



The Poly Rambler

Members' Newsletter of the Polytechnic Rambling Club

www.polyramblers.org.uk

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Chairman's message

It's been a somewhat disappointing summer weather wise, but that hasn't stopped many of us from getting out most weekends. Walks continue to be well supported.

Your committee is ever open to suggestions of ways to save money and it has been proposed that we join The Walking Partnership. This is supported by RWH Travel Limited and provides direct financial contributions to local walking groups to help with organising group walks, encouraging people to get out walking, helping to clear and improve footpaths, providing equipment to help walkers etc. Over the past 65 years, the company has given many millions of pounds to assist walking charities and conservation projects. Now we can benefit directly.

RWH Travel Limited is the current name for Ramblers Holidays, and continues to operate as a not for profit company. Many of us have been on their trips in the past. Under the Walking Partnership scheme the club would receive between £10 and £30 per person for each member making a booking, depending on the type of holiday. This could be a useful contribution to our finances.

We discussed this at the last committee meeting and it was agreed that we would sign up. For more details, see The Walking Partnership website at www.thewalkingpartnership.org.uk

Still hoping for an Indian summer!

Mike Coyle

(Photo - One suggestion for recycling walking boots! Dominique)



Material for this edition collated by the committee.
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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

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Vice Presidents

Rosemary MacLoughlin
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Gillian Swan

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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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Club's Facebook page:

<http://tinyurl.com/qclyyf>

* 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**

SNOW-WALKING WEEKEND - FRIDAY 12 TO MONDAY 15 JANUARY 2018

This time, the snow-walking weekend will be in Fischen im Allgau in Bavaria (Germany), see <http://www.fischen.de/fischen>. Fischen (altitude 761 metres) is situated in the valley of the river Iller on the edge of the Allgau natural park surrounded by mountains.

If you are interested in taking part in this weekend, please book your flights with Lufthansa, see <http://www.lufthansa.com/uk/en/Homepage>.

Book flight LH2471 from Heathrow T2 to Munich T2, leaving on 12 January at 8.45, arriving in Munich at 11.30 and returning on LH2482 Monday 15 January from Munich T2 to Heathrow T2 at 19.15, arriving at 20.20.

The cost is:

£98 with only hand luggage (one carry-on bag up to 8kg/18lbs, toiletries in a clear plastic bag, no liquids, etc.). Check luggage policy. Payment by credit card is £1.60 or free with a debit card.

Or £132 with one suitcase in the hold. Payment by credit card is £2.20, but free with a debit card.

Transfer from Munich to Fischen by train. Accommodation will be in a B&B. **Please let me know when you have booked your flight.**

Dominique (07908 623 207 or tonybyrnes@compuserve.com)

Recent winners of the Rambler of the Year Trophy (see Geoffrey's article on the next page)



The History of the Rambler of the Year Trophy - part one

During the year, there is increasing speculation about who is going to win the Rambler of the Year Trophy for completing the most walks in the year. The winner for the preceding year is announced at the AGM in March. The Trophy is presented to the victor in front of the members who keeps the Trophy for a year and hands it back to the committee in time for the next AGM.

The main reason for writing this article is that when I won the trophy for 2013, presented to me at the AGM in March 2014, I found it very hard to believe that I had won it for the thirteenth time!! However, the evidence is there on the Trophy's plinth. Each winner has their name engraved on the cup with the relevant year. Being on the superstitious side, I decided during 2015 this statistic should not remain and I must attempt to win the competition again. Result! Absolute success, with my bumper attendance at over 60 rambles and now 14 wins!

I had a reputation for winning the trophy continuously from 1979 till 1989, until I moved to Crosby in the summer of 1990. In those days it was a smaller trophy, with one circular tier of winners names. In 2000 a second tier of winners was added taking us into this century and gave the Trophy a more prestigious look.

But how did this competition and trophy come about in the first place? I don't know the answer, but believe a clue is shown by an engraving on the outside of the cup which reads, "*IN MEMORY OF DOREEN & HAROLD SMALL*".

That, together with the fact that the first year of the competition was 1969, and knowing from my days as club secretary/managing membership records during the early 1980s, that Harold died in 1968. It would seem possible that the idea of having a competition with a trophy is likely to come from either or both of them. I wonder if there may be evidence in the club archives/minutes at that time to prove this. Hence the inscription was added after Doreen passed away.

I didn't know Harold, but when I joined the club in 1978 his wife, Doreen, was our Treasurer. In those days we used to have Club social evenings at Riding House Street and she would sometimes refer to Harold. We would hear stories on Friday evenings about threats to close the Ongar Line and through her work on local committees it was kept open until 1994.

I believe they had been members since at least the 1940s. Doreen would often organise the Annual club Dinner/Dances. I recall she referred to a good one back in the 1950s, which went on into the wee small hours and she and Harold caught the last train back from the then Holborn Viaduct station well after 1am, to their home in Catford.

