



The Poly Rambler

Members' Newsletter of the Polytechnic Rambling Club

www.polyramblers.org.uk

Contents

Page

- 1 Chair's Message**
Hilary Abbey
- 2-3 Geoffrey celebrates 40 years of Club Membership (part 1)**
Geoffrey Waters
- 3-5 August BH 2018**
Gillian & Stuart Swan
- 6-7 Ashbourne 2018**
Hilary Abbey
- 7 Stanfords' map store**
Dominique Le Marchand
- 8 August BH 2019 details**
Hilary Abbey

Chair's message

The Polyramblers enjoyed an excellent Christmas lunch at the Freemasons Arms. This was preceded by a walk through St James Park and along the Thames with the risk of being run over by the large number of tourists taking advantage of cheaper pound!

We ended our year with a very enjoyable cathedrals walk and service at St Pauls led by Danny.

After Christmas Gillian and Stuart organised a really interesting walk around Clerkenwell followed by a visit to the postal museum where we enjoyed a ride on the postal train. Not for those who are claustrophobic, as it was intended to carry post bags not humans!

Polyramblers enjoyed a good start to the New Year with over 20 people visiting the Water and Steam museum followed by a walk along the Thames.

We are finalising details on the trips away this year. A huge amount of work goes into the arrangements for these trips, so a big thank you to all who take on this work.

We have the club AGM on the 23rd March. After many years of holding our AGM at the University of Westminster we have now moved to another venue, as the University has substantially reduced the discount on room hire making it unaffordable.

The new venue is near London Bridge and Southwark, so is easily accessible. We hope that you can come along, as your participation and views are integral to the running of the club. Refreshments will be provided as usual.

With the increase in daylight hours we can return to a varied walk programme of long and shorter walks and being intrepid ramblers I am sure that adverse weather will not put us off!

Hilary



Concrete and snow boot photo c/o Dominique!

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

President

Christine Bignold

Vice President

Rosemary MacLoughlin

GENERAL COMMITTEE

CLUB OFFICERS

Chair

Hilary Abbey

General Secretary

Gillian Swan

Treasurer

Daniel Duffy

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Pam Beach

Kim Chowns

Mike Coyle

Susan James

Dominique Le Marchand

Jennifer MacKenzie

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 past memories of events and walks.

Geoffrey celebrates 40 years of Club Membership

(Part One)

Last June I celebrated 40 years of continuous membership, having joined the club around June 1978. Last Summer on the programme was a weekend with two rambles, i.e. Sat 30 June (Jackie's from Goring & Streatley), and Sun 1 July (Danny's from Watford). I decided the best way to celebrate was to attend both these rambles and provide a bubbly drink to my fellow walkers. And what a hot Summer we had in 2018!! Several members on Jackie's walk, suitably imbibed, advised me to write this article when we reached a cool wood high above Goring. Then the next day on Danny's (i.e. a completely different group), we found an open field to celebrate, with a bit of shade.

Now, lets go back to 1978. I discovered the club through being a student at the Polytechnic of Central London. One day visiting the Regent Street building I came across a noticeboard giving information about the institute's clubs and societies. There was an entry for the rambling club, describing fortnightly country rambles and social evenings. Having already undertaken some walks in the country alone during the previous year, I decided this was do-able and noted down the contact details.

Soon after that I made my first visit to our (then) clubroom in Riding House Street on a Friday evening early in June 1978. I was met by Dorothy Bodimead, the secretary, who introduced me to the other members present. She showed me across the corridor to the club's noticeboard on a balcony over a gym below. Its principal use being for ramble leaders to post details of the forthcoming Sunday rambles saying when where to meet/ what train to take. In those days the train was the one to arrive closest to 11am to start the walk. The clubroom was always available to members every Friday at 7.30pm.

The first ramble I attended was on a Sunday in June 1978, led by Peter Gould, from Egham station. In fact I discovered that it was taken from a London Transport book of country walks of which I had a copy. I actually repeated this walk in Summer 2001 prior to Gillian & Stuart's wedding, as the route wasn't affected by foot and mouth that year. It was routed around the outskirts of Englefield Green, with lunch at The Sun pub, and continued through Windsor Great Park and Virginia Water Lake. In 1978 five of us attended. At the end, I remember waiting in the sunshine at the then Victorian brick built Egham station (it got redeveloped in 1980), and we must have caught a slam door southern train back to Waterloo about 15:50. I enjoyed the day and decided to go on the subsequent rambles, the next one was Harlow Town to Bishop's Stortford along the canal.

