

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 76

October 2003

Dear Pilgrims,

Another busy and interesting pilgrimage this year. Happy memories of the church stops and the food in particular. Our thanks to the helpers who made it possible and also those who contributed to the talks. The weather, churches and routes chosen were also a blessing. Amazingly hot weather as the Dover starters will remember.

About as much a challenge being Co-ordinator as I could have expected with quite a number of unexpected events and a few areas where the planning could have been better.

Two pilgrims have contributed thoughtful précis of what went well and what could be done better plus suggestions from many others. Much to think on and carry forward into 2004. Some areas, such as integrating the liturgy with the theme, need a Liturgy Leader to work up programmes during the year. There are also several other key roles to be undertaking as your work for God; Cooks Helper, Church Liaison Officer, Sandwich Team Leader, Nurse and Van Assistant. We will enjoy the benefit of many pilgrims carrying on with their current roles plus two new officers; Fred Adilz as Halls Officer and John Chenery as Assistant Route Planner.

The committee has agreed on Gloucester to Chester for 2004. This should be a brilliant walking route via the Severn, Malverns, Marches, Shropshire Hills and a scrap of Offas Dyke maybe. The theme and patron saint are still being mulled over. Suggestions welcomed.

Mary Fuller and her team have sorted the Reunion in North Eastbourne as you will see from the enclosure. By this date, 7th to 9th November, much of the route should be confirmed and the day planning volunteers can start to look at maps.

Hope to see many of you in November.

Best wishes, Bruce

PILGRIM TIME TRAVELLER

Not many of the pilgrims saw him. We were looking at this hole in the ground, under the altar, in St Edmund's Chapel in Dover and he slipped in and stood for a moment at the back with a rather quizzical look on his face. I really only sensed his presence and he slipped out as I turned round. Rather bizarrely, the hole was where his innards were placed after his death - perhaps that is why his face had that expression. I felt he was pleased we were there. After all it had meant a lot to him to be able to consecrate that chapel to the memory of his recently-canonised friend and mentor, Edmund. Richard died a few days later and 750 years have passed but the chapel is still there, the pilgrims were there and Richard was there.

St Richard popped in again at the church at Coombe. Again he stood at the back, next to a chap who was known for preaching using glove puppets and for wearing funny hats. He was wearing a rather silly hat with a bobble on it that kept bouncing about in front of his eyes. The man with the hat did not seem to be very interested in the reading but then it was he who had written it years again when he was a priest in Nicaragua. I looked back as I left the churchyard and thought I

could see the hat still nodding as John Medcalf slept on the bench with his name on it which we had blessed.

They walked with us as did all those pilgrims we remembered at Bognor. They tended to come and go but I guess it was just that we didn't notice them a lot of the time. The man from Galilee walked as well. He managed to get to every single God stop and yes he was really present at our celebration each day. I was glad that he enjoyed the joke when the bread was so difficult to break. I think quite a few of us heard the parable that he made out of the incident.

Perhaps you think this is being fanciful. Well maybe ... maybe there is a degree of poetic licence. But it is true - they were there - I know they were - I was there. They were all there when we got to Chichester, looking up at that amazing ceiling and listening to the beautiful choral Evensong, all of us half asleep. We were exhausted but after all we had walked a long way. The funny thing is they are still here behind me now, watching me tapping away at the computer. I am not sure why they are hanging around. What is even more strange is that so many of my fellow pilgrims this year are here as well.

*and eternal life is this
to know that we are there
to know that they are here
to know that He is with us
to know that we rise again
and again
and again*

Terry Dobson

John Chenery spotted a piece in the Parish Round-Up section of the A&B news, which follows below for those of you who (like me) don't get to read the A&B news:

"CHICHESTER

THE HIGHLIGHT OF a boiling August in Chichester was the arrival in our city and parish on Friday 22nd of St Richard's 750th Anniversary Walking Pilgrimage. Eighty people walked this last stage, half of whom had come the whole hard way from Dover.

More than one wore a T-shirt marking 25 years participation in this annual diocesan pilgrimage to a place, shrine or area of Christian faith and heritage. This year they had walked from Dover, where St Richard died in 1253, to his tomb here in Chichester Cathedral. Their journey took in eight churches dedicated to the saint, the last before our own being St Richard's at nearby Slindon.

To share the pilgrims' itinerary, with its ecumenical inclusiveness, its happy spirit, its simplicities, fatigues joys, refreshments and laughter, check their astonishingly good website at www.thepilgrims.org.uk/2003/diary/index.htm. The walkers came from Scotland, Cumbria, Teeside, Wiltshire, Warwickshire, the Home Counties, Germany and Australia. Our own parish website, ever developing and more up-to-date at www.strichardschichester.co.uk also gives a bright illustrated account of their culminating time with us. They were very welcome, making our parish rooms their unisex dormitory. Kevin Grant"

Proposed Pilgrimage Theme.

While examination of the local history of Christianity is rewarding and there are associations of places along the proposed route with Werbergh and Winefride, it was suggested that there should be more focus on how

we are to live our Christian lives today. This is an idea suggested for development and help will be sought to develop this idea into a daily theme for the pilgrimage.

