and I ran up to him to watch him pick up his first ever rabbit with the proudest smile on his face. The rabbit had only gone 1m as it had been heart shot. I was relieved I wouldn't have to cut it out of the nearby blackberry bushes.

After getting a rabbit for myself, we were off home to tell everyone the story of his first rabbit. Mum still can't believe he got one at five years old and on his second round of hunting.





Hoyt GM *rebirth*

Luke van der Plaats

Back in 2015, I bought a 1980s Hoyt GM and a Yamaha YTD2 for \$100 from the president of my local archery club, the Snowy Mountains Bowmen. Until recently, they had been sitting on my bow rack unused. They were only ever shot a couple of times through the years.

At the start of the year I decided to pull both off the rack and put a few arrows through them. It was then I realised how nice these bows were to shoot. Unfortunately, due to old age, the top limb of the Yamaha ended up with a small crack in it, so I put it aside.

Moving back to the Hoyt, (by chance the bow I preferred out of the two) I started by installing a limb clicker and then played around with the plunger setting. After these adjustments I was pulling off some very nice groups at 30m to 35m and decided to make the old Hoyt my new ABA and 3D bow. The only thing left to do now was to pull everything off and bring life back to the face of the bow. Here is the process that I went through to bring the old girl back.

The riser

To start this process off, I disassembled everything that I possibly could on the bow. I removed all adjustment bolts, the grip, the plunger, arrow rest and the Hoyt badges from the riser, and on the limbs I removed as much of the ILF (International Limb Fittings) mechanism as I could.

With the riser being so beat up and faded, I needed to give the whole thing a good sand to even out all the chipped and worn sections on the edges of the bow. To give the new paint good adhesion to the riser I started off using 180

grit sandpaper to get the bulk of the paint and uneven areas sorted out. That was followed by another round using 240 grit, and then a quick final rub over with 320. Finally, I gave it a rubdown with general purpose thinners to clean the riser from all dust, oil and grime left from my hands.

It had come time to figure out what colour I wanted to spray the riser. At first I thought I'd paint it the original pearl white with white grip, but I wanted to have a riser that went well with a white grip and camo limbs. As I was keeping the grip gloss white, I



decided to do the riser gloss black so it would flow and match the base of the limbs. This being the first time I had repainted a bow, I just went out and bought myself a can of WATTYL KillRust epoxy gloss enamel, and a can of quick dry gloss enamel for the grip.

Before spraying the riser, I gave it another quick wipe with general purpose thinners and taped up all the limb

bolt and stabiliser sockets (to keep the silver metal accents) and threaded a length of wire through the top limb bolthole to hang the riser while painting. The first coat that I applied was only light, and focussed on the edges where the paint was needed the most. With this you could still see a fair bit of white showing through the paint. After leaving it for around 24 hours, I gave

it a light sand with 320 grit and gave it a second coat. I made sure that the second coat was an even spray all over the riser without getting any runs on it. I let the second coat dry for another 24 hours, then did another light sand and the final coat of paint.

The grip

Once the grip came off the riser, I gave it a good sand with 180 and 240

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Before and after.



grit sandpaper and a really good wipe over with the general purpose thinner to make sure that the clear protective coat of the PVC wouldn't compromise the paint adhesion. Once I had sanded and cleaned the grip down and let the thinners dry I placed it on a clamp sitting horizontally so I could spray right around the grip without having to worry about a wire and getting a line on the bottom of the grip where the wire would have been. Using the quick-dry gloss white for the grip, I was able to do three coats of paint within 45 minutes. I let it sit for a day so it would be completely dry before I touched it.

The limbs

The coating on the limbs had started to flake and come off, and was worse around the string grooves. I sanded both the limbs until all the original clear coat had come off (without taking any of the original markings off the base of the limbs). I used the same process to sand the limbs as I did for the riser. Once the limbs were sanded, I gave them a wipedown with thinners as I had done with everything else.

Wanting something different from every other target bow around, I decided to incorporate some of the camo tape that my fiancée had given me for Christmas last year. I cut the camo tape to length so it would fit on the white section on the back of the limb. I kept the tape full width and placed it over the back of the limb, making sure to work the tape on carefully so that it didn't pull off while I was trimming the edges. I didn't worry when the edge trimming frayed a little bit as that could be fixed later on when sanding between clear coats.

With the tape installed on the main section of the limb, it was time to tape up the rest of the ILF mechanisms and hang the limb from some wire ready to give its first coat of clear. For the clear finish I used an interior/



Hanging the limb.



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exterior WATTYL Estapol. I hung both limbs up through the ILF mechanism so I could get right around both limbs whilst spraying. With the Estapol you can respray within five to 30 minutes, so once I had done the first coat I did a quick second coat about 15 minutes later. With the finish going over the tape, it had become a little furry on the surface as the clear coat was drying. Once the clear coat had gone off completely, I gave the limbs a light sand and another spray. I repeated the sand/spray process until the surface of the tape was nice and smooth. This process also cleaned up the furry tape edges and made them neat and clean.

With the clear coat done, I taped up the camo section of the limb and prepped the section of the limb that slips into the riser for the black gloss. This section of the limb was already black I just wanted it to match the riser. I gave these sections two quick coats of black before removing all the masking tape on the limbs.



The details and assembly

Now that the main sections of the bow were complete it was time to start fixing up and detailing the badges, arrow rest and plunger. The black on the badges had faded over the years and the edges were also chipped, so I pulled out my old car model-making kit and got to work. The fine paint brushes in the kit were perfect for touching up the black areas around the fine chrome text, and the black



Before and after.



areas of the arrow rest and plunger. A single coat was more than enough for these components.

I didn't want to damage the black epoxy by installing the limbs into the riser too soon after painting, so I gave it a full month to set ... a very long, slow month of just wanting to get out and shoot the bow.

Exactly one month later, it was time for the final assembly.

The limbs were in, the badges were back on and the arrow rest, plunger and the limb clicker were all set again. I also made up my own 12oz stabiliser out of some 16mm threaded rod and several nuts that I had machined down to the shape and weight that I was after. With the pieces back together, I was finally able to go out and start flinging some arrows with the new-looking old girl.

With this whole experience, I have learned not to be scared of fixing up old bows. It doesn't take much, it's good fun, and a learning experience on how bows are made. I am looking forward to taking this old Hoyt GM out and using her on the ranges as she was originally intended, rather than just have her sitting up on a wall.



Happy with the way she shoots.

CAPE YORK HOGS



SCOTT BROWN

This big old boar of Scott's was number four for the trip. Facing page: Warren and a wallowing boar.



It had been 10 years since Dad and I had hunted Cape York, and we were eager to get back there.

