

The first I.L.A.A. Clout-shooting Championship at Cobham Hall, 19 September 2010 (By Michael Herschell, Chairman).

It was an event that had long been on the wish-list of the International Longbow Archers Association. All it needed was suitable ground. It was well found; Cobham Hall, a medieval Manor that goes back to early Tudor times, was the perfect setting. The ground is surrounded by a dense fringe of species trees on each of three sides; the fourth gives a panoramic view of "the house". To sum it up; a stunning venue !

No draw-weight restriction or arrow fuss

We only had five weeks to put the shoot into the calendar and so it was a pleasant surprise to have well over 30 archers on the shooting line. Key to the whole concept is to provide a tournament where there is no draw-weight restriction ! The I.L.A.A. firmly believes that there is no rationale for limiting what weight of bow longbow archers choose to shoot – nor what weight of arrow.

There are growing numbers of heavier longbows and there is no reason why someone who chooses to shoot with a warbow and 1500 grain arrows, should be kicked out of shooting traditions in which they can perfectly well participate. The I.L.A.A. longbow definition (which is still without peer) allows for it and its shoots enable it to be done safely.

Earlier in the year we had a York Shoot (also without weight limit) that was ably hosted by the Sutton Bowmen – now it was the turn of Clout. Proof of the pudding was that there were at least 8 longbows present that would not have been allowed in by the any other archery association.

Quick to score – easy to organise

Another feature of the shoot was that targets were strong, light and kind to arrows. Moreover, scoring was greatly eased by driving a very thin flag-pole vertically through the centre of the Clout itself. All the scorers had to do was to walk round the Clout with a tape marked with the different scoring sections. No messy spray-paint on the grass – the result was that scoring took less than half the usual time (see photo).

We were able to start the shoot at the leisurely time of 1100hrs, have a good break for lunch and wrap it all up with prizes at 1600hrs. The efficiency and simplicity with which the event was run meant that we still shot the full quota of 72 arrows !

The I.L.A.A.'s approach to these traditional shoots is straightforward. Firstly, it has to be accessible to all. Secondly, the infrastructure has to be easily transported and set up. Finally, but just as important; for organizers the shoot has to be easy to run. The result was there for all to see; surprisingly high numbers of participants (given the short time in the calendar); inclusion of all longbows; a full day's Clout round done and dusted.

Comparability as part of the tradition

We place great importance on keeping the tradition and maintaining comparability of scores and ends shot, between the various archery associations. The fact one is able to compare results, precisely because the tradition is adhered to, enhances the tradition itself. It fits our way of doing things; all the longbow traditions for all archers.

To achieve it we believe it can all be made more attractive to more archers and more easily done for the organisers. Is that not the best way to keep a valuable tradition going ? The sheer success of this first I.L.A.A. Clout Championship surely points the way. Everyone enjoyed the successful debut and everyone worked together to make it so. A big thank-you should go to Father and son team, David and Blake Ashworth, ably assisted by Bernard Moulder.

Congratulations to the winners; David Shillito for the Gents; Angela Plater for the Ladies and Jamie Maguire for the juniors.

The 2011 combined Clout and York week-end is already booked – 17 / 18 September – don't miss Cobham Hall !

For more information e-mail; contact@longbow-archers-association.org

Or go to the website at; www.longbow-archers-association.org