

Email to all – 21st May 2019

Hi All,

Thanks for coming on board and 'So it begins'. Please keep it quiet for now.

There are loads of films out there dealing with shooting a variety of things at armour and many are heavily flawed but are presented as truth. I have seen aluminium plates, thin plates presented as thick, under weight bows, plates stuck on sand bags etc etc - you know the deal. There seems to be nothing out there that I feel comes close to telling the truth, as observed in the tests just done, explaining where the flaws or assumptions are, why this is the case and presenting the results. However this is only valid if the materials and actions come close to what was out there. That is why we are all talking.

The idea is to put together a team and design some tests that really provide some information that is good enough to hold up to real scrutiny. However this needs to be done on a budget of both time and money, so there have to be some concessions, but let's chat it through.

The tests will consist of shooting a big bow (Joe Gibbs) and a big crossbow (Tod) at a variety of breastplates (Kevin at Plessis Armouries) using a variety of arrow heads - wrought, case hardened wrought and shear steel (Will Sherman). This will be filmed in Tod's back field (safe and undisturbed) over a reasonable distance, shooting at a breast plate over a gambeson, over a ballistic gel torso, on a slightly mobile frame. The whole would be filmed and edited by Mike Chernett.

The idea with this team is that not only will the gear be real, so will the people. We are not people who talk about doing/making we are the people who do. If you are uncomfortable talking on camera that's fine and someone else can do what is required, it is just important to be there.

I would like to get a gambeson maker into the mix. (Chrissie Carnie?)

I would love to get Toby Capwell to film a 'forward'. I have no idea if he would do that, but I know him well enough to ask, but he would want to see the film before committing, but I think this is a real possibility.

There are two other filming professionals that I know that may want to be involved (TBC) but I doubt they could be involved even if we wanted them.

Kevin from Plessis Armouries - medieval armour, conservation metalwork, specialising in armour

Will Sherman - arrow heads and war bows

Joe Gibbs - War bows and shooting them

Mike Chernett - filming, editing and making trailers for historic based computer games

Tod - crossbows and location.

That is the outline of what is in my mind, but this will need to be discussed before we storyboard it (make a sketched out comic book version to ensure we cover all the aspects when we actually film it) and then of course we will have to actually get together and film it and with 5 of us involved this may be tricky on its own. I think the best thing to do is we all say what weekends we can do or if we are prepared to do weekdays and see what day will work for us all.

It would be best if we could get together one evening to discuss the project to throw ideas around and establish what we think should be in it and this is probably best done at the start.

How does this all sound?

It will be quite a project, but with each of us doing our bit hopefully not too onerous on any one of us and we have the chance to really make a film that moves the field on significantly and memorably.

Tod

Email to Piers 21st May 2019

Piers happens to be a good friend, but also a DOP/Cameraman

Hi Piers,

I hope you are well and probably travelling the world, but just in case you want to join in the fun.....you are one of the two referenced 'other film professionals'

(You can tell I know him well as that was the entire message)

Email from Mike 21st May 2019

Hi Tod, and everyone else.

This sounds like a great idea, and something I've wanted to do for a long time. I think we have the opportunity to go well beyond the usual fluff and half-truths we get on TV and really do the subject justice for once.

As for scheduling. I'm "between jobs" and available from 15th-23rd June, though this is probably too soon to be useful. After that I'll be limited to weekends (having just started a new job).

Cheers,

Mike

Email to all 21st May 2019

Hi Guys,

Thanks Mike and Will, that is a positive start and I can also do that area.

I have also had a chat with another friend of mine and he could also get involved around this time. His name Peirs Leigh and he is the DOP that does all of Mike Loades stuff filmed in Europe and that would be a fantastic opportunity to have him involved. The DOP is the guy that frames the shots and basically makes everything look great and chooses the right cameras and lenses etc. He would also bring all his camera gear and 20 years of experience filming history based documentaries.

Kevin and Joe - any thoughts for dates?

