

AROUND THE TRADS 2019.4

*It's a fair drive from the Sunshine Coast in Qld to Newcastle in NSW and I was keeping a keen eye on the weather, as there was one cyclone looming over the gulf in Qld and they were not sure of its inland path and the other over WA, plus a low pressure system off the coast of NSW. Was the HVTA hex going to strike once again! The shoot was now a week away and the rain forecast was minimal over Saturday down there, so accommodation was booked, vehicle packed and off we went.

We had information regarding access to the Hunter Valley driveway as the Roads Dept. was doing continual works on the freeway, and discovered the club track is at the very end of the roadwork barrier wall. Just as we arrived one of the club members pulled up behind us so we didn't need call for someone to let us in.

Driving toward the club grounds along the track we were wondering if anyone else had arrived. After going through the second gate the camping area came into view, we pulled over to one side to look for a spot. There was one chap setting up camp, who we knew, so wandered over to say g'day. He was here with his grandson who was doing his first trad shoot. Then we found a good spot nearby and set up our camp. We didn't have to wait too long for the others to arrive, set up camp and bring out the nibblies.

For Thursday evening meal we all contributed to different part of the menu and next thing you know we have a small feast, and a beautiful clear sunset through the trees. We celebrated our safe arrival, toasted a great weekend in our friend Andy Firths honour, with good wine, single malt and cigars.

You don't realise how close to the freeway the club grounds really are until you tuck yourself in and try to sleep.

Friday morning dawn with blue skies, sunshine and a gentle breeze, we eased ourselves into the day and after lunch as others started to arrive we wandered over to the practice butts for a few shots. Howard had given his grandson Jesse lots of instruction and he was starting to shoot quite well, then we walked closer to and further away from the butts to give him an idea of the different distances.

Our Friday evening meal was a mixture of contributed foods and it went down a treat, followed once again by some fine quality drinking liquids. There were by bedtime many many campers set up, all looking forward to the weekend.

Around 1.00am the spits of rain started, light at first, which dulled the traffic noise, and then a little heavier, and it was still raining when we got up. Oh dear, this looks like it's set in! One lot of campers woke up, packed up and left. There was quite a few of us huddled under the tarp waiting for the rain to ease so we could go down to the club to get some breakfast and as the weather report looked like the afternoon would be clear, the shoot was going ahead. Most of us had paid nominations Friday so only the shooter who arrived Saturday needed to pay. They decided to hold the Muster around 9.30am to tell everyone what the plan was – the main part being for everyone to be back in at 3.00pm to raise a glass as Nick Lintern gave a fabulous speech to let those who were unaware, why we were all gathered for the weekend, to honour our friend Andy Firth who life was cut short rather suddenly by cancer.

Muster was over and the rain had started to ease, then having checked the radar ourselves decided to all sit down and have a cuppa, wait for about an hour and then go out. Well that paid off as it started to rain again. Soon the skies started to clear and with broly in pocket we departed. The score cards have 30 targets, bow bird, moving target, speed round and hunt round on it, and as we had started rather late, figured we wouldn't get it all done, so started on one of the courses.

The first 10 targets on the course we did were all rather small, so the young fellow did well to get them, the closer ones can be tricky at times. The last few targets were larger and set back a bit further, so a bit of guidance he was hitting them regularly, sometimes when we, the more experience archers, were not.

As the targets were spaced a fair way apart it took quite a while to walk around, so once we had finished we went back to camp for a late lunch, then thought we'd do the Hunt Round. There was some confusion between with the signage, the markers and scoresheet, so I ran over to the clubhouse for some clarification. Ok sorted, back I went, explained the "rules" and we started to shoot – everyone was done except me.... Oh No!! where's my glove? I always keep it attached to one of the belt loops on my shorts or trousers, where on earth could it be.... Well I don't have time to find it now, so I did the event with bare fingers..... ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch!!!!

