

AROUND THE TRADS 2019.5

*Excerpts taken from a personal post from a first time attendee:

What do you get when you gather close to 200 people, 150 of them registered archers, onto the Hunter Valley Traditional Archery range? Answer: An absolutely fun filled time all in the name of Traditional Archery.

This was the first time my dad Keith and I had attended the Gathering on the June long weekend. Arriving at the gate we had to ring "Uncle Ronnie" to find out the code to unlock on the gate. The friendly voice assured us we had arrived and this was going to be fun. It was a lovely surprise to see other Queenslanders had also made the trip. It was the clubs 20th Gathering and archers arrived from near and far not wanting to miss out on helping the club celebrate, true trad camaraderie at its best. By Friday night the large camp area resembled a small village, camp fires to sit around, lots of stories and laughter and a delicious complementary meal of chicken curry and dessert.

We woke ready for a Saturday of Trad Archery. Breakfast of Bacon and Eggs commenced at 7am, with expert bacon crisper and egg flipper Towball in good form with his humour. President Peter called all archers to muster at 9 am to welcome us and outline the weekend's program. Range Captain Richard set us a challenge of 3D targets with some interesting gamble shots thrown in and the novelties that we have all come to know, speed, hunter, bow bird, running pig and rolling discs. Our group was made up of archers who in true trad form did not take themselves too seriously. We laughed, told jokes and heckled at each other's attempts to hit the tricky shots and gamble shots. A hotly contested axe and knife competition started at 2pm. Many whoops and hollers were heard as the double bit axe was thrown. Some major talent was definitely on show.

It was wonderful to witness so many cubs (at least 30) attempt the balloon pop event that followed the axe and knife. Excited children all vying to reach a score of 50 by shooting balloons of different colours. Each colour being worth a different score saw keen young eyes really homing in on the gold balloons worth 25. At 50 the cub earned a "party bag" filled with all sorts of goodies. Every child received at least one bag, some managed to earn themselves more. Even the parents and onlookers wanted to get in on the action! These extremely well behaved kids had fun all weekend with the freedom to ride bikes, roast marshmallows over the fire pit and of course participate with their bow and arrows. They are definitely the future of our sport.

A Spinning Chevron Challenge followed, being a knock out competition accompanied by much cheering and noisy ribbing.

Dinner consisted of spit roast pork and beef or chicken Maryland. Why would anyone choose to eat on their own when for \$15 they can have such a great meal and support the club? A beautiful celebration cake followed, cut by some of the original club members and competitors from 20 years ago. Roast and dessert – couldn't ask for more! Sunday again saw the range blessed with fine weather. We were off to try our luck in the improvement challenge over the 30 targets. Pride and the determination to show that second time round the scores would improve hilariously only worked for some.

I've never been to a shoot that included a broad head range. Fantastic seeing so many archers testing their accuracy skills under hunting conditions.

A lovely tradition that we had not seen before was next. Archers were asked to write their name on one of their arrows. We all gathered in an area overlooking one of the pretty wetland ponds. By shooting our arrows out onto the field and then gathering another archer's arrow we all made a new friend. I was shocked to find out of such a large group of lady archers I had been selected to compete in the Top Five Shootout. Kay Prince and I ended up tying and having to repeat our shots. With so many archers present I felt honoured to accept this trophy and the beautiful glass trophy (unique and made by Towball at his Glass Fusion class) for Ladies Recurve. Our little Queensland contingent did ourselves proud and we had to bring up the State of Origin win as well! More importantly we all had heaps of fun. From the archery shots to the very full two days of events this shoot has been fantastic. The friendly club members, the fully catered canteen, the large bush camping area with fire pits, the choice of events all mean that we look forward to returning to HVTA.

Congratulations HVTA on 20 years. You have done an exceptional job."

