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Archery Action

2023 YEARBOOK



Looking back on 2023

Field Archery Celebration

Bowhunter (and Character!) of the Year

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Australia's longest running archery and bowhunting magazine

Game Claimed
Darren Askin arrowed this red deer
which measured Trophy Class at 195 2/8pt.





Archery Action

Volume 49 No. 1

2023 Yearbook

printed January 2024

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from the *President*

RALPH BODEN

Hi everyone. Here's a review on the ABA's 2023 year.

The delay in the production of *Archery Action* relates to a complete communications breakdown with the person who was engaged to produce the magazine. This has left the Executive trying to pick up the pieces, along with the need to re-create lost information.

We are very lucky that Jenel Hunt, our previous Editor, offered to assist us to get through the situation and produce the delayed 2023 yearbook.

We are now in the process of contracting the services of a new Editor and hopefully we will be back on track by March this year.

The *Archery Action* magazine still requires photos and stories – both hunting and field – from you, the members.

The running of the association becomes more complex every year due to federal, state and local government regulations. This involves a lot of behind the scene work from both the ABA office and most of the Board of Directors to address these rules and regulations.

Different states have different regulations and the same goes for some for local governments. This makes it extremely difficult to have a blanket policy to cover the same issue in different states and territories. It's a never-ending battle.

Our ABA membership numbers have remained consistent over the past year. As some members drop off, new members join up. I'm sure

you will all see this at your clubs.

The big issue for us this year was the South Australian proposed bowhunting ban. This came about with the change of the State Government.

ABA engaged professional legal assistance with this to deal with the South Australian Government. A few members from ABA South Australia and I had an in-person meeting with the Deputy Premier to present our proposal regarding to this issue which is still in progress.

This is purely a political decision from the South Australian Labor and Greens. The previous South Australian Liberal Government had held a review into bowhunting and the outcome was that no changes needed to be made.

ABA received support for the bowhunting defence from SSAA who have a much larger membership base (213,000 members).

There are a lot of bowhunters out there who don't belong to any association and I would encourage them to join a registered hunting association (Preferably ABA) so that we can increase our numbers. This is all about votes for and against whichever political party is in the chair at the time.

To date, ABA has invested about \$30,000 into the bowhunting defence, not to mention the many hours from several volunteers behind the scenes.

The ABA's insurance costs continue to increase every year and with limited underwriters

willing to cover our activities there is not much choice for us.

All clubs should now be incorporated with their state and territory governments. This is important to legally help protect clubs and their executives.

This year (2024) the Wide Bay club will host the National Safari at Easter and the IFAA Nationals, which is a great help to the ABA and its members and I thank the club for taking on these events.

The 2023 Safari (ABA and 3D) were held at ABA Park Mudgee and challenged many archers. This was run by the National Executive with the assistance from Hunter Bowmen running the canteen.

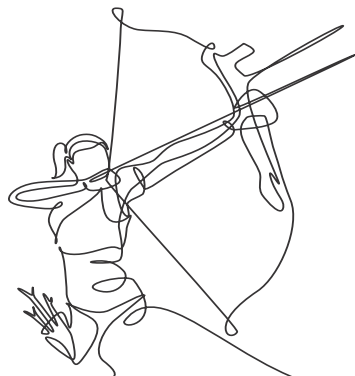
The 2023 PRFAC was held at the Mallee Sunset Field Archers Mildura who put on an excellent event despite a bit of wet weather.

The TBA Bowhunter of the year 2022 was achieved by David Luxford. This is a mighty effort from one of our senior members. You can read about his adventures in this issue.

It is good to see that there are new members achieving TBA membership every year.

The re-accreditation for measurers, BPC officers and coaches was run in July and thanks to all those involved and who put their hands up to take on positions.

I would like to thank all those members who take on positions in club, branch and national level as well as Kerry our office manager/company secretary for all the work that they do behind the scenes.



COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Peter Griffiths has made his mark as one of Australia's Master Bowhunters and here he's done it again with a Trophy Class goat, 104 2/8pt. He took a Record Class animal around the same time.

DEADLINES

Please submit articles and advertisements by these dates:

editor@archeryactionmagazine.com

ISSUE		DEADLINE
2024		
Vol 49 No. 2	March-April	1 February
Vol 49 No. 3	May-June	1 April
Vol 49 No. 4	July-August	1 June
Vol 49 No. 5	September-October	1 August
Vol 50 No. 1	November-December	1 October

(November-December issue = printed yearbook)

Welcome to 2023's *Archery Action* yearbook. We're sure some people have been waiting all year to hold a 'real' copy of the magazine in their hands again!

The ABA has been bringing you archery news and features throughout the year via digital magazines and we have included some excerpts here in the *Highlights of 2023* section starting on Page 113. The Youth Writing Competition, organised by ABA Treasurer Amanda Skinner, is featured from Page 99; we're sure you'll enjoy reading what the kids have to say about archery. So much fun! And a special feature of this magazine (Page 52) is the story of David Luxford, who is our reigning Bowhunter of the Year.

The digital magazines are still available (for download only) on the ABA's website. The files are large – around 35MB per magazine – and generally copy to your computer's Downloads folder. Go to www.bowhunters.org.au and choose 'Archery Action' in the top menu bar then click on 'Electronic Magazines' in the dropdown menu that appears. A single click on any of the cover icons should download your file. (The current magazine is usually only available through the members' portal.)

Thanks for inviting me back to prepare your 2023 yearbook. I've loved connecting with Australia's field archery and bowhunting family again.

Jenel Hunt



FREELANCE CONTRIBUTIONS

are welcomed by this magazine and articles should be addressed to: The Editor, Archery Action. 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 return of photographs if required.

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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A story of *two boars*

by **DAVID LUXFORD**

This is a tale of two pigs, both taken with a bow and arrow by one man. But they weren't brought down on the same hunting trip. This story was, in fact, 31 years in the making.

Nick Joyce (left) and David Luxford with David's tusky boar.





In 1992, I hunted Toomba Station in North Queensland on invitation from Bill Baker, my friend and a bowhunting legend of the time. This era was in fact the dreamtime of Toomba Station. Pacific Bowhunting Safaris hadn't even been thought of at that time. It was the 'good old days' of bowhunting; no sights or release aids, no range finders and certainly no GPS – a

compass was as good as it got.

These were the very early days of my bowhunting career. I was 37 years of age. Before the trip to Toomba I had never shot a pig with my bow. So my apprenticeship was to be in the basalt with Bill, in an environment that was totally foreign to me. My pig adventure started off well; two pigs with the one shot.

Over the proceeding days

I shot another eight pigs, watched Bill demonstrate his craft with the bow and was in awe of his ability to navigate in and out of the unforgiving endless maize of basalt and swamps.

One afternoon we packed into the back blocks. It was hot, 46 degrees. We took refuge from the heat under a large fig tree beside a green-murky pond and waited for the witching hour; the time gap between when the afternoon shadows are stretched long and sunset.

We ventured out, crested a rise in the basalt overlooking a long lagoon and proceeded into the breeze, Bill one side and I the other. At the end of the lagoon, a lone boar stood in water up to its belly munching on reeds. Although Bill could have made the stalk he motioned me forward. I made for a fig tree growing on the edge of the lagoon and from its confines came to draw on the boar. The shot was about 20m. I drew, held firm and watched the arrow hit directly centre of its chest. The boar lifted his head from the water, chomped a mouth full of reeds, then went for some more ... all this time with an arrow protruding



Historic picture of David Luxford with a boar he remembers to this day.



from either side of his chest. The boar lifted his head once more, unaware of his life threatening injury. Then he walked to shore, took a few steps backwards and expired.

The boar's mouth was graced with a remarkable set of tusks. If scored on the longest they would have measured high thirties, as it was he was still an exceptional boar scoring just under 33 on the shorter side.

Since that time there have been many pig hunts and adventures across Australia and many return trips to Toomba Station. Although always hoping to encounter another exceptional boar, I had to wait 31 years for the occasion.

In August, 2023, I was on the Cobourg Peninsula in the Northern Territory, not to hunt but to work in Nick Joyce's Banteng Camp. How did I end

up there? Well, like many aspects of life and especially hunting it is all a combination of circumstance, where you go and who you meet on the journey.

In October 2022, I accompanied my son Michael on his banteng hunt on Cobourg with Nick and TLF Safaris. Michael was successful in taking a great banteng bull, and he also completed his bowhunting grand slam of all

species recognised by various bowhunting organisations in Australia and overseas – which in turn made us the only father and son team to achieve such a goal.

A few months after Michael's hunt, Nick asked if I would return to Banteng Camp and assist with camp duties and attend to client's trophies. So I returned. We had a couple of hectic weeks of hunting with hunters from across the USA.

After the hunters had all departed, Nick asked if I wanted to go for a re-con to a big swamp. I'd brought my bow – that always accompanies me wherever

I travel. As we reached the swamp and were making our way through a glade of vines and paper-barks on a backwater, a boar was noticed on the other side feeding amongst reeds. As we closed the gap between hunted and hunter, another boar was noticed asleep under a paperbark. A quick shot dispatched the sleeping boar and he didn't travel anymore than 15m from his bed, expiring close to the swamp's edge.

Within a short distance our original quarry fell to another arrow and travelled a similar distance to the first. Two boars, two arrows, five

All that remained of the great animal was a remnant of dried, twisted skin ...

minutes apart. It doesn't get much better than that.

While I was attending to my boars, Nick went to check out a banteng bull shot by a client days earlier. He returned with amazing images of an impressive boar feasting on the dead bull. A week later we were back at the swamp. There was no sign of the two dead boars – they had

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TUSKER TROPHY OF THE MONTH

Best Trophy Taken

Taken with a Tusker Head, Recognised by ABA

Stephen Robinson, Independent, Fallow Deer, 194 3/8 pts, Record Class




WINNER
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This trophy becomes eligible for judging at the next Easter Safari. The winning trophy receives \$100 worth of Tusker Products. Enter now by sending your application direct to ABA.

First Kill or FKOS


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

Simon Cocks, Peel Archers, Fox, 9 9/16 pts, Trophy Class



WINNER
Packet of TUSKER BROADHEADS

been taken by crocodiles. We ventured to the bull carcass. All that remained of the great animal was a remnant of dried, twisted skin in the middle of a circle of dust. As there are few pigs in the area it is conceivable that the big boar was the only guest at a 'Banteng Banquet'.

From there we made our way to a different section of the swamp, slowly working our way amongst paperbarks, pandanus, reeds and fallen logs. Inching through what appeared to be an ideal place to find a boar, I noticed the back of a big one not 15m away rooting through soil on the other side of a big log. The situation couldn't have been better, or so I thought. I elevated myself so I could take a clear shot over the log; came to draw, but something was horribly wrong. My arrow was pointing down and half my lift-up rest was missing. What? What! I let down my bow, assessed the situation. It was not good. I came to draw again, trying to substitute my finger for the missing half of the rest, but the nock came off the string. No! Once more I assessed the situation, came to draw with the bow canted, used my finger as the rest but in the process of drawing the arrow and trying to adjust it into position I slid the Viper trick over my finger. Not good!

Then with all the awkwardness of packing an elephant in to a postage tube, I canted the bow, tried to look through the peep, release-aid and such, then took the shot. Impact!

The boar slowly left the swamp, walking past me at less than 20m. Gushing blood on his lower chest indicated a good shot, then he lay down.

All good? No! It was just the beginning of a rather frustrating and tedious affair with the boar. Experience teaches when another arrow is required to finish the deed. With fading light and the complications of simply drawing the arrow I eventually got another shot away but not before several attempts. The fact that the boar had got to his feet during all this didn't help the stress levels. The second shot was centre of the chest but a bit far back. To cut a stressful story short, I followed the boar in fading light then called off the pursuit.

The next morning, we found the boar 50m from where we made the call the previous night.

The old boar was impressive – big bodied with a great mouthful of tusks. To sit with Nick and admire this boar was indeed a moment to cherish. It had been a great result under extenuating acute equipment malfunction. As

we walked back I was carrying the jaw. It dawned on me then that very few boars have a tusk that can be used as a carry handle. The tusks were not even, just like the 1992 boar, and this one, if scored off the large tusk would have scored a bit over 33; what an impressive boar and more than memorable hunt.

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Bowhunting

DIVISION REPORT



by **ALLAN DRIVER**
DIRECTOR – BOWHUNTING

A great deal has happened during 2023. I may be focussing on Victoria and South Australia quite a bit with my reports but they seem to be the ones taking the brunt of mis-information from government factions that are trying to stop bowhunting in these States.

ABA has been firmly engaging with people to give us assistance to fight these groups to the best of our ability.

Presently in Victoria there has been an on-going push by the Animal Justice Party, the RSPCA and others to have duck hunting stopped.

Now I know this is a firearms situation but it shows the depth to which some groups will go to stop hunting in general.

Many of our members

are firearms owners and are passionate about their love of hunting, but there are others who don't see it our way.

The duck hunting situation in Victoria was not handled well by the government and vital reports were not given to them showing the benefits of duck hunting. It was then given the go-ahead to travel to the next step for voting in Parliament.

Today that has not happened as the Premier stood down and his deputy came in to take on his role as Premier of Victoria.

A cabinet re-shuffle happened and there may be a possibility of a change in direction and that duck hunting may continue. But we can't hold our breaths.

There are many hunting

organisations in Victoria and other States lobbying the government to prevent small people putting their agendas forward without consultation.

It has presented an anomaly that the Animal Justice Party has put forward that they want duck hunting banned but on the flip side preserve traditional owners' rights to hunt ducks. And remember there's also talk of a bowhunting ban in Victoria hunting.

Pressure will be brought to bear on this on-going issue; hopefully with a better result for the hunters.

The other States appear to be running along quite nicely.

With the year coming to a close soon it will be a perfect time to get out and about bow

hunting and claiming game.

As a bowhunting organisation, we should be chasing new members constantly to bolster our numbers.

We all know what a great game this is and to foster others will make the association bigger and better.

Just talk to friends, work colleagues and anyone else

who shows interest in archery/ bowhunting and steer them in the right direction – to one of our ABA affiliated clubs.

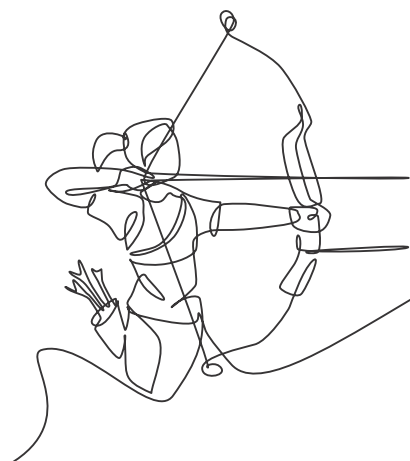
Until the next issue, stay safe and good hunting.

Summary of Australian Bowshot Records

Species	Holder Record	Australian Class	Record Class	Trophy
Boar	Michael Dacre	37 2/8	29	25
Goat	James Finlay	151 2/8	110	95
Buffalo	Peter Griffiths	130	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	Glewyn 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	Elissa Rosemond	275 2/8pt	2021
Fallow Deer	Elissa Rosemond	205 7/8pt	2019
Chital Deer	Elizabeth Proctor	161 3/8pt	2019
Hog Deer	Elizabeth Proctor	88pt	2023
Sambar Deer	Nil		
Rusa Deer	Elizabeth Proctor	231 3/8pt	2023
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	Glewyn Butson	14 3/8pt	1986



Where do you live?

Toowoomba , Queensland.

Personal history?

39 years old, married to my beautiful wife Marsha with two daughters – Ellie 8, Chloe 6.

Family members interested in archery?

Dad got me into Archery at the age of around 5, taking me to shoots at our local archery club (DDFA) and hunting trips into my teenage years.

How long have you been hunting?

I've hunted most of my life. It's the outdoors that does it for me; it's the perfect place to unwind.

How long have you been an ABA member?

On and off for 15 years

What got you into bowhunting?

My Dad got me into hunting at a young age which has shaped my passion for nature and the outdoors. It also taught me the ability to manage some of our feral species and provide meat for the table as well.

Are you a member of an archery club? Do you hold a position in the club?

I'm a member of Darling Downs Field Archers. I don't hold a position.

How often do you get to go hunting?

I go hunting on average once a month.

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

I use a compound bow.

Mathews Traverse 70 #, Heatseeker arrows from Native Hunting Gear, Hamskea Epsilon rest and a five-pin sight.

9. Has this encouraged you to do more hunting?

I don't need much encouragement to go hunting. I'm always keen, whether it's with the family, mates or solo.

10. Do you have any hunting goals that you would like to achieve?

Trophy Bowhunters of Australia Club



INTRODUCING

Zach Kronk

I'd love to tick off all of the listed ABA game species at some stage in my bowhunting career. How that would line up for a chance at certain bowhunting awards/Ishi's, I'm not sure.

11. Did you know much about TBA before this?

I've known about the TBA for a long time. It's great to finally be a part of it.

Can you give us a quick brief on the hunt in which you achieved your TBA membership?

On this particular hunt I was

waiting on a dam. I had walked in and set up in the dark and at first light I could see antler tips of numerous stags feeding towards the dam. I watched in awe as 13 stags approached and did their thing for at least 15 minutes. I had stags come in to 7yd from me but not the one I was after. Another 10 minutes passed before a shot opportunity presented itself on this stag, I hit him with a quartering-away shot and he went 70yd or so before expiring. I was rapt, to say the least!



Bowhunting achievements

to end September 2023

Master Bowhunter

Peter Griffiths 490

Tyler Atkinson 470

Trophy Bowhunter Award

Michael Luxford 290

Marc Curtis 220

Daniel Ferguson 200

Bowhunter Award

Dan Podubinski 170

Wayne Atkinson 160

Bowhunter Royale

Nil further since last report

Bowhunter Imperial

Nil further since last report

Bowhunter Supreme

Graham Wienert

Senior Member of TBA

Thomas Buxton

Nicholas Bedford

Members Admitted to TBA

*Club (membership granted
after taking first Trophy Class
or better animal)*

Leisa Nesbitt

James McWilliam

Simon Anderson

Simon Cocks

Picture: UNSPLASH

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

— a credit to all

The National Accreditation of Branch committee members for measurers, proficiency officers and coaches occurred in July.

It has taken a great deal of work to achieve this milestone as COVID got in the way of the original plan to conduct it in 2022.

There were many returning to do re-accreditation and several new members getting on board to learn the process to take back to their respective branch committees for training at club level.

Measurers and coaches travelled to Queensland to the venue on Friday night.

Lindsay Yuile, the ABA National Coach, was there to run the coaching program for

the branch members.

The event officially began on Saturday morning with an introduction from the National Measurer Garry Pitt on what measurers could expect.

Garry got people into small groups to explain how to measure the smaller variety of feral animals that are claimable in the ABA. It was a hands-on approach for everyone involved and many questions from those there so they could confidently measure game such as cat, fox, goat, camel, pig, buffalo and many more.

It was good to be in a room with so many experienced members who have claimed game and been in roles within the ABA for so many years. You do tend to forget things over

time and with this hands-on program it was good to see the correct way to do things.

That part went into the early afternoon and then the major measuring of deer species began in earnest. Deer can be one of the most difficult species to measure and the dreaded fallow deer is probably the hardest of them all.

To help in the measuring of deer species Garry called on Mark Burrows to help. Mark is very well known to most of us as a former member of the National Executive and atop hunter who has a wealth of knowledge about the process of measuring deer species.

This session proved to be full of deep discussions on taping up deer skulls with masking



ABOVE: Measurers' course in action.

RIGHT: The measurers.



tape-finding starting points and using tape measures to measure deer.

Everyone went through the different species and gradually we got to the fallow deer head, where you had to really take your time to do a confident measurement.

After a few hours of measuring, all those in the room were happy with the training and confident they could return to their branches and train club measurers. Garry and Ralph Boden, the President of the ABA, gave feedback on the day's training.

The branch proficiency officer training was conducted by Ray Morgan, the National Director of Bowhunting Proficiency. This was held online via computer at his home and I was also there to give him support.

This was a first for ABA and will be the future way of doing training like this.

There were many members continuing as BPC Officers and a couple of new people.

The meeting was about going through the National Bowhunting Manual explaining the many changes that have occurred.

The book was revised in 2022 by Ray Morgan, Ralph and me. The bowhunting manual will be accessible on the ABA website soon.

The National Executive are



At the course for coaches.

working towards an online platform for ABA members to complete the BPC certificate through the website.

Ray went into all manner of detail on questions raised. Most attendees were old hands at the BPC but if anyone has any further queries they can call or phone Ray for answers.

The coaching re-accreditation was conducted by the National Coach Lindsay Yuile next door to the measurers. Lindsay was well prepared with handouts and a wealth of knowledge to pass on to everyone.

These coaches will return

to their branches and continue to pass on what they have learned.

I wish to give my sincere thanks to all the national trainers and the ABA branch members who attended the re-accreditation. You are all so important to the ABA.

The re-training will be in three years' time at a venue to be determined. If any member wishes to become involved in these important roles, get involved at your branch level in a few years' time.

**—Allan Driver
ABA Director of Bowhunting**



Manly Warringah Field Archers celebrate in style

by ED LANSKE

The club was founded as Manly Field Archers by Ron Bush and George Scott in 1953. George Scott, archery pioneer, recognised as Australia's father of modern bowhunting, was inducted into the Australian Archery Hall of Fame in 2008.

The search for suitable land

By the deed of agreement dated September 1, 1953, of Section 521 of the Local Government Act, between the Council of the Shire of Warringah and the Municipality of Manly, Manly Field Archers were granted a licence to conduct field archery activities on part of the Manly/

Warringah Memorial Park.

Part of the licence reads, 'This licence may at any time be revoked forthwith by the council without payment of any compensation whatsoever if in the opinion of the committee it would be in the public interest so to do. The club shall have the exclusive use of the subject area and no person other than a member of the club shall engage in the sport of archery therein.'

The club had to take out an insurance cover of \$5000 and pay stamp duty of \$1.10. The licence was finalised on March 24, 1958.

Membership from the beginning in 1953 until 1980 fluctuated between 20 and 40 members. In the 1980s there was

a strong increase with a peak of 240 members by the end of the decade.

On August 9, 1957, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the NSW Parliament RW Askin expressed that, "I would consider it an honour to be elected patron the Manly Field Archery Club".

Sir Robert Askin later became the NSW State Premier.

The club occupied the land until November 1983 and in January 1984 we moved to our present site at the JJ Hill Memorial Park on Mona Vale Road, Terry Hills.

