



The Poly Rambler

Members' Newsletter of the Polytechnic Rambling Club

www.polyramblers.org.uk

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Chair's message

Another challenging year, but lots of positive moments for the Poly Ramblers with two very successful trips away to Chester and Swanage, both with a really good turn out and some glorious sunshine.

Our walk programme has been varied with a good attendance regardless of the weather. Susan and Jennifer have been very encouraging and persuasive resulting in an increase of new leaders.

Our recent walks have been notable for extensive mud and rain and for someone like myself with a poor sense of balance it has been an achievement just to stay upright!

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

Chair's message continued

A walker from another club with similar problems described her walk as 'ruttet soggy soaking mud filled water with boggy sub terrain!'

Thanks to Pam we have continued to support the Blind Ramblers by joining them on one of their walks. This year we conducted a very enjoyable walk from St James Park to Kensington Gardens. I was really impressed by the way they were able to navigate their way through tourists halting in front of them and other obstacles such as road works. I reflected on how well they coped with travel by train and bus to make their way to our meeting point. This was my first walk with the Blind Ramblers and one to be repeated.

One of the highlights of the year was our club Xmas meal back at the Freemasons Arms in Covent Garden with a really good attendance by club members. We met at Westminster for our traditional pre-lunch walk led by Danny walking along to Blackfriars Bridge before making our way to the pub. The meal was an opportunity to meet and chat to club members who have been unable to join our walks. The meal was really successful with very good service. It was lovely to be able to finish the year on such a positive note thanks to Danny for ensuring that all went to plan.



Our AGM has now been booked for the 12th March at a new venue (more details on page 6). This is an opportunity to celebrate getting back to some normality again with one of the great institutions of our club.

A Happy New Year to you all!

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
Shirley Hafey
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
Jennifer MacKenzie
Jackie McCartan
Geoffrey Waters

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Club's Facebook page:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8fzk7n>

* 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.

Trip to Fort William Friday 30th September to Tuesday 4th October 2022

Over 20 polyramblers, hikers and strollers have expressed interest in this trip which will offer a varied programme of long and shortish/gentler walks in this beautiful area. There will be an option to climb Ben Nevis for the hikers, weather permitting, as well as a chance to explore the Corrour estate and hopefully take the train across the famous Glenfinnan Viaduct.



Danny has confirmed that there are a number of transport options the most flexible involving a train or flight to Glasgow or Inverness and then a bus to Fort William, which can easily be completed in one day. However, people are welcome to arrange to spend a day/night in Glasgow en-route at their leisure.

People are requested to book their own transport and accommodation.

Details of possible train and bus times will be circulated nearer the time. However, those who are considering flying should investigate this option as soon as possible.

The Premier Inn is usually good value and offers a fully refundable option. There are also a number of other B&Bs in the area which can be found via an internet search. However, it is best to check that these are not too far out of the center of the town to ensure ease of transport to meeting points.

It is planned to arrange a group meal in a local venue on the evening of Monday 3rd October and we will be asking for a £25 deposit towards this nearer the time.

I appreciate that people's plans may change over the next few months and people may wish to drop out or join, so it is not too late to register your interest! I will be going up to Scotland in June to do a recce and firm up the programme, so it would be really helpful to have confirmation of numbers by the end of May if possible.

Rochelle

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Swanage Weekend - October

Friday 8th

Twenty seven Poly Ramblers gathered in Swanage on the beautiful Jurassic coast at the start of a weekend with a promise of sunny weather. The majority of the group were staying the Youth Hostel situated at one of the highest points in the town with views of Studland bay. Sandy used his local knowledge to lead a recce of town, before we all dispersed to eat. **Gillian**



Saturday 9th - Hikers walk - Corfe, Studland and Old Harry Rocks

I had the honour of leading the walk on my birthday!

