

Coventry CHA Rambling Club Newsletter December 2025

Our Cyprus Holiday

On the Wednesday 19th November twenty-two club members set out for Cyprus. The flight from Birmingham was quite early, (wouldn't you know it!), and so we had strict instructions from our glorious leader that we were to be at the airport no later than 6.15 a.m. Everyone seemed to have taken all the instructions to heart. No one forgot their passport and no one misplaced their boarding pass on the way to security except my husband who was convinced that I had taken possession of it despite my assertions to the contrary. Fortunately, he had a copy of it on his phone, but before he could find it our leader produced a paper copy and he was able to continue through. (The offending item was later found to be in a fellow member's envelope that he was looking after!!) So, we were able to gather as a complete and smiling group at the correct flight gate ready to start our Cyprus adventure.

We arrived in Paphos airport without incident and proceeded gamely to tackle the new procedures at Passport Control. Apparently, all those photos in your passport are not enough and there is a need for another one printed on a piece of paper!! However, the look of resigned irritation on the faces of airport staff was not going to dampen our cheerful holiday spirit. We synchronised our watches to two hours further along, waited dutifully for our luggage and were shown to the coach that was to take us promptly to the lovely Athena Beach Hotel all beautifully decked out for Christmas.

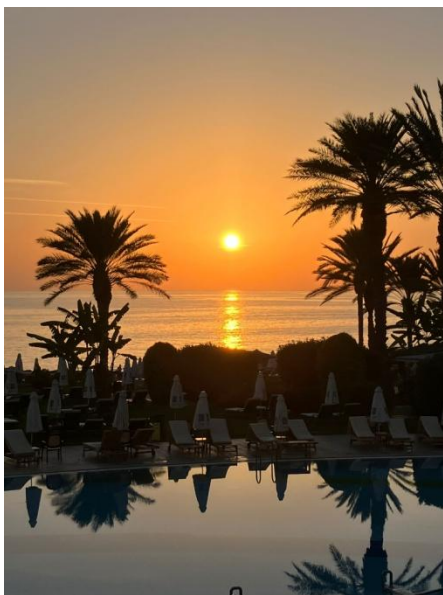


The next day, Thursday, was designated as one for walking and after sampling the many choices that the buffet had to offer we gathered as one group and walked straight out at the back of the hotel along the well-constructed seafront all the way to the harbour, so that everyone could get an idea of the local area. We were now well into holiday mode, so naturally when we reached the harbour we stopped at one of the many cafes for refreshment and some chat.

Walkers now decided how much further they wished to walk.

The C group walked as far as the castle at the end of the harbour and were free to explore there or the UNESCO world heritage site also located in that area. A further option was to simply walk back to sample the delights of the hotel. Did I mention that the weather was lovely and warm and there was an indoor and an outdoor pool available? The B group carried on along the coast as far as the Tombs of The Kings. This title was not strictly accurate as it was an elaborate burial ground for Paphian aristocrats and important officials, not kings, but the tombs carved out of solid rock were ornate in style and reflected the different empires living on Cyprus since 4BC and the importance of the afterlife. The visit was well worth 2.5 Euros of anyone's money! After the visit there was a choice to be made about using the straightforward bus system that went right past our hotel or to walk back. Most chose to walk back via the harbour, but some of us rather liked the idea of easing the strain with an ice cream. As I say, we were getting into holiday mode!

There was plenty of helpful advice and activities available at the hotel. A notice board informed guests of activities for the day and trips or cycle hire could easily be arranged at a desk in reception. Entertainment was also laid on in the evening, and this first night was a magician. Three of our walking group were enticed onto the stage to help, but not one could tell us how that lady tied up in a bag managed to change places with a man tied up in the bag!!



The next day was a do as you please day so a few of us tested out the bus system, just changing buses once, and went to look at some more beautiful scenery by the sea at Coral Bay. Some brave souls even took a swimming costume and towel and ventured in the sea. Others had a short amble, chatted some more, and looked for a leisurely lunch venue. We could have watched that man on a motorised surfboard all day! That evening the entertainment was a dance group of five ladies who were not half bad. One young lady was closer to a gymnast, I'd say.

