Bowmen of Warfield

Members Handbook

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Bowmen of Warfield Members Handbook. It is for people who have just joined the club after completing a beginners' course. When you join the club, our secretary will give you information about the club, including the club's constitution and advice about basic etiquette, the clubhouse, security, etc, plus the rules of shooting and code of conduct. This handbook is a welcome from the coaches, and whilst we include some of the same information for reference, the main reason we have prepared this handbook is to tell you what you need to know about starting archery at Bowmen of Warfield.

Nothing in this handbook is prescriptive. You can do it all at your own pace. There is an etiquette in archery that you worry about your own scores, not other peoples.

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Introduction

You will probably have joined the club after doing our own beginners' course. If you have done the two day course there's no more to do. If you have done the short course, we will invite you to do a few further learning sessions. Once you have signed up as a member and paid, you are free to come along to the club whenever you like.

If you are joining as an experienced archer (e.g., as an existing Instructor, as a returning archer or from another club) then we will need to carry out a safety check before you can join. This is for both safety and insurance reasons. We don't care if you hit the target as long as you know the safety rules and have done a beginners' course or equivalent.

If you are under 18, you can't shoot alone. You need to have a parent or guardian with you, and another archer who is a member of Archery GB must also be present, unless the supervising parent or guardian is a member of Archery GB.

Our Club

When you first join, it can be a bit daunting to come along to the club on your own or during one of our organised sessions. However, are a very friendly club. If there's anything you need to know, please ask – members are always happy to help. Do come along.

The club website is http://bowmenofwarfield.co.uk. This handbook is not intended to replicate the information on the website. Please visit the site to find out what's going on.

The club postcode is RG42 5NP. You can't write to us at that address because there's no post box, but your Sat Nav should be happy with this.

When you join, you will be told the basics about the clubhouse, keys, security codes and where things are kept, but if you have forgotten, please ask.

If you have the gate code, you can shoot at any time, except on the odd occasions when the field is closed for field days (maintenance), competitions or other organised events. You will receive emails about these closures. We are almost but not quite a 24/7 club, because the grass needs to be mowed occasionally and other maintenance work needs to be carried out. In particular, the mowing team work on a rota and do it when they can so, please give them room and time to work. You can't shoot when someone is out on the field on the mower!

Talking about maintenance, as a member you will be expected to help out occasionally on field days with things like cleaning up and gardening, but mostly with boss repairs. Watch out for emailed requests for help.

It's not all work though. We try to have a couple of social events each year, to thank you for all the volunteering.

Lastly, all suggestions are always welcome. See the box in the clubhouse!

Archery Organisation

We are part of Berkshire Archery, and also Southern Counties Archery. The sport is administered nationally by Archery GB (whose proper name is the Grand National Archery Society).

There are all kinds of useful information on the Berkshire Archery website – see web address in Annex 2.

Etiquette

At the Club

Arriving:

- Please park on the shingled areas either side of the old shooting line. Space is at a premium so please park considerately.
- When you arrive and park, if there are three or fewer archers shooting, please close the gates and thread the chain through the gate so they look locked. This is to prevent anyone driving straight in and to warn off anyone who fancies the field as a campsite.

Leaving:

- Please take your rubbish home with you, there is no refuse collection at the club.
- If any equipment has been left out by accident, please put it in the clubhouse.
- When you leave, please close the gates as above if you are leaving only a few archers shooting.
- If you are the last to leave, please lock the gate. Please also ensure that clubhouse is locked and the keys are away in their key-safe. Please ensure the target face store is closed.

General:

- The club has laminated master score sheets for all rounds. You may use the photo-copier to make your own copies. Please ensure the master copy is put away and the photocopier switched off when you are done.
- Please feel free to make tea and coffee, but when your thirst is quenched, please wash up and make sure biscuits are put away in a tin or container. Please also check that the sink is left tidy. Feel free to put a quid or two in the 'tea fund' box occasionally.