I'd contacted Mick Baker from Trophy Bowhunts Australia, and before I knew it we were counting down the days until we flew out of Melbourne.

We flew into Cairns where we met

up with Mick and spent the night in a local hostel. The following morning we were up early for the seven-hour drive to the station where we'd be hunting for the next 10 days.

The station is about half a million acres in size with swamps, waterholes and creek systems running through

it—the perfect habitat for wild pigs.

We arrived at the station, quickly unpacked and settled into our accommodation. It was luxury to us for a hunting camp as we had air-con and ceiling fans, which was a nice relief from the heat of the day. We were to hunt from here for a few days, move

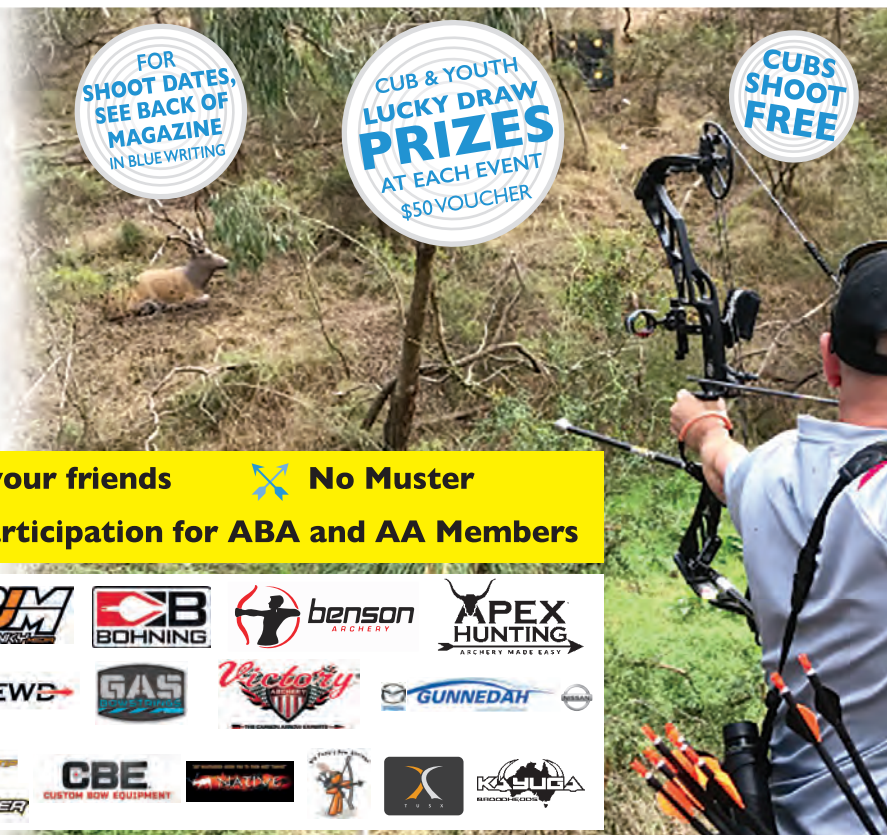


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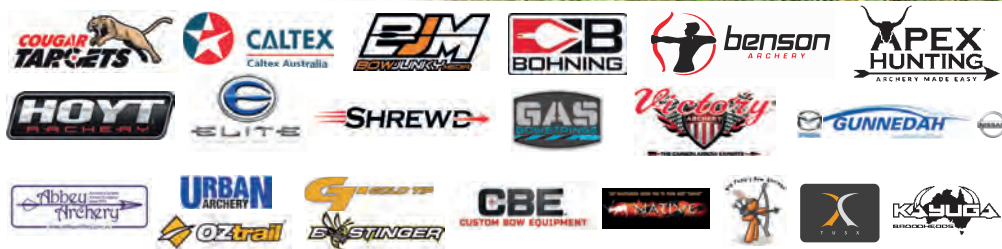
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The third boar had a pretty good set of tusks.



down to the river camp for five days and then back again to the main camp to finish off.

Right from the start we saw a lot of pigs. Sometimes it was mobs of six to eight pigs, other times it was 20 to 30. Sometimes it was just one big old boar bedded down next to a tree or in a muddy wallow. Dad and I weren't fussy and tried to make the most of every opportunity. Trying to stalk in on a mob of 30 pigs can be quite challenging and on several occasions we got busted. The big old boars that were bedded by themselves proved to be extremely cagey as well. If you didn't have the wind exactly right or if you accidentally stepped on a small stick that you'd thought your foot would miss, it was all over and your boar would take off like a rocket.

There was only one day out of the 10 that we didn't get a pig on the ground. The rest of the time we were seeing a lot of pigs and getting quite a lot of opportunities.

The first morning was a good one and we both managed to take pigs of average size and tusks. As we drove back to camp for some lunch, Mick spotted a lone boar trotting back into the bush. We had spooked him from a small waterhole. Mick didn't think it would go far and suggested that I run into the scrub to try to cut it off. It was probably 100m away and moving at a steady pace. I had nothing to lose so angled my run towards the pig in the hope of getting in front to ambush him. To my surprise this worked and within a few minutes I had closed the gap to about 20m. As he was rooting around looking for somewhere to bed, he offered me a perfect broadside shot. I drew back and was just about to release when he decided to turn and start walking directly towards me. I held my pin on him as he got closer and closer and at 3m a slight turn of his head was all I needed. The arrow punched in through his neck and out

his chest. He ran about 40m but was dead on his feet. Pig number three was in the bag and with a set of tusks that were close to Trophy Class; how could you not be excited?

On the second day of the hunt we hadn't travelled far from camp when Mick spotted a lone boar bedded under a tree in the shade. A check of the wind direction meant I'd have to circle around behind him. After a quick stalk I was standing about 20m from him. He was still bedded but offered me a perfect broadside shot. I drew my bow, settled my 20 pin on the side of his chest and released. The pig made a small flinching movement and for a split second I thought I'd shot under him. A few seconds later the boar kicked its legs a couple of times and it was all over. The arrow had gone a bit lower than I'd hoped but as luck would have it, I'd made a perfect heart shot. The big old boar never knew what hit him. He also had a good set of tusks.

At mid-morning we came across a waterhole and it was Dad's turn to try his luck. After glassing the water's edge, we spotted a pig bedded on top of the bank in some shade. A plan of attack was agreed on and we were off, with me armed with the video camera. Every step was like walking on cornflakes so it paid to take our time. I stopped about 50m back from

the pig and let Dad close the gap, as we wanted to minimise any noise. The position the pig was lying made it difficult to work out which end was which but after another look through the binos it was confirmed. Dad had closed the gap to about 15m, drew back and settled into the shot. The pig didn't know what hit him. As soon as the arrow hit, the pig jumped out of his bed, looking around to see what the hell had just happened. He stood there for a few seconds, got the wobbles then went right back to where he had been bedded for his final rest. Dad was pretty happy taking our fifth pig, as it was another tusky boar.

