

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 74

February 2003

Dear Pilgrims,

Best wishes to you all for the New Year. Much has happened since the Reunion in November. Again many thanks to the Guildford gang for their fruitful efforts.

Some of us carry new burdens and others look forward to celebrations. In this context I ask you bear Stephen Smith's mother and family in your prayers as she is being treated for cancer. Please also remember Father David in prayer as he looks forward to his Jubilee celebration at the end of March.

The halls along the Dover to Chichester Route have been booked through Aidan's capable efforts. The costs are also lower so the Committee has accepted the Treasurer's estimate of a lower cost to pilgrims. Remember this as we share with congregations along the way, some materially poorer than others.

Maurice has been able to start the walk planners off with instructions so all is proceeding to plan. Well, not quite to plan. There are still vacancies in key roles; van driver and helper plus assistant cook. All free places whilst you are doing the work as well. Volunteers on a part way basis would be very acceptable.

There will be a booking form with this newsletter produced by Patrick (with Aidan's light touch on the software). Early booking helps particularly if there is a demand for a coach to Dover.

Chichester diocesan officers have been enthusiastic about this extra pilgrimage through their patch and we hope to benefit from the teaching/liturgy material they are compiling for the anniversary year. Another priest has expressed interest in walking with us so likely help for Father David.

In the last newsletter I wrote sharp words about the excessive use of procedures. My comeuppance followed promptly with a realisation that our contingency plans have to be formally prepared in advance. It is not a lack of trust in God's protection and the pilgrims' capability to deal with the occasional problems; injuries, getting lost and security around the halls. It is an acceptance that we must be more formally organised just in case problems happen. External organisations are also starting to expect/require this of organised walking groups. I am preparing a draft based on one for my Gloucester Men's Walk group.

This years Men's' Walk is the 9th and 10th of May for you men to stretch legs and enjoy the Pembrokeshire Coast path around St David's (excuse the bit of free advertising slipped in here).

Remember to use the Pilgrimage posters to attract others to share the experience with us.

Next Committee meeting is on the 27th April in Redhill for which all are welcome.

God bless,

Bruce Matheson

Co-ordinator

2002 Pilgrimage Reunion

St John the Evangelist, Guildford

The 2002 reunion was organised by Guildford pilgrims Sue Earley and John Lamb at St John the Evangelist's Church, Stoke Park, Guildford. It was an ideal location with interconnecting church and hall, carpeted floor, with parking privileges alongside and easy to find except when driving in the rush hour.

Friday night saw a steady stream of pilgrims arriving, sharing soup and fillers while some went off in search of pubs and more serious food. Nick Lamb showed his slides, before we tumbled into bed ready for a prompt start in the morning.



Saturday morning, after a not-too-early cooked breakfast and prayer in the Church, we were off into bright day which was very encouraging after the heavy rain of previous days, though a little nippy. Sue and Fred had chosen a good route through the town keeping shopaholic pilgrims away from temptation. This took us to St Martha's Church; an ironstone building which stands on an unmetalled section of the pilgrim's way and has fine views. Prayers outside in the sun, led by Bruce preceded the next down and up to Newlands Corner, a favourite venue of bikers, dog walkers, horse riders, admirers of the views to the South, and Roman snails (the real thing, not sluggish papist pilgrims). Then down to Shere for lunch. The "White Horse"

swallowed us with ease – so much for "I could eat a horse" but quite a number found it warm enough to eat outside. For those who still had a corner to fill, Sue arranged an optional visit to another pub, the "Villagers" at Blackheath, for Banoffee Pie! Dropping down from the heath to Chilworth, we were greeted by, Bill and Kate.

It was good to see them though the kitchen crew, alias Guildford Gourmets missed the pleasure; they were fighting potatoes by then. With autumnal mists at dusk and bonfire smoke in the air we got back to base at around five o'clock as planned to top up on cakes made by pilgrims and friends. It was good that these kept the wolf from the door, as the ovens in the hall were a touch slow. Dave Cosham kept us entertained with an impressive show of pictures of last August while we waited. A leisurely progress through the evening meal was no hardship as one of Sue's fellow parishioners Chris Lee and his family entertained us. Chris moved from table to table amazing us with his conjuring skills that he uses to explain the Gospel to youngsters while baffling the adults. Quietly, and embarrassingly, the Rector, Michael McLauchlan, his wife, Kit, and Andy and Vicky Crocombe (Sue's housegroup leaders) were washing up for us as they waited for us to get ourselves sorted for our Taizé service – the real reason for their presence! The Taizé was good, enhanced by a succession of cross images provided by Dave C. which were a reminder of the Remembrance theme to be picked up on the morrow.



And so Sunday saw us packing our bags and tidying before joining the parishioners for Remembrance Day Morning Prayer and wreath-laying. A good way to share our faith in the Risen Christ before departing.

