



The Poly Rambler

Members' Newsletter of the Polytechnic Rambling Club

www.polyramblers.org.uk

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Chair's message (continued)

We had excellent accommodation in the VVF Holiday Centre Orbey. The staff made us feel very welcome, and we enjoyed a wine tasting session and karaoke. I particularly enjoyed Geoffrey's rendition of a Kate Bush song, an unforgettable evening. Dominique organised some quite challenging walks incorporating castles and lakes and memorial sites to WW1.

For the August Bank Holiday weekend we stayed in accommodation at Penryn near Falmouth. We had nice weather and stunning scenery as we walked around the Roseland Peninsula and went on a ferry from Falmouth to Place.

Our final weekend club trip of the year was to Fort William organised by Rochelle. Train strikes did not deter Poly Ramblers as they managed to be first in the queue to board the train to Glasgow. Five of our group climbed Ben Nevis. A great achievement. We ended the trip with a visit to Corrour youth hostel on the edge of Loch Ossian and a meal at the Station House. The delayed last train caused concern that we may not get back to Fort William!

Chair's message

We will all have been greatly saddened by the death of Queen Elizabeth II who was celebrated for her passion for the outdoors, the countryside and rural life, she lent her support to the work of the Wildlife Trusts and many environmental charities over the years.

Now that we are moving into Autumn, the summer hot weather reaching at one point 40 degrees at Heathrow will be replaced by colder weather and more muddy walks! Gillian was kept very busy writing emails informing us of cancellations because of the heat and later further changes because of the train strikes still ongoing.

We had some excellent walking trips away this year. Dominique finally managed to organise the twice postponed trip to Alsace.

We were very sorry to hear that Hazel Sack had died after a long illness. Hazel was a longstanding member of our club who had introduced a number of colleagues who worked for Westminster University to the Poly Ramblers (see obituary on page 10).

The committee agreed to organise some events with club funds this year to Chislehurst Caves, a tour of Windsor Castle later in the year and a map reading course.

The year would not be complete without our annual Christmas lunch and we return to the ever-popular Freemasons Arms.

I look forward to seeing you on our forthcoming walks.

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.

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Donations 2022

At the AGM earlier this year, it was agreed that the Committee would decide which donations were to be made this year. This they did at a meeting in April and the HF Pathways Fund, the Disabled Ramblers and the Woodland Trust were chosen.

The last is the UK's largest woodland conservation charity and a new recipient for a donation. The £50 in question has been used to dedicate five trees to members who had passed away in recent years. They are Ian Gordon, Solvig Starborg, Valeria Mosini, Anna Mayer and Hazel Sack. The trees are in a grove at Theydon Bois at the east end of the Central Line. They will not be individually identified, but a walk to be arranged through the area in the future will still be a nice way to remember the five much-missed members.

Of the other recipients, the HF Pathways Fund continues to give grants for walking-related causes. Recently, it supported the restoration of Cotswold Way sections that were in urgent need of repair and improvement.

As for the Disabled Ramblers, they continue their campaign of raising awareness of the needs of people with limited mobility and to organise a national programme of rambles for people who use mobility scooters.

Danny



Woodland Trust wood in Theydon Bois (Wikimedia Commons - free to share)

The Polytechnic Rambling Club
Christmas Lunch - Sunday 11th December 2022 - 1.30pm

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

Nearest tube: Covent Garden - Piccadilly Line

MEMBERS £27 FOR THREE COURSES

This price includes gratuities and a subsidy from the Donations Fund.

Guests of members are welcome at £35 for three courses.

STARTERS

Chicken Liver & Brandy Parfait

With cranberry & raisin Crispbreads, onion chutney and dressed watercress

Roasted Parsnip & Celeriac Soup (vg)

With parsnip crisps and artisan pumpkin bread

Roasted Squash & Red Onion Salad (v)

With truffle goats cheese dressing, spiced gingernut crumb and toaster pine nuts

Beetroot Cured Smoked Salmon

With horseradish & chive crème fraîche, dressed watercress and sourdough

Courgette & Sweetcorn Fritters (vg)

With confit heritage tomatoes, pomegranate seeds and coconut & soya yoghurt

MAINS

Traditional Roast Turkey

With pigs in blankets, sage & onion stuffing, crispy roast potatoes & seasonal vegetables

Roasted Plant-Based Chicken Breast (vg)

