



The Poly Rambler

Members' Newsletter of the Polytechnic Rambling Club

www.polyramblers.org.uk

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Chair's message

The Poly Ramblers club has had a very successful year with a full programme of varied walks, trips abroad and in the UK and other activities such as a visit to the Angels Costume Museum.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and willingness to devote time and organisation from club members to enable these events to take place successfully.

Material for this edition collated by the committee.
Production by Kim Chowns

We have reviewed our YHA weekend which has been organised largely by Danny for a number of years now, and decided on a different format for 2020. Details have been circulated in the club newsletter.

We enjoyed a slightly muddy end of year walk to Shoreham in Kent followed by a splendid visit to Southwark Cathedral to partake in the Christmas carol service and a fact filled walk about Karl Marx, followed by a successful Xmas lunch to finish our year off. A special thank you to Danny for organising these events.

Pam organised a charity collection during the Xmas lunch to CHICKS a charity promoting respite breaks for disadvantaged children. We raised a generous £117.40 for a very good cause.

The Chiltern Society will be installing a gate near Wendover in memory of Peter Gould. A walk will be arranged in due course passing by the gate.

The committee has begun a review to update the club's health and safety statement and implementation. This will be one of our priorities for 2020.

We have had some generous donations to the club funds and are very grateful to the individuals concerned.

Our AGM will be taking place on the 14th March, we will be back to last year's venue at Bankside as this proved very successful. We had a good attendance last year and I hope that this will be repeated as your views and active participation are essential to the continued success of our club.

Very Best Wishes for 2020

Hilary

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

Honorary members

Christine Bignold
Peter Bonfield
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

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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.

Youth Hostel Weekend 2020

Fellow Ramblers

As indicated in recent newsletter articles, the format of this year's youth hostel weekend is changing. Rather than having an exclusive hire, we have gone for a non-exclusive one with individual bookings. A wider range of locations is thus available and the planned destination is Swanage, a hostel which has been out of our price range in past years.

It is a spacious and elegant Victorian house, overlooking Swanage Bay. It's an ideal base from which to explore the incredible Jurassic Coast and the beautiful countryside of Purbeck. It has forty-four beds in a mixture of rooms ranging from two to six beds. There is a self-catering kitchen and a full meals service is available when booked in advance.

The dates for the weekend are Friday 27th to Sunday 29th March 2020. The accommodation cost for the two nights will be around £40. Travel to Swanage is by train to either Bournemouth or Wareham and by bus from there.

If you are interested in coming on the weekend, please let me know by e-mail to qprduffy20@hotmail.com, stating if you are a member of the YHA and thus qualify for a discount. Please also say whether you want me to book on your behalf or whether you will book directly. Beds are currently available at the hostel for the weekend in question but that situation may change.

Danny



DOLOMITES 25-30 MAY 2019

Friday 24 May 2019: Moena - 30 Polyramblers met at Venice airport to travel to Moena in the Val di Fassa. There was quite a lot of snow along the road as we went up into the mountains. After a late arrival, we walked to the next village to eat dinner at Pizzeria Goofi.

Saturday 25 May 2019: Moena - It was raining heavily when we woke up but nothing stops the Polyramblers. The hikers went by coach to Pozza di Fassa and met our guide, Luca. We walked on a track to Malga al Crocefisso and had a look in the chapel. Then we continued up Val dei Monzoni. From time to time, the path was blocked by fallen trees due to the hurricane last October when over one million trees were uprooted. In addition, because of heavy snowfalls in April, many paths were also impassable so we could not do the walks Luca had planned. But we continued up, in the rain, splitting into two groups at one point, one that continued up the track, the other going cross country through snowfields, sinking in the snow up to our knees. We met up at Malga di Monzoni for lunch. We went back down to Pozza Di Fassa on a track in the sunshine. The coach then drove us to a cheese shop selling cheese made locally which we bought for our lunch the following day. Then it was back to the hotel.



Sunday 26 May 2019: Moena - A dry day with sunshine and clouds. The coach picked up 18 hikers and drove us to Canazei where we met Luca. We went up through the old town and followed a track beside a rushing river and ski pistes now covered in grass. We arrived at Pian Frataces where we had a little rest and admired the Sella group and Pordoi, cliffe-like mountains. As we continued climbing, we encountered more and more patches of snow. We arrived near Passo Sella where we had lunch on the edge of a snowy meadow surrounded by beautiful mountains covered in snow, including Marmelada, the highest mountain in the Dolomites. We went down the same way we came up and made a detour to admire a waterfall with basalt columns similar to the Giant's Causeway. We continued down to Canazei where we headed to a bar for a well-deserved drink. The Strollers took the bus up the valley and walked back to Moena.



