



ANCHORS

ANNOUNCER:

The Management of The Burnham Company of Archers, or BCOA, wishes it to be known that they are not an anagram of the old defunct airline BOAC. Thank you.

Readers in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England have their own programmes.

For Scotland - Highland hammer throwing Championships live from the space station. The organisers have purchased a seriously extra long tape for the event this year.

Readers in Northern Ireland have a typically Irish demonstration on how to pour and drink a well-known pint of stout whilst doing Riverdance and not spill a drop.

Welsh readers have 'How to speak Welsh' in Welsh. Without subtitles. Followed by carpentry tips with Ply Cymru the Independent Carpentry Party.

In England, there is a feature on 'How to complain about foreigners'. Also, live from the House of Commons, a farce entitled 'How to organise a piss up in a brewery'.

And for the rest of you, this beautifully crafted load of old rubbish.

Thank you, that was the announcer who wishes something to be known but nobody could be bothered to ask about it anyway. So I'll carry on.

Our story starts in A.D. and frozen to death. The Romans had conquered Briton. Emperor Hadrian wanted his new villa built in the north! Why? Don't ask me I only write this stuff. But that's where he wanted it. OK! He called upon the finest British construction firm in the land - 'The Old and Wizeded DIY It All Company', Proprietor A. Sage the Slightly Insane (President Strokey Beard Club).

All went well with the drawings until somebody jogged the architect's arm resulting in the garden wall stretching from Newcastleus to Carlisleus. This error went unnoticed until some Scots-folk looking to go on holiday in Cornwallus found their way blocked. Well that pissed them off no end! So armed with Picts and shovels they tried to dig their way through but to no avail. They tried shouting and waving at passing Roman soldiers who just waved back.



They finally attracted attention by jumping up and down in kilts and chucking huge trees at the work force and swearing in Latin in a broad Glaswegian accent. Some of these activities became traditions and are still practised today.

The builders realising their mistake opened a huge hole in the wall, put a road through and called it the MVI Cartius Wayus Passius, or as we know it, the M6 motorway.

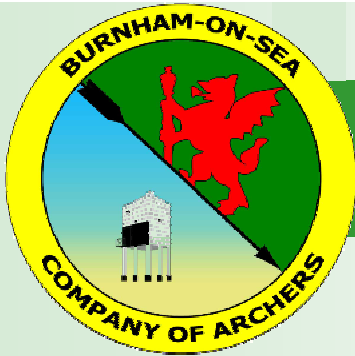
However, to find out what we are looking for, we must venture further north to the unknown Highlands of the Celts, and to the banks of Loch Loch, to a wee tavern called The Loch and Whistle. Inside, Mars bars (don't ask), haggis, salmon and pasta were being deep fried on the spit. Coffee and kit-kats (I said don't ask) also available.

A sign over the bar read 'All weapons including trees to be handed over before being served. Thank you.'

The landlord was a fearsome individual with ginger hair and many lumps on his head (caused by his wife nutting him for changing the tavern sign yet again). He was a man who could spin a good yarn after a couple of large whiskeys. One in particular was a favourite of his.

It involved two Scottish craftspersons (note politically correct) who had been backpacking, sightseeing and working around Europius (well it was Roman times). Travelling home with Viking ferries, they landed on the east coast of Scotland clutching a couple of holiday souvenirs from a well-known Swedish furniture manufacturer.

A few days later, they returned home and decided to have a go at assembling what they thought were two pieces of art deco. Wrong! They turned out to be two bows (Whoops! Bows were banned in Britain around this time. See History of Arching Part 2). You know, considering the instructions were in everything else except Celt and with some of the bits missing they made a pretty good job of putting them together. The Scandinavians called them Recurve bows or, in English, Recurve bows. One bow had a sight and a long rod. The other didn't. So to use them meant using different styles. One they called freestyle, the other barebow.



ANNOUNCER – We interrupt this story to bring you an emergency warning. Hot from the pages of the BOAC, sorry BCOA website AskTwitFaceTube and the Ministry of Unemployment, we're sorry but we have to present in 2D typing 'The Sensible Bit' (Orchestra bursts in. Saxophone one note) (Stampede. Cries of 'Abandon ship!' Appeals for calm from world leaders)

Oh alright. Close your eyes or hide under the desk and I'll write when it is safe to come out.

Right. Now then. As this story is entitled 'Anchors' I suppose I'd better explain. It's not about bits of metal on a ship you sling overboard to stop it from moving. It's about the hand position on the face when aiming the bow.

Let's start by keeping things simple. I'm not going to go into compound style anchoring because it's more difficult to explain and it's mainly for archers who are more experienced. No the anchor points I refer to are:

a) Side of face method. This is used in barebow shooting or have-a-goes. Basically you put the forefinger and the next two fingers of the drawing hand on the bowstring under the arrow, making sure there's a slight gap between arrow and finger. Next, draw the bow and keeping the hand flat, place the middle finger on the corner of your mouth, directly underneath your aiming eye. Many people prefer using the forefinger and that's OK.

b) Under the chin method. Also called freestyle. This is when you're using sights. A bit trickier this one. You'd be surprised how many beginners don't know where the under side of their chins are. As a result, their anchor point tends to range from above the upper lip to below the Adam's apple. So the first thing to do is take your index finger and put it on the bottom of your chin. OK now press and move it from side to side. You will feel a dent. This is where you position the string at full draw. Now, put your forefinger of your drawing hand on top of your arrow and the other two underneath making sure there is a slight gap between arrow and middle finger. Draw the bow, again hand as flat as possible, so that the top of the forefinger brushes against the underside of the chin. Where finger, chin and string meet – that's your anchor point.

OK! You can come out now! (Writes 'All clear' siren)



Meanwhile, back at the tavern, the story continues. Our two travellers decide to try their luck shooting for fish or anything else that had a pulse. They were at this little inlet when a thick mist descended over the Loch. From a distance they heard an eerie sound. A sort of cross between an old fashioned vacuum cleaner and a vuvuzela on steroids. The sounds grew louder and more terrifying as it came nearer and nearer. Our two Scottish bowmen saw a huge, vague outline. Instinctively, they both aimed and shot at the same time. There then followed a sound like a balloon deflating, followed by Glaswegian swearing in Latin. To this day no one knows what happened to our two travellers. All they found was a set of flat bagpipes floating in the Loch with two arrows in the bag. Which only leaves us with the mystery of why local man Big Mac McMac suddenly disappeared, taking his secret burger recipe with him. But that's another story.

Good shooting!
Nigel