

Activities in 2016

ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - ACTIVITIES IN 2016

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17 Nov 2016

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*Image by courtesy of
[Weymouth Bay Rib Charters](#)
who provided the experience.*



Go Ape Treetop Adventure

19 May 2016

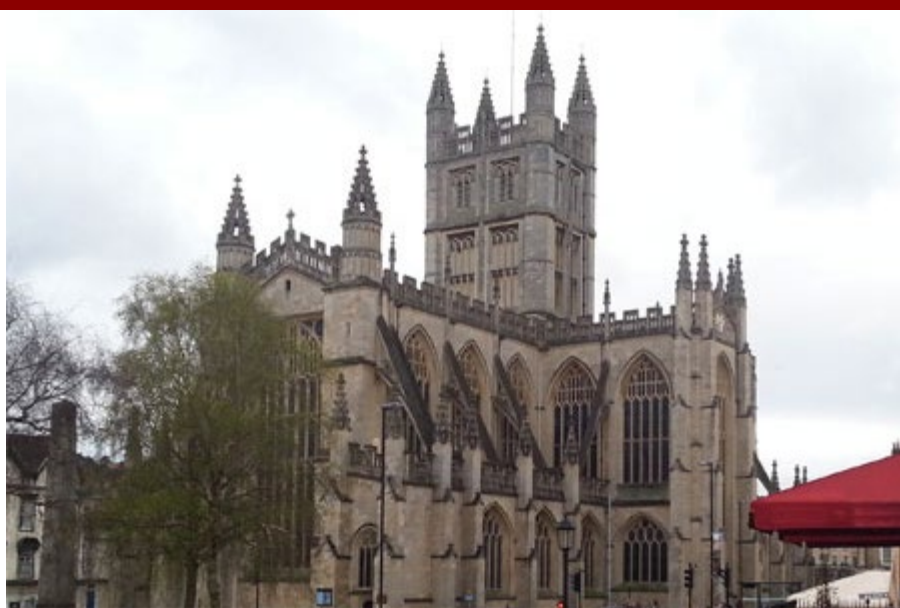
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ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - THE LOCKED ROOM 17 Nov 2016**Help!!!! We're Locked In.....**

On the 17th October, 19 brave souls from the Active Adventurers experienced something rather different at BathEscape. The first challenge for some was finding the location having not read the flyer or used a sat nav. Once inside the quirky café, the door was secured, instructions given by city Beadle Lewis and each team member signed in to say they understood the house rules. A second challenge, that of finding 2 volunteers on each team, one to carry a clip board and another to master the walkie talkie, raised the level of nervous tension within the team. Then it was time to step into the Locked Rooms. Aarrgh...

The Concierge and his Door Belles, clearly a team of brazen hussies led by a well dressed cad, were the first to wander through the labyrinth in the afternoon. Obviously they had other interests planned for their evening. Resolved to unravel the hidden clues and make their escape within the hour to a local hostelry, gadzooks they found it more difficult than they'd imagined and it was not to be. Some 80 minutes had past, seemingly in a flash, before they found a way out ably assisted by Beadle Lewis along the way. By all accounts there had been much frivolity below stairs.

Enter The Pick Locks here for a night out on the town (they need to get a life). A lively team of gentle men and women well-schooled in the art of detection who seemingly wandered full of purpose and determination to do well, unknowingly led by a professional burglar with an innate ability to unscramble the combination locks without the aid of the clues hailed to him. This individual's steely determination to clear the rooms of the aforementioned gentle men and women still aimlessly wandering about trying to solve all the clues, proved vital. A time of 48 minutes was greeted with good cheer and plenty of back handed compliments were exchanged.

Meanwhile The Door Bolts had ascended into the Haunted Rooms above. This motley crew of hard working and retired boys and girls from the workhouses in the city sought escape from the daily drudge and were ready to rise to the challenge. By all accounts one had the temerity to hang out of a first floor window in the dark in an effort to grab a clue. Had nobody told them their rooms were haunted by such folk? What bravery or foolishness drove them to such lengths to win? Were they trying to cheat by leaving through the window? Clearly exhausted from their daily toil they failed on both counts miserably. Only released by the merciful Beadle Lewis, despite remonstrations from The Pick Locks who by now had supped tea and coffee and eaten their prize cake, The Door Bolts sought to make their way to lighter, nay poorer refreshments and an early night.

So these Active Adventurers had yet another tale to regale their families, friends and neighbours with over the Yule tide fireside.

ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - ABSEILING 19 Oct 2016

The spectacular views along the coast and inland on a bright sunny morning in October were worth the climb up the footpath to the top of the old quarry at Uphill, near Weston-Super-Mare. The reality was our adventure was about to begin. "The difficult bit is stepping off the edge" as our instructors Ian and Sean of Aardvark Endeavours kept reminding us and "After that it's easy if you take your time". Attired in a hard hat, a sturdy abseiling belt, ropes securely anchored to the ground and clips attached, each of us in turn stepped off into the unknown. Getting back down on a rope hanging against a rock face from heights of 70, 120, 150 and almost 200 ft took some nerve, lots of enthusiasm and plenty of adrenalin. It was also a lot quicker getting down than walking up the footpath for the next go. In the best tradition of the Group we gave each other the encouragement to overcome any fear we might have harboured and went for it. Everyone enjoyed the experience and we have yet another amazing story to tell.



ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - PADDLEBOARDING 16 Sept 2016**Paddle Boarding at the Cotswold Water Park**

Six brave souls took to the water on 16 Sept to try their hand at paddle boarding. Attired in unflattering wet suits and tight fitting life jackets, to ensure there was no chance of us dying of hypothermia or drowning, we selected our boards grabbed our paddles and under the guidance of Simon and Tom of CWP took to the water. Having been warned to stay near the banks, not to paddle too far out from our starting point, we knelt some to paddle and others to pray that they didn't fall off. The prevailing wind blew us all down the centre of the lake without us having to make much effort. Then as we gallantly paddled trying to turn our boards round and stand up falling off seemed obligatory. Those who did manage to stand up then had the challenge of getting back on their board unaided, whilst others abandoned all hope of getting themselves back through the choppy waters and were rescued by the boat. The latter proved to be much more fun than paddle boarding apparently. Sian took up the challenge of kayaking that proved to be a sensible option being the only one to stay dry! For those who've not tried it, give paddle boarding a go. You won't be disappointed, just a bit wet.







ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - ZIP WIRE 5 Sept 2016

At the invitation of U3A Weston Turville, a small number of Active Adventurers took up the challenge to ride the Longest Zip Line in Europe at 1,560 metres and the Fastest in the World with a maximum speed 165 kmph. The prospect of a hair-raising adventure was too good an opportunity to miss and although it meant travelling up to North Wales it was well worth the time and effort.

The adventure, operated by Zip World at Bethesda, took two hours to complete. A shorter zip line to test your nerve and a 'jingly truck' ride to the summit was followed by a fifty-five second descent. The adrenalin buzz through the build up to actually zip lining from a height of 432 metres across a slate quarry back to the start is unbelievable.

The video and still pictures below give you an idea of what it was like.

Unfortunately your browser doesn't support embedded videos, but you can [download zipvideo.mp4](#) and watch it with whatever mp4 player you have installed.





ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - RIB RIDE 18 Aug 2016

A Summertime Special on the Sea

Fourteen of us went to Weymouth on the 18 August to take on the challenge of the new Weymouth Charters Rib Ride, anticipating a promised adrenaline rush. We were not disappointed. At the harbour side we split into two smaller groups. With life jackets fitted by Charters rep Kirsty we went aboard with 'Master at the Helm' Craig. The calm waters of the harbour were soon behind us and the Rib Rider was twisting, turning in tight circles, bouncing through the bow waves and spinning away from the buoys when a head on collision appeared unavoidable. This was the high octane fuelled adrenalin rush we all wanted. Weymouth on one of the hottest days of the summer was a great place to be.



ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - GO APE 19 May 2016

Active Adventurers GoApe in the Forest of Dean

True to the spirit of the Active Adventurers approach of "Live Life Adventurously", on 19th May eleven members of the group set off in search of their hidden Tarzan. At GoApe deep within the Forest of Dean they climbed ever higher rope ladders, ventured across progressively more challenging high walkways and balanced on logs suspended high in the trees before descending on ever longer and faster zip-wires back to earth. For most it proved impossible to resist the temptation to do a true Tarzan-style swing. How could anyone forget the first stomach-churning moment of free-fall before the rope took up the slack and you swung through the air to land in the cargo net – nor the struggle to climb up the net to the safety of the tree platform again. If the whoops and screams that rang out through the forest that day were anything to go by, it would appear the group achieved their goal!! Even those who decided, after a couple of stages, discretion was the better part of valour and became spectators were pleased they had risen to the challenge and explored beyond their usual comfort zone.





ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - BATH ABBEY TOWER TOUR 21 Apr 2016

On 21st April we had an interesting guided tour of the tower of Bath Abbey, rounded off with tea at a local cafe.



With 212 steps to climb it might not have been too adventurous but it was certainly active.



We stopped to look at the view when we reached the roof before continuing up the tower.



The ringing chamber also houses a box of electronics that now controls the hour and quarter chimes.



Behind the clock face. The shaft on the left drives the hands. The mechanism is in a separate room.



The fan vaulted ceiling from above. The keystone which you can see at the centre is surprisingly thin.



The fan vaulting looks a lot nicer from below! A peephole lets bell ringers know when a wedding is ending.



We have reached the top of the tower and can take in the views and discuss the flagpole.



The view to the north.



The view to the south.



Back down to earth and time to look round the nave and chancel.

ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - BLOKARTING 7 - 8 Apr 2016

Active Adventurers get blown away by Blokarting

On 7th & 8th April we linked up with Weston Turville U3A Extreme Group to go Blokarting on the beach at Weston Super Mare. What's a Blokart? - it's a 3 wheeled buggy with a sail which enables you to whip along the beach at amazing speeds. What an experience – and what fun!!

Our first day dawned cloudy with a strong onshore wind and standing water left behind by the tide. However, we were soon kitted out and quickly learnt how to control the blokart - steering into wind and 'sheeting in'. Before long we were off, negotiating the figure of eight course in style, water and sand spraying up in all directions!! A shower and facial dermabrasion at the same time!!

That evening we gathered in the Japanese restaurant and exchanged experiences in between watching the chef prepare our Teppanyaki meal in truly flamboyant style.

The day dawned bright but, as we had to wait for the tide to go out, a guided visit to the Helicopter Museum was laid on, including a chance to have a go at a Helicopter Simulator. The tour led us through the history of helicopters from the first pioneers to present day – especially interesting for the more technically minded as we learnt how complex the mechanics are and why helicopters are so expensive to run. Our attempts at piloting were all too brief but at least none of us crashed over Somerset! Not sure they'd be willing to let us loose on the real thing though.

On the second day conditions for blokarting were quite different – the sun shone with a lighter wind at an angle to the shore. This favoured the lighter amongst us as more technique was needed, especially to maintain momentum as you rounded the marker & headed towards the uphill slope. Some of us had a tendency to come to grinding halt (!), but our instructor Chris was out there, coaching us all the way and also taking some great action shots of us all. Inevitably as tends to happen whenever you get Active Adventurers and Extremists together, a bit of friendly rivalry ensued but really everyone was there just to have good time and enjoy the experience.

Another experience ticked off our list, though maybe some of us may even do it again – did I hear a few enquiries about the availability of lessons and even second hand blokarts?!



ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - SEGWAY 16 March 2016

Riding a segway is an interesting and peaceful experience. Controlling it with body position soon became natural and effortless. The movements are rather like those in skiing. The pictures and video below show what our day was like at Avon Valley Country Park in March.

Due to its popularity, a second segway ride was arranged with Segway Bristol Safari on 29th June 2016. This gave us views over the Bristol Channel.



Kitting up



Well protected



Instruction



First try



Look at me



Practice



Getting the hang of it



Ready for the safari



ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - DOWN A COAL MINE 25 Feb 2016**Active Adventurers Go Deeper**

On a bright crisp morning eight of us set off for Blaenavon and the Big Pit National Coal Museum. We assembled at the pit head to be kitted out in hard hats with lights attached and deprived of *everything* electronic – so no sparks could cause fires or explosions underground! The Big Pit is not a working mine but is still classed as a coal mine under the Coal Mines Act. We adventurers, under the guidance of retired miner Russel, experienced the sights, sounds, smells and feel of the coal mining industry.

During our descent to 90 metres in a bumpy creaking lift Russel explained the history of the South Wales coal mining industry, how mining was done, who did it and showed us to the coalface. Fortunately we weren't expected to get our hands dirty. At one point we all turned off our lights to see just how dark and quiet it would have been. Until 1842 children as young as six worked in this environment of total darkness, tethered to heavy wooden doors which they had to open and close as the miners moved along the shafts. From the 1840s pit ponies were used instead of women and children to drag the mined coal out. They worked shorter shifts than the men but once underground the ponies never saw the light of day again. We then walked down to the pit bottom at 110 metres to get the lift back to the surface. The end of an arresting if at times rather unnerving experience.





ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - ICE KARTING 28 Jan 2016



Active Adventurers hit the ice!!

Karting, on ice!! What a crazy thing to do? – which is exactly why we did it! Jan 28th saw 16 of us spend an afternoon racing (yes, racing!) round an ice rink. After a short briefing it was helmets on, rev up the engines and we were off. The 45 mins of practice laps gave us a chance to suss out how to control a go-kart with studded tyres around an Olympic sized ice rink. It wasn't long before most of us had the hang of sliding the back end out and powering round the corner before heading down the straight ready to attack the next corner – while others took a steadier, more regal approach! After resurfacing of the ice, just to make things even more interesting, came the more serious stuff - a race against the clock to see which team could clock up the greatest number of laps. One thing's for sure, put Active Adventurers in teams and things can get surprisingly competitive! OK, maybe the Le Mans style change-overs weren't as swift as they might have been but it's not so easy unfolding from a low racing seat these days! It was close but Team Jackie snatched the trophy by just 2 laps.

Racing over, a chance to compare experiences over some well earned refreshments before heading home. Did I hear right - 'When can we do it again.....??!!'



Heading out onto the track



Some didn't always make the corners



A regal wave as Team 1 is lapped



Proud trophy winners