On Sunday March 18, 1984, our inaugural shoot was held with our guest of honour Councillor Julie Sutton.

The early days

Due to the lack of a field archery associations in Australia, Manly Field Archers applied for membership with the USA-based National Field Archery Association in Redlands, California.

On January 20, 1958, the club was granted a club charter for a fee of \$2 per year. A standard 14-target field course was established. The normal shoot format was 28 targets while the open championship was a 56-target event. In 1959 the required insurance cover rose to \$25,000 and the cost to the club was £30 11 shillings and 3 pence. In the early 1980s the club affiliated with the growing Australian Bowhunters Association and adopted the ABA field round and hunting awards program that provided the structure and formal competition that saw the club thrive.

Under the leadership of President Regina Dinten, the club started serious fundraising and in 1988 we were able to move into our brand new clubhouse. Our guests of honour were the Member for Pittwater the Honourable Jim Longley and



Chris, his brother Steve and their father Ed Lanske celebrate with a safari round. There are three generations of archers in the family.

Mayor of Warringah Shire Council Julie Sutton.

Many of our club members did us proud with their achievements in field archery and bowhunting. In 1983 at the National ABA Safari, John Downes won the Recurve Division and at the same event Nan Midgely won the Ladies Compound and Chris Lanske the Junior Recurve. Several members attended different IFAA world championships in Scotland, the USA and Australia.

Today

Currently a membership of 200-plus has been maintained. Some of our past members include Mike Benson of Benson Archery and Nick Lintern of Norseman Traditional Bows was a junior in our club. The late Barry Johnson, outstanding longbowman and bowyer, his hand-made bows are now collectors' items. The late Kim Melit, well known archer and leather craftsman won many awards for his leatherwork.



Archer Donald Turton (left) and William Rogers.



Life members

Throughout the history of our club, some of our members were found worthy of receiving life membership of the club. These members are:

Rudy Sendlehofer
Denis Gaskill
Regina Dinten
Bill Bedford
Marto Plecko
Roger Keen
Ed Lanske
Chris Lanske
Keith Hamilton
Paul Wallbridge
Horst Bansch
Kim Melit
Roger Keene



The late Bob Marksworth, US professional archer and showman, was an honorary member of our club.

On the hunting scene we also have many dedicated bowhunters. Ben Weatherall, a traditional bowhunter, has many excellent trophies to his credit from Australia, Africa and North America including 58-inch moose taken with his Black Widow

recurve which qualified for the Pope and Young Record Book. Father-and-son team Bill and Nick Bedford took many Record Class game including fallow deer. Then there's the team of father, son and grandson Lanske. Ed and son Chris have recorded many trophies from Australia, Africa and North America including water buffalo, banteng, kudu, warthog, gemsbuck, caribou and black bear. Ed Lanske was the first Australian bowhunter to have an entry in the Pope and Young Record Book for a Quebec labrador caribou taken in 1992. Ed was inducted into the Australian Archery Hall of Fame in 2012. Grandson Sean, still in his teens, has two Record Class fallow bucks to his credit.

The club continues to be family orientated with a healthy mix of traditional and compound archers. We are confident that our club will continue to have a long future with many existing and new members accepting the challenges and enjoying camaraderie that the pursuit of archery brings.





2023 ABA Queensland State Titles

by JEANETTE DOWD

Alfie Mann, 5, and Levi Mann, 3, do some practice before the main event.

Wide Bay Field Archers put on a great event when they hosted the 2023 ABA Queensland State Titles. It was the biggest turnout Branch C has had since COVID, with 130 nominations received. It was fantastic to see archers travel from as far away as Mackay up north and the Gold Coast in the southern Queensland.

By Friday lunch time, the campgrounds were a hive of activity as competitors busily set up their camps.

The Wide Bay club has ample space, so four ranges were used

over the weekend, which meant no one had to shoot a range twice

On Friday night, the club put on a free meal for all the campers. Spaghetti bolognese filled everybody's belly while they caught up with old friends or made new ones.

Within a blink of an eye the first day's rounds were over and done with – just in time to watch the AFL grand final (although some campers struggled to get their vans' TVs tuned in for the start of the game.)

Brad Stephan took out the points honours for the day, coming back in with a 798 out of 800, including one perfect round of 400. Saturday night saw a group of Branch D members competing in their monthly fun novelty events with 'push the stubby' and 'tight ass'. A small crowd gathered to watch the shenanigans. Paul Keating was crowned both the 'push the stubby' and 'tight ass' champion. Then it was on to cornhole throwing.

The next morning, some archers had a slightly slower



Grandparents Jeanette and Kevin Dowd with the grandkids Alfie and Levi Mann. Archery truly is a family sport.

start after a big night.

Two perfect rounds of 400 were shot on Sunday. One was by Brad Stephan from the Renegade Bowmen and the other was by Damien Ormiston from Moranbah Field Archers. Brad Stephan shot the highest score over the weekend with 1596 out of a possible 1600 in the Men's Freestyle Unlimited division.

It is always great to see so many families competing, camping and socialising over the weekend. I personally enjoy catching up with my family because it doesn't happen often enough. After 38 years in the



A group of archers ready to tackle the hardest shot on the course. LEFT: Rozz Davies.



Marcus McKinnon from Grange Bowmen.

sport of archery, to be able to still have the same passion and interest in the sport as your husband, daughter, son-in-law and grandkids makes archery just so much better.

Some families go back even further with their archery interest. In 1983 James McKenzie won the Junior Bowhunter Compound Boys State Title. Fast forward 40 years and this weekend competing at the ABA State Titles, his son Heath McKenzie won the same title.

Heath shot a 696 on Saturday and a 720 on Sunday, shooting a compound with fingers no sights. Well done, Heath – excellent shooting.

The presentation was put

on as soon as possible after the three-arrow and one-arrow rounds, along with drawing the raffle. The club had two huge tables full of raffle prizes.

By Sunday afternoon the campground started to clear out except for a few campers who knew they wouldn't make it home in time to watch the NRL grand final so instead stayed on to cheers on their favourite team (the Broncos).

A huge effort was put in by the Wide Bay Field Archers Club members and the Branch C committee who ran the event. These shoots, like any events, are run by volunteers and without them we would not be enjoying our sport, so thank you.



Heath McKenzie stands on the podium as State champion, the same award his Dad won 40 years ago.



Troy McKinnon ... a moment of celebration and an oryx.

It's moments like
these you need ...

*an overseas
hunt*

*Troy McKinnon says
he is a bowhunter for
life ...*

There's an old Chinese curse that goes, 'May your life be interesting'. During 2023, Troy McKinnon's life has been more than just interesting. It has been a death-defying rollercoaster ride ... and his way of dealing with it all is something that will definitely find an echo in the hearts of other bowhunters.

It started early in the year.

Being a Queensland and a builder, he gets an annual skin check, and during an appointment in January it was found that he had a cancer on the ear. And not just a little spot. By the time he'd been through an urgent surgery he'd had 27mm cut off his ear and undergone reconstructive surgery. A second biopsy done

during surgery showed that the cancer was just 5mm away from getting into his brain and killing him.

Surviving a brush with death was cause for celebration, and what better way than going on an international hunt? Without the melanoma he wouldn't have thought about doing a trip to Namibia at that time (he's



a workaholic) but as his Nan always said about money, “You can’t take it with you.”

Not much about the preparation for that trip was smooth sailing, but the fact that he could even source a hunt in Namibia was a big positive.

“All those big hunts are usually booked out 12 months or two years in advance. I was

lucky to get a cancellation. So I thought, just book it and go,” he said.

Not quite so positive was the fact that his bowstring suddenly showed signs of wear at the nocking point the night before his flight.

“The month before a hunt I always fire off about 1000 arrows a week – 100 every day

from Monday to Saturday and the rest on Sunday,” he said.

“I like to be able to be accurate from 50m up to 75m with a hunting bow in practice.

“I was in the backyard firing off the last three arrows and I looked down at the string. So I sent a pic to my bow tuner and he said that I needed to go over with my bow right away,” Troy said.

“That was pretty stressful but we got it fixed and got the bow sighted in.

“Then there was the 24 hours to get to Johannesburg only to find that they had lost my bow – \$10,000 worth of bow and hunting equipment and subsequently was an hour late for my next flight.

“By the time I got to Namibia I’d been 47 hours in transit.”

So he was picked up from the Namibia Airport for the four-hour drive to the farm.

“By then it was 2 o’clock in the afternoon and I’d left Australia two days before. I’d only slept four hours in that time, and the guy there said did I want to have a sleep but I was still ready to go!”

So he did what all keen bowhunters do. He pulled out his bow and had some practice on the targets to make sure the bow had come through transit with flying colours.

It had. And despite the lack of sleep, so had he. After a bulls-eye at the 20, 30 and 40

By dark the first day, Troy had his first beast on the ground – an eland.





Troy with his kudu.

marks, he snapped a picture of the bullseyes and sent them to his guide. He was ready.

And apparently it's not the standard (some bowhunters have *a lot* of trouble sighting in their bows, so they claim), but he shot every animal he was aiming for, racking up an impressive number in less than a week.

Starting with an eland on the first night, there were two red hartebeest, a couple of impala, two kudu, two oryx, a black wildebeest, four warthogs and

two waterbuck.

The eland has stayed in his memory for the taste alone.

"I had shot it at dark and we were literally eating it two-and-a-half hours later. And no need to hang it – it was up there as one of the best pieces of meat I have ever tasted in my life. If you could buy that kind of meat, it's all you would ever eat," he said.

It's nothing like hunting in New Zealand, that's for sure.

"In New Zealand you would start at 4am and spend four

hours walking in then hunt for tahr in the high country and once you had your animal you'd break the meat down and put it in backpacks for the four-hour walk out. You might get back to your car at 8.30pm.

"On our hunts, we've been known to just have tahr meat in the back of the car, cut some off and eat it that day, cut some off the next day and eat it – it's so cold in winter that you can do that in New Zealand.

"In Namibia they have to have people come out in a ute

to pick up the game straight away otherwise the animals get hairlip, which is no good for taxidermy.”

He’s having at least seven heads prepared for export so they can be taxidermied after they arrive in Australia. It costs thousands of dollars just for the preparation part, then there are shipping and taxidermy costs on top of that, but hang the expense.

Troy’s hunting background goes way back – 30 years or so, and he’s only in his 40s.

With family in New Zealand, he was often there as a child. He was about seven when his parents put him on a plane on his own to visit his New Zealand relatives.

In Australia throughout his childhood, his parents were anti-motorbikes and anti-hunting but his New Zealand uncle was a hardcore shooter and hunter, and owned a gun shop.

“I think I first shot a gun at 4, and I started archery at 11 years old at the Mt Warren Club doing club competitions with a recurve,” said Troy.

“The first thing I saved for when I was an apprentice at the age of 15 was a hunting trip and I shot my first rabbit and fox at Mudgee, New South Wales.

“Then I shot my first deer in New Zealand when I was about 16. And that was me hooked – throw the guns away! After I’d

started hunting with a bow, I said, ‘Using the rifle’s cheating, mate.’ I have shot a gun since but it was for one of those once-in-a-lifetime moments about 10 years ago.”

He had busted his knee during a bowhunt and after he and his mate had seen an amazing red deer (550 on the international scale) his mate walked back to the car to get a rifle after telling Troy that he would never see a deer like that again in his lifetime.

Hunting in New Zealand has been a regular activity. With his Nan living in Wellington until her death just before COVID, Troy has been a frequent visitor there and always tried to fit in a hunting trip during his stays.

But this year’s hunting trip was one of the ‘downs’ on the rollercoaster that has been 2023.

After 2021 when he took a ram, elk, turkey and tahr, and 2022 trophies that included a massive feral goat and a black fallow deer, he was hoping his August-September trip to New Zealand would be highly productive.

It wasn’t. He didn’t even get to go on a hunt with his NZ mate. The day before the expected hunt, during a visit to Franz Josef Glacier, he had a heart attack which he was later told had a 98 per cent death rate within 20 minutes.

“I’ve always been the fittest



The first warthog.



The second warthog.



The third of four warthogs.



The first red hartebeest.



The second red hartebeest.

A black wildebeest.



and healthiest of the tradies I work with. I don't eat meat pies, I go to the gym. And there I was, having a heart attack with only a 2 per cent chance of survival after the first 20 minutes.

"If I'd known it would be five hours before I got to hospital, I don't know if I'd have made it. But I stayed calm – wiggled the toes, breathed in, breathed out – and just kept holding on for the next bit of the journey. I could survive until the ambulance came. And then

until the helicopter arrived.

"I remember looking out and seeing the sunset from the back of the helicopter. It was the anniversary of my Nan's death that day. The people in the chopper were talking through the headphone, saying 'We need to go faster' but there was a blanket of cloud cover and it was going to take an extra 20 minutes to land. It was five hours in by that time, but suddenly there was a break in the clouds straight over the hospital at Dunedin and the

helicopter landed."

His first thought once the hospital procedures were over was that he wouldn't mind going to Alaska for a moose hunt. His bowhunting mate, a taxidermist, could have swung it, too, with a half-price last-minute trip opening up due to a cancellation. It was the lady at the travel insurance company who put the skids under that plan.

"You've just had a heart attack and you want to go to Alaska hunting? You'll be lucky



Troy with his second impala.



The arrow hole in Troy's first impala.

to get travel insurance in 12 months' time, let alone now," she told him.

A member of Renegade Bowmen in Ipswich ("At least, I think I'm a member – have I paid my fees this year?") and the Game Hunters Association of Australia, he is also involved with Safari Club International.

In fact, Troy is meant to be going to America in late January to receive an SCI trophy award in Nashville, Tennessee, for a goat he took on the west coast of New Zealand in 2022. The animal ranks second in the world, at 87 4/8 – just 3mm less than the world record.

The only kind of hunt he could wangle with such sort

notice was a cougar hunt. But the trip, booked before his heart attack, might not happen anyway.

He's not perfectly recovered from hand surgery (that's another story) or his heart attack and has been taking 12 medications a day, but Troy's one of those guys who is always looking forward.

He can't wait for his next international hunt ... just as soon as he can get travel insurance again.

He describes himself as a bowhunter for life. Having had two near-death experiences after which his first thought was to go on a bowhunt, you'd better believe it.

Shot in New Zealand (2021-2022) ...



This is the goat for which Troy McKinnon is receiving an award from the Safari Club International (SCI). It ranks number 2 in the Record Book of Animals and is classed as a gold medal trophy.



Black fallow deer.

Talking turkey.



Shot in New Zealand (2021-2022) ...

Tahr.



Amazing elk.



An 18pt red deer.



Arapara ram.



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29 March to 1 April 2024



All ABA members are cordially invited to compete at the 2024 National Safari Championships.

Nomination Fees:



All nominations must be completed online at www.bowhunters.org.au and be paid for at the time of registration.

Nominations will close on 23rd March 2024 and NO late nominations will be accepted.

ABA	Adult \$55	Jnr/Cub \$45	Family \$125
3D	Adult \$60	Jnr/Cub \$50	Family \$135

Closing date for entries is Saturday 23rd March 2024

Last date for grading is Saturday 23rd March 2024

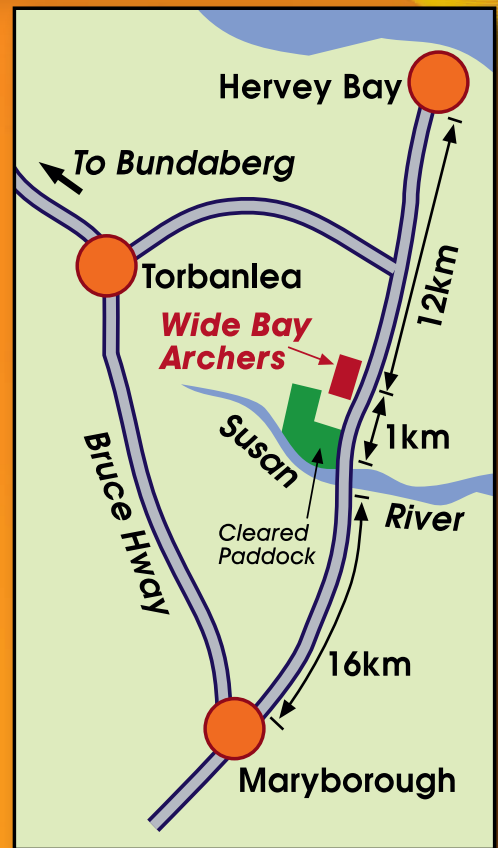
Timetable:

Muster each day at 8.00am for an 8.30am start

Registration and Bow Checks for both events Thursday 28 March

ABA - Friday 29 March and Saturday 30 March (3 and 1 arrow each day) followed by Presentation Saturday evening

3D - Sunday 31 March and Monday 1 April (3 and 1 arrow each day) followed by Presentation Monday evening.



Camping:

Camping is ample at the range; anybody wishing for offsite accommodation can obtain further information from the ABA website. Definitely NO DOGS allowed.

Catering:

Bookings essential. Contact secretary@widebayarchers.org.au for food bookings

Champion of Branches Team Competitions will be running for both National Championships and teams must be registered prior to Muster for each competition.

TRADITIONAL *trails*

Hi to all our readers and happy new year. I hope 2023 was full of shooting arrows in your chosen field of archery and that you've had success. I've been crazy busy making bows and accessories so it's been a while since I put pen to paper ... I'm very happy to be here now writing an article for the *Archery Action* yearbook.

with NICK LINTERN

Background: UNSPLASH



Welcome to another edition of Traditional Trails. There's a lot of craziness going on in the world right now and I think we all need a dose of stability and reality in a world that's lost its mind. And lost its way.

Many of us who are '60s kids or earlier and grew up in the '70s and '80s even '90s knew a simpler, happier time. Stress was lower, obesity was lower, we all had much more physical lives and all understood that anything worthwhile took time. People served apprenticeships or studied at university. People

who got into sport understood it was a learning process that took time. Dating was much more hands on. You didn't swipe right or left. You had to ask a girl out, read the room. See if she was giving you signals that it was okay to approach. Girls knew how to signal a guy they were interested in, without prancing around half naked on social media. Things like bullying certainly happened, but more often than not it was dealt with in a playground, or with some schools, a boxing ring. Nothing cured a bully quite like being disassembled by the school boxing champion. Cyber bullying

that causes so much youth suicide today just didn't/couldn't occur. So, what's this soapbox stuff got to do with archery? Quite a bit actually. Those who have read my articles for years will have heard this to some extent before, but I've got a slightly different perspective here, so stay with me.

Why the traditional path?

Evolution

Evolution is a perfect process; it is flawless and doesn't make mistakes. It comes from natural *need* for change and is very slow and exacting. A basic example is a white rabbit released into the wild,



Pure simplicity. Draw an arrow, shoot an arrow.

for dinner but spends the whole time on their phones instead of talking to each other. Men no longer understand when a girl is giving them a signal. People don't know how to hold a conversation. Youth depression and suicide is at an all-time high. Prominent psychiatrists all agree that social media and mobile phones are the root cause. No one cares though. There's a heap of money to be made. So, when all these platforms got going, no one had the forethought to consider – or just didn't care about – what the long-term consequences might be. Look at the latest thing: electric cars. No problem if you live in a city and don't travel more than 100km or so. But if you do, they're no use at all. They're catching fire, take 45 minutes to charge and still use power off the grid. I'm not saying we don't need to do anything about pollution et cetera but electric cars are clearly not the answer. But just based on pure emotion with no thought of the consequences, we charge off down a really stupid path.

The traditional family unit is also breaking down – to our detriment. Folk can't seem to realise that a baby stresses relationships, it doesn't fix them. The idea of being together because you want to be, then bringing a child into the equation – deliberately – is a far greater formula for success. This is replaced by swiping right or left or whatever it is and the horrible process of 'ghosting' people, leaving them utterly confused and with no clue as to what had happened and what was wrong.

Human beings are social

creatures. We need each other in communities to thrive. The whole social media culture kills that. I'm often accused of being a technophobe or anti-progress. Nothing could be further from the truth. I embrace any advancement that is definitely an advancement. I love paying my car's rego on my home computer instead of queuing up for hours at the rego office. Internet banking saves so much time. The internet itself is a great source of information (albeit flawed at times). I might write an article on the bowmaking BS I've seen on there but that's a story for another day. So, I'm definitely not anti-technology or improvement, as long as it is truly *improvement*. Way too often, it isn't actually improvement. It's tech for the sake of tech. Look at your mobile phone. Apart from a supposedly better camera, is the latest phone better than the one from five years ago? Does it do its primary purpose of taking and making phone calls or texts better? Maybe it has a bigger memory. My old iPhone 4 could access the net, et cetera. It was really not that much different to the latest 15 Pro or whatever my new one is. But people order the latest thing in advance with no real knowledge about if it's going to be better than the previous one. Great advertising is partly at the heart of that. Anyone see where I'm going with this?

Now back to archery again. For thousands of years the bow – the traditional bow – was the lifeblood of human civilisation. Our brains were what gave us the edge over bigger, stronger creatures and put us at the top of the food chain.

if it survives, will be a completely different colour very fast. It will change to match its surroundings as a matter of pure survival. Domestic cats double in size as they become feral and so on.

The problem with the modern world is that our technology has raced ahead of our evolution. We are making decisions with zero understanding of the long-term consequences of those decisions. There are too many examples to list them all here, but a few examples are: social media, great for business platforms et cetera but diabolical for human interaction. A group goes out

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Some raw fibers are produced overseas

The bow was the epitome of that. We could rain death down on our enemies, or bring down meat for our tables at range. The various styles of bows that we see from history had design variables based on material availability and use. These bows have not changed in their design for thousands of years. Because if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

There has been however, some evolution. Definite improvements. Back in the 1920s or thereabouts, three American physicists Hickman, Klopsteg and Nagler realised that while the traditional English longbow was a brilliant design, especially with yew, it could be improved upon. These were the men pretty much responsible for the American semi-longbow we are so familiar with today. They worked out that the rectangular, flattish cross-section limb would store and release energy better than the stacked belly design. So here we have a case of genuine evolution ... no

negatives and all improvement.

And that wisdom hasn't changed since. The next one was reliability advancement. Around the 1940s Frank Eicholtz came up with one of the first uses of fibreglass for bows. Thin skins on the bow's back and belly. Now it is standard application and there is no negative to its use. Genuine improvement: higher performance, super reliability – and *no* design change. Why? No need to change the design because it was perfect the way it was.