With cranberry & orange stuffing, crispy roast potatoes, seasonal vegetables and rich gravy

Pressed Slow Cooked Pork Belly

With pork crackling, crispy roast potatoes, seasonal vegetables and spiced plum sauce

Jewelled Nut Roast (v)

With butternut squash, sweet potato & carrots mixed with nuts, seasonal vegetables and rich onion gravy

Festive Burger

With pork & sage stuffing, turkey bacon rashers, pigs in blanket, chips and a jug of gravy

Roast Haddock

Wrapped in streaky bacon & served with hasselback potatoes, cauliflower puree and steamed kale

DESSERTS

Traditional Christmas Pudding (v)

Served with clotted cream & redcurrants

Warm Triple Chocolate Brownie (v)

Served with black cherry compote & clotted cream

Lemon Meringue Tartlet (v)

Served with fruity raspberry coulis, fresh berries and caramelised lime

Blackcurrant Delice (vg)

With a crisp biscuit base, blackcurrant mousse, chocolate ice cream and hazelnut brittle

English Cheese Board (v)

A selection of English cheeses with biscuits and chutney

To Finish

Coffee & Mince Pies (v)

BOOKING

To book, pay by bank transfer to the Club's bank account (number 29935940 & sort code 05-02-00) by no later than **SUNDAY 4th DECEMBER** and email qprduffy20@hotmail.com with your menu choices. Alternatively, send a cheque made out to the Polytechnic Rambling Club, along with your menu choices, to Danny Duffy, 28 Dunraven Road, London W12 7QZ.

The numbers attending and their menu choices will be communicated to the Freemasons on Monday 5th December. The Club cannot guarantee that refunds will be made for cancellations received after this date.

Alsace Weekend - May 2022

Strollers



The stroller walks on the Alsace trip started with a coach ride to Ribeauville with the hikers. They soon shot off along the picturesque Grande Rue while we took our time admiring the many attractive timber-framed flower-decked buildings enroute. Instead of heading for the three castles overlooking the village, like the hikers, we joined a section of the Way of St James pilgrim route which would take us to Hunawihr via a plethora of vineyards. The fortified church was worth seeing but otherwise this working village lacked tourist facilities like a bar! However, I managed to buy some cans



of cold beer from a small shop which went down a treat with our packed lunches! Continuing on, we reached the lovely walled village of Riquewihr, where our four-mile walk ended. We had time for refreshments and an enjoyable road train sightseeing tour before we returned by coach to Orbey.

On the next day, the coach dropped us off at the Hohrod German Military Cemetery. From there, we had a short climb to the Linge Memorial which commemorates the First World War battle in its vicinity. Whilst we were in the museum, there was torrential rain which fortunately had finished by the time we carried on walking. Our next stop was the Col du Wettstein French Military Cemetery where we had our picnic lunches. A steep climb took us up to a high ridge which gave us a level route all the way to the end point of our five-mile walk at the Lac Noir. There some of us attempted to go round the lake while the rest of us relaxed in the cafe with refreshing beers. The coach turned up to take us back to the holiday centre along with the slightly bedraggled hikers who had been caught out in the open by the earlier torrential rain.



On the final day, a number of strollers decided to visit Colmar for some sightseeing. The remainder joined me on a circular five-mile morning walk from the centre. We climbed past the St Genest Chapel to the Sacred Heart statue where we enjoyed the extensive views. We then headed to the high point of the Creux D'Argent and returned by pastoral fields to Orbey. In the afternoon, most of the stroller group went by bus to the charming town of Kaysersberg while I carried on to Basel for a night's stay before an early-morning flight back to London.

Danny

Alsace Weekend - May 2022 (continued)

Hikers

Wednesday 1 June 2022

Finally, after being postponed twice, it was third time lucky and 36 Polyramblers made their way to Alsace for our walking weekend. We all met at Colmar station - whose design was used in the construction of Gdansk's main rail station - some arriving from London that day and others having spent a few days in Colmar and/or Strasbourg. Our coach was waiting for us and took us to Orbey, the small town where we were staying in a holiday centre (which was up a hill).

But the trip did not start well. The coach driver had been told by his boss to leave us at the bottom of the hill as it was difficult for coaches to turn around in the car park of the holiday centre. We did not enjoy the prospect of walking up a steep hill with our luggage. But, after a few phone calls, we were told to go back on the coach and we were safely delivered to our accommodation.