*The ANAA's Coffs Coast Archery Club moved their 2019 Trad shoot to June in the hope of having finer weather and they were fortunate in their endeavour. We arrived Thursday afternoon just as the coolness of the afternoon shade began creeping over the camping area. The few lingering clouds didn't amount to any dampness. Campers started arrived late Friday morning while we were having a couple of shots at the practice butts. One of our group of friends is in the the process of mastering Manchu archery, including a complete duplicate of their dress code, which he has made himself and quite proudly donned, then gave us a demonstration of the shooting style.

There were a couple of drops of rain late Friday afternoon while we were having nibblies before tea.

Many archers arrived for registration on Saturday morning, and a few travellers were staying in the motel in town, well it was a little cool for us who had travelled from north of the border. It was great to see quite a few cubs having a shot at the practice butts before the shoot commenced.

Coffs Coast has 2 x 15 3D target courses – the first you shoot as a 2 arrow round the other as a 1 arrow round, then, you swap the courses the following day. So once the Muster was over, the 52 archers in attendance, some who had travelled from Newcastle, Port Macquarie and Tooma in NSW, Gladstone, Sunshine Coast, Kingaroy and Brisbane in Qld headed out. Our group went to the closer course and began shooting our 2 arrow round. The first few shoot pegs had various different deer targets, all the time using the shrubs, trees and terrain to set some very realistic shots. A couple of these were “windows” through entangled twigs or lantana, or bears standing beside a tree and the shoot lane was lined either side with many more trees, which often seemed quite daunting, so you took a deep breathe, focused on the target, let the string go and held your breathe until the arrow hit, hopefully the target. There was one target in particular where a conveniently felled tree stump had an opening through it that was large enough to see the score zone of a bedded deer, and even highlighted in the brightest of pink, just to make sure you hit it. I threaded the first arrow through without any hesitation, so theoretically the 2nd shot should be just as easy, however the brain often decides to throw a spanner in the works doesn't it, and you guessed it, I hit the pink paint on the stump in front. Oops!

At the gamble shot there was a small fox sitting in the middle of the track, and further along there was a huge elk standing quite a ways behind, once again the flight path lined with trees. Nothing like a bit of challenge.

We didn't see many groups while doing our 2 arrow round, just a couple of the Coffs gang setting up the Hunt Round which was between targets 5 and 6 of course B. This course came back out a fair way up the driveway, however we went back to our camp for a casual cup of tea before doing course A which was almost at the very top of the driveway.

The first peg on this course was a gamble with a javelina and a lion, which was a slightly downhill shot with a lot of open ground between the two targets, and as this was our 1 arrow round, keep your fingers crossed. Then as we stood doing the scores at target number 2 we could hear the black cockatoos in the trees above us, and they made their presence known by dropping pine cones down. Cheeky birds!

One of our group also found the stump just in front of one of the other targets a little further along the track, a wolverine standing in front of a very large tree base. A pig in the shadows where you shoot over the shrubbery, a rising boar hiding in the grasses beside the little creek, and then you get to the downhill shots, where the sun glistened on the creek water behind two of the targets. Then the last event on this course was the pendulum duck, where you shoot 3 arrows as the duck rocks from side to side behind a tree. Not that easy let me tell you!

With the courses now complete it was time for lunch and then we would do the remaining novelty events.

First we did the 30sec speed round which was directly behind our camp, where we found 5 javelina strategically placed neatly behind, under and in front of many many fallen branches or trees, except 1 which was standing out on the bank on its own. You needed to move a little on the peg to thread an arrow through to all the targets. Just as we were about to score another group came along.

Next we walked toward the Stalker round, however there was a couple of groups already waiting, so off to the Hunt Round we went, which as mentioned earlier was at target 5 of course B. When we arrived, there was a group in the process of shooting so we waited and chatted to those who had already shot. Just before the last archer in this group set off it was clear she would not have enough arrows in the bow quiver, so a fellow female archer walked along and handed her the arrows as she needed them. Great teamwork Ladies.

The 60 second hunt round was 5 targets set in spots at different distances along a short piece of track with a separate peg for each animal. What made this a little more challenging was that some of the targets blended quite well with the background. You walked along to each peg and then back through them again until time was up.

Event complete, we headed out of the course and back up the driveway to do the running pig, where you shoot 5 arrows from a different position on each run.