Next comes modern structural epoxies. The use of these makes a bow nearly indestructible. So, the bottom line here is that if Hickman, Klopsteg and Nagler saw a modern longbow, they would recognise it instantly. They'd no doubt be curious about the materials in use but would be comfortable with the design. Here is an example of evolution. Perfection in improvement. Zero negatives. This all begs the



A traditional archer shoots the rolling disc.

question, with archery was there a *need* for change? Or was it driven by something else? And as we'll look at later, is the ultra-high-tech modern compound bow even an improvement? Maybe, maybe not.

Bows, archery and why we do it

This is a massive heading as there are nearly as many answers as stars in the sky. However, what archery offers us is a brilliant way to get strong, get outside, connect with our ancestral past, build discipline and compete with one another. It is actually a martial art. There are *no shortcuts*. You have to put in your time and master all the points of good form, mastering your mind and developing the ability to hit anything, anywhere, whatever the conditions. It's that same challenge that fills golf courses on weekends. *Any* attempt to take shortcuts using gadgets et cetera is a false security. There is no substitute to learning the bow's discipline. I had a good mate of mine drop in a while ago. He had the latest compound set-up. I had no idea how far compounds have degenerated from the original

ones. I knew things were bad, but this thing was a hot mess. You couldn't really call it a bow. Maybe 2ft long, it had a scope system that had a built-in range finder and self-aiming system. There were tubes coming out of it everywhere – it looked like something from a sci-fi film. And needless to say, it was constantly breaking down. It was way overstressed; a classic case of technology for technology's sake. I told him to sell it and buy a rifle. When I questioned why the hell he dropped \$2500 on it he told me he wasn't a good enough shot with a traditional bow. I had no words. In the end, I just told him: Practise! 'I'm not a good enough shot is not a reason to go down that path!'"

Archery is the act of drawing an arrow and releasing it towards a designated target. It requires effort to master and constant practice to maintain your skillset. Anyone who knows a truly good traditional archer will tell you that lethal accuracy is not only achievable, it's only a few years of practice away.

Back to evolution: Why is the compound bow an example of poor evolution? Remember,

evolution by definition is a perfect process where the benefits must be not only necessary, they must be without blemish. Firstly, it's not reliable. A compound bow is so highly strung these days that you really can't depend on it. Even a broken string/cable is a massive headache. Secondly, If you are relying on sighting systems, visibility can be a real problem. Thirdly, In a hunting sense, flexibility of shot is limited. For example, laying the bow over messes up sighting. (That's not a problem with a traditional bow). Fourth, things vibrate loose, springs and circlips fracture – all without warning – and it can be tough to sleuth out what went wrong.

Evolutionary advantages: There are definitely some. Firstly, they are fast ... although this is largely irrelevant. If you confine your shots to the flat shooting range of your bow/arrow set-up it serves no purpose other than increasing your accurate range, and there are some ethical concerns there in the hunting field. Secondly, accuracy is quickly attained. A rank novice

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can hit things within weeks of shooting. Still, the personal growth from having to master a discipline like archery is missed if it all comes too easily. The negatives outweigh the positives, in my opinion.

I have been involved in archery for 45 years and have been a professional bowyer for 20 of those years. I've seen it all, tried it all. The one unalienable truth is that a bow shoots an arrow. Simple, hey? Granted, it has to be a well made, balanced bow, reliable and strong. And it has to suit your shooting needs. But



we have to learn to shoot. There is no substitute for this obvious fact. Gadgets and so-called technological improvements can't replace your responsibility to learn to shoot.

The modern compound is not an example of good evolution. It's more an example of trying to reinvent the wheel to grab a market share. Standing on a practice butt with a set sight and putting arrows in a thimble is actually only an example of working within a gadget's very limited scope of operation and not an example of superiority.

To sum all this up, it's very frustrating watching everyone marching down the tech road in all aspects of life without thinking – although at least in archery many

are not, which is refreshing. Some folk love the tech; just love it. The more tech and fiddling, the better they love it. If that's you, knock yourself out.

Personally, I see bows and arrows as practical implements like what a hammer is to a carpenter: no nonsense, it drives nails reliably, but does require skill from the person wielding it. I don't want to be in the middle of nowhere and discover my highly strung bow needs open heart surgery.

Our main advantage as humans has always been the ability to think and reason things out. Let's maintain our intelligence and mental and physical strength and enjoy our ancestral culture.

Until next time, keep traditional.

BELOW: Osage flat bow, leather guard and glove and wooden arrows. With these Nick has taken a lot of game and won a few traditional tournaments as well. He says it's not magic, just effort.



LEFT: The last word in cunning simplicity ... the mighty yew war bow redefined Europe and helped build an empire. No sights, no release aids, no stabilisers ... just almost mystical skill in its use.

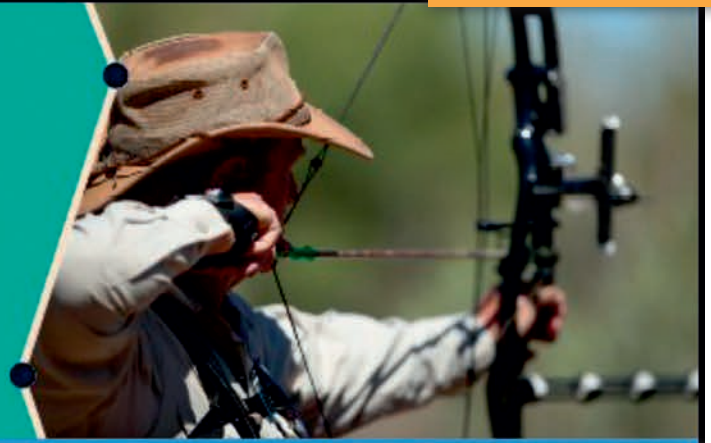


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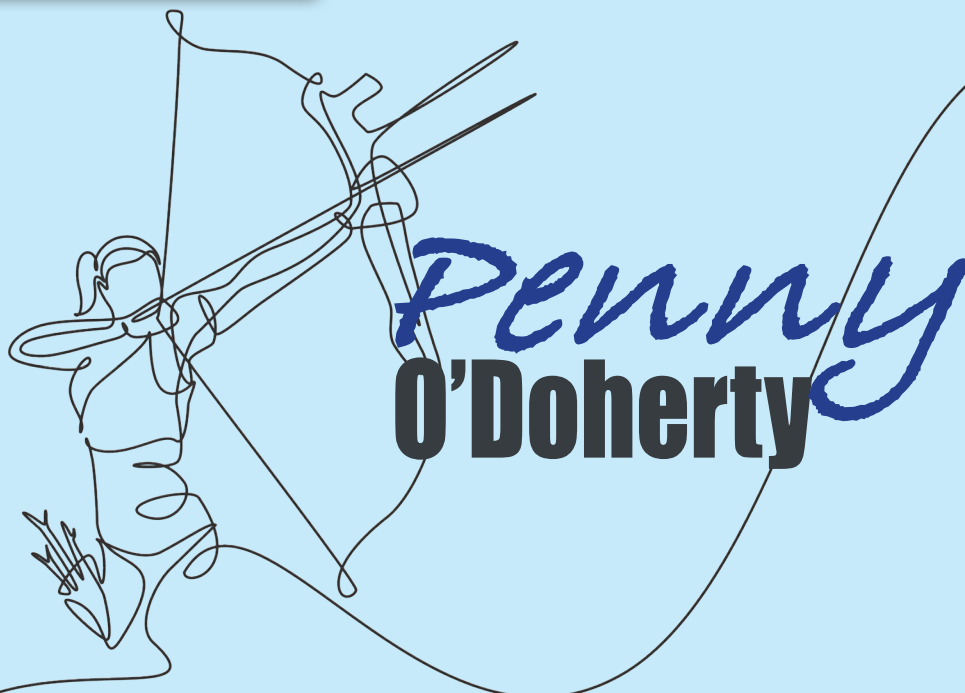


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Sports Coordinator: Stuart Renwick & Sonja Wegert
Email: dcbhpresident@ntarchery.org.au





How did you start in Archery?

We were on holidays, and we found a 10-target archery range (a bit like putt putt) in Margaret River. All four of us had a go and all four were hooked and wanted to do more.

How long have you been involved in archery?

10 years.

Local club?

Sawtell Archers

What types of archery do you shoot?

Compound and longbow. I enjoy all forms of archery – field, target, indoor and 3D.

I love shooting a variety of different events.

Do you hunt?

No, only chooks at Norfolk Island!

What's your favourite archery memory?

Competing at the World Indoor in Sydney 2020, most nervous and enjoyable too, plus meeting some inspiring international archers.

What appeals to you about archery?

It's a family friendly sport – something the whole family can do.

Are any family members involved in archery?

Yes all four of us. Husband Troy, sons James and Seton and me.

What was your first bow?

Samick Sage Recurve.



Benchmark 3D Shooters Association is keen to help promote women in our sport—from the good sport who helps unstintingly at the club through to the top-level archer. If you know someone you think should be featured, please contact us.

*Email: info@benchmark3darchery.com.au
Phone: Robert Vayro 0438 997 638*



What do you use currently?

Darton Tempest and Black Eagle x-impacts & PS 23s.

Greatest achievements in or outside of archery?

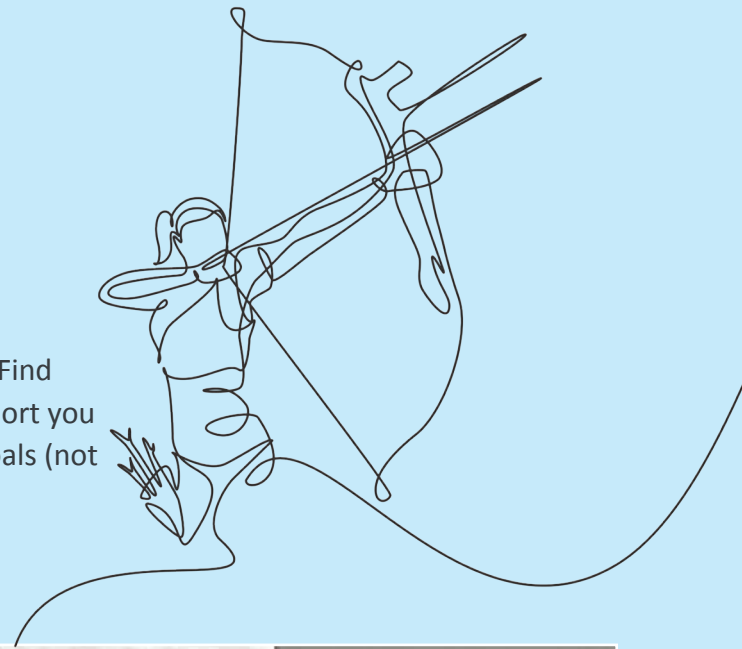
Competing as a co-driver in the World Rally Championships in Coffs Harbour in a Triumph TR7 V8, five times.

Sponsors?

Sherwood Archery.

A last word?

Believe in yourself! Find those who will support you in achieving your goals (not lecture you).





Australian Bowhunters Association LTD



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 shown).

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2023 Branch B Safari

incorporating the 2022 Hunting Awards



by **GRAHAM McCOMISKIE** – Branch B Field Representative



Archers relax outside the Isa Bowhunters clubhouse.

G'day all. Well, another year has come and gone all too quickly since the previous safari in FNQ, and we find ourselves reflecting on an amazing event.

Our Branch B 2023 Safari, incorporating the 2022 Hunting Awards, was hosted by the Mount Isa Bowhunters who

had cleverly tied it in with the Mount Isa Centennial Celebrations, including the renowned Isa Rodeo. That made the long trip very appealing for the 65 shooters, many of whom came from Mackay, Townsville and Collinsville et cetera for the event.

I must say that as far as weekend events go, the Isa Bowhunters crew were all over it! The courses were second to none, with the Rock Face course beautiful and enjoyably challenging. One shooter who had his eye in shot a perfect 400! Pretty impressive, Jess.

Returning from the course was something to behold with the meals being a delightful selection of home-cooked meats accompanied by a selection of salads, vegies and breads. The fresh corned meat and smoked brisket were just superb.

As Saturday evening rolled around, the finishing touches were put to the Hunting Awards Table and Trophy display, scheduled to take place between dinner and the live band that was thoroughly



Peter Ellis (right) from Mackay stands in for Toby Gall to accept his Male Hunter of the Year Award.

First Kill of Species

GOAT	Dean Dank and Chris Nelson
RUSA	Graham Wienert
RABBIT	Damien Smith
FALLOW	Beck Nelson and Dave Flynn
RED DEER	Chris Nelson and Brian Duynhoven
PIG	Michael Picot
SHARK	Chris Nelson

entertaining into the night.

As the awards got under way, the atmosphere was amazing with a lot of the hunters present to accept their awards and savour some of the amazing hand-crafted perpetual awards with their mates.

Most of the recognised species were covered this year

and with quality up there with a high percentage of Record Class and Trophy Class claims.

Firstly, I must congratulate hunters who recorded game on what will always be one of their most memorable hunts – that of the First Kill of Species, harvested with the bow (*listed above*).

Best of Species

BOAR	Graham MComiskie 30 4/8pt
GOAT	Dan Smith 115 4/8pt
BUFFALO	Toby Gall 93 pt
CAMEL	Bryan Butson 28 2/16pt
RED DEER	Graham McComiskie 190 5/8 pt
FALLOW DEER	Dan Ferguson 223 1/8 pt
CHITAL DEER	Brian Duynhoven 169 pt
RUSA DEER	Toby Gall 218 2/8pt
SHARK	Graham McComiskie 15 6/8pt
STINGRAY	Graham McComiskie 6 6/8 pt

Also, congratulations to our Branch B hunters who achieved well at national level, taking out Best of Species – Toby Gall for rusa, Graham McComiskie for boar, Graham McComiskie for stingray, Beck Nelson for Ladies fallow, Bryan Butson for camel and Chris Nelson for bowfishing shark.

Four hunters gained recognition under the Master Bowhunter system. Congratulations go to John Teitzel and Dan Ferguson Bowhunter Award and Toby Gall and Graham McComiskie Trophy Bowhunter Award.

The Dave Anderson Award for Best Goat and Boar



Chris Nelson (centre) receives the Dave Anderson Goat and Boar Perpetual Trophy from Graham McComiskie while Wayne Salmon (right) looks on.

aggregate went to Chris Nelson.

The prestigious Bill Hill Award for Most Trophy Boars Taken went to Graham McComiskie.

Female Hunter of the Year was Beck Nelson.

Male Hunter of the Year – yet again – was Toby Gall.

Sincere congratulations to all. Thanks to those who participated, making a great event. May you enjoy your adventures in the bush this year.



Happy faces – Beck Nelson was awarded the Female Bowhunter of the Year. Here, she presents Graham McComiskie with the Bill Hill Perpetual Trophy for the Most Trophy Boars.

Trophy Bowhunters Australia

Bowhunter of the Year 2022

David Luxford



by **JENEL HUNT**

David Luxford describes himself as having a ‘Krusty the Clown hairdo’. Master deer guide Glenn Carlson apparently calls him ‘Cottonbush Dave’ because he became virtually invisible one day when he was in among the cottonbush during a hunt. But whatever his Einstein/mad professorial hair says about him – maybe he just doesn’t like haircuts – David has a stature in the bowhunting fraternity much greater than his physical size and he is much more serious about hunting than his fluffy hair might lead you to believe ...



A natural raconteur – whether telling stories over a campfire or while drinking tea from a bone china cup at a friend’s house – David is a fascinating character. He has wrinkles upon wrinkles but he’s not old. He talks fast yet he has deep and enduring passions. He loves his family, his art, the theatre, his bowhunting, his archery friends and writing. Yes, despite the fact that his teacher thought he was a loser at school (and David also admits that even well into adulthood he ‘couldn’t spell for nuts’), he has published a number of books, one on bowhunting, another on taxidermy, one a veritable tome on family history “The Luxford Chronicles,” a book on his Mum called “Betty Has a Doll” and a children’s book called “The Frog, The Bear and Mr Sparrow,” based on the camaraderie of real-life hunters who were vastly different in age and background.

Another two books are three-quarters done. One is a history of European hunting in Australia and the other is about Munro, where he grew up.

He is still married to his country sweetheart, Karen, and they have three children.

His idea of art is fun and perhaps even a bit wacky and ranges from still art to the frankly unusual performing arts. Once he made the biggest set of lips you could imagine. Another time he was down the street in his country Victorian town wearing a platinum blonde wig with oranges strategically placed under his shirt. Then there was the time he got in a cage with some taxidermied animals with a sign, ‘Do Not Feed’. (His grandchildren wouldn’t go near him after that escapade!) He has, as a mentor once told him, an infectious mind.

A few years ago he did a series of short films. He

has opened art exhibitions, trod the boards declaiming Shakespearean monologues, been his own boss on the property and has been, in his own words, free as a bird.

“I worked at Telecom for 17 years as a draftsman, then I was retrenched. I’d bought this taxidermy business so I did that for 25 years, then sold that 13 years ago and went back to the shed and did the taxidermy instead of selling the supplies. Somehow I’ve got through life.”

He says he’s never made a cent from his books but it was never about making money – it was always about the story.

Life hasn’t always been straightforward. He had a triple bypass and still has a health issue that could carry him off. But he doesn’t spend much time worrying about that.

“It has been the best time; I’ve met the best people you could ever wish for. It has been a marvellous life.”

Announced in 2023 for animals taken with the bow and arrow in the 2022 hunting year, Victorian man David Luxford is the reigning Bowhunter of the Year. And he's not shy about admitting he has been angling for the honour for a long time.

For the past few years he has felt like 'always the bridesmaid' because he's come in second. But if you go back far enough, David has actually been the Bowhunter of the Year before – in 2002 and 2007, in the days when the National Safari teemed with entries for a huge craft section that included knife and axe set, home taxidermy, tanning a skin, presentation of trophy, photo albums. Outside the big tent there were knife and axe events, a speed round

and a sneaker round. And the Bowhunter of the Year worked under a formula – where the hunting points were part of three categories.

"And then that stopped working and I said to Mark Burrows (the then Vice-President Bowhunting Division of the ABA) that what we needed was a trophy that people really wanted their names on," David said.

"I'd won the big Australian Safari Club trophy four times – which is pretty cool when you consider you're competing against rifle hunters – so I had this beautiful bronze buffalo. I thought, 'I got it from hunting; I'll give it back.' So I designed a trophy around that buffalo, with 120-year-old timber around it from an old shack I'd

pulled down. Mark and I built it together. So I already had my name on the back of the trophy as the donor!"

But of course, he wanted his name on the front too.

"It's all about whatever fires you up and gets you doing stuff. This has been my passion. And I'm getting a little older and perhaps not as enthusiastic as I used to be – but I still kind of am. I like it that you have to get enough points to get your Master Bowhunter status before you even get in the pool. It means you can't get it in your back yard – you have to travel to get the variety of Trophy Class animals that you need, and it's hard yakka. Anything worthwhile is. And this is the pinnacle for bowhunters in Australia."

Never a 'boaring' moment when you're a bowhunter ...



Pretty good for a fellow who didn't even pick up a bow until he was about 35! (Although he remembers making his own bows when he was about eight years old.)

"To the young blokes in your 40s, you don't know how the next 15 or 20 years will fly by. I'm running out of lifetime, that's the reality. But to be still there 20 years after I won it the first time is pretty amazing."

He has a deep respect for the many names that came before his on the trophy but never talks about the respect that others have for him. He just shrugs and says how amazing it has been to meet the people he has encountered while working in hunting camps as everything from skinner to cook to general camp hand. He still goes every year to work hard for guiding outfitters and help other hunters have a great experience. He has friends throughout the world that he has met in this way, and he considers his archery friends a 'beautiful family' – along with his own family, of course.

To take the trophy, David shot seven recognised species including Record Class and Trophy Class animals.

He says his son Michael is desperately trying to get his name on the trophy too.

"Come on, son, lift your game!"



*David's famous headgear.
Photo by GRAHAM McCOMISKIE, 2015*

On the following pages, in his own words, is the story of David's winning bowhunting year.

“

The year started off as it usually does with my annual addiction to fox hunting and my desire to obtain Master Bowhunter status; something I have done for many years. It is nothing more than a personal challenge – go hard and try to obtain my goal within a few kilometres of home and by the end of March.

On January 3 I waited patiently for the easterly breeze to pickup and for the afternoon shadows to stretch out. I positioned myself exactly at the same spot, same shrub, same time as I have done for years, came to draw, whistled, released the arrow and had

my first fox for the year and by the time the sun had set I had another. Over the next few weeks, I repeated my simple formula; whistle and call from where it has worked before and by mid-March, I had eight on the deck. All are memorable and exciting hunts, but some remain entrenched in the memory bank.

I had been hunting sambar deer in the high country, took a break and went to the ‘gorge’ for a whistle. The gorge is somewhat steep country, what a surprise, positioned myself in a rather precarious spot overlooking a briar-covered rock face; perfect spot for a

fox. I backed up to a burnt-out tree, concentrated where the expectant fox would appear and arced-up the ‘Dufferator’. I seemed to be calling forever, then turned to my right only to see a fox sitting and watching me at about 6m; he paid the ultimate price for his curiosity.

”

Fox





Three of eight foxes taken by mid-March.



“

Oh, such a sad tale it is. The photo should have been of one of the most majestic Queensland bush stags imaginable ... but it isn't. It could have also been of a very impressive 5 x 5, but it isn't.

In short, my first few days in Red Deer Camp was a living nightmare even though I was shooting well and stalking at the optimum level.

Mr Big was broadside at 45m, a comfortable shot, only if you take into account the decline. The impressive five; a great stalk, perfect anticipation of encounter amid the chaos of a roaring stag rounding up his hinds while fighting off adversaries. He was that wired and stirred up that when he passed at easy range and I let the arrow go he tensed up, dropped and did an about

turn in a micro- second. This resulted in me discarding my pack and all other equipment, looking at a tree with a raised bow and face planting myself into the dirt.

I was a mental wreck. I had blown a perfect opportunity. I had put everything into the pursuit of a nice stag. I was done. It was only when Jerm, who had recorded the shot (not the hissy fit), showed me footage revealing that it was not my fault that I regained

some composure.

So, how do you get back on your bike after such disappointment? You regroup. It's not easy but that's what you do. That afternoon I went out with determination to shoot a spiker or such, but more so to fire a perfect arrow, and I did. The double-two was the smallest stag taken over the three-week hunting period, but to me, he was one of the grandest and most important.