As there were 8 of us in the group it took a little while to run through, so once we had scored all the arrows, everyone, with head down looking, retraced my steps back to the clubhouse where I had run before, then back to camp. I hear you ask did you find your glove? – well.... Yes.... about 3 feet from camp. I had stopped the fellows to take a photo, had taken my glove off and shoved it under my arm, like you do, and when I turned to give one chap a hurry up, well I guess it fell out and there it laid, very unloved on the wet leaves until I returned. Thank goodness for that, I didn't want to be breaking in a new glove. I apologised to everyone for my bloneness, and thanked them all for looking, including those who were at the clubhouse when we went down, with drinks in hand to raise a glass to Andy Firth – gone yet not forgotten.

Following the tribute we ventured off to do the 2nd course. This too had smaller targets and one particularly large glob of silicone, we think used to be a rat, was a little difficult to hit without shooting through it into the tree, which wasn't terribly kind on arrows. We finally finished this field course, which also had the targets fairly well spaced

apart, and with the wind now blowing in gusts we decided to skip the bow bird and do the speed round. It was now rather late in the day, so I took the score cards up to the shed and asked if we could finish tomorrow.

Meanwhile back in camp Saturday dinner was being planned by the chaps, over a tall glass of stout. We had jacket potatoes wrapped in alfoil and cooked in the coals, with various brands of fancy sausages from Europe and South Africa, plus some steaks and bread rolls with cooked tomato, onion and sliced speck. Another feast indeed, followed by South Australian triple cream Brie with the biggest bag of corn chips I have ever seen.

Stimulating conversation, single malt whiskies shared, is there a better way to spend an evening?

No more rain had been received or was expected, so the chaps went to the clubhouse for a bacon and egg burger before we set off to the running pig from yesterdays sheet, so I could then get the score sheets for today. For the Sunday, if people wanted to shoot, they gave you scorecards that were pink. They were not entered as a separate score to be included in the total; they were used as a comparison only to your previous field course scores only. We just wanted to shoot some more, however one our group had had enough of the long walking distances between the targets around the courses and packed up to drive home, so off the rest of us went, pink score cards in hand. We did the two courses and I handed in the sheets and we thought no more of them.

A lot of people were packing up waiting for the presentations, and as we were not leaving until Monday morning, sat down for some light refreshments before heading down when Muster was called.

Our group, which was made up of travelers from as far away as Southern NSW, the Shoalhaven area in NSW and the Sunshine and Cooloola Coasts in Qld, did quite well in the overall scheme of things at the presentations including the young fellow who claimed his first trophy in a competition.

With the comparison scores they were giving out certificates and chocolates, and members of our group received all of them - Most Improved Adult Male, Most Improved Adult Female, and Most Improved Junior. Mr Towball had written two numbers on the top of head, -10 and -25. These negative numbers were for a prize given to the archer who didn't shoot quite as well on the pink score cards, and one of our group won that as well.

We headed back to our camp and over a couple of Stouts, made plans for Sunday evenings meal: a couple of steaks, some European sausage, onions, tomatoes, chopped potato fried up, and bread rolls – another feast, complete with remaining Brie cheese and we still had the huge bag of corn chips.

After our meal we enjoyed a fine malt and then the night's entertainment arrived. His name at the end of the night was "Way", as he regaled us with many hilarious tales of his exploits when he was a pest exterminator, and his experiences with many a foreign customer not being able to pronounce the letter R. As you can imagine we were still calling him "Way" the next day, and will continue to do so should our paths cross again.

On Monday we finished packing up and hit the road pretty early for the drive home.

The Hunter Valley Traditional Archers next shoot, The Gathering, is held on the June Long weekend.

*The Kurwongbah Open was originally down as a 2 day shoot, and even though not strictly a Trad shoot, the format is, that the targets are set at hunting distances. A few of us had already made plans to stay with a friend that lived near the club over the weekend, and when the club changed the shoot to just the Sunday 14 April only we decided to stay Saturday night anyway. As there were 3 shoots in a row some travellers from Southern NSW and also Newcastle NSW were going to this shoot too.

To say we had a feast on Saturday night at our friends would have been an understatement, it was just a continuation of the HVTA meals. We had a wonderful evening with few different European dishes with champagne, then finished the evening with a few more beverages.

Sunday morning after a hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs, we headed out to the Lakeside clubs' course.

There was a total of 36 archers there for the day, of which only 9 were not shooting Trad gear. We received instruction and then set out for the course – our group was quite large so we started on target 3.

