



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –  
OUTDOORS

## RXW14

By Anna Baker Cresswell

Our 5th Rural Week at Bicton College (RXW14) started on Sunday 24th September when we welcomed 9 HighGrounders to Bicton on a gloriously sunny afternoon.

We had 8 Army serving and one brave Veteran who had served in the Royal Marines and then transferred to the Royal Navy.

### Why Did They Join Us For RXW14?

They wanted to do a Rural Week for lots of different reasons:

- To see if tree surgery really would be right for them and if it was worth burning all their ELCAS allowance on the course.
- To find a way of working outdoors again after being at sea.
- To leave the desk behind and use their teaching skills outdoors.

Another of our HighGrounders had been medically discharged and was using the Rural Week as a reality check; he said he'd spent so long being told what he couldn't do, he wanted to find out for himself what he could do...

### What We Did On Our Rural Week

The weather was very kind to us; mild all week with only a couple of sluggishly damp and drizzly mornings which got out later on, and didn't spoil the excellent outings to Exminster Golf Club, Lord Clinton's forestry, Bicton Home Farm, the construction and plant machinery site, Archery, or Forest School which Chris had organised for us.

Our evening speakers Tony, Tom and Lee were brilliant – all ex-military and now working in the land-based sector. They gave freely of their time, experience and contacts and we are very grateful to them all.

Lee did a Rural Week with us when he was leaving the Royal Marines, and now he has his own [Forest School business](#). I'm so proud that HighGround has been able to help him a bit although in true Royal Marine style, he got there himself!

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For more information about HighGround's services please contact Anna Baker Cresswell  
Email: [anna@highground-uk.org](mailto:anna@highground-uk.org) Telephone: 07951 495 272. [www.highground-uk.org](http://www.highground-uk.org)



Join our closed LinkedIn group where we post work experience and employment opportunities from military friendly farms, estates, forestry and commercial horticulture companies, vineyards and much more. Follow HighGround at Headley Court on Facebook.



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Our Resilience Training session with Skid from [Strongmind Resilience](#) was well received; we all need to be resilient in life and at HighGround our aim is to help Service Leavers and Veterans get closer to, and into land-based employment and self employment. Easier said than done, especially when your entire working life has been spent in the military but there is a lot of goodwill in the land-based sector, and if we can help to channel it in your direction so you avoid some of the puddles, then we have done our job.

Many thanks to all our outside presenters: Debbie from [South Yeo Farm](#); Phil from [Sampson Hall](#), Matt and Kirsty from [Hi-Line](#), Angie Shepherd, John Wilding, Roger Halliday, Josey Field from the [National Trust](#), Neil from [Ground Control](#), Julia from [BASC](#) and Terry and [Exminster Golf Club](#).

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### Feedback From The Rural Week

What do you hope to get out of this week?

“This week I am hoping to get some straight talking answers on how achievable working in the land-based sector is. I am not sure how realistic this is having been in the Army since I was 16.”

Steve, who completes 22 years in the Army in December.

“Hoping this week will be the impetus I need to stop thinking about the land-based sector and get into it.”

Dave, who has spent the last 11 years in the Royal Navy.

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