(continues on next page)

Geoffrey's 40 years continued

And so I joined the club at the age of 22 and three quarters and quite exciting to ride on new railway routes for the first time.

The Friday social evenings would consist of a coffee evening every first Friday of the month. Other Fridays we might invite a guest speaker or club member to present a talk about something, also members bringing their holiday slides was popular. At this time I worked in an office at Cricklewood and had to decide whether to go home (Kingsbury) for tea, then make a separate journey to the clubroom, or work late and catch the 616 express bus from Cricklewood garage to Oxford Circus. Once I had my first car (1979) I was able to drive up to the clubroom and bring my slide projector etc. for a slideshow. A former member, Martin Sweet, used to do favourite records evenings, where he went to the trouble of bringing in his hi-fi separates from East London to the clubroom. In December, we would have a club Christmas party.

In summertime we might do a Friday London evening walk instead of meeting in the clubroom. My first was in July 1978. I thoroughly enjoyed it, as we had a good turnout of about ten members. I recall walking past the warehouses and cobbled streets via Shad Thames ending at London Bridge station. I had just passed my driving test (7th attempt) a week or two earlier.

Later in 1978 I was introduced to Youth Hosteling, as the club had a tradition of having a YHA weekend every August Bank Holiday. That year it was Truleigh Hill on the Sussex South Downs, organised by Martin Sweet. We left on the Friday - I was only able to get the afternoon off work, but Martin went to the trouble of hiring an Austin Allegro, and met us at Baker Street station at lunchtime. Us? Yes five of us, myself, Rosie, Gerald, Dorothy and driver Martin set off from Marylebone Road, through Westminster, thence up Brixton Hill and down the A23 to Sussex. The car was a bit jerky in 1st gear. Martin said "there's a Kangaroo in the back of this car"!

(to be continued in the next issue)



August bank holiday weekend in the Scottish Borders

Following a six hour journey on packed trains via Edinburgh, and a longish wait for taxis at Galashiels, 33 Poly Ramblers arrived at the Jean Muir Student Village on outskirts of the town with views of the Eildon Hills to the East. Reports of the accommodation were universally favourable. The single ensuite rooms were well equipped and most people had access to a kitchen with fridges and microwave – ideal for those impromptu evening meals. We gathered the group for an orientation walk into the town of Galashiels, walking along the Gala Water. As we reached town the heavens opened and those who came unprepared with umbrellas had to shelter, shivering, in shop doorways before making a run for it to Wetherspoons. Later we enjoyed an excellent meal at Quins of Galashiels.

(continues on next page)

August BH continued



Saturday dawned bright and sunny. After an excellent breakfast 22 hikers headed for the bus stop. I was very relieved when a double decker turned up on time and there was plenty of room for us all to get on. The walk took us from the quaint town of Innerleithen onto the Southern Upland Way, a 212 mile long distance trail stretching across the breadth of Scotland.

We enjoyed superb views in the sunshine and although there was quite a bit of climbing at the start, the track was easy to follow and good underfoot. After lunch we reached the Three Brethren, three large distinctive cairns which marked a crossing of paths. At that point we left the Southern Upland and headed downhill towards the market town of Selkirk. Harriet and Jackie, forged ahead seeing a lochan in the distance and managed to fit in a skinny dip (much to the enjoyment of two men on quad bikes) before the rest of the group arrived. Stuart was keen to find the grave of Tibby Tamson which was in the vicinity. Eventually we found a signpost and after a long trudge uphill through a field of long grass we came upon the grave. For those who haven't heard the story, Tibby Tamson was an 18th century Selkirk woman, reputed to be of limited intellect. She was accused of stealing some yarn and so the tale goes, took her own life rather than face court.



The townspeople pelted her coffin with stones as she was taken from the town to be buried outside the town limits. In Victorian times her treatment was recognised as a stain on the reputation of the town and she was rehabilitated, her grave acquiring a headstone which stands today. Some Club members were much moved by this sad tale from history (or legend) but not everyone was impressed especially as it added a good half a mile to the walk.

Retracing our steps we continued downhill through woods and eventually into the town of Selkirk which we discovered was also on a hill. There about half the group repaired to the Fleece Inn where we enjoyed an excellent meal and studied the weather forecast for the next day. The locals told us to expect torrential rain all day and zero visibility but they must have been winding us up.

