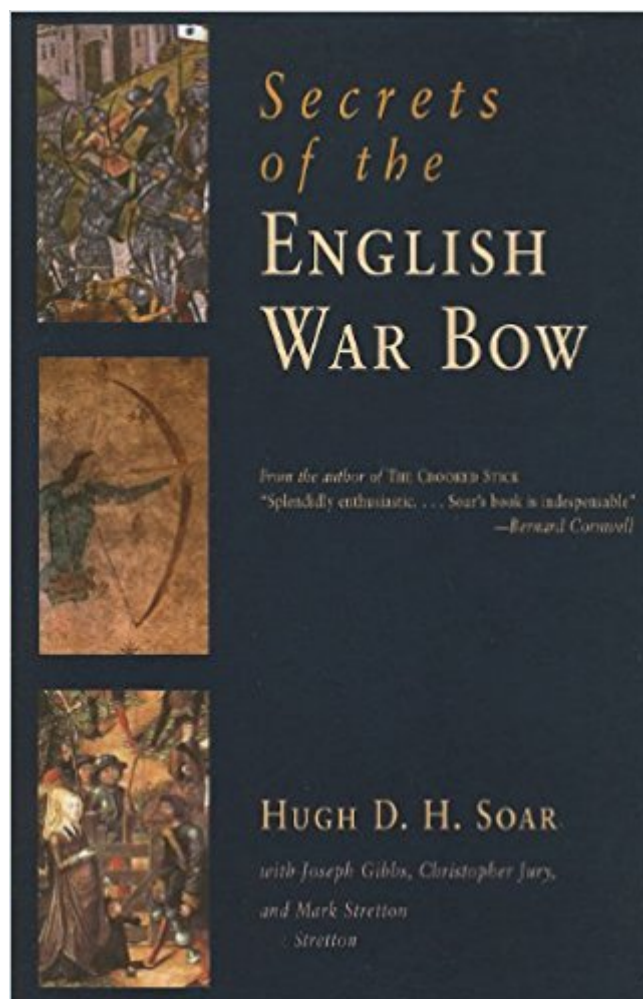


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# Secrets Of The English War Bow



## Synopsis

Dominating medieval battlefields for more than two centuries but requiring long and arduous practice to command, the English war bow and its battle shaft are the symbols of the rise of British power in Europe. Despite being crafted for hundreds of years and wielded by generations of archers, no example of the war bow—the military version of the longbow—exists, outside of a single broken limb. Now for the first time, expert craftsmen use all available evidence including applied archaeology to unlock the secrets of the English war bow. Historian Hugh D. H. Soar is joined by Mark Stretton, master blacksmith, and Joseph Gibbs, bowyer, in order to demonstrate how a war bow and its associated arrow heads and shafts may have been constructed and used. In addition to showing the complete manufacture of a bow from tree selection to stringing and how specialized arrowheads were forged and attached to shafts, *Secrets of the English War Bow* provides information on the actual performance of the war bow, including the bow's effectiveness against various materials and, for the first time, its use against moving targets, since bows were often drawn against mounted soldiers. Armed with this new information, Soar provides an analysis of both successes and failures of the war bow in several important battles. Illustrated in color and black and white, *Secrets of the English War Bow* provides an invaluable service for those interested in medieval military history, archery, and technology.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Hugh Soar, author of *The Crooked Stick* and recognized authority on the history of English archery, has given us a book that analyzes the persistent, nagging questions that historians and archers

have puzzled over for decades. What was the effective range of a war bow? What was the typical draw weight? How many shafts a minute could a war bow put into the air? How effective was the war bow against plate armor, really? How were the strings made? The list goes on and on. However, Soar's intent is to try to figure out what was historically possible, not to write a 'How to Create Your Own War Bows and Arrows' book. Arrowhead making aside, there is not much technical instruction. If you have bowyery knowledge already, you will most likely gain some insight. If not, you will still learn a lot, but not enough to do it yourself. To Soar's credit, his approach is practical, as well as academic. Soar is no stranger to the bowyer's and fletcher's arts. However, he collaborated with other experts, such as Mark Stretton and Chris Jury, in order to gain as complete an examination as possible. Stretton's analysis of arrowhead design and effectiveness was particularly interesting, as he is a blacksmith capable of reproducing replica arrowheads and an archer trained in the skills necessary to shoot 150+lb war bows. At the same time, Soar is very open about the limitations of his research. Frustrating for the reader, as well as the author, he has to confess at several places that source evidence either does not exist or is incomplete. He is also very clear about the limitations of his own testing. Despite these problems, Soar does a good job of using what evidence there is.

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