



The Poly Rambler

Members' Newsletter of the Polytechnic Rambling Club

www.polyramblers.org.uk

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Chairman's message

Hopefully, by the time you read this, the days will be getting a little longer with perhaps some early signs of Spring. It's been heavy going underfoot during the winter months, so well done the brave few of you that have been out and about, supporting those that devise and lead our walks.

On March 11th we hold our AGM, further details of which are below. We hope that as many of you as possible will attend. This is your chance to elect the committee and to hold us to account. For newer members, our AGM is also a pleasant enjoyable social event after the formal business is completed.

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

At our last meeting we noted that our committee makeup has been unchanged for a couple of years and so we would especially welcome anyone with new ideas for walks and activities. Papers, including nominations for committee members should be with you soon.

Although the trips away are becoming more and more popular, attendance on our Saturday and Sunday walks has declined slightly. The more regular walkers among you seem to be still coming out in your usual numbers, but it is the occasional walkers that have fallen by the wayside despite us offering more shorter walks. This is presumably due to the fact that we are all getting older and so recruitment of new members remains a concern to the committee. Word of mouth does seem to be the most effective way of getting members, but additionally, Kim has produced some flyers that will be available at the AGM and we hope you will take these and get them displayed on notice boards near you.

Sandra and I are organising a club trip to Exeter over the August Bank Holiday, further details of which are elsewhere in this newsletter.

My best wishes to you all for 2017 and I hope to see you on a walk soon. **Mike Coyle**



Hilary and Clive (see page 2)

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

President

Christine Bignold

Vice Presidents

Margaret Lanham
Rosemary MacLoughlin
Professor Geoffrey Petts

GENERAL COMMITTEE

CLUB OFFICERS

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Mike Coyle

General Secretary

Gillian Swan

Treasurer

Daniel Duffy

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

CONTACT FOR CORRESPONDENCE*

Kim Chowns

k.chowns@yahoo.co.uk

Club's Facebook page:

<http://tinyurl.com/qclyyfq>

* Articles for inclusion in the newsletter are welcome from all members. They should be walk related, but do not necessarily have to be about a club walk, e.g. walking holiday or what the club was like in the past. **Kim**

Highlights of our Trip to Tasmania with Hilary and Clive

Tasmania's distinctive landscape, climate and culture are largely due to its 185 mile distance from the mainland. The isolation has left a legacy of unique flora and fauna an abundance of water and relaxed lifestyle, helped by its emphasis on wine and fine food! We travelled to Tasmania from Melbourne to Hobart to take part in a motor bike rally for AJS and Matchless British motorbikes. We were lent one by a club member who turned out to be a millionaire. He earned his fortune through running Tasmania's Salmon Fisheries, so we had a lot of salmon steaks at the rally!

Our first stop was a short tour of the Tasman National Park, which included stunning coastal walks to the Tessellated Pavements, finishing up at Port Arthur established in 1830 as a prison settlement for repeat offenders. By the time it closed in 1877 some 12,000 men had passed through what was commonly regarded as the harshest institution of its kind in the British Empire, this also included a prison for children.

We then travelled in a convoy of motorbikes to Launceston the second largest city in Tasmania. Nestling in the Tamar river Valley Launceston is Australia's third oldest city. We enjoyed a walk along the Cataract Gorge reserve which has a Chairlift believed to have the longest central span in the world, needless to say we kept to ground level. On one of our motor bike rides we stopped at a café famous for its history of the Tasmanian Tiger which roamed the area before being hunted to extinction.

At the conclusion of our rally we travelled onto Freycinet National Park on the East Coast of Tasmania via Tasmania's smallest National Park the Douglas Aspley National Park full of river gorges waterfalls and a three-kilometre penguin breeding colony. Also, important to note a motorbike museum with a very rare bike, a Noriel Café Racer (Ariel Square 4 engine in Manx Norton frame - edited by Clive!). We enjoyed a walk along the foreshore with a distant view of the Penguins and a spectacular blow hole.

Our last stop was at Coles Bay situated at the entrance to Wine Glass Bay, thought to be one of the ten most beautiful beaches in the world. This was a subject of much debate between Clive and myself as it involved a very steep ascent and descent and many large mosquitos. We almost bumped into a Wallaby and finished up with a walk along a shingle beach with a dead seal and no bar! Sadly we did not see any Tasmanian Devils as they have been beset by a disease which has almost eradicated them. Efforts to boost the population have been made through the introduction of breeding centres.

