



The Unknown History of Arching (Part 2)

Announcer: We present the unknown History of Arching part two an epic story in words, sound, Technicolor and 3D. Available, if you've gone digital, wearing funny specs and sniffing the cats litter box. Now read on.

In the year something and frozen to death the Vikings invaded Sweden, along with Forte, Cromarty, Fisher and Germanbite it was the beginning of a forecast of things to come. Under their fearless leader Saxa the Ever ready, a warrior infamous for assault and battery, they raided a well known Swedish furniture manufacturer and came away with the secret blueprint for the first bow. (See unknown History of Arching part one).

On their return there was a great celebration, with a lot of drinking and singing in the Whistling Norse and Longboat. With plenty of mead on tap and fruit juice for Eric the Wuss. Salami sandwiches bought from the supermarket were roasting on the spit, everyone was having a good time. Except one. Mudgaard, son of Asgard, nephew of Firegaard, brother of Lifegaard was down by the harbour side on The bay, doing a dodgy deal with a couple of shady characters. One was a Frenchman, the other a German. Together with others they formed a secret sect known as: The EU. (Orchestra three descending chords).

The blueprints were handed over in exchange for money, two pigs and four cans of lager. A deal, which would revolutionise industry in that country for a very very long time.

The following years saw pre- history Carpenters, Scientists, Physicists, Dentists, Artists and other 'ists' painstakingly piece together the bow. Well they did it, but it was useless, until the invention of bowstrings and arrows. Finally after much testing it was deemed to be too dangerous and a EU directive was issued. It ran somewhere along the lines that while it was OK for most of Europe to have these weapons, the Britons who were a bloodthirsty bunch of psychotics. You know the sort of people who would race towards you from a mile away, shake you by the hand and wish you good morning before rearranging your bits. Other than that, they were not too bad once you got to know them. Were not to have them under any circumstances and a EU ban was put in place.

All went well until 1066 when a private entrepreneurial arms dealer called Willie D Norman decide to try his luck in England. Knowing about the ban, he and his men set sail under cover of darkness, in the holds were bows, arrows, tea, coffee and Kit Kats.

Landing just south of a place called Hastings, he invited all the dignitaries to meet him in the Blue Frog and Woad. Stuffed hedgehog with salad and nettle pudding was roasting on the spit. Everything started out OK, but unfortunately after more than just a few beers and teas, everything started to go not OK.

Well you try smiling for hours while somebody tries to capture the moment on tapestry. Then some poor sod cops it in the eye, because they didn't listen to the instructor about not pointing a loaded bow at each other. (Safety rule No 1 beginners' lessons.) Finally some drunken Norman calls Wilbert the Blue, a man who made the Titanic look like a paddle steamer, an English poof. Boy did he ever sober up fast. An almighty punch up ensued, in which quite a number of people were seriously killed, including the king of the Brits, Harold.

William and his mates won and he was proclaimed king. The French were delighted and the EU lifted the ban. The cross channel ferry was invented, which gave rise to the 'Booze cruise' and that made everybody happy.

But time and tide waits for no man. We have to move on to the next phase in our journey. The Middle Ages.



(Sound of lute playing): Scene The forest glade, nearby a forest inn Ye Whistling Twig and Firkin. Inside a meal of beef, Yorkshire pudding, peas and gravy is roasting on the spit. Upstairs a dying man of fiction surrounded by his mates is shooting his last arrow out of the window. The other five being in the ceiling, with two in the wall. (Well it's a longbow, what did you expect)? "If this bloody arrow makes it out of the window wherever it falls you must bury me" he gasped. And with one final effort shot the arrow out of the window, much to everyone's relief. The man dies and the hunt begins.

Well they searched all over the place. Deep in the forest, in the long grass, in a nearby hayfield. They even drained the village pond. But all they found was an old supermarket trolley, a ducking stool with occupant, a suit of armour, two pairs of horseshoes and a rollerskate. But no arrow. About to abandon all hope of finding it, they saw in the distance an old and wizened figure holding aloft his old and wizened stick. Must be because of his oldness they thought. Yes it was A Sage the middle aged. They looked up to where he was pointing and there was the arrow, stuck high up in an oak tree. Wasting no time they took the body from the inn and stuffed it in the tree, where in a few hundred years later it would become part of a well known Swedish furniture manufacturers' range. And now we have to move on, but not before we mention the pivotal role of the archer in past wars. He and his bow helped to shape the history of Britain. For example one remembers Agincourt, Poitiers, Calais and the other one. The hundred years war, the twenty years war and the ten minute tiff. All was going well for Britain we were the top nation thanks in part to the bow. But things were about to change, as we move to the modern era. Somebody invented guns and Americans. There were world wars one and two. Britain slowly declined despite the efforts of one Walter Biscuit. Working from a corner of a shed on the BCOA ground, using a piece of rail track, a spring, two pramwheels and half a mile of telephone cable, Walter almost succeeded making the first compound bow. Also by sawing off the limbs of a longbow, running them over with a steam-roller, adding some poles with weights on the end and a couple of screws, almost succeeded in making the first recurve bow. Inevitably it was the Americans with their money and know-how greatly refined Walters' ideas and took all the credit. The compounds stayed in America and were used for hunting and Rambo movies. The recurves were exported to Korea, which made them the best and brought Archery to where it is today.

Good Shooting.
Nigel.