When Shooting

- Ensure your Archery GB membership card is visible or at least available. Show it to anyone who asks to see it. Only Archery GB members may shoot and you may be asked to prove that includes you.

- Don't touch anyone else's equipment without their permission. Always ask them, even if you need to move equipment so someone else can park.

- Don't go on to or off the shooting line when the person either side of you is at full draw. This applies on club nights but is especially important in competitions, so practise this rule at all times.

- Don't disturb other archers while they are shooting. Keep your voice down when talking behind the shooting line during shooting.

- Guests and friends must stay behind the shooting line at all times.

- There is a rule about when and how the field is split into two ranges where each shoots independently of the other. Get to know this rule. Ask a coach if necessary.

- Don't be nosy about other people's scores and don't look at them unless they show you.

Clothing

Don't forget the advice given to you for your beginners' course:

- Wear a long-sleeved top;
- Wear several thin layers rather than one thick one if it's cold;
- Avoid wearing coats with bulky collars;
- Tie back long hair;
- No open toed shoes – boots are best;
- Don't wear hoop or long earrings;
- Consider removing nose piercings and any hidden piercings the string might catch;
- Wear a hat when it's hot (floppy brims are better than peaked caps).

You can buy a club polo shirt (or a fleece or a hat) with our logo embroidered on it from Ascot Promotions. See web address in Annex 2 below. They will do just one and you can collect it and pay on collection. Remember you need to have your shirt logo on the opposite side from your bow arm, so it isn't covered up if you use a chest guard.

You will find information at the club about club kit for members to wear when shooting at competitions.

Coaching

The club is lucky to have a number of coaches on its books. Coaches have a variety of roles, and your coaching should ideally be done by a coach appropriate to the coaching you require. At present we have one or more coaches at each of these levels:

- Session coaches have the job of introducing beginners to the sport. The session coach will make sure beginners can shoot safely and to a basic standard.
- Development coaches are there to help you improve your technique and get ready for your first competition (should you wish to do one). The development coach will also help you set your bow up properly.
- County coaches are performance coaches and aim to get you from being a decent club archer to something better, maybe a county archer.
- Senior coaches are the coaches who train county coaches. They will run regional coaching sessions with a view to advancing promising archers to national levels.

All coaches can give basic advice about technique, bows and equipment. All coaches are DBS checked every three years and undertake regular safeguarding training.

If you want any coaching, just ask. If you want to be left alone, just say so. If you've been practising a lot on your own, be prepared to have your technique looked at!

Rounds

When you shoot at the club or at a competition, you will usually shoot a 'round'. This is a set number of arrows at a set distance (or distances) on a set target size. You will soon get the hang of this. Most rounds will qualify you for classification or progress awards if you reach certain defined scores, whilst a few are just shot for fun or practice.

For outdoor archery, there are two types of round:

- Imperial rounds (with traditional British names such as York, Bristol, Albion, Windsor) are shot over distances in yards on to large (122cm) target faces. These are scored using 5-zone scoring: Gold=9, Red=7, Blue=5, Black=3 and White=1.
- Metric rounds (with somewhat more utilitarian names such as FITA70, WA1440) are shot over distances in metres on to medium (80cm) target faces at shorter distances and large (122cm) target faces at distances over 50 metres. These are scored using 10-zone scoring with two scores possible for each colour: Gold=10/9, Red=8/7, Blue=6/5, Black=4/3 and White=2/1.

In metric rounds you can also score an inner 10, or 'X', and these differentiate you from an archer who scored mere 10s!

For indoor archery, things get a bit more mixed up, but when we are shooting indoors there are always plenty people around to explain things.

