

ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS: Roger Deakin Archive

A WHIFF OF PEAT by Roger Deakin. 15 February 2001. Extract of a draft article for the *New Yorker*. [RD/LIT/3/2]

I never feel entirely happy in anything new. I am reminded of my uniform on the first day at school. Just as you have to inhabit your house for several years before you can really call it your own, so it is with all clothes but underwear and possibly socks. If I get a new pullover, I must set upon it and yank it about like a terrier as soon as it's out of the wrapper, then wear it about the house and garden for months before I can call it mine, turning the compost in it, doing the washing-up in it, carrying in the firewood in it. With new shoes it's just the same. They won't answer to me as my own until we've done a hundred miles or so together. They must be brought to heel. This is the great thing all country clothes have in common. As the walnut is said to improve with beating, so they improve with wear. New moleskins of any quality must practically be chewed before you can settle down to read a book in them. Old canvas-and-leather rucksacks and battered leather suitcases carry far more weight ^{with} ~~at the~~ ^{than} ~~any~~ ^{with your rural hosts} designer shoulder-bag.

Roger writes about his love of old clothes. We've added a photo of the school uniform he mentions, and one of a young Roger looking very comfortable in his outdoor clothes.

Roger assisted with the website design for Green Shoes, a hand-made shoe manufacturer in Devon owned by his partner Alison Hastie, he also wrote advertisements and articles for country clothing, some of which were published in *Countryman*. See RD/LIT/2/7-9.

