

# WARLINGHAM ARCHERY CLUB - BOWS FOR BEGINNERS

## 1. Where do I start?

Once you have finished your Training Course and joined the club you will want to start shooting in club events. These notes are intended to help you make the right equipment choices as like most sports there is an abundance of accessories all aimed at helping you shoot the best you can.

There is no substitute for experience however and any of the club coaches or members will be glad to help you, as will the staff of the local archery centres.

## 2. What do I need?

The most basic equipment you need to get started is;

- A bow
- A bow sight
- A "tab" to protect your fingers where they hold the bow string, a finger sling and an arm guard (bracer)
- A set of arrows
- A bow stand and arrow holder (quiver)
- An arrow 'puller' (to give grip when pulling arrows from the target).

You can either buy these or hire most of them from the club on a weekly basis for about £1 a time. To purchase you should budget about £300 for this basic equipment.



Figure 1: Basic training bow on stand

## 3. Where do I buy my equipment?

If you look at the "useful links" part of this site you will see one for Quicks. They are the leading supplier in the Surrey area and there is an on line catalogue to help you gauge prices.

Our website also provides links to other suppliers. E-bay also provides a useful source of second hand equipment.

It's always worth talking to the coaches and members before purchasing any equipment.

## 4. How do I know it will be the right bow for me?

We are all different in our ability to draw a bow and it is important that the bow is tailored for your use. It pays to know this before buying second hand as it is unlikely that the person selling the equipment is exactly the same physical build as you.

If you buy your equipment new then the archery centre will spend some time with you ensuring it is right for you.

## 5. Should I buy my equipment as soon as I join the club?

There is something to be said for waiting, as your shoulder muscles will develop as you start shooting and in time you can draw a more powerful bow. This is an advantage when you come to tackle the longer distances.

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You can continue to hire rather than buy if you prefer, as you develop your ability. The website "links" page includes a web site for Chiltern Archers who have hire arrangements for more sophisticated equipment. This approach will allow you to try different equipment before you settle on your final choice.

### 6. How much will it cost me to buy ALL the equipment I need?

This is a hard question to answer, as there is an incredible range of equipment available to the modern archer. The bow in the picture illustrates a typical set up for an experienced archer.

The bow itself will be made of lightweight materials and the limbs, which fit into the middle section of the bow, can be changed independently. They can also be made from a variety of materials to improve the quality of the shot and 'feel' of the bow. The Long Rod sprouting from the middle of the bow with its V-Bars are all intended to aid the balance of the bow and counter the flexing which releasing the arrow causes. This all makes it more pleasant for the archer who feels little of the forces generated when the arrow leaves the bow.



Figure 2: Modern Recurve bow

With the arrows and a hip mounted quiver to hold the arrows an archer would expect to invest approximately £500 in a first target archery bow and essential accessories.

### 7. Are there more traditional types of bow used?

The bows illustrated so far are referred to as "Recurves" after the shape of their limbs, which recurve towards their ends. This design allows the bow to store more energy and drive the arrow further. There are many archers who favour more "traditional" bows made from wood and which are shot without the aid of sights or stabilising rods. There are many variations in style and types of wood used but basically they fall into 3 categories:

- The longbow
- The flat bow
- The horse bow (Mongolian, Korean, etc.)

The longbow is one of the most significant bows in history and accounted, almost entirely, for the ascendancy of the English armies in the Middle Ages before fire arms became commonplace.

The picture below shows 2 modern longbows (1 a self yew bow, the other a tri-laminate bow), which although not as powerful as it's medieval predecessor, is valued by the archers who use them for its simplicity and lack of modern day technological aids.

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Prices vary according to the materials used but a reasonable longbow and set of arrows with back mounted quiver would also cost in the region of £400. These bows are certainly used in target archery but are also used extensively in field archery. In this sport, targets, representing various types of animal, are set out in wooded conditions and scores allotted according to where on the animal the arrow strikes.

The Flat Bow is more American in origin and is made in both traditional and modern materials. It is a very powerful bow and is more often seen in field archery. It is shorter than a long bow and has a small 'shelf' cut into the bow to form a rest for the arrow while it is being drawn. Prices start around £150.

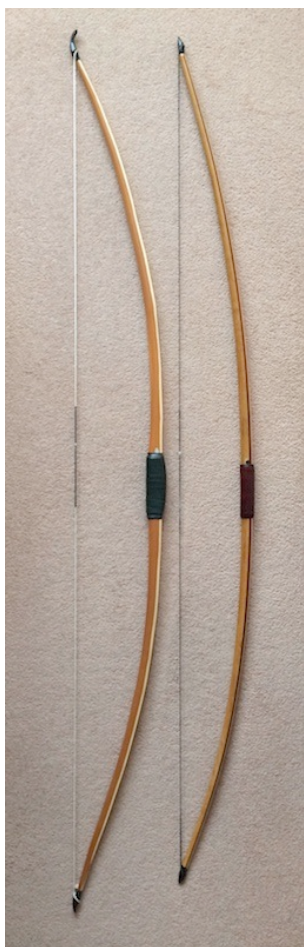


Figure 3. Longbows



Figure 4: Flatbow



Figure 5: Horsebow

There is more information on our website, in the 'Bow styles' page.



