

NEWSLETTER

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BILL HAYNES RIP

Sadly Bill Haynes, known to many as founder of our pilgrimages, died from multiple cancers just before Christmas. His funeral was held in Little Chalfont on 3rd January 2013, with several pilgrims present (see obituary below), followed by cremation. Bill's ashes will be laid on his parents' grave after a memorial service to which all pilgrims are invited. Why not wear a pilgrim cross – your first perhaps? **Please let Aidan know if you want details when they are available.**

Dear Pilgrims,

This newsletter is a constituent part of the BIG mailing of the pilgrimage year. This beginning-of-year mailing is bigger than the other 2 regular mailings in two ways: its contents are larger and its distribution is wider. This year sadly its contents are larger than ever due to the inclusion of the notice of the Bill Haynes Memorial Service alongside the applications forms and posters for the 2013 Walsingham Pilgrimage. While the other two annual mailings go only to recently active pilgrims, this one is sent to everybody on the distribution list. Well, that is the case for the physical mailing, but if you receive your mailing by email (which is now the case for the majority), then you get all the mailings as well as the other "eNewsletter" emails that Comms Officer Aidan sends out during the year. Please let us know if you want to move from physical mailing to electronic mailing, and then we can reduce our postage costs. But also let us know if you want to move back from electronic to physical, or to receive the mailing in both formats. I don't want to lose touch with any pilgrim as a side effect of trying to reduce costs. Do let us know if you suspect that we are sending to any email addresses which in practice are never read.

As you will see from the application forms, I am delighted to announce that this year the pilgrimage is going back to Walsingham, for the first time since 1987 (which was before my time). The dates of the pilgrimage are Saturday 10th August to Sunday 25th August. The route from St Albans takes us through Bedfordshire, where John Bunyan preached and was imprisoned. He wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* while incarcerated in Bedford, and our theme this year will follow the story told in that book. We will end up the Marian Shrine at Walsingham because it is one of the pre-eminent historic pilgrimage destinations in England, and of course we will include a Marian element as we approach the end of the walk. The theme title is "To be a Pilgrim", after the favourite hymn inspired by *The Pilgrim's Progress*. As Bill Ward put it at the last pilgrimage committee meeting, it is a great sign of how the ecumenical movement has set aside the historic divisions between denominations that an ecumenical group walking to Walsingham can see it as perfectly natural to take *The Pilgrim's Progress* as its theme, full in the knowledge that the last thing puritan John Bunyan would have approved of is a pilgrimage to a Marian shrine! Later in the newsletter Sue reflects on what *The Pilgrim's Progress* has meant to her, and I encourage all pilgrims to read *The Pilgrim's Progress* themselves in advance of the pilgrimage.

You will see that we have increased the pilgrimage charge from £150 to £175 this year. Food, petrol and accommodation cost increases led to last year's pilgrimage making a loss of around £1000 so the increase is necessary. (We had sufficient funds to cover that loss but should avoid repeating it). Essentially the committee is assuming the same number of pilgrims as last year in making the calculation. We also have to consider the maximum number of pilgrims that we could take. More pilgrims = less cost per pilgrim, since some costs like the van hire are fixed regardless of how many pilgrims there are, and we are loath to turn anybody away, however more pilgrims also means more crowded halls so a lower standard of comfort. Historically, if in doubt as to where to set the limit, the committee tended to side on the more-the-merrier side of the debate, but in recent years we have given greater weight to the quality of pilgrim experience. Large halls are harder to find than they used to be, with schools now almost always unsuitable as the catering subcontractors will not allow use of the kitchens. Also the introduction of disabled loos into halls has often been achieved without increasing the overall floorspace allocated to loos and therefore has reduced their overall capacity; this trend is very admirable in itself but doesn't suit the pilgrims. At this stage the hall booking process is incomplete, so we don't know at what level we will have to cap the bookings, but there will be a cap, so get your application in early to avoid disappointment!

Since the last newsletter, we've enjoyed the 2012 reunion. Thanks to Gillian and Monica for hosting it splendidly in Gillian's parish, Our Lady of Fatima, in White City, West London. There is a report on the reunion later in the newsletter, and on the website.