We were allocated our rooms and some opted to use the indoor pool straight away. After settling in, I found the Polyramblers in the bar (of course) where they were sampling wines from a local producer. After somewhat of a chaotic meal when people tried to identify what they could and could not eat, we went to bed looking forward to our first walk.

Thursday 2 June 2022: Ribeauville to Hunawirh via three castles



After breakfast, our coach arrived to take us to Ribeauville and managed to turn around without any problems. Once the obligatory toilet stop over, we made our way through the beautiful village of Ribeauville passing lovely shops. We could not resist stopping at a biscuit shop to sample what was on offer. From the town, we could see the three castles we were aiming for. We started the proper walk going up through the forest in the vale of Lutzelbach. We stopped at a spring to fill our water bottles. We were glad to be in the shade because it was quite a hot day. Picnic tables were mentioned in the walk description but we did not find them and had

lunch sitting on logs. After a bit of confusion about the instructions, we finally found the right path. We did not go up to the Haut Ribeaupierre castle as advised in the description and made our way to the Saint Ulrich castle down a narrow stony path. We turned a corner and, here it was, an impressive ruined XIII century castle with amazing views of Ribeauville and the Alsace vineyards below. The ruins of Girsberg castle were only a few hundred yards away on a rocky promontory so we made our way there.

This afforded us an even better view of Saint Ulrich castle. A few people opted to visit Saint Ulrich castle while the rest of the group made our way down a steep narrow path.



Alsace Weekend - May 2022 (continued)

We had taken a wrong turn at the castle so missed the Dussenbach monastery which slightly shortened the walk. We all met at the bottom of the path in Ribeauville and discussed our options: have a drink here and continue our walk or walk to Hunawihr and have a drink there. We chose the latter which turned up to be the wrong decision. We continued along a narrow road in the middle of the vineyards with the three castles behind us. We were walking on one of the Saint Jacques de Compostelle routes. It was hard going on a hard surface without any shade and we were all looking forward to a cold drink in Hunawihr. But it was not to be. The small shop where Danny bought his cans of beer earlier was shut and there were no bars or restaurants. Hunawihr is a working village, not based on tourism, so there are no facilities. We walked around the village and ended up in the fortified church of Saint Jacques le Majeur (XV-XVI century). After visiting the church, we all sat in silence in the pews enjoying the atmosphere and the cool. The coach picked us up and stopped in Riquewihr where we had to wait for some of the strollers who were in a bar. Lucky them!



Friday 3 June 2022: The four lakes (or in our case, three!)

A very different scenery today of low mountains, moor, bogs and forests. The coach dropped us off at Col du Calvaire. We walked up through a meadow and forest up to the Lac Blanc ridge and then along a narrow path with the lake below us before turning towards Gazon du Faing, a high moor which is a protected habitat.

Then clouds gathered, storm and tempest ensued and it was time to put our wet gear on. It rained for a good half hour ensuring that we were all soaked. Soggy and feeling sorry for ourselves, we continued along the moor, stopping at a trig point to take photos of the Lac des Truites below. Then I took a wrong turn and we went down to a road and, when I realised we



had gone the wrong way, we had to go up again. We finally found the right path which was quite stony and difficult to negotiate.

We met three French ramblers who told Stuart that Chalet Ericsson was open for lunch. It is run by volunteers from the Club Vosgiens, the rambling club in eastern France. They serve food and drinks and allow people to eat their own lunch. This was good news. We gave a miss to Lac Vert which would have meant a detour and had a lovely break at the chalet.

Alsace Weekend - May 2022 (continued)

Then I took a wrong turn again, getting mixed up with the names of the lakes, and we had to come up a path we had just descended. We continued through the forest and finally arrived to Lac des Truites where fishermen were trying to catch trout. We headed towards Lac Noir up a stony narrow path through woodland. It was getting late and I knew we would not make it back to Lac Blanc so phoned our coach driver to ask him to wait for us in Lac Noir where he was meeting the strollers. It was down all the way



on a forestry lane and then a narrow path. We arrived at the agreed time to meet the strollers who had time to have a leisurely drink. Back at the holiday centre, dinner consisted of specialties from Alsace: flammenkuche, sauerkraut and apfelstrudel, a bit too rich and plentiful even after a hard walk.