Shooting Times

Unlike a lot of clubs, you are free to shoot whenever you want to, subject to field closures, but we do have some organised shoots, as follows: (times correct at the date of writing)

During British Summer Time

Wednesday 18.00 to 20.00 or earlier/later depending on sunset

Senior club evening. Coaches will be in attendance either by arrangement or if anyone has signed up online for coaching, and often, because of the numbers attending, a field captain will be in charge of shooting. This is our one regular get-together where you can shoot for awards, shoot for scores or shoot for fun. You will have an opportunity to have your equipment looked at and have your shooting form looked at – or you can be left alone to practise.

Tuesday 17.30 to 20.00 or earlier/later depending on sunset

Junior Club, for archers under 25. Coaches will be in attendance, and if there is a large number of people shooting, a field captain will be in charge of shooting. This is the weekly junior shoot. The format varies: some weeks the juniors will shoot rounds, maybe in preparation for upcoming events, whereas some weeks they will have an evening split between a coaching session and a fun shoot. Juniors also shoot for awards some weeks. This session is exclusively for juniors.

Sundays at 11.00

Members get together for an organised shoot. Each week there is a suggested round, and members will score for each other and leave scores for the records officer. You are free to shoot by yourself on a Sunday morning, but there is nothing to lose by joining in. Beginners and juniors can shoot shorter versions of the same rounds.

When we are on Greenwich Mean Time

Wednesday evenings and Saturdays in conjunction with Crowthorne Archers - times vary

Indoor at Sandhurst School gym. We generally shoot Portsmouth rounds (60 arrows at 20 yards using 60 cm target faces and 10-zone scoring, but no ‘X’). Sometimes we shoot other weird and wonderful rounds, but indoor shooting is mostly about the Portsmouth. Don’t be afraid to come along. There will be familiar faces there and you will get all the help you need. It’s only 20 yards.

Sundays at 11.00

At the club, we shoot a ‘Frostbite’ round (36 arrows at 30 metres using 80 cm target faces and 10-zone scoring). This runs for a number of weeks, and your final score is based on a combination of your best and worst scores. In the past we have seen a first year archer win this competition, due to the handicap system, so it’s not all county level shooting!

Other

There is organised coaching at 10.00 on the first Saturday of every month. This is primarily for the benefit of new archers.

In September we hold our club championships. For experienced archers the shooting tends to be at 70 metres, but for the current year's beginners and for juniors it is shorter. It's a good fun friendly day. Most years we also do an indoor championship in February/March.

We have a 'St Nicholas' shoot on Boxing Day. This is well attended and good fun. Come along and see if you can beat last year's score!

Equipment

The most important thing you need to know about equipment is that you should not rush out and buy your own kit without taking advice. Please don't be tempted to buy from eBay, and don't ask your friends and family for archery kit as presents.

Archery kit (bows, arrows and various other items) need to be fitted to you according to your height, arm length and strength.

Beginners will probably have been given an opportunity to rent a bow from the club. This is probably the best way for most new members to get started.

As you progress, your strength and ability will change quite quickly, and you can change rented equipment at minimal extra cost.

If you are dead set on buying your own equipment straight away, please ensure that you talk to the club coaches first, and that you buy from one of the reputable archery suppliers, in person, and allow enough time – you can't do this in your lunch-hour. The supplier will double-check your measurements and provide you with kit to suit you. Please don't buy your first set of kit over the Internet. It's good advice to set your budget before you go to a shop. Having said that, the shops are quite decent about not pushing your spending limits.

There is no right and wrong about what you should rent or buy, or when, but Annex 1 gives some basic guidance for beginners.

With regard to limbs for your bow, you will find that you need stronger limbs, how quickly depends on how often you practise. If you bought your bow, and arranged limb exchange, you should be able to swap limbs at a modest fee. Juniors should not be tempted to use limbs above 20/22 lbs.

With regard to arrows, most beginners use 'XX75' aluminium arrows from Easton. These are good all-purpose arrows and should last you a decent while. When looking at your next arrows, don't be tempted by all-carbon arrows. If they go in the grass, you can't find them, and many archery venues ban them.

