

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 82

September 2005

Dear Pilgrims

Thinking back to the Winchester Pilgrimage this year, I would like to thank you all for your contribution, whether as a walking pilgrim, in the back up team, or sitting at home watching and praying for our progress.

It was particularly enjoyable this year to be visited by so many day pilgrims. Some were past pilgrims unable to walk the distance any more. Others were restricted by time pressures and only able to spare an afternoon. Families with children joined us at the pub and on the walk. The St Francis Ramblers joined us one day. Whatever your contact with us, it was lovely to see you and we hope that you will join our pilgrimage again. We had messages from e-pilgrims and as has in recent years become the custom, a splendid daily diary broadcast almost live over the Internet thanks to the efforts of Stephen Smith and his contributors.

We enjoyed some joint Eucharistic services, many lively Pilgrim and Parish Services, with thoughts about the fruits of the Holy Spirit at our varied Pilgrim Prayer stops. Our young people excelled with their hilarious, dramatic presentations of well-known parables. The balmy hot days at the start gave way to a couple of days heavy rain, but these did not dampen our spirits, and we reached Winchester fitter and spiritually refreshed.

Canterbury Cathedral gave us a warm send-off. Winchester Cathedral were equally warm in their welcome, opening the west doors and leading us down the aisle, tired but elated. As we entered the chancel, the choir applauded. It took a moment to sink in that the applause was for us, and that we really had walked the 170 miles from Canterbury.

Thanks to the last minute volunteers who manned the support team: Fred Adilz, John Russell and Terry Furze, who shared van driving, and to Clive Connor and Elaine Bambrough for driving the catering car. We were well cared and enjoyed the hospitality of many churches, schools and pubs along the way. I have received several letters of thanks from people expressing their appreciation for and enjoyment of this year's Pilgrimage. Thank you all for your hard work and especially to those who helped with loading, unloading and doing those less attractive tasks.

After the vote taken at the end of the Winchester Pilgrimage, a few more votes on line and some discussion at the committee meeting, it has been agreed that next year's Pilgrimage will go from Chester to Lincoln. The theme is yet to be confirmed. In the meantime, Mark & Mary Yeomans have kindly offered to host the Winchester Reunion in Wye, Kent, 4th-6th November, details enclosed. I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

Sue

Dates for your Diary:

The **Winchester Reunion** organised by Mark & Mary Yeomans is planned for November 4th –6th in Wye, Kent, details enclosed. Do come and bring your photographs, musical instruments etc. Please book in advance, so they know how many to cater for, especially for the Saturday night meal.

Day Route Planning for the 2006 Lincoln Pilgrimage: a list for volunteers will be put up at the Winchester Reunion. There should be a minimum of two pilgrims planning each day. We would welcome some new route planners; it is a great way to become more involved with the running of the Pilgrimage (if you can read a map!) For advice or if you cannot attend the reunion but would like to lead a walk, you should contact John Chenery.

Next Year's Pilgrimage, by popular demand and a new destination:

Chester to Lincoln, Saturday 12th August to Sunday 27th August 2006.

Theme: suggestions are invited for discussion at the Reunion. If you are not attending the Reunion but have ideas that you would like to be considered, please post them to Sue Adilz, preferably before the Reunion.

Pilgrimage Committee Meetings 2006:

will be held at 3.00pm in the Bar area of the Church Hall, St Joseph's Catholic Church, Ladbroke Road, Redhill on Sundays: January 8th, April 23th, June 18th and September 17th AGM. Pilgrims are welcome to attend.

Pilgrimage Officers (as at Pilgrimage Committee Meeting 18th September):

Co-ordinator Sue Adilz

Deputy Peter Doran (Thanks to Peter for taking on this role. Peter will be Co-ordinator in Sept 2006).