17 Poly Ramblers went to Corfe Castle village. The weather was pleasant as we passed through the centre of the village and then uphill. At this point we had a photoshoot, as looking back, there was a spooky dramatic view of the ruined castle in the mist. We joined the Purbeck Way track onto the ridge at Rollington Hill and taking us over Brenscombe Hill, with good views of Poole Harbour in the distance. We continued to Nine Barrow Down, and then descended into a valley between Round Down and Godlingston Hill where we took a path up Dean Hill and eventually into Studland.



In Studland we went to find Joe's café, an isolated shed with an open counter and a terrace of picnic tables. It provided us with snacks and drinks. Loos there were none, we had to improvise!



From here we joined the South Western Coast Path; keeping the sea to our left, along the only part of North Coast in Dorset I know! We reached a large grassy opening of common



land on the clifftop, and followed a path to Handfast Point where we saw Old Harry Rocks. The sea was 3/4 of the way around us, with views of Poole Harbour. The rest of the walk took us further along the coastal path via Ballard Point, around Swanage Bay into Swanage, where along the beach we had to negotiate several groynes. At a concreted area several ladies in the party decided to rest, so I encouraged them to up and continue, as tea and birthday cake were looming at the Hostel where the walk ended, within the next mile.

The cakes were delicious. Thank you Hilary for the lovely almond cake and to Poly Ramblers for my birthday card.

Geoffrey

Swanage (continued)

Saturday, 9th - Strollers walk - Ballard Down

The Strollers met to catch a bus to the stop at the foot of Ballard Down to climb up to the flat, grassy ridge of the Down. For the next 2.5 miles we walked along the ridge in fine, sunny weather. As we approached the Old Harry Rocks although sunny the visibility over Poole Bay wasn't good enough to see the Isle of Wight, but we could just make out the Admirals Walk building in Bournemouth. Some members of the group ventured out on to the edge of the cliffs while the more cautious ones, myself included, stayed well back!



We descended to the village of Studland, where we met the Hikers on their way to Joe's café. I was determined to have a ham baguette in the Bankes Arms but the rest of the party went down to Joe's café where they queued for 45 minutes to get an ice cream! I also had to wait. 25 minutes for my Guinness and another 10 for my ham baguette! I was just starting to enjoy my baguette when I saw the rest of the strollers walking past the window to continue the walk. Feeling responsible as walk leader I rushed out to join them with half a baguette in my hand, but they were kind enough to let me finish before starting out!

We crossed Ballard Down to return to Swanage. On the way back the path was quite steep and consisted of stones and gravel, and those of us with walking poles were grateful for them.

Sandy

Sunday 10th - Hikers - Langton Matravers Circular

Eighteen hikers took the bus from Swanage to Langton Matravers on another glorious sunny day. We made our way to Spyway Barn said to have been used by smugglers in the 19th century. Continuing down to the coast we soon arrived at the steps down to Dancing Ledge. This was a Purbeck limestone quarry and the platform by the sea left from the quarrying gets its name due to it being a similar size to a ballroom and the waves 'dancing' over it. We continued along the South West Coast Path (SWCP) to Winspit where we looked into caves at a quarry which provided stone for many London buildings. Some have been sealed off as they are home to the Greater Horseshoe bat.



Further along the SWCP we came to St. Adhelm's head, the most southerly point of the Isle of Purbeck, where we stopped for our picnic sitting around the memorial to radar research which took place there during WW2 and then visited St. Adhelm's Chapel. This tiny Norman chapel is one of the oldest churches in England. We soon came to the steep steps leading down to a valley. Here some members decided to take a more gentle path inland towards the Compass pub, while about eight of us climbed the steps back up on the other side. These proved to be far less challenging than the ones down and we were rewarded by amazing views of Chapman's Pool below and Portland Bill in the distance.

(continued)

Swanage (continued)

After a short walk inland we came to the pretty hamlet of Worth Matravers where we met up with the rest of the group at the square and pub. Refreshed we set off for the final leg, along the Priest's Way, visiting the dinosaur footprints at Keat's Quarry. We arrived in Langton Matravers in time to visit the parish church and for a couple of members, another quick visit to the pub. We all agreed it had been an excellent day walking in this spectacular area, steeped in history, and with the extra blessing of beautiful weather.