A good weekend, we hope. Love and God bless from Sue and John

Guidance Notes for Pilgrims, Front & Rear Markers

Pilgrims

Slow walkers should set off promptly in the morning and after the lunchtime pub stop. Its easier to do this than try to catch up on lost time.

Fast walkers should allow the front markers a good head start in the morning. You could be the first to see arrows that have been interfered with so stay alert.

Front Markers

Markers should set off up to 30 minutes ahead of the programme. This depends on the days programme and the distances between stops. A church stop soon after the hall can be accounted for in the margin as it is seldom that the markers can join in (except for full services).

Another situation that suits a briefer gap between markers and pilgrims is walking through towns. It is more likely that arrows will be interfered with and a short gap reduces the chance of this happening.

Back Markers

This is one of the harder tasks during the day as you are always last and latest into the hall. Setting off very soon after the last pilgrims is reasonable as is encouraging the slow walkers to move along.

Pubs & shops should be checked as pilgrim free.

Help may be needed by injured pilgrims e.g. escort to a bus stop or a call for a pickup. Do not leave an injured pilgrim on their own. This is when a team of at least four is an advantage as one can be spared to help out.

If you find problems; injuries, exposure, reports of missing pilgrims, pilgrims too slow to make it to the hall in daylight, etc, PHONE IN to the Co-ordinator. (separate contingency plans are to be prepared for these sorts of events)

Carry torches in case everything runs late and nightfall finds you still walking. For safety, form into groups rather than walking alone in failing light. A mobile phone in the group will be handy in case of trouble. Borrow one if necessary.

Maurice



Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
For all the benefits which Thou hast given me,
For all the pains and insults
Which Thou hast borne for me,
O most merciful Redeemer
Friend, and Brother.
May I know Thee more clearly,
Love Thee more dearly,

And follow Thee more nearly.

Amen

Jesus at the Crossroads

Once more at a cross-roads,
Lord where should I go?
Every path a mystery,
No signposts that I know.

Jesus is a way maker,
He made a way for me,
Placed my feet on firmer ground,
And set this captive free.

I'm confused about everything,
What I feel; what I should do.
I know that I should trust you.
But I really wish I knew
What path that I should follow,
The life I ought to make,

How to fill this hollow,
When and what to give and take.

But, suffering is nothing but the road:
You, the shepherd, are sheer delight,
Torn from a joy that cannot corrode.
A wisp of transcendent, liling light.

Once more at a cross-roads,
Should my mind, my feelings,
Or blind chance lead the way?
For my feelings pull me strongly,
But my mind has more to say.

I could always follow faith,
And let the Lord steer the way,
To God it's part of his big plan,
One huge cosmic mystery.

Be, then, whatever person time will tell.
Always west of heaven, east of hell
Do what reason and the heart deem good.
Take whatever will or fortune would.

Once more at a cross-roads,
Reflecting on the life I've had,
We pray to saints for guidance
We pray to the Saints for guidance
Especially Saints Cedd and Chad.

Help me Lord, and guide me,
I do not know the way.
You are the one true pilot
Steer me through each passing day.

Danny Thomas 2002

(From his Prayer Stop, on last year's Pilgrimage)

Pilgrim News

Our Polish Pilgrims - Monika & Jacek are expecting a baby in July! They regret that they don't think they be able to manage this years pilgrimage, but hope to be back in the future. Our congratulations & best wishes go to you both.

Fr David is celebrating his Silver Jubilee on the 31st March, at St John the Baptist. The service starts at 18.30 and celebrations continue in the hall afterwards. Pilgrims are welcome!

Rupert Quail feels he has dropped out of touch with the pilgrims since doing rather a lot of moving. He has passed on his latest address.

As mentioned in Bruce's letter, this years Pilgrimage is still in need of a helper / second driver for the Luggage van as well as a Catering Assistant. If you can fill either of these roles please let a member of the committee know.



Joseph Brennan's photo arrived just too late for the last newsletter, so for those who didn't get to see him at the committee meeting, here he is.

John & Leslie appear to have adjusted well to the enforced change in lifestyle!



Another new Pilgrim who didn't arrive in time for the last newsletter was Sophie Elizabeth Kansen born -13th November 2002 (two weeks late) weighing 8½ lbs. (A Kansen daughter seems to be rare as gold so her grandmother was over the moon at the news) Despite Sophie spending a worrying week in Special care (with a weak larynx) both mother & baby are doing well. Sophie hopes to be able to join in this years pilgrimage for a day or two, (in a purely observatory role).

Stephen Smith has sent a request for urgent prayers, for his mother, Mary Smith, has just been diagnosed with cancer, once more.

Those of you who were with us last year will remember Stephen; those who followed on the internet will have seen his many photos. Stephen and his mum were instrumental in the welcome we received in Lichfield in 2000 and the send off in 2002. I'm sure you will remember them in your prayers.

A thought for pilgrims & trainee angels:

Until you spread your wings,

You'll have no idea how far you can walk!