

What has the weather done for us so far?

Tom's GB selection shoot (for a place in the touring teams this summer) took place in mid April. Great – we were booked for a skiing holiday in France.

No problem – we're staying about an hour's drive from Geneva so he can fly back. EasyJet do a daily flight and there are seats available. How easily we were fooled! Just as we were leaving for the airport we got a message to say his flight had been cancelled; some bizarre Icelandic plot to take the lid off a volcano, or something similar!

This was a major disappointment but he got over it in a really mature manner, resigning himself to the fact that volcanoes are outside our control. We drove back from France, arriving after the selection shoot had finished.

Never mind, there was a chance to 'get even' a fortnight later at the Walsall FITA. Thomas had a really good day, shooting the Ladies' FITA and broke the National record – it had stood at 1364 for a few years and he managed a very respectable 1369. That means he now holds both the Under-16 and Under-18 National Metric records.

Every week-end since then we have travelled up and down the country chasing scores to ensure he keeps his place on the GB squad. He was set a goal of achieving at least 640 in Metric 720s and 1310 in Ladies' FITAs, which has been successfully attained.

County and regional records have tumbled with a 668 score last week-end at the Sherwood 720, and Thomas is now shooting to a handicap of 14 (not bad for a 15-year old).

The EMAS junior compound squad also took the honours at the recent tournament against the Northern Counties (this backs up their win at the Junior Outdoor Championship last July). There is some prodigious talent in the current crop of local youngsters.

Overall, though, the windy weather has not helped at all. High scores are a rarity and some shoots have been rather disappointing; more a test of character and perseverance than anything else.

Good news came at the start of June: Tom has been invited to represent England in the forthcoming Junior Home Nations match at Lilleshall. There are three recurve archers and one compound shooter for each gender, so he feels very pleased at his selection. Derbyshire has three of the total of eight archers in the squad. Hugh Williams of Derwent and Laura Evans of Burton Bridge are also in the team and deserve congratulations!

Meantime, we are only about half way through the current outdoor season and there is more work to be done – Junior Euronations is the next challenge. It's tough at the top!