Tod

Email to all 22nd May 2019

Hi Guys,

Chrissi Carnie from The Sempster is up for making a gambeson panel but yet to fully confirm.

Looking at dates, I think the best is to look at Thursday the 20th June. Thoughts?

I think that there is a fantastic opportunity to really make a great film here and so it will take some planning, which I am happy to do, so basically the whole day would be structured so we get all the shots that we need and that we tell the story properly from what we already know and what we discover. Not fully scripted, but well thought through and planned. If we try and do this aspect as a collective we will be here forever but as a suggestion, can I 'block it out' detailing each shot and the narrative through the filming and then throw this out to you guys to approve or add aspects that you feel are important?

During the filming we will of course introduce who we are and why we are taking part and so we will have our appropriate web links posted up. There will likely be exposure from this, as an industry friend said 'if after a year and 3m views you suddenly think "bugger I should have done X' then it will be both a shame and too late", so think things through now.

Let me know if this approach works for you and as I am spending the weekend with Mike the camera man/director we could start to block out the shots and the story, getting it ready for your approval.

Tod

Email to Toby 22nd May 2019

Hi Toby,

I am putting together a team to film longbows and crossbows shooting at an accurately constructed breast plate and here is the premise.....

There are loads of films out there dealing with a and shoot a variety of things at armour and they are often heavily flawed but are presented as truth. I have seen aluminium plates, thin plates presented as thick, under weight bows, etc etc - you know the deal. There seems to be nothing out there that I feel comes close to telling the truth, as I understand it and explaining where the flaws or assumptions are, why this is the case and presenting the results. However, for us to do this, it would only be valid if the materials and actions come close to what was out there. That is why we are all talking.

The idea is to put together a team and design some tests that really provide some information that is good enough to hold up to real scrutiny. However this needs to be done on a budget of both time and money, so there have to be some concessions, but lets chat it through. It will not be a scientific series of tests as that level of rigorousness requires a great deal of time, but the tests will be well constructed and all the people involved are makers and doers, not just talkers.

The tests will consist of shooting a big bow (Joe Gibbs) and a big crossbow (Tod) at a variety of breastplates (Kevin at Plessis Armouries) using a variety of arrow heads - wrought, case hardened wrought and shear steel (Will Sherman). This will be filmed in Tods back field (safe and undisturbed) over a reasonable distance, shooting at a breast plate over a gambeson (Chrissi Carnie), over a ballistic gel torso, on a slightly mobile frame. The whole would be filmed and edited by Mike Chernett and hopefully Piers Leigh (DOP to Mike Loades and friend of mine).

Kevin from Plessis Armouries - medieval armour, conservation metalwork, specialising in armour
Will Sherman - arrow heads and war bows
Joe Gibbs - War bows and shooting them
Mike Chernett - filming, editing and making trailers for historic based computer games
Tod- crossbows and location.

It will be quite a project, but I am sure we can pull it off and we have the chance to really make a film that moves the field on significantly and memorably.

If you happened to want to lend some of your expertise or take part in a discussion, on or off camera, that would be fantastic, but of course completely understand if you wouldn't, but as part of this, Kevin would like to model the breastplate on an actual piece; would he be able to examine a piece that may fit the bill?

Many thanks

Tod

Email to all 22nd May 2019

Wow!,

This is snowballing.

Toby Capwell would like to be involved....

Tod

Email to all 22nd May 2019

Hi Guys,

I dropped a line to Toby asking if he would like to give any advice and he is all over it and would really like to be involved. Is everyone good with this? Again it would be a fantastic opportunity, both in terms of having Toby appearing, but also the expertise and he would bring.

I will have a chat with him tomorrow and unless I hear otherwise assume we are all OK with it.

Tod

Email to all 23rd May 2019

Hello everyone,

We have some progress.

Everyone can do the 20th June (please let me know if this is not OK)

We can all overnight here at mine the night before and of course if you don't want to or can't, that is fine, but it would be helpful for an early start and a look at the site the night before and I can provide something between nice and acceptable accommodation for you all.