All 24 of the 3D targets were set in very realistic situations. We were to shoot 2 arrows at each target, unless there were 2 targets set up, then we were to shoot 1 arrow at each target. This was made a little challenging at 1 of the target pegs, as the 2nd goat was situated just behind the 1st goat, so you'd land the arrow in the first one, then if you didn't quite get it right, then you'd land the second shot also in the first one, and well, that's a miss isn't it. At target 1, there was rather large wilderbeest with a slightly smaller deer in front of it, and both animals "facing" difference directions. There was only 2 in our group that landed an arrow in both targets.

Once we had done the field course we grabbed some lunch, and the hamburgers were huge, with pineapple on them as well, plus a bucket of chips and some yummy vanilla slice and a can of drink to wash it all down, before doing the speed round. This was set up just near the underground septic tanks, which were a little on the nose as they were supposed to have been emptied, so it certainly got the groups moving along. You needed to go for the green cube first, whether you hit or miss, then carry on with the rest of the animals.

The hunt round was set up at the side of the camping area and the targets were set up along a meandering path which you followed and then had to shoot each target from its own peg. This event was timed for 1 minute. Scoring for all the targets including the speed and hunt round was 10, 8 and 5. Our scorecard was complete and handed in. While the scores were being tallied, an 80yard shot at a very large pig, was set up in front of the practice butts. It was \$2 for 3 shots and ended in a tie, one chap using a recurve and one chap using a compound with sights and release aid.

The presentations were then done and the mens recurve winner, Mr McGuire, was also the overall points winner. Top marks to the range captain and his helper for the realistic target placings and with just one group a little slower than the rest of us, it was really good day, and next year they are thinking of putting it back on for the 2 days. We shall have to wait and see.

The Lakeside clubs next shoot we will all be at is the Jules Shield Trad shoot being held 06/07 July.

*The North Albert Field Archers Traditional Rendevous is held over the Easter long weekend, which was April 19 to 22 this year, so some of us take advantage and head down Thursday. We were tootling down the freeway toward Brisbane under grey cloudy skies, knowing the forecast was for possible showers through to Saturday. We were going regardless of the weather, as camping with friends over a long weekend is always great, and even better when it's at a Traditional archery event.

There wasn't much in the way of rain on Thursday during the day, and there were 6 campsites set up, which was great. Our campsite residents enjoyed a small feast of smoked chicken breasts and salad for tea, a tippie of fine scotch to keep the mozzies away, and, even though we had a couple of showers during our dinner, the almost full moon shone brilliantly in the sky as we headed to bed.

Friday dawned with overcast skies and a drizzle or two of rain. There had been one brief heavy shower of rain and the club had kindly left one of their regular courses open with vinyl type targets on them, so we wandered, rather casually, around the course and got back to camp just as the rain started again. After lunch and a couple of brief showers we went to the practice butts for a little shot at the different distances, ducking under the cover when another burst of rain fell. As we enjoyed our evening feast of fish, which had been caught on the south coast of NSW especially for the occasion, expertly battered by the chef of the evening, along with potato scallops and salad, a few more showers fell. By Friday evening only another 4 campsite had been setup, it seemed the rain may be keeping people away, and following the downpour we received through the night, we wondered if any more would turn up tomorrow for the shoot.

On Saturday morning the sun was shining and following a rather well done club breakfast of bacon eggs and sausages, we noticed the carpark was starting to fill with archers who had decided to be day visitors instead of camping. By the time of muster we had 58 archers ready to go, which included travelers from Tooma in Southern NSW, Shellharbour and Newcastle NSW who were doing 3 or 4 of the Trad shoots during the month.

What was missing from this particular shoot was archers who may have needed to travel more than 3 hours or so and possibly didn't like the prospect of a wet weekend camping, which is fair enough, however the shoot still had reasonably local support with Lakeside archers totaling 18.

At North Albert there are 2 courses of 15 x 3D targets. On Saturday and on your 1st course of choice you shoot 2 arrows, then you only shoot 1 arrow on your 2nd course of choice (or you can do it the other way around, as long as you shoot 2 arrows on 1 course and only 1 arrow on the other course). Then on the Sunday you shoot both courses the other way around – no I don't mean you walk backwards, you shoot 1 on 2 and 2 on 1, opposite to Saturday – trust me it's easier if you're there!