Awards

252 Awards

As a beginner you may be interested in trying for an award called a '252'. This is 36 arrows which you shoot on a large (122cm) target face at a range of distances, starting at 20 yards. These awards use 5-zone (imperial) scoring. If you average 7 points per arrow (that's getting reds, and a gold for every blue) you will score 252 and qualify for a badge. The coaches can help you get started with this. After you have your 20 yard award, the 30 yard one awaits, and so forth up to 100 yards. Some of the coaches would struggle with the longer distances!

FITA Arrows

There is another set of awards for beginners. These are the 'FITA arrows'. There are five of these categorised by colour. To gain these awards you have to shoot 15 arrows at a set distance for each award and score 115 points. You shoot on a medium (80cm) target face at a range of distances, starting at 10 metres. These awards use 10-zone (metric) scoring. The club likes you to shoot each distance successfully three times to receive your award (twice for juniors).

For each FITA arrow you have to answer a series of questions and/or be assessed by a coach on various technique points. For the first award you are simply being assessed against what you were taught on your beginners' course. The coaches can help you get started with this. After you have your 10 metre (white) award, the 14 metre one awaits, and so forth up to 26 metres (gold). Most of your coaches would manage to pass these awards!

There are also some FITA 'feather' awards for juniors but we tend to go straight to the arrows.

Progress Awards and Classifications

As you start shooting at greater distances you will probably want to start to look at gaining your progress awards and classifications. Technically you need to re-classify every year, but when you first gain an award you will get the appropriate badge, which is then yours to keep.

Classifications have been revised in 2023, and a sheet showing the requirements is kept in the clubhouse. The scores you need to get on a given round vary by gender and age group.

Progress Awards are in five colours like FITA badges. They exist for both indoor and outdoor. The outdoor rounds can be shot as imperial or metric or a mixture. They require you to:

- Shoot three rounds to a certain score depending on your age group
- Give the coaches evidence of your scores

The classifications are:

- Archer: Class 3, 2 and 1
- Bowman: Class 3, 2 and 1
- Master Bowman: Regular, Master and Elite

Archer classifications require you to shoot 144 arrows over three rounds at any shoot. Bowman classifications require you to shoot 216 arrows over three rounds at any competitive shoot. For the Master Bowman classification you shoot 432 arrows at a “record status” shoot.

Archery GB Awards

There are also a number of AGB awards you can try for, such as an all-gold end (half dozen) at 80 yards, but these are not something many beginners are going to be in a position to gain! Some of them are only available at “record status” competitions.

FITA badges and progress award badges are chargeable.

Your Own Objectives

Above we have told you what’s possible. Each individual will advance at their own rate. There is no set requirement for what you do in your first year, and no two archers will do the same. It is completely up to you what you try for.

Obviously, you will want to hit the target and get good scores, but don’t rush to longer distances. It is sometimes better to consolidate your skills and your scores at shorter distances before trying longer distances. For some, the longer distances are a challenge to be met head on while for others they are a discouragement as your scores drop.

Typically, a beginner might look at doing the following in their first year:

- 252 awards at 20 and 30 yards
- The first two FITA arrows and progress awards (white and black)
- Take part in the club championships as a novice
- Achieve a higher n Archer third class classification
- Learn to re-fletch their arrows

Typically a second year archer might look at doing:

- 252 awards at 40, 50 and 60 yards
- The other three FITA arrows and progress awards (blue, red and gold)
- Take part in their first competition
- Achieve a higher Archer classification
- Learn basic bow tuning

Some archers will do more than this and some will do less. Nobody minds what you do. The best idea is to set yourself a goal for each year and see if the coaches can help you achieve it.

You should try to take part in the various club shoots. The indoor shoots are friendly (and warm). The Frostbite is equally friendly but often a bit colder or wetter.

For some, it’s a good idea to buddy up with another archer and work as a pair. You may find that working together improves both your scores. Others may prefer to work alone.

