



John Clarke Memorial Challenge

Dr John Clarke

Dr John Clarke (Dr John) was one of the founding members of the Gosford Archery Club back in the early 1960s. The Gosford Archery Club later became the Erina Archery Club.

Before leaving England for Australia, Dr John achieved a level in Archery that is very difficult to do. Shooting a Recurve he rose to the level of Grand Master Bowman. It is at this level he was considered for a spot on the UK Olympic team unfortunately that year Archery was not included.

Dr John was a man of passion and determination achieving many things in his working life as a GP and sporting life, despite considerable challenges. He had his first of many heart attacks in his early 20s. Later in life, Dr John suffered a stroke, which partially paralysed him on one side. Yet he remained an active archer and continued to shoot.

Dr John and his blind Australian silky terror, Monty, truly epitomised achievement despite overwhelming odds. One thing you never said to Dr John is "I don't think you could do that". Very soon after that you are asking yourself "how did he do that?"

Dr John was president of the club for four years and recorder for four years. He was awarded Life Membership to the club in 2002.

Dr John was born on 15th October 1932 and he died while on holidays with his wife lone in Canada on 15th September 2005.

Dr John always wanted us to shoot a traditional English York round. This event, the John Clarke Challenge, is held in his memory.

Event Symbols:

York Rose:



The other famous symbol of York is the York Rose.

Trophies:

Dr John was a keen woodworker and produced many fine pieces of this craft. It is fitting that the trophies for this event be made a wood. The longest continuously running sporting event in the world is the Scorton Silver Arrow, an archery event run in the town of Scorton, near York. The winner is awarded a Silver Arrow.



Results of the John Clark Memorial Challenge for 2009:

York:	100yds, 80yds, 60yds.	Adrian White – Compound 1st
Hereford:	80yds, 60yds, 40yds.	Anthony Helsby – Compound 1st
Bristol 2:	60yds,50yds,40yds.	David Tucker – Recurve 1st
Bristol 4:	40yds, 30yds,20yds.	Caleb Hale- Recurve 1st

Anthony Helsby was 1st overall

Robin Hood & York:

You can't do any research on archery in England without looking into the history of Robin Hood.

While the traditional history of Robin Hood place the events in Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire, some historians believe that many of the events were actually located in Barnsdale in Yorkshire

Battle of Agincourt:

A date in English History known to most Archers, 25th October 1415. When a relatively small and vastly out numbered English Army of less than 4000 men, demonstrated the lethal and devastating power of the English Longbow against the might of the French Army, numbering, according to some accounts, 50,000 men under the command of Constable d'Albret.

Before the battle, Sir Walter Hungerford, gloomily confided that he wished he had 10,000 of the best Archers in England with him. King Henry replied angrily, 'You are wrong. I do not need a single extra man, for my hope is in God, and if my cause is just I shall prevail, whatever the size of my following'.

This theme of winning against the odds is a very inspiring one, and reflected in John's own life and his ability to overcome the odds.

The battle also inspired William Shakespeare's Henry V play.

Dr John's Trophy is engraved with a famous quote from this play from the Saint Crispin's Day speech. This speech was given by Henry V to his assembled troupes on the verge of the Battle of Agincourt October 25 1415 to inspire them to success in the face of adversity.

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers . . ." (Act IV, Scene III)

The full speech is below:

Saint Crispin's Day Before the Battle of Agincourt, 25 October 1415

This day is called the feast of Crispin:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispin.

He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispin:'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day: then shall our names
Familiar in his mouth as household words
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Day shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhood's cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Scorton Silver Arrow

On Saturday, the North Yorkshire village of Scorton hosted one of the oldest sporting events in the country, the Antient Scorton Silver Arrow. Longbow enthusiasts aimed to be the first to pierce the three-inch black spot in the centre of a target, set at a distance of 100 yards. And these "Gentlemen Archers" were only allowed to use traditional longbows, not high-tech compound bows.

The winner's reward was the Scorton Silver Arrow trophy, first presented in 1673. Or rather, a copy, since the original is now kept in the Royal Armouries in Leeds. Such is the prestige of this competition that devotees of the English longbow came from overseas to compete.

Usually the event is held at a different Yorkshire venue each year. Last year (2007) it was Hull, and in 1980 the contest was in Scarborough. But this year is rather special. As it's the 300th recorded tournament, the Scorton Silver Arrow is returning to its home village near Catterick Bridge.

There's been increased interest in the English longbow since some originals were found in the wreck of Henry VIII's flagship, the Mary Rose. Before this, reconstructions had been based on illustrations, but the yew bows rescued from the silt were in such good condition that exact replicas could be made.

Once it was the duty of all Englishmen to practise the longbow every week, and it was necessary to start young to achieve the level of skill and rate of fire that made the longbow such a highly efficient weapon. To ensure that there were no distractions, the popular pastime of bat and ball was banned in 1470. After that, men took to playing football. With a statute of 1515, Henry VIII intended to maintain archery as the supreme sport. Fathers were required to educate every male child over the age of seven in the use of the longbow, or face a fine.

Tales of the Greenwood

It's hard to talk about longbows without thinking of Robin Hood. Even though the tales can be traced back to the 14th century, they have an appeal that still resonates today. But Robin wasn't the only well-known archer. Another noted Bowman was Clym of the Clough, who lived as an outlaw in Englewood Forest near Carlisle with his mates, Adam Bell and William of Cloudsley. Clym's exploits were celebrated in the ballads of the day, making him famous throughout the north.

Surprisingly, Yorkshire has a good claim to Robin Hood. The earliest tales are set in Yorkshire's Barnsdale Forest, and the rich churchman punished by Robin is the Abbot of St Mary's in York. The king mentioned is Edward, so it could be Edward II, who went on a tour of his realm in 1323.

In East Yorkshire, the bitter wind that thaws the ground after a long frost was known as Robin Hood's Wind. It was said to be the only discomfort he could not stand. And the outlaw was supposed to have gone to ground in Robin Hood's Bay, where he lived for a while disguised as a fisherman.

Robin was such a popular figure in Tudor times that he and his companions became part of the May festivities, appearing in pageants and folk plays. Eventually the merry pranks of the outlaw band merged with the May revels so completely that Robin and Marian replaced the May King and Queen. The medieval folk hero had come to symbolise the very spirit of May.