



Adrian Caddy with the "Aston Martin of bows" a custom Hoyt

# bang ON target

**If you read Raymond Watts' article in the March/April issue of County Life (and judging from the phone calls and e-mails, many of you did), you may have been tempted to discover more about an activity which has been very much a minority "country sport", despite its green credentials.**

No doubt there'll be those who think that the qualification of "country sport" means something living has to be chased/stalked/dug/caught or shot; or a combination of any of these. Well it's true that in Field Archery, something does have to be shot, but as bow-hunting in the UK is strictly illegal (quite rightly agrees this former Wildlife film-producer) we Field enthusiasts rely on the targets being static, lifeless and moulded from a secret-formula, high density foam plastic – the patent for which is held firmly by John Rinehart and his family in Wisconsin, USA. Rinehart, without doubt, make the world's BEST 3-D Field Archery targets, to the point that if John made cakes, he'd have to change his name to Kipling.

At ACCA (Adrian Caddy Corporate Archery) we use Rinehart products for the quality and the amazing range of choice. John has been adding to the catalogue over the years and his company now makes foam plastic, arrow-resistant, weather-proof, non-disease carrying, infertile, lifeless deer, turkey, wolves, elk, caribou, bear, cougar, leopard, pink panther, wart-hog, carp (yes, carp), baboon, coyote, stegosaurus, tyrannosaurus, velociraptor and very soon – a host of Aliens; closely related in appearance to the callous beastie that probably did more for British movie-Director Ridley Scott than those inquisitive silverback gorillas did for my greatest screen hero of all time – Sir David Attenborough.

Now this story has another hero though – well OK, two of them. If you are a parent – regardless of the number of years' service in this noble but oft unrecognised devotion – you'll have experienced a unique glow from time to time. Maybe not when a son bends your car or a daughter "borrows" your best top and uses it for accidentally filtering wine (or some unearthly beverage we'd best not think about), but when he/she achieves something or shares something that makes your face (and your entire being) grin all over. My two sons frequently generate that glow in me because we all revel in an activity that requires no batteries, keyboards, screens or weird language. Not only that – we all get to spend time in the great outdoors using up calories and inhaling clean air whilst carrying craftsman-built kit which is widely respected and cared for. And to top it all off? Every teenager who has been with my two on a Field Archery shoot has declared the entire day: COOL. Quite an accolade that, to be added to the selfless joy of our youngest scoring more points than his Archery Coach dad on a tricky long shot – or my thinking the elder lad (now 6 foot 6 and longer than any longbow I've yet seen) can't beat my maximum scoring last arrow, just before he shoots my fletching (feather) off and parks his arrow even more centrally in the score-zone of a distant Mule Deer.

This is where you'll be thinking the two heroes are my children and this story is about to become as interesting as the neighbours' holiday pictures. Not quite. The first hero is Tony Weston – founder and owner of The Archery Company ([www.thearcherycompany.com](http://www.thearcherycompany.com)). Tony is not actually famous, but he certainly should be. If he were a footballer – Beckham, Rooney et al would be doffing their England caps to him. If he were a Formula One driver – Schumacher, Alonso et al would be wondering how they could ever catch



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him. Tony has won more Field Archery prizes than I can count, he has taught more winners than I have ever shot arrows with and he is without question the most honest and knowledgeable person in the Archery business – which is really going some because as a group of people they are up there with Wildlife Film-makers for being awesomely decent folk. The Archery Company is without doubt the best place to start if any form of the (legally addictive) activity catches your interest. ACCA buys exclusively from The Archery Company – safe in the certainty that all products are sound, tested, safe and priced more fairly than at any other UK supplier.

I first met Tony in the mid to late 90s when he was one of the staff at a Bucks based Archery shop – and the resident Coach. Since then – he has taught me, my two sons, friends and a host of now-enthusiasts who have become friends to shoot so many different bows and learn the beginnings of the craft that really is endless in its learning/enjoyment/frustration/surprise journey through our lives. It was Tony who made me see clearly that the start of a passion for Field Archery can take place at 9, 19, 49, 79 and anywhere between or outside those ages. It was Tony who lifted my spirits and aspirations when the budgets for my last Wildlife film were cut to nothing and I had to look elsewhere to earn an income. It was Tony who helped me become a fully qualified NFAS (National Field Archery Society) Coach and launch ACCA – currently appearing at a Country Fair or Corporate Day somewhere near you. If you feel like picking up a bow, do what I did and call Tony first. He and his company are a treat to deal with – and as the BBC will soon be airing their brand new series of the timeless Robin Hood in Autumn this year – I'd call him soon before the queues grow longer than Little John...

So before you accuse me of writing a fan letter instead of an article – Hero 2. This time it is a company, a manufacturer and not a person. Hoyt are also based in the USA – in Salt Lake City Utah. The address is pretty impressive as they are probably the biggest unit in Neil Armstrong Drive, which makes me want to move to somewhere like "David Attenborough Boulevard" if only there was one here in Amersham... Hoyt make bows of various types – and if you saw Australian Simon Fairweather or American Jay Barrs win the Olympic Gold medal for Target Archery (Jay won it twice) then you'd have seen Hoyt Recurve bows in stunning action. If you go to the Hoyt website, ladies – you'll see that Messrs Fairweather and Barrs are not exactly ugly geezers, and apart from the bows, I must admit to visiting it myself, because actress Geena Davis is not only a stunningly beautiful and awesomely talented actress (you must have seen Thelma and Louise?), she is also a very skilled Hoyt shooter.



Far from being a faceless American Corp. Inc. Numbers.com organisation, Hoyt is run by a bunch of delightful people who just go so far out of most people's way to make you welcome and looked after. They have helped me nearly as much as Tony Weston in building a new business and in doing so they have won my life-long loyalty to a product that shoots beautifully and consistently, even when I don't. There are many thousands of you out there who will walk vast distances with a bag of sticks in an effort to bang a small white ball into 9, 18 or even more holes. You may find that Field Archery provides as much – maybe more – pure enjoyment. Let's face it; you too are already mad.

This is the first of a series of articles in County Life about Country Sports/Activities, which deserve more exposure for readers and a forum for equipment/service providers. If you are interested in a feature, County Life and Adrian Caddy would love to hear from you before the next issue goes to press. ■

**ACCA (Adrian Caddy Corporate Archery)**  
**Telephone: 07904 369362**  
**Email: [adrian.caddy@btinternet.com](mailto:adrian.caddy@btinternet.com)**  
**[www.adriancaddy.co.uk](http://www.adriancaddy.co.uk)**