During the time I knew Doreen she lived in a cottage in Chipping Ongar, and commuted up to Regent Street or our Friday evenings at Riding House Street, in her grey Morris Minor. She remained our Treasurer until AGM 1986 and organised our Centenary Dinner that January. She was well known locally in Ongar and at the Poly where she was involved in the Christian Fellowship and flower arranging activities. She would become very active prior to Christmas using her car to deliver the "Poly Parcels", a big round trip, for the benefit of keeping in touch with Poly Institute members who had moved from London to elsewhere in the UK.

Occasionally if there was a ramble in Ongar she would invite us for tea. I remember the last invitation was late July 1990, just a week before I moved from Charlton to Merseyside. Sadly, Peter Gould informed me at the Settle weekend he organised in August BH 1999, that she had recently passed away.

The next newsletter will look at previous winners. There will also be some photographs of early winners of the Trophy! See if you can recognise them!

Geoffrey Waters

SPRING 2017 BANK HOLIDAY IN COGNE AND THE AOSTA VALLEY

Thursday 25th May. Mike writes. We arrived in the early evening at Cogne, a small mountain town and checked in at Residence Chateau Royal. This fine building dates from the 11th century and was built as a fortified tower.

Friday, 26 May. Pam writes. We were met by our guide, Stefano, for the next three days. He explained that the area immediately around Cogne is prone to avalanches and for this reason there is no Alpine skiing.



We strolled up alongside the river, observing the remains of the iron mines on the opposite hillside, to the impressive Lillaz waterfalls. We could not complete the planned circular route as the snow was still too deep at the top and lower down was treacherously icy despite the sunshine. The melting snow creates rivulets that become gushing streams, which we had to navigate on our way up through the woods. It took us longer than Stefano had estimated, because he paused a lot to tell us about the many flowers we saw along the way, e.g. Orchids, Ranunculus, Gentian, Anemones of various colours, Larch, Spruce and Scots Pine, and a marmot was spotted on the way back down. On the return, just outside Lillaz, we had a cool refreshing drink at a bar before making our way down beside a rushing river. We arrived back at the Château with just enough time to jump into different clothes and walk up to Al Tarabas restaurant for dinner.



SPRING 2017 BANK HOLIDAY ... (continued)

Saturday 27th May. Pam writes. We were taken on a long coach ride to Saint Jacques and were able to admire the mountain views and different villages along the way. After a steep climb we rewarded ourselves with a very tasty lunch at the Rifugio Ferraro, built at an altitude of 2,066 metres, which gave us the energy to continue on upwards to the Blue Lake (see opposite).

Mike adds. For me, the lunch at the Rifugio Ferraro was one of the highlights of the trip. These establishments are not accessible by road and provide basic accommodation as well as food for people doing long distance routes on foot and skis. The owner of this particular one had spent time in the Himalayas and there were prayer flags outside and evidence of links to a Nepalese children's charity. We sat outside, enjoying the sun with a magnificent backdrop of snow clad peaks.

Sunday 28th May. Pam writes. We caught the local shuttle bus for a short trip up to Valnontey, to the start of the path which led eventually up to the Rifugio Vittorio Sella (2588 metres in altitude) where we had lunch. On the way up we saw chamois and ibex which were not bothered by our presence. We also saw silky black squirrels scampering about in the woods and more flowers. Nearer the Rifugio there was still quite a lot of snow on the path and on the plateau. In fact I slipped over on my back on the way back down but at least the snow was soft! Back at Valnontey, Stefano's wife and in-laws were waiting for us. We had a beer with them before a brisk walk back to the Château via the delightful Sant'Orso village meadow, that was a sea of buttercups and dandelions in time for our farewell dinner at Al Tarabas. All the people we met, the ladies at the restaurant, the mini-market where Stefano's wife worked and the young ladies who oversaw the delicious breakfast and egg-boiling machine each day at the Château were so friendly and helpful.

Monday 29th May. We all caught the coach down to Aosta to meet an excellent guide, Claudia, for a very interesting tour of the Roman ruins. It was then time for those of us returning home to take the coach to the airport. Thank you to Susan for organising such an enjoyable trip and to Stefano for his excellent guiding.

Gillian writes. At the end of our guided tour of Aosta, Susan escorted the dozen or so people who were flying back to London to their coach and left the rest of us to find some lunch with strict instructions to be at the station in time to catch our train to Verres an hour later. Inevitably the train pulled out of the station with three Poly Ramblers left standing on the platform. From Verres we had a slog up a steep cobbled path in the heat to reach the 14th



century fortified castle which overlooks the town. We finally made it in varying states of exhaustion and were met by Dolores, our guide, who we should have met in Aosta, but for some confusion over dates. The castle was very austere with no interior decoration, but Dolores did a good job of explaining its history. The three who had missed the train finally arrived half way through the tour. Later back in the town we enjoyed beers and nibbles before heading back to Cogne for our final evening meal at Bar Fromage.