We chose to do the course across the road as our 2 arrow on Saturday morning, figuring it was the longer walk and made sure we had brollies just in case, and yep you guessed it, at Target 2 it started to drizzle, then stopped as we put up the brollies. Once again we found a target strategically placed at the end of the tyre tunnel which you have to shoot through, this time it was a fat turkey. Still one fellow hit the tyre instead.

One of the targets on this course is at the bottom of a gravel-filled-tyre downhill walkway, and when we were standing on the peg it took us a little while to find the very well camouflaged Stegasaurus target in the long grass. I didn't see too many groups out on this course, we thought we were on our own. The gamble shot was the big white oxen of some description and a wolverine in the quarry. As it was now raining again 3 from our group shot the close target, and 3 of us took the gamble and all made the target, and by the time we were at the target to score the rain had stopped again. Another target had branches strategically placed not far from the shooting peg, so some of us vertically challenged persons had to kneel, where the taller person could shoot over the top, however they did need to do a little bit of arrow weaving if not overly tall.

When we got to 15, the target seemed to be around the wrong way so the chaps went to investigate – nope it was facing correctly. A very small target area indeed, was the bright pink backside of a baboon nestled behind and in between two tree trunks.

We stopped for morning tea of Chai and biscuits, which was expertly made by our resident Chai wallah, now all we need is someone to hold the umbrellas, and we'd be right. The drink was very refreshing, then we carried on to do our 2nd course, being a 1 arrow round. The Jackalope is definitely an interesting looking target which we found on target 4. The gamble on this course at target 6 was a very big lion at a distance or a closer beaver. All our group took the gamble shot, and all with success, yay. We needed to deploy brollies by target 7, it wasn't a heavy shower, just a slightly longer drizzle and by now we were used to them. There was one in our group who had a raincoat instead of a broly and he decided it was easier to just get wet instead of taking it on and off again, so we shared the bigger umbrella.

Targets 8 and 9 were side by side at the far end of this course, and many a hole was in the fallen dirt tree base behind one of the targets. There were a couple of bear targets set in the woods and a very small white bear was the final target which was to be shot through the hole in the shade cloth which was quite interesting too.

Following the completion of this course we stopped for lunch and would do the novelties later in the afternoon. There was already a group at the 30sec speed round so we went to do the rolling discs. At the NAFA course the disc comes down at a sharpish angle and the ground level is also downhill, so the disc rolled at a pace, and with the end of the ramp being open it is a little easier to see the disc coming. That doesn't, however, equate to an easy hit! Next event was the running pig, and as the group themselves run each novelty, this particular event in shot in two runs which often makes for more successful missed arrows being found.

The Hunt Round was set up along a wide track, with 4 targets down one side and 4 targets down the other side. Right hand archers start and run up one side then down the other, then back up again if they have time, whereas left hand archers can start on the other side. The club had even gone to all the trouble of double numbering the targets spots for both handed persons. The targets were all set at very gettable distances, it was the settings that made the difference. Shooting at a rather large orange cane toad in the middle of a green bush and a huge cobra between two trees in the open, a pig that had the vitals visible just over the top of the lantana where only a few of the targets in this 60 sec event.

The 30sec speed round was found to the side of the water tanks, with 6 targets set at different distances which you shoot from a static spot. Once this event was done we only had the bow bird to compete and this was done when most archers were back. Someone stands behind a solid barrier and throws discs into the air, which we need to hit with flu flu. One group of shooters had a very successful round with 4 hits on 3 discs. There was one flu flu lodged in the foliage of the big gum tree which we figured would come down eventually. Just like the one that was in the same foliage clump as last year, and the fellow collected at this shoot. There was one other arrow that was actually stuck into the trunk of the tree. That flu flu may take a little longer to fall, if it ever does.

We had all been pretty lucky with the rain so far today, and the day trippers all went home we decided to have a shower. My better half was finished so he headed back to camp, as did the chap in the cubicle next door, while I finished getting dressed. Well the rain started bucketing, so I stood under the shower awning and waited for it to at least lighten up. I'd just had a shower, I didn't need a rinse cycle as well!

