



SUNDAY SUNDAY BA DAA BA DA DA DA

My apologies to the Mamas and Papas for nicking some of the title, but there's nothing quite like a lie in on a Sunday morning. No need to rush about like an overactive blue-bottle on helium. No need to burrow your way through a pile of freshly ironed clothes stacked neatly in the airing cupboard just to find a clean pair of socks or whatever.

Then trying to put them on with one leg in your jeans, the other out. Hopping around on one foot while trying to clean your teeth at the same time. Finally succeeding after picking yourself off the floor. Running downstairs, grabbing a burnt slice of toast and a quick sip of lukewarm coffee. Dashing out the house, slamming the door behind you and racing off down the road to work. And all this because you missed the snooze button on the alarm clock and overslept. No! No need to rush about at all.

Unless you're an archer or a helper on a Sunday, tournament day. Then there's no lying in bed. I don't know about you, but no matter how early I get up there's always somebody already down at the field beavering away. I mean how do they do it? Are they really that keen? Do these people stay awake all night? Do they have bladder problems? Is there a competition to see who can get there the fastest? Perhaps they don't have a snooze button on their alarm clock. I've no idea how, but I'm glad they do.

We're lucky down at Burnham having our own ground to shoot on. It means we can set up the catering tent and mark the field out for the targets the day before. So we've a head start in the morning.

But what about the archers themselves? I mean they have to get up early, load the car up with all manner of kit. Travel miles to get to the shoot, arrive ahead of time, check in, set up, shoot all day, help with moving bosses, pack up, stay for presentation, travel miles home and unload the car. They must be utterly knackered! There must be an easier way.

Well I was pondering the problem over a pint of something or other down at the Dog and Badger. (Blimey the landlord has finally got it right). Bread rolls, prawns and duck pate were roasting on the spit. (I was wrong). Among the pile of mags on the table was the next edition of OK Archery. On page 3, just below a model showing off a nice set of nocks was a small advert entitled; Rent an Archer and a contact number. Time to investigate. Taxi! (Orchestra theme tune from star wars). Travelling at twice lunatic speed, I nearly arrived at the BCOA ground before I got there. I used the force to open the wallet, or was it used force to open the wallet. Anyway, I paid and the taxi was gone in a flash.

I made my way to the communications department, which is situated on top and underneath the right hand side of the embankment. (And you thought the masts belonged solely to O2, Orange et al, nope! They thought so too. Don't tell anyone will you). Pulled a lever marked pull this lever, a door opened and a homing pigeon flew out, stopped, scratched its head and flew back again. Must be one of ours.



I walked down the passageway, found the phone booth, picked up the phone and dialled the number. From a room across the hall a phone rang. Talk about a local call I thought. I put the phone down and strolled towards the room. Over the doorway was a sign, Old and Wizened Rentals, proprietor A Sage the seriously ancient. Behind the counter stood Rufus the Unmentionables' ever so many times great grandson Dave the Unbearable.

"Sorry about the pigeon" said Dave "he's a good homer but very gullible. Now then what can I do for you?" I explained about reading the ad and asked him what it was all about.

"Well, he said, if you've had a rough week or a late Saturday night for whatever reason, and you're shooting the next day, you're tired and want a lie in, what do you do?"

"Simple, you ring us on our 24 hour hotline and you can rent an archer for the day".

He showed me a list of charges. If you're a real tightwad you can get a very unclassified archer who shoots rubbish, hits the target less times than the longbows do and gives up before it's all over. (Does this sound like someone you know? Then you know where they're from).

Or on the end of the scale you can get an extremely classified archer. One who can plant six arrows on top of one another at 70m blindfold And for an encore does a tap-dance while whistling the national anthem in Welsh, backwards. Maybe a wee bit over the top don't you think?

No, there's only one way to improve your archery, and that's to get out there and shoot. There's nothing like the atmosphere and camaraderie at a tournament. And so what if you're tired, there's nothing like a hot bacon butty and cuppa to get you going first thing on a chilly morning.

Remember if it's your tournament, come on down and help. Don't leave it to the usual gang to do all the work. If we all stayed in bed on a Sunday, nothing would happen and we'd all lose out in the end. Yes? OK!

Good Shooting
Nigel