

NEWSLETTER

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Pilgrimage Postponed!

It was with heavy hearts that the Pilgrimage Committee voted unanimously on the 24th June to postpone the Lichfield - Lastingham pilgrimage by a year, in the light of the ongoing foot and mouth situation. It became a decision not so much whether we *could* do the pilgrimage as whether we *should* do the pilgrimage. Taken after considerable sharing of views and information, the decision was made with a heavy heart, but we felt that it was the right thing to do. It is clear that many paths are reopening, and several of our days are known to be clear or viable with a degree of road walking, but many concerns were expressed, which are summarised below.

The biggest issue was the apparent insensitivity of a large group walking an extended distance over agricultural land so soon after (or even during) the foot and mouth crisis.

There is a risk of conflict with landowners even if paths are officially open.

The crisis is not over, and there is a risk that paths currently open will be closed, and we may not discover the fact until we reach the point of closure.

The degree of road walking required may be unacceptable to some pilgrims.

Unplanned re-routing may be too difficult for some pilgrims.

Several days are as yet incompletely planned, and the time for route planners to plan and resolve issues is too short.

There is insufficient time to do a really good job in vital liaison with local churches.

The number of pilgrims booked is lower than usual, though probably not below the critical threshold; many regular pilgrims have not booked.

On the positive side: we have a head start on next year's pilgrimage, and every opportunity to make it one of the best.

The 2002 Pilgrimage will thus continue from Lichfield to Lavington, where Chad and his brother Cedd spent many years, going via the Peak District and York. The dates are 17 - 31 August 2002 (a week later than usual).

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'Pre-union' being planned in Redhill during September.

It is planned to hold the reunion earlier (mid September if possible) to coincide with the Annual General Meeting. Details should be included in this mailing.

Pilgrimage Contacts

The Pilgrimage can be contacted via

DABCEC, 4 Southgate drive, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 6RP

Co-ordinator - John Lamb - e-mail: Via WebSite

Bookings Secretary - Pat Donachie -

Newsletter editor - Mike Kanssen - e-mail: Via WebSite

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

<http://www.thepilgrims.org.uk> (Aidan's)

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Dear Pilgrims,

This letter was written before the decision was taken over whether to take the plunge and walk or not. However, you may like to know what went on as a bit of history - mostly in the face of difficulties. As you can imagine it is difficult to get hard facts on the progress of the Foot and Mouth Disease epidemic at the level of detail necessary to know whether a projected route is going to be open. Moreover, it is not just a question of rights of way, but also of not angering people whose livelihoods are bound up with animal husbandry.

As you can imagine, route planners have had to think of fall-back options which involve more road walking. The down side is that it is tougher on the feet, more hazardous and usually less pleasant. This uncertainty has put other things on hold such as church liaison and lunch stops. There will be a lot of telephoning to be done if we are able to decide to go when your Committee meets on the 24th June. As I write, the problem areas seem to be at the start and end of our pilgrimage, so we may have to fudge the first day and finish at York. Better half a loaf than no bread but we shall see. It is always a pleasure to spend time together as Pilgrims, so let us hope we can pull it off.

There are two very sad events to report: first Brenda Dillon died in April in a nursing home. Many of you will have happy memories of "two puddings Brenda" who kept trim by giving most of them to fellow pilgrims. She was a very creative lady and an unstoppable photographer. I have sent love and sympathy to her family on your behalf. Another death is that of Jim Casey who seems to have died in tragic circumstances in a road accident. This is more recent and I have no details yet. Please remember these people in your prayers. It would be good to have a memorial service for Brenda and Jim. As we are so far-flung as a group, the best opportunity would be while on pilgrimage but arrangements will be rather ad hoc and tend to exclude those not walking this year - sorry! *[We now have a memorial at our Reunion.]*

The Rev. Jill Warren, Rector of St Chad's who made us so welcome last year and who hoped to walk with us to Lavington, has had surgery from which she will not be fully recovered by August. We pray that you return swiftly to full health, Jill, and we hope to see you on your home turf at least. *[We now hope next year we can see Jill with her boots on for our postponed L to L walk.]*

A bit of cheering news is that the appeal for pledges to fly Fr Joe over to join us has met the target for Egypt Air via Cairo, though not KLM or BA.! The pledges sum to about £500 and there were a couple of generous gifts too. What a kind group of people you are! We will to call in your pledges not with this mailing as proposed in the last newsletter, but once we are sure Fr Joe can come at this late stage. *[I hope the pledgers can renew their pledge for 2002 – more later.]*

And talking of mailing, Tom Yeung has kindly agreed to run the Data Base for us which leaves Danny Thomas running the Website. Thanks to both. And thanks also to Aid Simons who has coaxed so much information and help from Public Rights of Way Officers over the last couple of months.