As we were driving back to camp for lunch another day we passed a water hole and spooked maybe 20 odd pigs that all took off for cover. It appeared they hadn't gone far once they'd reached cover so I jumped out of the 4x4 with my bow and off I went. As I pushed my way through the tall dry grass I could hear pigs grunting. Off to my left I noticed some black shapes moving and figured that was the mob we had seen. They were only about 10m or so away and slowly walking through the grass. I drew back as they were filing past and sent an arrow into the one that gave me the best shot opportunity. Pigs erupted everywhere as I tried to keep an eye on the one I'd

hit and five seconds later it was quiet again. I found my arrow, which was covered in blood, and by this time Dad and Mick had joined me. As I started following a good blood trail through the grass I noticed a black shape to my right. There was a lot of burnt-out stumps in the grass and I didn't really pay that much attention to it until it started grunting. I quickly turned my attention to the grunting burnt stump and tried to get a better view before taking the shot. It was a bigger pig than the one I'd just shot and I think he must have been asleep and had woken up during all the commotion. He was 15m quartering away and not real sure what was going on. A razor-sharp broadhead into his vitals soon changed that and he took off like a bat out of hell.

We continued following the blood trail of the first pig and found it about 30m away. It was a small sow. The second pig had run about 50m or so and Dad had found that while Mick and I were with the sow. Mick and I made our way over to Dad where the boar was lying and stood around it, reliving what had just happened. I'd just put my bow down and was getting the camera ready when all of a sudden this dead boar decided he wanted to live and jumped up onto his feet. He must have had one last shot of adrenaline because none of us could believe it. Only a few moments, before Mick had had his hand in its mouth looking at the tusks. Without thinking, Dad jumped onto the boar's back and held onto it by the ears. For a few seconds, it was a bit like a mechanical bull ride. Mick stood back and was laughing helplessly while I helped Dad get the boar to the ground and finish it off humanely. It certainly added a bit more excitement to the day ... and shows how tough some of these wild pigs can be.

Warren with a boar near a waterhole.



For a couple of days we set our sights on hunting scrub bulls. If we came across pigs in our travels then all well and good, but a scrub bull was our priority. We saw quite a few bulls but they were all small and not the big old bulls that the manager had wanted us to try and get rid of.

One day we were following a game trail along the top of a riverbank in search of bulls and a lone boar headed towards us on his own mission. As soon as Mick saw him we froze and I nocked an arrow as quickly and quietly as I could. The pig was oblivious to us and continued along the trail directly towards us. There were several small trees that I had to negotiate in order to get a clear shooting lane. At about 15m I drew my bow back and waited for the pig to enter the gap I'd picked out. Not cooperating with the plan, he veered off the trail slightly while still heading towards us. He walked to within 5m and I knew it was now or never as in a few more steps he'd be in our laps. I placed the pin down the side of his neck for a steep quartering-on shot and released. The arrow buried up to the fletches into his chest and poleaxed him where he stood. He had a good set of hooks that would be Trophy Class.

On one of the last days, Mick took us into a dry creekbed where he told us he had always seen good sized boars. He explained to me that as we got close to the bank's edge, I needed to have an arrow ready, and if I heard any noise at all I should draw back because pigs could come out of anywhere. As it turned out, just as we got close enough to see into the creekbed, there were two pigs bedded in the sand. I could only get an angle at the one furthest away so drew back and let fly. The hit appeared to be good and the pig staggered to gain his footing. At the same time this alerted the other pig and he was now standing broadside. I nocked another arrow, drew back, and before I knew it my arrow was on its way, dropping him within a couple of metres. This unfortunately made the first one I'd shot run off into the bush, as the shot hadn't been as good as I'd hoped. We followed him up and I was able to get another arrow into him to seal the deal.

The final day was upon us and we needed one more pig to crack the 20 for our trip. The morning was a bit slow with only a couple of stalking opportunities, but I was still positive that we would get there.

Mick decided to check out a

swamp he knew of that always had water in it, and hoped that the heat of the day would bring in the pigs. As usual, he was right. As soon as we got to the small swamp we spotted a boar bedded in the cool mud—but on the other side of the water. The swamp area was too big to walk around so off with the shoes and socks and in I went. Mick assured me there were no crocs in this particular swamp and gave a wink and a smile. Mind you, we had seen crocs in some of the other areas we had hunted. There was one particular dead tree in the middle of the water that I could use as cover to get in to 15m. I positioned myself with the tree between the pig and me, and made my way into the swamp. My plan worked perfectly. I drew back, stepped out from behind the tree, held my pin on the pig's chest and sent off my arrow. The pig didn't even leave its bed. Pig number 20 was on the board! I dragged the pig back across the swamp to where Mick was waiting to take some photos and cut the jaw out.

Unfortunately during this trip Dad's shoulder was giving him a lot of problems. Still, he managed to shoot some good pigs and he was happy to be out in the bush enjoying the adventure with me.



The writer of this story wins a threepack of **TUSKER SPIRIT** broadheads



More Best of Species—Feral cat



In 2019, not one but three people took a Record Class feral cat of exactly the same size—7 10/16pt. They were Luke Hebb (left), Christie Pisani (featured in the previous issue of *Archery Action*) and David Wallace (right). Usually if this happens, the first hunter to take the animal of that size is given the award. This year, a technological glitch has made it possible for all three people to receive the award. Hooray! But back to normal next year, folks.



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Feral Goat, 112 7/8 pts, Record Class**



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Taken with a Tusker Head, Recognised by ABA



To enter for First Kill Trophy, Tusker Head, mark your ABA small game application clearly with "FIRST KILL".

BEST GAME NOT TAKEN WITH A TUSKER

**Matt Huggins, Western Melbourne Field
Archers, Fox, 9 9/16 pts, Trophy Class**



WINNER
Packet of
TUSKER BROADHEADS

Branch B FNQ 2019 Bowhunting Awards

Graham McComiskie

BRANCH B FIELD REPRESENTATIVE



Branch B Bowhunter Awards' Male Hunter of the Year, Toby Gall.

Like all the other bowhunters in north Queensland, I was really looking forward to a catch up with old friends and new alike at the Branch B Safari at the Hinchinbrook club's marvellous facilities in June; but you guessed it, that just wasn't going to happen this year. Oh well, I'm sure next year's event will be bigger and better than ever, when bowhunters can personally receive some of the beautifully hand-crafted perpetual awards with their years of history.