A great holiday and one I hope to repeat in the future as we have many more National Parks to visit!

Hilary



August Bank Holiday weekend in Skipton

The Strollers' report

For the Strollers' first outing we caught the train to Settle to walk from there to Horton-in-Ribblesdale. On arrival in Settle there was the usual demand for a coffee stop from the subversive element but our leader enforced discipline and we made our way out of Settle into the beautiful, green Yorkshire Dales countryside. Before long we came to a steep hill, which surprised us because we were expecting a leisurely riverside walk. Nevertheless we made our way up the hill with true Strollers grit and determination. The descent into Stainforth proved to be even more of a challenge. It was on a steep, narrow, uneven and rocky path but we helped each other with true Strollers' comradeship, sometimes resorting to sliding down on our rear ends. We were rewarded with a brief stop at the Craven Heifer in Stainforth, Craven being the name of the surrounding district. After Stainforth we deviated from the original route to avoid further climbs and made our way to Helwith Bridge for lunch, with the help of Mike and his map. The last stage was along the bank of the River Ribble but with a lot of stiles it was not as easy as we thought and we only just made the train at Horton.

For our second walk we caught a coach, which Gillian had booked for us, to Malham. This time we were able to have coffee in the Old Barn Café while waiting for our leader. He came later as he was arranging a meal for some of us in Le Bistro. At the café I introduced some of the Strollers to Kendal Mint Cake. We then walked a short distance to Malham Cove, which is a limestone cliff 260 feet high and 980 feet wide. We climbed to the top and some of the group claimed that there were 424 steps. It turned out, however, that they had overheard an energetic little girl who had done the counting for them.



Our Monday outing was to Bolton Abbey where we walked along the banks of the River Wharfe to Barden Bridge, which is near Barden Tower, a ruined hunting tower. Again, those expecting a leisurely riverside walk found that the path was far from flat. However the path was well maintained and didn't cause much trouble. On the walk we passed the Strid, a gorge in the river with rapids which is considered by some to be the most dangerous stretch of water in the world. We had lunch at the Strid Wood café, where the pasties were of variable quality, although my Yorkshire curd tart was very tasty. On the way back David and I took a different path from the others and went at a fast pace, pretending to be Hikers. As we went through the extensive and crowded parking areas on the approach to Bolton Abbey we remarked on the large number of people and barbecues. We returned to Skipton on the service bus and later joined the Hikers for an excellent meal at Oakley's Restaurant. The people at my B&B told me that Oakley is the name of the chef who took over from the previous Italian owners of the restaurant.

On behalf of the Strollers I would like to thank Gillian and all others involved in organising yet another great Polyramblers' trip, not forgetting Danny, the Head Stroller.

Sandy

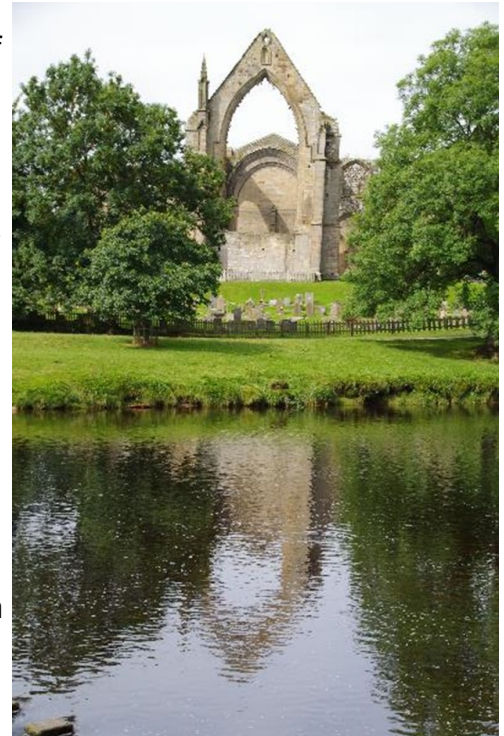
Hikers report is on the next two pages

August Bank Holiday weekend in Skipton (continued)

The Hiker's report

We started our weekend in the Yorkshire Dales with a stroll around the bustling market town of Skipton on Friday afternoon. We witnessed swans being weighed on the canal towpath before heading up the High Street for a circuit of the Castle woods, arriving back at the Castle entrance in plenty of time for our private evening tour. Our guide, Peter, had a wealth of knowledge about the long history of the castle and many entertaining anecdotes. Sadly I have already forgotten most of what I learned but can say that the castle dates back to Norman times, was involved in the Wars of the Roses and the Civil War and was restored by Lady Anne Clifford in the 17th century.