On Saturday a coach took us inland to a small typically Greek village and taverna. We were dropped off just outside Kritou Terra as the village roads were very narrow and we proceeded to the taverna where the small C group were to take refreshment, walk to view ancient wash holes, where women in the past would have gathered to do the weekly washing load, and proceed to the top of the Kremiotis Waterfall for which the village is famous. The unexpected bonus apparently was an invitation by an elderly resident to step inside her house and sample her fig jam!

I should mention at this point that, as we were inland, the terrain had changed to beautiful hilly scenery, and it was quite hot. The plan for the B group was to set off straight away, go uphill a little way and walk round to view the waterfall from the road as we had previously found a walk to the bottom of the waterfall somewhat underwhelming! (due to a hot summer perhaps!) However, by the time we reached the waterfall most walkers did not wish to continue round the headland but preferred to return straight back to the taverna for much needed cooling refreshment. We like to be flexible, so one leader led most of the group back to the village and the other one carried on with three intrepid (or crazy?!) ramblers. I think they enjoyed the great views in spite of the quite steep, very warm ascent up the road back to the taverna and I was happy to learn that the Cypriots were prohibiting the hunting of their native wild sheep, the mouflon, to get their numbers back up.

The highlight of all the evening events had to be the Greek night. Togas and laurel leaf head gear were delivered to our rooms and after any adjustments with sizes and fittings, we all assembled downstairs looking pretty good I have to say. A sumptuous banquet awaited us, and it is no exaggeration to say that both food and drink flowed!

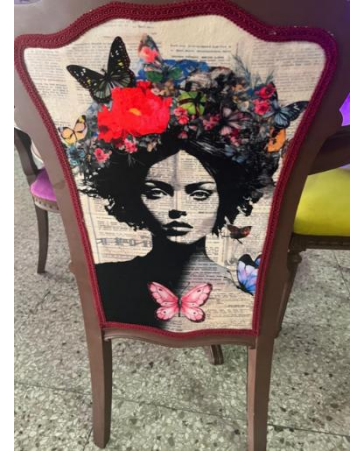


We had two musicians on keyboard and bouzouki who sang and played authentic Greek music, and they were joined later by two gentlemen to demonstrate traditional Greek dance. Despite the drink there was much enthusiastic clapping which was in time with the music, and it was very evident that a good time was had by all!!

Sunday was another day to amuse ourselves. Some used the bus service to visit the old town and to possibly pick up some souvenirs and others were probably happy to potter in a leisurely fashion after the demands of the Saturday walk!

Monday's walk was fortunately less challenging as the weather had cooled a little. We headed inland again by coach to the mountain village of PanoPanayia the birthplace of Archbishop Makarios, the first president of Cyprus, who some of us remember from our youth regularly popping up on the television.

The area also produces the best wine of the island. Starting from a lovely café, the Veranda TouOnirou, run by a lady and her mother who seemed besotted by Frida Kahlo décor, the plan was for both groups to head to the Chrysoroyiatissa Monastery.



The C group, after refreshments of course, were to go uphill slightly to admire the wonderful views towards the reservoir and then come down to the monastery to have a look round and purchase any produce on sale that they fancied.

The B group had a steeper climb to a vast area of vines, but the temperature was more comfortable and eating grapes that had escaped the harvest kept some very happy!



We finally descended to join the other group and look round the monastery, have some drinks, admire the views and then return with the C group down the road back to the village café for delicious homemade vegetable soup and light, fluffy kourabiedes biscuits.

On Tuesday quite a few people decided that they could not visit Cyprus without going to visit the North to see how an island could be divided into a Greek region and a Turkish area, with British army camps based at the border keeping the peace.