Last year saw game claims coming in from most of the Branch's clubs. The Branch total was 177 and within that number most of the 18 recognised species were covered. A couple of hunters—Dan Ferguson and Brian Duynhoven—even braved the cold way down south to bag a sambar. Quite a few hunters claimed their first kills, which is a great milestone. Hearty congratulations go to Tracey Smith (rabbit),

Bec Nelson (pig), Lorraine Bruce (pig) and Chris Nelson (pig).

Accolades also go to those hunters who achieved personal milestones by adding to their list of species taken. These were Tom Bruce with a pig and a cat, Graham Weinert with a red deer, Graham McComiskie with a camel, Shane Scorgie with a rusa deer, Darren Carter with a pig, Brian Duynhoven with a cat and Toby Gall with a shark. At a national level, four hunters achieved recognition under the Master Bowhunter system. Well done to Laurie Goudie and Toby Gall for attaining Master Bowhunter Award status, Graham McComiskie Trophy Bowhunter Award and Brian Duynhoven Bowhunter Award.

There was some real quality for the Best of Species, with five of our Branch members making the national list as well. My congratulations to all. I hope you enjoy your time in the bush this year.



Branch B Bowhunter Awards' Female Hunter of the year, Lynda Fell.

Dave Anderson Memorial Shield for FKOS Boar:

Darren Carter (Trophy Class boar).

Dave Anderson Memorial Shield for FKOS Goat:

Michael Picot (Trophy Class billy).

Dave Anderson Memorial Shield for Boar and Goat Aggregate:

Graham McComiskie.

Bill Hill Award for most Trophy boars:

Laurie Goudie (19 Trophy Class or better boars).

Female Hunter of the Year:

Lynda Fell.

Male Hunter of the Year:

Toby Gall (six measurable species—RC buff, RC rusa deer, TC boar, TC chital deer, TC stingray and a game award shark).



Laurie Goudie won the prestigious Bill Hill Award for the most Trophy boars, with 19 boars Trophy Class or better.

BEST OF SPECIES

Feral pig: Edward Rowe with a Record Class measuring 31 2/8pt.

Feral goat: Michael Picot with a Trophy Class measuring 104 4/8pt.

Feral cat: Rick Morrison with a Trophy Class measuring 7 6/16pt.

Camel: Graham McComiskie with a Record Class measuring 30 14/16pt.

Buffalo: Toby Gall with a Record Class measuring 96pt.

Chital Deer: Dan Ferguson with a Record Class measuring 196pt.

Rusa deer: Toby Gall with a Record Class measuring 192 6/8pt.

Fallow deer: Steve Fairbrother with a Record Class measuring 202pt.

Shark: Graham McComiskie with a Record Class measuring 23 6/8pt.

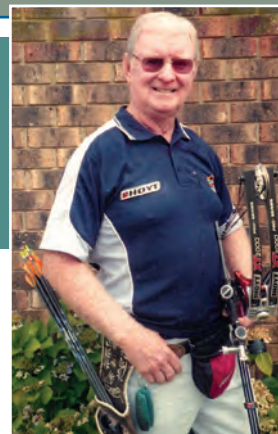
Stingray: Toby Gall with a Trophy Class measuring 7 1/8pt.



Lorraine Bruce with her first kill.

ROY ROSE

Meanderings



Isolation

It is highly likely that a good percentage of archers, in a country the size and expanse of Australia, may be isolated from the advantages of city club amenities. A majority of these archers are undoubtedly bowhunters predominantly but no matter who shoots a bow, their objective remains the same. They, quite simply, have the desire to hit what they are aiming at. So the question arises: Is it possible for an archery enthusiast to be able to attain archery excellence without coaching interaction and club back-up?

There's an old saying that 'if you see a turtle on a fencepost, you know he didn't get there by himself.' In other words, reaching a lofty standard is seldom accomplished without input from wiser sources. However, our sport is basically extremely simple, just requiring video-like replay of a dozen seconds of action. Consequently, and with today's internet input, yes, it is potentially quite possible to establish a very high level of accuracy, despite isolation, via all the external devices we have at our disposal in today's world. Whether it be bow set-up, tuning, form, execution or any other facet, it is within reach of the archer desirous of success at a high level.

Eventually, however, there

are obvious hurdles which must be confronted; adaptation to the environment of competition being a major one. If you have the desire, you have the power. Ours is very much an individual sport, so it can readily work in harmony with an isolation situation. Isolation often means that at least you may well have real estate which is conducive to practice at competitive distances, which may only be available to city shooters at club venues on weekends.

Archery success, like any other achievement, is a journey, a road under constant construction. The major commodity needed by any aspiring sportsperson is time, and time is available wherever you may reside. If used well, it will yield a positive outcome.

The first step is set-up and the tune of the bow, whether recurve or compound. These processes I have outlined previously, and the details, which are quite straightforward, are easily available on the net. Once your bow is set up and tuned, work begins in earnest on your form and education. Being isolated from the interaction with more knowledgeable club mates and coaches is a negative, but you can find a great deal of information

online. Learning the correct basics in my young archery career in the sixties was way different, with no DVDs, no internet and no access to knowledge other than the assistance of more experienced club mates. I was extremely fortunate to be a member of the Gold Coast Archery Club, where national champion Bernie Adams was a constant help and supporter. I also received coaching advice via cassettes from leading professional archers Association champion Jim Ploen in the USA, an enormous boost which helped me reach a very competitive level.

Because shooting a bow works on the premise of duplication. with patience—even with limited knowledge—a quality level of accuracy is attainable. Unlike tennis or golf where various shots need to be mastered, the unique simplicity of what we do as archers is quite conducive to exploring and obtaining a repeatable process, the essence of archery accuracy. The old archery premise that 'you don't necessarily have to do it right, you just have to keep doing it the same' has merit, as even a form and execution that is not copybook perfect, works fine if it is duplicative.

The obvious isolation negative, if you have competitive intent, is the lack

of opportunity to test your practice scores in a tournament situation. Becoming familiar with the nervous tension competition invariably brings is a sizeable part of your tournament make-up. Familiarity certainly breeds confidence and a positive mental state, which is critical to reproducing your practice scores.

All the same, an assured and repetitive form and execution process

can be gained rather quickly once competition stresses come into play.

It seems most likely that really isolated archers in our western regions may well be bowhunters whose main concern is to make accurate ethical kills.

So if you don't have easy access to a club and its coaching and competitive facilities, remember that in today's technological environment it is possible to attain much of the

information you need to develop accuracy with a bow.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This column was written pre-COVID-19 but is just as apt for archers who have been able to practise in some way during the restrictions. For those who haven't been in a space where they can shoot their bow, research is a valuable tool at this time—but check that any internet sources you use are sound.