### 8. What about the latest types of bow?

The recurve bow continues to be the mainstay of archery in the UK currently and the use of new materials, such as carbon, for bow and arrow making, ensures their continual development.

In recent times the Compound Bow has become increasingly popular, particularly in the USA where there are over 3 million compound archers! Bows come in many shapes and sizes and the amount of effort to draw back the bow is usually referred to as "draw weight". A junior might use a bow with 20lbs draw weight and a senior male a bow with 40lbs draw weight. This is roughly the equivalent of picking up a 20lb or 40 lb weight every time they draw the bow.

As you can see from the photo the Compound bow has wheels or cams at each end of the bow. These lift the string as the bow is drawn back and reduce the amount of effort required to draw back the bow. This reduction in effort is referred to as "let-off" and makes a significant difference to the draw weight an archer can manage.

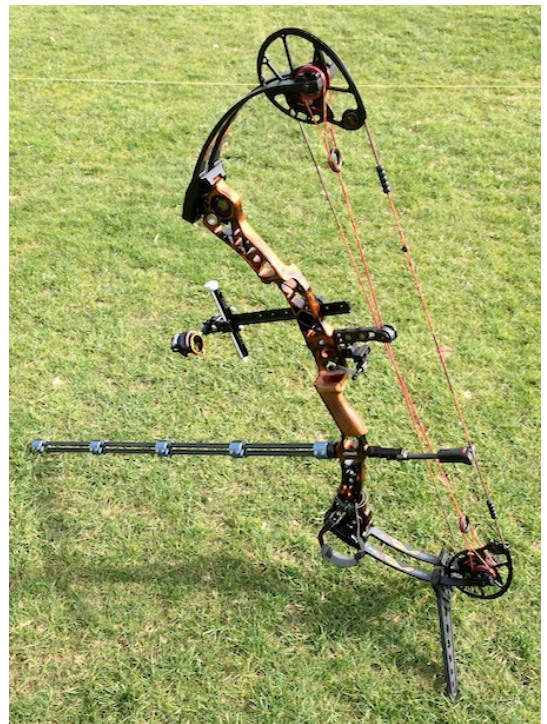


Figure 6: Compound Bow

For example a bow with a 40lb draw weight and a 50% let-off will feel like drawing back a bow with only a 20lb draw weight. A typical "let off" is 65% but depending on the cam profile higher reductions in draw weight are achievable.

The string on a compound bow is usually drawn back by a wrist mounted mechanical release, though many field shooters prefer to use their fingers. Compound bows also differ in that they have a rear peep sight in the string and a front magnified scope. The result is a bow that has greater accuracy, particularly over longer distances, and is easier to hold at full draw. As a Compound bow is also much shorter than other bows and is not dismantled between shoots then it is easy to see why it is becoming increasingly popular for target shooting.

Compound bow prices start at about £550 for the basic models, including sights.

### 9. What else is important?

Your choice of arrows is also key to how well you will shoot. For traditional bows the arrows are best made from wood but for Recurve and Compound bows arrows will be either aluminium or carbon or a combination of these materials. Cheap arrows are a false economy and it is best to budget at least £50-£70 for your first set of 8.

The length of the arrow, the spine (stiffness), the fletchings that stabilise the arrow in flight and the metal point referred to as a "pile" all need to be customised to you and your chosen bow.



Figure 7: Arrows - from top to bottom: wood; carbon/aluminium composite; aluminium.

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Your local archery centre will help with all the technicalities involved and there are experienced archers at the club who can point you in the right direction.

Your choice of sight and the ease with which it can be adjusted is also important and there is quite a variety on offer these days ranging in price from £50 to well over £250. All will do the job though so it is more a question of what you want to spend when it comes to choosing a sight.

### **10. What should I do next?**

Why not "have a go" by contacting the Club secretary and signing up for the coaching course which is described elsewhere on the website. If you then join the Club you will get plenty of help to ensure you enjoy your archery, particularly in the long days of summer.

Our advice on buying equipment can be easily summarised as:

- Be patient
- Hire before buying
- Talk to our coaches and club members
- Listen to archery centre staff
- Plan your purchase
- Avoid expensive accessories to start with.

Above all archery is a sport to be enjoyed and your equipment is just a means to that end.