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Susan

Sunday 10th - Strollers - CORFE CASTLE TO SWANAGE

We travelled to Corfe Castle and village on the Swanage Railway. Leaving the village we started to climb up to Nine Barrow Down. The path took us obliquely up the side of the ridge so was a steady but not too strenuous ascent. I assured the party that once we got to the top we would have easy walking all the way to Swanage. However this was not exactly true as the path kept going uphill, albeit at a fairly easy gradient, so was hardly noticeable. Visibility was better than on the previous day and we were able to see the Isle of Wight.

The descent was like the ascent in that it ran obliquely down the side of the hill. We were looking forward to an easy walk. However we encountered a lot of mud and came to one field entrance which resembled a bog, with footprints sunk deep into the mud. We had to make a detour through a field, uncertain where the faint path would lead. Fortunately we were able to join the main path and after going over two stiles were able to join the main road into Swanage.

Sandy

(continued)

Swanage (continued)

Monday, 11th - Durlston Country Park

On Monday morning most of the group gathered at the town square in warm sunshine for a final walk along the coast to Durlston Country Park, led by Sandy. We passed the pier and headed uphill, passing the Portland Stone Ionic columns dating from the early 19th century. We headed uphill, pausing at the Coast Watch station on Peverill Point. Later we entered Durlston Country Park. After a mile or so walking through woodland along the coast we came to Durlston Castle with its cafe and globe. The great globe is one of the largest stone spheres in the world, made of Portland Stone. It was constructed in Greenwich in 1887 in Mowlem's stone yard, and brought to Swanage by sea. John Mowlem the stonemason was born in Swanage and is commemorated in the town.



All too soon it was time to head back to Swanage by an inland route – no time to visit the cafe sadly. A lovely end to a great weekend. Thanks to the organisers and walk leaders.

Gillian

Annual General Meeting – Saturday, 12 March - 10.30 for 11am

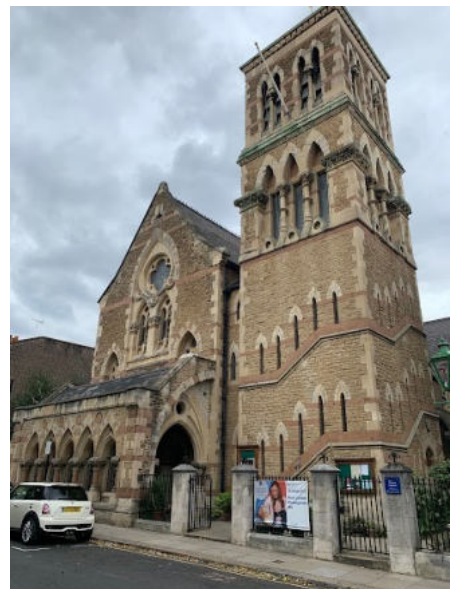
[St George's Church Community Space, Aubrey Walk, Campden Hill, W8 7JG](#)

We have a new venue this year for our AGM. After two years at the Bankside Space in Southwark and last year on Zoom mid-lockdown, we are moving across London to St George's Church, Campden Hill. The nearest tube stations are Notting Hill Gate (6 minutes walk) and Holland Park (8 minutes walk). The venue has a kitchen so we will be ordering refreshments for after the meeting and members are welcome to bring food and drink to supplement this.

For those who liked the Bankside venue, unfortunately they had not reopened after the pandemic when we needed to make the booking, but we will certainly consider using them again.

All members are welcome to attend the AGM and we hope to see many of you on 12 March.

Gillian Swan



Obituary - Anna Mayer (1926 - 2022)

Members will be sad to hear that Anna Mayer, a member for 40 years, passed away on 29th January. She served on the committee, and as our General Secretary from 1992 to 1996.