”

Red Deer



Fallow deer



David with Marc Curtis.

After almost a month at Red Deer Camp I headed for home, a bit disheartened and sad and sorry for myself. I always have a couple of fallow stop-overs on the way home; Tamworth and Goulburn. Although the grunt is usually close to an end by the time I pass, it's nice to catch up with friends and go for an uncomplicated stroll. I called at Marc Curtis's home, chilled out, listened to local advice, went for a stroll, waited where I was told to wait, moved off at the optimum time. I intercepted a good buck strolling along, watched him thrash a bush, stand stretched out and demolish the highest branches.

Every time he thrashed the bush I moved closer. I had a steady upward breeze in my face and just enough cover to conceal my approach. At 30m I came to draw. The buck was now standing beside the shrub and quartering away. Arrow away, buck away. The shot was good and I was able to watch the buck for some distance before he disappeared behind a tree and out of sight. A small blood trail and the arrow told a positive story. But as it was just on dark, I returned to Marc's home. We analysed the whole event and were back just after light and found the buck only a short distance from where I had seen him last. Sadly, the foxes had had a merry old feast during the night and although the cape was okay, the rest of the carcass was just a bit tainted. Finding the buck together and sharing the moment with some one whom you have known for 30 years is rather special.

Buffalo



“

In September, I was in Buffalo Camp east of Katherine. Primarily I was working as a skinner and responsible for capes and trophies with the possibility of a hunt if time allowed. Pigs and a donkey were my preferred game as it had been six years since I had faced off with a buffalo bull and in all honesty, I wasn't sure if I had it in me to do the job.

Adam Clements was on the hunt under the guidance of Russell Cornall. Both men are good friends and when Adam had fulfilled his dream run

“

A donkey is not everybody's idea of huntable game, however for someone from the far south the donkey is a fascinating animal to hunt. Few opportunities exist to hunt donkeys other than if you happen to be up north or in the far west. So, whenever there's a chance to have a donkey hunt, I take it. And the donkey I took while in buffalo country became one of the nine species I took with the bow for 2022.

”

Donkey



of trophies they eagerly and enthusiastically persuaded me to hunt a buffalo. I made up every excuse, why I couldn't, and eventually had no option other than to do it.

With a mountain of anxiety, I followed quietly behind Russell along a dried creek bed. We climbed up the bank to where we thought the bull we had seen earlier would be. As it happened it was the perfect intercept. The bull was quietly sauntering along above us. Using a partial washout for concealment we waited. The

bull for some reason was aware that something was up; we waited and waited. His inquisitive nature closed the gap between hunter and hunted to seventeen metres. The shot was broadside and the bull, as they do, trotted off some distance and bedded down. It was a huge relief to me to see the bull down, although as it turned out the hunt was far from over. We waited awhile, moved in,

maybe pushed the issue of insanity a bit, had a serious face off in the open and then closed the deal with a double lung shot.

It is hard to describe my feelings as I watched the bull attempt his last run, zig-zagging between anthills and collapsing on the red dirt. It was truly something unexpected and another great moment shared with great friends.

David with Adam Clements.



big saddleback boar in the company of Adam and Russell, although he wasn't big in the tusk department he had true spirit, gave his all and was once again a very memorable hunt in the company of friends.

Boar

There is no doubt that hunting boars with the bow is the best sport going. During my time at Buffalo Camp, I had a couple of opportunities to go for a creek walk. It was hot and there was plenty of action. The first day out I took a couple of big sows and a couple of big boars with small tusks. The next walk up the creek I shot a couple

more boars, it was exciting hunting not knowing what was around the next corner; wild horses were aplenty, scrub bulls encountered and buffalo aplenty; it was truly an adventure. I took a nice

“

What I like about bowhunting for fish is that there are no mountains, no need to get up early, it is warm and anything can happen at a moment's notice. There is also an element of danger associated with it. A great majority of bowhunting for fish is conducted in the far north and thus crocodiles are part of the risk, stonefish, box jellyfish are also part of the equation and, believe me, stingrays are not to be taken for granted; I have been hit twice and the pain is horrific and endures for at least six hours. So why do it? The answer is simple, it can be exciting, action packed and is out of the normal realms of standard hunting.

When heading to the territory I always take my bow-fishing gear and do my best to find a beach to walk or a rock shelf to berley from. An opportunity arose with my son Michael and within minutes of tossing a berley bag, we had action. Without the slightest hesitation, a shark came directly at the berley bag and attacked it, thrashing back and forth. My shot was well placed and it was almost over before it started. It is an addictive sport due to the unpredictable

Shark



nature of the game we hunt and the variety fish species that are observed while waiting for that 'two seconds of action'. I also took a small stingray on that trip and couldn't believe it was the only one I encountered.

Stingray

Greater Victoria trains bowhunting proficiency instructors



The Greater Victoria Branch of ABA held its accreditation for its club bowhunting proficiency instructors in September 2023 at Bacchus Marsh Bowmen.

Ray Morgan, the Branch BPC instructor who is also the National Director of Bowhunting Education, was the man in charge.

The club rooms had a very comfortable warm fire going, which was welcome because it was a beanie-wearing day outside.

Two members from the west of Victoria had an interesting trip. They'd headed to the Ballarat Bowhunters Club by mistake so it was a bit of a detour to get back on track.

There was some talk on the subject of the BPC manual and the updates that have occurred and will be available very soon to everyone.

The book has some new additions and a lot of obsolete items have been removed. This in turn raised many questions which were discussed at length to help and clarify for the club instructors to take back to their clubs to train their members.

Ray had organised for a guest speaker to attend the meeting to show everyone the process of resuscitation and use of a defibrillation device.

Robin is a good friend of Ray and has been in the industry for many years and now supplies devices such as de-fibs and first aid supplies. This was not a certificate course – just a friendly demonstration

for those in attendance. Many of us hadn't seen one before. It was not complex but we all felt comfortable that if ever the need were to arise, we could do what was required.

Ray's wife Helena brought along food for everyone to feast on during the lunch break.

Then it was back to the BPC training. Talk on what to put in a first aid pack to carry out hunting was good topic with some digging out of their packs that they had brought along and showing everyone the latest and greatest gadgets that are available.

Discussion on devices to navigate also created a lot of talk as to what is available these days. Things have certainly changed from the old boy scout days, but a compass and map will never go astray when you are in a new area. You also need to remember that mobile phones do not work in many remote places.

Many of the members who attended are carrying on from the previous term as a BPC instructors and we had two newbies.

Our qualified BPC club instructors will go back to their respective clubs in the Greater Victoria Branch and train members to obtain their Bowhunting Proficiency Certificate to hunt feral animals and claim them in ABA.

–Allan Driver
Director of Bowhunting



An archery marathon-

IFAA National Championships and Pacific Region Field Archery Championships

by ALLAN DRIVER
Director of Bowhunting

The 2023 International Field Archery Association (IFAA) National Championships and the Pacific Region Field Archery Championships (PRFAC) were conducted at Mallee Sunset Field Archers, Red Cliffs, Victoria in June.

This major event comes around every four years and clubs throughout the world can get the opportunity to host it.

Ray Morgan (ABA Bowhunting Education Officer) and I began the long trip to Red Cliffs for this event ... in a national role and as competitors. We arrived just after midday and set about getting our campsites ready for the next six days.

We were joined by Geoffrey Blake from Donald and so started a wonderful journey for all of us at this event.

Once we were set up both Ray and I headed down to the Mallee clubrooms to see who else was about and found Brian Taylor, the National Score Recorder, and Ralph Boden, the National President, both going about their duties to ensure a smooth event.

Before an event such as this there is a huge amount of work for the club to set up courses, prepare targets and set them out, measure

peg distances to conform to the rules of shoot and put out signage for competitors to find their way around the courses.

Plus, the club has to prepare meals for everyone and see to the toilets and all those behind-the-scenes things that go into making a successful event.

But things don't just stop there. Brian and Ralph were working on registrations. With a major event like the PRFAC there is more paperwork to fill out than a normal ABA or 3D shoot. The bow inspections were conducted outside by Bruce Kelleher (former National member) and with his knowledge he managed to get all those archers through the process without many hiccoughs – thanks, Bruce.

Wednesday went by without any dramas and on Thursday morning more archers were due to come in to register and get their equipment checked.

Red Cliffs is in northwest Victoria and winter was approaching – but you can be lucky with the weather. It was mostly sunny and mild on Wednesday but that changed in the evening just before nightfall and one hell of a storm came along and rain teemed down on all

campers.

Our campsite had an inch of water running through it ... truly a sight to behold.

Because the Mallee club grounds are relatively flat, a sheet of water was flowing through the place at speed and all we could do was have a drink and watch it.

Luckily, we had a fire drum working and it kept the rain and cold air at bay under Ray's awning while we waited for the rain to finish.

Day one of the event dawned and archers made their way to the practice butts and others made their way to the canteen for a hearty breakfast.

Last-minute bow checks were performed and the hooter sounded for muster where Ralph and Brian went through the formalities to explain the day's proceedings, safety on and off the courses et cetera.

With this type of event, you don't normally have a lunch break so you take something to eat with you and shoot 24 targets in one go. Mallee Sunset also had set up food points midway on the course with undercover shelter and sales of food and drinks – a great idea.

Day one is about finding your way around the courses and becoming accustomed to the environment and the people in your groups.

The following days were the same for everyone shooting the field round for two days and the hunter round the next two days.

Most mornings when everyone walked out to the courses they were greeted by cool fresh weather and depending on which side of the course they were starting on, the rising sun was right there in their face, making it quite difficult to see the targets.

One of the Mallee Sunset members took a drive along the red course in her Holden sedan and got it bogged in a muddy patch.

Our group of longbow archers came across it and got it out of its situation so it could be driven back to the clubrooms sometime later – longbowers rule!

Day five was the final shoot day and was the animal round for IFAA.

It had been a long time since I had shot the animal round and we were greeted to colour targets very similar to ABA, which made it a lot of fun to shoot.

After shooting for five days, the old fingers were feeling it after flinging four arrows at 24 targets per day. It takes its toll, especially for longbow shooters.

Once the last day was done and dusted it was time to work out the placegetters with Brian working his magic to make heads and tails of it all.

The presentations were conducted at the clubrooms outside with many recipients receiving awards for their hard work.

Many thanks to the Mallee Sunset Archers club members for all their hard work and a truly great shoot. It was one of the best title events I have seen.

That abouts wraps up this PRFAC and if you get the chance to attend the next one in four years, you certainly won't be disappointed.





DV Knives

By KEV WINDLE

Kev's first DV knife.

Renegade Bowmen foundation and life member Denis Vince makes knives. Denis has been making knives from around the time he took up archery in the 1970s.

Denis also made Bushranger bows and there are still some examples of these bows around. My brother Bob still has one. But I digress. At a club shoot earlier in the year Denis brought out some of the knives he had made. One in

particular caught my eye so I purchased it from Denis. Now I'm no bladesmith or forger but this knife had some character. It was made from a file. Denis had left some of the original file grooves in place when making the knife which, to me, gave it the character that I was looking for in a knife. He shaped it with a gentle curve and finished it off with a wooden handle. It was a pleasure to hold and it fitted in the hand nicely. It was well balanced and just looked

good. And *sharp!* This knife was so sharp it sliced paper easily.

Denis asked if I would give the knife a field test and I was happy to oblige. My next hunting trip was a while off at the time so in the meantime I gave it a run around the house. I used it for cutting fruit and cuts of meat which it handled with simple ease. To protect my investment, I made sure to clean it thoroughly and oil it with some vegetable oil after each use.



ABOVE: Part of the workshop.

BELOW: Denis Vince.





Eventually my hunting trip came along. Every two years I have some work in Longreach, central Queensland and make a point of having a few days off on the way home to chase pigs and cats. So with my new knife packed, I finished my work and headed to the property. Disappointment followed as no pigs or cats were to be found. Field testing delayed.

Later in the year, in October, I finally had my chance to test the knife. (Actually it was

a professional tracker and skinner who did the testing.) I had purchased a hunting trip to South Africa in 2019 with the view of taking it in 2020 and everyone knows what happened then. Anyway, the outfitter was kind enough to defer the hunt and I eventually got the chance to go.

After a couple of days I got my chance to shoot a blue wildebeest and as they were loading the animal on the truck to go to the butchery I asked

if the skinner could use the knife and report back to its usefulness to which Philamont, the tracker and as it turned out was also the skinner, happily agreed to do.

The following morning he handed me back the knife and all he said was, "It was very good, sir. Very sharp." I wanted to ask some more questions but we were making tracks for our hunting day. A couple of days later I got the opportunity to sit with Philamont and talk



to him again. I asked if it was comfortable to use. My accent was probably difficult for him because he wasn't sure what I was asking. So I tried with "Was it easy to hold in your hand?" to which he replied, "Very easy. Very nice to hold." I asked again about its sharpness and if he really liked the knife and he indicated he was very happy with the knife and how sharp it was. Philamont said, "It is better than any of the knives we have here."

I figure for a professional skinner to say that says volumes for my (Denis') knife. When I got back to Australia I gave it back to Denis for a light

polish and for him to check the sharpness. Denis said it was still very sharp but one section of the blade just dragged a little on the paper test so he gave it touch-up. He didn't think that Philamont had used a steel which made me feel very good about my purchase.

I was so impressed by the quality of Denis' knives I went and bought a second knife from him.

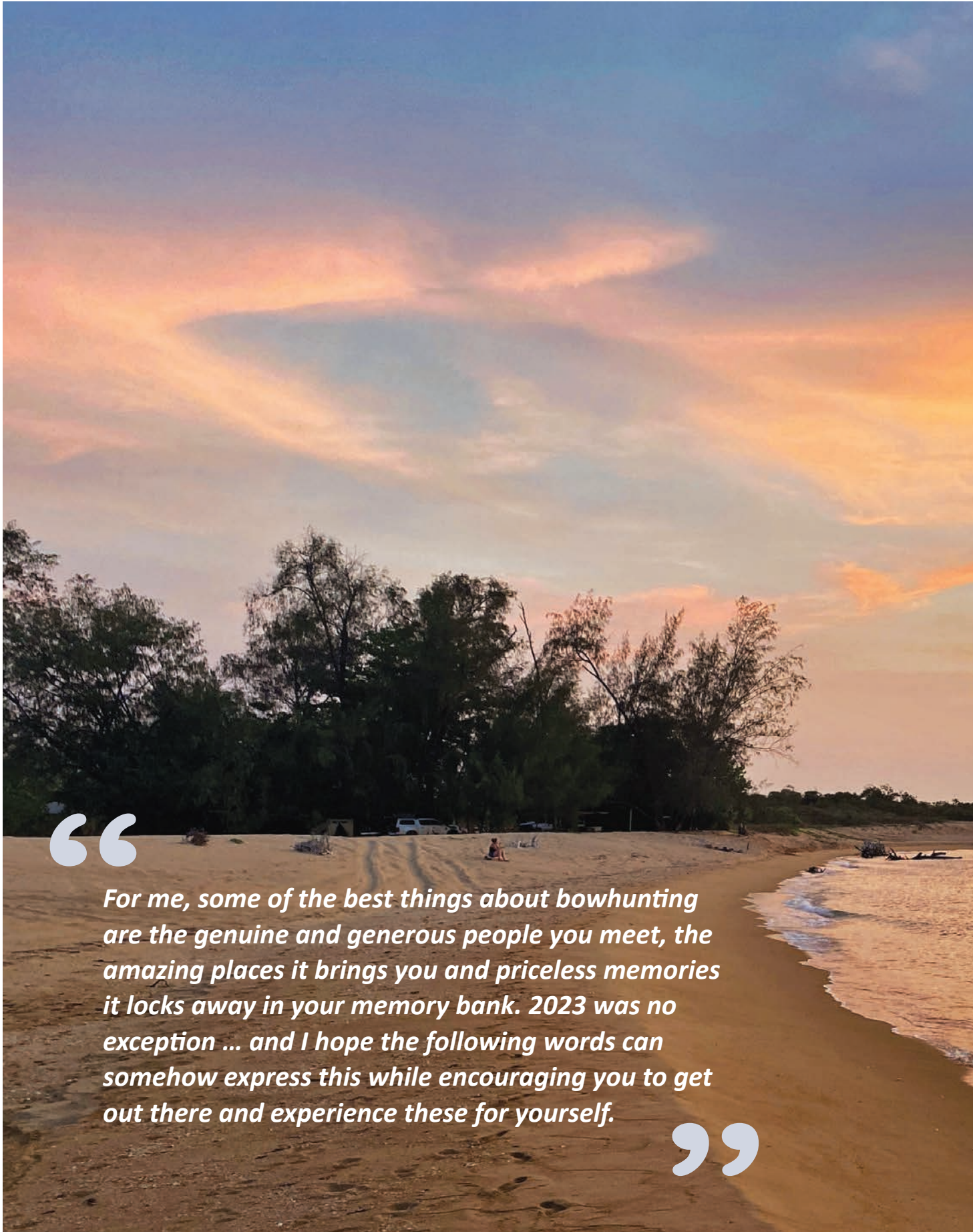
Fellow club member and current President of Renegade Bowmen, Bevan Blacklock, also purchased one of Denis' knives. As at the date of writing this story Bevan has skinned and boned out two deer with his

knife. He is super impressed with the feel of the knife and the sharpness of the blade. He has only used a leather strop to keep the edge keen. Bevan is eager to see how long it will take before the knife needs a proper sharpen. I suspect it may take some time.

As I said at the start, Denis Vince makes knives – quality knives that look good, are well built, well tempered, comfortable to hold and sharp.

Denis also offers a blade-sharpening service and for those who are keen to DIY, he also gives knife-making lessons. Denis can be contacted on (07) 3389 9995.





“

For me, some of the best things about bowhunting are the genuine and generous people you meet, the amazing places it brings you and priceless memories it locks away in your memory bank. 2023 was no exception ... and I hope the following words can somehow express this while encouraging you to get out there and experience these for yourself.

”

Make every year ...
*a hunting year to
remember*

by **ADAM CLEMENTS**



Adam with his Record Class fox ... a nice start to the year.

The year's hunting began with a summer evening wandering the rolling hills of Gippsland in Victoria, whistling foxes.

It doesn't always come easily, though. The whistling session was followed by a morning of digging out a wombat hole to recover the nice record class fox that I took!

March came along and while on the way to Red Deer Camp with Mark Burrows we stopped in at a property in New South Wales to do some early recon for a 2024 fallow hunt. This quickly turned into chasing rutting bucks up and down mountains, listening to stories from the past, absorbing some stunning scenery and putting in a stalk and taking a nice young boar at 20m.

Arriving at Red Deer Camp a couple of days later was an experience of itself. Well equipped, comfortable and carefully planned out by Glenn Carlson from Queensland Bowhunting Safaris, it had a big outdoor table where you could spend your time enjoying great meals, and hearing stories of both heartbreak and success each day.

There was a central campfire to sit by while taking in the array of vehicles/tents/campers, energetic and excited guides and hunters alike setting up camp. We were all summing each other up while comparing

and prepping our gear ready for opening morning ... all while hiding our nerves and excitement.

When 4am arrived, there was scant time for a coffee and toast then off the convoy went ascending into the mountains in search for adventure.

Before first light, I was sitting on a log cresting what I could sense was a valley below listening to red stags roaring all around. The adrenaline was flowing and when first light broke, boy did I have a great view! Every hilltop seemed to

have a stag on it. We took our time glassing to see what stag we wanted to chase. A couple of unsuccessful stalks later and the wind not playing the game, we headed back to camp. That afternoon produced a similar experience to the morning.

The following day I headed out with Glenn and it wasn't long before we were in the action. Watching his experience and knowledge of hunting was something else. Zoning in on a roar and being able to pinpoint where and how a stag would be presenting from hundreds



This boar was taken at 20m.



A master at work.

of metres away then planning a stalk through the maze of steep gullies and ever-changing wind direction to get you within 5yd to 10yd of an approaching pumped-up red stag is very special.

The morning of Day 3 and the experiences continued. This time I was out with guide Clanger and we quickly found ourselves watching some impressive stags chasing hinds, roaring and chasing off any other stags considering an approach on their harem.

There seemed to be deer going everywhere! We approached a lone stag while dodging cattle and kangaroos, carefully picking where we put our feet. Things were going well until a brief change in the wind struck the back of our necks

and the stag was gone...

We continued, contouring the steep terrain until all of a sudden we noticed a few deer above us grazing back the way we had just come from. We quickly double backed a little and closed the distance uphill towards them.

Thankfully we'd had a few rain showers that morning and the ground was quiet. There were three or four hinds and two young spikers moving around feeding while every now and then randomly lifting their heads to survey their surroundings.

Time wasn't on our side as our trajectories had an eventual crossroad in the wind but I wanted to make sure I caught my breath as well as having them at a distance and angle I



Roaring valley ... what a view.



Adam and his red deer.

was confident with. I had one of the spikers in my sight and the arrow flew and disappeared through his shoulder.

All the deer took off and he broke away from them and headed over the ridge. After a little time, we were both confident in the shot and decided to begin tracking the blood trail. It wasn't long and I could see him lying down in the grass not far from the shot. This was my first red deer and a moment I won't forget. We soaked up the excitement and moment together, took photos then got to work harvesting what meat we could.

The following day, I headed out with Tim. We covered lots of ground but struggled to find

the deer that morning until we tried one more spot when suddenly it all came together. Stag roaring, hunter ready, guide masterfully calling and enticing the stag to come in ... it wasn't long before the arrow flew. I was confident with the

shot, the amount of blood and direction he went in. So we waited. Unfortunately, after hours of tracking we couldn't find him in the thick scrub and decided to head back to camp and re-group. For the next few hours, I was gutted and grieving

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over what could have been. Thankfully, Tim must have picked up on my struggles and came up and offered to go out early to look again. I jumped at the offer and we headed out to re-trace our steps but unfortunately after more hours of searching we couldn't recover the stag.

This is the point where everything changed and this experience went from a hunt to something else ... Tim pulled

me out of the emotional hole I was in and said, "Let's go find another stag." We were both determined and found another gear and for the next couple of hours we went further and further over hills, down creeks, through the bush calling, listening and chasing roars through the mountains.