Competitions

You probably won't want to do any competitions in your first season, but certainly you should enter the club championships in September. There is always a category for this year's new members, and if you don't enter you won't have a chance of winning it, because next year you won't be a novice any more!

Once you are shooting OK at 50 yards or so, it may be time to do a real competition. You don't have to start with scary national or county competitions at long shooting distances. There are some competitions which are shot at shorter distances, and where the rules and atmosphere are relaxed.

Ones which only require shooting to 60 yards and which our club members recommend as friendly for adults and juniors are:

- West Windsor Western (May)
- Windsor at Windsor (June)
- Yateley Westerns (June)

There are entry forms in the clubhouse for a lot of upcoming competitions - ask your coach.

There are others which are very junior-friendly - you should ask at the junior club about that.

Once you are confident at the distances, you should enter our own 'Short Metric' competitions. The junior one is in July and the senior one in September. These may be a great first competition for you.

When you go to a competition, there are some things you need to know, and things you should take:

- Get there an hour before 'assembly'. That will give you plenty time to set up and get a cup of tea before it starts.
- Take a chair and a tent or shelter. This is Britain.
- Most venues sell drinks and food, but take water.
- Take a spare bracer, finger tab, finger sling and string. Also take at least two spare arrows. All these spares should have been 'run in'. Don't take unused items as spares.
- Wear decent shoes. If you do a York round in ends of three you will be walking about 4 kilometres!
- Don't wear blue denim, camouflage patterns or any drab olive (army coloured) items, and don't wear non-archery logos. Ensure your midriff doesn't show when you shoot.
- Ensure you know the etiquette about going on to and coming off the shooting line.
- Make sure you know how to score a round.
- Be prepared to do the scoring (it's usually archer 'c' on each target who does that).
- Relax and have fun.

Age Grouping

For the purposes of all classifications, target scores, eligibility for rounds and so forth, your age group is the one that corresponds to the end of the calendar year so every 1st of January your calculated age automatically changes.

For example: if you turn 15 at any time between the 1st of January and the 31st of December of the current year then you are competing in the U16 age group for the whole year.

Lastly a note about what distances juniors compete at: Under the new classification system introduced in 2023, each age group is shown the rounds they are recommended to shoot.

Visiting Archers

If you bring a friend to shoot, your friend MUST be an AGB member. You should enter their name in the book in the clubhouse and put £5 in the honesty box.

Credits and Versions

Author: John Walton

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Approver: Steve Cornish

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Edition	Date	Comment
Ed 1	14 August 2017	Original version.
Ed 2	28 February 2019	Second Edition incorporating new shooting line info and minor updates/additions. Renamed from 'New Members Handbook'.
Ed 3	12 September 2022	Third edition incorporating minor updates, additions and corrections.
Ed 4	19 April 2023	Fourth edition updating the clubs shooting times and information, and reflecting the new classification system.
Ed 5	06 May 2026	Includes new AGB age group definitions. Progress Awards added. Visiting Archers added.

Please advise any required corrections to John Walton at the club.

Annex 1 – Equipment

As a rule of thumb for beginners, you should probably rent or buy initially like this:

Rent or buy	Item
Rent or buy	Riser (you don't need a £500 riser to start you off)
	Limbs (don't spend more than about £80 a pair at this stage)
	Sight
	Arrow rest
	Button
	String (x2)
Buy	Arrows x 8 (aluminium, matched to your draw length and bow weight) *
	Arrow tube *
	Quiver
	Bracing height gauge
	Bracer *
	Finger tab (it's worth spending a bit of money on this, maybe £25) *
	Finger sling *
	Bow stand *
	Bow stringer *
	Chest guard
	Stretching aids
	Notebook to record scores, settings and sight marks
	Bag to keep it all in

* Beginners may be able to rent these items from the club.