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DOLOMITES continued

Monday 27 May 2019: Moena - After breakfast, the coach took the Hikers to Campitello di Fassa where we met Luca. We followed the Rio Duron then went along a steep narrow path and joined a track that continued up along the river. We saw a few cute marmots along the way. It was raining heavily as we arrived in Val Duron, a beautiful mountain valley. Luca had arranged for us to have lunch in Lino Brach, a mountain hut owned by friends of his. We were served polenta with a choice of cheese, mushrooms, goulash or sausages (flat). We ended the meal with grappa. The rain continued as we made our way down via Pian, the old Campitello village where we had a drink and said goodbye to Luca. The Strollers did a 5 mile walk from Moena to Malga Ronca and back to Moena. We later had an excellent dinner at Kusk restaurant. The Chair gave a speech to thank Susan for organising such a great weekend.



Tuesday 28 May 2019: Padua - We said goodbye to Moena and travelled to Venice. After dropping off nine Poly Ramblers at Venice airport, the remaining 21 continued to Padua and arrived at the Hotel Cason. We dropped our bags and headed straight out into the city in search of a quick coffee and bite to eat before our booked tour of St Anthony's chapel, led by one of the friars. St Anthony lived in the 13th century and died in Padua and many miracles are attributed to him. The tour included an opportunity to see and touch his tomb and the reliquary. Then we had a couple of hours free before our tour of the Scrovegni chapel, the highlight of the day. Giotto's 14th century frescoes were truly impressive.



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Dolomites continued

Wednesday 29 May 2019: Sightseeing day - Wednesday was our free day. Some people visited Verona and others Vicenza, but the majority opted for Venice. When we arrived a few peeled off to visit the Guggenheim and other museums while the main group led by Susan took a water bus down the canal to St Marks Basilica. We found a traditional lunch and then headed back to the canal to visit the island of Murano. After coffee and cake and some window shopping we headed back to the station via the Jewish Ghetto area. A very good day in spite of the weather and an excellent trip. Thank you Susan.



Gillian

Autumn weekend in Lynton North Devon. October 2019

Having spent many childhood holidays in North Devon, I had been keen to share it with the Poly Ramblers for some time, but transport always seemed problematic. I remembered the cliff railway in Lynton from the 1970s and stayed in the town on holiday with Stuart in 1995. Visiting for the recce 24 years later I was delighted to find it thriving with some lovely shops, cafes and restaurants, certainly more upmarket than I remembered it.



Twenty Poly Ramblers took the train from Paddington to Barnstaple with a quick change at Exeter onto the Tarka line which winds gently from south to north Devon. From Barnstaple I had a coach booked to take us to Lynton. As I hadn't thought it necessary to mention to the coach company that we were travelling with luggage it was a little cramped on board.

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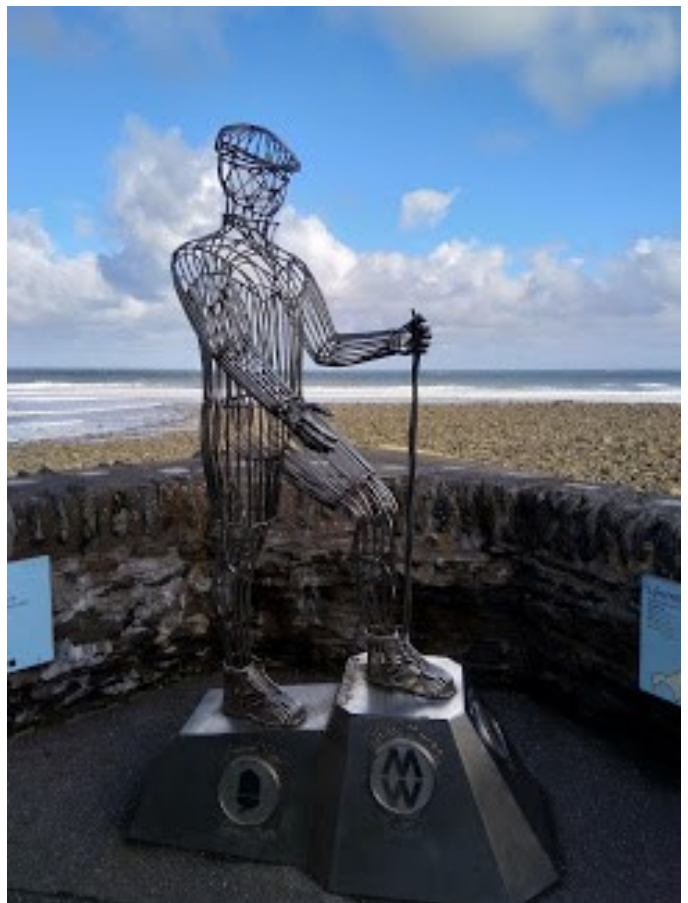
Lynton continued

The weather had been gradually deteriorating as we travelled west and by the time we arrived in Lynton we had blustery wind and rain to contend with, the remnants of Storm Lorenzo. We huddled by the impressive town hall for shelter as I tried to point people in the right direction for their B&Bs (I had booked eight in total). Later we convened for a short walk around the town (in the rain) ending at the cliff railway. I had hoped to show everyone the view across the Bristol Channel to South Wales from the churchyard but it was obscured by mist. Three members decided to take a round trip to Lynmouth and back on the funicular while the rest headed for the nearest pub. Later we enjoyed an excellent meal at the Vanilla Pod.