Just as we sat for a break and I was thinking the day was done, we headed over one more ridge to see what we

could see. *ROAR!*

We spotted a bedded stag perched on a bench in the side of a hill, his hinds feeding above him towards us. It was going to be a hard stalk but we went for it. At 200m it was all good, 150m still good, at 100m the hinds aware of us but still feeding, at 80m we had to cross a gully and come up from below him and at 50m the hinds had fed away and he was now alone bedded behind



This red stag meant so much ... a lesson in perseverance, teamwork and overcoming doubts.

a rock roaring with no intention of standing up. At 30m I'm shaking but I hear, "Take your time ... we have him where we want him", at 25m I am singing my little tune in my head to stay calm while I contemplate the steep uphill shot in front of me. Then I hear, "When you draw, I will make him stand up." Draw, hold, Tim started to call, nothing. Called again and the stag just sat there! No ... I couldn't hold for much longer!

After what felt like minutes holding at full draw, the stag finally stood and stared us down.

I aimed about an inch above the rock he was standing behind and the arrow flew. He jumped and ran straight downhill and I lost sight of him. I was going to nock another arrow just in case I needed it and turned to Tim, who was smiling and pumping the air excited. "Well done mate, you

got him!"

"Really?" I asked.

"Go over and have a look," Tim responded, so I did.

As I crested the ridge there he was, he had only gone 50m or so and was down so not wanting to take any risks I added another arrow in to make sure.

Overcome with emotion, I pumped the air, did a dance and shed a few tears! This was more than a stag on the ground. It



Amazing scenery at Red Deer Camp.

was a lesson in perseverance, teamwork, pushing through a wall and overcoming my own self-criticisms and doubts.

This deer meant a lot to Tim, too, after all the effort he had put into guiding me that day and I was proud to share it with him.

We took photos, and while the stag wasn't what some would consider a great trophy in a score sense, he was an old warrior and that meant so much more to me. I knew straight away I wanted to have him mounted so I could capture and cherish this moment in time.

While we were in the process of capping him another stag came roaring in to round up the now lone group of hinds. Now we had a huge pack-out ahead of us in the dark and I tried to use the left-over adrenaline I had to get as far as possible as we followed the creek upstream listening to roars and animals moving through the bush before punching up what felt like a never-ending mountain track – and thanks to Tim's constant encouragement and superhuman fitness, I eventually made it.

There is something very

special about this place and the experience and scenery never disappoints.

While at Red Deer Camp I had organised to return in June for a rusa hunt with Glenn. As the dates got closer my Dad unexpectedly became very sick and a week before I was due to leave, we decided to get to Queensland as quickly as we could to see Dad as his condition became worse.

I had touched base with Glenn to let him know I was in Queensland but that I might have to cancel at the last minute depending on how Dad was doing.

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After much debate within myself, Dad and the family encouraged me to go as we were close by and things were stable again so off I went. I met up with Glenn and followed him into rusa camp, taking my car just in case I had to leave early. Glenn was very understanding and helped me to relax in this stressful time and again had an amazing camp set up for us. We went for a scout around on the first evening and saw a few deer but only one stag.

The next 24 hours was a whirlwind. We drove around spotting all types of deer and stalked a herd of rusa stags in

the morning but couldn't get close enough for a shot. In the afternoon it went quiet so we headed out to a spot that was thicker/scrubbier country which might be holding some deer. Upon arrival, we encountered an impressive fallow buck. I missed an opportunity on him but there were some rusa – including a nice stag – across the valley. We planned our stalk and went to try cut them off, catching our breath and closing in on where we expected the deer to meet us.

I noticed the deer were still further along but there was a spiker 25m in front of me,

feeding straight towards us.

With Glenn right behind me and watching the stag further ahead and not realising I was focussed on about to be getting busted, "There he is," Glenn said as I pointed to the approaching spiker. Inevitably, we got busted. The deer ran but as the stag went to crest the hill, he stopped for one last look at what all the commotion was about. The distance was more than I would have normally taken a shot at but he was broadside and I had a little time on my side.

With some encouraging words from Glenn behind me I



The stag that stopped for one last look.

went through my shot process and sent an arrow. The arrow was on its mark but at the last second looked like it may have dropped below him. The stag ran around the corner and we went up to investigate.

To our surprise, he was only 30m from where he'd been standing at the time of the shot— dead on the ground.

The next morning while out looking for deer I got a call to say Dad had suddenly gone downhill and my heart dropped. We raced back to camp, packed up while Glenn remained calm and made sure I had everything I needed then I headed back to Brisbane to see Dad for what was a very emotional few days before thankfully he pulled through and has now recovered and is doing well.

A couple of months later, I got an invitation to tag along on one of Andrew Robertson's

hunts up in the Victorian high country chasing sambar.

Taking full advantage of this opportunity, I headed up, ready to learn as much as possible from this very experienced sambar hunter.

It was a great three days with some amazing up-close encounters with sambar as always at Timberline Self-Guided Sambar Hunts and enjoying getting to know Robbo more as well as enjoying his delicious camp cooking!

Now October, it was time for a planned family trip to Cape York and I was keen to try my hand at a chital hunt or some aquatic species while up there. I wasn't able to arrange a chital hunt, unfortunately, despite lots of generous efforts by a couple of fellow bowhunters.

I got in touch with Graham McComiskie who despite many things going on in his

schedule at the time went above and beyond giving me tips and pointing me in the right direction for where to try for a shark and stingray. It wasn't the best time of year to hunt these species but I was excited to give bowhunting in the ocean a go anyway.

We arrived to an amazing beach camp, got set up and to our surprise had the company of another travelling couple we had met the week before while travelling on the other side of the Cape.

While enjoying the view we watched dolphins, sharks, jumping manta rays, fish and crocodiles going about their life. I was keen to take an early morning walk to see what I could find.

As I took in the sunrise, it wasn't long before I worked out how foreign and hard this bowhunting with fishing line

Victorian high country.





Sunrise panorama at Cape York.

was going to be. After returning to camp frustrated, I had a coffee then tried again. This time the sun was up higher and I could see in the water better. As I waded along, I noticed some big fish chasing little fish so stalked in and had a shot.

I missed, no – hang on – I had a hit! The line spooled out and the fish took off! As I got it back to shore, the family ran down and congratulated me.

Thankfully, our new friends were avid fishers and generously helped identify the

fish and give me tips on how to fillet it.

Now armed with some berley, I found myself stalking and aiming at sharks. After I'd had a couple of misses on some small sharks, a larger one showed up and swam past within range.

As I shot, I prepared for a fight and gripped my bow, thankfully though the shot had dispatched it through the head and before I knew it, I was back at shore with a shark!

Again, after lots of

celebration, our new friends helped with filleting and were grateful for some fresh shark for their freezer.

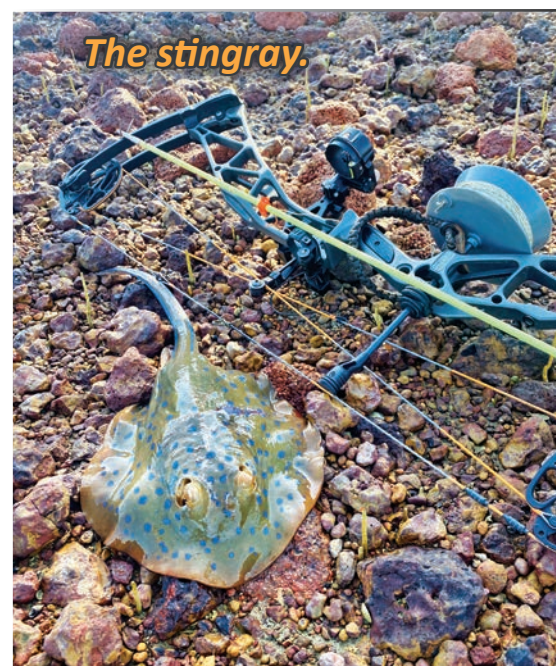
The rest of the week was spent searching and chasing stingrays around the rocky mangrove outcrops at low tide. While it was frustrating missing quite a few shots trying to get used to the refraction, I enjoyed seeing so many different types of fish and a very large shark. Then on the last morning I said to Crystal I wasn't going home until I had a stingray. Thankfully



Success after a steep learning curve.



Adam's shark.



The stingray.

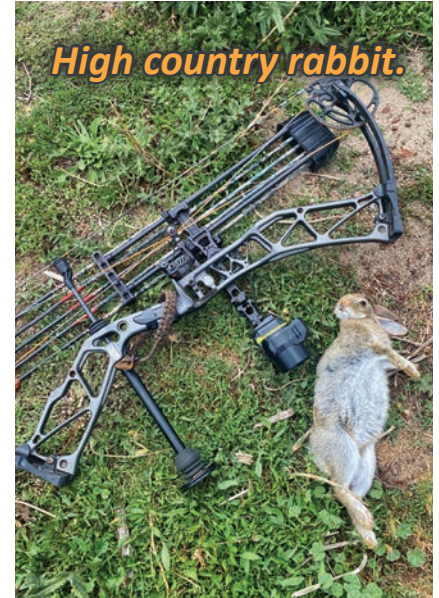


the week's experience had taught me a few things and I had my spot narrowed down where I was consistently finding them. Then it all came together and I realised just how strong a small stingray can be!

Like all trips, this one came to an end and the week we arrived home I had another trip planned for up at Timberline. The family decided to skip this one and recover from the previous six weeks of camping so I asked Mark if he wanted to join me. The weather wasn't looking great but we headed

up anyway and enjoyed a few more sambar encounters including a very special evening experience with a stag that preached and shredded some saplings for about 15 minutes only 30 yards from me ... but never presented a clear shot. We did manage to take some rabbits while up there, though, and enjoyed a great cuppa with David Luxford on the way home, sharing stories of our recent adventures.

Among these experiences there have been the close calls, missed shots, heartbreaks,



sleepless nights, patience-testing tree-stand sessions, bad decisions, countless insect bites, battles with self to push further, hunt harder, hunt smarter and sometimes just get myself out of bed to do it all again the next day but this all adds to the incredible journey of bowhunting! And it all starts by picking up your bow and going for a walk. Happy hunting!

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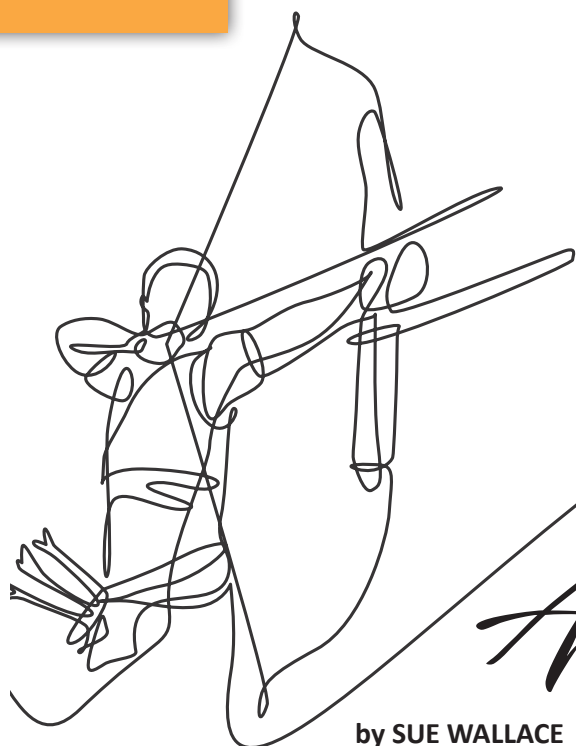
*Morning view,
Adam Clements.*



*In the right spot,
Kameron Rowntree.*



*Mathews Phase4's time to rest,
Kyle Harrison.*



Around the Trads

by SUE WALLACE

National Muster

It was quite overcast as we set off on Thursday for the TAA National Muster at Chinchilla Archers, situated about 20km from Chinchilla at the small township of Brigalow. There were already a few camps set up when we arrived mid-afternoon and we drove around a couple of times, much to the amusement of those watching, until we settled on a spot.

On Friday we went over to the practice butts for few shots. The ground was so hard that if your arrows missed the target, you had to walk quite a way to retrieve them. That evening there was a free sausage sizzle.

Saturday morning was a little brisk, with blue skies as far as the eye could see. They called for Muster around 8.30am and 102 archers from as far as Tully in Far North Queensland and Sydney in NSW. The events were a 20-target 3D course, three-arrow walk-up scoring 10/8/5, a Moving target between target 9 and 10, with the rolling disk along the track as you walked onto the course, plus the Hunt Round on the other side of oval.

For the Hunt Round, there were about 10 or so targets set in various positions and you had 60 seconds

to walk along a track shooting the animals as you came across them, then back toward to start line until time was called.

With so many archers in attendance the shoot groups were averaging 7, so we knew it would be little slow going.

With a three-arrow walk-up there were three markers and the targets included a chameleon, many goats, a large bear, a couple of rising boars with one hiding in the shrubbery where you needed to pull a handle to slide him out to score the arrows.

Next was the moving target. At this target there were six shooting positions for archers, and you shot five arrows only, one from a different marker each time. The scoring was 10 for A/B and 5 for rest of body.

On to the turkey at target 10, followed by a couple of deer, a fox in a log, a fox in the grass, three deer, three pigs

We did the rolling disk on our way back to the clubhouse.

Later in the afternoon was the Hawkeye Event. There were 54 archers competing in the 1st round and only 12 went through to the next round.

Dinner was included in our shoot

fee, prepared and served by the P&C committee of the local Brigalow school district, being roast beef and/or chicken with mixed vegetables and potato bake. This was followed by a presentation by Mary O'Brien "Are You Boggled Mate". The subject being Men's Mental Health, and she had an extraordinary way of explaining things and was a most enlightening topic, especially when she explained the difference in communication between males and females.

Another glorious morning greeted us on Sunday. We had a one-arrow round on the Field Course plus a 30-second Speed Round had been set up.

Once everyone had completed the Field Course, Hog Hollow was run for those who wished to continue shooting.

For this event there was an array of pigs set at various distances and competitors shot an arrow at each, with the crowd encouraged to heckle each competitor.

People were starting to gather at the clubhouse now, and everyone was given a very cultural display of Ottoman style thumb shooting archery by a large group from the Maydaan Archery Club Australia, who



If you use Facebook, see Travellin' Round the Trads for shoot write-ups, flyers for trad shoots and the proposed trad calendar for 2024. There is also a Facebook page for Traditional Archery Australia or check the website at www.traditionalarcheryaustralia.org/events.

To be added to the Queensland Traditional Archery database for direct shoot information, contact s2wallace@spiderweb.com.au.



had driven up from Sydney for the weekend Muster.

The presentations were soon under way, commencing with the cubs, and it was so pleasing to see that each of the different bow types was represented for the boys, with asiatic and hybrid for the girls.

After all the bow division presentations was the Hog Hollow Trophy, and Perry gave a very impassioned speech about the foundations of this event before presenting the winner's perpetual trophy to a young cub from the Maydaan club.

The overall winners of each division were presented with a rather hefty chunk of Brigalow tree with TAA plaque attached. This was rather appropriate as the tree, which is a species of acacia, is commonly found in the area, including where everyone was camped.

Chinchilla Archers Inc. would like to thank the following businesses and organisations for the generous donations and support they have given to the club, in order to run an extremely successful TAA National Muster for 2023: Western Downs Regional Council, Brigalow State School P & C Association (catering),

Apex Club of Chinchilla (Friday night barbecue), Three Rivers Grazing, Jackson Parts and Industrial Supplies, Keith Crawleys Industrial and Rural Supplies, Nutrien Ag, Chinchilla Black Truck n Ag, Keatings Hardware, Betta Electrical Chinchilla, Sibylle Austin, Steve and Fiona Klein, Intura, Tyrepower Chinchilla, Rusty'N'Dusty.

Gympie Campout

The weather was warming up in time for the Trad Campout weekend held at Gympie Field Archers. The range captain had done some great work to refurbish the 3D targets – a bit of bog, a coat of paint, and some new legs, plus stands too.

On Saturday morning, a two-arrow round was first up. This would be followed by a one-arrow round on the same course shooting at the closest target, if there were two, followed by the rolling disk. The scoring on the

field course was 10/8/5.

There were round IFAA targets and 3D pig targets of all sizes, various 3D deer targets, a brown bear vinyl followed by a 3D bear shot from a gully, a large standing 3D black bear, a wild 3D dog plus wolf vinyl, plus some old ABA targets thrown in. We had been seeing wild hares running about the place and one came out near target 14 while we were on target 12 ... he nearly didn't make it across the road!

We had a good mixture of bows for the event, that's for sure. The top male archer was shooting a recurve, second placegetter was shooting a hybrid, third place (and top female) a recurve and fourth place went to a male archer shooting an Asiatic.

Sunday morning was a club shoot on the vinyl targets on the Phoenix course. All in all, it was a fabulous weekend.



A novice bowhunter's *trip down memory lane*

by PETER SKINNER

The sage advice given to me by guide Ron Green during the required boundary walk of bowhunting property Milani on my first outing there some 10 years ago still resonates every time I venture out on this beautiful property.

As a 68-year-old novice bowhunter, I needed all the advice and help I could get and Ron's words, even though he no longer guides, stuck with me: "Make the effort to really hunt Milani and your chances of success are good. The game is there but it's up to you to spot them before they see you. And never stop looking, listening and hunting." Obviously, this advice could apply to most other hunting areas but nevertheless, it's worth keeping in mind.

And to that could be added: be prepared for the expected

Early morning sunlight filters through tree branches and rising mist, heralding the start to another day's bowhunting.

and don't be surprised at the unexpected.

Another great tip was to locate the lookouts that were invariably part of goat herds and on numerous stalks I have enjoyed the challenge of spotting those sentries and timing my movements around their vigilance. Staying in the shadow of treelines, checking and re-checking wind directions, and always looking for movement (such as the flick of an ear or tail) while minimising your own, and for straight horizontal lines (often they turn out to be an animal's back) all have become habitual when I venture out on a hunt, thanks to Ron's advice.

My bowhunting jaunts, only one or two a year, are pretty tame by comparison with the

endeavours of vastly experienced and dedicated trophy hunters and I have great admiration and respect for those elite bowhunters. But from the outset my goal was to enjoy the sport and its challenges and I was determined to be satisfied if I got the occasional feral animal suitable for the table. On one occasion I did bag an old lone black billy whose meat was good only for dog food ... his horns I gave to a friend to make walking stick handles. And on another I made what I consider my most satisfying shot—a 27m spot-on neck/shoulder shot on a humble rabbit (which wound up in the pot!). However, meat goats were, and remain, my preferred quarry.

Milani, about 26km from Guyra, NSW, has been a

bowhunting property for going on 40 years and during that time hundreds of hunters and their guests have enjoyed the excellent hospitality and facilities. Game likely to be encountered include deer, goats, pigs, foxes, rabbits and the occasional feral cat. Laura Creek flows through areas of Milani, providing habitat for platypus and stocked trout and depending on conditions offers excellent trout fishing. Two comfortable creekside cabins are available for trout anglers.

The bowhunters' cottage has three bedrooms, hot water, a well appointed kitchen and dining area, TV, and a very cosy living room heated by an efficient wood burning stove. Another popular feature is the wide verandah, a

great place to take off the boots after a day's hunting, put the feet up and enjoy a comforting glass of red vino or a cold beer while the sun sets. Another memorable scene from the verandah is when the first rays of light filter through trees shrouded in early morning fog.

Milani was operating as a private hunting club last year but has reverted to usual hunting practices for 2024. For details contact Milani Bowhunting. (milanibowhunting.com).

That first goat

A few days after my property orientation with Ron Green I was getting more comfortable with the situation and while I had no

great aspirations, I was pretty keen. This particular day started when, from the cottage, I had a look up at a hillside about 2km away and through binoculars spotted a large mob of goats, too enticing to ignore. An hour or so later I had worked my way up the slope and into the breeze. I had spotted at least two sentries and as a few magpies went berserk above me one of those sentries looked directly at the tree I was hiding behind for what seemed an eternity. Eventually, the magpies flew elsewhere and the goat lost interest. So, I moved from tree to tree, gaining elevation while ensuring the wind was in my face all the time.

Finally, and after what seemed a long time walking stealthily,

Maybe there's a hunting pot of gold at the end of the rainbow? Beautiful lighting over a section of Milani.



followed by a couple of hundred metres crawling on my knees through grass, I bellied up to a large log. Black shapes appeared on the other side and I saw that I was almost into the mob. So, this was it – time to set up and shoot. I'd like to be able to say that I casually selected the closest arrow in my quiver and with fluid ease knocked it and closed the jaws of the release around the D-loop on the string. In truth, my heart was pounding and my fingers shaking and it took at least three fumbled attempts to set the release on the D-loop. Another dilemma was that I was prone on my stomach so I had to get to my feet, select a target and loose an arrow all within a few seconds. At least I had the advantage of surprise.

On standing up there seemed to be goats everywhere in my view. A massive billy was very

close but I ignored him and a few other pretty big goats near him and swung right, spotting a smaller nanny within about 15m or 18m. I can't really remember the aiming and firing sequence. As quick as the moment was, the young goat was quicker and leapt forward and away as I released. The shoulder target area became a going away rear and the arrow sliced the animal's back legs—as I found later. I was, to be quite frank, very annoyed at myself for not making a clean kill after such a successful spot and stalk. However, I was able to follow the goat and got close enough for a clean fatal shot and harvested all the meat.

Since that first goat I've done pretty well with meat gathering – to 'feed the tribe' as I like to call it – and while there have been many fruitless hunts, numerous spot-and-stalks which have resulted in

no shot taken, or a missed shot, or simply being busted, there have been enough successes to fuel my enthusiasm. And always a bonus to any hunt is simply being out there enjoying the solitude while observing the abundant wildlife which can range from parrots to platypus.

Patience rewarded

On another occasion, after hours of walking I had spotted a small group of goats from about 400m. As there was a range of tea-tree and other cover between them and me, I was able to approach unseen and close the distance at a good clip. On getting closer I slowed to a snail's pace and quietly worked my way behind a very small tree and stood silently watching. Everything was in my favour except the distance – too far for a comfortable shot.

The quietly grazing goats eventually moved into a thick patch of tea-tree and I waited for the last remaining goat, an older nanny, to follow so I could sneak in behind them. But she continued to graze and all the while I knew the others were probably heading into nearby rocky hills. It was a proverbial stalemate.

Just as I was considering breaking cover and walking toward the nanny a goat reappeared from the tea-trees. It was followed by others and in a matter of minutes the mob was back and feeding. Finally, a nice sized meat goat fed its way right in front of me and I waited until it was stationary, barely 12m away, and very slowly knocked an arrow, drew back and took aim. The shot was spot-on and the goat dropped with barely a bleat, its legs kicking up twigs



Two meat goats taken with one arrow. The small kid was unseen behind the adult nanny and the pass-through shot hit the kid as well.



