

NEWSLETTER

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<http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~downs>

December 1999

Dear Pilgrims,

It really does not seem over three months since the "St Dunstan's Pilgrimage" to Bath which was overall, I think, enjoyed by all. Although numbers were lower than usual and the Pilgrimage made a loss of some £1300, contributed to chiefly by the expense of ferries to and from the Isle of Wight, I will not dwell too much on the downside.

The weather overall was very good and only the rest day in Shanklin was "rained off". The Cathedral staff at Chichester, Salisbury and Bath Abbey were all very welcoming and at all the other churches thanks to John Lamb's endearing preparation. We were all very grateful to Monica Russell for stepping in to assist Frances with the catering at such short notice and the only "near disasters" I can recall were the brand new "T" Reg van braking down at Emsworth and the sleeping bag with a mind of its own ending up in Guildford but perhaps I have a short memory!!

It was enriching to have more families with young children with us assisted really by the shorter days. It was also wonderful to have past co-ordinators Alan Fox and Andy Ollard walk with us at Pennington and with Bill and Kate also joining us from Fordingbridge to Salisbury we were blessed with a full compliment of past and present co-ordinator stalwarts.

It was also encouraging to have so many new pilgrims undertaking the whole or part of the Pilgrimage and really enjoying the walking especially Sadie, Jade, Claire, Kieron and Mark from Patrick's confirmation group. Our Pilgrimage family is extending and on Day 7 we were joined by Day pilgrims Anne and Richard, from Canada, so the website is certainly working!

We did have short prayer services in Taizé and Iona style, however, the whole ecumenical aspect of our worship is something the committee are keen to address and you will see enclosed a request for your comments, which we eagerly await.

You can read separately about the reunion at Lewes in October but enormous "thanks" must go to Mary Fuller, Monica and John Russell for a very enjoyable weekend with the final day of the Rodin Exhibition timed to coincide you will recall.

After much discussion it was agreed that next years Pilgrimage will be from Guildford to Lichfield between 12th-27th August. It is an important year in several respects, the 25th year of our Walking Pilgrimages, the year 2000 Jubilee Pilgrimage and by extreme good planning Lichfield Cathedral is celebrating its' 1300th Anniversary next year! So we must make our Jubilee Pilgrimage one to remember.

Happy Millennium,

HappyChristmas Everyone!

Lesley.

Pilgrimage Contacts

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Pilgrimage report

(...Sudden flash of inspiration ...? Nope, I was wrong.) Hi. Siobhan Matheson here. It's not really essential you know who I am, though. So what was special about this year? Well as always the frontmarkers frontmarked, the backmarkers backmarked, and everyone also demonstrated that innate pilgrim sense of exactly where you are in precise relation to the nearest public house. Need I say more? Probably, yes.

This summer, the city of Chichester was privileged to witness our horde taking up their compeeds and sleeping mats, and striding forth with a general air of optimism. And poor old Bath, drawing the short straw as we staggered through the front door of their cathedral armed with guitars and songbooks, finally collapse into those small hard pews, viciously designed to keep even the most determined of church sleepers awake and concentrating. I think we beat them this time!

The weather for the most part was pretty good. The countryside was fantastic, and, marvellously, mainly flat which was a welcome change. Rest days spent in Lake on the Isle of Wight, Salisbury and Bath were productively occupied with various activities, including boating, drinking, shopping, sleeping and watching *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*. Some people who must have been really in the self-punishment think waked up the Salisbury Cathedral Tower! (The view was rather nice, though...) We ate out together in Salisbury despite the usual irregular showering, and miraculously managed to catch the ferry to the Isle of Wight and back despite the stubborn efforts of some pilgrims to sleep in. Nothing that couldn't be corrected with a decent water pistol, however.

So to round off our two weeks (after popping and dressing our blisters) we held a cabaret at the school on the stage. We were treated to the sight of pilgrims enthusiastically singing, dancing and lathering themselves with shaving foam to our heartfelt applause. If you weren't there, WHY NOT?!! (Answers on a postcard, please).



“Pilgrimage2000”

-Ecumenical Pilgrimage from various starting points joining together at Canterbury on 31st December 1999 (tel 0171 221 6109) or www.pilgrimage2000.co.uk for more information.

News

Mike & Jess Kanssen moved in September in a futile attempt to get more space.

In September John & Dawn Willson moved back to England after 5 happy years based in Provence.. They were visited by Bill and Kate during July



Jerry & Anne Sleight (nee De Ath) are proud to announce the arrival of their firstborn, Aidan Michael, who was born on 9th June at 5.43 .