Saturday 4 June 2022: Orbey-Le Linge



We started by climbing the very steep hill opposite the holiday centre towards Pierre du Loup. Ida and Stephen went to investigate and reported that it was just a big stone. We continued through woodland and then had a long steep climb along pine trees, stopping at one point so that half a dozen people could help put a plaster on Siew Kee's blister. Finally arrived at the top, we had a rest at the Pierres Tremblantes, which were more remarkable than Pierre du Loup.



Alsace Weekend - May 2022 (continued)



We then followed a forestry lane for a few miles, crossed a road and continued through the forest. We nearly lost Rochelle at that point. She had told someone she was having a pit stop but that someone forgot about it and the group continued

walking. Rochelle caught up with us and we arrived at the Baerenstall, a 1914-18 German military cemetery. We spotted picnic tables so stopped for lunch. Afterwards, we made our way to Le Linge Memorial Museum. We walked in the German trenches and saw the remains of the French trenches before going to the museum to learn about the waste of 17,000 soldiers' lives on this 14-18 battlefield.



We continued through meadows and woodland to the Col du Wettstein, the site of a French military cemetery.



We stopped at a spring to fill our water bottles and made our way downhill to the small village of Les Basses Huttes on a small lane. After a steep hill, we re-entered the forest and followed the GR 531 then continued our descent towards Orbey through a valley. After a final hill, we were back at the holiday centre.

Sunday 5 June 2022: Journey back to London

The weather changed for our last day and it was raining quite heavily when we woke up. After breakfast, we finished our packing and the coach took us to Colmar station. We learnt that there were delays and cancellation on the Eurostar as overhead cables had been damaged near the Gare du Nord following a thunderstorm. We took a Train Express Regional (TER) to Mulhouse and a TGV to Paris Gare de Lyon. We had to negotiate two stops on the Metro and arrived at a chaotic Gare Du Nord. As we were early, some of us had a meal in nearby brasseries. We kept hearing of trains cancelled and people having to book hotels to travel the following day. Being mainly British, we saw a queue and joined it in an orderly fashion. We established that our train would leave, but with a delay of around two hours. So we waited and waited and managed to get through security, then went in the waiting room and boarded a nearly empty train. But even this delay could not spoil an excellent trip - if I can say so myself.

Dominique

Provisional dates for 2023 trips

Weekend of 14/15 January - Snow walking weekend
Venue to be confirmed
Please contact Dominique le Marchand if you are interested
Dominique.le.marchand17@gmail.com

Weekend of 22/23 April - North Norfolk coastal path stage 1 long distance walk
Gillian Swan
gswan70@gmail.com
Details to be advertised shortly

27-31 May (bank holiday weekend) - Cotswolds walking based near Cirencester
Gillian Swan
gswan70@gmail.com
Details to be advertised shortly

25-29 August (bank holiday weekend) - Derry, Northern Ireland
Jackie McCartan
Details to be advertised in the New Year

October dates to be confirmed - Autumn weekend based at a Youth Hostel
Venue to be confirmed
Danny Duffy
Details to be advertised in the New Year



Cotswolds Oxfordshire 2016

Hazel Sack

Hazel passed away at the North London Hospice on 27th July after a period of illness.

I had known Hazel for over 30 years. She lived just five minutes walk from me and was part of a local group of friends, so she was someone I saw on a very regular basis. In fact, it was Hazel who introduced me to Polyramblers. As hiking and the people in the club are such an important part of my life, I shall be forever grateful to her for this. She introduced many other people, apart from myself, to Polyramblers.

Hazel was a true Londoner, born within the sound of Bow Bells and her love of London never diminished though she hated the way that glass and concrete were so radically altering the character of our city.

Hazel was introduced to walking by her father when she was a child who would take her on walks in Epping and Hainault forests. A regular on day walks and the hostel weekends, she was at one time a committee member and co-led walks with me on a number of occasions. As Hazel became older she became a keen member of stroller group. Ill health meant she was seen less often in recent years, though even as she was struggling with mobility, she was absolutely determined and succeeded with my help, in attending the recent Poly Christmas lunch. She loved seeing everyone.

Hazel was a loyal friend though she wasn't always the easiest person to be with and I frequently clashed with her. However, she was always there and a part of my life and I shall miss her. A wake took place for Hazel's London based friends at her favourite pub in Muswell Hill in September when we enjoyed a memory photo board and the music of her favourite bands. A good time was had by all and seven Polyramblers including myself attended.

RIP Hazel.

Mary King



Toast to Hazel