We have often used associations of holy men and women with places we visit to give a theme for a pilgrimage. The thinking is that these people showed Christ-like qualities that we could well emulate. For a change it is suggested that we look sometimes at issues rather than individual people.

There are ever-present social and moral sores that cry out for our attention as Christians.

One such issue is **persecution**. This is conveniently viewed from some high moral ground, such as the church pulpit as we criticise the treatment of Christians in Indonesia, for example. But are we part of the problem? East Timor is just one current among many. Why is the hatred there? What is the solution – not just for races, nation states, political parties, organised criminals tribes, sects, playground bullies but for you and for me? The idea is to look more closely at the present and the future for which **we** have responsibility rather than history – well some of us are old enough to be viewed as contributors to history too!

I suggest you give the matter some thought and come along prepared to share your thoughts and prayers at our prayer stops. But don't let such grim matters get you down; there is a loving God to lighten our spirits plus a lot of really nice people in the world.

Examples include 2000 years of anti-Semitism, Maronite Christians since the c.7th, Druze since the 10th, Cathars, Baha'i, Parses, Huguenot's, Dissenters, Copts – and that's just for starters.

Then there are people who don't fit in for other reasons: "witches", Gypsies/Romany, mentally ill, handicapped.

For political persecution try Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, the USSR which killed more than the Nazis.

Reflections on St Richard's Pilgrimage and pointers for 2004

Submissions made through the suggestions box, were discussed at the planning meeting recently. Broadly, they fell into three categories:

- Requests for a focus on a more prayerful approach to pilgrimage,
- A desire to curb the "booze cruise" behaviour which gives a poor message to the young, and
- Suggestions on how to make people more considerate and co-operative when living in pilgrimage conditions.

Several solutions have been identified which should help the pilgrimage become a more fulfilling experience (without detracting from the enjoyment of a fortnight's summer holiday). These include:

- to have a nominated person (Muezzin) to convene Morning and Evening Prayer for those who wish to take part – a.m. 15 min after rise time; p.m. as opportunity permits,
- to have a nominated person to organise the daily "Setting out Prayer"
- to have a "theme" announced each day to be reflected upon...

Many of the organising committee remain another year, but other pressures have left a few vacancies. If you feel you could help out by taking on one of these roles please contact Bruce

Co-ordinator	Bruce Matheson
Deputies	John Lamb+1
Minutes Secretary	Keith Donachie
Treasurer	Patrick Reeve
Accommodation	Fred Adilz
Alt. Transport	Monica McLauchlan
Booking Sec.	Monica McLauchlan
Day Pilgrims	Gillian McLauchlan
Catering	Frances Dean
Catering Support	Vacancy
Chaplain(s)	Fr David Russell +?
Chief Route Planner	Maurice Hickman
Assisted by	John Chenery
Church Liaison	Vacancy
Database	Tom Yeung
Drinks car	Rosemary Southon
Footcare	Vacancy
Liturgist/music	T.B.A.
Newsletter Editor	Mike Kanssen
Publicity Websites	Danny Thomas + Aidan Simons
Safety Officer	Peter Whipps
Sandwiches	Vacancy(s)
Youth concerns	Patrick Reeve
Van	Alison Tanner + John Russell?
Van assistant	Vacancy

St Richards Anniversary Pilgrimage

A full colour book of St Richard's life & the history of the area, entitled 'The Story of St Richard' (by Michael Gudgeon) has been published by Chichester Cathedral for the 750th anniversary of the death of St Richard.

If anyone would like a copy, Monica McLauchlan would be pleased to get you one. Cost is £3 + p&p

Pilgrim News

Some of you will remember Simon and Marilyn Quail - they've popped in from time to time in recent years. Simon writes regarding their daughter, Jo Quail:

"This is a belated piece of tragic news that I wish I did not have to tell you of the Pilgrim Family. Jo was travelling in Australia, 9 months in to an Asia/Oz/NZ tour when the 4x4 she was travelling in had a rear tyre

burst and the car turned over 3x and Jo was tragically killed. She was 25 This happened near Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia on Saturday 30th August. at 1 pm WA time. It took 2 weeks to get her home and we buried her here in Rudgwick on Monday 15th. We had a packed church with people from both Bristol where Jo trained as a nurse and from locally. She had a job lined up in Wellington NZ from October...

We are still trying to come to terms with her early death. Your prayers would be appreciated."

It's my sad duty also to report the death of Pat Heffernan who died of Cancer on the morning of 21/9/03. I remember Pat from several pilgrimages in the late 90's where he made some close friends. I'm sure Pat will be missed. *Pat became affectionately known, along with Kath Grafen, as one of the "wrinkly rockets" - Pat in particular walked at a pace that put much younger pilgrims to shame!*

Fortunately we also have some happier news:

- Our congratulations go to Jean Nicholls who got married in June to Conway Churchill. The Wedding was in St Lawrence Church, Chipping Sodbury and was attended by Tom McNerney, an old pilgrim friend.
- Monika and Jacek Winiarski (the polish pilgrims who have joined us several times in the last few years) have had a baby boy born on 2/7/03. I'm sure he'll be the source of much joy.