And now we can announce the date of the 2013 reunion, which will take place from the evening of Friday 25th October to the morning of Sunday 27th October in Farnham. Put it in your diaries! Thanks to Ceri for booking this so far in advance! In the last few years pilgrims have not been springing forward to lead reunions as readily as they once did, and indeed in 2010 the newly appointed Coordinator Nick found himself organising the reunion himself, then in 2011 it fell to Louise and I (the then deputy coordinator). That must be because fewer of us are based in and around our home patch of Surrey and Sussex these days. In fact I wonder whether we might see the northern pilgrims organising their own reunion, as there are so many of them.

Such a reunion would help with the planning of the 2014 pilgrimage, as we have already decided that it will be "up north". Two routes are being considered. Each would start in Chester or Liverpool, and then we would either go up through Lancashire and the Lake District (low level, not Striding Edge!) to Carlisle or across the Pennines to York, via Ilkley Moor where the ducks play cricket. I would ask the proponents of these two routes to continue to investigate their feasibility, to assist the decision on which to opt for.

We have also decided that the 2015 pilgrimage route will be within Surrey and Sussex, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, and the 40th Anniversary of the foundation of our pilgrimage itself. I am looking out for opportunities to involve the pilgrimage in other ways as the diocese builds up for 2015.

In my last newsletter I was appealing for volunteers to fill the roles of van driver and treasurer. I am pleased to announce that Nick will be taking over from Patrick as treasurer, while also continuing as Deputy Coordinator. One of Patrick's final acts as treasurer was to produce the costings for this year's pilgrimage. Also we have a "Plan A" for the van driver role this year: Peter Doran and Howard Park will be sharing the driving. But I am still looking to identify more potential van drivers to give us a "Plan B", and indeed more potential drinks car drivers to give us "Plan B" as backup for Rosemary. Also we are always on the lookout for future RC, Anglican and Free Church chaplains. Please have a think about whether you can identify any candidates for these roles.

Last but not least, an independent production company named CTVC has a tentative proposal to do some filming on our Walsingham Pilgrimage. The idea is that 2 or 3 pilgrims would talk to the camera at various points on the way to Walsingham about how their spiritual journeys were progressing. This would then make up 3 items to be broadcast on the One Show! I'd like to see this happen and so would the producer at CTVC but it depends on the aforementioned 2 or 3 pilgrims coming forwards in advance of the pilgrimage (and on CTVC and the One Show deciding it is viable). If you are interested, contact me and I will put you in touch with the producer at CTVC.

Quiz question: how many former coordinators have contributed to or are mentioned in this newsletter? Thanks to them all for continuing to contribute to the pilgrimage organisation!

Best wishes, *John*

BILL HAYNES RIP

I first met Bill (as "Fr Haynes") about 40 years ago when he came to St Joan of Arc parish in Farnham as curate, his second appointment after ordination in Worthing and a first posting in Epsom. He was not unique among younger priests in getting involved with youth work, but Bill came with his own minibus (a 1965 Ford Transit, lovingly known as the Snoopy bus) and organised theatre trips (Godspell, Jesus Christ Superstar and Slade in concert!). He took groups of us to visit disabled people of our own age, who were largely institutionalised. He also shared his love of the outdoors and walking with us, taking us on an annual hike to Guildford Cathedral and the Diocesan YouthGather sponsored walk, and annual Youth Hostelling trips.

Sometime in late 1974 Bill, Bob Garrard (then a deacon at Farnham) and Fr Jude McHugo were discussing how to mark the Holy Year of 1975 (also the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton's 10th anniversary) and the idea of "Beating the Bounds" of the Diocese was formed. Bill did much of the planning and on Easter Monday 1975 some 25 of us set out from Arundel Cathedral – on a 10-day walk, but a journey that would last a lifetime. It was a tough walk – rain, snow, primitive accommodation, but as we walked hand-in-hand through Arundel Park as we returned to the cathedral with Bishop Michael Bowen we were elated.

