

## **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**



## **A GUIDE FOR WALKERS**

Welcome to walking with the Polytechnic Rambling Club. Most of our walks are in the London and South East area and range in distance from 5 to 13 miles. Most begin and end at a railway station. We organise walking weekends away five times a year including one trip abroad. Full details of each walk can be found in the walks programme, which is issued every four months. We hope that this leaflet will give you some useful tips on how to get the most enjoyment from your walking and to stay safe and comfortable.

### **The walks**

- There is no need to book to come on a walk – just turn up on the day. If you are joining us for the first time, you may like to let the leader know and he/she will look out for you.
- The walks in the programme vary in length and difficulty. If you are unsure whether a walk will be suitable for you, please contact the leader in advance who will be able to tell you more about it.
- The pace will depend on the length of the walk and the size and ability of the group.

### **What to wear for walking**

- **Walking boots** are essential for country walks, especially in the winter when we often encounter muddy conditions. Trainers or walking shoes may be adequate for some summer and London walks – check with the leader if you are unsure. Whatever footwear you choose, it must have a good grip in slippery conditions. If you are going on a weekend away, you must have walking boots, as the terrain is likely to be more difficult.
- **Waterproof (not just showerproof) jacket** is essential for country walks.
- **Waterproof trousers** are also useful
- **Warm clothing such as fleece or pullovers.** Several layers are generally warmer than one thick layer and this enables you to take off layers when you get hot.
- **Gloves and woolly hat** in cold weather
- **Spare socks** in case of wet feet.
- **Sun hat and sunblock** in hot weather.
- **Shorts** in summer – brambles and nettles can be a problem on some walks.
- In spring and summer ticks are endemic in the UK. A proportion of ticks carry Lyme disease. Wearing long trousers tucked into your socks and using a repellent can reduce the risk of a bite. More information can be found at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/)

## What else to bring

- **Water** - it is essential to carry extra water in hot weather as you can become dehydrated very quickly when walking. On country walks, there won't be any opportunity to get water except at the pub stop.
- **Food** – lunch is usually in a pub or a café' and with the added option to picnic close by. It's a good idea to carry some emergency supplies in case no food is available.
- **Rucksack** - Rucksacks are not usually waterproof. Line yours with a plastic sack to keep the contents dry in heavy rain.
- **Plastic bags or boot covers**– to tie over your muddy boots in pubs and cafes.

## Getting there

- Most of our walks begin and end at a railway station. Walkers usually meet the leader at the London terminus. The programme will tell you where to meet for each walk and what ticket to buy. Some walks are linear, starting and finishing at different stations while others are circular. If you intend to travel to the walk by car, please inform the leader in advance.
- Remember to allow sufficient time (at least 20 minutes) to purchase a ticket – some London stations can get very busy at weekends, especially Victoria.
  - If you walk regularly, it is worth purchasing a Railcard which gives 33% discount on ticket prices.
  - Discounted travel information is available at [tfl.gov.uk/](http://tfl.gov.uk/) and [www.nationalrail.co.uk/](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/)
  - If you already have a travelcard or freedom pass, ask for your ticket to start from the boundary of the zones covered by your card.
- Some walks involve the use of local bus services. The leader will advise if a bus is paid for separately, or whether you can purchase a PlusBus rail ticket for the whole journey.

## Lunch

- The leader will usually choose a pub or café for lunch and identify a picnic spot close by. This will probably be about halfway along the route. Most of the pubs we visit offer sandwiches and other bar snacks as well as main dishes. You can usually check the menus online.
- On some walks, especially in summer, there is no pub and the leader/programme will advise to bring a picnic on these walks.
- Muddy boots must be removed before going into pubs and cafes or wear plastic bags or boot covers over them.

## Children

- We regret that we are unable to accept children under 18 years of age on the walks.

## **Dogs**

- If you are thinking of bringing your dog on a walk, please ask the leader in advance who will advise if the walk is dog suitable or not.
- Be sure to keep your dog on a short lead where there is livestock, especially sheep and cattle with their young. Owners are responsible for keeping their dogs under control.

## **Health and Safety**

- For your own safety and enjoyment and that of fellow walkers, please co-operate with any requests or instructions from the leader. At the beginning of the walk the leader will give a safety briefing. Please listen carefully and adhere to any requests made. Take extra care when walking along roads and crossing railway lines. The leader may appoint a back-marker. Please ensure you keep in front of the back-marker and do not get ahead of the leader. Please keep up with the group and keep an eye out for people in front or behind you. This is particularly important when changing directions.
- If you decide to leave the walk you should let the leader know and if you go off on your own the leader is no longer responsible for your safety.
- If you have a recurrent medical condition e.g. asthma, allergies, diabetes, epilepsy etc., please inform the leader or another walker at the beginning of the walk, giving advice on any immediate treatment you may require and whether you are carrying medication with you.
- Please carry emergency contact details either on your phone under ICE or a hard copy. If you have a medical alert card or bracelet please carry it with you.
- When abroad you may also wish to carry your insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number.
- At social events, AGMs and meetings you are expected to locate for yourself where the safety exits are.
- Please bear in mind that on club holidays the leader has probably not been able to do a walkover and the walking may be more challenging than on the weekly walks. On arrival at your accommodation check the fire and emergency evacuation procedures.
- You must arrange your own travel insurance for all holidays abroad. Please ensure that your insurance is fit for purpose, especially when visiting areas which may involve challenging walks eg. mountainous areas.
- You are encouraged to carry your own basic first aid kit.

## **Leaders**

- All our leaders are volunteers who enjoy planning and leading walks.
- The leader will check the route in advance and will carry a map.
- We are actively seeking new leaders for our walks. If you have been out on a few walks and are interested in leading a walk on a future programme, or if you would like to suggest a walk, please contact the Programme Co-ordinator, contact details on the programme.

## **The Countryside Code**

- As considerate users of the countryside, it is important that we follow the Countryside Code.

### **Respect – Protect - Enjoy**

#### **Respect** other people:

- consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

#### **Protect** the natural environment:

- leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- keep dogs under effective control to ensure they are not a danger or nuisance to farm animals, horses, wildlife or other people.

#### **Enjoy** the outdoors:

- plan ahead and be prepared
- follow advice and local signs

Full details at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code)

**We hope you enjoy your walking and look forward to seeing you on a ramble soon....**