



The Poly Rambler

Members' Newsletter of the Polytechnic Rambling Club

www.polyramblers.org.uk

Contents

Page

- 1-2 Chairman's Message**
Mike Coyle
- 3-4 Snow walking weekend**
Dominique Marchand
- 5 Autumn Trip to Northumbria**
Danny Duffy
- 6-7 Polyramblers Cheesy YHA Weekend**
Pam Massey
- 8 Peter Gould**
Christine Bignold

Chairman's message

Our AGM in March was well attended. Thanks to those of you who found the time to come along – we do like to hear your views. Unfortunately our President was unable to be there and to chair the meeting, but we managed to get through the agenda without mishap. It's largely business as usual as regards the club officers and committee although we are pleased to welcome Hilary as an additional committee member.

Gillian won the Rambler of the Year Cup with Sunita a very close second.

After the meeting a number of members went on a visit of the new BBC studios.

Hopefully you will have seen our new website by now, see link above. We have been extremely fortunate in the past to have had our websites written for us free, firstly by Peter Gould's son Paul, and subsequently by Stuart Swan. Following the hacking of Stuart's site, the committee decided it was time to bite the bullet and pay someone to write a new one for us. Our designer, Clive, is someone Sandra and I met when visiting Andalucia to research the club's trip there. He also organises walking and wildlife trips there and we have allowed a link on the Club's website to his Wildside Holidays site, in exchange for a reduction in web administration fees. For those of you interested in wildlife, I recommend looking around his site.

(continue on page two)

Congratulations to Gillian for winning the Rambler of the Year Cup.



Material for this edition collated by the committee.
Production by Kim Chowns
Printing arrangements by Dominique Le Marchand.

**The Polytechnic
Rambling Club**

(in association with the
University of Westminster)
Founded 1885

Affiliated to the Ramblers'
Association (Inner London Area)
Affiliated to HF Holidays

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

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Christine Bignold

Vice Presidents

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Margaret Lanham
Rosemary MacLoughlin
Professor Geoffrey Petts

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Mike Coyle

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Gillian Swan

Treasurer

Daniel Duffy

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Hilary Abbey
Pam Beach
Kim Chowns
Dominique Le Marchand
Solvig Starborg
Stuart Swan
Geoffrey Waters

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CORRESPONDENCE**

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Club's Facebook page

<http://tinyurl.com/qclyyfq>

Chairman's message continued

Our own new site is more fluid than the previous one and you will find the appearance changes from time to time. However, this isn't purely a gimmick. Many clubs who are affiliated to the Ramblers Association now have their sites hosted and designed by them and the overall appearance of what we see as our competitors' sites has become more professional. Apart from being our notice board, we see the site as a way of attracting new members and it is largely for this reason that the committee considered we should up our game. We are still getting used to the organising and the editing of it, but welcome any comments you may have.

At our last committee meeting, we discussed future club trips away. Plans for 2015 are all in hand, but at present, apart from the Youth Hostel weekend, there are no firm proposals for either Bank Holiday weekend or the autumn weekend in 2016. It would be really good to receive some suggestions from you the members, and even better if you were able to assist with the organising. Do e-mail / speak to a committee member if you have even the seed of an idea.

Here's hoping for a glorious summer in 2015. I look forward to seeing you on a walk soon.

Mike Coyle

Spring is here!



SNOW WALKING WEEKEND – 23/26 JANUARY 2015 BAYRISCHZELL - BAVARIA

I had missed seeing mountains covered in snow in the past two years, so decided to organise another snow-walking weekend with Danny's help. This time, it was in Bayrischzell (800m), in south Bavaria in Germany. After flying to Munich and a train journey on BOB (Bayerische Oberlandbahn), ten Polyrampblers arrived in the pretty village of Bayrischzell where we were pleased to see that there was some snow. Bayrischzell is a lovely village in a quiet and sunny valley surrounded by mountains. Like many towns and villages in Bavaria, there were many houses adorned with painted scenes with a religious or historic theme. We stayed in two different guesthouses; one was in the centre of the village and had a sauna, which we did not use and the other had two dogs, a cat, a piano and free Wi-Fi, but was further away.

After settling in, we all met in the Sports Bar - which became the HQ for the weekend – before going for a meal in the Wendelstein hotel where a few of us had a 3 course meal for €11. The



waitress in this restaurant and other places where we ate were wearing traditional costumes.