In contrast to the previous day, Sunday dawned grey and unpromising with rain threatening. The hikers donned full wet weather gear in preparation for all eventualities. Both hikers and strollers boarded a coach to the village of St Boswells from where the hikers embarked on a section of the St Cuthbert's Way, south to the market town of Jedburgh. The strollers led by Danny went on a circular walk taking in Dryburgh Abbey and the Wallace Statue. As the latter involved an uphill walk I suspected that they might not make it.

(continues on next page)

August BH continued



St Cuthbert's Way is a 62 mile trail across Scotland from Melrose to Lindisfarne. Our section took us east, first close to the river Tweed, then on to the village of Maxton and along an ancient Roman road, Dere Street, passing Lady Lilliard's tomb. She was the heroine of the Battle of Ancrum in 1545, she reputedly avenged the death of her lover by slaying the English, continuing even when her legs had been cut off. This was a complete contrast from the moorland walk of the previous day, being low lying with plenty of woodland cover and lots of historical interest. In spite of intermittent drizzle, the conditions we were warned of never materialised but we were still glad of a lunch stop at Harestanes Visitor Centre and the chance of a sit down with a hot drink or bowl of soup. It was not long before we arrived at Jedburgh with its 12th century ruined

abbey. There was enough time for a drink in the local before heading back by coach.

Monday saw the hikers head to the Eildon Hills near Melrose, another of the Border Abbey towns. Arriving by bus we had time to buy lunch and Selkirk Bannocks (a heavily fruited large teacake) before heading to the hills. The iconic Eildons are modest in height but steep in places and the climb was quite challenging in slippery conditions after the previous day's rain. Once at the top of Eildon North Hill a squally shower precipitated a hasty descent into woodland and from there it was a fairly level walk into the village of Bowden with its attractive Pant Well (see photo). The next village was Newtown St Boswells where we hoped for a pub stop. Unfortunately, being a Monday afternoon, the pub was closed. The majority of the group decided they had done enough walking at this point and headed to a nearby garden centre for tea and cake before catching a bus back to Melrose. A small group took a lengthy detour to see the statue of William Wallace, 13th century Scottish hero of the interminable war against the English. Oddly this statue is hidden in woodland and could do with some restoration, but is impressive for its size if nothing else. We retraced our steps to the village and walked back to Melrose (which admittedly was a bit of a slog).



In the evening we enjoyed a final group meal at Herges on the Loch. Chatting with the strollers it became clear that they had not made it to the Wallace Statue but had enjoyed walks around InnerLeithen, Melrose and Dryburgh Abbey.

On our final morning many of the group decided to visit Walter Scott's house at Abbotsford, which is within walking distance of campus. A few of us managed a short walk in the hills above Galashiels. before descending for coffee and biscuits at Quins.

I would have liked to say that the journey back to London was smooth and uneventful, but unfortunately the group who decided to catch an earlier train to Edinburgh were turfed off halfway by a signal failure and ended up getting taxis to the city (ouch!) and running for the London train. Meanwhile those of us on the later train sailed through without any problems. It just goes to show that being the early bird doesn't always pay.

Thanks to everyone who took part and especially to Danny for leading the Strollers.

Gillian and Stuart

Ashbourne October 2018

Following on from the success of our 2017 weekend in Darwin Forest we booked lodges at Sandybrook Park in Ashbourne. On the Friday afternoon we settled into our lodges and prioritised party plans for the weekend to celebrate birthdays.

Our orientation walk was via the Tissington trail to Ashbourne. We arrived at St Oswald's church dating back to 1240 and home to many artefacts about local history. We were lucky enough to be shown around by the vicar who was happy to expand on the churches' historical significance.

We were greeted on Saturday with rain which had been falling for most of the night. However, after our soggy start the sun came out and we were lucky to have a dry day. The Hikers met up with Hilary's sister Janet from the Nomads walking club who led our walk from Illam, to Thorpe. We crossed the river Dove via Stepping Stones and had morning tea and cakes at Illam YHA based in a 17th Century Manor house on the beautiful Illam estate. Our lunch at Aston Feld was followed by a tea stop thoughtfully provided for visitors by its Parishioners in their church.



