



Faults By Nigel Boley

Dedicated to Professor Burgess Mac Readymeal, creator of the bow powered ground-to-ground short-range misguided nuclear missile. Who, on testing, famous last word was: "It". Before being vaporised.

Before I commence on this wonderful piece of old tat, your complaints are not to be sent by e-mail, but should be sent by postcard instead. The reason for this is the heating system in the indoor Archery range is a bit pathetic and we need fuel to keep the brazier going.

There's always something going on in and around Burnham. For example: There's Badger reclining. Wind Tunnel Hairdressing. Underwater bungee jumping. Zero gravity trampolining with a hostile ferret. How to posture in the High street and get away with it are just a few of the things you won't find. But there's something going on, there must be!

I was vigorously practising in the bathroom the other day. Well kettledrums do sound better in the shower. Bit tight for room though. When there was a knock on the door. There stood what looked like an apprentice itinerant minus his dog. "I've applied for a government grant for one," he said. He then showed me his business card, it was blank. When I enquired why, he explained they were in the middle of a takeover. Well what did he want and how did he get in?

"Well sir", he replied, "there's this car parked in your lounge". "Whose is it"? I enquired. "Mine" he replied, "I tried ringing the bell but it wasn't any good, there was this bleeding awful racket coming from upstairs and you couldn't hear me. Sorry about the front wall and the tyre marks in the veg patch as well". "I was wondering sir if you would like to participate in an attempt on the powerchair land speed record." Would I! I had visions of myself tearing down the Bonneville salt flats in my chair. With my hand gripped tightly around my joystick, going at it full throttle. "No mate, it's near the Burnham mud flats." "I've got a couple of notaries to do the timekeeping for us. The very Reverend Earnest Pewscratcher and the Right Hon Lady Etheline Sandblaster. They've taken the latest digital sundial with them and they are waiting for us as we speak."

Time for some action music. (Orchestra bursts in, theme from 'Thunderbirds').

I shot downstairs on the turbo-stairlift, got in my chair and made my way onto the beach. Where I found an orchestra playing the theme tune from 'Thunderbirds'. Nearby was the wreck of the SS Nornen which in 1897 ran aground. How? Well I'll tell you.

Many, many years ago much of the Somerset language consisted of the letter "R". This all changed by the discovery of the letter "O". That in itself gave village idiots, farm labourers and crap Pirate impressionists agreeable employment. However Somerset scientists, spelt with a 'z', were busy concocting a wonder potion, which, if drunk in flagons, claimed it would help boost your powers of communication. Today this potion is known as cider.



I'd love to have been a fly on the wall when the MOD got wind of this.

Anyway on this particular day the Norwegian skipper and crew thought it might be a good idea to communicate with the river pilot. Who in turn thought likewise. And after several flagons soon found they still couldn't understand each other at all. But it did promote friendliness, singing and wibbly legs. As a result of being three sheets to the wind, they missed the river Parret altogether and ended up wrecked on Berrow beach. Staggering off the boat, they formed a conga line and danced down the beach where they were stopped by the local constabulary and arrested for excessive use of communication.

Anyway I digress. Just as I thought I would be the only one taking part in this record attempt two other people turned up. I recognised them at once. They were from the Riefel clan, Archie snr and Archie jnr. One could say they were my arch riefels (Taa Daa!) (I had to do that bit myself as the orchestra were on a tea break).

Anyway the chair they had constructed made mine look a bit weedy. It was a massive 5800bhp, twin turbo steam battery powered rocket chair, with wide tyres, wings, two seats and a gay starling called Oddrod, who liked to do dog whistle impressions by inhaling large quantities of helium gas.

After winning the toss of a coin, they opted to go first.

Everyone stood well back as the Archies lined up on the starting point. They lit the gas boiler, that turned the turbines, which heated up the rocket fuel, that set the hamster wheel in motion, which made the drive shaft work, that sent the electro gubbins into overdrive and that charged up the battery. Archie snr let off the handbrake and stamped on the accelerator aaand.

(Ginormous explosion!!!) Ah, there seems to have been a bit of a technical hitch. All that was left was a huge crater, some feathers and a pair of hubcaps down at the bottom. Unfortunately by the time they had finished filling in the hole it had become overcast, and that meant the digital sundial had become useless. Well you try to set the time on a sundial when the sun's gone in, it's bloody hopeless. So they decide to abandon the attempt altogether. Damn! Now I'll never ever know how fast my 6mph chair will go.

But this is not the end of the story. Oh no, I'm not letting you off that easily. There was a letter to the MOD in OK Arching, Cornish edition, which ran something like this:

Dear, whatever your blasted name is.

We down here in Cornwall are fed up with you testing your cut price aircraft around these here parts. We'd just finished a most agreeable afternoons Archery shooting, (personal bests all round,) and were enjoying our coffee and Kit kats, when suddenly out of nowhere this contraption came flying along at very low level heading towards the Scilly isles at a high rate of knots. Thanks to Mavis and her spotting scope we have identified this craft as a powerchair with a pair of missing hubcaps. Driven by two persons with blackened faces, smouldering boots and shattered underpants. At the back was a bald gay starling hanging on to the exhaust pipe for grim death. Please stop doing this as it is scaring everything.

Yours etcetera Chairman.

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Phone rings: “Hello, Announcer here. I’m in the USA.” (Sousaphones, stars and stripes all over the place, gun shots, yeehars and spitting) “I’m in the British theme pub The Dog and Hoover.” (Sudden mass evacuation) “In the pub earlier there was a man straining in a dark corner. Well the writing on the menu was a bit small. When he had finished ordering I managed, despite the vowels, to engage him in some conversation.”

“Yessir, (spit, dang) we here in the States (spit, dang) have just about the biggest of everything. Why even our clothes size goes up to OMG. As for your archery, (spit, dang) there ain’t much that we don’t know about it.”

Just then some woman came up to us, punched the guy on the nose and told him to stop spitting in her bar. “Hell woman, I used the spittoon,” he protested.

“Yes,” she replied, “But my bar’s the one with the outside tables across the street.”

“Well sir, before things take a turn for the worse, I’ll hand back to you.” (Hangs up) Not much they don’t know about archery eh? This is probably true, but one thing they don’t have is the BCoA extensive library run by our own Ava Stogie. She lent me a very rare copy of The Old and Wizened Book of Troubleshooting. So for you here are some extracts from the book.

Warning! One bit might be accurate...

Lose sight of target at full draw	It’s been put away.
While standing on the line, I can see only bows and tents.	Turn around.
Bow feels light in my hand.	Assemble Bow.
Arrow suddenly loses velocity.	String busted.
Man with red face, big cheeks, bulging eyes is blowing a whistle very loudly at me.	You’re shooting too slowly.
Arrow low.	Bow upside down. Aim higher.
Arrows missing left and right.	Aim right and left.
I shoot longbow.	No kidding. That explains a lot.
I smell burning while on shooting line.	Catering tent on fire.
Shooting time speeded up a lot.	Fire spreading.
Loud noise on shooting line.	Fire brigade arriving.
People running away.	Shoot abandoned.



I knew we would find something. And finally, a word of warning. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Nothing in your sport will make you worse than some well meaning person who thinks they know what they're doing. If you've got a good coach, consult them first. They should help you with most of your faults. See how I slotted that in there. I'll shut up now.

Good Shooting
Nigel.