

# Newport Outdoor Group



Putting our best  
boots forward  
since 1960

## Editors

Mike Alder-Woolf  
& Nick Meyrick

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**Get  
The  
Outdoor  
Habit!**

## Edwinstowe YHA, Sherwood Forest

17 October 2014

By Trudy Porter

*Participants: Liz and Paul (the home makers), Norman (route leader), Jackie (hunter gatherer), Somesh (the Miller), John of Gloucestershire (pacemaker), Nigel (failed fire maker), my husband Norman and Trudy (guards).*



Our band of Merry men gathered on Friday 17, at Edwinstowe YHA, a very central and modern hostel suited to us all. They had interesting stories of their journeys to the forest gathering. Norman and myself had enjoyed a fascinating tour of Hardwick Hall and its grounds en route. Liz, Paul and Nigel had stopped at Branston Lakes for lunch and completed a six mile walk including some canal walking, a scenic ridge and experienced the pervasive odours from the local breweries. John had used a mixture of transport arrangements, (the stage coach was fully booked) to reach Sherwood.

In the evening, half the party were soon bound to the Dukeries Lodge to dine, by recommendation of the 'foresters' at the Royal Oak. Passing St Mary's Church, where Robin Hood and Maid Marian, are believed to have married, the pubs of Jug and Glass, Black Swan and the Pizza Hood Restaurant, we came to the Dukeries Lodge, large and welcoming with lights, food and fun, a perfect feasting and refreshment spot for us and it became apparent that all roads were to lead there.

### Day 1, Saturday 18th October 2014 - into Sherwood Forest

All of us were present and we were greeted by a golden Autumnal morning leading us into Sherwood Forest where beech trees threw out their long, straight branches and formed a canopy overhead allowing pattern from the sunshine to form along our way.

Ancient Oaks including **The Great Oak**, which was possibly a thousand years old welcomed us and had shared a secret or two with Robin Hood around 1287. It willingly showed us its unity with life, reaching to the past, present and future. We shifted in 'time' and joined the forest of the past, which was ever giving and willingly sharing its plentiful, vibrant and colourful array of harvest, nuts, sweet chestnuts, rose hips, haws, sloes, nettles, roots, and wood. All these foraged goods were free to us as a band of outlaws, but were once only available to the marshals and king of the land. In Robin Hood's time, only acorns and ferns would have been for us and little more.

We watched the squirrel run and almost fly through the air, the huge Clydesdale horse and pony being ridden around us on ancient track ways, the old grey donkey who recognised us, swans who majestically formed a triple line along the river on its never ending course. Then, amazingly we arrived at the Dukeries Lodge once again, for yet more feasting of the modern time.

### Day 2, Sunday 19th October 2014 – a bridle way to Rufford Abbey

Nigel the fire maker:- All good outlaws need someone to build a fire, Nigel attempted to fill this role by cleverly setting fire to the toast, unfortunately black smoke billowed out of the toaster causing the fire alarm to be activated, and his attempt to warm our Merry band and possibly the rest of the Sherwood forest, was prevented.

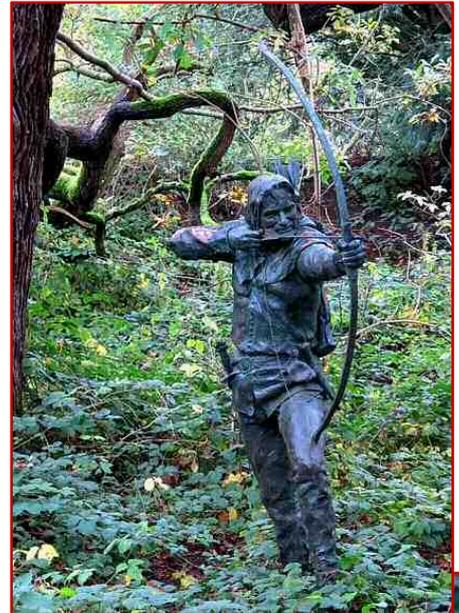
Norman R, the leader of our escapades led us from the road onto a wonderful bridle way, on towards Rufford Abbey and beautiful lakes and grounds, a 6-7 mile walk, an arc around the spire of St Mary's, hedges were shorn or missing, modern arable land, straight, uniform windswept fields, without trees. Imaginations were needed to picture the Ancient forests and we were walking on an ancient route, parallel to the main M1 a Nottingham to London route where Royal Cavalcades would constantly have been bombarded by outlaws.

