

Activities in 2018

ACTIVE ADVENTURERS - ACTIVITIES IN 2018

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29 Jan 2018

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28 Mar 2018

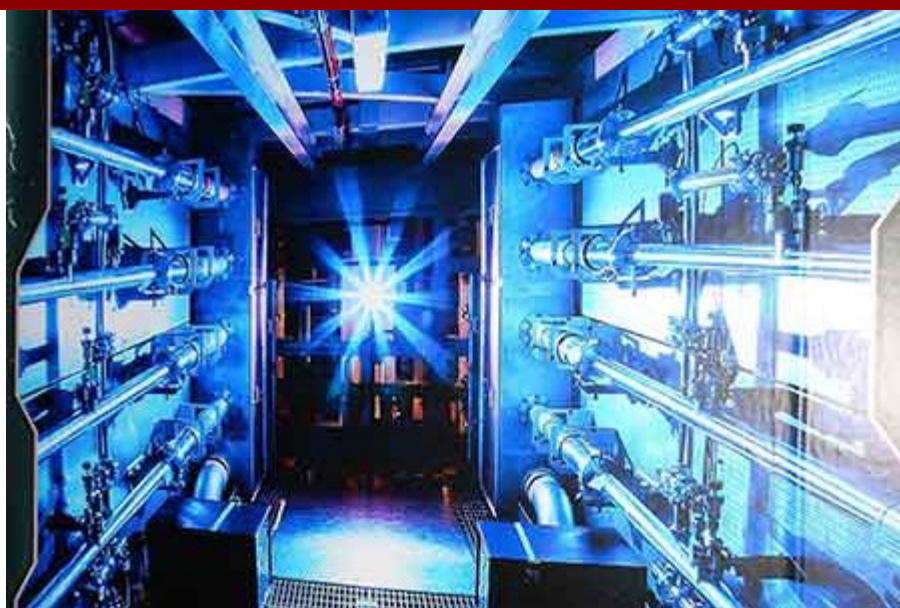
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[Activities in 2018](#) > Tai Chi

TAI CHI 29 Jan 2018

Our first activity of 2018 was an introduction to Tai Chi, a form of gentle exercise which requires you to "feel the flow" not "feel the burn".

The session began with a relaxation exercise. This was followed by a series of movements to help us loosen and stretch which was accompanied by constant reminders from our instructor, to "keep to 70% of what you think you can do!" (we are all enthusiastic and some of us are competitive). The final part of the session was doing "very easy Tai Chi" which required stepping forward and circling the arms at the same time. This was not as easy as you would think because it required concentration, coordination and movement - all at the same time.

Our instructor made the session both interesting and fun so we all enjoyed our brief introduction to Tai Chi. As well as benefitting from the physical movement, there was the added bonus of not having to wear hard hats or harnesses to do it.



[Activities in 2018](#) > [Go Karting](#)

GO KARTING 21 Feb 2018

A bright February day saw 18 intrepid Active Adventurers converging on Avonmouth, donning overalls, helmets and gloves ready for a morning of Go Karting. We were split into two groups, the first group set off around the track, accelerating down the straights and braking for the corners with much squealing of tyres while the next group made notes and planned their strategy before setting off on their run. After a quick break and comparing of lap times, we were split into the faster group and the not so fast group. We had all grown in confidence by this stage and everybody improved their times, racing for the chequered flag with Tony Waddell claiming overall victory with a blistering, fastest lap time of 44.776 seconds.



[Activities in 2018](#) > Ghost Hunt

GHOST HUNT 10 Mar 2018



That's the Spirit!

After a hearty meal and liquid refreshment to steady the nerves 14 of us visited Woodchester Mansion to explore the most haunted house in England. Under the expert guidance of Paul and his team from Haunted Happenings our mixed Group of sceptics, believers and "on the fence sitters" moved around the house looking for ghosts, spirits and signs of paranormal activity with varying degrees of success in this abandoned Victorian Gothic mansion. Those not distracted by the classical architecture experienced "a presence", "saw the lights" and "heard the sounds".