SPRING 2017 BANK HOLIDAY ... (continued)

Next morning found us loading our luggage onto the coach for the two hour journey to Turin for our city extension. Before long we arrived at our hotel on the northern outskirts of the city to find that the air conditioning had broken down. Thankfully it was fixed by the end of the day. There were eighteen in our group and squeezing onto an already packed bus into the city centre was an interesting experience, as was making sure that we all got off at the right stop.

We found our way to the Palazzo Madama where we were meeting Valeria later. Stuart was keen to visit the old Fiat factory to the south of the city which is now a shopping centre. After a long walk along the river we found it and fortuitously bumped into Almas who somehow had managed to secure a key to the car test track on the roof where scenes from the film the Italian Job were filmed fifty years ago. This made Stuart's day! Meanwhile the rest of the group enjoyed the historic city squares and riverside park. The next morning most of us headed off together to visit the Cathedral where a replica of the Turin Shroud was on display. We then made for the Porta Palazzo open air market where we browsed the fruit and veg stalls, admiring the sheer variety on offer and the low prices. From there people started to peel off, some to take the lift up the Mole Antonelliana for great views across the city and others to visit the Cinema museum in the same building, once a synagogue. Others discovered the museum of Egyptology or enjoyed a leisurely lunch.

Susan and some of the female contingent went clothes shopping on the Via Roma. Most of us met up at a restaurant on the Piazza Vittorio Veneto that evening for a final al fresco meal, enjoying the all too rare opportunity to eat outside in the evening in comfort.



Thanks from all of us Susan for organising such a great trip. For anyone still reading, William Turner visited the Aosta valley in 1836. You can see his watercolour of the Roman bridge at Pondel here: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-the-roman-bridge-at-pondel-looking-down-the-cogne-valley-to-the-val-daosta-d25444>.

Club Christmas Lunch, Sunday 10 December 2017

Back to the Freemasons Arms! It was built during the reign of Queen Victoria and has a great place in history. It was here that the Football Association met in 1863 to thrash out the laws of a game now played in more than 200 countries across the globe. This connection is celebrated with a fine array of soccer memorabilia in the downstairs bar.

A form is set out on the next page giving details of how to book places for the lunch and tell Danny which dishes you would like to order.

A short walk alongside the Thames to the venue, starting at Tower Hill Station at 11 am, will precede the Lunch for those who wish to work up an appetite!

Danny Duffy



The Polytechnic Rambling Club

Christmas Lunch - Sunday 10th December 2017 - 1pm

Freemasons Arms Public House, 81-82 Long Acre, London WC2E 9NG

Nearest tube: Covent Garden - Piccadilly Line

Members £18 for three courses or £14 for two courses (excludes gratuity).

This price includes a subsidy from the Donations Fund, as agreed by the Committee.

Guests of members are welcome. £23 for three courses or £19 for two.

STARTERS

Smoked Salmon & Cornish Crab Cake

Carrot, coriander, rocket & cranberry salad & curried cape Malay aioli

Roasted Plum Tomato & Red Pepper Soup

Fresh basil, crème fraiche & rustic breads

Baked Goats Cheese & Balsamic Onion Confit Tart

Wheatberry, apricot, apple & cranberry salad with red wine dressing

Chicken & Clementine Pate

Cumberland sauce, dressed lambs leaf lettuce & toasted sourdough bread

MAINS

Roast Turkey Breast

Pigs in blankets, onion stuffing, rich gravy, maple parsnips, roast potatoes & winter vegetables

Pot-Roast British Pork Loin

Lemon stuffing, roasted fennel & mushroom cream sauce, crackling, roast potatoes & winter vegetables

Pan Fried Fillet of Salmon

Fine green beans, mixed glazed pods with a black rice & quinoa salad and a caper & dill butter sauce

Gnocchi with Sautéed Wild Mushrooms

Feta cheese, glazed Brussels sprouts, green beans & popper peppers and a basil & pine-nut pesto

DESSERTS

Traditional Boozy Xmas Pudding

Red currants & brandy butter ice cream

Best Ever American Deli Style Baked Vanilla Cheesecake

With mulled fruit compote & apple sorbet

Zingy Double Cream Citrus Sponge Fool

With lime & topped with crystalised orange

Scrumptious Warm Triple Chocolate Brownie

Topped with coconut gelato & salted caramel sauce

Booking form

Detach & send with your cheque to Dan Duffy, Flat 2, Gooch House, 63-75 Glenthorne Road, London W6 0JY no later than 26 November. Alternatively pay by BACS to The Polytechnic Rambling Club (account: 29935940, sort code 05- 02- 00) and email gprduffy20@hotmail.com to confirm your payment & to give your menu choices.