Most asked questions

One eye or two?

Something I am often asked about is whether or not shooting with both eyes open is critical to peak performance. A majority of top archers utilise this method so it is a legitimate question. The direct answer is yes, it is probably preferable, but certainly not vital, as many great shooters do perform with one eye shut.

The problem for some archers (myself included), is that when they attempt to shoot with both eyes open they get a multiple target image. In order to obtain a both-eyes situation, I add a blackout card to my visor. You will see quite a number of elite performers with this attachment to their hat or visor for this reason. Personally, I do find having both eyes open more relaxing now as a compounder, even though as a recurver I shot with one eye closed.

The argument for having both eyes open has some substance. Firstly, logically, you attain a higher percentage of actual vision and secondly, closing one eye presumably adds tension to the facial muscles.

However, when you consider that some of the finest archers of all time shoot with one eye shut, it really gets down to what level of comfort you best experience. If you feel more composed and natural closing one eye in your aiming, then do not be concerned that it will necessarily harm your performance.

What about bow poundage?

Questions invariably arise about bow poundage, both the draw weight and the mass weight. It is logical to presume that if you wish to replicate the level of scoring achieved by upper echelon archers (recurvers in particular), you need to upgrade your poundage appropriately. Essentially, this is true. No recurver shooting 35lb is performing at elite level, even in the ladies' ranks.

However, it is clearly pointless to attempt to shoot higher poundage than your present level of strength and fitness will permit. For the aspiring recurver, the transition to

top level poundage around 50lb for the men and well into the 40lb figures for the women, must be a gradual process which is allied to practice hours available and physical fitness levels.

The same principle applies to mass weight considerations. There are well defined and accepted reasons that increased mass weight on stabiliser systems has its advantages, but once again, your form will suffer if you're attempting to hold up a bow which is beyond your present physical status. Compounders in particular, almost across the board at the pro level, utilise considerable stabiliser weights front and side. But again, it has to be in proportion to your ability to hold it up, aim and execute successfully.

So the message is that you must work your way forward at a gradual pace with regard to draw weight and mass weight, always commensurate with your physical ability and the time you have available to practise.

A footnote of importance: If your form, particularly your alignment at anchor (and especially for recurvers) is at 180 degrees, then the draw and hold of poundage becomes a much simpler task. This is why we see elite recurvers—Korean women are a classic example—easily able to shoot poundage in the mid-40s despite their often slim stature.

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Traditional Archery

One looks at
A target
Intuition is the eye
That takes aim
For the target is hit
Before the bow arm
Is even raised
The bow is fully drawn and anchored
Three fingers
On a taut string; a breath is held
The fingers release
The string
And a feathered arrow
Flies to its destiny
A bent stick and string
Arrows in a leather quiver
Strapped to an archer's back
A walk through the woodland
One's spirit abides with
All of Creation
And its wonderful creatures
Conversations with feathered friends
And others that dwell in the wood
All part of the Creator's artistry
One's longbow or recurve, it seems
Belongs to this world
Of nature and wonder
Where everything is beautiful and true
Shots at tree stumps
A simple pleasure
An ancient ancestral memory
Of an age when truth, honour and courage
Defined a man
Life is wonderful

Glenn Varona

Belthronding

Lying on its back among my possessions
A cherished thing full of old traditions
An old, black longbow named, Belthronding
A weapon of legend in Tolkien's writing
A hefty draw of heavy poundage
On its shelf, a cedar arrow
Drawing to full needs matchless courage
And honesty one could not borrow
I loose the arrow, a flash of white wood
The target is struck right at its eye

In a hidden forest clearing, the archer stood
Beneath the pines and an azure sky
After the shot, I look at Belthronding
And hear sweet, misty voices singing
Elven songs from an age long past
When men were strong and truth stood fast
I leave the woods at day's ending
The bent stick in my hand as I am walking
The elven singing fades as I depart
Bow in hand, they still sing in my heart

Glenn Varona

First hare and rabbit

by TOMAS LONG

It all started off with a half hour trip into town to pick up my mate Jett on Saturday morning. When we got home we just played a few games to pass the time while we waited for it to cool off so we weren't hunting in the 12 o'clock heat. We had decided to go out hunting at 3.00 o'clock but when 2.30pm came around we couldn't resist the urge so we got changed, got our bows and arrows ready and set out in the back paddock. We tried to call in a fox with no luck, we tried piles of logs and sticks, the creek which was about 300m long. We headed home for lunch then rode my dirt bike around on the track then set out again and got a lift on the tractor because Dad was going to our next-door neighbour so he dropped us off out at the front paddock which was about an 840m walk away to check for a hare that I had been seeing around. I suggested that we wait but Jett couldn't wait long because all he wanted to do was shoot a fox (even though there are no foxes at all where I live) so we went around trying to call a fox. After about 45 minutes I heard Dad coming home and said "If you don't want to walk home, Dad is here and we can get a lift home". We got home and swapped our broadheads for field tips and went to the backyard for some practice. Dusk came and we got out our gel blasters and shot at geckos until dinner. The next day we got up early to go to our local archery club, Gladstone Field Archers at Awoonga Dam where I shoot 388 out of 400 (off the closest peg, the yellow peg but now I shoot off the second furthest peg the green peg). Afterwards Jett's Dad took him home. Once at home I had lunch, helped dad with some jobs around the place, relaxed for a bit and Dad gave me

his old Hi-Tec Magnum hunting boots. Mum and Dad decided to go next-door so it was just grandma, my sister and me at home so I decided to go back out to the front paddock and have a look for the hare, so I put on my new boots, got my bow ready and set off. I was walking along and didn't see the hare there and scared it off because I was making too much noise. I kicked myself for not being alert. I found a place to sit in the fork of a fallen tree and waited, I had an arrow nocked and ready with my bow up and my release clipped on ready to draw as soon as I saw anything worth shooting at. I waited for seven minutes before I saw it; a hare had just come up quartering onto me at 11yd and then inevitably buck fever set in like crazy, especially because it was the first time I'd had a chance to shoot anything live. I stood up, trying my best not to spook it. At full draw I could see a twig sticking out and didn't know if the arrow would hit it so I squatted down a bit and settled my 10yd pin up from his shoulder and backwards a bit and tapped the trigger and before I knew it, the hare was lying on the ground making that sound that they make when they are injured. Fifteen seconds later—it felt more like 15 minutes—it was dead. I tried to get my arrow out but I wasn't able to so I took photos, called Dad and then started walking home. The weight of the hare was killing my arm so I had to switch hands. When I got home I hung it up at our home butchery shed and waited for Dad to get home. Once Dad was home we skinned it and then I had a look to see what the arrow had hit on its way through. The shot was great—it went in the ribs then through heart, liver and kidney. If I had taken a bit more time I would have moved



the shot further forwards and it would have gone straight through the middle of the heart. I washed my arrow and broadhead, gave the heart to the dog and headed in for dinner. I used a 100gn Slick Trick broadhead with a Redzone Carbon 50/70 out of my Bear Cruzier G-2 at 34lb.