On Saturday, the Strollers had an inauspicious start with a damp walk alongside a busy road to Fenny Bentley. However things improved when we caught the bus to Alsop Station from where we walked down to Milldale. There we had some welcome refreshments at the 'Hatch' surrounded by numerous ducks looking for titbits. Our walk continued alongside the River Dove to the start of Dovedale. We then passed the attractions of Reynard's Cave, the Tissington Spires and Lovers Leap before reaching the famous Stepping Stones. We didn't cross them, but instead headed up Lindale to the village of Thorpe and its excellent Old Dog pub. After a fine lunch, we joined the Tissington Trail for a couple of miles back to our accommodation at Sandybrook for a well-earned rest.

Our evening meal was at the Bentley Brooke Pub in Fenny Bentley where we had a room to ourselves and very efficient service.

On Sunday the Hikers met up with The Nomads walking group who led us on a circular walk through local villages and farmland bordering Staffordshire. The walk was slightly marred by a very noisy motorbike race track which happened to be in use that day. The Nomads very kindly gave us lifts back to Sandybrook for us to be in time for our next lodge party of the weekend, followed by a great meal at the Coach House restaurant on the same site.

(continues on next page)

Ashbourne 2018 continued



On Sunday, the Strollers still had a busy road to start with, but a much shorter stretch and the weather was considerably better. We branched off up a steep hill to a pleasant caravan park and then downhill through fields to the village of Mapleton or Mappleton depending on which map one looked at! The landlady at the Oakeover Arms pub kindly provided us with coffee before we headed off on a circular route past Oakeover Hall and through its extensive park. En route we passed through a couple of fields with 'Mind the Bull' signs and sensibly kept our distance with those of our number with red clothing!

After lunch in the pub, some of the party retraced their steps back to Sunnybrook while the rest took the easy option of a taxi.

On Monday the Hikers went along the Tissington Trail to the very quaint village of Tissington where we follow a circular route identifying the six wells. The village is part of the Tissington estate, Gillian, Stuart and Pam had a chat to the Baronet of Tissington Hall as he popped into the Tea Shop! The Strollers went into Ashbourne. The whole group returned to London with Danny following a very busy weekend walking in the beautiful southern peaks of Derbyshire.

Many thanks to my sister Janet and the Nomads walking group for taking us on walks that ensured we saw many of the highlights of the Peak district. A big thank you to Danny for leading on the strollers walks and identifying some very good Real Ale pubs along the route!

Hilary and Danny

Stanfords' map store has now moved

If you buy your maps at this famous store in London, please note its new location. **Dominique**



August Bank Holiday Weekend in Lancashire, Friday 23rd to Tuesday 27th August 2019

We will be based at Lancaster University, Bailrigg. The University is set in 560 acres of parkland and is 3 miles south of the city of Lancaster. Lancaster is situated on the river Lune and the Lune valley. It is one of England's historic cities with a castle and museums. Travel will be by train to Lancaster and then a bus ride to the campus.

We will be staying in Bed and Breakfast accommodation consisting of either single and double rooms (twin beds) with tea and coffee facilities and en-suite bathrooms. Breakfast is provided each morning at the *Marketplace*, a short walk from the accommodation. Costs are in region of £30 per person per night for a shared double, £45 for a single. The campus includes a selection of restaurants, cafes and bars. There is a regular bus service to Lancaster and Morecambe and also a taxi rank.

Walks will be led by Geoffrey, and will include the Forest of Bowland, an area of outstanding beauty, and a walk along the coast to include Morecambe, Heysham, Silverdale and Arnside. It may be also possible to book a guided walk across Morecambe Bay, but this will be at your own risk as the sands can be treacherous!

If you are interested in this trip please: email Hilary habbey@btinternet.com to register your interest by 28 Feb 19, confirming single or shared double room, and send a £50 deposit to the club to secure your place. Payments by bank transfer to the Polytechnic Rambling club a/c no. 29935940, sort code 05-02-00 or by cheque made out to the Polytechnic Rambling Club and sent to Dan Duffy at Flat 2, Gooch House, 63-75 Glenthorne Road, London W6 OJY.

Hilary



EXPERTS IN
ADVENTURE
SINCE 1913

discover

A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF WALKING

CALL
now
FOR OUR LATEST
OFFERS

hf holidays
walking and activity holidays .co.uk

HF Holidays have been creating walking and activity holidays since 1913. Combine healthy exercise in areas of outstanding beauty, with superb accommodation, good food and the company of a small group of like-minded companions. We take care of the food, the itineraries and the accommodation, letting you relax and enjoy the best that every area has to offer.

Call 0345 470 7558 | Visit hfholidays.co.uk | Quote WALKING