



# The Poly Rambler

Members' Newsletter of the Polytechnic Rambling Club

[www.polyramblers.org.uk](http://www.polyramblers.org.uk)

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Portland Bill lighthouse

Material for this edition collated by the committee.  
Production by Kim Chowns  
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## Chairman's message

The better weather is with us now and the last few walks have been well attended. Thanks to those of you who come out regularly during the winter months and support our organisers.

Our AGM passed off without any major issues being raised. However, as has been the case for some time now, your committee are concerned about the shortage of new members joining. Kim has very kindly produced some flyers which I hope you will all try and display on a notice boards in libraries and the like.

Some of you suggested that we try and raise our profile via various social media. The committee are considering this, but would really appreciate any of you who use these platforms regularly to take on the responsibility for setting up and administering such an item. I know that many of you enjoy reading Dominique's Facebook page, and we have moved the link to the top of our web page. It would be great if some of you could find time to post chatty comments.

We are also trialling a link to Booking.com. As you probably know, Booking.com charges a sizeable commission, which is distributed among various intermediaries. If you access Booking.com via our web site, then a small amount goes to Clive, our Andalusian based web designer and administrator. This helps him run various web based, non-commercial wildlife forums. If enough of us (around 30) use this each year, then he will be able to provide hosting and support for the Club gratis.

Hope to see you on a walk soon.

**Mike Coyle**

## Snow-walking in Oberammergau (Bavaria) 13 to 16 January 2017

### 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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Pam Beach

Kim Chowns

Dominique Le Marchand

Solvig Starborg

Stuart Swan

Geoffrey Waters

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#### Club's Facebook page:

<http://tinyurl.com/qclyyf>

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\* 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**

Travelling on Friday 13 was asking for trouble, but our journey by plane and train, via Munich to Oberammergau, went very smoothly. And we had time for lunch in Munich main station. We were again very lucky with the weather. There was no



snow at all a couple of weeks before we travelled, but when we arrived the scenery was a winter wonderland. After settling into our hotels, we did an exploratory walk as night was falling and drank our first gluhwein/beer. Oberammergau has a long tradition of wood carving and there are many shops selling wooden toys and religious objects. Also traditional in Bavaria, are a lot of houses decorated with hand painted murals called *Lüftlmalerei*.

Oberammergau is famous worldwide for its Passion Play. It was first performed in 1634 and was the result of a vow made by the inhabitants of the village that if God spared them from the effects of the bubonic plague then sweeping across Europe, they would re-enact the passion of Christ every 10 years for all eternity. The next play is in 2020. It involves over 2000 actors, singers and technicians all residents of the village. Most of the people we talked to during our weekend had been involved in the play one way or another. The receptionist of our hotel started when she was 5.

Dinner was in our hotel and then we had an early night. In the morning we had a nice breakfast and were overwhelmed at discovering that the hotel had not one, but two cats!

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## Snow-walking in Oberammergau (continued)

After getting overexcited at finding the cats, we calmed down and set off to walk the Altherrenweg, a trail with panoramic views which follows the river Ammer valley. We saw a black squirrel and a hare, but no cats!



We had lunch at Gasthaus Stern in Unterammergau where I tried *Kaiserschmarren* (Emperor's Mess), which is a shredded pancake served with apple sauce. It is named after the Austrian emperor Kaiser Franz Joseph I who was very fond of it. We also became very fond of it! We then returned to Oberammergau, following the river Ammer while the snow fell. The Amblers went back to Oberammergau by bus. Once back from our 8-mile walk, options included visiting the interesting museum, shopping or swimming. Dinner was at Gasthof zur Rose.

On Sunday, we could see some blue sky when we set off. We walked along the river Ammer for a short while and then followed a country road through the Weidmoss nature reserve. We continued on a path with a forest on one side and fields covered in snow on the other side. The Amblers took the bus to Graswang and walked to Linderhof. We reached Graswang where we had a light lunch consisting of dessert (*kaiserschmarren* or apple strudel with vanilla sauce) and *jäger tee* or *gluhwein*. A wide path which started flat and then gradually climbed through the forest took us to Linderhof castle in a heavy snow shower.