Then around 6.30pmish the heavens just opened up. Thankfully we had cooked dinner and were all gathered under the big tarp to serve up. We had invited another couple of join our feast of various continental sausages and salad. The chairs were pulled in from the sides we'd put up, while I straddled the river of water that by now was running through camp. The downpour did eventually let up, while we enjoyed a tippie or two, before heading to bed.

During the night it rained quite heavily on and off, however as we walked around the 2 courses on Sunday, we were quite surprised to not see water lying around. The only place there was a huge puddle, read as pond, was right behind the long gamble shot target on our 1 arrow course, and yep, a couple of our arrows ended up in the pond. We also have to deploy umbrellas again, with only one shower a little more persistent than the others.

There was one group that must have started later, and was a little slower than the rest, so the presentations were delayed slightly. One chap did make good use of the wait, to catch up on some shuteye while surrounded by chatter. They did the female presentations first and after we'd sat down they realised the banner with bear attached was missing, so called us back up. Me being me, I said to Elle I was going to do something silly, and laid along the bears back. Then proceeded to get the giggles, as I do, at the silliness of my antics, however, I am pleased to report, I wasn't the only one to play up. Even the junior boy joined in the antics by laying down and casually propped up his head on his hand. He and his siblings are the 3rd generation of one of the club members of NAFA and 4 of the 5 children all received medals, as did Mum and Grandma too. I also believe the youngest child did shoot a couple of arrows while on the course as well.

It was really good to see that all the archers from Saturday had returned for the Sunday as well, despite the heavy overnight rain. All in all everyone managed to stay very dry over the entire weekend, and no-ones camp was washed away with only one camp packed up Saturday morning, as he was travelling south on Monday and didn't want all his gear wet. Great work was done by the range captain and his helpers. It was a shame that more didn't show, and

after talking to some club members, it was great to hear that the shoot, at this point in time, will be on again next year. So please mark your calendar for Easter weekend April 11/12 in 2020.

This year there is also a 2nd Trad shoot being held, so if you aren't already aware then please also note your calendar for the NAFA Trad Tourney to be held over the weekend of October 26/27. This is one club where all visitors are welcome and allowed to shoot, so come and join in the fun.

*As we sat under dreary skies having a cup of tea, we were contemplating how many would pull out for the upcoming shoot at Chevallan Archery Park. It was being held over the weekend April 27/28 and most of those coming had already experienced a dampish shoot at NAFA last weekend.

The rain did ease off a little as we arrived, with one camp already setup, and we were pleasantly surprised when, by 5.00pm, all archers had arrived and managed to set camp without too much getting wet. Just before dinner a couple of people arrived by pushbike to camp for the weekend. As it was a little damp they were invited to join us for dinner gathered under the waterproof shade sails, where we discovered they had arrived from Germany some time ago and were taking 12 months to cycle around Australia.

After dinner everyone dispersed to their various camps to enjoy some refreshments as the evening wore on. The German couple were quite interested in our archery chatter and we suggested they follow us around the course tomorrow.

Saturday morning dawned with clear blue skies and sun shining bright, a complete contrast from yesterday even if it was a little cool. After a hearty breakfast I did the registrations and a couple more archers arrived, some just to shoot for the day. Around 8.30am I did the muster and explained all the events being shot over the weekend, before everyone set off for the day.

The travelling archers from Southern NSW had joined us too, for this weekend, so the shoot group was quite large and they wanted to do the field course first. Thankfully the way the field course is set out, you can bypass as many targets with archers on them as you like and just start shooting at one that is unoccupied, then do the ones you missed on the way back. There were 25 x 3D targets x 2 arrow and we started on target 3. The creek was up a little as it had been raining on and off, quite heavily at times, all week, so most of the targets on the course were placed high and dry. The dappled sunlight coming through the wet leaves and reflecting off the wet ground was making some of the targets challenging to see and with a large group the score zones on some of the targets were getting a little crowded. With the smaller targets 4 of us shot, then the other 4 shot, so our arrows weren't damaging each others' ... well that's what we were telling ourselves!

