

Newport Outdoor Group (YHA)



Editors

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Web Site

<http://walk.to/nogs>

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Get The Outdoor Habit!

HAY-ON-WYE

17th to 19th February 2012

"I THINK THE FORECAST IS FOR RAIN LATER"

By Clare Hughes

Firstly I would like to say that I thoroughly enjoyed every second of my weekend at Hay-On-Wye with the NOGS. However, as that would not be completely accurate, I will simply say it how it was.

Nine of us arrived at Baskerville Hall Hotel on Friday (10 to include Sandy, the lab.) The earlier arrivals, Colin, Brian, Kevin, Marion and myself enjoyed an evening meal at the hotel, and then Chris Nevines, Charles Goodreid, Norman and Jackie joined us later for a drink in the bar.

On Saturday morning after a hearty breakfast we set out for a 10 mile walk from the hotel. At the start the sun was shining, everyone was in good spirits and we were all looking forward to a lovely day. It was mentioned that rain was forecast for later, but we didn't let that dampen our mood! Anyway how true that forecast turned out to be. No one had envisaged that this day which had started out so brightly, would soon see us all cold, very, very wet, and would end with my hands stuffed down Norman's socks!

Before lunch we walked via Llowes Common to The Roundabout on the Begwns (415m). This walk should have been very enjoyable with fantastic views, but was spoilt with the relentless heavy rain. Also when we were making our way to the highest point of the walk and I felt the day just couldn't get any worse, we were pelted with hailstones. What fun - I don't think! I was the only one suffering as one of the comments I heard at lunch was, "Can't we head for the nearest road and get a taxi home." (I'm not naming names, but you know who you are!) Such a good idea though.

Did you know?

As you may have guessed from the name of this Hotel, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a frequent visitor and indeed a family friend. He discovered the local legend of the hounds of the Baskervilles, and in due course this became one of his most celebrated works for the great Sherlock Holmes. At the request of his friends, however, he set the book in Devon in order to ward of tourists!



I would at this point like to say thank you to Norman for coming to my rescue that day, as when my gloves were totally soaked he offered me his spare pair of walking socks. They not only restored warmth to my hands but also doubled up as great glove puppets! He definitely deserves to be Man of the March!

Soon after lunch a miracle happened - the rain stopped and as an added bonus the sun shone and all my thoughts of never walking ever again completely disappeared. We then returned via the pretty little hamlet of Gogia and then alongside Garth Dingle (see photo below) to Llowes village, and followed the Wye Valley back to the hotel.

Before our evening meal some enjoyed the swimming pool and sauna facilities. However, when I arrived to have a swim and was told that the showers in that area were freezing cold, I gave that a miss as I'd endured enough for one day. I went back to my room and set about opening a bottle of wine instead.

We then had an evening meal in the hotel and reflected on the events of the day. We all felt that it had been a great day and a superb walk, which we would love to do again. You see we'd forgotten already about being cold, wet and miserable!

After the meal we had a drink in the bar. Then some went to the disco, some went to play pool (I understand that Kevin was the overall winner - a misspent youth?) and some went back to their room to finish the wine!

On Sunday morning after breakfast, we packed up the cars and set off to Hay for the start of a 6 mile walk. The weather was great and we had a very enjoyable day following the Wye Valley Walk, returning to Mouse Castle Wood and Motte & Bailey to Cusop, then back into Hay via the Offa's Dyke footpath.



Photo above is of Garth Dingle.

It appears courtesy of ZytPyx at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zytynski/4119123699>

We walked through a golf course which had some very interesting sculptures of gymnasts made from willow and Kevin posed for a photograph by them doing press-ups! Once an army man always an army man! The golfers weren't impressed but then they never are with walkers ruining their day!

Our weekend ended with everyone going to the Black Boar pub in Hay for tea and cakes and to unwind. As Marion had said earlier, *"It's hard work enjoying yourself!"*

I'm sure that all those who enjoyed this weekend would like to thank Colin for leading the walks on both days. Some may in time even forgive him for not calling the whole thing off on Saturday. Of course, others may not!

Membership fees to rise!

Due to a rise in the cost of insurance for the group, it will be necessary to raise the annual subs from the 1st of April 2012. Subs will go up from £10 a year to £15, but there will be a £3 reduction to £12 a year for all members who are paid up members of the YHA, and show their YHA membership cards when renewing their NOG's membership. Although this might seem to be a big increase, **subs have not been raised for the best part of 15 years**. We hope that as many members as possible will join the YHA and benefit from the reduced rate of NOG's subs. This will also benefit them when booking hostel overnights, as the YHA charge £3 more a night for non-members.