John of Gloucestershire (pacemaker) set a fine march always aware of Normans' lead yet making adjustments for our needs. Holders of the Bow and Arrow, my husband Norman and I became the lookout guards for our merry band and were ready to shoot our way out of trouble as we headed to Rufford Abbey for lunch.

Liz was delighted by the chocolate retriever, the male and female dogs which we could recognise by their pink and blue harnesses. Paul explained how 'her' vast array of other interests including American Soccer and steam trains had led them into many adventures. We looked for the steam train as we came to the railway line without luck but did see the cool mine carriages for the working mine nearby, thought to be the last working one in the country.

Jackie was pleased to be able to forage, with Somesh's help for more sweet chestnuts, horseradish, dandelions and rosehips. We guarded her carefully as she looked at the modern crop of horseradish, turnips and sweet corn in case there were lords present. Somesh, the Miller, who was constantly interested and easily distracted with all he was able to either see, photo, use, eat or concoct into an interesting meal with their joint spoils from the forage.

We began circling back, trees and woodland appeared, as did the sparrow hawk of Robin's time. Then, the wonderful Dukeries Lodge appeared, we were almost home. Where a warm welcome from our home makers Liz and Paul prepared tea and cakes, once again before our departure.



# NOGs weekend in Rhossili Gower Coast

7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November 2014

By Ivor Barclay with added insertions by Nigel Bolter



When I looked out of the window on Saturday morning, shafts of sunlight were beaming through leaden skies on the tormented waters' of Mewslade Bay. This bay and its adjacent bay, Fall Bay are geological wonders; containing many different types of stratified rocks, each displaying varying degrees of resistance to the pounding of wind and waves.

As a new member this was my first experience of a weekend away with our walking group. The group had booked the use of a YHA hostel at Middleton near Rhossili. I arrived just after dusk on the Friday with John Thompson from the Gloucester group. The place was deserted, but I was surprised how much things had changed since my last experience of Youth Hostels in my late teens. Memories were of boot camp type institutions, only without, the sadistic drill sergeant. This hostel was clean, well appointed, with varying levels of accommodation and was very warm.

On Friday night, after a fish and chip supper, there were only three of us present. We retired to our beds about ten thirty wondering if anyone else was going to show up. The others must have crept in with the stealth of commandos. On Saturday morning I was surprised to see that the vacant beds were occupied. They weren't aliens but fellow NOGs members.



Kitchen Corner is on the cliff tops and it was reached after a steep ascent. On the way up it looked as though we were climbing towards "The End of the Earth." When we did get there, it became apparent that there was a sharp right angle turn. This led along a narrow path cut into the face of the cliff. Our passage along the path seemed very dramatic and exciting as we were buffeted by strong winds but the group supported each other and we safely ascended to the main coastal path. The officers in the nearby Coast Guard Lookout Station, perched on the end of a promontory of land, informed us, that a force nine gale was blowing. It was from this vantage point, that we had a clear view of the great mass of Worms Head.



After lunch in Rhossili, we admired the broad expanse of Rhossili beach, whose scale only became apparent, when the two dots I could see through my binoculars, were identified as walkers. Crossing Rhossili Down, my equine interests were aroused by the site of piebald ponies, grazing the hillside. One brave pony stood on top of the Down, head held high, his mane blowing in the wind as if to proclaim himself as "King of the mountain." At the end of the Down we crossed the sand dunes, to witness three kite surfers, pitting their skills against the ferocious elements. As we walked back along the beach towards Rhossili, big surf, sent crashing waves across the sand.



Even on our Sunday walk, when heavy rain marred our walk to Port Eynon, the sense of comradery and friendly banter, that been a feature of the whole weekend, still persisted. At the end of this venture we sheltered in the local chippie which doubled up as a teashop whilst Pam and Martin who had returned back to the hostel for this purpose came to collect us in their cars to return us to the hostel. The lady warden who had been starting to clean the hostel kindly let us use the facilities to change into dry clothes and chatted to us before we started to make our way home.



This challenging weekend had danger, excitement and friendship. There was also a palpable look of pride on the faces of Norman and Jackie Roberts, who had seen their son, " Jamie Roberts", give a good account of himself and his team in the International Ruby on Saturday. But above all my abiding memory will be of the shafts of sunlight, piercing those leaden clouds, giving a sense of theatre to a beautiful landscape. It was like a 3D "Turner" painting, transforming the ordinary into the exotic.



More pictures of the atmospheric Rhossili trip appear here.