By the time we got to target 15 the sun was beaming down and we couldn't wait to get to the tea tent for a sit down in the shade. The infamous target 81 for this shoot was a walking leopard set as a downhill shot, with the sitting leopard as target 19.

After a stop at the tea tent for morning cuppa and biscuits, we finished the field course, which had the gamble shot as the final target 25. As the field course runs around the edge of the property, to get back up to the shed you have a choice, to either do some of the novelties on the way back or leave them and come down later after lunch. We chose to do the Hunt Round, the moving pig and 2 targets we missed before doing lunch.

The Hunt Round for this shoot was a completely different setup – you start on the blue X moved to 1st orange plate and shoot 1st target, then walk to 1st target find the orange shooting plate and shoot the 2nd target, then walk to 2nd target to find the orange plate to shoot the 3rd target and so forth until you get to the 6th target shot, you walked to the target, find the plate and turn around to shoot back at target 5, walk to target 5, find plate, shoot and so forth until time runs out. We set the time at 90 seconds to give all a fair chance of at least getting to the end of the first run, and there was a couple of us that did make it back to target 1. The other two in the group took a shot, however when I got there I just stopped, and looked, what for, a colour I liked!!! the target wasn't quite set at the right angle to hit the score zone, and the two guys just shot at the target to get a hit, however Me, no I just stood there like a stale jug of milk, much to the amusement to the everyone, including myself. What a goose I am, deary me!!

The two German tourists had enjoyed their morning walk and also joined us for lunch.

Once we had a break we walked across toward the rolling disk, which was being done by another group, so on to the Owls on the Popinjay. Our group usually does the clout and popinjay first up in the morning while the sun is lower in the sky, however, as we had done the field course first today it wasn't the case, and the sun was shining rather brightly straight into eyes. Then we did the Clout Range and this too was a little "light" challenging, and this afternoon, thankfully, there was only a gentle cross breeze blowing.

This was then followed by the rolling disk, the 30 sec speed round, which for this event was set up in the round yard, with 6 targets of various sizes being shot from one static position just inside the gateway, followed by the horizontal popinjay, which we shoot with flu flus. The round hinged discs had been spray painted very bright colours.

By now it was getting late in the afternoon, so while I keyed in all the scores everyone settled back with a refreshment or two, along with cheese, crackers, dips and salami, being careful to leave enough room for the marinated steak dinner, with potato bake and salad followed by various cheesecakes for dessert.

A couple more campers had arrived during the afternoon and they also joined us for dinner, one lady was from Holland, and the other two were Canadians who now live in Brisbane, and also the German couple too.

After dinner we started the fire and also sat around the table nearby enjoying our refreshments and celebrating life. The evening was a little cooler and great for sleeping, and the morning also dawned with sunny blue skies.

On the Sunday we don't do a muster and the groups can go out when they are ready. A couple of the locals had also joined us today.

Our group had grown by two more shooters this morning as the German couple hired some archery equipment and set to go around with us. This made the group a little too big, so at the 2nd target one fellow who was giving marvellous verbal instruction, chose to take the beginners onto the next target, shoot his arrows, then let them shoot and collect their arrows while leaving his in the target. We could score his after we had shot, then one of us couriered his arrows onto him, while the Canadian visitors walked around and watched the rest of us shooting. Today we had the field course, the moving target, 30sec speed round and the rolling discs to shoot.

I was a little concerned the presentations might be delayed as I was in the last group back in, however my fears were unfounded, as I'd entered the scores and completed the sorting by the time lunch was cooked.

There was only one couple still munching on lunch when I started the presentations, and I wanted to get them over and done so those heading back to the Brisbane area could get away, as the roadworks heading back can make for longer Sunday afternoon delays than usual.

It was great that everyone turned up, despite the weather's best intention to dampen our enthusiasm, with Traditional archery being the weekend winner.

Our next big shoot is the Full day Memorial Shoot in honour of all of our archery friends who are no longer with us, and is being held Sunday June 23. There will be a field course of 3D animals plus a few novelties. Keep an eye out for the flyer.