My late father used to tell a story of that first pilgrimage. Bill was the original "front marker", putting up our fluorescent arrows, and dad was backmarker, taking them down and sweeping up the stragglers. As anyone who's done backmarking knows, it's a tough job for 1 day, let alone 10. Bill didn't always enunciate his Ps and Bs very clearly and came up to dad at the end of a long day and said "Mike, you're a prick!" Dad was rather taken aback, until he realised he was a BRICK. Bill always made the effort to appreciate and support us on our pilgrim journey.

Many friendships were made in that first pilgrimage – Imelda and I were reputedly the first “pilgrimage couple” having fallen into step on day 2, but Helen and Les Smith were the first to marry only weeks after meeting on the pilgrimage. There have been many more marriages and close friendships

We were unanimous in agreeing with Bill that there should be another pilgrimage, this time from Winchester to Canterbury (but Bill decided that was too short, so we started at Arundel). Again, Bill did most of the planning, including arranging to celebrate Mass in Winchester Cathedral (maybe the first time since the reformation).

Around this time Bill was posted from Farnham to be chaplain at Cardinal Newman School in Hove. Feedback from pupils of that era describe him as quite unlike other priests, approachable and supportive: characteristics many of us would value in him over the years. Newman also gave Bill a new recruiting ground for the pilgrimage – youngsters who might not be great church-goers but who found the pilgrimages accessible, and fun. The pilgrimage enjoyed its greatest numbers (and youngest average age no doubt), but Bill coped well with the challenges of keeping order and took it in good humour when he was beaten by some practical jokers.

Bill was moved, reluctantly, from Newman to St John’s Seminary at Womersley to share his great gift for pastoral care with trainee priests, but Bill missed being out there doing the pastoral work himself and this was not a happy time for him.

In 1981 the pilgrimage became Ecumenical, joining with the other churches in Sussex to celebrate the centenary of St Wilfrid, Apostle of Sussex. Bill (now definitely “Fr Bill” rather than “Fr Haynes”) took some risks to try to make the ecumenical aspects work (it’s a challenge we grapple with to this day) and built up a good working relationship with Anglican and Free-Church ministers. By this time some of the load of planning the pilgrimage was shared by others planning individual days, but Bill still did all the accommodation finding, church liaison, timings, advance shopping...

In 1982, with the great assistance of Fr Pat Olivier, Bill organised a special pilgrimage from Arundel to Wembley to welcome Pope John-Paul II, and amazed us all by finding a green and relatively pleasant route through west London.

By 1983’s pilgrimage to Evesham Bill had organised 10 pilgrimages, and the strain was starting to tell. He was now parish priest at Woodingdean, and he looked for a successor to run the pilgrimage. He took a back seat for the 1984 pilgrimage to Lindisfarne and the 1985 Birthdays pilgrimage. It was only when we tried to take it on that we realised just how much Bill had been doing, far more than any one person (or even small team) could take on. We realised that a bigger team was needed to share the load of planning and leading the pilgrimage, and invited Bill back to be “Chief Coordinator” – the idea being that he made sure the rest of us were doing our jobs properly rather than doing it himself.

The 1986 pilgrimage to Bath was much more successful, and over the next few years the committee developed, meeting first at Bill’s church in Rydes Hill, Guildford, then at Redhill when Bill moved there. Having steadied the tiller, after a few years Bill stood down as coordinator after which a series of coordinators have each taken a 2-year turn.

It came as a great shock to many of us when Bill announced in 1997 that he was leaving the priesthood to be with Kate, who he had met via the internet, but the majority of pilgrims wished him well in his new vocation. Bill and Kate popped up on the pilgrimage, at reunions, and at pilgrim functions. Bill got a job with London Underground and ran a small travel agency business. 10 years on, released from his vows by the church, Bill and Kate married, among friends including many pilgrims. Sadly Kate was terminally ill and they were separated all too soon.