Another time my mate Jett and his dad Sean took me when they went hog hunting. I thought it would be awesome to try to get a new animal under my belt. We got to the first property we were allowed to hunt on, said hi and had a small chat before hunting and the hares and rabbits were mentioned so Jett and I got our bows and set off. At this point we had done a couple of laps around the yards and had gone into the paddock a little way. When we went back to do a final lap around and through the yards when Jett saw a rabbit. For some reason the rabbit came to us from 30yd to 18 yards and went into the shadows of some posts, then came in closer, right in to 10yd. He didn't move when I drew back and he piled up on the spot without a sound.

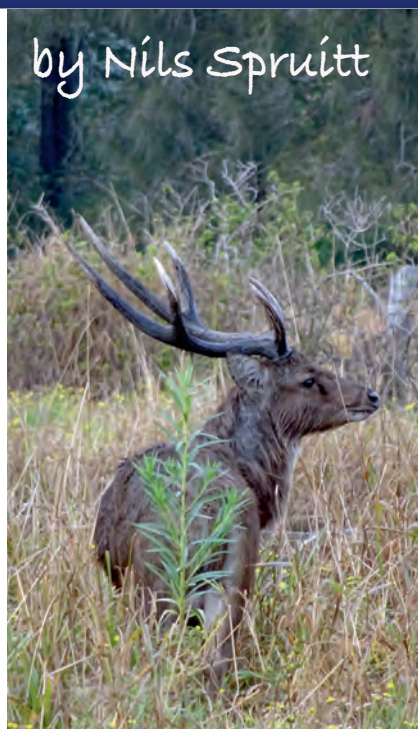
Outside In the zone

A matter of choice

In the previous edition of *Archery Action* I spoke about my love of the bush, camping, bows and a few bits and pieces about my youth. Carrying on from there ...

Compound bows were not commercially available when I was growing up. I am not sure exactly how old I was when I shot my first compound, but it was somewhere in my early or mid-twenties. I had by then moved away from home and was living in Sydney and employed as one of NSW's finest. On my days off I used to ride my motorcycle back home to the south coast to visit Mum and a few friends if I had the time. It was during one of these visits I met up with Jerry, who had been one of my old hunting mates throughout our school years. During the course of our catching up he informed me he had purchased a brand new compound bow. I was a trifle taken back by this news as Jerry had never displayed any interest in bows of any kind throughout our junior years. His love was shotguns. I was heading back to Sydney late that afternoon so with a couple of hours to spare, Jerry organised to meet me at his uncle's farm where we could have a few shots with the bows.

At this stage of my life, hunting and archery had been put on a temporary hold as I worked to pay rent and the loan for my motorbike. I knew about



compound bows but had never even held one, let alone fired one. Later that day we met up again and he handed me this rather ugly looking contraption. I can still remember the brand—it was a Browning. I had grabbed my old recurve which I kept at Mum's and together we spent an hour or so shooting at boxes, tussocks or whatever took our fancy. I was rather rusty as I had not fired my 'curve for a year or two, but eventually I got my eye back in and was shooting pretty fair. Jerry, who had only taken possession of the compound a month previously, was hitting more targets than he was missing, which shocked me.

I must point out here, that early compounds were longer and fairly basic when compared to today's versions. You still shot with fingers (no release aids back then) and they did not have sights. They had two advantages over a traditional bow. Firstly, the primitive cam design (by today's standard's at least), allowed you to comfortably stay at full draw for much longer and secondly, the trajectory of the arrow was noticeably flatter than one fired from a traditional bow. I found this out as soon as I started shooting Jerry's Browning. In no time at all I was hitting targets almost at will. To say I was mightily impressed is an understatement. I wanted one.

When I returned to Sydney, I made a few inquiries and ended up buying a new PSE Pacer compound. I used this bow for years and claimed all varieties of game with it. I still used cedar arrows which I made myself; I never did fit it with sights of any kind and always shot with a three-finger release. I knew of no other way, to be honest.

As time marched on, my leisure time spent in the bush grew less and less, until it dried up completely. I was by now married and doing my best to support a wife and new family. There just didn't seem to be much time for anything else, plus I was fighting a few demons of my own. Early on

in my career as a police officer, I walked smack bang into an armed hold-up and had a round fired at me from a .22LR. To this day I still cannot understand how the perp missed as he was mighty close. A few months after this I was one of the first day responders to the Granville train disaster and worked there for the next five days. I thought I was a pretty tough guy mentally, but both incidents affected me deeply. In those days we had no counselling and you were expected to just carry on as normal.

In the end, my marriage deteriorated and single malt became my best friend. I stuck it out in the force but my career did not prosper. I had given up archery and when I look back on it, I realise there was a time when I just about gave up on life. I still remember driving home from a late shift and thinking how easy it would be to just slam the car into a tree. I think the only thing that stopped me was that I had seen the end result of cars hitting inert objects and such images kept me on the straight and narrow, so to speak.

In time I met and married the current Mrs Spruitt, who was my saving grace. She's a wonderful woman (even though I lightheartedly give her a bagging every once in a while). We decided I should leave the force, which I did, and from that moment on I felt better and more at peace with the world. I made contact with some of my old hunting buddies who I had not seen or spoken to in years and this rekindled my desire to go bush with a bow in my hand.

My old Pacer was just that, old, and I no longer had a recurve. To get back into the saddle, I ordered a new Bear compound bow via online shopping so I could start hunting again and joined the local field archery club. When the bow turned up, I was mortified. This short contraption with bits and pieces hanging all over it

was not at all what I was expecting. I honestly thought I had purchased a bow fit for a small child until I tried drawing it back. I had also purchased a dozen carbon arrows, which I did like the look of.

In the months that followed I tried my hardest to shoot the Bear like I used to shoot the Pacer ... but with no joy. In the end I gave in and put the sights back on, a dropaway rest, the D-loop and purchased a release aid (or trigger as I prefer to call it). Once I had the sights adjusted, I immediately found I could hit things—including the Group 5 targets—with relative ease. I also bagged a couple of critters, including a fallow buck, but I was not happy. This new-age style of bowhunting and archery just did not sit comfortably with me. I was using sights and a trigger, for heaven's sake. The entire concept, to my way of thinking, was almost like shooting a firearm. It was not the archery I used to love and enjoy. I yearned for the old ways and in the end I sold the Bear and bought a new recurve.