The Way to Lichfield

Having embarked on my second year as Accommodation Officer, I'm realising just how easy I had it last year, when everything fell into place. Although I've made contact with lots of places, using the same process as last year, I seem to have had a lower success rate! I have had some success, however, with two venues competing to host us in one town! I'm not giving up, but there's still a lot to get sorted.

My apologies to those who've volunteered to plan days if the information is late reaching you: it won't be Maurice's fault but mine. Things are always a bit fluid when the details go out, but not normally to the extent of not knowing either the start or end town for a day!

The good news is that I have found real interest and enthusiasm along the way, especially at Lichfield, where they'll be celebrating 1300 years of Lichfield Cathedral in 2000. Is this guidance from above in our choice of destination?

Aidan

The Lewes Reunion - A & B Pilgrimage 1999

I finally got back to the Pilgrimage mould, when I arrived at Brighton station and saw Sarah Doran getting on the train at Brighton. We both made it to Lewes and St Pancras Hall, trusting Lesley's map. Mary Fuller was there to welcome us and Pilgrims enjoyed an evening at the local bar in the building. Soup was also available from the kitchen.

Saturday was fine and after a leisurely breakfast we sat out under John Russell's leadership for our morning walk to Glynde. Apart from the danger of flying golf balls by the local golf course, we huffed and puffed over Kingston Down and had a good lunch at the Trevor Arms in Glynne. Bill Haynes met with them with his American wife, Kate. It was not long before the banter started and by the time we got back to the hall we were pleasantly tired.

Lesley then took us to the Rodin exhibition where we were able to see 'The Kiss', firsthand and watch a video of Rodin's life. Anne Shardlow met us in the gallery.

Saturday evening's entertainment was a splendid disco, sampling the local flavour. We went to bed happy, after watching David Cosham's and Patrick Reeve's slide show and video. Looking at pictures was a highlight of the weekend and thanks should be offered to all the pilgrims who showed their photos and gave enjoyment to others.

Sunday was also fine and before we parted we met John Flood the local Parish Priest who took us through the Mass and told us to be charitable to those people who burn effigies of the Pope and attend the local bonfires. He came back to the hall and chatted with us. Thanks should also be offered to Father Flood for letting us use the hall as well as to Mary Fuller, our Pilgrimage host for the weekend. There was also time to go to the Anglican Church at St Michael's. The CoE once again welcome us with coffee and tea after the service. Thanks!

I went home after the Anglican Service but Lesley and friends stayed and went to the King's Head for lunch. And so to St. Chad's Pilgrimage!

Richard House

St Chad and a walk for Christian Unity

As at the end of every pilgrimage, ideas for the following years walk were suggested at Bath and Pilgrims put their names down against their preferred destinations. The options were Bath to Lichfield, an around Birmingham Evesham, Shrewsbury, Lichfield pilgrimage and an around Sussex pilgrimage. We had in previous years talked of the year 2000 pilgrimage needing to be something special for the millennium and a celebration as our jubilee year of pilgrimages (1975 - 2000). The Sussex option had always been thought of as a likely choice because the first pilgrimage ever had been beating the bounds of the Diocese. Somehow looking at the Sussex route, and with no obvious theme to it, it didn't quite seem right as it was. The other choices would require two coaches which would push the price up and given the predicted loss from the Bath pilgrimage, they didn't grab me either as being special enough.

After the pilgrimage, in an effort to see if I could make the around Sussex choice more meaningful as the year 2000 option, I decided to start gathering material for the planning meeting where the final choice of destination would be decided. In the first book shop I went into, I stumbled upon a book called **Sacred Britain** in which Lichfield and St Chad were mentioned. What I read nearly made my eyes pop out, a real eureka experience.....

Back in the 7th Century, as a result of the Synod of Whitby where the Roman and Celtic Churches resolved their differences, the Greek Archbishop Theodore had to decide which Bishop, Wilfrid (Roman Church) or Chad (Celtic Church) should step down as they both covered the same area (York). He chose in favour of Wilfrid, but was so impressed by the Humble way in which Chad stepped aside that he soon gave him the Bishopric of Mercia. St. Chad set up his Cathedral at Lichfield, a site at which Christians had been martyred during a period of Roman persecution. This St Chad also liked to walk everywhere and it is recorded that the Archbishop ordered him to use a horse to get around.....bit like telling a pilgrim to catch a bus.

Back in 1981, our pilgrimage went around Sussex in honour of St. Wilfrid who is accredited with having brought Christianity to the South Saxons. It was our first ecumenical pilgrimage. Since that time we have grown closer and closer together as a pilgrimage family but we again and again have had to struggle with the complications and pain caused by being unable to receive Eucharist together. For the most part, the act of birth into a family of one denomination or other has defined and shaped our faith journey and our faith community or denomination. Our conversations, as we've walked along together, on how best to be a truly ecumenical Christian community, whilst respecting what we each hold as important in our faith, have I feel, become deeper and more determined because of our common desire to overcome the obstacles that separate us. It is this determination to find the unity that Christ so much wants that seems to be the issue that most pilgrims want to focus on for the Millennium year.

