

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Pilgrims

The 2009 Pilgrimage to Lindisfarne is almost upon us, and we've proved wrong those who said it couldn't be done within the usual September to July planning cycle. A great team effort has found accommodation, planned the walking routes, liaised with churches we will visit, scheduled our waking moments, and taken the details of the pilgrims who are joining us this year - and all from the other end of the country.

Lindisfarne was the clear favourite destination when we discussed possibilities at Salisbury last year, and it has proved more popular than we'd dared hope: numbers are higher than for many years, almost approaching those of the early 1980s, with a high proportion (65%) booked "all the way". Among these pilgrims we welcome a substantial number of people walking with us for the first time and several returning after some time away, who will journey to Lindisfarne with the regulars. I hope we can share the pilgrim spirit with our new comrades, and I also anticipate an injection of "new life" from them.



A song that was popular with pilgrims when we last walked to Lindisfarne 25 years ago included the line "Verse 6, same old tricks" (yes, we still sing it!), and much of the formula that has made our pilgrimages so successful over the years will be unchanged again this year. But we don't stand still, and there will be a few changes: for example, with greater numbers than usual, making sure we use the available space efficiently is essential, especially to ensure that the later arrivals can find space to sleep, so be prepared for a "bed-space manager" directing traffic on arrival.

Some change is forced upon us, and this will be the first pilgrimage in 30 years where Frances Dean has not masterminded our catering, serving up amazing meals in the most unpropitious circumstances, and positive feasts when allowed near a decent kitchen. Sadly Frances has been battling with her health since Christmas, and is unable to continue in her role. I have no doubt that we all send our thanks and prayers to Frances, who will be with us in spirit I am sure.

We are extremely lucky to welcome Alexe Parker as our new caterer, who brings experience of catering for similar groups, including a lot of work with the Guides. For the second week, Imelda Simons and Mary Yeomans will take over catering to allow Alexe to walk - taking on board feedback last year that a non-walking newcomer can be a little isolated. Of course, we can all help to make sure that the caterers are not isolated by volunteering for those important little jobs like stirring soup and washing up the pots and pans.

That's an appropriate point to remind us all that the pilgrimage is a team effort - and it works because everyone does their bit. This is no more true than in the morning, when we have to pack up and get on the road: we all have to make sure that we're ready for the day, but please help out with the many little jobs that need doing before we can start the day: if you're fit, volunteer to carry luggage or equipment to the van, or sweep the floor. If you need to sit down - there are lunches to be made every evening...

Every year we send out information on how to prepare for the pilgrimage, but it is evident that we all get fitter as the days pass, and we cover the miles more quickly. This year, however, because of the terrain we are crossing, there is no easy start: it's in at the deep end! So please do try to come prepared: make sure your boots are walked in, and do several practice walks of reasonable length and hilliness.

So much for the practical challenges: the pilgrimage is essentially a spiritual activity. We have prepared a theme (included in the route notes) around the strap line "On a Mission... Messengers of God's Gift of Love" divided over the 3 phases of the pilgrimage. We start with "What is Pilgrimage?" and look at the ideals; then "What are the Barriers to growth?" and finally "What are the Practicalities?" Each day has a specific theme relating to these headings as they affect us today, and is linked to one of the Celtic saints or an aspect of the Celtic Church. The theme is core to the reflection offered to us in our main worship, and pilgrims leading individual "God Stops" en route are encouraged to build on the day's theme. Bill and Mary will be looking for volunteers, so don't be shy if you have something to share, and look at the theme to see where it might fit. Resources are available - just ask.

This will be a special pilgrimage for me – 25 years since our previous Lindisfarne Pilgrimage, my first as chief routeplanner – and being on Holy Island on St Aidan’s Eve. I pray that it will be special for each and every one of you, through the journey we make, the companions we share or the fleeting encounters along the way.