In 2009 Bill appeared on the pilgrimage in Northumberland with a new lady in his life, Gil, and over the next few years they dropped in to the pilgrimage for a day or two each year, and joined other celebrations. We were happy when we learnt at Christmas 2011 that Bill and Gil had married, but Bill’s own fight with cancer was underway and he died on 23 December 2012.

Over the 15 years after leaving the priesthood, despite juggling work commitments, Bill was a constant support and inspiration to the pilgrims, especially those of us privileged to follow in his footsteps as coordinator. He wouldn’t tell you how to do things, but he’d share experiences from earlier times, listen, and encourage. Many going through major life changes found him tremendously supportive – he was, after all, an expert in pastoral care.

Bill had been able to plan much of his own funeral, from the music and prayers to the choice of an environmentally-sound cardboard coffin. A good number of pilgrims from throughout the decades came to send him on his way, and to share remembrances with each other and with Bill’s family and friends. The pilgrims were, of course, the last to leave (unable to drag themselves away from free food!).

Bill had wished to be buried with his parents in Worthing, but the grave could not accommodate him, so his remains were cremated and there will be a memorial service in Worthing to accompany the transfer of his ashes to

the family grave. All pilgrims and friends are welcome to join this celebration of Bill's life – and are encouraged to bring photos and memories to share.

Finally, at the funeral Patrick and I found it hard not to refer to the deceased as "Father Bill". There are those who say that this is right, as Bill's vocation simply changed direction. But in any case, he'll always be Father Bill to us – he's the Father of the Pilgrimage, without all of Bill's efforts in those early years there would be no pilgrimage, and without his support in later years organising would have been a greater burden for those who followed him.

So Bill, lay out your mat, slip into your sleeping bag, and enjoy the rest of a heavenly hall!

Aidan Simons

CHILDHOOD REFLECTIONS ON THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS BY JOHN BUNYAN

My mother, in her wisdom, read me this book at the age of 6. I was particularly struck and rather frightened by a picture of Christian (the principle character) with a large growth on his back, his "burden" that looked like a permanently attached rucksack.

I am about to re-read *The Pilgrim's Progress for the Pilgrimage* – but first let me summarize memories of that child: "Christian was going on a journey. He carried a burden that bore him down. He met Hopeful who cheered him up and didn't seem to be carrying a burden at all. They travelled together through thick and thin and got into all kinds of scrapes and met many obstacles: the Slough of Despond, there was some house that caused distraction and a dark forest, a place where the road split and a choice had to be made between the easy and difficult path." No prizes for guessing that the easy path quickly ran into trouble while the tough one proved worthy of Christian's effort.

Morals glide in and out of this story; to me, they were lost, I was 6. They were just frightening fairy tales not pointers for life! I was so relieved when Christian finally got rid of his burden: he does quite early on in the book: it rolls down the hill. Then he travels on. "Towards the end, before Christian and his friend Hopeful reach the Celestial City on a hill, they have to cross a river. This is the last challenge. Christian steps into the river and goes up to his neck. Hopeful is standing waist deep in water. Christian grasps hold of Hopeful with all his might and in fear is taken across safely to the other side by Hopeful who walks all the way." It is a startling image.

The Pilgrim's Progress is an allegory of our journey through life. Now I am older I can see that. We do not all have burdens of "sin" like Christian did physically stuck to our backs (certainly not as children), but we do have burdens, often internal ones; from time to time that need easing or shedding, letting go and rolling away.

It was always an anathema to me that Christian seemed to have the harder time. He was the one with the faith and trust and yet it was Hopeful who strode forward without fear. Hopeful that looked forward to getting there – who believed he would arrive. Christian suffered on the journey and got waylaid many times.

Thoughts after re-reading *Pilgrim's Progress*:

Christian leaves the City of Destruction in search of the Celestial City. He is told to go to the wicket gate to enter "by the narrow way". Messrs Obstinate and Pliable try to put him off. His family stay behind and chide him for going. Christian is pursued by those who would persuade him to return then he falls into a miry bog and has to be rescued. Distracted by Mr Worldly Wiseman, he eventually makes it to the gate, where he receives his passport to the Celestial City. He is told the burden will in time drop off of its own accord as he moves along the route, which it does.

