

## Archery star inspires youngsters to aim high

AN INSPIRING young archer who has just helped win GB's team gold at the Europa Cup is aiming for more youngsters to take up the bow.

Mary Perrott, 18, from St Albans, has been a 'bowman' since the age of seven and is currently coaching young people at Beechwood Park School School in Markyate.

She said she hoped that her success so far would inspire more young people to take up the more unusual sport.

"Archery is a sport which encourages children to shoot against themselves, so they can improve on their own scores without worrying too much about competing directly against someone else. That boosts their confidence and encourages them to improve every time, so they literally have something to aim for!" she said.

Mary, who has been shooting for eleven years now, has been in the Great Britain squad for five years already, and went to her first world championships at the age of 14 - where she won a team gold and was placed fifth individually.

She now is a top senior in Hertfordshire, third-placed nationally in the under 21's, and the sixth-placed senior nationwide.

About the coaching, Mary added: "With these courses, children have got the opportunity to do something which is slightly different to the sport most of them play. Also, it helps focus their concentration and shows them that working hard at something can be really rewarding.

"Archery is the type of sport everyone and anyone can take part in, no matter what their prowess may, and actually achieve something for themselves as well."

Although Mary is not eligible to compete in the next Olympics as competition using her bow type - 'compound' - is not offered at the Games, she has been selected to go to the European Championships in Germany this July and has also qualified for the next indoor championships in Poland in 2011.

"I am also aspiring to continue shooting for team GB when I am a senior, and my biggest goal right now is to qualify for the 2014 Commonwealth Games," she said.