Those who cannot be with us this year: please pray for us, as we will for you. If you can, follow our progress daily on the web site (<http://live.thepilgrims.org.uk>) and be part of the world-wide virtual pilgrimage. We appreciate all the messages of support and the prayer requests, even if we are too tired to reply to them individually!

God Bless – and don’t forget your preparations!

Aidan

From our Pilgrimage Family



Happy Birthday Frances!

Many friends - parishioners, pilgrims and family gathered to celebrate **Frances Dean’s 70th** birthday party on Saturday 25th April 2009 at St. Peter’s Church Hall, Hove. Terry and Frances on the dance floor in photo left.

For more details and photos see:

http://thepilgrims.org.uk/birthdays/frances_70/frances.htm

Santiago Pilgrim

Fr Dominic O’Hara, last seen on the pilgrimage 25 years ago on Lindisfarne! I think, (Aidan says he was on Evesham 1983), is walking part of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Spain in the next few weeks, 250km up to Burgos. We know this because his walking companion will be our PP Fr. Dominic Rolls.

John & Louise Chenery

Wedding Bells

Those who went on the Chester to Lincoln pilgrimage in 2006 will remember two beautiful and lively young Polish sisters Marta and Ola... The ones that loved singing and eating English puddings! Well, I was lucky enough to get



an invite to Marta’s wedding that happened at 2pm on Saturday 27th of June 2009 in Gdansk Poland. What a mad, wonderful crazy weekend it turned out to be... just like a pilgrimage really!

Getting there involved a rise time of 3.00am on Saturday, driving to Luton Airport, catching a plane at 8.05 am and a taxi from Gdansk Airport to Marta and Ola’s parents place. If you want to know why Marta and Ola are so lovely you only need to meet their parents to see why, they are the perfect hosts with warmth of welcome which is truly Christ centred.

Marta looked absolutely stunning in her wedding dress and so did Ola in a beautiful purple dress. Unlike in our country, the bride and groom (the

groom’s name - Michal .. (you’ll be happy to know Marta has chosen well ... a great guy!) - meet at the Bride’s home before the wedding for a traditional blessing from both sets of parents and then everyone goes to the Church. More differences – the priest goes to the back of the church to collect the bride and groom who walk down the aisle together – the rings by the way go on the right not the left hand (a ring on the left hand means your spouse has died... yep, Ola and Marta panicked on their first day on our pilgrimage thinking it was a dating agency for widows and widowers) – an archway of roses made from guests holding them over the newlyweds as they walk back down the aisle... I could go on and on. It was a truly wonderful event with



beautiful singing from Marta and Ola's friends from their Oasis group with 5 priests and a deacon concelebrating... oh and some pilgrim arrows turned up somehow... arf arf!!

And the wedding breakfast... food, more food, more and more food, more differences, dancing, more food, dancing and singing and more food and dancing and food with people just like pilgrims! Brilliant!! I got to bed a 2am their time, up at 7am, got fogged in at Gdansk airport... eventually flew back to Stanstead (not Luton) airport, coach to Luton, drove car home arriving at 5.30pm Sunday!!! In summary, transport logistics from hell for a wedding from heaven! Marta and Ola, your friends are beautiful, your family is beautiful and you are both beautiful... and Marta, good choice of husband!!!

Michal and Marta, congratulations to the both of you! Now Ola - when are you getting married? I don't care how many airplanes, buses, taxis or camels are involved count me in!!!

Patrick Reeve

Trailwalker

On 18th and 19th July I will be a part of the York St John's Trailwalker Team of 2009! and we need your support so that we can participate.

Trailwalker UK is run in partnership with the Queens Ghurkha Signals – they make it a brilliant and unique event. The money is split fairly between Oxfam, and charities that benefit ex-Ghurkha soldiers and their communities. These are the Ghurkha Welfare Trust, and the Army Benevolent Fund. The route follows the South Downs Way, starting in Petersfield and finishing in Brighton ... it is the equivalent of 2.5 marathons and the complete ascent of Ben Nevis!!! I hope you can help me out by sponsoring whatever you can. Whether its £1 or £100, every little helps. Donating through Justgiving is quick, easy and totally secure. It's also the most efficient way to sponsor me: Oxfam Trailwalker gets your money faster and, if you're a UK taxpayer, Justgiving makes sure 25% in Gift Aid, plus a 3% supplement, are added to your donation. So, please log on to <http://www.justgiving.com/michaelgamble1> to sponsor me!!