Here the story takes on a different dimension. Past the wicket gate, Christian is instructed to follow the path that is straight and narrow. All other paths are to be avoided at all costs and lead to destruction. At once the path itself becomes difficult. At times enemies, physical and persuasive stand in the path, blocking its passage. Sometimes the way is steep, challenging and tiring; Christian is tempted to rest in pleasant but dangerous arbours; other times there is darkness, bad air, or light that affects the mind, causing confusion and drowsiness or grief. The hazards mount as the journey continues. He is rescued several times when he takes a wrong turning and ends up in difficulty; certain death awaits him who leaves the path. Christian meets many and varied companions on the way.

By way of respite, there are safe havens, places for pilgrims to rest and recuperate, learn and be guided and Christian takes full advantage of these: Inns or Refuges. These are used more extensively by Christiana and her family in the second half of the book. The second journey repeats the first, but by now, her husband, who has died and gone to "the Celestial City", is legendary, and his fame goes before them.

It is a triumph of hope over experience that she sets out at all, showing a complete change of heart from the start, when Christian set out alone. It is a touching tale of remorse and repentance, of tenderness and compassion, as we read how Christiana, and her companion Mercy, tread the path in her late husband's steps, encountering their own dangers, but making much progress on the way. It is a woman's tale, as told through the eyes of a man. The

women and children are in need of protection and travel as a group, which unlike Christian they have in the form of a guide all the way.

One thing becomes clear in the second part of the book that was not clear in the first. Christiana's party wait to be called to cross the river, whether flowing high or low, calmly or fiercely. We know from Christian's encounter, that crossing the river was deep and dangerous business. In Christiana's journey, pilgrims vanish as they cross the river, and although we are told of angels and chariots to meet them, we do not see what happens. The book ends with a monologue of testimonies of how each pilgrim in turn is called to cross the river, departing from this life to the next. We are not told what happens, we are left guessing, as we would be in life, with the faith to know or sense the destiny of another's departure. Without the certainty we had when Christian and Hopeful reached the Celestial City and were made welcome with open arms, trumpets and white garments. We are left with an imaginary vision of heaven, our loved ones departed.

John Bunyan

John Bunyan (1628-1688) left a remarkable legacy of Christian literature; his most famous book, *The Pilgrim's Progress* was written whilst in prison. John Bunyan was imprisoned more than once in Bedford jail, 12 years, for preaching without a licence and non-conformist views and therefore at odds with the established Church of England at the time. He was a troubled man, with a powerful imagination and an inner conviction that he should write. The book that came to him was not the one he originally intended to write, it was another – given as he wrote it from the confines of his cell: *The Pilgrim's Progress*. 100,000 copies circulated in Bunyan's lifetime; it has remained in print since.

Bunyan is depicted in the stained glass window in the Bunyan Meeting Free Church, Bedford, which commemorates the tri-centenary of the publication of *The Pilgrim's Progress* on 18th February, 1678. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a journey through life of a character called Christian, it weaves story with biblical text, biblical principles with allegory and clearly indicates the pitfalls in life through imaginative and clear labelling of obstacles and naming of characters such as they are or their behaviour suggests. We know what will happen by the language, by the descriptions and their names. We know that life for Christian will be a struggle against adversity and the status quo. Bunyan's episodes illustrate in story form the truths in biblical texts, quoted in the book. There are lessons to be learnt, examples to follow and in that *The Pilgrim's Progress* is very powerful; it also shows us character weakness and tendencies, which enable some and not others to follow the path to heaven, the "Celestial City" as Bunyan calls it. Many of Bunyan's phrases and images have found their way into our language, so absorbed that we are unaware of their origins. *Sue*

