

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Pilgrims

I'm writing this having just returned from a planning weekend in Wales, the glorious weather showing the countryside at its best, hoping that our fortnight in August offers something similar, although I'm sure would like it a little less warm! Whatever the weather there's a lot to look forward to this year.

The St David's Pilgrimage has proved a challenge to organise. Rosemary has done a sterling job as Accommodation Officer, but west Wales is a rugged and relatively under-populated part of the UK and her options were quite limited, not to mention that in the university towns where you'd expect greater choice we got blank refusals. Several of the halls are a bit cosy, so we'll all have to be a bit more considerate and squeeze in!

The accommodation challenges and the distance from "home base" have meant that several day route planners had to do one-shot planning trips relatively late in the day, leaving chief route planner John and church liaison team Bill and Caroline working late on contacting churches and finalising timings. There is higher chance than usual of post-publication changes to the timings – if you're walking with us, be attentive; if you are planning to drop in, check the website or call us first.

So, huge thanks to the planning team who have coped so well with the challenges of another remote pilgrimage. Despite its challenges, this pilgrimage has so much to offer – wonderful scenery both along the coast and inland, with loads of sea birds and buzzards and red kites to attract the ornithologists. But what struck me was the welcome and interest of the people we met whilst planning, people with time to stop and talk. I hope that this more relaxed way of life will rub off on us as we pass through.

Among the other enclosures with this newsletter, those of you booked on the pilgrimage will find an updated "Pilgrim Code". Please do read this NOW – it contains important guidance not only on health and safety but on how we all contribute to make the pilgrimage enjoyable for everyone.

This year we have included details of the pilgrimage theme on the route cards for each day. Do consider offering a prayer stop or reflection on the day's theme (talk to Bill or Caroline). Offers can be scarce in the early days, so if you can plan in advance that will be most welcome!

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

The Fruits of the Pilgrimage

It was on the 1993 Pilgrimage, when on the rest day Pat and Keith had got together and arranged a Taizé evening, involving various pilgrims who wanted to take part. It was such a success that it was talked about for some time after on how prayerful it was at the time.

A week or two after the pilgrimage Pat & Danny talked about starting their own Taizé evening in their home, so it was agreed that Danny and Norma would start the ball rolling, they invited Pat & Keith, Alex & Evelyn and Barbara Drubzer to come along, unfortunately Pat was unable to attend the first Taizé evening. The first meeting was a real success, very prayerful and singing lovely easy songs with deep prayer together. The following month they met at Alex & Evelyn's house and Pat was able to attend, a wonderful evening. Then Pat shared with Joan Gale and myself,

we both said that we would like to come to the next Taizé group. So Pat asked Danny & Alex if we could come along for the next meeting. We immediately felt at home, as time went on we agreed to take it in turn and have it in our own homes.

It's been a real blessing, as we meet in each other's house and is still continuing after all these years. I'm sure that the Holy Spirit had planted a seed which has continued to grow right up to the present day. Gradually more people joined, Mary, Mark & Merlyn and family, Sue and Fred, and 'Yes' the Holy Spirit has made it possible and that we all live close by.

Then at some point we felt a change was needed, but felt a strong urge to continue with the group so prayed about it, and then eventually someone suggested we carry on meeting but change the name to "Bible Study" -- (using the Sunday readings for meditation, reflection and prayer), which again has been very rewarding.

What I feel strongly about this group, is the powerful friendship and building up of trust, a place of belonging where we pray and share both for ourselves and for others that are in need of prayer. It is also a social time where we bring food and drink to share later.

Last year Alexe Parker joined the pilgrimage to be our cook and since then has now also joined our Bible study group.

Yes! I feel we are a flourishing group where we can share personal things and have fun in a safe environment. But of course, all this would not have happened if it wasn't for Pat and Keith who first started the Taizé group back in 1993 on the Pilgrimage.

Anne Alcock

Monica's Santa Walk

Monica McLauchlan (1975 onwards) our booking secretary and drinks car assistant was out & about in central London last November, when she did a Santa Walk around & over the River Thames. The route was only 5 miles but with torrential rain & a hail storm. Most of the 55 walkers wore Santa hats but Monica stood out in a reindeer costume!!! Her sister Gillian walked alongside with the daybags & camera. She raised £633, part of total £7,500 for Hosanna House near Lourdes. We hope it will be a dry this year - for the reindeer's day out. Monica will be setting up a Justgiving page contact her for details.

Monica McLauchlan



Other News

David Ward (son of Bill) pilgrim on the 1st St. David's: St. Michael's, Cornwall; Glastonbury II and Day Pilgrim and on many others, finally got married to Annette Johnson (who also has joined us as a day pilgrim) at Holy Trinity Church, Orton Longueville, Peterborough; on Friday 3rd July 2010.