On Saturday the hikers took taxis to PrayWay Head car park and followed the Two Moors Way north across Exmoor back to Lynton. The weather had improved and there was only the odd shower but there was a lot of water underfoot. At the beginning we struggled to find the path and the going was hard. One walker fell into a concealed storm drain - not a pleasant experience. Once we found the path it was a lovely walk over the wild moor and then along lanes and woodland paths with glimpses of the sea. We stopped at the Beggars Roost for refreshment and continued down a slippery woodland path to Lynbridge, one walker had a nasty fall on the way down. A good day though more eventful than I would have liked.

Meanwhile the strollers, without their usual leader Danny, enjoyed a walk round the Valley of the Rocks, led by Judy, followed by a cream tea. They have got the right idea.

On Sunday the hikers had an excellent day walking with no accidents and we didn't even get wet. We walked down to Lynmouth with the strollers and then took the coast path to Countisbury. It was a little exposed in the breeze but the views were great. We walked up to Foreland point, a few taking the exposed cliff path, and stopped at the Blue Ball for coffee. We headed down to Watersmeet through a beautiful valley and met the strollers coming back from the tea room. After lunch some of the group continued to the Rockford Inn for another drinks stop. The remainder of the walk was a quite challenging undulating route which eventually took us back to Lynmouth in time to get the cliff railway back to Lynton. In the evening we all gathered for a lovely meal at Abi's cafe.



Our last morning in Lynton dawned wet and very windy. Eight of us took a cautious walk on the surfaced but exposed coast path to see the Valley of the Rocks. We would have stopped at the café but sadly it was closed. Half of the group returned by road while the rest took an up and over route on woodland paths. We whiled away the rest of the morning in the interesting museum, shops and cafes before taking the coach back to Barnstaple for the train home.

Gillian

August Bank holiday 2020

Our August Bank holiday trip will be in Mourne, Co. Down, an officially designated area of outstanding natural beauty in Northern Ireland.

We will be staying in Newcastle, an attractive seaside resort about 30 miles south of Belfast. It is overlooked by the Mountains of Mourne. Accommodation will be B&Bs and hotels, roughly £40 per person per night sharing and £50 for a single room (limited number in town). There is also a hostel in the town, 'Hutt Hostel', which some might like to book into independently.

There are numerous walk possibilities of varying levels in the vicinity of the town. Hiker and stroller walks will be arranged for each day with the highlight for the former being the route to the top of Slieve Donard, the highest point in Northern Ireland at 2790 feet.

For those not walking during some of the trip, there are options for sightseeing trips. Tollymore Forest nearby appeared in season 1 of Game of Thrones, as the Haunted Forest north of the Wall and the Wolfswood outside Winterfell. Downpatrick, with the grave of St Patrick, is a short bus ride away. Belfast has numerous attractions including the Titanic exhibition, Crumlin Road Gaol, Wall Murals, its Big Fish and more.

If you're interested in the trip, please e-mail me on jackiemccartan@hotmail.com or ring me on 07986 388577 (leave a message if not answered), stating what accommodation is required (i.e. shared or single room) or whether you will be making your own arrangements. If you want me to book your accommodation, please send a deposit of £100 by bank transfer to the Club's bank account (number 29935940 & sort code 05-02-00) or by cheque made out to the Polytechnic Rambling Club to Danny at 28 Dunraven Road, London W12 7QZ.

Flights to Belfast for the period of the trip are on sale now and it is recommended that you book them as soon as convenient. The suggested EasyJet flights to be taken to Belfast International Airport are shown below and connecting coach/minibus transport will be arranged to coincide with them. If you are travelling at a different time or flying to Belfast City Airport, there are connecting bus services from the airports to the Europa Bus Station in Belfast from where there are regular bus services to Newcastle.

Friday 28 August - Stansted/Belfast International 12.20/13.35 or Luton/Belfast International 11.25/12.40

Tuesday 1 September - Belfast International/Stansted 18.00/19.15, Belfast International/Luton 18.10/19.20 or Belfast International/Gatwick 18.25/19.55

There are numerous other EasyJet flights on the same days between the three airports and Belfast International. In addition, there are flights between London Heathrow/London City and Belfast City with British Airways on www.britishairways.com, Aer Lingus on www.aerlingus.com and Flybe on www.flybe.com.

When you have booked your flights, please let me know the details jackiemccartan@hotmail.com.

Jackie

Autumn Weekend 2020

Autumn weekend to Leek Staffordshire from Friday 9th October to Monday 12th October 2020. Leek, is an historic market town about ten miles south of Stoke on Trent known as 'queen of the Staffordshire moorlands' near to the Peak District National Park.

The Staffordshire Peak District is an area of moorland, reservoir, a canal, and country parks. We will be staying by Rudyard lakes an area popular for water sports, fishing and walking. Accommodation will be self-contained lodges and additional rooms at Rudyard hotel nearby as there is limited availability of the lodges.

Early booking is essential as this is a popular walking and tourist destination. Please let me know by the end of March with expressions of interest to habbey@btinternet.com.

Hilary

Photo: Canal and River Trust



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