Further Biographical Notes on Bunyan from Bill

- Born Elstow, a village a mile from Bedford in Nov. 1628
- Bunyan became a Cromwellian soldier at 16, experiencing that terrible upheaval of violent political and religious upheaval that was the English Civil War. In restoration days he followed his trade as a brazier, a worker in brass. He had learnt to read and write as a child, becoming a considerable reader.
- He married and influenced by his first wife became an active Christian and eager Bible reader. A hot religious debater and compelling preacher, eventually leading his church community. A popular prophet of his times; but his powerful and unlicensed preaching led him to Bedford Jail, on and off for a decade. He was treated kindly in prison, allowed considerable freedom to see his family and community. Indeed his time in prison led to his most prolific writings. His most famous work : "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" was one of the fruits of this time.
- Eventually he was formally pardoned. He returned to preaching, controversy, writing and visiting a circuit of congregations. His authority so widely recognized he was nicknamed "Bishop Bunyan".
- Died August 1688

To be a Pilgrim... Homework on this year's theme from Sue...

I recommend reading "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" by John Bunyan – an abridged or children's version in the original language. We are hoping that Pilgrims might want to prepare some prayer stops in advance on our Theme "To be a Pilgrim", inspired by Bunyan's book. Please look at the theme sheet; if one of the daily themes inspires you, and you would like to prepare a prayer stop for the pilgrimage, let me know. There are some links below which may help or be of interest.

Walsingham Pilgrimage Theme				To be a Pilgrim...		
DAY, DATE AND DAILY DESTINATIONS				CONTEXT: <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i>	DAILY THEMES - PRAYER STOPS <i>Our Inner Journey</i>	
Day 1	Sat	10-Aug	St Albans	<i>John Bunyan - history & background</i>		
Day 2	Sun	11-Aug	Whitwell	Christian leaves the City of Destruction	Setting out	Moving on
Day 3	Mon	12-Aug	Barton-le-Cley	The Wicket Gate	Choice	Wide or Narrow Gate?
Day 4	Tue	13-Aug	Bedford	The Cross	Salvation	Loss of Burden
Day 5	Wed	14-Aug	Bedford - Rest Day	The Armour of God	Struggle	Battling the enemy
Day 6	Thu	15-Aug	St Neots	Christian meets Faithful	Encouragement	Actions speak louder than words
Day 7	Fri	16-Aug	Fen Drayton	Vanity Fair	Trials & Tribulations	Sacrifice
Day 8	Sat	17-Aug	Ely	Christian meets Giant Despair	Hope	Despair
Day 9	Sun	18-Aug	Downham Market	Byway to Hell	Navigation - finding the way	Retracing steps
Day 10	Mon	19-Aug	Kings Lynn	Enchanted Ground	Persistence	Overcoming obstacles
Day 11	Tue	20-Aug	Kings Lynn - Rest Day	The Celestial City	Crossing the River	Joy
Day 12	Wed	21-Aug	Heacham	Christiana sets out on her journey	Repentance	Desire for a better life
Day 13	Thu	22-Aug	Burnham Market	Christiana's Journey to the Celestial City	Family & Community	Vision of Heaven
Day 14	Fri	23-Aug	Walsingham	Arrival at Walsingham	Inspiration	Vision of Mary
Day 15	Sat	24-Aug	Walsingham	<i>Our Lady of Walsingham - background & history, abbey and shrines.</i>		
Day 16	Sun	25-Aug	Home	<i>Our Walking Pilgrimage complete: our Inner Journey continues...</i>		

Bunyan Links:

- <http://www.chapellibrary.org/bunyan/> gives information about John Bunyan himself and lists all his works. There is an option to download the complete book, although I would probably recommend an abridged or children's version in the original language
- <http://jeaninallhonesty.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/pilgrim%27s%20progress> Jean's website gives a contemporary insight into episodes in The Pilgrim's Progress and also uses it as a focus for bible study and discussion. Her site is well worth a visit; she also looks at the women in Bunyan's life and suggests some children's versions of the book.
- <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pilgrims/context.html> gives a one-page plot overview of The Pilgrim's Progress, plus information about all the characters and stages of the plot, should you want to pass an A level or indeed plan a cracking Pilgrim prayer stop.
- http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/pilgrims-progress.html as above
- <http://freeclassicaudiobooks.com/audiobooks/Pilgrim/mp3/>
- http://divinerevelations.info/Documents/pilgrims_progress/pilgrims_progress.htm offers audio/visual material and summarizes the 10 stages of Bunyan's most well known work: The Pilgrim's Progress, from which we have derived our theme this year