Since then I have added and subtracted a few more traditional bows including a couple of longbows. I love shooting trad bows. To me, it is the sport of archery in its purest form and there is nothing like hunting an animal with what is basically a bent stick and your ability. I hold no grudges against anyone who wants and does shoot a compound bow, especially those few diehards who try to hang onto the old ways and shoot said compounds without aids. And some do it quite well, I might add ... unlike me.

The advantage that you get by using a compound with sights and release aid is its accuracy. No denying it, the modern compound bow is lethal and in the world of hunting, ethics demand you be capable of putting an animal down quickly and cleanly. The trouble is that far too many are trying shots at ridiculous distances and they

are not capable. Inexperience and a lack of hunting ability are to blame in my opinion and I shudder whenever I hear of young guys shooting a stag or whatever at distances best suited to a scoped rifle. In fact I don't know why they don't use a rifle in the first place since they rely so heavily on sights to aim and a trigger to release the arrow. It kind of reminds me of the poker machine addicts. You only hear about the big pulls. You never get told just how much gets fed into the machines or in this case, you never hear about the misses or worse.

I am not so naive to believe that all trad-bow hunters are different but in the main, anyone who opts to shoot a traditional bow is looking for more of a challenge, be it in field archery or hunting. From my own experience, I am damn useless on Group 5 targets and never fire a shaft at an animal beyond my comfort zone which is 30m for large game and less for small. Don't even get me started on IFAA. I don't like to think of myself as old fashioned and in some ways I am not. I now own a mobile phone, use a computer and only use carbon shafts. (I might be a stickler for trad bows, but you can't beat a straight arrow.)

The way I see it, unlike yesteryear, archery is now a sport of choices. You can buy all the modern equipment and shoot with all the aids or you can try your hand at the traditional ways. It is your choice and either way I have no doubt you will enjoy yourself.

Before closing, one final word on the compound-versus-traditional-bow debate. Next time you are at an organised shoot, walk around and observe a group of freestyle compound shooters as they go about their business and then do the same with a group of trad shooters. I'll bet you a pound to a penny I know which archers appear to be enjoying themselves most. Until next time.

SHOOT-CALENDAR

July-August-September



Date	Club	Branch	Shoot Style
July			
4th - 5th	Mackay District Bowmen *	B	ABA
4th - 5th	Lower Eyre Peninsular Archers *	I	ABA
5th	Mount Isa District Bowhunters	B	ABA
5th	Phoenix Field Archers of Sale *	G	IFAA
5th	Canberra Archery Club *	ACT	CAC July Presidents Shoot
6th	SVAC *	Vic	Indoor July 2020
11th to 12th	Twin City Archers	Vic	3DAAA - check Local Government guidelines
18th - 19th	Clubs	E	Branch IFAA Indoor
11th to 14th	Freds Pass Field Archers *	A	NT Titles 2020
12th	Charters Towers Bowhunters	B	ABA
12th	Full Boar Archers	B	3D/IFAA
12th	Townsville District Bowhunters	B	ABA
12th	SOPA *	NSW	SOPA QRE
15th	Tuggeranong Archery Club *	ACT	Indoor QRE
18th - 19th	Darling Downs Field Archers *	D	C vs D ABA
18th - 19th	Shellharbour Bowmen *	F	Branch ABA Titles
18th - 19th	Western Plains Archers *	J	State 3D Titles
18th - 19th	Dubbo 3D Archers *	NSW	3DAAA
19th	Collinsville Bowhunters	B	ABA
19th	Hinchinbrook Bowmen	B	ABA
19th	Kurrimine Beach Archers	B	3D
19th	Mackay District Bowmen	B	3D
25th - 26th	Silver City Archers *	I	ABA / 3D
25th - 26th	Hinterland Field Archers *	Qld	3DAAA
26th	Full Boar Archers	B	ABA
August			
1st - 2nd	Kurrimine Beach Archers *	B	ABA
1st - 2nd	Full Draw Archers *	C	Branch ABA Titles
1st - 2nd	Cessnock Archers	NSW	3DAAA
2nd	Mackay District Bowmen	B	ABA
2nd	Mount Isa District Bowhunters	B	ABA
2nd	Boola Valley Field Archers *	G	IFAA
2nd	Canberra Archery Club *	ACT	CAC August Presidents Shoot
3rd	SVAC *	Vic	Indoor August 2020
8th	Lismore City Archers *	NSW	Field QRE
8th - 9th	Hunter Bowmen *	E	3D
8th - 9th	York Peninsular Field Archers *	I	ABA/3D
9th	Charters Towers Bowhunters	B	ABA
9th	Full Boar Archers	B	3D/IFAA
9th	Townsville District Bowhunters	B	ABA
12th	Tuggeranong Archery Club *	ACT	Indoor QRE
15th - 16th	Collinsville Bowhunters *	B	ABA
15th - 16th	Bendigo Field Archers *	H	3D
15th-16th	North Albert Field Archers	Qld	3DAAA
15th - 16th	Lake Macquarie Field Archers	NSW	3DAAA
15th - 16th	Twin City Archers	Vic	3DAAA - check Local Government guidelines
16th	Hinchinbrook Bowmen	B	ABA
16th	Kurrimine Beach Archers	B	3D
16th	Mackay District Bowmen	B	3D
16th	Cressy Bowmen *	SA	Cressy Bowmen Invitation Tournament
22nd - 23rd	Barambah Bowhunters and District Field Archers *	D	Celebration Shoot ABA
22nd - 23rd	Forbes Lachlan River Archers *	F	3D/ABA
22nd - 23rd	WA Field and Bowhunters *	J	3D/ABA
23rd	Dead Centre Bowhunters *	A	3D
23rd	Freds Pass Field Archers *	A	3D

All shoots must abide by COVID-19 government requirements in your State/Territory. Please check with your local archery association to make sure your event will be going ahead.