[Activities in 2018](#) > [Mini Factory Visit](#)

BMW MINI FACTORY VISIT 28 Mar 2018

Our visit to the BMW Mini factory at Oxford gave us a glimpse into the wonders of modern high tech car manufacture. It was an eye opening experience. The entire metal body is assembled by a vast army of orange robots similar to the one shown in the picture below. They pick up individual steel pressings (produced in Swindon) and spot weld them together. Successive panels are added, with large chunks of car being effortlessly swung through the air, until the body is complete. All the robots are controlled by a central computer and report any faults or hold-ups so that they can be rectified. The area is almost devoid of people.

The bodies then pass through the paint shop and on to the assembly line where they are mechanically rotated or lifted so that "associates", as workers are now called, can add trim, seats, wiring etc., and engine, transmission and suspension are fitted.

Engines and other components arrive from other factories in Britain, Europe and in some cases elsewhere on the just-in-time system, i.e. only as they are needed, to avoid having large buffer stocks.

It was a fascinating visit.





[Activities in 2018](#) > [Laser Tag](#)

LASER TAG 19 Apr 2018

Active Adventurers Feel The Force

Laser Tagging has nothing to do with shopping but everything to do with ray guns, creeping around in the dark, hiding behind walls, doors and windows to shoot lasers at the enemy. Sloth, Reeva, Wally, Dappy, Squitch and Sweetpea were just a few names chosen by the players. Enough to frighten anyone this lot! Having no idea what we were doing, lasers fired everywhere and anywhere. A hit and the troopers lit up like Christmas trees. The first round went to Stealth, admitting she'd done her research on line beforehand. Who told Linda this was for real? Soon we formed 2 teams, The Reds led by The Killer and The Blues by Wizard who switched to a left handed gun and ran riot. The Reds were totally outgunned claiming later that Wizard had more troops but forgetting that this gave The Killers band more to aim at. There's no excuse Tony. Well done Zoom for getting the highest score but, Christine, you were still on the losing team. Not quite the good old Cowboys and Indians! Ride 'em cowboy.....



[Activities in 2018](#) > [Microlight Flight](#)

MICROLIGHT FLIGHT 17 May 2018

Such an adventure! Flying in a large 'coal scuttle' and what fun! My pilot asked where I lived and off we went, dressed in heavily padded jackets, helmets, ear phones and microphones which enabled us to chat. The flight was so smooth and the birds eye view and commentary were so delightful, I forgot I had a small engine at my back and a seemingly flimsy wing being manipulated at the front. Great fun and very rewarding especially when my adventurous 43 and 46 year old sons said they would be too afraid to try it!





[Activities in 2018](#) > [White Water Rafting and Bodyboarding](#)

WHITE WATER RAFTING AND BODYBOARDING 28 June 2018

Active Adventurers on White Water at Cardiff International White Water

Adorned in fetching black wet suits with matching booties, red helmets, life jackets and paddles in hand we boarded our rubber rafts. Instructed by Chris and Keiran manning the tillers we practised our strokes and moves before ascending a ramp with feelings of trepidation reminiscent of the water chutes rides of our youth. The gentle flow of the stream to paddle through was soon replaced by the stronger current that was to plunge us through a series of whirlpools, rapids, twists and turns. The tiller men manfully steered the rafts into the white water shouting instructions such as "down, right backward, left forward, paddle up, and relax (not often or for very long)". Just to be sure everyone got the hang of it we went round at least a dozen times. The rafts didn't sink, though at one point baling out the water in them seemed likely. Nobody fell overboard either, though a few head butts and non-combative paddle blows between crew members left a few bruised egos. The tiller men, masters of their trade, made sure everyone got a thorough soaking, had a good laugh and left park wanting more. Now where's the nearest river?

Body Boarding

Having survived the white water rafting, a few adventurers expended what energy they had left on the Body Boarding experience. It's fast, furious, tiring, great fun but can be quite a bruising experience unless you know what you're doing. Tony and Mac quickly mastered the basic technique and then showed us some great moves on the water. Staying on the board was enough of a challenge for the rest of us!