A mob of goats graze into the timber, oblivious to the hunter/photographer.

and dirt. Two goats nearby jumped and nervously trotted around but none of the others seemed too concerned.

I didn't move a muscle and waited, amazed that the goats hadn't spotted me behind a tree which was really not much more than a sapling with small bushes at its base. My camo must have been pretty good because within a few minutes curiosity got the better of a small billy, who walked over to check his fallen mate and in doing so presented an ideal target. Another good shot and I knew the freezer would be well stocked.

First recurve game taken

On my last foray to Milani I achieved a goal I'd had in mind for a while – bagging a goat with a recurve. A couple of years ago I bought a Hoyt Satori recurve and it had become my principal bow for shoots at my archery club, Sunshine Coast Bowmen, and I'd become pretty confident with it—at realistic distances, of course.

On a morning hunt I had followed two goats as they grazed into the wind until I got close

enough for a shot. A pretty good shot – a pass through – with the Alpine Roxstar compound took care of that meat goat so I made the decision to use the Satori recurve the following day.

Walking down the long hill in an area known as Clover Paddocks, I saw in the distance a small group of goats. As I got closer I could see more and counted 38. A lot of goats and potentially a lot of lookouts. Sure enough, I got busted – by a lone black billy I hadn't seen. He snorted and coughed and goats ran in all directions, including at me. But I froze, partly obscured by a tree and while the billy did his best to convince his mates that he had spotted a predator it seemed as if they didn't believe him. So, they started to graze again and the billy wandered off into the bush. I didn't see him again. In the meantime I did identify a look-out, a pretty big nanny, and timed my moves around her.

I had focussed on a group of about five goats feeding through tea-tree bush and, crouching really low, managed to get within about 10m of the leading goat. He was feeding and moving so I let him

wander out of sight and focussed on the next animal, a young white billy. And as soon as he stopped to nibble some foliage I lined up and released. A clean pass through and I had my first recurve kill – and more meat for the freezer.

Lessons learned

It's surprising how you become attuned to the bush once you start concentrating on finding signs of game. Listening, looking, scanning unusual shapes and forms with binoculars. It becomes obvious very quickly that the odds are stacked against the bowhunter. Mobs of goats post sentries so the bigger the mob, the more eyes that are employed as security. Added to those eyes is the network alarm system of the bush. Birds of every make and model squawk, screech, whistle or flap as soon as they are aware of your presence. No use shushing them; they take no notice! The only thing to do is stand still and remain stationary until all those self-appointed sentries figure that you're not really up to no good so they can go back to eating insects or procreating or whatever birds do when they're not interfering



Peter Skinner ... came late to bowhunting.

with bowhunting business.

Initially, I admit that it was with some trepidation that I packed my gear hoping that I had all the bases covered. But after a lot of to-ing and fro-ing I had my bow and arrows, compass, Garmin GPS navigation unit, communication and visual equipment, a spot tracker (so someone knows your location), some munchies and lots of water and various first aid and emergency bits and pieces packed. My camo gear and backpack felt overdone and heavy but it's par for the course in bowhunting and just takes time to settle into a comfortable routine of assembling gear and modus operandi. Whichever way you look at it, there's a helluva lot to learn about bowhunting. And that's even

before you get to actually launch an arrow at a game animal.

In addition to improving and honing hunting skills are mastering (or at least learning) other ancillary and important aspects such as bushcraft, map reading and navigation either with compass or GPS devices. Marking waypoints and using them to backtrack and later studying one's routes on maps add to the experience and satisfaction of the whole bowhunting experience.

Observing and enjoying wild animals

Among the many attractions of simply being in the outdoors and enjoying the Australian bush is observing wildlife. I've found it

takes me a couple of days to tune in to the sights and sounds of the bush and at times while waiting in a likely ambush spot have whiled away hours observing wildlife, watching animals being people. I vividly remember the time I was waiting beside a game trail when two beautiful crimson rosella parrots entertained me with a game of chase, up and down branches, almost within touching distance. They either didn't know I was there, or didn't care.

On another really memorable occasion I observed for well over an hour while two young brutes of billies took it turns to clash heads with a third, older billy. They were massive goats and it was probably a battle for mob rights or superiority. As they reared on their

Prepare for the unexpected

On the final day of my first visit to Milani I had decided to set up and wait in a spot where I had seen goats disappear up an open slope into the hills. My ambush lair provided unimpeded views of that slope and I was confident that if any goats did appear and head my way I was in an ideal spot.

It was very tranquil and while no goats appeared the time passed easily as I listened to the noises of the bush – magpies, butcher birds and other birds – and through the binoculars I could see roos feeding at numerous spots on the open paddocks.

Two beautiful crimson rosella parrots also entertained me with a game of chase, up and down branches. They either didn't know I was there or didn't care.

I had contemplated nocking an arrow but also figured that I'd see any goats coming down the hill well before they got in range so left all the arrows in the quiver and the bow lying on the ground. Had I followed my initial instinct I might well have bagged my first (and at writing, only) deer.

A handsome young fallow buck suddenly materialised right before my eyes, barely 12m or 15m from me and completely unaware of my presence. He walked silently by and I quietly picked up the bow, nocked an arrow and then peered around the tree ... and peering back at me was the deer. Before I could draw, he was gone in a series of bounds up the hill and into the scrub.

It was all over in about 30 seconds. For a short time my pulse raced but I quickly settled down and digested the experience. I was not overly disappointed at not bagging the deer and I learned a valuable lesson: when in a hide or ambush spot, be prepared for any eventuality. I was mentally geared for goats coming from a specific direction. Deer were far from my mind. But I am still perplexed as to why I didn't see him walking up the slope to my right. It was as if he appeared out of nowhere, silently gliding by as if walking on air. It was a brief but exciting and memorable encounter.

hind feet and powered forward, clashing in a violent collision of heads, the ground reverberated with their impact. While the older goat was being head battered, the second younger billy butted the old bloke's belly and thighs. I stood behind an island of low scrub while the battle raged. Finally, the billies and the rest of the mob headed back into the rocky hills oblivious to my attendance at their battle royale.

Equipment

Probably typical of most bowhunting aspirants I've tried a range of bows, arrows, and an array of aids and paraphernalia, ultimately settling on finger release for both compound and recurve; got rid of a peep sight

on the string and went with the Hindsight system developed by American bowhunter Don Priebe that works ideally for my typical shorter range hunting with the compound bow. I don't have any sights on my Hoyt Satori recurve. Compounds I have bagged game with are two Alpines – the Frontier and Roxstar – and an older bow made from Jennings components by a longtime friend in the USA, former Hollywood stuntman, Jack Verbois. (As an aside, Jack was the Archery Master on that old classic movie, *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*.) The compounds are in the 52lb to 54lb range, and the Satori about 42lb, heavy enough for my kind of hunting. Arrows I've used successfully include Victory Buck Busters, Gold Tip Hunter, Carbon

Express Predator, and Heritage Traditional, all with 500 spine, and I've stuck with Tusker Spirit broadheads, both 100gr and 125 gr. Once sharpened, they certainly do the job well.

Resources and support

As with most pursuits, we rely on others for guidance and advice. There's a wealth of bowhunting and general archery resources – printed and on-line – and over the years I've benefitted accordingly. The ABA and its membership is one of the best resources and the *National Bowhunter Education Manual*, compiled by ABA, is a must have. Issues of *Archery Action* invariably contain valuable information and advice from an array of experienced archers and

The best shot I didn't take

I had spotted the big fallow buck meandering up a track and into timber but decided not to attempt following him as the wind would've been behind me and I also knew the tinder-dry vegetation would've crackled underfoot. Instead I waited until he disappeared and then skirted the timber to investigate another area.

About an hour or more later, I worked around a different edge of the timber into which the buck had disappeared and from the shade of the treeline scrutinised the open country ahead.

Nothing moved and I was just about to walk along the treeline when I spotted a symmetrical set of branches under a tree, some 150m or more away. I studied those branches through my binoculars trying to convince myself that something was there. After a couple of minutes I was just about to continue walking when I saw something flick between that set of branches. Immediately I knew I had relocated the big fallow buck seen earlier. He was bedded down next to a lone gum tree and facing away from me. The symmetrical dry branches were his antlers; the giveaway had been the flick of his ear.

Between him and me was open paddock with that sole tree my only possible cover. Moving into a position so that the tree created a blind spot for the deer, I tucked my arms and bow as close to my body as possible and started a slow and hopefully silent shuffle towards the deer. As long I could see his antlers protruding on either side of the tree trunk, I knew he was looking away from me and up the hill. Progress was slow and agonising and while the very light breeze was in my favour it was also a bit flukey and I knew could change. Also in my favour was an inexplicable lack of birdlife. There were no magpies, mynahs or butcher birds to announce my presence.

After what seemed an eternity, I was up against the tree, breathless and tense as I

peeked around to see the deer nonchalantly snoozing. I must admit I was pleasantly surprised to have made it unnoticed and couldn't stop a huge grin of satisfaction. But, I was in a quandary. The deer was lying down and his shoulders were hunched. The angle he presented was not ideal and I was very reluctant to take a shot, even though it was only 17m (I know that because I measured it later), and risk a non-fatal wound. So, I decided to nock an arrow and hope the deer would eventually get up and present a side-on or three-quarter shot. Minutes passed and the stand-off continued. My legs were stiffening from the cramped position and my pulse was racing. I was really tempted to take the shot but held off.

And then it happened; the wind must have changed, ever so slightly and, to me, unnoticeable. But that deer noticed. I saw his nose start twitching and his head moved in unison. I readied myself figuring that when he rose to his feet I'd get my opportunity. But he didn't get to his feet in the true sense – he accelerated from a prone position to a full-on sprint like an Olympic 100-metre athlete out of the starting blocks and within seconds was full tilt up the hill. Some 180m away, he stopped and looked back. I hadn't moved and remained stationary. The deer scrutinised the scene and then slowly walked away into the timber at the top of the paddock.

I still relive and second-guess myself on that scenario, one which is unlikely to be repeated. Should I have taken the shot; did I do the right and ethical thing? On the positive side, I take great satisfaction in the spotting and stalking and getting so close without being busted. Opinions of some archery mates are divided: "Yep, you did the right thing," say some.

"Bloody hell mate, I would've taken the shot," say others. As the adage goes, it's history now but is indelibly etched in my memory bank.

bowhunters. Another publication I always keep handy, and one which has become my bowhunting bible, is the *Bowhunter's Guide to Accurate Shooting* by Lon E. Lauber, a highly regarded American author of outdoors subjects and an accomplished bowhunter who is a nine-time Alaska State archery champion. Among his hundreds of game kills are 41 official Pope and Young-class trophies. Lon now lives in Spokane, Washington, USA. We occasionally exchange emails and he has become an appreciated mentor on bowhunting. Locally, my principal guru has been a Sunshine Coast archery and bowhunting legend, John Ward, who guided me through my ABA proficiency course and over the years has offered a wide range of advice.

So, my advice to any aspiring bowhunter is to tap into the vast array of resources, digest the information, determine what's

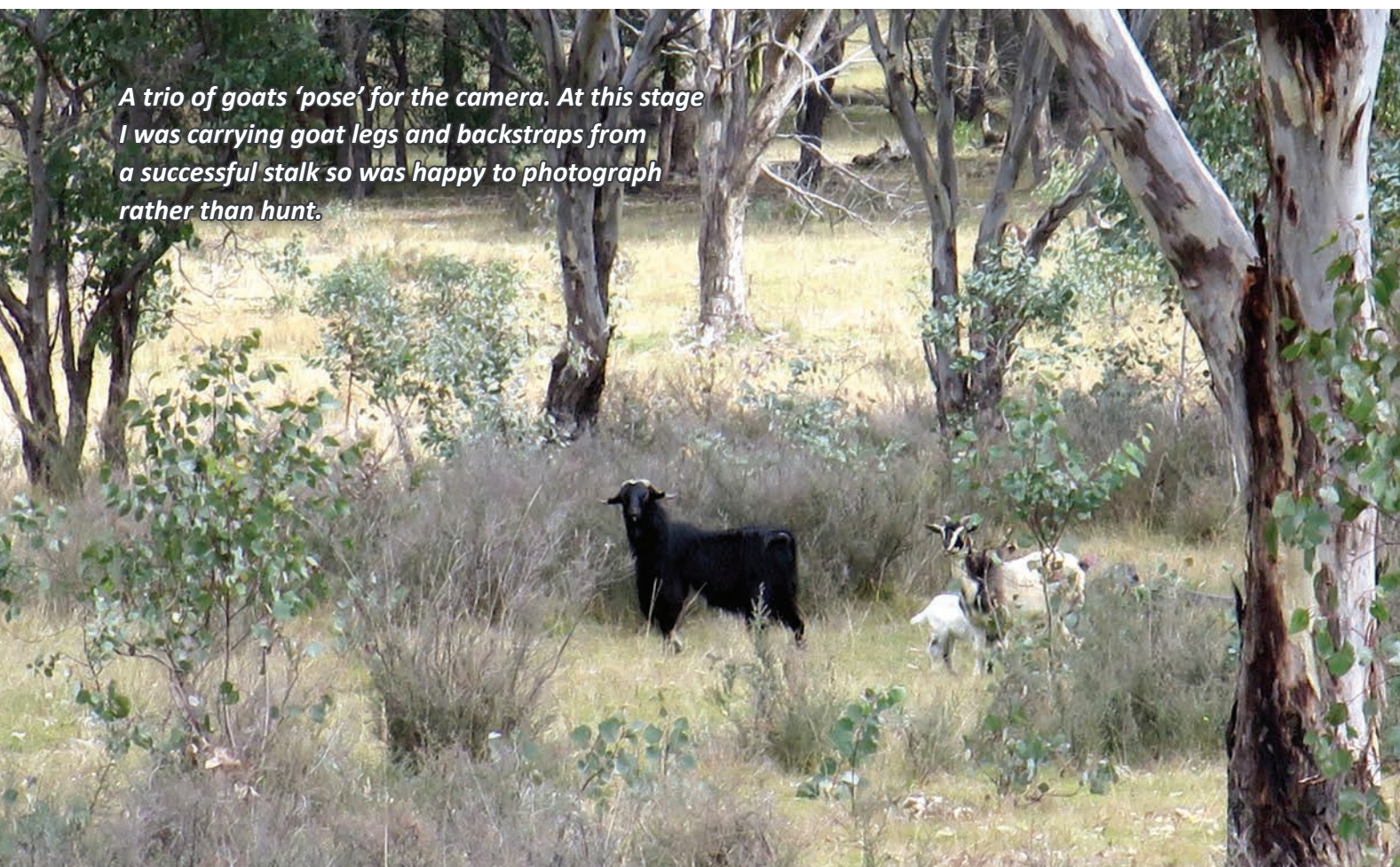
most likely to work for you and follow that advice on gear and preparation and then go for it. In the field, walk slowly, stop a lot, look and listen, minimise movement, be patient, and remember that it's about hunting – not necessarily killing something every time. Be realistic in your expectations, learn from mistakes

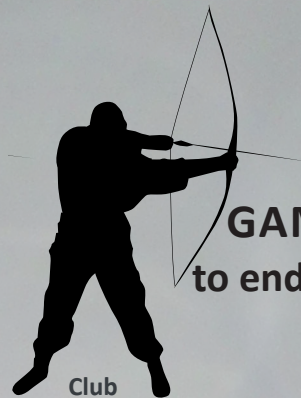
and don't be discouraged if things go wrong, as they often will. A missed shot is not the end of the world! Glean the positive from the experience, good or bad. You're never going to bag game on every hunt but conversely you can usually learn something every time you venture out. Above all, have fun and stay safe doing it.



A healthy young goat for the curry pot, taken with the Alpine Frontier compound and Tusker Spirit broadhead.

A trio of goats 'pose' for the camera. At this stage I was carrying goat legs and backstraps from a successful stalk so was happy to photograph rather than hunt.





GAME CLAIMED to end November 2023

Bnch	Hunter	Club	Game	Award	FK/FKOS	Size
A	James McWilliam	Freds Pass Field Archers	Pig	RC	FK/FKOS	31 6/8
B	Bryan Butson	Full Boar Archers	Donkey	GA	FKOS	0
B	Simon Anderson	Mackay District Bowmen	Pig	TC	FK/FKOS	25
B	Toby Gall	Mackay District Bowmen	Chital	TC		144 5/8
B	Toby Gall	Mackay District Bowmen	Chital	RC		161 6/8
B	Toby Gall	Mackay District Bowmen	Rusa	RC		178 1/8
B	Toby Gall	Mackay District Bowmen	Rusa	RC		184 1/8
B	Toby Gall	Mackay District Bowmen	Rusa	RC		205 6/8
B	Toby Gall	Mackay District Bowmen	Pig	TC		25 2/8
B	Chris Nelson	Townsville District Bowhunters	Fallow	TC	FKOS	188 2/8
B	Damien Smith	Townsville District Bowhunters	Pig	TC		26
B	Damien Smith	Townsville District Bowhunters	Pig	TC		25 6/8
B	Helen Smith	Townsville District Bowhunters	Fallow	GA	FK/FKOS	131 3/8
B	Daniel Ferguson	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Fallow	RC		212 4/8
B	Daniel Ferguson	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Fallow	RC		201 3/8
B	Daniel Ferguson	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Fallow	RC		217
B	Daniel Ferguson	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Red Deer	TC		177
B	Daniel Ferguson	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Chital	RC		179
B	Daniel Ferguson	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Pig	TC		27 2/8
B	Daniel Ferguson	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Feral Cat	TC		7 8/16
B	Garry Pitt	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Feral Cat	RC		7 12/16
B	Garry Pitt	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Pig	TC		26 2/8
B	Graham Wienert	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Fallow	RC		208 4/8
B	Graham Wienert	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Hare	GA	FKOS	0
B	Graham Wienert	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Pig	TC		25
B	Graham Wienert	Twin Rivers Bowhunters	Pig	TC		26 2/8
C	Brett Fittock	Full Draw Field Archers	Fallow	TC		188
C	Elissa Rosemond	Full Draw Field Archers	Fallow	TC		186 6/8
C	David McGhee	Moranbah Bowhunters & FA	Pig	GA	FKOS	0
D	Wayne Shum	Darling Downs Field Archers	Goat	TC		108 7/8
D	Oliver Brown	Grange Bowmen	Goat	GA	FK/FKOS	0
D	Thomas Buxton	Grange Bowmen	Goat	TC		107 2/8
D	Darren Askin	Independent	Red Deer	TC		195 2/8
D	Dave Pender	Lakeside Bowmen	Feral Cat	TC		7 4/16
D	Darryl Bulger	Pacific Bowmen	Red Deer	RC		254 3/8
D	Darryl Bulger	Pacific Bowmen	Rusa	RC		203 6/8
D	Dale Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Pig	TC		28 6/8
D	Dale Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Pig	TC		26 2/8
D	Jack Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Pig	TC		25 4/8
D	Jack Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Pig	TC		27 4/8
D	Jack Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Pig	TC		27 2/8
D	Jack Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Pig	TC		27
D	Jack Winks	Renegade Bowmen	Pig	TC	FKOS	7 7/16
E	Ian Courtney	Namoi Valley Archers	Goat	GA	FK/FKOS	31 1/8
E	Tiff Courtney	Namoi Valley Archers	Goat	GA	FK/FKOS	76 7/8
F	Shawn Ahola-Martin	Independent	Goat	GA	FK/FKOS	0
F	Stephen Robinson	Independent	Fallow	RC		194 3/8
F	Graeme Larkings	Forbes Lachlan River Archers	Goat	RC		112 7/8
F	Graeme Larkings	Forbes Lachlan River Archers	Goat	TC		97 6/8
F	Graeme Larkings	Forbes Lachlan River Archers	Goat	RC		114 3/8
F	Nick Bedford	Manly Warringah Field Archers	Fox	TC		9 6/16
F	Nick Bedford	Manly Warringah Field Archers	Goat	TC		98 4/8
F	Nick Bedford	Manly Warringah Field Archers	Pig	TC		27
G	Andrew Robertson	Boola Valley Field Archers	Sambar	TC		158 1/8
G	Chris Bourne	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Hog Deer	RC		107 1/8

G	David Luxford	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Pig	TC		28
G	Elizabeth Proctor	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Buffalo	TC		80 4/8
G	Jeremy Kasper	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Hog Deer	TC	FKOS	67 2/8
G	Jeremy Kasper	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Fox	TC		9 3/16
G	Marc Curtis	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Red Deer	TC		188 2/8
G	Marc Curtis	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Fallow	RC		194
G	Marc Curtis	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Fallow	RC		223 2/8
G	Marc Curtis	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Fallow	RC		196 6/8
G	Marc Curtis	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Fallow	TC		186 6/8
G	Michael Luxford	Macalister Trophy Bowhunters	Buffalo	RC		92
H	Allan Driver	Bacchus Marsh Bowmen	Goat	TC		1014 4/8
H	Tyrone Cain	Bacchus Marsh Bowmen	Rabbit	GA	FK/FKOS	0
H	Axel Podubinski	Ballarat Bowhunters	Cat	TC		7 3/16
H	Dan Podubinski	Ballarat Bowhunters	Fox	RC		10 2/16
H	Dan Podubinski	Ballarat Bowhunters	Fox	TC		9 6/16
H	Dan Podubinski	Ballarat Bowhunters	Fox	TC		9 11/16
H	Dan Podubinski	Ballarat Bowhunters	Feral Cat	TC		7 6/16
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowhunters	Fox	RC		10 3/16
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		99 7/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		100 2/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		99 3/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		95 4/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		104
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		98 6/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		105 1/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		107 6/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		104 3/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		100 6/8
H	Tyler Atkinson	Ballarat Bowmen	Goat	TC		104 6/8
H	Wayne Atkinson	Ballarat Bowhunters	Fox	TC		9 10/16
H	Wayne Atkinson	Ballarat Bowhunters	Goat	TC		97 4/8
H	Wayne Atkinson	Ballarat Bowhunters	Goat	TC		103 5/8
H	Wayne Atkinson	Ballarat Bowhunters	Goat	TC		102 5/8
H	Wayne Atkinson	Ballarat Bowhunters	Goat	TC		99
H	Wayne Atkinson	Ballarat Bowhunters	Goat	TC		108 5/8
H	Simon Kairn	Bendigo Field Archers	Goat	TC		95
H	Simon Kairn	Bendigo Field Archers	Goat	TC		95 3/8
H	Simon Kairn	Bendigo Field Archers	Goat	TC		95 5/8
H	Alastair Meldrum	Geelong Trophy Bowhunters	Pig	GA	FKOS	8 10/16
H	Kenneth Gage	Geelong Trophy Bowhunters	Rabbit	GA	FK/FKOS	0
H	Kenneth Gage	Geelong Trophy Bowhunters	Hare	GA	FKOS	0
H	Wayne Rantall	Mount Clay Archers	Fallow	TC		159 4/8
H	Wayne Rantall	Mount Clay Archers	Fox	TC		9 6/16
J	Dominic Neeson	Gleneagles Field Archery	Camel	RC		30 2/16
J	Dominic Neeson	Gleneagles Field Archery	Camel	TC		28 13/16
J	Dominic Neeson	Gleneagles Field Archery	Camel	RC		29 8/16
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Camel	RC		31 4/16
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Fox	RC		10 5/16
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Fox	TC		10 1/16
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Feral Cat	TC		7
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Feral Cat	TC		7 7/16
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Goat	TC		95 3/8
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Goat	TC		97 1/8
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Goat	TC		99 5/8
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Goat	TC		101 3/8
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Goat	TC		104 2/8
J	Peter Griffiths	Independent	Goat	RC		116
J	Jacob Damstra	Peel Archers	Goat	GA	FKOS	0
J	Leisa Nesbitt	Peel Archers	Fox	TC	FKOS	9 6/16
J	Simon Cocks	Peel Archers	Fox	TC	FK/FKOS	9 9/16
J	Simon Cocks	Peel Archers	Feral Cat	RC	FKOS	7 2/16
J	Jorma Merilainen	WA Field & Bowhunters	Goat	GA	FK/FKOS	0



ABOVE: Chris Bourne,
hog deer RC 107 1/8pt.