23rd	Full Boar Archers	B	ABA
29th - 30th	Emerald Archery Club *	C	3D
29th - 30th	State of Origin		3DAAA
30th	Archery SA *	SA	State Clout
September			
6th	Full Boar Archers	B	3D/IFAA
6th	Mackay District Bowmen	B	ABA
6th	Townsville District Bowhunters	B	ABA
6th	Canberra Archery Club *	ACT	CAC September Presidents Shoot
6th	SOPA *	NSW	SOPA QRE
7th	SVAC *	Vic	Indoor Sept 2020
9th	Tuggeranong Archery Club *	ACT	Indoor QRE
12th - 13th	Charters Towers Bowhunters *	B	ABA
12th - 13th	Gloucester District Archers *	E	ABA Branch Titles
12th - 13th	Armidale Archers *	NSW	ANWS Field Championship
12th - 13th	Mornington Peninsula Bowmen *	Vic	3DAAA - check Local Government guidelines
12th - 13th	Caboolture and District Bowmen *	Qld	3DAAA
13th	Dead Centre Bowhunters *	A	ABA
13th	Freds Pass Field Archers *	A	ABA
13th	Mount Isa District Bowhunters	B	ABA
13th	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters *	G	ABA
13th	Archery SA *	SA	State Field
19th	SQAS *	Qld	SQAS Short Range Championships
19th - 20th	Wide Bay Archers *	C	ABA
19th - 20th	Campbelltown District Field Archers *	F	3D/ABA
19th - 20th	Mallee Sunset Field Archers *	I	State Paper Titles
19th - 20th	Geographe Field and Bow *	J	3D/ABA
19th - 20th	Lake Glenbawn *	NSW	3DAAA
20th	Collinsville Bowhunters	B	ABA
20th	Full Boar Archers	B	ABA
20th	Hinchinbrook Bowmen	B	ABA
20th	Kurrimine Beach Archers	B	3D
20th	Mackay District Bowmen	B	3D
20th	SQAS *	Qld	SQAS Clout Championships
20th	MAC *	Vic	Moorabbin Shield Tournament
19th - 27th	Australian Indoor IFAA Mail Match *		Organised by Branch G
25th - 27th	Lilydale Bowhunters *	H	State IFAA Titles
26th - 27th	Darling Downs Field Archers *	D	Gold Cup ABA

Black type shows ABA events, green type represents Archery Australia events and blue type denotes 3DAAA events, ABA national events are in red. Shoots marked with an * are cross-participation events

DR Archery and Firearms

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DL# 5000 1536

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Preferred method of receiving

Archery Action

☐ digitally online

☐ hard copy (mailed)

Post completed form to:

Office Manager ABA

PO Box 5124

Brendale Qld 4500

Phone (07) 3256 3976

Renewal ☐

New Member ☐

ABA Membership N°:

I, (full name) (M-F)

Of (street # & name) (town-city) (p-code)

Postal address (PO Box #)..... (town-city) (p-code)

Phone number Date of birth/...../.....

Email address.....

do hereby wish to make application for membership of the Australian Bowhunters Association Inc (ABA), and if accepted, do undertake to conduct my/our membership in accordance with the Constitution, Rules, Policies and Code of Ethics of the ABA. Additionally, I/we acknowledge that Field Archery and Bowhunting are shooting sports conducted in the natural environment which can impose inherent risks and this application is made in full recognition of the Association's requirement for responsible and ethical behaviour. I/We undertake to do all in my/our power to preserve the good image of the sport and ABA. I/ We understand that members breaking the Code of Ethics and/or ABA's regulations may be subject to sanctions as per the Constitution.

I am a member of (Club)

I agree my contact details can be provided to form a contact list to be used within the Australian Bowhunters Association only.

If you do not agree, tick this box: ☐

Signature of Applicant

I enclose the required fees of \$.....

I, the applicant above, also wish to make application for membership of ABA (Inc) on behalf of the following persons, who are members of my family and reside at my address:

Full Name of Applicant	Male-Female	ABA Number	Date of Birth
.....
.....
.....

I am prepared to accept the responsibility for the above applicants who are under the age of 18 years, until they attain such age.

Parent-Guardian Signature ABA Number if Applicable:

The Australian Bowhunters Association Inc reserves the right to refuse, suspend or terminate the membership of any person whose conduct contravenes the Constitution, Rules and Policies of Association of the ABA. Failure to provide information sought or supply of incorrect information may result in application being rejected.

RENEWALS and/or Advance Memberships for existing members

	12 months	3 years in advance
Adults	\$75	\$205
Juniors-Cubs	\$50	\$145
Families	\$160	\$435

New Members (12-month membership including joining fee)

Adults	\$100
Juniors-Cubs	\$75
Families	\$205

PENSIONER DISCOUNT: Deduct 10% from fees listed.

Quote Pension Benefit Card Number:

All fees include GST

Note: Dates of birth must be shown for all persons listed. Club name must be shown. **Family membership applies only to parents and their children under 18 years of age.** Separate single membership must be taken for children over 18 years. Couples without children under 18 years also pay separate single membership. In the case of family renewals, state ABA membership numbers. If insufficient space, use additional form.

Card Number ↓	NAME OF CARDHOLDER (print)															
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	[][][][]				[][][][]				[][][][]				[][][][]			
<input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard	[][][][]				[][][][]				[][][][]				[][][][]			
Expiry Date (mm yy)	[][][][]				Signature											

12/ 2018



INCORPORATED (Inc in NT No A01978C) GST TAX INVOICE GST ABN 79 750 431 225

APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE
AUSTRALIAN BOWHUNTERS ASSOCIATION™



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Chital Deer - Jan to May from \$3000 (5 days) includes a stag and unlimited does.

Buffalo - June to August (6 days) fully guided hunts, POA.

Wild Boar - Aug to Oct from \$4000 (10 days).

All prices are a guide only as people require different options so please call for a quote.

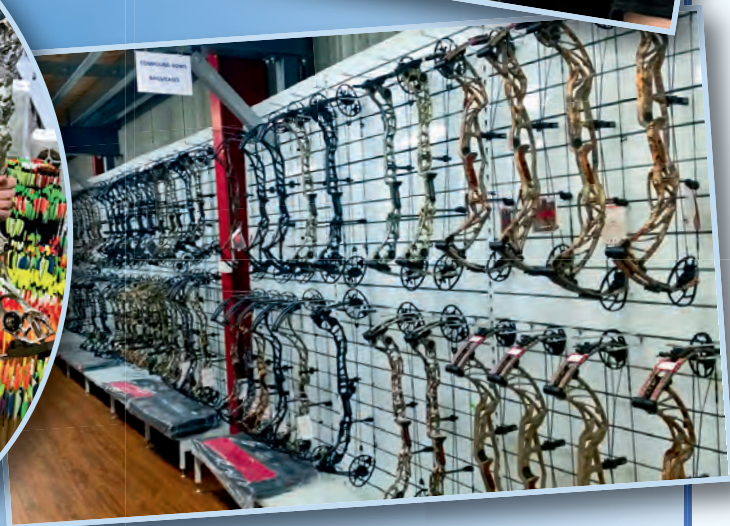
Hunts are all inclusive except: Alcohol and Trophy Fees (Trophy Fees on application)

Indemnity Waiver to be signed at pickup.

Special Hunts are available from time to time so if you are flexible you can get a great deal on some hunts. All you have to do is get on the emergency list and you are notified every time a special deal comes along.

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