[Activities in 2018](#) > [Concorde](#)

CONCORDE MUSEUM AT AEROSPACE BRISTOL 4 July 2018

First we were taken through their museum showing some of the many different products that had been made in the long history of what is now Aerospace Bristol, which started in 1910 as the British and Colonial Aeroplane Company. In addition to aircraft, there were cars, lorries and even a fibreglass sailing dinghy. More recently they have made missiles, rockets and satellites.

Then we came to the main exhibit, Concorde, built jointly with the French company Aérospatiale. We were able to walk through it and imagine we were (literally) high flying executives or celebrities commuting across the Atlantic in under three hours and being high enough to see the curvature of the earth.

The pictures below show a Concorde flight simulator and an aeroplane used in the first world war.





[Activities in 2018](#) > [Transporter Bridge](#)

TRANSPORTER BRIDGE, NEWPORT 26 July 2018

Who needs to go to Sydney? Spanning the River Usk this early 20th century spectacular masterpiece of engineering offers incredible views, brilliant photographic opportunities and an adrenaline buzz of its own. It is a Grade 1 Listed Structure and its historic importance stems from its very unusual design. There are only two others like it in the UK and only seven in the World. Climbing the 270 steps to the 645ft gantry we strolled, walked and I think some ran from the west to the east riverside. Looking down through the metal framework to the river nearly 200 ft below was not for the faint hearted. A visit to the engine room to be regaled with historic tales by The Engineer and a ride on the gondola used to transport cars across, led to chats with the enthusiastic and knowledgeable team of volunteers looking to save the bridge. It is well worth the journey to have a look at this iconic structure and learn about Newport's incredible history. You won't be disappointed. Just don't expect to see an Opera House.





Activities in 2018 > Hawk Walk and Owl Encounter

HAWK WALK AND OWL ENCOUNTER 8/9 Aug 2018

It was a hoot!

We met up at Newton St Lowe Farm where the West of England Falconry Birds of Prey Rescue Centre is based. Jay Marshall is the founder of the WOEF registered charity which is dedicated to the well-being of owls and birds of prey through selective breeding, training, rescue and rehabilitation of birds in captivity.

The Adventurers were divided into 2 groups of four people which meant a very individual experience was had by all. Group 1 went to see the Owls first and George, a WOEF volunteer, took us into the owl barn exercise area. First up was Ruru, a Morepork Owl. This breed hails from New Zealand although Ruru had been breed in captivity in the UK. She was extremely small and once she was weighed in (part of a daily health check) she started flying to whoever had their gloved hand held out. George fed her and once she'd had enough she went back to her perch. Bowie, a Tawny Owl, was next up and finally Ghost, the Barn Owl, had lunch and flying exercises with us. It was fascinating to have the owls perch on our outstretched hands.

The larger Owls came out for group 2. Staring Sikh, a Snowy Owl, walked into the exercise area following her keeper. Sikh is only a year old and is one of the largest species of owl, with a wing span of around 4ft wide. The snowy owl, in the wild, is a ground nester being the heaviest owl species and primarily hunts rodents and waterfowl. Sikh makes loud raucous noises and flew up and down the enclosure.

The groups swapped over and we went to fly a Falcon; we were given a glove and a bag of food each which turned out to be Travis's lunch. Once in the flying field, Jay let Travis (a very handsome Harris Hawk from Namibia) fly off to a near-by tree from where he observed us with a hawk-like eye. A small movement towards our food bags brought him flying towards us and he perched happily on our outstretched gloved hand, sometimes making his way up an arm and onto a head!





[Activities in 2018](#) > [Horse Racing](#)

HORSE RACING 22 Aug 2018

A busy summer program ended with a splendid afternoon at Bath Races. After picking a dud in the first race (her horse didn't leave the starting gate) the horse racing expert among us won a handsome sum in the penultimate race of the afternoon. This was just reward for all the tips she gave us about selecting horses, placing bets and explaining the difference between the Tote and Bookies odds. Our vocabulary is all the richer for this experience though our bank balances were left a little lighter.

The picture shows the disconsolate owner of the horse that didn't leave the starting gate. It got itself into such a lather it had to be hosed down. The owner turned his back on it.



Activities in 2018 > Conkers

WORLD CONKER CHAMPIONSHIPS 14 Oct 2018

We went to compete in the World Conker Championships at Southwick, Northamptonshire on 14th October 2018.