Saturday morning found 13 hikers on a short bus ride out of town to pick up an easy track across the moors which took us to the Bolton Abbey estate. We stopped to admire the ruined priory and church, eat ice cream and watch an unfortunate man stuck in the middle of the river on some slightly scary stepping stones. Needless to say we used the bridge instead. We headed up the river to a tearoom for lunch and from there across moorland back to the village of Embsay (starting point for the steam railway to Bolton Abbey). Stuart was a bit disappointed at having to change his preferred route due to grouse shooting on the moor (and would have happily ignored the signs had we not objected). We found another slightly longer path to the south without much difficulty and after many fields of sheep and cattle, countless step and ladder stiles over dry stone walls and quite a bit of bog hopping we eventually arrived in Embsay and a busy but friendly pub to get out of the drizzle. After refreshment it was only a couple of miles road walking back to Skipton.



The next day a slightly different set of 13 hikers headed north by train to the town of Settle from where we were to walk to Malham. Stuart and I remembered Settle from a previous Poly Ramblers trip organised by Peter Gould 17 years earlier. We paused at the cobblers where the proprietor in his leather apron had proved a great attraction to the female members on our previous visit. A long and steep climb out of Settle in the warm sunshine was rewarded by superb views across the valley and the rest of the walk seemed easy by comparison. After 6 miles we reached the limestone pavement above

Malham Cove which was heaving with bank holiday crowds, and from there we headed across to Gordale Scar, meeting the strollers on their way back. After heavy rain the night before the Scar was an impressive sight. From there it was a level mile and a half to the village of Malham with a very welcome pub and tearooms. A few of our number found the energy to walk out to view Malham Cove from below before picking up our coach home.

Continues on next page

August Bank Holiday weekend in Skipton (continued)

On Monday we were back on the train north, this time joined by Geoffrey for the ascent of Pen-y-Ghent, one of the three Yorkshire peaks at 460 metres. We still didn't manage to exceed thirteen in number though. Geoffrey provided some early drama by leaving his rucksack (containing food, water and warm clothing) on the train at Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Luckily customer services came to his rescue and sent it back to Skipton from where he picked it up later. The climb was relatively easy compared with some we have done, although there was some mild scrambling near the top to provide a bit of a challenge. We all made it to the summit without too much difficulty. On



Malham limestone pavement

the way down we had time to make a slight detour to visit Hull Pot, a 100 metre gash in the moor with steep sides dropping to a shingle floor.



The exceptionally easy descent put us back in the village in plenty of time for the early train. In the event most of the group found their way back to a house offering a garage sale and tea and cakes which we had seen on the way out. This turned out to be a cat rescue home so there were gorgeous kittens to cuddle and cats to play with. This left half the group in rapture (led by Harriet of course) and the rest slightly

bemused. Once we had torn ourselves away from tea, cakes and cats we embarked on a crawl around the two pubs in the village before catching the train.

That evening the whole group gathered at Oakley's restaurant and pizzeria for a very enjoyable meal with extremely large portions. Only five people out of 31 could manage dessert which tells you a lot. On the final morning we did a 5 mile walk from the village of Cononley, just south of Skipton back into town via the village of Carleton in Craven with an impressive mill, which turned out to be quite hilly with lots more step and ladder stiles and many many sheep. A good way to end the weekend.



Gillian

PEAK DISTRICT WALKING WEEKEND – NEAR MATLOCK

After many years of enjoying walking breaks with the club. I decided that my turn had come to organise a walk weekend. There was just one obstacle to my good intention a complete inability to lead a walk as I have no sense of direction!

Luckily my sister came to the rescue and agreed to lead the longer walks including a walk with her walk club the Nomads. Many thanks to my sister Janet and the Nomads for all their hard work in leading the walks for so successfully.

We all stayed in Lodges in Darwin Forest Park which proved very popular venues for two parties to celebrate both Rochelle and Geoffrey's birthdays.

Following our arrival and settling into our lodges we went in a taxi convoy for a stroll and dinner at La Caverna an Italian restaurant in Matlock Bath. The owner Salvatore proved to be an excitable person who appeared well known in the local area.



On Saturday the longer walk group met up with my sister Janet in Bakewell for an eleven mile walk to Chatsworth. We were lucky to have a warm sunny day which added to the wonderful vista. We had lunch by the river on within sight of Chatsworth House and a tea stop at Endors a village near to Chatsworth House where the previous Duchess of Devonshire had resided.

