

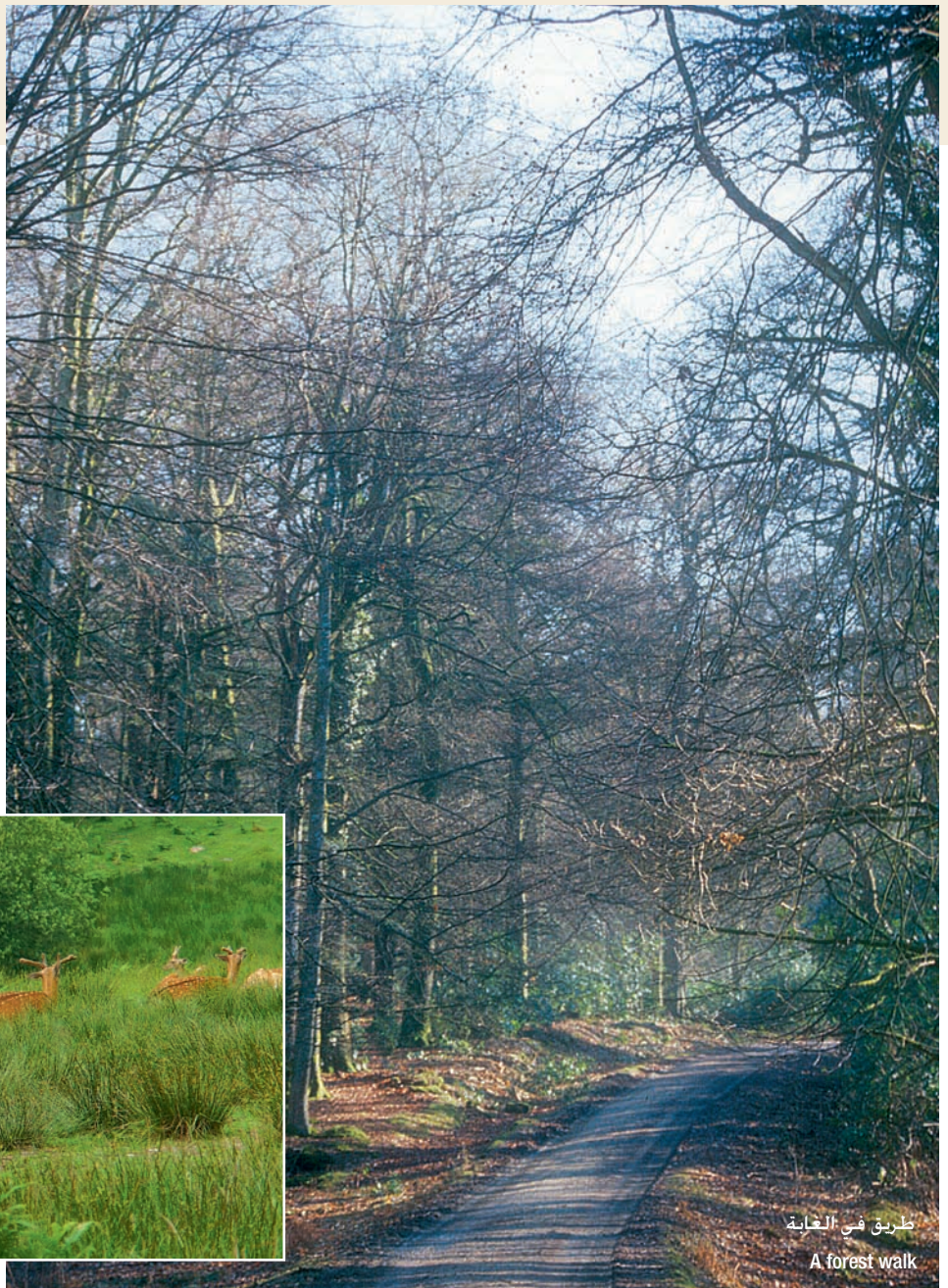
The New Forest:

An Experience Of Peaceful English Life

> Derick McGroarty

William I created his "New Forest" in 1079 for a privileged minority. The Rufus Stone erected in 1745 marks the spot where his son died in a hunting "accident". It is well signposted and easily reached from the main A31 road. It is an attractive glade for a picnic.

Between Southampton and the Dorset hills, the forest offers an area rich in scenery and wild life. Ponies roam the common land and there are four species of deer besides numerous smaller animals. The history and ecology of the forest is explained at the Visitors Centre, Lyndhurst, with an AV show and exhibits including the story of Brusher Mills (1840-1905) who lived in a hut made of sticks and turf, making a living in part, by catching snakes with a long forked stick which he sold to London Zoo. He also made money demonstrating his ability to visitors. There are still adders in the forest but no more snake catchers! Over the centuries the use of timber for housing and ship building has been carefully controlled. The first enactment was as early as 1483 and today, as a National Park, ▶



Deer in the Forest

غزال في الغابة

طريق في الغابة
A forest walk

management balances the needs of both preservation and recreation. Less than half the forest is woodland, dominated by oak and beech. The patchwork of habitat is brought about by constant grazing which prevents tree growth, extending heathland and grassland areas. A few hundred people are proud to call themselves "Commoners", but the practice is declining as values of properties, including common rights, increase beyond the reach of local people.

The natural beauty of the forest and moorlands is the prime attraction but there is much to see and do within the immediate area. Helpful information is freely available. www.thenewforest.co.uk

Lord Montague believes that Britain's great houses should be enjoyed by everyone with a love of national heritage. Beaulieu has a feeling of a lived in home by the most prominent family in the New Forest. The National Motor Museum is located in the grounds.

Three miles from Beaulieu, Exbury Gardens, privately owned by the Rothschild family, extends to 200 acres of woodland garden with 20 miles of pathways. It is a colourful and interesting place to visit the year round. Spring reveals the full glory of rhododendrons. Autumn brings the quieter but spectacular reds and yellows of the deciduous trees which herald the onset of winter. At the end of October I walked



Rhinefield House

قصر راينفيلد

through avenues of glorious foliage and took the interesting miniature gage steam railway ride.

Other New Forest attractions include a butterfly farm, a dairy farm, a tide mill and an English vineyard. For the energetic there are water sports and horse riding.

Quality hotels include the attractive woodland setting of Rhinefield House, Brockenhurst. With formal gardens and ornamental lake, in the style of a manor house, it has fine wood carvings including the "Armada" in the dining

room and work by Grindling Gibbons. The Alhambra Room was created by Spanish workmen. Bedrooms are immaculately equipped. The service was superb and the country house feel provided relaxation in quiet forest surroundings.

(www.handpicked.co.uk/rhinefieldhouse).

The New Forest still maintains a peaceful English way of life to be envied and can be enjoyed whether for a short break or as a main holiday. ■



Autumn foliage at Exbury أوراق الخريف في أكزبيري



Forest

الغابة