It rained steadily all day but the 250 competitors were all good humoured, many wearing fancy dress. The majority of us had little or no skill and were there just for the fun of it. The town crier and civil war re-enactors opened the ceremony with much bell ringing and banging of drums respectively, the ukulele band played, the sideshows dripped, the beer tent was well attended, tea/coffee and cake was served in the adjoining village hall and the organisers were extremely efficient. It was all very impressive, especially the entertaining Tannoy announcer in his scaffold tower overlooking the playing arena who inevitably rhymed bonkers with conkers and likened us to Caesar - we came, we saw, we conkered!

Competitors had coloured "bibs" with numbers, each of the four colours being called to play in turn, the loser having to remove their bib, the winner progressing to the next round. We played on a podium, with six games playing at any one time.

Sadly, Mike was conkered by a very experienced conkerer in Round 1, whilst Hester met less skilled opponents and somehow made it to Round 3 before her bib was ripped off!

The overall conclusion of the day was that we had a really fun time despite getting soaked and that everyone who plays conkers is bonkers!



[Activities in 2018](#) > [Rock Climbing](#)

ROCK CLIMBING 16 Nov 2018

Six of us went rock climbing at Burrington Coombe in the Cheddar gorge. This was organised by Ian of Aardvark Endeavours, who as always was cheerfully helpful and encouraging. Fortunately the weather stayed dry although some of the rock was damp and slippery.

Three climbs were set up with ropes that looped over pulleys at the top. We worked in pairs, one climbing while the other belayed from the base of the rock face. One of our number, in the lower picture, had experience and fitness and went up the climbs with great speed. The rest of us varied in ability but it was a good and enjoyable challenge. We finished the morning off with a meal at the nearby restaurant.





[Activities in 2018](#) > [Secure Room Experience](#)

SECURE ROOM EXPERIENCE 6 Dec 2018

Active Adventurers Search for WMD and Blackbeard's Treasure

Set against the background of WWII espionage and the Allies hunt for the enemy's secret missile base and weapons, our brave teams, under the code names 'Coolings Heroes' and 'Lame Ducks', set out on their special assignments. Each had just 60 mins to crack the codes, unlock the doors and get a message to Allied Command to say where they'd found it all. Coolings Heroes almost made it out but were blown up by a missile. Trying to save the pigeons, who were all worthy of the Dickens Medal, was an honorable end. Meanwhile Lame Ducks lived up to their billing by failing to get out of the first room. Our third team, Zoom, went in search of Blackbeard's Treasure. Clearly this was much easier to find than WMD as they escaped in 40 minutes to win the prize winning cakes.



[Activities in 2018](#) > Crazy Golf

GLOW IN THE DARK CRAZY GOLF 13 Dec 2018

CRAZY GOLFING IN THE DARK

On a bitterly cold night in December, nine hardy Adventurers met in the Royal Victoria Park. What better way to test your thermals, nerve, balance, and eye sight than by playing Crazy Golf in the dark. It was an unforgettable adventure: three teams playing for the bragging rights of best player and the winning team. The "Glow in the Dark" balls were given a good whallop to get up the sloping fairways with unerring inaccuracy that led to some scrabbling round in the rough. It was fun watching former golfers endeavouring to putt and miss again and again, see others drive off only to see their ball roll back to the tee or rebound off a strategically placed rock. The Adventurers (n)ever competitive refused to concede a hole as the score cards proved at the end. Linda Candy scored a hole in one but Sue Hatton led the winning team and won the bragging rights for the best round with a creditable 6 over par 60. The rest retired to the club house for a cup of hot chocolate and, in the best traditions of this amazing game, to reflect on what might have been.





[Activities in 2018](#) > Ice Skating

CHRISTMAS ICE SKATING 14 Dec 2018

ADVENTURER ON ICE LEADS THE WAY

In the true spirit of the Active Adventurers, Frank Thompson took up the challenge of skating on the ice in the Royal Victoria Park. It was all the more impressive as he went ahead as the only surviving member of the trip! He reported "After 15 minutes I managed to prize my fingers off the barrier and gained a minor degree of mobility for the remaining time on the ice. Will go again." Well done Frank.

