

# NEWSLETTER

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Dear Pilgrims,

It is customary to look back on the summer pilgrimage before our thoughts turn to next year. In 2015 we started at St Peter's Church in Chertsey and after the pilgrim commissioning service and a thoughtful send-off by Rev'd Tim Hillier we began the pilgrimage walk on the Saturday. Although not uncommon earlier in pilgrimage history it seems the last time pilgrims made a Saturday start was the Lichfield Pilgrimage in 2000!

We had made a deliberate choice to return to the A&B Diocese and to the communities of our roots as the Diocese celebrated its Golden Jubilee. I felt this connection very keenly as we stayed at St John's seminary, Womersley, awed by the austere grandeur of the building and by staying at the centre of priestly formation for the Diocese. The connection was similarly strong when we stayed at St Joseph's Redhill, home to a number of pilgrims and venue for many pilgrimage committee meetings over the years. At Worth Abbey with its tradition of Benedictine spirituality, magnificent round Abbey Church and quiet gardens I was aware of the prayers of so many Diocesan days of retreat and celebration, and at the Towers Convent, which has hosted us so generously as recently as the Jubilee Pilgrimage and over many years, there was a profound connection to past welcome and pilgrim journeying.

Our theme this year was "Christian Communities and what these can teach about Discipleship". We had a number of thought-provoking prayer stops and what was especially striking this year was the number of the church communities that had prepared services for us. I think particularly of evensong at St Martin's, Blackheath with hymns, a picture and poems of pilgrimage; of the morning eucharists at Hailsham and also at Seaford where musicians, team ministry and some of the congregations were gathered to lead us in worship, or of St Mary's, Storrington where female clergy had prepared an Anglican eucharist for the close of the penultimate day.

Sunny for the first week as we crossed the North Downs and Surrey Hills, and rainy, some of it torrential rain, for the second week as we walked in the Weald and along the Sussex coast. I could summarise the Arundel Pilgrimage, the 40th Anniversary Pilgrimage, from Chertsey to Arundel Cathedral, in this way. That of course would be a dramatic oversimplification because the pilgrimage is a unique experience of spirituality, fabulous countryside, good exercise, developing Christian community, fellowship and yes, fun!

I want to thank everyone who made the Arundel Pilgrimage such a tremendous success. To Patrick for finding such a selection of spacious and comfortable halls (tempers are less frayed when there is space to move!), to Howard Park for coordinating the route planning with such attention to detail, to all our day planners for some very beautiful walks, to our catering teams Bruce & Hazel and Alison & Stuart for super food to sustain us at start and end of each day. Thank you to Clare for taking the bookings, doing the drinks car and so much more and to our multi-tasking van drivers Howard & Theresa, Michael Beswick and John Russell for negotiating tight corners with something more of a lorry than a van. On the spiritual side a big thank you to Fr David and to our Anglican clergy, to Sue for holding the music together, to Ann Lavelle and Susan McCabe for contacting the churches we visited and to Bruce who made our splendid crosses. If the list is long it is evidence of community at work; thanks to the very many pilgrims who took up the tasks of each day, to Nick as fire officer, to Aidan for chronicling our activities and to John Chenery whose support as Deputy Coordinator was invaluable, thank you. Louise, we were so sorry that your riding accident prevented you joining the pilgrimage this year. We missed you!

The daily adventures of the Arundel pilgrimage are chronicled in the pilgrimage diary (<http://thepilgrims.org.uk/2015/home.php>). Amongst others you can see the pilgrimage's own safari, Leith Hill Tower adorned in orange, pilgrims resting part-way up Box Hill, 'Team Ice Lolly', Seven Sisters and

our first views into Arundel. As I reflect on the 2015 pilgrimage I am struck particularly by the sense of returning home, by the way our journey was so ecumenically enriched by the communities through which we passed and by the recognition of our need to adapt and grow.