See you in August, I hope. God bless.

John Lamb

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Pilgrim News

As you may have already heard two recent pilgrims have finished their pilgrimage on this earth. I am still somewhat shocked by this news as I have fond memories of both of them.

Brenda Dillon, who only a couple of years ago was so full of life, and had kept my spirit up on several hot tiring afternoons. As reported in the last newsletter she seemed to be making a slow recovery but has since suffered a relapse and died during April.

Tragically our pilgrim family has also lost a young member. Jim Casey, who has taken part in many recent pilgrimages and related events, was found beside the Brighton Bypass on Bank Holiday Monday, 28th May 2001, and died on the way to hospital.

Please remember both of them and their families in your prayers.

I believe it is now planned to hold a memorial service for them during the September reunion.

Monica McLauchlan thanks pilgrims for their prayers and support, she has finished the invasive treatments and says it good to have hair again. She remained active throughout & has just completed a 5 km sponsored walk in 44minutes!

Mark Sharp completed his finals in May last year & graduated in that July. He then brought a house together with his fiancée Triona & they moved in time for their wedding in August. (Sounds like a very hectic summer!). Both are now working in London, Triona as a Teacher/Tutor for deaf students, and Mark as a Building services engineer.

Mark & Triona send their best wishes to all pilgrims, past, present, & future!

Paul Martin has moved from Whitstable and is now living on the Isle of Wight.

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Several Pilgrims have recently celebrated milestone birthdays-



Believe it or not, Patrick Reeve celebrated his [40th birthday](#) on Saturday 3 February! Always a kid at heart, he found something in the dressing up box and came out to play, as did several of the partygoers.

Julian Martin was 40 in October & had a [surprise party](#) awaiting him.

On Saturday February 24th, Pat Donachie thought she was going out for a quiet family meal to celebrate her 60th birthday but Keith and their children Andrea, David and Rachel had other ideas - they had spent the last few months organising a [massive surprise party](#). So on arrival at the Skylane Hotel in Horley, Pat was amazed to find the function room filled with her friends. There were some she hadn't seen for many years including two people who had flown in from Israel especially. 30 pilgrims were there including Edna Davies who was down from Merseyside and looking in fine fettle. Many pilgrims were to be found on the dance floor, dancing the night away to the sounds of the swinging 60s, and a couple of pilgrims came suitably dressed,

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John & Lesley would like to say 'Thank-you to everyone who attended our [wedding](#) at St Andrew's Church Thornton Heath on 11th November last. It was great to see so many Pilgrims at the Mass despite the atrocious weather. Thanks also for all the gifts and cards'

They picked up a leaflet at one of the churches in Staffordshire whilst to Route Planning, with the following prayer for the Foot and Mouth crisis:

"Eternal God, Creator and sustainer of life, we praise you for the beauty and fertility of the earth. We praise you also for its complexity and mystery before which we bow in wonder and awe.

Hear our prayers for all upon whom we depend for the production and provision of our food, for the management of the countryside and the husbanding of its resources.

To those who are suffering in the present crisis bring comfort and hope;

to those entrusted with the decision making that affects other's lives give wisdom and discernment; to your Church in its ministry to all, grant a watchful eye, a loving heart and a prophetic voice in the service of your Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen"

Our little Geoff, has now reached 7 months and passed his development test with flying colours-(the next Prime Minister?!!) He says "daddy" now and loves to sing in church. Father has already signed him up for the church choir! He's not managed to crawl yet but can sit up on his own - maybe next year he'll be walking! God help us all!!

Geoffrey has asked us to say how disappointed he is not to be walking the Pilgrimage this summer but on reflection it will give him a bit more time to prepare for next year. He successfully slept through most of the half day's 'walking' (in the buggy) he had on Student Cross at Easter, though he was able to be involved with some of the celebrations over the weekend, the all night party proved to be a little bit too much for us! On the night before his Baptism (on June 3rd) he discovered the delight of real ale. We took him to the pub with us and as soon as we were served, his eyes lit up & he reached for the glass with both hands, He's tried this again since, so now we are trying to wean him off the bottle! Like all 7 month olds he is changing every day (He no longer looked like his passport photo by the time we could get the application sent off, so we can't see what use it will be to any Customs officers!)