Walsingham Links: our destination is the site of the foremost Marian Shrine in Britain. As we approach Walsingham, better acquainted with Christian's journey to the Celestial City, and painfully aware of our own, we consider Christiana's journey, that of Christian's wife and family who followed in his footsteps. We consider the differences between the two journeys, the role of the women and the benefits of travelling as a community, as did Christiana and as we do on Pilgrimage.

Our Lady, Mary, through a vision shaped the history of Walsingham. The Walsingham shrine dates back to the eleventh century, when a Saxon noblewoman, Richeldis, a prayerful and generous lady, had a vision of the Virgin Mary and was taken in that vision to the house in Nazareth where Mary had been visited by the Angel Gabriel announcing the news of the birth of Christ. Mary asked Richeldis to build a replica of that house in Walsingham – the vision was repeated thrice. In the middle ages, when travel to the Holy Land was difficult, Walsingham became a place of pilgrimage, known as “Nazareth” – in England. Despite upheaval and destruction during the reformation, pilgrimages began again in the 19th century. On 19th August 1934, The Slipper Chapel at the Roman Catholic Shrine was declared the National Shrine of Our Lady for Roman Catholics in Britain. In 1921, the Vicar of Walsingham re-ignited Anglican interest in Pilgrimage and erected a statue of Mary asking her to join in prayer. There are also Orthodox and Methodist churches. For further details:

- Walsingham Abbey http://www.walsinghamabbey.com/Groups_%26_Pilgrimage.html
 - The Anglican Shrine www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk
 - The Roman Catholic Shrine www.walsingham.org.uk
 - The Orthodox Church in Walsingham exarchate.org.uk/church-st-seraphim-little-walsingham
 - The Methodist Church in Walsingham <http://www.eamethodist.org.uk/walsingham.htm>
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PILGRIMAGE REUNION 2012

After several pilgrims had difficulties booking halls (all booked up) the reunion finally took place at the Fatima Centre, White City 16/18th November. We chatted over bread & soup as pilgrims gradually arrived on Friday evening. After cooked breakfast we set off in drizzle to Our Lady of Fatima Church for morning prayer. Group photo's followed as we gathered to walk through the older parts of Hammersmith. At Cathnor Park we made proper use of the kissing gates!! We looked in at the Polish RC Church, St Andrew Bobola & paused for private prayer. In Ravenscourt Park there are several interesting memorials. Our next stop was at St Peter's Church, Hammersmith a familiar sight to motorists as it is in close proximity to the A4 Great West Road. We were given a great welcome & the Vicar talked of the very interesting history of the Church & development of the area after the Napoleonic Wars, followed by brewed coffee & chocolate biscuits!! Most pilgrims then did a short detour to take photographs of the square.

Under the A4 we were soon at Chiswick Mall, turning west along the Thames Path. Our final church stop was at St. Nicholas, Chiswick, where we gathered in the porch, (inner door locked) and Nick led us in prayer, our intentions included sick & recently bereaved pilgrims. Along through Duke's Meadow gave good views of old boating installations by the Thames, especially as the tide was out. To lunch at the Bell & Crown, Strand on the Green.

After lunch we went up onto Kew Bridge & crossed over the river to the “Surrey“ bank, where the scenic Thames Path is between Kew Gardens & the river. There were still autumnal leaves though most were underfoot! We saw herons & green parakeets & enjoyed the views across to Syon Park & Islewoth village. There was a photographic opportunity at the Kew Meridian - had been the Prime Meridian before 1884 when Greenwich Meridian took over. Over the river again via Twickenham Bridge and along Duck's Walk where we read the memorial to the most senior officer to survive the sinking of the Titanic, Commander Charles Herbert Lightoller. Back over the river on Richmond Bridge, then down & under it to our open air tea stop.