I had a good chat with Toby today and he would also like to be involved which is of course fantastic and he has had some great ideas and just as importantly he adds both historical weight and simply knowledge of the subject. This will allow us to tap him for info as we get stuff ready.

My initial idea was to cover as much ground as possible, looking at hardened armour, wrought, assorted arrow head materials and essentially looking over a 200 year period. He's suggests nailing it down to a date - Agincourt? and making a breast to suit with the ancillary protection of the time and working with that. This will focus the filming down to a particular set up which will be helpful. I will write something up this weekend and then we will start to have a good direction to follow.

A good point Toby made was that we should justify as much as we can with sources, so what arrow, off what bow, hitting what armour, made from what at what thickness and shooting at what distance etc etc. He will be invaluable for this.

So thats the brief for right now and I will start to nail some stuff down over the weekend and get back to you early next week with some more specific requirements/information for each of you.

Tod

AND SO THE SHOOT WAS ORGANISED

Email of 28th May 2019

Hi All,

I have put together a treatment that outlines what I think should happen on the day. This is not definitive, so if you would like to see changes or think the order could be better, please say so, but in essence - is it OK?

Kevin is talking to Toby about armour samples.

Will and Joe, can I have a chat with you tonight? Could you send over your numbers.

Mike and Piers - can you have a chat?

Thanks

Tod

Attached was "Arrow shooting" document

The project had now taken on a life of its own so there were dozens of emails and phone calls shooting around, but another major milestone was what happened next.

Email of 6th June 2019

Hi All,

The ever growing crowd.....

Cameras

We will hopefully have Rob on board as another professional camera guy, so between Piers and Rob as professionals and Mike as a semi-professional and long-time YouTube collaborator and editor we will have quite a crew.

We also now have a 4K slo-motion camera doing 1000 frames a second, which will show things very well. This is a domestic camera rather than professional, but still will be great.

Sound will be covered by individual radio mics on the contributors and we also have local recorders for arrow strikes etc. My helper Greg can monitor sound if he is required (Mike/Piers discuss)

Test elements

The torso will be made from ballistic gel and mounted on a carriage on castors, there will be two hides for brave camera operators.

Test materials

Will is cracking on with wrought and case hardened wrought arrow heads, on fully authentic shafts

Joe is flexing his muscles

Toby is flexing his knowledge

Kevin is making a breast based on a Churburg piece with variable thickness; also supplying flat panels for comparative impact tests.

Tod is making a torso and support, hides and the support for the comparative test sheets, a sample panel of padded jack under armour and a section of stuffed jupon based on a historical piece from the period

Cap a Pie is providing maille panels to place under the breast and also to be shot for 'lucky shots'

Blimey

Tod

Email to 'cameras' from Mike 6th June 2019

Hi Rob!

Thanks for coming on board. Looks like we'll be well covered for cameras. I've attached a shot list with very approximate timings (sorry, not a professional producer, I'm more of an editor), that you can look at. Take it more as a content guide than a schedule. We can have a chat about how we're going to shoot it on the day (or the evening before if you are arriving then), but you and Piers are the pros so I'll welcome your input on how best to set up each shot. As for style, I had, in my head, something along the lines of Scrapheap Challenge / Mythbusters ("dynamic documentary" style?) but toned down a bit, combined with nice beauty shots of the actual objects on test. But I'm open to suggestions. Keep in mind that the star of the video is the actual test and the truthful information around it. I want it to be presented clearly and be entertaining, but we don't have the same constraints as mainstream TV. It is actually a genuine test, without a predetermined narrative, so it would be good to try to capture the reactions and thoughts of our various experts. My suspicion is that, like any good experiment, it will prompt as many new questions as it answers. Which, if it's the case, is fine. We don't need to "fake" anything.