Minutes Secretary John Lamb

Treasurer Patrick Reeve

Accommodation Fred Adilz (understudy sought to take over role in Sept 2006)

Alt. Transport Rosemary Southon

Booking Sec. Monica McLauchlan

Catering Frances Dean

Catering Support Vacancy

Chaplain(s) Fr David Russell (other Chaplains welcome; an Anglican Chaplain in particular)

Chief Route Planner John Chenery

Church Liaison Danny Thomas

Database Aidan Simons

Day Pilgrims Vacancy

Drinks car Rosemary Southon

Footcare Vacancy

Liturgist/music Fr David, Peter Doran, (other help always welcome)

Newsletter Editor Mike Kanssen

Publicity Aidan Simons

Safety Officer Vacancy

Sandwiches Tineke Hulsebosch

Youth concerns Patrick Reeve

Van John Russell

Van assistant Vacancy

Webmaster Aidan Simons

Deputy Webmaster Stephen Smith

If you would like to help in some way please contact the Co-ordinator.

Pilgrimage Mailing Database – Don't Let Us Lose You!

From the earliest time the pilgrimage has kept a confidential database of those who have expressed an interest in or walked on a pilgrimage, primarily in order to keep people informed through the thrice-yearly

mailings and newsletters. For many years this was managed by Bill Haynes, then by Tom Yeung, and for the past few months by myself. Apart from necessary contact details, we list which pilgrimages you have taken part in, and a "status" flag so we know which mailings to send you. Keeping the database up-to-date is quite a challenge, especially making sure that we don't lose long-standing pilgrims who haven't joined us for a few years. At the recent AGM we agreed a new process to review any pilgrims we propose to downgrade to less frequent mailings, to avoid the handful of people who didn't get their mailing this summer being disappointed. But you can help! If you receive an "are you still interested?" sheet with the January mailing you must return it to stay on the list. In a separate development, I am gathering e-mail addresses with a view to distributing at least some of the material by e-mail rather than on paper to people who would like this. I envisage this will assist our overseas pilgrims as well as those who would otherwise only get the January mailing. If you'd like to get on the list, [e-mail me](#). In accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act, we only use this information to send you mailings, and we will provide you with a copy of the data held about you on request. Contact details are not provided to third parties.

Aidan Simons

Dear Pilgrims

I just want to thank you all for your prayers during my time in hospital having my operation. I felt very supported and quite connected with you all in different ways

I want to thank Sue for presenting me with the pilgrim cross which meant so much to me. I took it with me to the hospital. Also a special thank you to Fr David for including me in the Pilgrim Mass.

It was lovely to see you all in the Sportsman pub at Mogador, thanks to the lift provided by Norma.

Now you have all finished the 2005 pilgrimage I hope you feel energetic, though tired, and with a sense of achievement. Like each one of you I was also on pilgrimage and facing my own difficulties. The operation seems to have been a success and I am hoping for a full recovery.

So now I must prepare myself this year to get better and stronger so I can, hopefully, be ready to walk with you all next year. In order to achieve that goal I still need your prayers.

So thank you all again and have a wonderful year.



Anne

By way of pilgrimage report we reproduce an article written for "The Trumpet", the parish magazine at St. Michael's RC Church, Ashted. Along with a few photos added from other sources. (Sue & Pilgrims Live)

PILGRIMS' WAY

We chose an unusual summer holiday this year: we joined the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton Ecumenical Walking Pilgrimage for its 30th anniversary event, a walk from Canterbury to Winchester, largely following the old pilgrim route now known as the North Downs Way. Our attention was drawn to it by a feature in the A & B News early in the year: it sounded like a healthy and inexpensive way of renewing body and soul, so we went for it!

These pilgrimages are organised by volunteers (experienced pilgrims) and have a tried and tested formula. Over the preceding year, a route is decided (linking holy places across the country) and an appropriate theme selected for exploration. (This year's was the fruits of the Holy Spirit.) Accommodation, in village or Church halls or in local schools empty for the holidays, is negotiated, as are the stopping places during the walking days for spiritual and material refreshment. Pilgrims have the support of a van (to transfer belongings from one sleeping stop to the next) and a car (to deliver drinks and provide personal transport in an emergency). A special team of volunteers shops for and prepares a welcoming meal at the end of the day, a hearty breakfast to start the next one – and the makings for a packed lunch to be taken en route.



