

BARRY A. GROVES - TRIPLE WORLD CHAMPION

MILTON-U-WYCHWOOD'S Barry Groves retired from the RAF in 1982 and, at the age of 46, took up archery. By the following year he was shooting for the county. In 1987 he won his first British archery championship. This was in Clout archery, a form of long-distance target archery. He has won that title six times and for five years held all the British Compound records in that discipline.

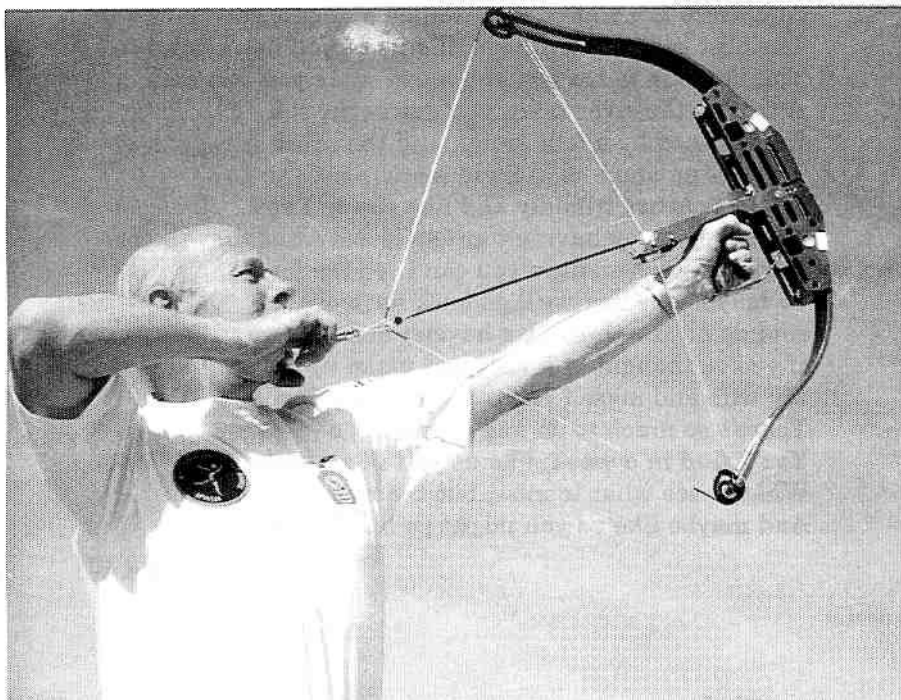
In 1992 he tried Flight Archery (where the sole aim is distance) for the first time, using a standard target bow, and became British Champion. He has successfully defended the title ever since.

In 1994 he designed and made his own compound Flight bow. Since then he has been continually testing and refining it.

He also makes his own arrows out of carbon rod using bits of floppy disc for fletches and cutting up his wife's aluminium knitting needles for points!

In 1995 Barry was invited to attend the World Flight Archery Championships in California, USA. He decided to attend in 1996.

In April 1996 the British rules were changed and the setup Barry was to use in America was no longer legal here. As he was unable to find anywhere other than the British Championships to practice, and now he could not even do that, Barry went to the World Championships with a bow setup which was untested, and a variety of arrows with no knowledge of which would suit the conditions best.



(Those rules are now being changed back again!)

The Championships were held in October at the Ivanpah Dry Lake Bed, just on the border with Nevada, about 45 miles southwest of Las Vegas.

Barry had gone to try for the 25kg record (25kg is the draw weight of the bow). He succeeded with a shot of over 931 yards, nearly 70 yards further than the previous record.

But as he was allowed to shoot in up to four classes, he also entered the 33kg and 40kg classes, despite the fact that his bow had a maximum draw weight of only 30kg. He won them all. He also broke the 40kg record by more than 40 yards with a shot of 1,041 yards – with only a 30kg bow!

Barry is 60 years old!

He did all this with very little help, and none from the British archery governing body. The only financial help he received was a grant of £200 from West Oxfordshire District Council.

The trip to America paid off as all Barry's hard work designing, making and testing his Flight bow gave him three Gold Medals and two World Records and, of course, two entries in the Guinness Book of Records.

Barry's bow is still being refined as he believes he can do even better. If he can raise some financial help he hopes to return to the World Championships next year to defend his titles.