Just a slight correction to what Tod said; (unless you are planning to bring a radio mic setup?), the audio recorders we have are 2 x Tascam DR10L, and 2 x field recorders (Tascam DR-05 and Zoom H1 that can use lav mics). So these are all local recorders, not radio mics. I'll set them up for levels to start with, but we won't be monitoring live. It's a bit of a risk, but without a dedicated sound person it's probably our best option. I'll sync in the edit so sync claps would be useful, but not essential.

The high speed capable camera is a Sony RX100 V, which will shoot 500fps or 1000fps, this will be at sub HD resolutions, but from the the samples I've seen should it should be sufficient for our purposes, We'll just need to make sure we do the arrow tests during the best light of the day for the best results.

Our target format is 1080p on YouTube. We actually have a choice to deliver at 24p, 25p, 29.98p, 50p or 59.94p (but no interlaced formats), YouTube accepts them all. I suggest shooting at either 25p or 50p unless anyone can see a reason not to?

Any questions just shout. Bear in mind, I'm just an occasional Youtube "videographer" so feel free to let me know if I've totally overlooked something or I'm talking rubbish.

Thanks!

Mike

Attached was the 'shot list' document

Arrow shooting V2 text issued on the 11th June

Email to all 11th June 2019

Dear All,

Time is moving on and the preparations are moving on too and I am getting more excited... This really is shaping up to be one hell of a film and once again thanks for taking part and making such an effort; it will be worth it.

I need to know some of the logistics of the day, so could you individually answer this mail rather than 'reply all' and I will get a better understand of who and where and when.

Filming will be on Thursday 20th June at my place and we will have breakfast at 7, set up at 7:30 and be rolling at 8. Sorry for the early start, but there is a lot to do.

Brief

We get together and shoot arrows at a series of objects, observe the results and learn. We are all contributing in some way, so I have listed what we are doing and please let me know if anything is new or unexpected in your section. We will all be appearing on camera and will all have speaking roles, but if you are uncomfortable, this can be worked around. However please remember, Mike is a great editor, so I could be replaced by a brick and he would still make the brick look good.

Joe - brings himself and a 160lbs yew bow and some warm up arrows

Will - brings hardened and unhardened arrows

Kevin - brings breastplate in variable 2.5mm unhardened steel

Toby - brings his knowledge and context

Tod - brings stands and hides for the tests, chronograph, fabric jack and jupon, ballistic gel

Mike - camera and high speed camera

Piers - Professional camera

Rob - Professional camera

There are a few reasons for doing this film, but whilst we are here, we may as well try to get some recognition payback, so as part of the introduction we will say who we are and why we are here and that can be done whilst we are clutching our proudest creations etc, so if you want to bring a clutch of arrows that you want the world to see, bring them along. Similarly if you want to have a think of 'who you are and why you are' that is probably better thought of before the day. We are not working to scripts, but will chat as and when things come up.

Questions

Do you want to stay over the night before (Wednesday night)?

If not, can you be here for 7am (approx)?

Do you want to stay over after filming on the Thursday night?

Are all your elements on track?

Many thanks

Tod

Email from Mike 1th June 2019

In reference to Arrow shooting V2

All good. I will suggest only one improvement. I think the first paragraph could be stronger. If you look at the "Audience Retention" metric, you'll find that it's normal (for most people, not just you) to lose 20-50% of your audience within the first 20sec. That's a big potential for extra full views. I will, of course, put some highlights in at the start (anything but actually striking the armour). But can I suggest something like the following re-arrangement:

"What did arrows do to the knights at Agincourt!"

Hi, its Tod here, and today we have something a bit special for you. I say 'we'; because I have assembled an extraordinarily talented group of people to try to answer that very question.

(Cut to group shot with VO)

And this is our mighty team; Joe Gibbs War bow Archer, Will Sherman from Medieval Arrows.com, Kevin Legg from Plessis armouries.co.uk, Dr Toby Capwell and myself from Tods Workshop.com

They have come together to answer the question we have all wondered for years; "What did arrows do to the knights at

Agincourt in 1415" The tests we are about to perform have no pre-decided outcome, so what you see will be real as best as we can arrange it as we try to answer that burning question once and for all.