Once you have been practising a while, you might like to invest in:

Rent or buy	Item
Buy	A scoring app (find one which links to Golden Records)
	Stabilisation (maybe just a long-rod to start with)

Once you are hitting the golds at about 30 yards:

Rent or buy	Item
Buy	Stabilisation (side rods as well as long-rod, and maybe a damper)
	Fletching jig (and spare fletchings and glue)
	A book about technique

Later, when you are scoring in good groups at 50 yards:

Rent or buy	Item
Buy	A more expensive sight (also worth spending a bit of money on, maybe £150)
	Aluminium/carbon arrows
	Spare bracer, tab and sling
	Clicker

Equipment Price Guide

Here are some approximate budget prices for some of the equipment listed above (January 2019 prices).

Item	Lowest £	->	->	Highest £
Riser	Core £58	Samick £90	Kinetic £136	Winners £238
Limbs	Core £63	Samick £77	Soul £90	Hoyt Excel £145
Sight	Avalon £12	Cartel £20	WNS £30	Shibuya £160
Arrow rest	Hoyt £2	Fivics £15	Win & Win £20	Spigarelli £25
Button	Infitec £10	Cartel £20	Shibuya £25	Beiter £100
String	Dacron £5	Fast flight £10	Custom £15-25	
Arrows (8)	Neos £55	Jazz XX75 £55	Plat+ XX75 £75	Easton ACE or X10 £400+
Arrow tube	Easton £16			
Quiver	Longshot £16	Easton £17	Avalon £26	
Bracer	Easton £8	Infitec £9	Longshot £10	
Finger tab	A&F £11	AAE £28	Win & Win £58	KSL £65
Finger sling	Longshot £4	WINS £5		
Bow stand	Avalon £11	Krossen £13	Win & Win £35	
Bow stringer	String £4	Webbing £6		
Bag	Backpack £38	Roller case 3125		
Long rod	Avalon £17	Infitec £42	Fuse £99	
Fletching jig	Sherwood £24	Bearpaw £39		

You

Below is a table for you to record information about your set-up. This is information you may be given after your beginners' course, by one of our coaches or by a supplier.

Date				
Draw length				
Bow length				
Limb type				
Draw weight (limbs)				
Draw weight (actual on fingers)				
Arrow type				
Arrow length				
Arrow spine				
Bracing height				
Nocking point				
Tiller				
String - length				
String – strands				

Annex 2 - Resources

Websites

Our website: www.bowmenofwarfield.co.uk

Club Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/688805517948911

Berkshire Archery: www.berkshirearchery.co.uk/

Southern Counties Archery: www.scasarchery.org.uk

Archery GB: www.archerygb.org/

Ascot Promotions: www.ascotpromotions.co.uk/

Merlin Archery: https://www.merlinarchery.co.uk/

Quicks Archery: www.quicksarchery.co.uk/

Chiltern Archery: www.chiltern-archery.co.uk/

Archery UK (Facebook Group): www.facebook.com/groups/529308263835682

Note that the above group does feature a lot of nonsense and some very bad spelling.

There are also several groups on social media where you can buy and sell second-hand equipment. Remember not to buy your first kit online without speaking to a coach.

Books and DVDs

Archery for Beginners Guidebook (by Archery GB)

Archery-4th Edition: Steps to Success by Kathleen Haywood and Catherine Lewis

The Way of the Champion (Archery GB DVD)

Articles

“How to practise with a new bow” from issue 113 of *Bow International* magazine

“How to reach the next level in your archery” from issue 121 of *Bow International* magazine

There is an article about “Archery and UK Law” somewhere, but we can’t find it at the time of writing...

Guides etc

Downloads or documents you might want to get hold of include:-

Code of Conduct

Rules of Shooting (latest version)

GNAS Classifications (latest version)

GNAS Beginners Manual

Ellison Bow Tuning Guide

“Archers Reference” Recurve Tuning guide Ed 5

You can also get hold of round/classification lists as spreadsheets. Maybe ask Charles van Rensburg for his magic spreadsheet.