On Saturday, light snow was falling and we walked in the valley, following small rivers, first in the countryside and then the forest. We came out of the forest onto Geitau's airport (a big field) and then to the village of Geitau (or Gateau according to Stuart) where we stopped for lunch at the Rote Wand hotel. We are still raving about the wonderful cakes we ate there. It is worth going back there just for the cakes! We walked back to Bayrischzell following a path alongside the railway line and under the cable car to Wendelstein; a few of us making a small detour to see the

waterfall. In the evening, we ate in Zur Post restaurant where, unfortunately, the vegetarian meal contained specks of bacon despite having assured that it was only vegetables.

It had snowed all night and it was still snowing heavily when we got up on the Sunday. But it was powder snow i.e. not wet and this meant that our clothes and boots remained dry. As Gillian said, it was like walking on icing sugar. Although the mountains were in the clouds, we decided nonetheless to take the cable car to the top of Wendelstein (1,704m). We walked along the river to the cable car station in Osterhofen. There was no view at the top and it was very windy, but we can now claim we have been there. We consoled ourselves by having lunch in the restaurant. We also walked in the tunnel to the arrival station for the cog railway which climbs from Brannenburg in another valley.

(Continued on page 4)

SNOW WALKING WEEKEND (continued)

Once back in the valley, half the group went back to Bayrischzell by bus and had tea and cakes (Danny wanted to use his free pass on the ski bus). By that time, the snow had stopped and the rest of the group wanted to do some more walking to enjoy the scenery. So, we went up along a narrow road that had been cleared and then arrived where the path should have been. But it had disappeared under knee-deep snow. However, there was still a faint trace of the path and, following Stuart who cut a trail through the snow, we went along a narrow footpath upwards through fields and forest. It was not easy walking because of the depth of the snow, but we were rewarded with views of the mountains and the valley and, along the way, met a small herd of Highland cattle. When you go up, you have to go down eventually



and we descended carefully through the woods along a narrow path on the flank of the mountain. Stuart and I went down without difficulty and waiting (im)patiently at the bottom and were told off for not being caring enough after phoning Gillian to ask what was taking the rest of the group so long. That evening we went back to the Wendelstein hotel for dinner.

On our last day, it was sunny and everybody came walking (apart from Danny who wanted to make full use of his free ski bus pass). Our walk was made easier by the fact that the machine that clears the paths had just preceded us. We did a lovely walk following the river

through the woods. When the going got tough, i.e. the path went up quite steeply, half the group went back to meet Danny in the Sports Bar. The rest of us persevered and continued uphill to an inn, Sillberg Alm (1,060m), where we had stunning views of the mountains. We had a well-deserved beer and saw two cats. We were back in time to have a snack before leaving the beautiful village of Bairyschzell. Next year: perhaps Berchtesgaden? The Black Forest? Who knows? But we will do another snow-walking trip.

Dominique



Autumn Trip to Northumbria

Friday 2nd to Monday 5th October

On one of the walks during last year's Yorkshire trip, I was 'ambushed' by a group of members promoting the virtues of Northumbria as a venue for a weekend away. As a big fan of the area, I was happy to support the proposal and the Committee subsequently endorsed it. We will be based in the historic coastal town of Berwick-upon-Tweed with its intact defensive walls and fine collection of bridges over the river. The town has good bus links so we will use that means of transport to travel to Holy Island on one of the days and Bamburgh on the other. On the former, our walk will take us past the atmospheric ruins of Lindisfarne Priory and Castle. At the latter, we will see the spectacular castle and walk along pristine beaches with views out to the Farne Islands.

Our accommodation in Berwick will be in B&Bs, but please note that the availability of single rooms is likely to be very limited. Please contact me, Danny (qprduffy20@hotmail.com or 07591-999016), to register an interest for the autumn trip.

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POLYRAMBLERS CHEESY YHA Weekend

Twenty one of us had another enjoyable YHA weekend in the village of Cheddar, just south of Bristol. Two Poly's stayed in a B&B and joined us after breakfast for the walking, talking, lunch and evening meals.

There was an afternoon orientation walk around the village on arrival. One end of Cheddar is quite different to the other, one being conventional English village, tuther being tasteful not tacky tourist shops at the Gorge end. Quite attractive actually.

