



Take Your Bow

Newsletter of Cromer Archers

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Table of Contents

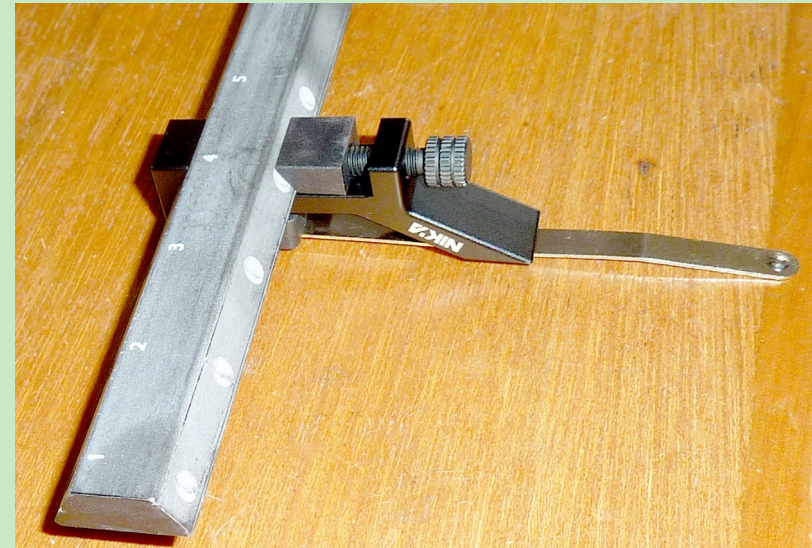
Review: Nika clicker extender	2
Zen in the Art of Archery	3
Dates when there will be no shooting – a reminder	4
Talking of caravans	4
Website	4
(Click to jump to the page)	

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Review: Nika clicker extender

Having only recently restarted archery my shooting muscles have a long way to go before they are up to full strength. I used a clicker that clicked down onto the riser. The trouble was that I couldn't pull back far enough for it to click. I needed an extension. Keith assured me that you could get such things and in the end I found the Nika Archery device on eBay for just over £20.

This clamps onto the sight bar so can be as far forward as you want. It doesn't need anything to click down on as it is magnetic and the click comes when the springy bit drops onto the magnet. The only thing I found awkward was that the clamping screw was difficult to tighten enough. In the end I had to use pliers.



Mounted on my sight bar



After changing my routine to include putting the arrow under the clicker, it took me a while to get used to holding back until aimed then pulling for the click. My shooting was rubbish in the first session (no comments please). I even managed a low shot that made the arrow plunge into the grass so much that only John P's keen eyes spotted the buried fletchings. However it has saved me from needing to buy shorter arrows. Sorry Graham.

I watched one round of the archery on the Olympics. Very weird shooting system with only two archers on two targets at a time. However I did notice that all the archers were using extended clickers.

Zen in the Art of Archery

This is an opening extract from 'Zen In The Art Of Archery' by Eugen Herrigel. It is an account of how a German man went to Japan in the 1920's to study Zen through Archery. It is a fascinating book. As Suzuki says in the foreword, 'Man is a thinking reed but his great works are done when he is not calculating and thinking. "Childlikeness" has to be restored after long years of training in the art of self-forgetfulness. When that is attained, man thinks yet he does not think'.

At first sight it must seem intolerably degrading for Zen—however the reader may understand this word—to be associated with anything so mundane as archery. Even if he were willing to make a big concession, and to find archery distinguished as an 'art', he would scarcely feel inclined to look behind this art for anything more than a decidedly sporting form of prowess. He therefore expects to be told something about the amazing feats of 3D trick-artists, who have the advantage of being able to rely on a time-honoured and unbroken tradition in the use of radio control. For in the Far East it is only a few generations since the old means of archery were replaced by modern weapons, and familiarity in the handling of them by no means fell into disuse, but went on propagating itself, and has since been cultivated in ever widening circles. Might one not expect, therefore, a description of the special ways in which archery is pursued to-day as a national sport?

Nothing could be more mistaken than this expectation. By archery in the traditional sense, which he esteems as an art and honours as a national heritage, the archer does not understand a sport but, strange as this may sound at first, a religious ritual. And consequently, by the 'art' of archery he does not mean the ability of the sportsman, which can be controlled, more or less, by bodily exercises, but an ability whose origin is to be sought in spiritual

exercises and whose aim consists in hitting a spiritual goal, so that fundamentally the archer aims at himself and may even succeed in hitting himself.

This sounds puzzling, no doubt. 'What', the reader will say, 'Are we to believe that archery, once practised for the contest of life and death, ... has been degraded to a spiritual exercise? Of what use, then, are the bow and the arrow? Does not this deny the manly old art and honest meaning of archery, and set up in its place something nebulous, if not positively fantastic?'

It must, however, be borne in mind that the peculiar spirit of this art, far from having to be infused back into the use of bow and arrow in recent times, was always essentially bound up with them, and has emerged all the more forthrightly and convincingly now that it no longer has to prove itself in bloody contests. It is not true to say that the traditional technique of ... archery, since it is no longer of importance in fighting, has turned into a pleasant pastime and thereby been rendered innocuous. The 'Great Doctrine' of archery tells us something very different. According to it, archery is still a matter of life and death to the extent that it is a contest of the archer with himself; and this kind of contest is not a paltry substitute, but the foundation of all contests outwardly directed—for instance with a bodily opponent. In this contest of the archer with himself is revealed the secret essence of this art, and instruction in it does not suppress anything essential by waiving the utilitarian ends to which the practice of knightly contests was put.

Later Herrigel says, 'The archer ceases to be conscious of himself as the one who is engaged in hitting the bull's-eye which confronts him. This state of unconscious is realized only when, completely empty and rid of the self, he becomes one with the perfecting of his technical skill, though there is in it something of a quite different order which cannot be attained by any progressive study of the art.'

A last thought. As the late, great football manager Bill Shankly might have said about archery, 'Some people think archery [football] is a matter of life and death. I assure you, it's much more important than that.'

Dates when there will be no shooting – a reminder

All of August due to caravanners
12 September because of Duke of Edinburgh Award campers

Talking of caravans

I was chatting to someone the other day about caravans. I said that, when I had one, the thing I disliked about it was putting up the awning. He said he had solved that as he had an auto-inflate one. I asked how so and he said, 'She does it.'

Website

Type cromerarchers.org.uk into your browser or click the link. You will see the club's website. Remember its **your** website so tell me what **you** want to see on it.