*The Gladstone Longbow and Recurve muster was held over the weekend May 4/5 and I phoned a participant and received the following information: Friday was muggy as it rained, and Sunday was beautiful. There were about 35 people, food was good, Sat 2 x 20 target courses 1 as a 3 arrow, 1 as a 1 arrow. Novelties: a flying pig shot with flu flus at the practice butts, a Hunt round and the Catastrophic, where you shoot at a cat before the pendulum type apparatus comes back. On Sunday there was also the 2 target courses, just the other way around. Novelties: a rolling ball, the speed round and a windmill where you had to hit a target between the blades. Up to time of sending report I still could not find any photos of this event.

* Who would have thought, on the last weekend in May, in Irymple Victoria, that I would be wearing a short sleeve shirt, waiting to shoot one of the many targets to be found at the ANAA's White Rose Archery Klub Inc. The day was glorious, with clear blue sunny skies and temps in the high teens.

Four of us, in two cars, had set off from the Sunshine Coast/Brisbane area for a road trip to Mildura on the Wednesday before the May 25/26 weekend Trad shoot, and arrived on Friday afternoon then set up camp. I had seen photos of the setup, so thought I had an idea of what to expect, however, actually being there makes you realise how many targets are set up in what can best be described as a very large backyard. The course is set on 3/4's of an acre which is set in amongst 24 acres of Sultana grapes of the neighbouring property, with many citrus trees which were all full of very ripe fruit.

There were archers from Qld, Mannum and Renmark SA, Broken Hill and Bega NSW, Swan Hill, Ararat, Mildura Vic, and we had all gathered to celebrate Roadies Birthday Trad shoot. Once nominations had been paid and the Muster done, we commenced with 5 arrows at the rolling disc, two people shooting at a time. Where else I wonder, could you recline in an armchair to watch archers shooting from the doorway of a shed while you wait your turn, and, to make it more interesting, the rolling disks were various sizes as well.

Next event was the windmill, which has two arms that rotate from behind a cover and each end has a 2D duck attached to it. A little tricky at first I must admit, and a whole of fun shooting 6 arrows in total. We then moved across to the "indoor range" which had a Fita 60cm coloured target face, an ABA colour turkey target and a 2D duck, and we shot 2 arrows at each target from different distances, two archers at a time.

The next "section" had a 3D fox, a 60cm cardboard square which had 3 small red/yellow circle targets and the 2 white/black circle targets which if hit had points deducted from the score and another 2D duck. We shot 2 arrows at each of this group of targets from different pegs, also two archers at a time.

In the next alcove, which we shot from in front of the pear trees and tank area, were a 2D turkey, a 3D cat with bird in mouth, and 3 rats in the vertical position which were shot with 2 arrows, also from different pegs.

We were then treated to a lunch of party pies, sausage rolls and pasties, plus a small tub of ice cream each, before we continued onto the other side of the yard, where we found 3 x 3D targets of a rabbit, cat and small pig laying in front of a paper Bundy bear, then a sitting deer, then, along a little, was a paper Pterodactyl with a very small red circle to shoot at, a 3D cat, a 3D dodo hidden in the grass, and an interesting 2D crocodile, which were all first shot from various positions with 1 arrow at each, two archers at a time.

Some of us then walked up the stairs of the "fort" and shot down to the bundy bear, pterodactyl, 3D cat, dodo and 2D croc again, while some stayed near the base of the castle and shot across at another set of targets consisting of 2D carp, 3D cat, 3D laying down rabbit and a rabbit square, from between the pear trees, all with 1 arrow only, then with 1 flu flu at each of the 3 coloured bottles hanging down, which were shot from the very base of the fort stairs. We then had a short break before piling all our gear and ourselves into a few vehicles and headed up to the Elmtree Gardens Nursery, which closes to the public at 3pm which meant we had the place to ourselves, and where we found 20 targets set in many and various locations, all strategically placed around the grounds. There was a mixture of 3D targets, 2D targets, paper targets, including a pig in a tutu, 3 little pigs 1 in a house of straw, 1 in a house of sticks and 1 in a house of bricks, with the straw house target closer to the archer and a big door to shoot through leading to the 3rd pig in the brick house sitting about 5 feet behind a smaller hole cut in the front of the "house". Beside this there was a wolf with a "heart" and "lung" shot. At some pegs were found 2 or more targets so all targets were shot with 1 arrow, then scores added together for the "1" score onto the sheet, including Dinousaur collection of 5 2D targets.