We returned back to Bakewell in time to enjoy a browse around the numerous walk shops and to buy Bakewell tarts which went down very well with Champagne at the evening birthday celebrations for Rochelle's sixtieth Birthday.

On Sunday the longer walk group joined the Nomad walkers for a ten mile walk in the local vicinity of Matlock. There were twenty four walkers in total and thanks to the leadership skills of the Nomad's walk leader no-one was left behind!

The walk proved challenging and as we struggled through thick mud up a slope Lucy managed to sink both feet into the mud and needed to be lifted out boots still thankfully attached to her feet! We enjoyed a stop at a local pub and a picnic at the foot of the oldest industrial chimney in the country. The evening was spent celebrating Geoffrey's birthday with more wine and Bakewell tarts!



On Monday we concluded our stay in Matlock with a walk to Lumsdale at Tansley where there were the remains of mill workings from Richard Arkwright to remind us of Derbyshire's history. We wondered around the mill pond and a waterfall in the midst of the mill workings followed by sandwiches at the local pub and taxis to the station .

A special thank you to my partner Clive for leading the short walkers and playing a significant part in organising the event. Many thanks to Danny for his usual efficiency in organising the trip to Crich tramway museum and sorting out our train travel etc.

Hilary

AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND WALKING HOLIDAY: FRIDAY 26th – TUESDAY 30th AUGUST

This year the Club is going to Exeter, staying in Exeter University accommodation. We had hoped to book flats for six persons, which suits those of us who like to self cater, but unfortunately these are not available over the Bank Holiday.

We will, therefore, be staying in Holland Hall, a modern block with a large lounge offering views over the estuary. All rooms are ensuite double bedrooms which are also offered for single occupancy. For more information about Holland Hall see:

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/eventexeter/venues/holland-hall/>

For more information about the rooms see the link below. It would appear that all ensuite rooms have tea making facilities and a small fridge. <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/eventexeter/accommodation/bedandbreakfast/>. Breakfast will be provided in the common dining room.

As usual there will be walks for strollers and hikers, though at present we don't have a firm programme. The city itself has much to see, and there are good walks to be had along the estuary towards Exmouth. We will probably have one day's walking on Dartmoor. Totnes is easily accessible and looks like a good center for both strollers and hikers. Any suggestions from participants will be considered.

For budgeting, accommodation costs are as follows:

Ensuite room, B&B single occupancy £38 + VAT per night i.e. £182.40 total for four nights.
Ensuite room, B&B double occupancy £52.50 + VAT per night i.e. £252.00 total for four nights.

We will travel to Exeter by train. At time of writing, an off peak return London to Exeter is £84.80, reducing to £55.95 with a senior railcard. You should allow for buying a picnic each day plus £10 - £20 for local transport. We intend to arrange two group meals in restaurants or pubs, leaving you to your own devices for the other two nights.

To secure your place, a £50 non-refundable deposit is required. Payment can be by bank transfer (Club's account number 29935940, sort code 05-02-00) or a Club cheque to Danny Duffy, Flat 2, Gooch House, 63-75 Glenthorne Road, London W6 0JY.

Organisers Mike Coyle michael.coyle@btinternet.com & Sandra Neilson sandraneilson@btinternet.com;
telephone 020 8542 4951

Exeter Cathedral

Photograph by
Torsten Schneider from
Wikimedia Commons



A polite repeat request!

First of all, thank you to all those members who have been loyally leading walks for our programmes. The club is nothing without you! This involves finding a walk, doing a walkover for transport, timing, suitability and checking out the pub (most important!) including checking with the landlord/lady that they can cope with a group of walkers on the allotted day.

We always welcome new leaders and ideas for walks. Some say they want shorter walks, but we need leaders for such walks! Some say they (and potential new members) want longer / more challenging walks – we need more leaders for such walks too! You can be such a leader or inspirer! We can support you in your finding, walking over, checking (timing and pub) or any other details you need help with.

Please contact me (see my details on the walks programme) with your ideas and offers to lead walks and/or any other queries. Or just have a chat with me when you come to a walk.

Pam and now the editor



A promotional banner for hfholidays.co.uk. The background is a scenic landscape with a path through yellow flowers and two hikers. The text includes "Discover a whole new world of walking", "Experts in FREEDOM since 1913", "Call NOW for the latest holiday offers", and contact information: "Speak to the experts 0345 470 7558 or visit www.hfholidays.co.uk". The hfholidays logo is in the bottom right corner.