Please reserve _____ place(s) for the Christmas lunch - £18 (£16 for two courses) or £23 (£19) for non-members

Names: _____

I enclose a cheque for £ _____ made out to the Polytechnic Rambling Club

Your Menu selection: Starter: _____

Main: _____

Dessert: _____

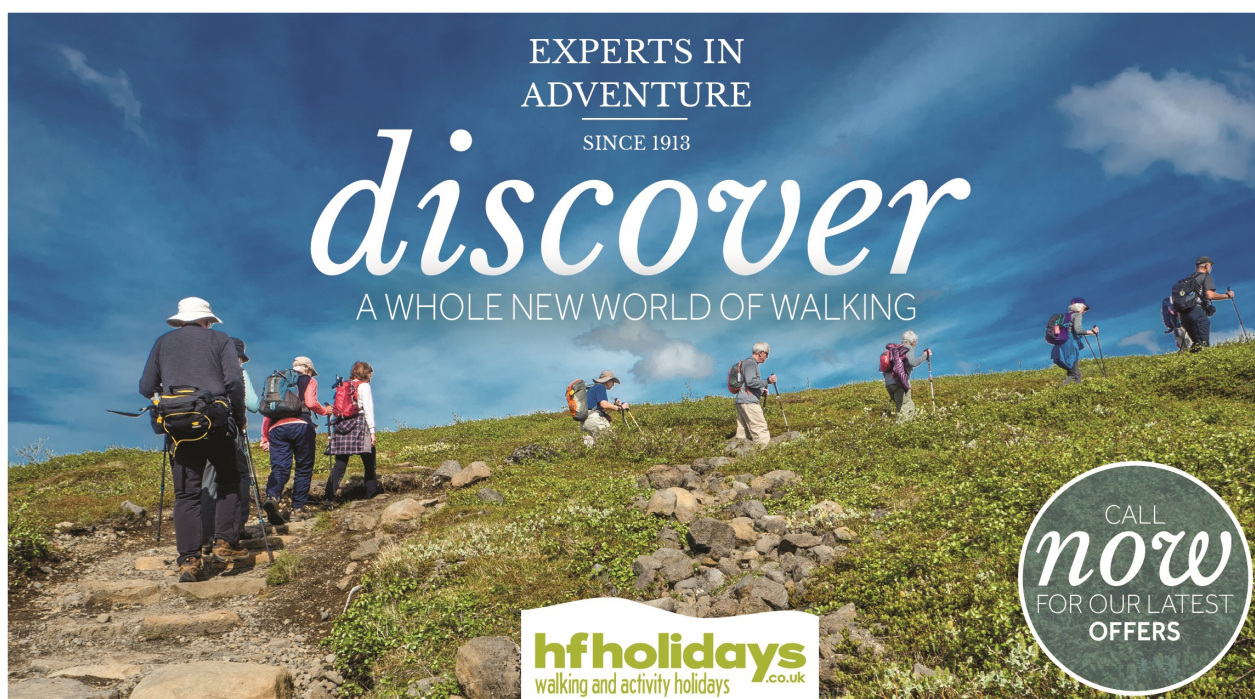
SPRING BANK HOLIDAY: WALKING IN BERCHTESGADEN, BAVARIA, GERMANY
FRIDAY 25th to TUESDAY 29th MAY 2018

You have seen Bavaria in Winter, now enjoy it in the Spring. The destination for the weekend will be Berchtesgaden in Bavaria that is well known for its second world war connection, but offers so much more. Berchtesgaden is a market town founded in the 15th century that is famous for its white gold (salt). It is situated at the foot of Mount Watzmanns and the Bavarian kings spent their holidays there. It is within the Berchtesgaden National Park and is renowned for the quality of its air, which contains very little pollen, allergens and pollutants. Since 2010, the entire county of Berchtesgadener Land became a UNESCO biosphere region, see <https://www.berchtesgadener-land.com/home>.

Accommodation will be in B&Bs and/or self-contained flats. The closest airports are Salzburg or Munich which is a little further. Information on the flights will be sent at the end of the year. The walking will offer options for hikers and strollers. There are bus services and plenty to see for those who do not wish to walk.

If you are interested in this trip please can you:

1. email Dominique tonybyrnes@compuserve.com to register your interest, and
2. send a £50 deposit to the Club to secure your place. Payments by bank transfer to the Polytechnic Rambling Club account number 29935940 , sort code 05-02-00 or by cheque made out to the Polytechnic Rambling Club and sent to Danny Duffy at Flat 2, Gooch House, 63-75 Glenthorne Road, London W6 0JY.



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