Anna originally came to the UK with her brother in 1938 from Czechoslovakia, spending the rest of her childhood with an Aunt in Southend-on-Sea. After the war she spent some time in France. Her first contact with the club came in 1960 when she met Rosemary McLoughlin on a cruise around the Balearic Islands, but it wasn't until 1982 that Anna became a member. By then she worked as a secretary in Nat West bank in the City, commuting from her flat in Crouch Hill.

I remember Anna for her very clear and somewhat deliberate yet polite and elegant way of speaking and was a kind person in many ways. She attended many club, and Peter Gould's YHA weekends and often gave me a lift to them in her red Fiesta. These included Stroud (Easter 1984), Malvern (Easter 1986) and Sheringham (Aug 1988).

Anna joined the committee in the mid-eighties and provided a lot of help with organising the Malvern weekend which I led, researching accommodation and doing a reccy of the area with me to vet various possible guest houses. I often would carry out the navigation on these trips and when I gave a direction to turn left (or right) at a junction, she would reply "Are you sure?". To which I would reply "absolutely!".

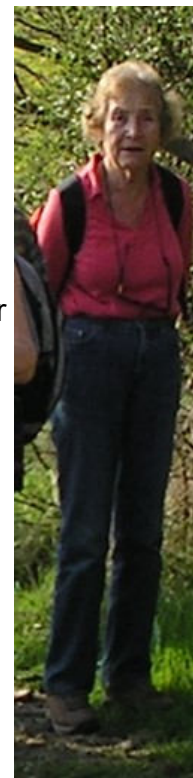
Then there was the lift to Sheringham (Aug 1988), where she picked me up near Kings Cross station. On arrival she opened the boot of the car to fit in my luggage then shut it and we drove off. After nearly a mile, near Highbury Corner, cars were starting to hoot from behind, to which she shrieked " Oh God", stopped the car, got out, to find her handbag still resting on top of the car!

Anna was a lover of classical music and opera and spent many years during the 80s and 90s stewarding at the Royal Festival Hall, which enabled her to hear much music performed live. She attended many performances at Covent Garden and Sadlers Wells and occasionally invited me to a concert and the ballet. I recall during a YHA weekend at Matlock (Aug 1991), with Anna driving me through the grounds of Chatsworth House, with a Mozart Piano concerto playing on the cassette player. "The music and scenery blended as one".



Many members will of course remember the Thames boat trip in July 2006, where Anna invited many polyramblers to attend, in celebration of her 80th birthday. We all assembled at the Festival Hall pier, and sailed upstream towards Imperial Wharf (Chelsea), then turned back and continued to the old Royal Naval College, Greenwich and finally back to the start.

During her later years Anna's attendance at rambles gradually declined, but we were always pleased to see her at club social gatherings, e.g. visits to restaurants, pantomimes and many of the Christmas pub lunches, as she was a great conversationalist. She will be dearly missed by those of us who knew her.



Geoffrey Waters

Weekends away 2022

We are very much hoping that we will be able to get back to our usual programme of trips away this year as the pandemic recedes. This is what we have planned for 2022:

Friday 22 to Sunday 24 April: Walking the Peddars Way from Swaffham to Holme-next-the-sea. Fully booked. Enquiries to Gillian gswan70@gmail.com

Wednesday 1 to Sunday 5 June: Walking in the Alsace region of France (trip postponed from 2020). We are waiting to hear if the holiday centre has more accommodation and will be in touch with those who have expressed an interest as soon as we hear back. Enquiries to Dominique tonybyrnes@compuserve.com

Friday 26 to Tuesday 30 August: August bank holiday weekend in Cornwall. Based in student accommodation in Penryn near Falmouth Enquiries to Gillian gswan70@gmail.com

Friday 30 September to Tuesday 4 October: Autumn weekend in the Scottish Highlands. See separate article on page 2. Enquiries to Rochelle rochelle.bloch@btopenworld.com



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