Some of the group booked a trip to Nicosia and others a trip to the city of Famagusta which included the area of Varosha, a once luxury tourist area which was fenced off by the Turkish army after the invasion of 1974 and which had been left in ruins with only some streets reopened to visitors in 2020.



I think most people would agree that this was a strange experience. Our tour guide who had been a child there when the invasion took place was very knowledgeable about the area's history. She also gave us precise instructions about collecting all our passports at the border, when photos could and could not be taken, and what we should not be purchasing while there. This was the only day we had a downpour and though I was interested in the area's history and archaeology, after the strange feel of Varosha, I was happy to show passports again and return to the South.

What can be said about Wednesday except that it was that time to go home with all the procedures that that entails. We were sad to leave the comfortable temperatures and the bright sunshine behind as we knew how low the temperatures had dropped at home in our absence, but all went smoothly enough on the return journey. One of our party was called to a flight gate at Paphos airport, but it was only a routine luggage check, and we arrived back at Birmingham without any problems or delays. We said our goodbyes and hopefully headed home with memories of lots of laughs, lovely scenic walks and some new experiences.

Moir

Annual Dinner 2025

The annual lunch on 28th September took place at Hearsall Golf Club. The weather was warm and sunny and an ideal day for a walk. Terry led us on a lovely walk from the golf club through the lakes and grounds of the University of Warwick via Canley ford.



Walkers take scary encounter in their stride

Back at the golf club we were made most welcome and the carvery and dessert that followed were excellent. We finished off with a relaxing drink outside on the terrace.

Our thanks to Terry for organising a smashing day out.

Bridgnorth Christmas Trip

On Saturday November 27th, the day started out quite miserable. It was raining, but on board the coach driver Dave brightened up the occasion with his jolly Santa hat and Christmas decorations.

By the time we reached Bridgnorth it had stopped raining and we then had a couple of hours to look around the town and the market, before the coach picked us up again to whisk us off to the hotel for our dinner. At the hotel there was another group from Dunwoods and we were all treated to a festive carvery. It was a very nice, well-cooked meal which was enjoyed by everyone. After the meal the entertainment was a singer from Walsall who sang lots of crowd pleasers. This got many of us up and dancing all afternoon!

On the return journey everyone was in good spirits, and we sang Christmas carols all the way home. A lovely day out will always have that effect!

Debbie

Bench at Ryton Pools

The old bench at Ryton Pools has been left in its original position, but now we have had a brand new one placed in a different location, just past the miniature railway station in the picnic area. This is in a much better position with an improved view. More people will be passing it as they walk close by along the track to feed the ducks and we hope that families will linger in the big green space to play games and use our bench to sit and eat their picnics.

Christmas with the CHA

Thursday walk on 4th December

We started our celebration of the season in Clifford Chambers with a five mile walk organised by Terry across the fields with great views of the counties around Warwickshire.



Even though it rained at the beginning of the walk we were grateful that it stopped in time for our coffee break. Angela provided the Christmas fayre and spirit with mince pies, two types of buns, two different types of sausage roll, mulled wine, soft drinks and a little sing song!

We returned to the New Inn and were joined by some non-walkers. So, in all, forty people sat down to eat a delicious carvery. There was a great atmosphere with a raffle and an auction in aid of Breast Cancer Research and £264 was raised.

Our Christmas party



On Friday 11th December the club held a Christmas party. Over 45 members supported the occasion. We had entertainment which included a picture quiz of television programmes, a sad poem to make us smile, a game of pass the parcel, and a raffle. We thought things couldn't get more exciting! The main event of the afternoon, however, was the arrival of a group of bell ringers who gave the event a very Christmas feel. They were even brave enough to allow the Treasurer to have a go. Such concentration was an

inspiration to us all! The buffet was delicious and thanks must go to members who supplemented it with mince pies, ginger biscuits and samosas. This event was enjoyed by all and a wonderful £385 was raised for Tools for Self-Reliance.

We must thank Terry and Jean very much for their organisation of this very enjoyable Christmas social occasion!