This test will require highly accurate reproductions of the bow and archer, the arrows and the armour....
(On to individual introductions to discuss each person and their object etc)

NB. I think it's still important to discuss the why and justification behind the test and all the rest of the info in your opening 4 paragraphs. But this should come in the body of the piece rather than the intro. The intro should present our star attractions. The test (promise of action), our people (star attraction and academic authority), and their objects (visual and engineering interest), as succinctly as possible

Just had one other thought; When we are discussing the film itself on camera, I think we should call it "the Test" or "this Project". In other words, reference what we are doing, not the medium it's being recorded in. We want people to become engrossed by the subject matter than distracted by whether the film looks good or not. If the filming and editing is good, ideally, the audience should not even be aware of it.

Cheers,

Mike

Email to all 13th June 2019

Hi All,

Just keeping you up to date.

I am getting all the hides, frames, gel and jack elements ready and they are all underway.

Will has made/is making the arrows and these are very well progressed

Kevin has finished an epic breastplate, thinning carbon steel from 2.5 to 1.5

Mike has got all the camera and sound gear ready

Chrissie Carnie from 'The Sempster' is making the Jupon sample

Will, Kevin, Joe, Piers (late) and Mike will be arriving and staying over on the Wednesday night; I have not yet heard from Toby.

Please advise if any is veggie/allergy for food.

Piers, Mike, Rob, please confer on how we can handle wet weather as it looks like it may be a bit showery....Rats!

Tod

15th June Arrow shooting V3 issued

Mike and Tod email 16th June

Hi Tod,

I've had a read. Lots of good stuff in there and really helpful to think things through, but... do you think it's starting to sound a bit "overproduced". The vibe I get from reading that through is a bit like a pilot for a TV show. I'm not sure that's where our strength lies, it might be tough to make it sound natural if it's too scripted.

I think a scripted intro, and brief outline of what we're going to do to grab attention right at the start (i.e the same function as a "clickbaity" title) is a good idea (and you've done that). But for the main content, I wonder if it would be better to work from a bullet point list (and relevant references). Maybe try to go a little more relaxed, It might be good to go a little more into why you (and the others) want to do this test. That's the "human interest" element. Lets talk about stuff that you genuinely find interesting. What *do* you want to know, what *do* you expect to happen, what's the exciting part of this for you. We don't need to sensationalise anything or hype it up, because we are all genuinely excited about doing this. We just need to talk about that on camera.

Like, for me, I really want to see what's going on with those arrows when they hit that target, do they shatter, bend? bounce? And I want to really see what a 1/2" shaft does coming out of a 160lb bow. Does it bend, does it straighten up, how much spin does it pick up in 25 yards? I think we should try to make some space for talking about what we're excited about.

Anyway, that's my 2penth worth.

Mike

Email to all 17th June

Hi Guys,

It is all getting close.

Will has the arrows, Joe has the bow (can you bring a spare something, just in case?), Kevin has the breast, I have the stands etc, Mike, Piers and Rob have the cameras and Toby has the brains. Chrissi has the Jupon and Cap a Pie have supplied some mail. All systems go.

Joe, Will, Kevin, Mike and Piers are arriving Wednesday night, Rob will arrive first thing Thursday and Toby will be with us by 10:45.

I have a temptingly large drive, but I also have angry neighbours who are looking to complain about me, so it is better for PR if you can park at the village hall. Piers, please park in the drive (camera gear etc)

We will have beds for you all, but Will and Joe can you share a room? Please bring bags though to save my lovely wife even more work.

Dinner will be available here, as will all snacks and meals on the Thursday.

Currently looking dry for that day.

Many thanks and see you then.

Tod

And the next notable thing that happened was we all filmed 'Medieval Mythbusting -Arrows Vs Armour1'