Mike Gamble

Anniversary

It was 20 years ago, that Alex Ollivier, my brother in law, (Alex and me in 1989 left), said he had seen a flyer for a



walking pilgrimage from Droitwich to Chichester in St. Joseph's church, Epsom. Duly signed up I joined the pilgrimage on the rest day at Oxford. My first hall experience was being offered a "privileged place to sleep" in a corridor between the ladies and gents loos; I had to sleep with my breathing apparatus to the left for a novel reason! Other memories of my first pilgrimage were the camaraderie, the blisters and the water pistols! Alex and I made a video of the pilgrimage which was shown at the Epsom Reunion last year. Needless to say I have stayed a pilgrim, bar a few pilgrimages missed; and moreover, the "pilg" over the years has given me deeper spirituality, opportunities for pilgrimages in France, Spain & Portugal, a true sense of being "a Pilgrim," and precious and lasting friendships.

Danny Thomas

Pilgrim Shop

Most evenings during the pilgrimage the "Pilgrim Shop" will be open in one section of the hall selling cards and small gift items, many with a pilgrimage or walking theme. Please peruse and buy at your leisure.

Monica Mclauchlan

Obituaries

Andy Bashford R.I.P.

There maybe some of you long walking pilgrims who remember one of our early characters from the pilgrimages – Andy Bashford.

Colin Hooper spotted in an Emmaus newsletter that an Andy Bashford who had been in their community some years before had passed away. I went up and saw the team that lead Emmaus in Portslade to try to find out if it was our Andy Bashford from the early days of pilgrimages.

Eventually, we found one of their old Newsletters. Although the photo wasn't brilliant, you could see a resemblance, a slightly chubbier Andy with a smile on his face. Their Andy Bashford's old stomping ground was Reigate, he was doing gardening (and had done a bit of chef's work) He was also dyslexic and while with Emmaus, went on a course to overcome this and did rather well by all accounts. Sadly, it all fits.

Our Andy was a happy character whose imagination knew no bounds when it came to telling stories. He led many a sensible person on a merry dance around reality. You never quite knew what Andy would do next... if the right thing to do was to arrive in a suite, he'd be in jeans and a tee-shirt. If we were all in jeans and a tee-shirt... guess who'd be in a suite, or wearing a cowboy's hat. Aidan met him at Buckfast when planning the 1996 pilgrimage there; he says, "we were just walking through the abbey grounds and he appeared!"

Talking with the Emmaus team, it seems that Andy had Diabetes and had previously had a heart attack before staying with them. The information they had was that he was up in lodgings in the Cambridge area – no one knew why – and was found dead when neighbours reported that they hadn't seen him for a while but his dog was barking.

Now the usual thing is to add our deceased pilgrims to our prayer list but with our unique Andy Bashford... I can't help but wonder if it's not one of his best stories yet and he'll turn up at the end of a pilgrimage wearing a suite telling yet another yarn about how he was just spending a bit of time with his mate Lazarus when...

Patrick Reeve

Rev. John Brockman R.I.P.



Deacon to St Joseph's Epsom from 1988 to 2004, and father to Claire Parsons, Margaret King and Tony (Brother Anthony) Brockman, at Worth Abbey - all past pilgrims, died on the 7th June 2009. His requiem Mass was held at St. Joseph's Church, Epsom on Monday 22nd June at 1pm.

In the early years, the Brockman family often showed up mid-pilgrimage to celebrate Margaret's birthday: photo left shows John with Margaret at the Pointer Inn on the Isle of Wight in 1978! Please pray for his soul and for consolation for his wife Sheila, and the family.

Claire Parsons