The final event of the day was the Stalker Round. You have 2 minutes to walk along a track, to find and then to shoot as many animals as you see. The first set of animals was in a coldersac-type arrangement with another 2 or 3 placed toward the “exit”, if you got that far. One target was a little easier as more archers went through, as there was now a warn track through the grass leading straight to it. I never did find out how many there were!

Scores tallied and handed in, now time to settle back with some light refreshments and many interesting conversations. The breeze was a little cooler this afternoon and later in the evening there was lightning in the distance. We received at least a dozen drops of rain, and that was it. Coffs Coast don't do an evening meal, so most feed themselves while some venture into the coastal town where there are many different meal options.

Sunday morning was a little cooler with clear blue sunny skies and slight breeze. We set off to do course A as our 2 arrow today following a hearty club breakfast of a bacon and egg roll. While on target 3 another group was shooting

target 2 and as they were only doing a 1 arrow round we asked them to shoot target 3 then score and move through so we didn't hold them up. We had 6 in our group, whereas they had only 3.

When we got to the rising boar it is on a single track heading down to the target and also shows the dense rainforest foliage we were shooting in on this part of the course. Once we finished the 2 arrow round we went back to camp for morning tea, then completed the other course, shooting only 1 arrow. There weren't any novelties today, so scores were tallied and handed in. Back to camp for a relax and some lunch prior to the presentations and raffle draw.

The Coffs Coast Club always put on a great Traditional shoot, and as they are members on ANAA all visiting archers are welcome to shoot. This year the courses were on a rather different layout to previous years, and the club takes full advantage of foliage and terrain for some very realistic shots. Even 3 of the novelties were in new parts too. We can now look forward to the clubs meeting to decide on the dates for the weekend Trad shoot to be held in 2020.

*The Lakeside Bowmen club held their annual Jules Shield Trad shoot on the weekend of July 06/07, 2019 and unfortunately I wasn't able to attend this one. From everyone I have spoken to that attended, the shoot was, as always, really good. Everyone had a great time and thoroughly enjoyed the weekend. I did receive the following brief description of the events: "The shoot was great 2 x 15 target ranges shot as a one arrow round and a two arrow round on both days. The rolling disc shot both days and running pig, 30 sec speed, 60 sec Stalker round were shot on Saturday and flu flu through a hot shot was done on Sunday. Plenty of arrows and good variety of target distances and placements. They done good." – I reckon that says it all, thank you.

*It was going to be a glorious Qld winter weekend with crisp evenings and warm days and after dinner as we sat around the fire the almost full moon rose high in the sky behind us. There were quite a few campsites already set up for the Chevallan Archery Park July 20/21 weekend Trad shoot.

When we arose Saturday morning we were thankful the thermometer had only dropped to 3.5 degrees. After a very hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs I took the rest of the nominations spoke to a couple of the new people that were here for the first time and made sure they had found themselves a group. Then held the shoot muster and sent everyone off to enjoy the day, asking them to have their field course scores written on a sheet for the Top 10 shootout by 3pm.

Some of you reading this may not be aware my better half is in hospital, so after the shoot muster I tootled off and then left there so I'd be back at archery in time to run the shootout.

The events for Saturday were 25 x 3D target x 2 arrow target round to be shot from the orange peg, the popinjay, rolling disks, moving target, 30sec speed round and 60sec hunt round. The clout was open to be shot, however there was no scoring this time.

The names and scores were all on the sheet and without actually taking any notice of the names I quickly sorted the scores for the Top 10. I was very very surprised to see a couple of the names that were quite high up the list, and thinking that it couldn't possibly been correct, went and checked the score cards, and there you go, the entire rounds score, which includes novelties, had been written on the sheet.... Woops. A quick reshuffle was required and I went off to gather "those who were eligible and their fan clubs for support" to meet at the 30sec speed round. Then just as I got back to the shed one final group came in. The leader was a pretty good shot and as he had so kindly taken a group of first timers around with him, I quickly added his scorecard to find Yes he should also be in it. Everyone gathered over at the 30 sec speed round and were enjoying the light refreshments provided, then after I explained the rules the archers began shooting one by one, with one archer in particular shooting 6 x 10's making him very hard to beat. The Top 10 shootout is proudly sponsored by wesfarnham@realty.com for a set of custom handcrafted matched arrows, which would be done on Sunday with the other presentations.

