

John v Thom Round 1 ... Archery

FORGET about The Beatles v The Rolling Stones, England v Germany or even the Roundheads v the Cavaliers because the real battle of the century is underway – welcome to John v Thom. Each week Free Press chief reporter John Edwards will take on trainee reporter Thom Kennedy in a test of their skills at all sorts of activities. Let battle commence ...

Eat your heart out Robin Hood



John Edwards, left, slightly more than shades the scoring against Thom Kennedy.

CHALLENGE 1: Archery
VENUE: Burton Agnes Sports Field
MENTORS: Bridlington Archers

THE CHALLENGE: Who can get the highest score after firing 36 arrows at a standard archery target from 15 yards

THE RESULT: John 247
Thom 222

JOHN V THOM SCORE:
1-0 to John

BECAUSE Robin Hood is back on our television screens, to kick off this series of challenges the chaps met members of the local archery club.

Archery sounds simple, you fire arrows and try to hit the bullseye.

But it needs a steady hand and an eagle eye and the correct stance.

It is not a sport you see much of on TV but it is accessible to everyone, regardless of gender, age, strength and ability.

Using recurve bows, the Free Press challengers fired three-dozen shots at the board, with 10 points for a bullseye, scaling down to one point for the outside of the board.

After a close-run contest, John pulled away at the end to win by 25 points.

So what was the experts' verdict on John and Thom's efforts?

Club coach Terry Jones said: "I thought that by the end they both looked very good for people who had never done it before. It was just a little bit of extra consistency which gave John the win."

"It proves that Joe Public can



The Free Press boys sherry-wood like another go with the Bridlington Archers.



Archery coach Peter Rollin with an example of a "Robin Hood" shot – one arrow striking the end of another.



The new BBC Robin Hood – actor Jonas Armstrong.

THROUGHOUT the summer, Bridlington Archers meet at Burton Agnes Sports Field on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4pm.

In the winter, they meet at Brandesburton Village Hall on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7pm until 9pm.

And all year round club meets take place at Burton Agnes on Sundays at 10am. The club also runs courses twice a year.

For more information, visit www.bridlingtonarchers.org.uk

come along and do it and enjoy it.

"We do it for the sheer enjoyment and comradeship.

"There is a really friendly atmosphere and it is a gentlemanly sport with an etiquette code.

"Archery can be tailor-made to each individual and it is a real family sport.

"Our youngest member is 10 and it is one of the few sports where juniors shoot against adults and men against women."

In the line of fire Another string to the Edwards bow

I HAVE to admit it was with a certain amount of trepidation that I stepped out onto Burton Agnes Sports Field.

Having never fired an arrow before, we listened to a brief round of guidance, before squaring off to finally settle all the office arguments once and for all. After a fine opening end from John, I pegged him back, with a ten and three nines in the second, to take a one point lead.

Soon, however, my form faded, and I was scraping around for eights to keep in touch.

While John was peppering the board with shots, picking up points left, right and centre, my six arrows were drawn towards the same area, around the six and seven marks. At least I was consistent – or consistently awful, according to Terry.

A poor fifth end left me needing to win the final round by a full 20 points to take the match, a task too large for weary arms. John's steady hand earned him victory and he kept his cool under pressure to ensure he never dropped below a 38 in the scoring – my poorest was a 27 out of a possible 60. Although the high wind speeds, and lower standing position may have adversely affected my performance, John's consistency earned him a deserved early win.

I want to think of this as a minor setback in the early stages of John v Thom, beginner's luck if you like, rather than a sign of things to come.

I have set out into this competition as the underdog – if he is Robin Hood, then I was always going to be Will Scarlet.

But John had better not start celebrating too hard, as these are the early rounds and things can – and will – change as time goes on.

THE 2012 Olympics here I come!

If archery needs a new hero, a modern-day Robin Hood, to appeal to a new generation, it looks as if I could be the man.

Maybe I was not exactly a natural, but there are six more years to get some practice in and then the medal Bridlington Archers gave me for winning this challenge could be replaced by Olympic gold.

Perhaps not, but archery was fantastic fun.

But do not get the idea that we were doing this just for fun. I was deadly serious about getting one

over on Thom. It was essential that I struck the first blow in this challenge and adopted a win-at-all-costs mentality.

Determined to look the part, I pulled on my Robin Hood-green jumper and listened to all the tips the experts had to offer.

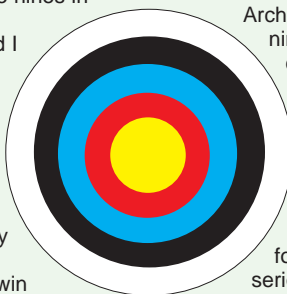
Once the safety advice had been given out, it was time to perfect my technique.

Load the bow, straighten the left arm, pull back, take aim, fire and look smug as the arrow lands in the bullseye.

It was not quite that easy at first, and a few of the arrows missed the target completely, but after a while I was into my rhythm and it was time for the talking to stop, as the practising



THOM'S VIEW



JOHN'S VIEW

ARCHERY FACT file

Archery dates back more than 5,000 years. The bow was originally used for hunting but was adapted for use as a weapon.

The first known organised competition was held at Finsbury more than 400 years ago with about 3,000 participants.

The sport featured in the first modern Olympic Games in 1900 but was dropped in 1920. It returned in 1972.

Aside from Robin Hood, the most famous archery legend involves William Tell, who was forced to shoot an apple off his son's head or else they would both be executed.

People who are archery experts or enthusiasts are called toxophilites.

ended and the real competition began. At no stage were we told who was in the lead, only how big the points gap was.

After the first four rounds, it was pretty much neck-and-neck. But round five was the killer, three arrows in the highest scoring yellow and I sensed Thom was tiring.

Going into the final round, he was a beaten man, I had ground him down and there was no way back for him.

Victory was mine, if I could only stop my hand from shaking.

I stayed calm under the pressure and knew that when the scores were totted up it was not a case of who had won but how many I had won by.

The thrashing was confirmed and I went off to celebrate the win with my merry men!

You can suggest challenges by sending a text starting BFPEDITOR followed by a space, your challenge idea and name, to 84070, or by e-mailing newsdesk@bridlingtonfreepress.co.uk