

## NEW YEAR TRIP TO EASTBOURNE

by Sally Gilespe



**Most of us arrived at Eastbourne** on Sunday evening. The relaxing sitting area and eating area at the front of the hostel had a television. We watched "Still Open All Hours" and "Last Tango in Halifax". Some of our friends escaped to the Lamb pub for some hot food. During the evening our hostel/home delivery from Sainsburys arrived. We had over catered on the fruit front, with one banana and one Apple and one satsuma per person per day. All the spare food was taken home at the end of the holiday.

On Monday Norman led from the hostel an 8 mile walk of Beachy Head and Belle Tout with Jackie, Nigel, Les, Maggie and Sally. Man of the day was Nigel, who gracefully performed a ballet step landing on his bottom twice. It was a bit muddy underfoot! Other memorable bottoms were Shooters Bottom, Wigdens Bottom and climbing Crapham Bottom.

Meanwhile Colin and Aly were hobbling along the promenade at Eastbourne. They drank coffee in an outside cafe as Eastbourne is advertised as "The Sunshine Coast". They explored the two thirds of pier unaffected by the recent fire.



Geoff and his Rail Card went by train to Rye. He chatted to a couple of ladies on the train. He spotted Bo Peek signal box near Hastings.

Tuesday morning Nigel had offered to organise breakfast. Geoff, chef extraordinaire, had volunteered Sally to help in spite of Sally's alarm waking Aly up at some ungodly hour. The full breakfast was bacon, sausage, egg, mushrooms, tomato and baked beans. Black pudding was also on offer, but when the same cooks helped Thursday this was off the menu. We served full breakfasts first and Steve was rather pleased when his vegetarian option was passed to him.

Toasters and kettles, cereal, milk and juice etc., had been removed to the eating area, and Sally was official bouncer on the kitchen. On Thursday, the only other cooked breakfast day, we let people into the kitchen in ones and two's as we were more confident in what we were doing.

That day we caught the bus to Seven Sisters Country Park where we walked with Ian to Birling Gap. En route Tony and Steve purchased coffee at the National Trust shop. Jeremy went to Beachy Head, where it was freezing and parking was expensive, so he continued to Birling Gap. Jeremy missed us like mad, but met up with Ian and some others. He found it quiet in the morning, with Hooray Henries coming out in the afternoon. Ian and six friends walked 10 miles ending up at the youth hostel. Tony thought he was lost so he phoned Norman. When we were back at the hostel Ian refuted any statement that one of his party got lost. The other six friends including walked to East Dean for a pub and then to a bus stop. Sally wanted full value from her bus ticket.



Tuesday Geoff gratefully accepted a lift with Les to Lewes, the county town of East Sussex. They went to the castle, museum and coffee shop.

Ian, presumably with helpers, had been to Waitrose in Eastbourne for ingredients to cook a chicken casserole, followed by deserts on Tuesday evening. Ian prepared the chicken which was the worst job. We cut and peeled onions, carrots and parsnips. We washed and cut green peppers, red peppers, yellow peppers and mushrooms. Tins of tomato and chick peas were poured into the mixture. There were also jacket potatoes which I didn't spot during preparation. I agreed to eat some leftovers just to be polite, which together with the celebrations I ate during the holiday and eating at Christmas, made my bathroom scales give a higher reading than usual!

The cheesecakes proved most popular. I only ate one slice.

Wednesday was New Year's Eve. Steve volunteered to lead a dramatic hills walk north of Jevington. Steve lost a black glove. Ian went back for it. Les left his stick at Jevington church and went back for it. Meanwhile Jackie pointed at the catkins to Sally. Tony slipped. We stopped at Folkington church, which was shut. Brian stayed to have a look in the churchyard. Some of us had a drink in the Jevington pub. Ian had two halves, one Bitter and the other Blonde Lady. We passed the Wilmington Long Man, cut into the chalk hill, which had lost the top of his head. We were very grateful that Steve was leading because some of us have no sense of direction and need to rely on his skills. The length of this walk was about 11 miles.

That evening we had a Chinese take away which Jeremy organised from a local restaurant. I only had a small first course, so had seconds and thirds. My friends thought I was greedy. We then ate leftover cake and puds from the previous day. The more adventurous went to the Lamb pub but I went to bed at 11.30pm. Party pooper.



We got up later on Thursday with Happy New Year in both English and Welsh. Brian had already left to visit family without his case that Norman had offered to take home for him. When we had eaten breakfast we tidied up and hoovered. Everyone seemed keen to help. Aly checked the dorm as Sally had left her dirty washing at her sister's. Everyone had found her announcement on the walk, about her texts with her sister, hilarious. We didn't think that the laundry man would want to collect hosteller's private washing.



Some of us walked to Waitrose for a free coffee only to find it closed on 1st January. We walked past Costa Coffee. I do not know if they pay their taxes but a large cappuccino for £2.45 is delicious. We wanted to meet those who had gone by car at the Victorian cafe on the pier where the coffee at £2.50 was awful. The cream, jam and scone and toasted tea cake were delicious. Sally went on a tour looking for a loo when the cafe had one all along. We then walked to where they fish at the end of the pier. I would mention that the pier was free, unlike Weston-Super-Mare, where there is a small charge. Talking about charge, whilst walking on the pier Norman suddenly realised that he had not paid his bill. So he went back to the cafe. Then they queried Mike's bill but it turned out that they wanted to charge Mike twice. We took a zigzag route back to the hostel. It was quite a long way home.

We were quite a small group by now, as some regulars had to go to work rather than Eastbourne. The group was very friendly as usual. On 1st January we had a few hugs and kisses.

All the activity over Christmas and New Year I woke up on Saturday and said, "I am on my own". I think I missed my friends. But Saturday turned out okay, having a meal out and theatre with two friends.

## PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION



The NOGs indoor meeting on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January saw Norman taking charge of the annual Photography competition, and what a cracker of a competition it was too! As usual, very high standards were set in both the digital and printed categories. Well done to all who took part, and congratulations to the winners of each category. Make sure you get snapping for next years competition.

The results of the competition are as follows:

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	WINNER
Best Print - The Great Outdoors	Transporter Bridge	Alyson Bristow
Best Print - The NOGs	Jason, Dean, and Brian on Fan y Big	Margaret Renshaw
Best Print - Natural History	Water Vole at Magor Marsh	Margaret Renshaw

Best Print - People	Old and Young	Stella Goodreid
Best Print - What Makes Us Laugh	Dog With Goggles	Alyson Bristow
Best Projected - The Great Outdoors	Wakehurst Place	Margaret Renshaw
Best Projected - The NOGs	Nogs Enjoying Drink Outside Pub - East Dean, Eastbourne	Jackie Roberts
Best Projected - Natural History	Bambi	Nigel Bolter
Best Projected - People	Cycling Race at Banff, Canada	Jackie Roberts
Best Projected - What Makes Us Laugh	Brian and Admirer, near Penzance	Norman Roberts
Best Print	Water Vole at Magor Marsh	Margaret Renshaw
Best Projected	Bambi	Nigel Bolter

The winning digital photographs in each category are shown below:



