

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 92

February 2009

Dear Pilgrims, 25 years ago our pilgrimage set out into uncharted waters: not only had Bill Haynes stood down after planning and coordinating our first 10 pilgrimages, but for the first time we chose a destination that meant the whole pilgrimage was outside our home diocese. Apart from its distance, the Lindisfarne Pilgrimage in 1984 was long and covered some rugged terrain. This came to mind as I heard today's readings – the calls of Samuel and of the apostle Andrew: all pilgrimages require a degree of faith as we step into the unknown, but some need rather more!

Similar faith was required of the Celtic saints who left home to set up their community on Lindisfarne and then worked to spread Christianity throughout southern Scotland and northern England, and by those who followed them.

And in 2009 we will be making that step (or many steps) of faith and heading once more to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. As in 1984, we will converge on York as our starting point, but rather than taking the remote inland route we followed then, this time we will take a more easterly route. And, to make things easier, we start off not walking but taking a bus ride from York to Lastingham, our destination in 2002 when we remembered Ss Chad and Cedd, the brothers who trained at Lindisfarne under St Aidan, and were both subsequently Abbots at Lastingham. Here we start walking: across the North York Moors, weaving between the Teesside conurbations to the ancient city of Durham, then out to the coast to cross the Tyne, before following the Northumberland coast for most of the second week, before we approach the causeway (the tide WILL be out) and walk the final mile to Lindisfarne Priory.

Recognising how dispersed our pilgrims now are, and the length of a coach journey from the south coast of England to York or from Berwick-on-Tweed south again, we have decided that we will all make our way independently to York and home again from Berwick. With advance purchases it should be possible to get reasonable prices on the train, and we have experts in low-cost train travel (a.k.a. students) on hand to help get the best deals, and to help people travel in small groups.

Danny and his team have planned a theme, full details in next newsletter, which combines reflection on the life and times of the Celtic saints with consideration of how they affect our lives today. Fr David, (see article overleaf), is preparing material on Celtic Christianity, which is rather different from what we are now familiar with. We have seen in recent years how much this spiritual preparation for the pilgrimage bears fruit, just as the planning of the physical route, accommodation and catering make the walking that much more rewarding.

It is inevitable that, with the logistical challenges faced this year, planning will run a bit behind its normal schedule, so why not make it easier for the planning team and **BOOK EARLY** this year? (Oh yes, that includes the planning team themselves!). Although we don't like to turn people away, that is always a possibility with the smaller accommodation found in remote areas...

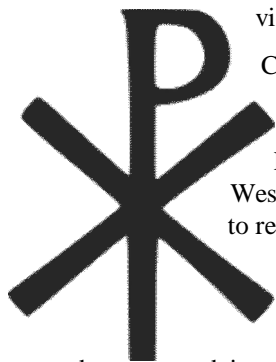
So, how about some New Year resolutions for 2009 (now that you've broken the original set!)

- Plan your leave and book for the pilgrimage – you know you want to!
- Recruit a friend or acquaintance to join the pilgrimage - most new pilgrims come by word of mouth, so use yours!
- Display a poster and spread the word!
- Get fit ready for the pilgrimage (oh, OK, that was one of the resolutions you already broke – start again!).

God Bless, *Aidan*

The Celtic Church and Celtic Saints

In 313AD a battle took place at the Milvian Bridge in the north of Rome. The winner was Constantine (now known as “the Great”) who had settled the Succession to the Roman Empire by his victory. He decided to settle in the east of the Empire – in Byzantium (later Constantinople, now Istanbul). He released Christianity from its many exclusions and indemnities, and passed other edicts making Christianity the state religion. Why? Because of his Labarum (Battle Standard) made hastily on the night before the battle. It showed the Cross and the Chi-Rho symbol He attributed his victory to his vision of the sign, hence the standard.



Christianity spread rapidly. British Bishops were present at the many councils organised to formulate the teachings and liturgy of the now-confident Church – the Council of Nicea finally formulated the Creed. This success lasted until 1400 in the East. However, in the West, the Roman Empire grew weaker. By the 5th Century the Church was virtually moribund. The Western Church revived in the 6th Century under Gregory the Great, the Pope who sent St Augustine to re-evangelise England.

In the North, however, the situation was different. The Monastic system had been the way of the Church in Ireland after the missionary activity of St Patrick. Abbots and/or Abbesses ran the local community churches. The Bishop was the spiritual leader, having the power to confirm and ordain. A central form of the spirituality, both in the Offices (the daily monastic prayers) and the Eucharist, was based on a close contact with nature and creation, hence its modern resurgence in spirituality with our current concerns for Green issues and climatic change.

Another aspect was that of Missionary Endeavour. The reasons given for the departure of St Aidan, St Columbanus and St Columba are intriguing: can future saints commit violence and get away with it? However, they did come to northern Britain, bringing the Christian message of sacrifice, hope and love. Their activity soon bore fruit with the expansion of the Church in Cumbria, Northumbria and southern Scotland.

The unity of the Church became a vital issue. Whose norms should be adopted – the Celtic from Ireland or those from Rome brought by St Augustine? This was finally settled at Whitby under the guidance and encouragement of the formidable abbess, St Hilda. The Roman norms were accepted, and the Church settled down to a period of expansion and furtherance of the living-out of the Christian Gospel. The great expansion of Monasticism brought the resulting development of areas, previously arid, into lush agricultural land with sheep and agrarian crops.

The Pilgrimage this year will see what inspired the Celtic Church and how it developed even after its incorporation into the Roman and Universal Apostolic Church.

Fr. David Russell

From our Pilgrimage Family

Mike Kanssen A sad bit of news for you, Jessica's father - Kenneth Lee - died 20th January 2009, aged 91. Ken was known to several of the Pilgrims (though not through pilgrimage events). Prayers for the family would be much appreciated.

Aidan Simons As many of you will know, I've visited Kenya a number of times over the past 2 years on business, and this has allowed me to meet up a couple of times with Fr Joe Kengah, who walked with us to Lichfield in 2000 and Lastingham in 2002, and who has dropped in from time to time since. When Joe heard I had to be in Kenya just before Christmas, he invited me down for the weekend and an early celebration. As you do when so invited I asked if there was anything he wanted for Christmas. No it wasn't socks – his answer was “a new roof for the church”: for little more than the cost of my airfare Joe could replace the rusting iron roof of the Church in Mivumoni, where he lives. There followed a few days of frantic effort to raise as much as possible of the £3,000 required: e-mail appeals to pilgrims, work colleagues and other friends plus an impromptu appeal at Mass the preceding Sunday brought in some £2,400. I was amazed by the generosity of not only pilgrims, many of whom know Joe, but “ordinary people” who wanted to give (generously) because they knew the money was going straight to the project.

And so, clutching a thick wad of used tenners, I flew down from Nairobi to Mombasa where Joe was waiting, and we had a pleasant evening at his favourite haunt (near Mombasa Cathedral) before staying at a religious house right on the Indian Ocean. Between here and Joe's house at Mivumoni we stopped off so that Joe could officiate at a funeral, at a homestead way out in the bush. It was a very moving experience that I felt privileged to share: the whole community, Christians and Muslims, coming together to say farewell to Michael. In a clearing in the trees Joe celebrated the requiem Mass, accompanied by wonderful African music, before the burial which was a community affair – no black-attired undertakers in sight. We drove on to Mivumoni, dropping youngsters off on the way (their other alternative being to walk) and had our Christmas feast together.

Sunday started with Mass in the church adjacent to Joe's house, where I was able to look up at the holes in the roof and at the gaps in the glass of the louver windows, then I chatted to the very-friendly locals and took lots of photos before we had to move on. Dropping a priest friend of Joe's to celebrate Mass at the outstation at Majimboni, Joe took me on a long drive up the dirt roads (there's no tarmac in his parish) to see the outstations in the north of the parish –

Msulwa and Dima, passing those at Shimba Hills and Mwapala that I'd visited last year. In so doing I used my GPS to make a map of the parish – something they don't have. This gave me an idea of the size of the parish – and particularly of the time it takes to get from one end to the other! Back at Majimboni we joined a celebration lunch – goat pilau, and as guests of honour we got the delicacies – goats intestines (actually very tasty, just don't think about it!).

I've posted some pictures of the trip on my website, linked from the pilgrims' web site at www.thepilgrims.org.uk.

According to Kenya Government statistics, more than 60% of people in the Mivumoni area are below the poverty line – pretty average for the region I fear – so there's no way they could maintain the church without outside help. So if you'd like to help us "raise the roof" please get in touch.

Frances Dean Has been in hospital over Christmas and had further tests in January; so hopefully they will show what is causing all the trouble and what treatment she will need. She thanks pilgrims for their love and prayers; and hopefully she may come with us all to Lindisfarne. She had news, at Christmas, from **Brooks Hill**, Rockville USA, who was on the last Lindisfarne Pilgrimage, asking if Frances would be going this year.

We all pray for God's healing and a speedy recovery for our very special pilgrim cook!

Phil Clayden Thanks for your email. If you like you could advertise the date of the 2009 St Birinus Pilgrimage, Dorchester on Thames. It's 21st June (mid-summer's day!). The preacher will be Bishop William Kenney. More details at: www.stbirinuspilgrimage.org.uk

José & Lourdes Así nos ha quedado el belén este año. Ante Él us recordamos con cariño.

Howard and Alison Buxton Some facts and figures on our 2 month trip in 2008: over 32 different beds not counting the UK 15 beds; over 60 hours on a bus including 3 night buses; 52 hours flying, at least 150 restaurants. Can't tell you how far we walked but I did at least 500kms, (350 in UK)!

Kiwi Nev Thanks for a great Pilgrimage, it was good to catch up with everyone again and get to know you all much better. I for one don't mind which route is chosen as is all new to me; and I don't always know if I'll be coming. My wife Helen arrived in Turkey with shingles in face and mouth, so spent much of the time to and from hospital until she was admitted eventually, for a week, after which we flew home. We managed to fit in a couple of boat trips and see some of the sites around Istanbul.

Mary Streater (nee Russell) The Pilgrims might be interested to know that my mother, Monica Russell, was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours list for her work in co-ordinating the play area in Lewes Prison. She has now finally retired from all her voluntary work, and will be celebrating her 80th Birthday on 24th April this year. She took part in her first pilgrimage in 1981!

Picture of Monica below left, with her son John (our illustrious van driver), at last year's Epsom Reunion.



Edit Rees

Edit and Phillip are absolutely delighted to announce the birth of their daughter, Andrea Jane Rees, on Sunday 11th January 2009 at 8:30pm, weighing 8lbs 11oz (I think 3.9kg, in metric).

Picture above right, of Edit with Andrea and husband Phillip.

Pilgrims we've heard from through the website/email (not to mention the "regulars"):

- *Joseph and Marietta Bonnici*
- *Bill & Dot DeVoti* – Happy / healthy New Year to all our walking friends.
- *Howard & Theresa Park* - Do keep in touch as we will consider 2010, but 2009 sees us in the Swiss Alps.
- *Tass Darlington*
- *Joyce Li*
- *Theresa Magee*
- *Gary O'Brien*
- *Margaret Howells*
- *Coral Walsh*
- *Fr Richard Lear*
- *Gillian McLauchlan*

Obituary

We have received the sad news of the sudden death of Barbara Deubzer who died suddenly on 17 May 2008 at her home in Tunbridge Wells. Barbara joined a number of our pilgrimages in the early nineties and was also an active member of the St Francis Ramblers. Barbara, originally from Bavaria, had made her home in England and had a wide circle of friends. The St Francis Ramblers recently organised a walk in memory of Barbara using a route near East Grinstead which Barbara herself had planned and led some years ago.

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Obituary

It was with great sadness we learned of the death of Kate Haynes (nee Pullman). Kate was the beloved wife of Bill Haynes, the founder, in 1975, of our Diocesan Walking Pilgrimages.

Bill and Kate enjoyed 12 happy years together and were married in August 2008. Kate had been diagnosed with cancer in 2006 and in December 2008 lost her battle in this world and went to her heavenly reward; for Bill "life must start anew". Many have already written in condolence, and he thanks you for all your good wishes and prayers.

Pamela Jean Pullman

"Kate"

12th January 1945

to

12th December 2008

May the angels lead you into Paradise.
May the martyrs come to greet you on the way.
May they lead you home to the holy city, to the new and
eternal Jerusalem.

May the choirs of angels come to welcome you.
May they take you to the arms of Abraham; where
Lazarus is poor no longer, and there may you find rest,
rest eternal.

Lux eterna luceat eis. Requiescat in pace.

Amen.