LEFT: David McGhee,
game pig.

TOP RIGHT: Dan
Ferguson, stingray BF TC
6 7/8pt.

RIGHT: Andrew
Robertson, sambar TC
158 1/8pt.

FAR RIGHT: Timothy
Messer, two game goats.



Game Claimed



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Put your club name, date and contact # here

YOUTH *Writing* COMPETITION





Hi my name is **Effie Irish**. I'm 10.

I started archery in my backyard with my grandma, and she bought me a red recurve bow for Christmas after a while I started really liking it so she bought me a better bow that's recurve and it's green my favourite colour. Then I went to my local archery club and started shooting there I made a friend named Lilly and she is really nice and we make bracelets for each other she

uses a recurve bow too.

I don't like compound bows.

I went to a competition in sale I had to get up at 5am to go. It was so much fun and I got another badge for my board second place.

I took my bow to school for show and tell and showed everyone how to hold it and stuff it was pretty cool. I go to archery every Wednesday and it's my favourite day of the week.

Bye from Effie

First place receives \$100 archery shop voucher, an item from the ABA Shop and Effie's club receives a new set of targets from Action Graphics.

Hi, my name is **Jorja Kelly** and I am a member of Colac Otway Archers. Our archery course, which has three ranges, is at Barongarook in southwest Victoria.

I began archery when I was four years old and I am now 10. My brothers both shoot as well. My dad, Tim and my grandma, Barbara shoot also. I use a 20lb recurve bow and shoot carbon arrows. This is my second bow, as my little beginner one I grew out of! My brother Declan also uses a recurve and Clayton has gone to compound. Dad has a longbow, recurve and a compound, so has Grandma.

I shoot at our local archery range and also have completed at lots of two days shoots all around Victoria, with some success. I enjoy shooting with my Dad and sometimes with Grandma, we have lots of fun together.

My friends and teachers at school like to hear about my achievements after we have been away at two day competitions. I usually have to stand at the front of assembly when the principal tells the whole school of my results! I like to show my medals to



my friends. Sometimes my photo is put in the local newspaper, which I really like.

I enjoy camping and catching up with my archery friends from other clubs. I really like the campfires, it's fun to poke sticks in the fire! We have lots of fun when the competition is over and even though I am tired, I still find energy to run around with all the others Sometimes I have a go at the axe and knife, but I don't always get a place.

This is a photo of me competing at our 2 day competition last May, where I finished in first place in cub recurve c grade.

Jorja Kelly



I started doing archery 2 years ago due to my family all doing it as my dad started doing it 20 years ago. I have made many good friends from different clubs, we catch up each month and have a competition between us. We also play spotlight in the night time and sit around the fire under parents watch toasting marshmallows. I shoot barebow hoping to change to bow hunter next year. I enjoy knife and axe throwing and seeing all the different ranges and towns such as Mudgee, Kempsey and Gloucester.

Heidi Courtney

My Archery story!

The first time I ever heard about this sport was when I was at school camp and I loved it! I was, and obviously as most people do, try to shoot for the Bull's Eye, the aimed center. I thought confidently that that was easy enough to do, but boy was I wrong! Most of my arrows landed on a grassy hill nearby. However, I managed to get my surviving arrows to hit the board!

Fortunately, soon after the Macleay Valley Archers (Kempsey Archery Club) had a Beginners Open Day out on the Archery range. I managed to learn the simple foundations and controls of the curve bow that I had been using. My coaches gladly correct and teach me the details and encourage my confident and share the lifelong experiences and immense knowledge. My club has a big spirit of welcoming newcomers such as myself.

My determined aim for this extracurricular activity is for me to proudly represent the Australian Archery team and achieve national levels of shooting! Which means training my focus and tiredness and being at the range on Saturdays and at Kempsey showground on

Wednesday evenings as often as possible with the supportive club members on my team.

I recently received my first compound bow this year on my birthday as a present from my parents! I was very excited and tested out the bow on the range. It needs a few adjustments to go through with the help from our club's experienced archers.

Once that's complete I'm going back to focus on training to achieve my goal.

Katherine Mackay

Macleay Valley Archers (Kempsey Archery)





I like archery because it's fun and I get to experience how to hunt, make friends and love to spend time with my family. I enjoy camping each month and shooting in our branch shoots. I like playing with my friends and making new friends where we go. I love helping cooking breakfast and lunch in our camper. Of a night time I like to join in the knife and axe throw and helping make a camp fire when we can. I currently shoot compound bare bow and will soon try shooting with a sight and release aid. Some times I go to shoots with just my dad and I get to sleep in my own swag which is fun to do. I look forward to shooting at club and branch shoots when I can and seeing all my friends.

Anthony Courtney

My name is **Axel Podubinski** and I'm twelve years old.

I first started archery when I was four and my dad used to take me every first and third Sunday with my two sisters.

I started as a longbow shooter but now I'm a compounder, I got a compound bow in August 2022 because I wanted to take bowhunting seriously.

My most memorable shoot would be the Mt Clay invertational ABA safari 2022 and on one round I shot 396 I also won the axe and knife throwing which was fun.

None of my friends at school compete in archery but



congratulate me when I talk about my achievements. The teachers at my school like to lift me up when I talk about my achievements in archery.

Yes I'm a bowhunter and I've been bowhunting for two years.

My most favourite bowhunting trip would have to be when I went to Tibooburra with my dad because I shot my first TC animal which was a goat that got me into TBA I also shot a pig which was my FKOS.

Hi, my name Ava Penna. I am 9 years old and I am a member of the Yorke Peninsula Field Archers in Branch I.

I started archery because my dad and my brother shot archery and I wanted to join to because it looks cool and fun. My first bow was a PSE Mini Burner when I was 5 years old and now, I shoot an Elite EMBER. I like making new friends and going to new places with my family and beating my personal best score. I like ABA because you go up to a peg and most of the time you guess the distance. You shoot animals targets and 3D animals.

I like scoring because I get to do math and we get to work as a team.

My most favourite memory so far is when I was first starting to shoot, I would always aim



Second place receives an archery shop voucher worth \$100.

at the butt of the targets, not the A or the B zone. Another memory is when I first shot over 200 in an ABA paper round. Beating my brother and getting my first medal. My brother and I set up the 3D animals at distances and shot them as competition.

My friends think that it is a cool sport that I am doing and some of them want to give it a go with me.

My goal is to do a whole round without getting a wash (miss). My second goal is to beat my brother. I love archery.

Ava Penna

Hi my name is Cooper. I'm 11 years old turning 12.

I tried archery after seeing an ad on my school newsletter and I really enjoyed it. I joined the Colac Otway Archery Club in November 2022.

I enjoy the indoor competition of a Thursday night along with tips from the coaches and I try and improve my score each week. I receive lots of encouragement from coaches and family.

I have competed against other members from different clubs in the 2 day outdoor

completions. I have competed at our local outdoor field at Barongarook, Bendigo, Donald and heading to Dunolly in August.

I use a compound bow and I am trying out a recurve bow for the Dunolly 2 day shoot. I've made many new friends locally and from other clubs.

I've won 2 gold medals in the outdoor shoots and one indoor. I've obtained a Junior Restricted Bow Hunter Proficiency Certificate and membership to the Australian Bow Hunters Association.

Cooper O'Gorman



2023
Laycee Mcghee
Moranbah Bow
Field Archers
My dad he is a bowhunter
he has taken me for some
competition 3D and ABA
he also takes me and my
brothers hunting and I
Think it's awesome

Third place receives an item from the ABA Shop.



thing about it but the thing I love the most is being outdoors and my first 3D shoot I love it!

All my friend's thing it's amazing and that I'm crazy to get out their and get to so close to pigs.

Yes I'm a bowhunter I still haven't got my first pig but I'm practicing my stalking with my dad and traing with my bow every week hopefully soon I will get one I really injoy it I will never stop!

Laycee Mcghee

8 year's old

Moranbah Bowhunturs and Field Archers

My dad he is a bowhunter he has taken me for some competition 3D and ABA he

also takes me and my brothers hunting and I Think it's awesome. I really love bowhunting and every

Hi I'm **Brock Penna.**

I really like doing archery. I live on Yorke Peninsula and shoot at Yorke Peninsula Field Archers every second Sunday. I also shoot at the Mid North Archers on Wednesday night and Saturday. I started shoot archery when I was 6 years old and when I was 8 years old joined as a member of the Yorke Peninsula Field Archers. These are the bows that I had through the

years, I liked all of them, I started when I was 6 years old with a cheap fiberglass bow that my dad got me for Christmas from there I was hooked. One year later, I did lots of chores at home and saved my money and dad got me a decent Chinese bow that was my second bow but this time I worked for it. Then on my 9th birthday my mum and dad got me my first USA made bow, it was PSE Mini Burner. I loved that bow but then I had grown out of it, so I upgraded to a PSE Stinger. I liked it so much that I got another one for a hunting bow.

My best memory of archery so far is achieving a Robin Hood at the 2020 SA Paper Titles held at Yorke Peninsula Field Archers. Most recently I have shot my personal best of two 400 rounds at a club shoot in Kadina.

I encourage people to have a go at archery as it is a wonderful sport.



It's a lovely morning in the scenic breathtaking forest as I carefully and quietly creep through the lush dewy overgrowth. In the densely shaded foggy forest, stalking my prey, whilst trying not to alert the creature that I'm after. I step carefully over twigs and sticks while trying to stay upwind of my prey, as I emerge into a verdant, breezy serene field, I see it.

A majestic and elegant stag standing there in the fog broadside towards me, grazing on the morning grass downwind of me; lined up for the perfect shot. I draw an arrow from my quiver, nocking it onto the string of my bow as quietly as I can. I take a long deep quiet breath, settling my heartbeat, as I bring the bow and arrow up to my cheek and find my anchor point.

I take another breath and on the bottom of my final breath I let the arrow go. The arrow sails silently through the foggy morning air and hits the creature. The arrow pierced deep through the animal's hide and into its rubber heart. My heart was racing faster than it had ever been. As we went to retrieve the arrow I heard the news and I was ecstatic. On my first shot, at my first archery competition ever, I had scored an A.

Dylan Rowling

Age 12, Snowy Mountain Bowmen's Club

My life in Archery

When I first came to archery, we went to FDFA (Full Draw Field Archers). It was about two years ago, my dad wanted to try it out as a family sport. Most of my family members stayed with archery (my mum, dad, brother and me), while my sister and my other brother decided it wasn't really their type of sport.

My most memorable event in archery is probably the Saxons competition campout last year, because we arrived late and the food there was delicious! It was also my favourite because I got to shoot with my mum, and I got to travel somewhere different. I have also made some great friends with the other cub girls at my club.

I would say that the kids at my school think that it is a little bit weird that I do archery. Some of my friends have come out to archery with me and they really enjoyed it.

I am not a bowhunter, but I am a target shooter. My favorite set of targets to shoot are probably the African animals. I also enjoy shooting the Zombie targets that our club has.

I really enjoy doing archery and I would be

happy to carry on the tradition to my children. My family stayed shooting with FDFA and we really enjoy the good sportsmanship. I hope you enjoyed my life in archery!

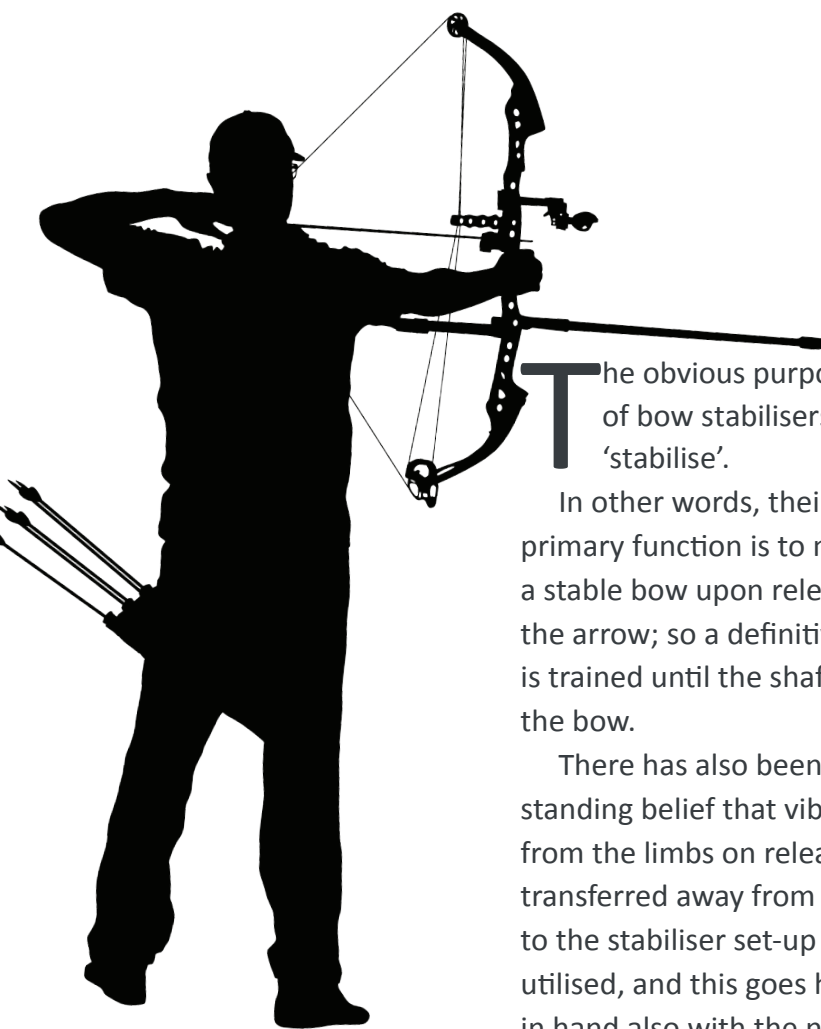
Natasha Knipler



Bow stabilisation

THE WEIGHT QUESTION EXAMINED

by ROY ROSE



The obvious purpose of bow stabilisers is to 'stabilise'.

In other words, their primary function is to maintain a stable bow upon release of the arrow; so a definitive aim is trained until the shaft clears the bow.

There has also been a long-standing belief that vibration from the limbs on release is transferred away from the riser to the stabiliser set-up being utilised, and this goes hand in hand also with the need to have the bow in a stable state as the arrow departs to facilitate the aim.

Adding screw-on weights to stabilisers is seen as a rational method of enhancing that resistance to movement and the thinking is that as long as it is a feasible weight for the

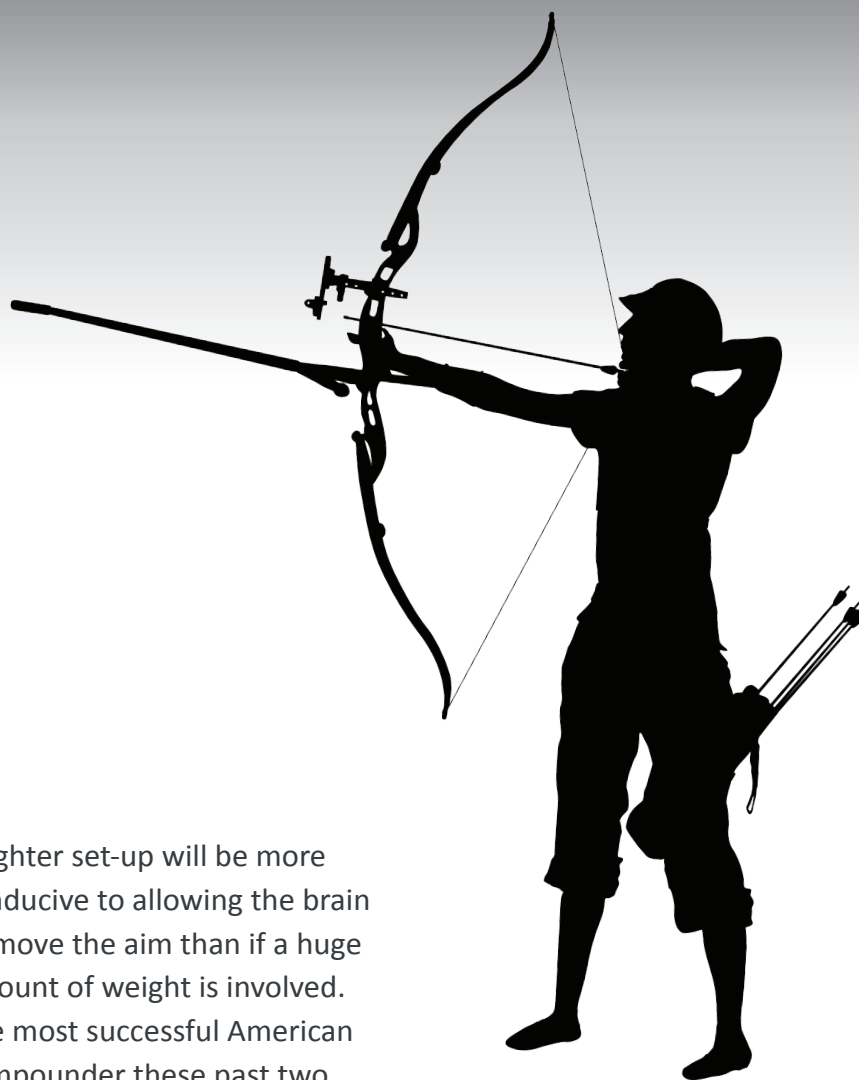
archer to physically hold up, the more the better.

Leading compounders like the top-rated Mike Schloesser in fact add huge amounts of weight to their stabiliser set-ups, clearly intent on obtaining maximum effect.

In spite of this line of functioning, which has been very productive for so many shooters, there is a somewhat contrary view which seems to be gaining momentum in recent times among coaches and leading shooters.

The rationale behind this is associated also with the aim, but comes from a completely different standpoint and it does, in reality, have very rational credence.

The secret to aiming, if that is the right word, is to allow the eye's self-centring



capacity to control the process by simply looking. In short, the focus on the X will allow the eye to bring the aim which is in a process of floating, to return to the centre, rather than attempting to hold the dot on the X (which in reality is extraordinarily difficult). While holding poundage, and with natural body sway, attaining a perfect aim is not a viable ongoing proposition.

If your aim by looking is causing the eye to be constantly returning any deviation of the dot back to the X, then logically a lesser stabiliser weight is much more likely to allow that to happen efficiently.

In recent times, some elite shooters have retreated from the idea of huge added stabiliser weights, believing

a lighter set-up will be more conducive to allowing the brain to move the aim than if a huge amount of weight is involved. The most successful American compounder these past two years, teenage sensation Bodie Turner, is an advocate of this stabilisation set-up.

A winner at Vegas, Reading, Lancaster Indoor and the reigning USA field national champion, this extraordinary youngster has found that a much lighter stabiliser weight has produced a more proficient aim ... and this is a proposition several other compound and recurve elite have also turned to successfully.

So if you have at this point ever been frustrated by the apparent necessity to load up your stabilisers with multiple screw-on weights,

it may well be worth a little experimentation, as a lesser set-up may in fact make a correctional factor more feasible, hence giving you a better aim.

On the other hand, extra mass weight has seemed a very logical method.

Leading archers and coaches always examine any possible theory which enhances accuracy and this new line of thinking may well provide to be a proposition worth your interest and, possibly, application ... to help you be the best that you can be.



Patience
pays off

by **JASON ROBINSON**

Stephen Robinson and his Record Class fallow deer.

With much anticipation my son Stephen and I pulled out of our driveway heading to the mountains loaded with enough supplies to spend the next two weeks chasing fallow.

It had been a while since we had hunted as our previous planned trip out west had to be cancelled due to the floods in the Darling River and Stephen was keen to put his first animal on the ground for 2023. We arrived at the property mid-afternoon and set up our camp in the usual spot. Once this was done it was awesome sitting back in the late afternoon sunshine with a coldie in hand, knowing the next couple of weeks would involve nothing but hunting and fishing. Just on dark, a couple of distant bucks started to grunt, bringing a smile to a young hunter's face.

We awoke to a balmy morning for this time of year and after a quick coffee we headed off in the direction of some grunts a few hundred metres from camp. As the sun's rays filtered over the horizon the buck stopped grunting, but we had a fair idea where he was from the previous year's scrapes and we crept forward, scanning for movement in the distance.

Edging over the rise about 70m from the scrape, we spotted several does feeding with the buck lying right where we had predicted. He was only small so with little cover between us, we sat back and waited to see if any bigger bucks were poking around. A few minutes later the wind swirled and before too long the cunning old does were flaring their nostrils and moved off

cautiously, taking the buck with them. We spent the rest of the morning hunt wandering around checking for sign in the usual places, but no bucks were sighted.

That afternoon we headed to the far end of the property to check along the creek that wound its way along the southern boundary. A few deer were holed up in the cover here and there but after a couple of unsuccessful stalks, darkness was upon us and our hunting time was over for the day.