## Snow-walking in Oberammergau (continued)



Linderhof castle is the smallest of the three palaces built by King Ludwig II of Bavaria and the only one which he lived to see completed. We visited the other two castles the previous year when we stayed in Fussen. We had a guided tour of the castle in English. The rooms, inspired by the castle in Versailles, were richly decorated with sculptures covered in gold leaves. The dining room is famous for its disappearing table (it can be lowered in the kitchen below by a mechanism) which was installed so that Ludwig could dine alone. Although the heating system was very advanced for its time when King Ludwig lived there, we felt colder in the castle than outside. After our visit, we went to the nearest and only cafe for cups of hot chocolate. We went back to Oberammergau by bus and met later for our last dinner, followed by schnapps in the local bar (for some).

More snow had fallen during the night and continued to fall after breakfast, so the walkers decided that, instead of taking the cable car to the summit of Laber where there would be no view, we would walk to Ettal. The Amblers decided to go on the cable car for the experience and had a drink in the café at the top of Laber at a height of 1684m. For the ramblers, it was a lovely walk along the river Ammer with pristinely white fields and trees covered in snow. Once in Ettal, we went into the abbey shop and the baroque church and then had a hot drink while we waited for the bus to take us back to Oberammergau. Then it was time to leave Bavaria to return to London. Next snow-walking trip in January 2018, venue to be confirmed. And, if you want to see Bavaria in the spring, I am organising a weekend in Berchtesgaden at the end of May 2018 (see <https://www.berchtesgadener-land.com/en/home> ).



**Dominique Le Marchand**

## YHA Weekend – Portland, 24 - 26 March 2017

On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March, 20 members headed down from Waterloo Station to Weymouth and caught the local bus no. 1 to Portland YHA with Sandy and Valeria going off to their B&B.

The programme was organised and managed by Danny who did an excellent job and the participants who all took their part by a rota system in (A) Laying tables and making tea/coffee; (B) Cooking the meal and serving, or (C) Washing up, putting away and wiping the tables. Each group took turns at A, B or C. It seemed to me, that no-one in the groups had met up before, thereby everyone getting to know each other.



There were only three gents in the hostel, namely Danny, Kim and Rajesh, the latter was said to be my 'baggage handler', for which I was very grateful! The rest of the folk in the hostel were Maggie Carman, Jennifer MacKenzie, Jackie McCoutan, Dominique Le Marchand, Sunita Shah, Gini Dearden, Hilary Abbey, Rochelle Bloch, Melida De Paiva, Lorna Gray, Hazel Sach, Mary King, Penny Taylor and Siew Kee.

That done, we come to the walks. On Friday evening we did a short orientation walk around Castleton and Fortunes well, then had our evening meal at the Cove House

Inn in Chiswell. On the following day, Saturday, we all took to the road and pathways' to walk around the 'Island'.

A few of us took the bus up to Portland Heights Hotel and met the most who walked up the steep incline to meet us. Portland itself is a funny shape as it is approached by a causeway from Weymouth via Chesil beach, which is a high mound of pebbles and so no-where have I seen the exact mileage. The YHA Hostel used to be owned by the Royal Navy and is consequently at the lower part of Portland, near all the Admiralty buildings.

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## YHA Weekend (continued)

Walking on from where we met up, twists and turns led to all sorts of sheds, buildings and outbuildings on rocky, pebbly ground. Three of us kept straight on and through shoe deep water under a bridge which was not really to any advantage, as we could have approached Church Ope Cove by a different route, not clearly marked up. Anyway, I left Sandy and Maggie to continue to Portland Bill Lighthouse and Visitor Centre where they would all have lunch at the Lobster Pot Café, a good one as I understood.



Anyway in passing Danny coming up from the Cove, I headed down there through a pretty little cove towards the ruins of Rufus castle, and sat on one of the seats heading out to sea eating, not my curds and whey, but my banana and apple. The weather was that beautiful that I thought one of the holiday 'Lets' in the cove could be opened up by now. We were most fortunate for weather throughout the week-end, but who could say how long it would last!