The statue of "Our Lady of the Taper" will travel to London for the Papal Visit. Benedict will bless and light the candle or taper in the hand of Mary before the statue returns to Wales. (June edition Dolen Mynyw/ Menevia News front page)

Bill Ward

Congratulations on the Pilgrims Code, all the essential stuff there. What a lot of happy memories it brings back of trying to manage probably too many people sleeping in halls.

Gil and I will be around you at some point this year staying in B&Bs and joining you when we can.

Last year Gil and I went to Proms in the Park in Hyde Park and thought how much the pilgrims would have enjoyed it – like singing Jerusalem en masse. We identified possibly the best area to aim for in front of the VIP stand which is on a convenient rise on the right hand side as you look at the stage. Any pilgrims who might want to come along on September 11th could meet up with us in that area. If people want to book they can do so at:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/proms/2010/promsinthepark/london.shtml>

Bill Haynes

Frances Winifred Dean R.I.P. 25th April 1939 – 5th May 2010

At a St Peter's Carol evening in December 2008, Frances was, as usual, leading the Union of Catholic Mothers in providing food for all of us. At the end of the evening, Frances suddenly didn't look well and seemed to be turning slightly yellow. This was the first indication that our marvellous illustrious kitchen genius was in trouble.

In April 2009 Frances celebrated her 70th birthday in a packed St. Peter's church hall. It was a great celebration of a wonderfully active person's life. One look around the hall gave you a good indication of all of the activities Frances was involved with. She fed us as pilgrims for 30 years, she has been central in St Peter's parish functions for about the same amount of time, she was a very active member of the Union of Catholic Mothers on a local and national level and numerous priests came to the party. Everyone was there to say thank you for what the gift of her friendship had brought to so many of us.... and there was just enough room left for her large family of five sons, Bennett, Paul, Jimmy, Jonathan and Michael, their wives and children to squeeze in! By this time we were becoming more aware of the seriousness of Frances's illness, an inoperable tumour which it was hoped could be kept under control with treatment.



Frances managed to meet us on the last few days of the 2009 pilgrimage to Lindisfarne. Although ill and weakened by her treatment you could see how happy she was to be with us. The pilgrimage way of life, in spite of the early rises which she didn't like, meant so much to her. She saw her catering role as one of service and I witnessed on numerous occasions just how upset and anxious she could get when something had gone wrong in the kitchen. The cure was always the same... I just opened a bottle of wine, poured her a glass, gave her a hug and a plan B would form and a miracle in the kitchen was off again.

Frances had many helpers over the years but her most faithful servant was John Russell our van driver – lifter of heavy catering equipment, food sorter and fetcher, can opener and grade 1 stirrer I know she missed John on the years he wasn't van driving. Those two were a regular Laurel and Hardy act in the kitchen!

I know all of you will have your own personal memories of our wonderful Frances, everything from the late night kitchen parties, the tambourine banging away almost in time with the music, her laughter, her joy at being involved in the celebration of the Eucharist etc. I'll leave you to ponder your own recollections of your times with Frances.

As for her fight with pancreatic cancer..... it was after Easter this year that the illness caught up with her and she passed away on the 5th of May 2010.

Frances's funeral was at St Peter's Church, Hove on the Friday the 14th of May. The church was packed and was the kind of send off that I know that she would have loved.... Even the undertakers were impressed... I was told that they didn't know whether to remain solemn, laugh or clap! Pilgrimage arrows marked the way from the church to the grave and many pilgrims walked rather than go by car. After the service at the grave side, the arrows led all of the assembled onto a pub stop.... Frances would have loved that too and just to put the cream on the cake... two of her young grandchildren helped put the arrows up from the pub to the hall for the official wake. It was just like her 70th, a celebration of our special friend's life but this time Frances was not involved in the catering.

I'll end with the two bidding prayers that were read out at her funeral, I think they summarise our hopes for Frances in a way she'd love. I'll leave you to add your own if you wish:

Frances's bidding prayers

Dear Lord, at the end of our Diocesan walking pilgrimages, we triumphantly process into our final destination singing and praising your name. In our midst there has always been Frances singing and playing her tambourine. Our pilgrimages are a reflection of our own life's pilgrimage and Frances has just reached her eternal pilgrimage destination, heaven. We ask that you get out the heavenly choir and give her a tambourine to play on the way in through the pearly gates as she joins our pilgrims who have gone before her. **Lord in your mercy....**

Dear Lord, we thank you for the 30 years of incredible catering support that Frances gave to Diocese of Arundel and Brighton's Ecumenical Walking Pilgrimages. She is the only person we know who ever came close to your miracle of turning two fish and five loaves into a feast for 5,000. We ask that you make her welcome at your heavenly table as she did to so many pilgrims over the years. **Lord in your mercy....**

P.S. I wonder if the menu in heaven has changed recently?

Patrick Reeve

Find us on Facebook at <http://www.new.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=13203916228>

Web Sites: <http://www.thepilgrims.org.uk> (Aidan's)
 <http://www.pilgrimsprogress.org.uk> (Danny's)