The pilgrimage first became ecumenical in 1981 and the meeting of communities, experiences of shared worship, mutual recognition and growth in understanding have given the pilgrimage a special grace. With this special grace comes a special challenge; to change, to grow, to welcome, to dialogue and to speak with joy of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

We have broken with tradition for 2016 and will be making our pilgrimage in the south of England for a consecutive year. Discussion on the Arundel pilgrimage acknowledged the need to grow both pilgrim numbers and the pool of people that can take on key committee roles in future. In this context those present recognised the need to organise the 2016 pilgrimage close to the A&B heartland in order to build on the contacts made during the 2015 Arundel and Jubilee Pilgrimages, and at the AGM it was agreed that for next year's pilgrimage we will walk from Winchester to Canterbury. The 1976 pilgrimage was from Arundel to Winchester to Canterbury so this could be seen as the 40th anniversary of that walk! I am certainly excited to walk to Canterbury which has been a pilgrimage destination for centuries.

We expect to leave Winchester on the Pilgrims Way and rejoin it for our approach to Canterbury having walked through some panoramic countryside in between. John Chenery has called the route the 'Watershed' route because tracks the watershed of rivers that flow northward into the Thames and those that flow toward the South Coast. It could be a watershed year for the Pilgrimage too as some pilgrimage stalwarts will be retiring while we expect to welcome a good number of new Jubilee and Churches Together pilgrims.

It has seemed difficult to organise next year's pilgrimage without acknowledging the thousands of refugees that are on the move daily (in the way that we are on pilgrimage) but do so because they are in danger and have to, rather than seeking an experience of pilgrimage, as we are. In response, this year we have decided to offer our 2016 pilgrimage as a prayer of solidarity and support for those people suffering the effects of conflict or fleeing persecution, praying that the world may become a fairer, safer, and more peaceful place.

Let us be accepting of the challenge and open to be changed by the pilgrimage journey we are making together.

### *God Bless, Ceri*

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#### [40th Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Ecumenical Walking Pilgrimage: Chertsey to Arundel 2015](#)

The pilgrims walked into Arundel on a bright August day, climbing up from Storrington for the final eight miles. Atop the South Downs, the view stretched as far as the eye could see: to the Isle of Wight in the south west with Arundel Castle standing proudly in the middle distance. This was the culmination of a 160mile, two-week walking pilgrimage from the abbey ruins at Chertsey via Worth Abbey and Brighton returning to Arundel Cathedral the mother church of the Diocese and start point of the Jubilee Walking Pilgrimage two months earlier.

This year, there was much to share: sunshine for the first week as we crossed the North Downs and Surrey Hills, rain for the second as we walked in the Weald and along the Sussex coast. There were many delights; charming villages, welcoming communities and historic treasures.

Our theme was "Christian Communities and what these can teach about Discipleship", led in short reflections by pilgrims and clergy at churches en-route. At the induction service pilgrims were given a wooden cross to wear as a sign of pilgrimage and asked to think about becoming pilgrims. In our journeying we considered the early church as community, we shared our experiences of parish life and the wider church, a URC pilgrim spoke on the gift of the reformed churches, in Brighton some pilgrims visited the Quaker Meeting House for silent worship and we considered new ways of being church, learning about a Café Church in Redhill and work with and a pilgrimage for homeless people at St Martin-in-the-Fields. The work of East Hoathly Church stands out as a splendid example of how parishioners have endeavoured to serve their village. They also served us tea and cakes as did many other churches! Thank you.

If you are able to walk 12-15 miles a day, do not mind communal arrangements and a few hardships, the pilgrimage experience is not to be missed. Walk the whole two week pilgrimage for maximum benefit but a

week or few days will suffice to enjoy the countryside, exercise, worship, prayer and friendships that develop in community life. On your own or with a friend, you will be made very welcome.

For more details of the 2016 Pilgrimage (13th -28th August 2016) visit [www.thepilgrims.org.uk](http://www.thepilgrims.org.uk)

Pilgrimages are organised by past pilgrims on a voluntary basis.