Another cracking morning saw us perched up scanning the surrounds for decent bucks, but with the unusually warm temperatures they were laying low shortly after sun-up. The camp woodheap was looking scarce so after brunch we hooked up the trailer and cut plenty of wood for the next week or so.

Then with a couple of hours until dark, we headed out for a quick look near camp. After circling around on our way back Stephen saw a young spotty specimen unaware of our presence and decided to put in a stalk. I sat back and watched



The spotted specimen taken not far from camp.

him close the gap to 30m before he let fly the little Tusker Spirit. It hit the mark and the deer only travelled about 20m before falling to the ground, but a finisher was required to secure his prize. After a few quick photos we field dressed it and before too long we had the prime venison in the fridge and the skin salted.

Overnight saw the wind pick up from the southwest, With this in mind, we planned to hunt our way around to a particular area that was sheltered from the prevailing winds. To get there without alerting any critters involved a fair walk circling around and approaching from the east.

Once we got to the hillside, we could hear the wind howling above but at ground level there was barely a puff. The sun was shining and I thought, "If I were a deer this would be the place to be."

Still hunting our way around the hillside, we scanned every nook and cranny but only spotted a few roos soaking up the sun's rays. Stephen had given up hope of any deer in the area, but I knew they had to be here somewhere.

We edged forward a couple more steps, and there they were – a few does with a nice-looking buck amongst them.

I indicated to Stephen to use the cover of the ti-tree to see if he could get close enough for a shot. Over the next half an hour he managed to get within 25m of the buck ... with some of the does as close as 15m from him. With the buck lying down in long grass he wasn't able to shoot cleanly and with some of the does getting edgy he decided to draw back and let out a soft doe call hoping the

buck would stand up. It sounds good in theory, but this time the buck went from sleeping to a full gallop, instantly disappearing into the rough country in a couple of seconds.

I wandered down to Stephen and could see the disappointment on his face. Trying to cheer him up, I said, "Well done, that was close, mate."

He replied, "Well done, my ---."

I then put it into perspective for him.

"Mate, you just stalked within 15m of several deer, that's awesome even if you didn't get a shot. You were just unlucky the buck didn't stand for a couple of seconds before he took off."

The windy conditions persisted for a couple of days, keeping the bucks quiet and locating them

difficult. Still, a high-pressure system was forecast and we hoped that would improve our chances. That night the wind dropped right off, and we awoke to a frosty morning with several buck' grunting frantically trying to entice the does into their territory.

One particular hill had a lot of commotion echoing down towards us, so we set off in that direction. The temperature was starting to warm a little as we approached the hillside. That would be sending our scent up towards them so we circled around to our left to correct the problem.

As it turned out we should have gone right, because just as Stephen was getting within range of the grunting buck, the warming air swirled towards them. Shortly after, all the deer went crashing off into the bush and all went

quiet.

We continued up the hill as I wanted to check it out for sign and possibly get the breeze in our favour. Reaching the summit, we stopped for a breather and noticed there were bashed rub trees everywhere. Thinking there must be a buck or two up here somewhere, we circled around the top and soon after my prediction was confirmed.

As I took a step forward, I saw what looked like an antler about 80m away. A quick look through the optics showed he was nice and even with good length and – better still – he had no idea we were there. Stepping backwards put him totally hidden from view and the stalk begun. With several large trees between us we got to about 40m relatively easily. Stephen continued slowly, trying

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to keep the crunching underfoot to a minimum and closed the gap to 25m. Arrow nocked, he moved sideways a couple of steps, ready to draw. Next thing he was shaking his head indicating no. He stood there for a good five minutes as I wondered what was up, then finally he drew.

Instantly the buck jumped up and took off like a scalded cat. I walked over to Stephen and asked what went wrong. The buck had been lying down with his head and neck curled around covering his vitals. Stephen had felt a breeze up the back of his neck so he drew hoping the buck would stand when he got his scent, but like the buck a few days earlier, he didn't hang around to smell the roses (so to speak).

The next day saw us hunting

along a ridgeline where two bucks had holed up on opposing peaks grunting fairly regularly as they competed for does.

We had no luck with the first as the swirling mountain air gave us away, but we managed to get to 50m or so from the second without any drama. The scrub between us was getting extremely thick and crunchy underfoot so Stephen crept forward while I stayed put and filmed the action on my phone. Stephen couldn't see the buck because of the shrubbery but he could be heard as he thrashed the ti-tree and grunted madly.

Stephen was less than 20m away when he stepped into a small opening. No shot to the vitals was presented so he patiently waited a few minutes

hoping for a shot opportunity. Being that close to a deer for so long could only end with disappointment as eventually the buck received enough scent to put him on alert mode and he moved off down the hill.

We awoke to a nice frost the next morning and all the bucks in the area were in overdrive grunting madly as the rut was nearing to an end. It sounded like two or three bucks were working the same rutting pad on the hillside where the wind had let us down a couple of days before, so we headed off towards the commotion.

The air was still so we took a punt and worked our way around to the right of their position. As it turned out, there were three bucks chasing some does around



LEFT: Stephen's RC fallow, on the ground.

ABOVE: The buck, caped out.

between the main pad and a thicket of saplings about 100m apart, with a few inquisitive spikers thrown in the mix as well. One chocolate coloured buck seemed to be the dominant one with the best antlers. I sat back in a prime position to watch it all unfold while Stephen crept forward to try and get in close and wait in ambush.

Over the next hour or so he closed the gap undetected and managed to get within 15m from the pad, only to find another buck tucked up there having a breather from all the action.

The next moment, a doe made a break towards him with the dominant buck on her heels. All hell then broke loose when the two bucks met on the pad right in front of a Stephen. A UFC-style battle lasted for 20 seconds before the

chocolate buck claimed the win as the other buck trotted away in defeat. While he was grunting his victory song a little Tusker Spirit struck him from 18m, dropping him on the spot. Before long he was lying motionless only 25m away from one happy young hunter.

I gave it a few minutes to let Stephen soak up the moment, then wandered up and congratulated him on such a fine achievement. A close inspection showed a nice even set of antlers with no damage to any measurable points. Stephen was over the moon with his new trophy, and it didn't take long for him to ask, "Do you think it will go Record Class?" I pulled out my tape and took a couple of rough measurements.

"It'll be close to it, mate," I

said, not wanting to get his hopes up too high. After the photo session we caped it out for a shoulder mount, removed the choice cuts of venison and two incredibly happy hunters headed back to camp.

After dinner, I got the tape out and scored it very roughly at 192, which made Stephen smile even more. "We'll have to wait and see what the official measurement comes in at."

A few weeks later I got a text from our area rep with a photo of the official score sheet and I forwarded it onto Stephen. It read, 194 3/8. Seconds later Stephen texted back: "So it went Record?"

"Sure did buddy; your first RC animal."

BELOW: Stephen back at camp with his trophy.



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Some excerpts from our year's digital magazines

2023 Highlights

Branch G Rendezvous and the story of a recording book

by ADAM CLEMENTS

It all started while standing in Mark Burrows' shed getting some game measured and I learned about our Branch G Recording Book; a meticulously kept 30-year history of all game claimed within Branch G. I hadn't heard about this book before and was excited to see more. Before long we were in his study going through the previous editions and learning about the history, people, game claimed and the old school process of printing a book ...let's just say it was *a lot* of work involving spreadsheets, printed photos, cut-outs, glue sticks, sticky tape and black-and-white photocopiers!

The previous edition had been produced in 2018 before I had submitted any game claims. Whether it was my keenness to learn or his wanting to see the legacy of the book carry on – or both – it was agreed the baton of keeping these important records would be passed on to me. Now armed with a lot of folders, photos and hard copy information) I got straight onto the process of collating it all into a digital format. During this process I realised this was going to be the 30th year and 15th edition of the book so I wanted to do something special for Mark and the Branch.

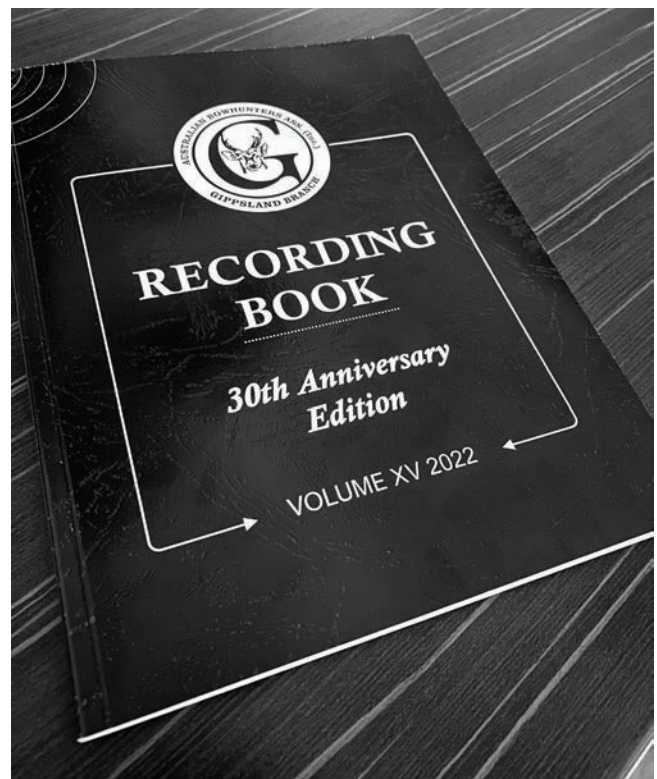
With our Branch Rendezvous and Mal Thomas Memorial Shoot usually held in March each year it made sense this would be a great time and event to build into a mini-hunting expo. We planned a weekend event including an afternoon bowhunting education seminar featuring gear to pack, shot placement, blood trailing, trophy preparation including caping and butchery, Bowhunting Proficiency education and even a guest speaker on bowhunting in the USA.

The next day entailed a 3D shoot and bowhunting/field award presentations ranging from First Kill to Master Bowhunter.

Macalister Trophy Bowhunters Archery Club hosted the event and we set up the shed with 20 or more amazing trophies, a table with photo albums Mark and David Luxford's chevron shirts showing just what can be achieved with a bow.

To acknowledge all the selfless work Mark has put into our recording book over the past 30 years, I presented him with the very first copy of this 15th edition.

To buy a copy of the 30th Anniversary Edition Branch G Recording, email branchgbook@gmail.com for details.





World Indoor Archery Championships - Kent, England

by JOANNE BOGIE

Earlier in 2023, six Australians travelled to Kent in England to compete in the World Indoor Archery Championships (WIAC).

The group, consisting of Randall Wellings, Lindsay Yuile, Richard Starke, Raylene Starke, Sindy Avard and Joanne Bogie, included three people from Manning Great Lakes Archers.

The competition was held at Medway Park, Gillingham, Kent with 380 archers from all over the world contesting the medals. The competition was amazing and the venue excellent.

Randall, (Freestyle Unlimited Professional Male) unfortunately arrived only to find both his bows damaged and so drove five hours to buy

the only replacement available for his bows in the country. Randal managed to continue to shoot well and placed 3rd on the podium.

Lindsay (Longbow (IFAA) Adult Male) arrived excited and well prepared to compete in what was to be his first world archery competition. Unfortunately, Lindsay became ill after contracting COVID and had to pull out of the competition. We all felt his anguish and could only wish him a quick recovery as he isolated.

Richard (Freestyle Compound Adult Male) was competing in his first world archery competition also. He shot well, coming in third after a competitor who already holds

many world records not only in this division.

Raylene (Freestyle Compound Adult Female) shot well and after a challenging few days, managed to hold on to first place, retaining her World Champion title and bringing home the gold! Well done Raylene!

Sindy (Bowhunter Unlimited Adult Female) had an amazing group of competitors and although she did not bring home a medal, shot well and it was a pleasure to be able to watch her give her best.

Joanne (Bowhunter Limited Adult Female) What can I say but I was amazed at how well I shot with the little practice I was able to do leading up to this wonderful event. I not only



Members of Manning Great Lakes Archers at WIAC are (from left) Jo, Rick and Raylene.

retained my World Champion title and came home with gold, but I also smashed two world records. The previous Flint record was 147 and I scored 261. The previous overall record

was 521 and I scored 830. Having only taking up the sport of archery when I turned 50 years of age I am proud of my achievements and now hold three world indoor records

Travelling to world events is costly but a wonderful experience and having fellow Aussies there to cheer each other on is what makes it so great.



ABA Park hosts the **ABA and 3D** Championships at the *National Safari*

After a five-hour trip, I arrived at ABA Park, Mudgee, on April 6 to the sight of caravans and campers filling a large camping area as everyone prepared for the ABA competition the following day.

It was great to see 150 ABA competitors and 145 3D competitors who had travelled from far and wide, with many new faces among the mix. The ranges made many of us guess and then recheck distances. Up hill, down hill and across gullies often arriving at the peg and then saying where is the target? With only one perfect score of 400 shot on the ABA course over the weekend by Jock Thomson, the range setters were obviously happy with the results. Well done Jock, a great achievement! Peter Stubbs, on the other hand, won the turkey award for continually leaving his bow behind.

There were a few steep walks to collect arrows but over all it was a very enjoyable Nationals, although a little chilly at times. I had two wonderful shoot groups with Raylene

Starke, Annette Stevens and Tim Hulsman for ABA and Tim Hulsman, Craig Smith and Jackson Blake for 3D.

Whenever we weren't shooting, the campfire, branch groups and just general catchups kept everyone entertained. I spend most evenings with others from Branch E playing cards, which occasionally got a little loud. But I'm sure we weren't the only loud group as I heard the Corn Hole Championships were apparently a big hit.

Branch E was well represented with 45 members attending. And a great turnout of 10 from Manning District Archers. Wonderful to see our new members attending their first Safari.

A big thanks to all the hard work put in by the National Committee and their helpers. It is a massive job and it is truly appreciated. Thanks also to the Hunter Bowman members who worked hard to supply meals to those who required it over the course of the competition. Without the help of volunteers, these events cannot proceed.

—Joanne Bogie





Looking back on a hunting trip of
Buffalo, Bulls and Boars

by **SCOTT BROWN**

This is the story of a buffalo hunt that took place some years ago. Hunting buffalo had always been on my bucket list and when the opportunity presented itself with Mick Baker from Trophy Bowhunts Australia, I couldn't pass it up.

I mentioned the hunt to my Dad who straight away jumped on board saying, "When are we going?"

We were advised to increase our arrow weight with stiffer arrows and heavier broadheads than what we were using. Buffalo are extremely tough animals and you want to have the best possible set-up before hunting them.

We flew into Darwin where we were met by Mick. After six hours or so of driving we got to

the property which was in the middle of nowhere. Arriving in camp we met our other guide, Tyler Chubb.

The plan was that Dad would be with Mick and Tyler would take me out most of the time. There were a couple of days we all hunted together but to try and maximise our chances we split up.

We saw buffalo almost right away as this area holds quite a lot of game. The property also had the option to hunt pigs and scrub bulls, which was a bonus. The first couple of days we sighted plenty of buffalo, a few scrub bulls and had a few stalks but no joy. We were driving through the property when Mick spotted a lone scrub bull in the distance ... a big black bull with a nice set

of horns. He was facing away, and we had a single tree to line up between him and us. With the wind in our face Mick and I started the stalk, moving slowly through the open country. We got to the tree while the bull was still facing directly away from us. All I had to do was take a couple of steps to the side and get a good quartering away angle. Unfortunately, the wind changed, and the bull spun around facing us, less than 15m away. Staring down a big scrub bull with only a single tree next to you sure can get the adrenaline going, luckily he didn't want anything to do with us and took off.

A day later Tyler and I were hunting through the base of a large gorge and spotted a pig. We got into position and as

the pig moved through, I took a shot, hitting the pig in the shoulder. We followed quite a bit of blood into some thicker terrain but were unable to find him. We continued to hunt our way up the gorge which would open into a large valley where Tyler had hoped to find some buffalo. We had only made it another 100m or so when we spotted a couple more pigs in a dry creekbed. A short stalk in to range and I sent a well-placed arrow into the boar that had been bedded behind a log. He only made it about 5m and piled up. He was a big solid hog but not huge in the tusks.

We got to higher ground overlooking the valley and Tyler was right – there were buffalo feeding in the area. A couple of big buffalo could be seen but it was very open with scattered trees and shrubs so made any stalk difficult. On hands and

knees, we moved across the dry hard ground to a small patch of trees in the centre, still over 100m from the buffalo. There was a huge bull trying to mount a cow that was almost as big as him but being out in the open all we could do was sit and hope they would move in towards us. Unfortunately, they didn't and moved off into thicker bush where we lost them. I believe that same bull may have been taken on a later hunt and became the new Australian record. He was a cracker.

Dad had a similar start to the hunt with a few stalks on some good animals but the wind would change, or they'd catch movement, and it was all over. We'd located a small herd of buffalo that were feeding in the distance, and it was Dad's turn for a stalk. Tyler and I stood back watching as Mick and Dad

moved in slowly towards a lone bull. They were able to get into range, giving Dad a chance for a shot. He drew back, aimed and released, sending an arrow deep into the side of this big bodied bull. All hell broke loose and there were animals running everywhere. Mick then made the quick decision to finish it off with the rifle as it appeared that the arrow had not got as much penetration as first thought. On later inspection Dad's arrow had only taken one lung. It would have been a fatal shot but possibly taken a long time for the animal to go down.

We had several close encounters and it surprised me at just how good their eyesight was – they were able to pick up movement at great distances. Their sense of smell and hearing was also top notch. For anyone thinking that it's as easy as walking in a paddock and





Scott's Dad took this buffalo

shooting an animal has got it all very wrong indeed.

It was getting towards the end of our hunt when Tyler and I had spotted a herd of buffalo one afternoon. They were slowly moving through, giving us a chance to get in front of them for an ambush. The plan worked quite well and before long we had buffalo feeding around us. The bigger of the bulls in the herd was a bit back so we had to wait patiently for him to present a shot and hope that we wouldn't spook the others that were closer.

The bull finally moved into my shooting lane and started walking towards me. I was on my knees in the tall grass and he was at about 15m when I drew back and sent an arrow into his chest. Luckily for us, the buffalo spun around and took off in the opposite direction.

My arrow had exited out his armpit but with the light fading fast it was decided to finish him with the rifle as none of us wanted to be tracking a wounded bull in the dark.

It was unfortunate that both our buffalo had to be finished off with a rifle but that's how hunting goes sometimes,

especially with bowhunting. Due to ABA rules we never claimed these buffalo as they weren't taken cleanly with only the use of bow and arrow. We still had an amazing time and adventure chasing buffalo in the remote Northern Territory and hope to one day be able to do it all again. Thanks to Mick Baker and Tyler Chubb, both these guys know their stuff. Tyler has since taken over the buffalo hunting operation from Mick. You can contact Tyler at www.ironbarkoutfitters.com

For those interested, some of the hunt can be seen on You Tube at Urban2Outland (Bowhunting Buffalo Northern Territory Australia).

Gear used: Both Dad and I used PSE bows @ 70lb with 780 grain arrows (total weight) tipped with 215 grain Widowmaker two-blade solids.

Scott's buff.



ABA NATIONAL SHOOT CALENDAR

January-February-March 2024

<i>Date</i>	<i>Host Club</i>	<i>Branch</i>	<i>Shoot Description</i>
January			
14th	Full Boar Archers	B	ABA
20th - 21st	Barambah Bowhunters	D	ABA
20th - 21st	TBA	I	Carp Hunt
21st	Hinchinbrook Bowmen	B	ABA
21st	Kurrimine Beach Archers	B	ABA
21st	Townsville District Bowhunters	B	ABA
21st	Phoenix Field Archers of Sale	G	IFAA
27th - 28th	Lithgow Valley Archers	F	3D/ABA
28th	Full Boar Archers	B	IFAA
February			
4th	Townsville District Bowhunters	B	ABA
4th	Bairnsdale Field Archers	G	ABA
10th - 11th	Moranbah Bowhunters & Field Archers	C	3D
10th - 11th	Hunter Bowmen	E	ABA
10th - 11th	Playford District Field Archers	I	IFAA State Titles
11th	Full Boar Archers	B	ABA
16th - 18th	South West Slopes Sporting Field Archers	F	IFAA Branch Titles
17th - 18th	Darling Downs Field Archers	D	ABA Branch Titles
17th - 18th	Ballarat Bowhunters	H	3D (non-grading)
18th	Hinchinbrook Bowmen	B	ABA
18th	Kurrimine Beach Archers	B	ABA
18th	Townsville District Bowhunters	B	3D
24th - 25th	Western Plains Archers	J	3D/ABA
25th	Dead Centre Bowhunters	A	3D
25th	Freds Pass Field Archers	A	3D
25th	Full Boar Archers	B	3D
March			
3rd	Townsville District Bowhunters	B	ABA
2nd - 3rd	Full Draw Field Archers	C	ABA Branch Titles
9th - 10th	Barambah Bowhunters	D	3D Branch Titles
9th - 10th	Northern Tablelands Archers	E	ABA
9th - 10th	WGFA at the Blackwood Annexe	G	3D/ABA Rendezvous
9th - 10th	Playford District Field Archers	I	ABA/3D
9th - 11th	Mt Clay Archers	H	ABA
10th	Dead Centre Bowhunters	A	ABA
10th	Freds Pass Field Archers	A	ABA
10th	Full Boar Archers	B	ABA
16th - 17th	Orange & District Archers	F	3D/ABA (non-grading)
17th	Hinchinbrook Bowmen	B	ABA (non-grading)
17th	Kurrimine Beach Archers	B	ABA (non-grading)
17th	Townsville District Bowhunters	B	3D (non-grading)
24th	Full Boar Archers	B	IFAA
29th - 1st April	Wide Bay Archers	C	National Safari ABA & 3D

Right

All smiles at the Branch B Safari at Mount Isa are Beck Nelson and Graham McComiskie. Beck was awarded the Female Bowhunter of the Year while Graham McComiskie won the Bill Hill Perpetual Trophy for the Most Trophy Boars taken through the year.



Below

Game Claimed.
Simon Cox claimed this Trophy Class fox, which measured 9 9/16pt, during the year.





Thinking about doing archery as a sport?

Would you like to try field archery or become a bowhunter. Maybe both?

Join the Australian Bowhunters Association



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- Access to a game award registration and recognition system at national, state and club levels
- Free coaching programs
- Bowhunter proficiency and education programs at club, state and national levels



For online membership and further information go to
www.bowhunters.org.au