On the west side of Portland the party walked to the sculpture park at Jout Quarry looking sideways to Chesil Beach. Walking back to the Hostel, I made my way back through Wakeham and Easton, then to Portland Heights Hotel where I didn't catch the bus! In Wakeham the Alessandria Hotel was still there where we stayed on the long weekend trip about ten years ago or so. Easton, I would say, is the main place with a pretty square of gardens and 'the Sugar Loaf Café' where I had a cream tea. I then moved on covering Easton Road, New Road and Castle Road thus back to the Hostel, all across the 'island' in fact!

On the last day, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March, we headed the opposite way down to Chesil Beach where the group walked along the shingle ridge. I walked on the path by the road to meet the group at the Visitor Centre at the end. We walked back on the other side along stretches of grass, watching all the sailing boats and wind surfers. To reach the admiralty buildings and the 'Boat that Rocks' pub for lunch, before catching the bus to Weymouth and then train to Waterloo. It was a really lovely weekend, full of interest, views and fresh sea air which we did enjoy.



Thank you Danny!

**Christine Bignold**

## Margaret Lanham 1923 - 2017

Margaret grew up in the outskirts of east London. She had two brothers, one of whom died young. She started working for Selfridges as a young apprentice learning various skills and later also worked for John Lewis. During the war she joined the army and learnt to drive lorries, transporting equipment between different camps.

As she came out of the army, she found most of her pre-war friends scattered, but in 1952 she joined the Poly Ramblers which brought new friends. She said: "What happy days they were, out every Sunday, rambling for miles." She had fond memories from the old days, like the yearly invitation from the Studd family, when the whole Rambling Club went on a coach trip to their home in Kent for Sunday afternoon tea.



In 1955 when the two clubs amalgamated Margaret was made Rambling Secretary and later she became Treasurer and finally General Secretary. She retired from official duties in 1970 when she married and moved to Milford-on-Sea. However, she remained a member and attended AGMs and other functions whenever possible.

I first got to know Margaret when we were writing the club's history book and she contacted me following an appeal in the newsletter for photos and stories from the 'old' days. It led to many happy occasions. She enjoyed coming to London and marveled at some of the changes that were taking place. She was particularly fascinated by Canary Warf, because she remembered as a child going there on the back of her dad's motorbike to see the big ships that brought supplies in to London. Once when she came up for an 'event' Gerald and I took her to Canary Warf on a Thames Clipper. She was delighted and soon found her way around the sky scrapers and down to some of the docks that are still there.

In 2013 Gerald and I visited her in Bournemouth during the week of her 90th birthday. She treated us to a lovely lunch and then took us on a bus to the center of the town. As we got off the bus she started to cross a busy road, so I said: "Eh, Margaret, the pedestrian crossing is over there.....". "I know", she said, "They are always in the wrong place!" We continued to cross the road, all the cars stopped and nobody hooted. Gerald later praised her leadership!

Margaret continued to be an active person, always prepared to help out and assist wherever possible. After moving to Milford she became a member of The Women's Guild and also did voluntary work at Milford Hospital.

Margaret represented the true spirit of the Poly Ramblers and we will miss her comments and input at future AGMs.

**Solvig Starborg**

## Friday 6 to Monday 9 October 2017: Autumn trip to Barmouth (North Wales)

Barmouth is located on the west coast of Snowdonia, with a long sandy beach and a picturesque harbour bordered by the dramatically beautiful Mawddach estuary and mountains in the background. More information: <http://www.barmouth-wales.co.uk/>

There will be easy and more challenging walks. It is envisaged that a walk will be organised to climb Cader Idris.

Accommodation has been pre-booked in a B&B on the seafront. Price is around £40 per person for a double/twin room ensuite, £50 for a single ensuite or £35 for a single with shared facilities. Or feel free to book your own accommodation. There are several pubs and restaurants, shops and a supermarket in Barmouth.

Barmouth is 5 hours from London by train changing in Birmingham New Street. Fare around £70.

Organiser: Dominique (07908 623 207 or [tonybyrnes@compuserve.com](mailto:tonybyrnes@compuserve.com)). Please contact Dominique to let her know if you want to come on the trip and whether you need a single or twin/double room. You need to book early, because there is a sponsored walk on 7 October in Barmouth in aid of Barnardo's, so B&Bs are likely to be busy.

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



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