

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Pilgrims, It seems hard to believe that this is the sixth (and therefore last) time that I have the responsibility and privilege of writing this section of the newsletter and this also means that I only have a couple of months of my 2 years as co-ordinator left to “survive”, although this remaining time does of course include the whole of this year’s pilgrimage with whatever challenges that may bring for all of us.

The numbers booked for this year are just a little down on last year, but for some strange reason I have the feeling that it could be a damper pilgrimage this year than it has been for a while, so having a little spare space in the halls to dry out clothing and arrows might well be helpful.

Do consider the effects of wet weather on the sort of clothing that you bring with you – jeans are definitely not right in such conditions and when did you last reproof your cagoule and over trousers (or is this perhaps the time to “splash out” (pun intended) on some new gear)?

I hope that if you are not blessed with good stamina and can just go out and walk consecutive 15+ mile days that you have managed to get some walking in by now despite the weather. Although this is not the hilliest of pilgrimages, it is not the flattest either with the Mendips, the Quantocks and the hills of Devon providing some ascent and descent but equally providing the views that justify the effort of climbing such places. The good news this year if you do have any fears in this regard is that alternative transport is reasonably good for much of the route so the option of walking for half of the day on any given day is realistic.

The reunion will need to be organised for some time in October and although it is early days yet with regard to organising this, it appears that we are getting a little challenged to come up with fresh venues and perhaps more importantly fresh organisers. As with many things, reunions are easiest to arrange if 3 or perhaps 4 people share the organisation of the event. If you feel that this would be your cup of tea, I would love to hear from you and if you are unsure about what is involved, there are plenty of previous organisers who can talk you through the process and tell you the sort of things that work (and as importantly, the ideas that don’t work). If I have received some offers or just suggestions prior to the start of the pilgrimage then these can be discussed during the walk and hopefully a decision then made by the time that we reach Exeter.

Further thoughts for the future that will be the focus of the AGM (on 9/9/2012) concern the pilgrimages for the next 3 years as 2015 will mark our own 40th anniversary and as many of you will know, our first pilgrimage in 1975 was a commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the formation of the A&B Diocese, so 2015 will mark the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese as well as our anniversary. The Diocese is already forming plans to celebrate the occasion and our presence and history within the Diocese are known to the planners but clearly something special should be done. In considering what to do for 2015 itself, this naturally has an impact on what we do in the next 2 years as well in order that 2015 is as special as it deserves to be. Your ideas for any or all of the next 3 years would therefore be extremely welcome as would be your attendance at the AGM. We also need to ensure that the committee continues to be made up of people who are comfortable in their roles and most importantly that there are others waiting in the wings to take over when the time comes. We have been truly blessed by many who have given unstintingly of their talents and time over the years, so if you think that YOU could be the next Halls booking officer, minute secretary or even co-ordinator please do get in touch.

Each pilgrimage is sure to leave its mark on all participants. Last year was special to me for many reasons that I touched on in the October newsletter, and even before we start this year’s walk it has a special resonance to me as our starting point in Bath was the end point of my first A&B Walking Pilgrimage – the St Dunstan’s walk of 1986 (although this was not my first actual pilgrimage, as I had been to Lourdes in 1982 and 1985 with A&B). I do hope and pray that we do not have quite the trials and tribulations of

1988 (those who were there will know what I mean by the “Roxwell survivors”) and yet it was remarkable how the pilgrims rallied round on that occasion, as we have on other occasions, and we should always remember that a true pilgrimage ought to have a little bit of discomfort as well as enjoyment.

Whatever Our Lord has in store for each of us, I wish you a good pilgrimage this year whether you are pounding the paths between Bath and Exeter or watching via the website, and look forward to seeing you at Bath or at some later stage – don’t forget that you can join for a day without having to book!

May God bless you all. *Nick*

Come and Join Us – or Join Us Online

Enclosed with this mailing (or on the website) you should find a “Come And Join Us For A Day” leaflet outlining our route and timings. Why not take up the invitation and walk a little way with us (or just meet us at a church or pub!). For those unable to get to us, you can be part of the pilgrimage by following our daily diary updates at <http://live.thepilgrims.org.uk>. The extended “virtual pilgrimage” has become a feature in recent years – do join us!

New-Born Pilgrim

Pilgrims who walked to Lincoln in 2006 will remember Polish sisters Marta and Ola from Gdańsk. Marta e-mailed to tell us that she and her husband Michal Szagzdowicz have a daughter, Zofia, born on 23rd June 2012.



On the move:

Bernard Coleman has moved to Ivybridge, Devon.

Moira Vaughan writes:

I'm so sorry but I can't go on the Pilgrimage this year I wish you all a lovely one. Glastonbury is a special place for Jim & I & I'm sorry to be missing this particular route. Maybe next year, love to all, Moira.

Lourdes Lluch writes:

Hello from Frómista, on the St. James' Way!!! We've moved to this small village, where we offer you all our small friends-flat for a holiday or rest during your pilgrimage to Santiago. I think I'm not able any more to walk so many miles; but I'm happy to know about your pilgrimages and every second fortnight I pray for my English friends.