In the evening we all ate in a nice village pub where we were served good food by the friendly landlady, who sat down and joined us as she cheerfully worked out each individual bill.

Danny did his usual stirling job of mapping out and leading 2 great walks.

On the Saturday we walked about ten miles, heading along a nice flat path out of Cheddar, to Axbridge (which I thought was just a name in the TV prog Emergency Ward 10!...but that's just showing my age....). What a pretty village Axbridge turned out to be! Recommended viewing!

After the obligatory toilet stop, we were ready to press on, up a steep and wooded hill. Christine B. wisely took the bus back to Cheddar at this point. After some huffing and puffing, we made it to the top, Crook Peak, and were rewarded with a 360 degree view over the Mendip region and everywhere beyond. We then went along the grassy hilltop, and eventually down



the other side, Cross, which

attractive name for such an attractive area! We had a pub lunch there, only 3 miles round the huge reservoir back to Cheddar. The sun beamed down on us almost all day, so everything looked at its best under the blue sky, with just the occasional nip in the air when the wind blew. Back at the hostel, where each in turn asked Christine "what did you do with your day?" – and she took great delight in telling us!! (sorry. One of those 'you had to be there' moments!) Then most of us collapsed in a heap, except for the poor A team, who had to cook our dinner! They whipped up a delicious chilli and trimmings meal, with a choice of 3 desserts, all good and necessary of a late evening walk-it-off.

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(Continued on page 7)

(YHA weekend continued)

We had a 10am start for our Sunday, five mile circular route walk up, along, down, across/ through and back to Cheddar. Starting at the pretty end of the village where the narrow Gorge begins, with its high sheer faced cliffs on both sides of the long and winding road. Little tourist shops and babbling brook beside the daffodils. One cheese shop that demonstrates cheese making and claims to be the only place in Cheddar that actually makes Cheddar Cheese! Another steep climb up through the trees, which is again where Christine wisely left us and did, who knows what?! (don't ask!).

At the top, we walked along the slightly rugged gorge-top path (or should that be gorgeous path? No. Too cheesy) that overlooks the windy road way below. We saw a goat grazing on the steep rocky hillside, with her 2 tiny black kids. We startled a wild horse that shot out of nowhere and galloped passed us nervously, and the day before we had seen a field full of black sheep and their lambs.

Eventually, there was a shorter climb down to road level, where the group split, and some walked back along the road, through the gorge, and some clambered up the other side and back across the other top, where the views of the gorge and beyond were more visible and impressive. There was also a look-out tower to climb up and, well, look out from!

And then it was very civilized steps back down to the pretty end of Cheddar again, where we caught up with the other half in a pub of course! And where we had lunch.

Once again we had enjoyed good weather. The sky turned blue en route, and there was no wind. Back to the hostel, where there was a common-room full of very quiet and weary ramblers and their luggage, all waiting for the bus to take them back via the scenic route to Weston-Super-Mare, train to Bristol, and on to London. They were re-united with JoyAnne who had dropped out of the Sunday activities – (hope you're feeling better now).

Danny's friend Andy went back to his Bristol home, and I drove back to my Dorset home, where I finally ate my breakfast sandwich, soaked my weary body in a radox bath, and had a very early night!!

Thank you one and all for another thoroughly enjoyable weekend of good walking, good food, and good company, and as Andy observed, being 'such a nice social group'.
I'll drink to that!

Pam Massey



Peter Gould 1936 - 2014



Peter was one of a few really staunch members of the Polytechnic rambling Club. He was married to Roberta whom he met in the Rambling Club and had two sons, Jonathon and Paul who can really be proud of the work Peter did for the club.

Peter joined the Polyramblers in 1965. He soon became a dedicated member and enjoyed all his days out rambling including leading walks, organising weekends away, long distance footpaths and a skiing trip to Austria. Later on he did sponsored walks for the British Heart Foundation, because of his own heart condition.

I can remember especially when the Club needed to increase its membership that his publicity in the Harrow area where he lived, was enormous and brought in a lot of new members including one special person who we all know today, Gillian Swan. Another innovation was to set up the Club's own website in 2000, together with his son Paul. In addition to this Peter became General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Club Chairman. He won rambler of the year six times and latterly became a vice president and remained as such until the end of his life.

A big thank you to Peter Gould for his fine contribution to the Polytechnic Rambling Club. Well done!

Christine Bignold