Our return was via Richmond Green to Richmond Station where we caught a London Overground train to Acton Central, where on the platform there are photo's of old transport - headlined Alternative Transport!! Leaving the station surprised pilgrims walked over a level crossing & in the gathering gloom across Acton Park. Through tree lined streets, across a small park - where we temporarily lost David Cosham who had stopped to take photo's of a mosque. Soon we were back at the Hall where Alison & her assistant Dave were busy preparing the evening meal.

We celebrated a significant birthday in October but had saved the champagne to have with the pilgrims. Non-alcoholic wine was also available!! After Alison produced a sumptuous meal we had a harmonious sing-a-long of hymns.

On Sunday we packed up before 09.00 Mass, returning for coffee before departing the Centre. It is the first time I have helped to plan & lead a walk!! So great to know I can walk 11 miles after all the problems I had with my leg!!

Monica & Gillian McLauchlan

FUND TO SUPPORT YOUNG PILGRIMS

An anonymous pilgrim has made a generation donation and stipulated that it be used to encourage young pilgrims, and assist those who would be unable to come on the pilgrimage without it. This fund could for instance be used to subsidise the pilgrimage fee, or to purchase necessary equipment e.g. walking boots, sleeping bag. If you know where we could spend this money in a manner consistent with the donor's intentions, let the Pilgrimage Coordinator know coord@thepilgrims.org.uk

CALLING FAMILIES AND CYCLISTS

Two members of our pilgrim family have ideas for pilgrimage-but-not-as-we-know it. Lesley and John Brennan are planning to stay in a B&B at Wells-the-Sea, 5 miles from Walsingham, and then join us with their children as day pilgrims. She asks that any other families who would be interested in joining in as what we might call "A&B B&B" pilgrims to contact her by email on La.brennan@btinternet.com. Meanwhile Ruth Hawe is interested in pilgrimage by bicycle. The idea here is that cyclists taking part in this venture would not be sharing our accommodation but would perhaps meet up with the walking pilgrims here and there on the way to Walsingham. Contact her on rhawe@hotmail.co.uk. If you are a family of cyclists, well I don't know, perhaps you should contact both Lesley and Ruth!

PRAYERS PLEASE

Please pray for Fr Rob Taylerson, who is recovering from a serious illness.

Patrick writes about John Russell:

Please pray for van driver extraordinaire John Russell, who is now at last out of Haywards Heath Hospital and is living in Horsham. The infection that had been the cause of his illness that had affected his brain has now been dealt with and he is now in a place which focuses on rehabilitation and also assesses what is best for John going forward.

John was in a very dark place back in November and was behaving in a way that clearly was not the John we all knew and loved. I know many of you have been praying for him, so I thought you would be pleased to hear that a really fantastic thing happened on my last visit to him a few days ago. Almost miraculous! It is clear that John's sense of humour is coming back! At one of his group sessions he had everyone playing the old pilgrimage game of Errr. Bunny, bunny, bunny, bunny, whoops bunny, bunny, bunny, bunny.... And he had a big grin on his face as he explained what happened next.

Please can everyone keep praying for him. He still has a long way to go. He is on a very difficult pilgrimage of his own.... And we all know that difficult days on pilgrimages are always easier to cope with when we share it with other caring pilgrims who are there to offer us encouragement. So please can everyone keep praying for him and if you can try and pop in and see him? Visiting times are after 5.30pm in the evenings I am sure he would love visitors.... Especially pilgrims. [Address details available on request]

ECUMENICAL MARIAN PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM

We are not the only group of pilgrims heading to Walsingham this year: you might be interested in the Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage Trust (<http://www.ecumenicalmarianpilgrimage.org.uk/>) who are planning a pilgrimage Tuesday 12th to Friday 15th March 2013, with full board accommodation at the Anglican shrine "with its excellent facilities"; the cost is £265. A coach to Walsingham will meet the train at Kings Lynn. An impressive range of liturgy and speakers is on offer, and you don't have to walk!

Pilgrimage Contacts

The Pilgrimage can be contacted via: **DABCEC**, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6RP

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