*Susan Adilz*

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## 2015 Pilgrimage Reunion in Dorking

26 of the pilgrims who took part in the fortieth anniversary pilgrimage to Arundel that started at Chertsey in August this year gathered for a weekend reunion at St Joseph's church hall in Dorking on Friday 23rd of October. They were joined by past pilgrims and some who had been on the Jubilee weekend pilgrimage from Arundel to the Amex stadium in Brighton in July and other friends who had not been able to walk this year.

After our potato and leek soup, Friday evening became an arrow making party where new arrows which are used to mark the way were cut out. We cut 900 to add to the remaining stocks so that there will be 1200 ready for next year's pilgrimage walk from Winchester to Canterbury.

Following a hearty breakfast on Saturday morning we set out on our 12 mile walk enjoying the autumnal colours. Our first stop was the George Gilbert-Scott church of Holy Trinity in Westcott. The churchwarden gave us a talk on the history of the church and Reverend Michael Preston who recently retired and completed the Camino de Santiago led us in a reflection for the day. We then continued to the King's Head in Holmbury St Mary for lunch which was followed by an often hilly afternoon walk, before returning to our evening meal which was preceded by a photo show and followed by a quiz! In the evening thoughts turned to next year's pilgrimage and a possible trip to Wales the following year.

On Sunday morning some of us were able to attend services at St Joseph's and St Martin's before heading home.

We thank John and Louise Chenery for organising the weekend, Margaret for preparing the meals and St Joseph's parish and Fathers Dominic and Tony for hosting us.

*Francis O'Sullivan*

## Accommodation Update: Hall Booking for the 2016 Winchester to Canterbury Pilgrimage.

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Since September, I have been very busy travelling over 1000 miles through the delightful countryside of Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex and Kent in pursuit of halls for us to stay in. I have been assisted in this task by some local knowledge: Clare Gamble in Alton, Alresford and Winchester, Ceri in Hindhead, Rosemary in Goudhurst, Tenterden and Tunbridge Wells, Mark & Aidan in the Ashford area. However, there is nothing like boots on the ground, coupled with research (hours) on the internet, searching for Village Hall, Community Centre, Memorial Hall, Church or Scout Hall. In the process, the odd leisure centre and launderette have been discovered in Horsham and T Wells, where we will want to wash ourselves and our clothes.

In sunshine or in rain, I can say that next year proves to be an exciting if not exacting route. Chosen and framed by Chief Route Planner John Chenery, it takes in rolling chalk downs, greensand of the high and low weald, flat pasture and some delightful villages. One of the spin offs of my job has been discovery of some wonderful churches – but I will leave their description for those coming on pilgrimage to discover.

So where have we booked? Well, just about everywhere, from Winchester to Canterbury. I have been very conscious of prayer support and thankful for the help of the people above, guidance from Ceri and last year's Accommodation Officer, Patrick, who provided a useful framework and advice as to how to proceed. Above all let us raise a cheer for the Hall Booking Secretaries that have said "Yes – you may stay here!" One has even offered us showers in her home.

At the time of writing there are one or two outstanding confirmations – in Cranleigh in particular; but even that is looking hopeful, and in a couple of weeks, I will visit the halls at the Winchester end to check them out. Job done!

*Sue*

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## Chief Route Planner's Column

The 2016 pilgrimage from Winchester to Canterbury takes a route that we haven't followed before. Instead of following the Pilgrims Way along the line of the North Downs, we are making a more southerly cut across the Weald. This will take us to some scenic parts of Surrey, Sussex and Kent that we haven't visited since the first 10 years of pilgrimage history and some that we have never visited (Tunbridge Wells, Tenterden).

The first 2 days from Winchester to Alton are on familiar terrain, following close to the St Swithun's Way, then around Hindhead we will encounter one of the more spectacular parts of the Greensand Hills (Beacon Hill, Devil's Punchbowl) which the A3 now tunnels under. Later, from the rest day in Horsham to the rest day in Tunbridge Wells and beyond, we will be close to the High Weald Landscape Trail. We will be back on well-trodden pilgrimage routes for the final day into Canterbury.

Route planners have come forward for most of the days, but we still have a couple of vacancies. If you might be interested, please contact me at [routes@thepilgrims.org.uk](mailto:routes@thepilgrims.org.uk)

**John**

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## Finding Our Way

About thirty years ago the ancient Camino Pilgrim route to Santiago had all but died out. But now each year, as in the Middle Ages, many thousands of people walk to the shrine of St James at Santiago. This revival was due to the work of a Spanish Parish Priest, Don Elías Valiña Sampedro. Among other things, he had the simple idea of painting clear yellow marker arrows along the length of the route from France pointing the way to go. So modern pilgrims need no map or compass, just the ability to spot the next yellow arrow and to trust it will guide them on their way to Santiago.

On the long journey, over mountain passes, through the twists and turns of city backstreets and on the long open paths of the Spanish plain, the presence of these yellow arrows gives a great sense of assurance and purpose. Pilgrims know they are safely on the route and are going the right way to reach their goal.

The experience of the outer physical journey of the Camino invites many pilgrims to reflect about an inner spiritual journey. For this inner Camino of the heart, are there spiritual arrows we can trust to guide us through life? For a Christian, the answer comes in Jesus' words "I am the way" (in Spanish *el camino*). Jesus offers us inner arrows to point our way. As we better learn to recognise the presence of the Lord around us, so we find walk through life with greater confidence and trust.

This reflection was given by Rev Michael Preston, retired Anglican parish priest, at the morning prayer stop during the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton Ecumenical Walking Pilgrimages reunion walk. Michael walked the Camino in September 2015. [The Diocesan pilgrimage uses orange arrows rather than yellow ones to mark the route.]

**Michael Preston**

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## "The Body of Christ" – reflections on a spiritual highlight of this year's pilgrimage

Father David was giving Holy Communion to a long queue of pilgrims and parishioners in one of the churches we visited. In a loud clear voice he declaimed uninterruptedly "THE BODY OF CHRIST". Suddenly I was allowed to perceive another level of meaning: not only was it a giving of the Body of Christ to an unending stream of willing recipients, but it was also a statement, powerful in its cumulative effect, a declaration that WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST in the world. It became a two-way flow: Christ into us; then ourselves, (become Christ – however temporarily – through the Sacrament alive in us) into the world. A piece of theological head-knowledge became a vivid and living reality before my very eyes.

"Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it." (Mary Oliver)

**Althea Tyndale**

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## Prayer Support

Prayer is very much at the heart of our pilgrimage as we take opportunity to stop for prayer in places of worship on our pilgrimage route. Whilst we are mindful to pray when we hear about tragedies or disastrous events in the media and within our pilgrim community - this year we have formed a prayer support team reaching out to our brothers and sisters who have a need for prayer.

I was asked to co-ordinate the volunteers who responded with requests which we have received for prayer. Requests for prayer may come from within our pilgrim community, those who are no longer able to walk with us, and others we meet on our way. When a prayer request is received, it is helpful to have as much detail as possible about the person/situation where prayer is required. It is not always easy for people to share their difficulty and some people may indeed prefer to remain anonymous.

To cement our faith in prayer, we only have to refer to the Bible where we hear in Matthew 7:7 "ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you" and Matthew again reiterates this in 21:22 "if you have faith, everything you ask for in prayer you will receive" John also verifies this when in 14:14 he writes "if you ask anything in my name I will do it".

As our prayer support team grows, we pray that these passages from scripture may be realised by more and more people as in Romans 10:10 "It is by believing with the heart that you are justified, and by making the declaration with your lips that you are saved"

Requests for prayer should be sent to [prayers@thepilgrims.org.uk](mailto:prayers@thepilgrims.org.uk)

***Mary Fuller***

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**Web Site:** <http://www.thepilgrims.org.uk>

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