We split into 2 groups and worked our way around – 1 group starting in the front grounds of the nursery, the other group at the paddock toward the back of the nursery. It certainly took a little while to go around the entire course and as the shadows were getting longer and the wind was becoming a little fresh, we finished up and headed back to Roadies place for some nibblies. Then once it was dark some archers had a few shots at the rolling discs with glow sticks attached which was a whole lot of fun. We then had a wonderful choice of Heathers homemade soups of pumpkin with zucchini and minestrone before a dinner of various different sausages, with mashed potato and a wonderful onion gravy, plus dessert which was a big birthday cake for Roadie. We all stood around and sang him Happy Birthday, much to his embarrassment.

The evening was made complete with a fabulous fire, a couple of medicinal drinks to ward off the cool evening and even some roasted chestnuts. Saturday evening was a little windy and cool, and we had at least 12 drops of rain, just enough to cause us to scamper to the verandah briefly.

It was an early start on a very brisk Sunday morning, as we needed to be at the Nursery by 8.00am to complete the course before opening hours which somehow we did. Our fingers were really cold which made loosing the string a little painful at times, and the sun was certainly taking its sweet time warming up. Sunday was a little cooler and windier.

The final event was the Carp Challenge, where you shoot 3 arrows and need to hit the target in the big circle to move into the next round, which was then shot from a little further back until the final round where the winner was the archer closest to the centre of the middle circle, and was taken out by one of the Qld archers. Way to go Dezi.

Once the carp challenge had been run we collated the scores and held the presentations so those who needed to travel today could get away. The rest of us staying got the fire going before bring out many many nibblies of different crackers, cheeses, chips, various salami types and we grazed from about 1pm through to dinner time, all the while chatting merrily away. We did go for a walk mid-afternoon into the citrus grove and filled a bag full of mandarins and oranges, then had some fresh cooked pizza when we returned before cooking a bbq dinner and continued chatting merrily into the evening.

Some well needed rain fell in the wee hours of Monday morning, which meant some of our gear was a little wet when packed, no problems though, it would dry out in the back of vehicle on the way home.

Everyone had a fantastic time. It was a really enjoyable weekend. The marvellous hospitality of Roadie and Heather, and all the great work Roadie has done in marking it a most interesting course in his yard. A big thank you must also go Lance at the Elmtree Gardens Nursery for allowing the use and access for the extended course.

Keep your eye out for the flyer for the August or September shoot and if you're travelling in the Mildura area then and I am sure Roadie will be happy to accommodate you.

*Trad shoots confirmed for Aug/Sept 2019 – North Burnett Trad Qld and Dunolly Vic Trad shoot Aug 03/04, Stanthorpe Trad shoot 10/11, Sunshine Coast Bowmen Aug 18, Swan Hill Aug 24/25, Townsville and Chevallan Archery Park Full Day Aug25 (date may change), Tully Qld 31Aug/01Sept, White Rose Irymple Sept 7/8.

*Reports from : HVTA The Gathering, Coffs Harbour Trad shoot, Chevallan Archery Park Memorial Trad day, Jules Shield Lakeside Bowmen, Chevallan Archery Park, Bega European Matchplay

For the readers who are on Facebook, check out Travellin' Round the Trads, where you can read the shoot write-ups and view many more photos.

You will find the further information and available flyers for the Traditional Shoots on the following websites:

Wallace Woods: www.wallacetradwoods.com > Shoot information (proposed 2019 calendar, and will have the link to the shoot flyers as they become available)

Ozbow: www.ozbow.net > Traditional Archery Events > each shoot has an individual thread

Chevallan Archery Park: www.chevallanarcherypark.com – for the 2019 Proposed Traditional shoot calendar, IBO approved African 3D targets now with replaceable centres, Customised unique Archery medals/medallions. Proudly supporting Traditional Archery

Traditional Archery Australia: www.traditionalarcheryaustralia.org > Shoot Information

If you have any queries or would like to be added to the Qld Traditional Archery data base for direct shoot information please feel free to contact me by email at swallace@wallacetradwoods.com

I look forward to seeing you 'round the trads in 2019. 😊