The connection between St. Wilfrid (Roman Catholic) and our Roman Catholic Diocese covering Sussex, with St. Chad (Celtic) and Lichfield Cathedral being Anglican and the struggle for unity achieved in the 7th century, reflecting our own present day struggles was obvious. As St. Chad had stepped aside humbly for St. Wilfrid maybe we should step out humbly from St. Wilfrid's old patch to honour St. Chad's example with humility and unity being the theme. What if the last and focal point of the pilgrimage were to the Anglican Sunday Eucharist service at Lichfield, something like those of the Roman Catholic Church (St. Wilfrid) following the example of humility shown by St. Chad (Celtic / Anglican Free Church) returning the gracious act 1300 years on, and stepping aside for the sake of Christ's desire of Christian Unity?....just a thought for consideration and contemplation?



On checking the possible routes on maps from our Diocese to Lichfield, the idea of starting from St. Wilfrid's School Crawley almost worked, but it would have increased the mileage per day. However Guildford to Lichfield, that was definitely achievable..... What a result!

After the committee meeting, when Aidan Simons went to investigate hall possibilities at Lichfield, he found that Lichfield Cathedral will be celebrating it's 1300th anniversary in the year 2000..... ever get the feeling the God had made up his mind where we were going before we did?

Patrick Reeve

Amundel & Brighton Walking Pilgrimages
**25
Years
Closer**

It was a special privilege on this year's pilgrimage to have my two daughters present as fully-fledged pilgrims (i.e. staying overnight) for the first time. I think this makes them the first 'third generation' pilgrims, with both parents and grandparents being pilgrims. (The pedigree actually goes further, with 3 uncles and 3 aunts too). Not that this makes them better pilgrims any more than old hands like myself are better than the latest newcomer. What does matter, however, is how this fits into our vision of pilgrimage as a model for life. We've often talked of life as a pilgrimage journey, with the pilgrims representing all those we make that journey with. In both, the passing on of tradition is an important element.

It also reminds me of a discussion, a few years back, about the place of children on the pilgrimage, during which someone expressed the opinion that the pilgrimage is essentially an 'adult thing'. I would argue exactly the opposite: as a mirror of life it's an 'everyone' thing, with obvious practical limitations that we've always applied. For me this was most apparent at the "20 Blistering Years" reunion in Ropley, 1995, when pilgrims from 20 years came both individually and with partners, offspring and various hangers-on. That's our great, inclusive, pilgrim family.

It's now nearly 25 years since that first pilgrimage back in the Holy Year of 1975, so it's time for another extraordinary reunion, over the weekend of 31 March – 2 April 2000. Put it in your diary now! More than ever it's a reunion for anyone who's joined us at any time over that period, plus partners and children. We hope to have facilities and attractions to suit all ages. (The venue is not fixed, but will be in West Surrey / East Hampshire, and convenient for public transport). Let me know if you hope to come, so that we can gauge approximate numbers.

So what's this one to be called? I resisted "25 Blistering Years" (the feet seem more under control these days). But, reflecting on the themes of pilgrim family and pilgrim journey mentioned above, I've chosen "25 Years Closer". "Closer to what?" you may ask. I guess everyone's answer will be slightly different: to God, to each other, to the end of our journey? In so many ways our pilgrimage is about getting closer: what would your answer be? Let me know (with a brief explanation if necessary). The best contribution before the reunion (my decision is final) wins a bottle of wine. Send your answer with your application for the reunion or [e-mail it to me](#)

Aidan Simons

**PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW! 31 MARCH – 2
APRIL 2000**

Memories of 25 Years

At the recent Lewes reunion, we had both the conventional slide show and a video of this year's pilgrimage. Plus people brought their photographs and memories to share. Somehow the idea emerged of creating a multimedia collage, using sound and still and video images to sum up 25 years of pilgrimage. Obviously, there's not time for many images of each pilgrimage, so what we're looking for are pictures that epitomise the various pilgrimages. Destinations may feature (for example, pilgrims outside Arundel Cathedral for the Holy Year 1975), but what about those memorable things along the way (the flood at Roxwell maybe) and pilgrims we've shared the journey with. The sound side is more challenging, but I'd be interested if anyone has any recordings that would be suitable, either of pilgrims making music or other groups playing 'our music'.

Please send any contributions (or ideas) to: [Aidan Simons](#)