

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 101

February 2012

Dear Pilgrims,

Since the last newsletter the reunion has taken place, organised by team Chenery in Dorking, and I would like to start by thanking Louise and John for organising the weekend. One thing that I always enjoy on both our main walk each summer and on the reunion walks is the opportunity to visit the many churches along the way. On this occasion, however, the reunion was at St. Joseph's which happened to be the parish where I attended Mass until shortly before my 6th birthday. I had not set foot in the church since 1969 but I had managed to accumulate quite a few memories of the place even though I was so young at that time and the church appeared to be virtually unchanged in all those years – even the ceiling colour of the Nave was the same. We also took a lot of family walks in the area when we lived there, and although I have been back for a number of walks in the area in subsequent years it is always quite a trip down memory lane whenever I do so. Having the reunion at Dorking was therefore a particularly pleasurable experience for me, and I know from talking to others who attended that they enjoyed themselves too.

Looking ahead now, the halls are almost all booked for this year, and those of you who have volunteered to lead a day will be receiving the information about your start and finish points shortly, and will therefore be able to get your boots out start your planning. At the January committee meeting, it was agreed that the main theme this year will be the Lord's prayer and work to develop this will now get under way. It was also agreed that with the start location at Bath and the finish in Exeter both having major railway stations, pilgrims will be asked to make their own way to Bath for the start and back home from Exeter.

In the last newsletter I said that I would introduce some more names to you from those who nobly volunteered their services to assist in our organisational efforts (or was it simply that when volunteers were asked to step forwards, every else took a step backwards and wrong-footed them!). Already hard at work and stepping into a task where the results are always highly visible is Clare Gamble in the role of accommodation officer; thanks are also needed for the huge work done in this capacity by Rosemary Southon in recent years. Another role that at first sight might not be considered as particularly high profile is Church Liaison, but it is actually a really important and very time consuming task. This year, this task will be shared by Cerri Potts and Roger Keyes, and I am extremely grateful to both of them for taking this on.

The final new name that I wish to mention relates to a task that is unquestionably of huge importance to the well being of all of us on every pilgrimage – catering. We have benefitted from Alexe Parker's love and care in this department for several pilgrimages, and I know that I can offer heartfelt thanks to her on behalf of the whole pilgrimage for this, along with our regret that (for a number of reasons) she is unable to continue in this role. This job has been the subject of quite a lot of discussion both at the meeting held at the Warwick rest day on our last pilgrimage and at the AGM. I am delighted that Alison Webb has offered to co-ordinate the catering with a number of other pilgrims volunteering their services to work in teams – further planning will now be done to determine whether for example there should be breakfast and evening teams that either swap at each rest day or perhaps do a complete week, or if some other model would be better. It is hoped that organising the catering in this way will spread the workload around somewhat whilst ensuring that a vital overview is maintained to ensure that “too many cooks do not spoil ... our favourite dishes” (or perhaps more appropriately given the theme for 2012 “our daily bread”)!

May God bless you all.

Nick

Bill and Gil Tie the Knot

Bill Haynes and Gil Marston-Slater were married on 2 December 2011. It was Bill who started our pilgrimages back in 1975, and has brought Gil to meet us during the past three pilgrimages. We wish them both a wonderful life together. Bill celebrated his 70th birthday last August, with several pilgrims present at what seems to have been a great party. Bill is battling with a few health issues and is in our prayers.

Howard – 70 not out!

Last year's van driver Howard Buxton turned 70 in January. We're always impressed how Howard travels half way round the world to join us each year. Congratulations, Howard!

Rest in Peace

- Julian Farmer's mother died in November. We pray for Julian and Betsy.
- Sue Adilz writes: my Norwegian friend of 35 years, Gro Birgitte Taugbøl, who with her husband came on the Richard III Pilgrimage in 2003 died last night. She had cancer. She was 56. She leaves 2 children: Hans Petter 20, who has just started training with the Norwegian Air Force and Birgitte, 18, who is just finishing school. Please pray for them and for Werner, her partner and close friend Karin, who has supported her during this difficult time.
- John Frost from Chichester, who arranged our visit to Bede's World in 2009, has died (though it transpired this is a different John Frost from the person who walked with us some years ago).
- George Kelly, one of the group from Hove who transformed the support side of the pilgrimage back in the late 70s died in February; his funeral was at St Peter's, Hove, on 29 Feb.

Fr Joe Kengah

Joe seems to be well settled in his new parish. A Maryknoll missionary, Coralis, who worked with Joe in Mivumoni to get the epilepsy clinic up and running is helping him with a similar project in Kikambala. We were able to send Joe the money for a microscope for their dispensary, which was purchased before Christmas. Thanks to pilgrims who contributed.

Unfortunately, Joe's truck, which he uses to get around the parish and is essential to his work, suffered a cracked cylinder head, and repairs will cost some £2,000. Various friends have donated money towards this repair, and we have borrowed the remainder on Joe's behalf to get him back on the road. Your contributions to pay back the loan would be much appreciated. *Aidan Simons (contact via www.thepilgrims.org.uk/mail)*