Following the Top 10 shootout everyone adjourned to their favourite drinking spots and enjoyed some more light refreshments until dinner was ready.

After we had all enjoyed the wagyu beef which was purchased from Stewart Terrace Butchery who also supplied 2 huge meat trays for the raffle table, we enjoyed various cheesecake tarts with ice cream, custard and cream.

It is always great to see the men doing the dishes after dinner and heaven forbid one shoot get in the way, one group will do the main dishes, then we all have dessert and a second group will wash up the rest. It really is a very social activity, and the socialising continued around the fires that were keeping the winter chill at bay. I was wondering how my drink glass kept staying at the same level despite the fact that I was drinking from it.... one of my many friends had asked me earlier was I driving to the hospital on Sunday, and when I answered not until after the shoot, he decided, for medicinal purposes of course, that he would keep my glass topped up and was sneaking over when I wasn't watching.....thank you, I slept rather soundly I must admit.

Sunday morning dawn was a little crisp with sunny clear blue skies, and following another hearty breakfast I bought out the Sunday scorecards, welcomed the archers that had come just for the day shoot, and explained the events

being done today, which was the field course, only this round shoot from the Blue peg, the rolling disk, the 30sec speed round and the 60sec Hunt Round. I joined one of the groups, once everyone was set to go, and also had a shot today.

With the layout of the field course you are able to walk past a few targets if they have groups on them and start further down the course, so we started on target 5 and completed to target 23 which was the gamble shot, then did the 60sec hunt round, back over the target 4 then though to target 1. As there were groups at targets 24/25 we walked to the rolling disk and completed, then did the 30 sec speed round before wandering back across to the 2 targets we missed.

Back to the house and I started to enter the finished groups scores in, while the hamburgers for lunch were put on, giving everyone a chance to relax and have lunch before the raffle and presentations were done.

The raffle was very well supported and one chaps who was sitting at the table nearest where I was standing was keenly encouraging the raffle drawers to pull out an orange ticket with his name on it. I think he wanted to target. So I did some raffle, then some presentations, then back to the raffles and still he was encouraging the orange ticket to be drawn out. The last thing on the raffle table was a packet of almond biscuits, and guess who's name was pulled out – yes that's right His orange ticket finally came out.... I'm not sure if he was amused at the irony, though he did win something.

Once all the shoot presentations had been done I asked the Top 10 competitors to father in front of the camper, that Wes Farnham was also promoting" and for everyone else to gather over there as well. I narrated the presentation of the arrows by Wes Farnham to the winner Troy Dickinson. Then Troy very generously went on to donated them to a very young and keen archer who is the grandson of one of the Sunshine Coast Archers, who unfortunately due to family commitments, was not able to return for the Sunday shoot, so the arrows were given to another for delivery. Congratulations Rory.

I thanked everyone for coming and also for signing the card I was to take to with me to the hospital, and that our next event was 5/6 Oct 2019. Another event I was able to announce, which I did on Saturday evening while everyone was at dinner, was that Chevallan Archery Park will be holding the 2020 TAA Qld State Titles on the weekend of July 18/19 next year. This is going to be a big event, so mark your calendars everyone.

*Trad shoots confirmed for Oct/Nov 2019 – Chevallan Archery Park Qld Oct 5/6, Hunter Valley Trad Archers Oct 5/6, North Albert Trad Tourney Oct 26/27, Sunshine Coast Bowman 17/11 and Chevallan Archery Park 23/11 single days

*Reports from Dunolly, North Burnett, Stanthorpe, Sunshine Coast Bowmen, Swan Hill Vic, Townsville Qld, Tully Qld, White Rose Irymple, Manning Valley NSW

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. 😊