Of enormous benefit to the geographically challenged was the system of 'Front Markers' and 'Back Markers'. Using brightly coloured arrows, the 'Front Markers' would go ahead of the walkers, signing the route for the day. The 'Back Markers' followed after all the other walkers, collecting the arrows for use another day. Following footpaths can be a tricky business: we were grateful to the pilgrims who planned and set out the daily routes in this way. Our only serious problem was to put one foot in front of the other for some 16+ miles a day, up hill and down dale! Fortunately, we were all allowed to walk at a pace that suited us!

Since Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and before, people have associated walking pilgrimages with story telling. This pilgrimage proved no exception, with a lot of life experience explored and shared. The themes: self-control; modesty; faithfulness; gentleness; generosity; goodness; kindness; patience; peace; joy and love, triggered plenty of discussion and some rich examples. Every day we visited a number of Churches, some as old as the tradition of pilgrimage, and prayed in them and for the communities they served. As an ecumenical pilgrimage, the vexed question of celebrating the group's faith (Eucharistic or not?) made for tensions which anchored us to the harsher realities. Please God, we will learn to celebrate unity better one day!



Who were the pilgrims? A floating population of some 60 individuals of all ages, shapes, conditions and pasts, united in a present community of their own making. Many had done such pilgrimages before: they helped the inexperienced get the hang of things! Sleeping together, as well as eating, walking and praying together, proved a great leveller!

There are surprises on pilgrimages: mutual friends are discovered, coincidences brought to light. (Tony's parents met as members of the St. Francis Rambling Club in the 1920's: there were members of the same Club present on this pilgrimage!) Reducing life to a walking pace had a calming effect overall: the jigsaw of life started to present a different picture.



Sadly, we had to leave the pilgrim band early, at Caterham, because of a call for help from a friend in the final stages of life's pilgrimage. We felt the support of all those we left behind and felt one with them as they plodded through the rain to their goal: Canterbury; Wye; Detling; Rochester; Kemsing; Caterham; Dorking; Guildford; Farnham; Alton; Alresford – Winchester!

Tim Pride, a lay clerk in the choir at Winchester and our nephew, sent us this eye-witness account: "I needed to go to the Cathedral after work today and I coincided with the arrival of the pilgrims. The Dean was around and he made a point of getting the great West doors open to let the group in. They followed the (visiting) choir into Evensong to an organ fanfare and applause from the congregation. I was only on the sidelines, but I gather it was an emotional experience for many of the pilgrims. Our Dean was previously Archdeacon of Canterbury and before he started here he also walked the whole route, so the pilgrims were with someone who knew what they had achieved. A good end to a long journey." Amen to that!

What are the benefits of such a pilgrimage? The same as from a good retreat, perhaps – but a walking pilgrimage is more of an ‘advance’ than a ‘retreat’! Pushing on purposefully, despite the relative hardships of sore feet and hard floors as beds, has its deeper rewards, helping put life into a fresh and memorable perspective.

You can find more (and see the pictures!) on the pilgrimage website: www.thepilgrims.org.uk. Go on, give it a try – and risk being changed for life!

Nina & Tony McCaffry

Bill Ward is also getting a short piece, on his experiences of this years pilgrimage published, this time in Octobers’ edition of the A&B diocese news, which should be available about now!.

Calling all Drama Queens (and Kings)

Back in the closing years of the last century the worthy residents of the Surrey village of Merstham put their heads together to discuss ways of marking the arrival of the new millennium and to raise money to pay for the marking. Several ideas were adopted, including a local web-site, and a "Millennium Clock" in the High Street. Also adopted was a plan to create a local theatre from the community to present a version of the mediaeval "Mystery Plays" in the summer of 2000, in the local Gatton Park. The idea that the audience, as in the traditional Mystery plays, would follow the cast around to various set pieces - in this case making use of features in the park: a pond for the baptism of Jesus, a knoll for the crucifixion scene . . . and so on. Suffice it to say that the "Gatton Community Theatre" (including myself) had a lot of fun putting this together, with the guidance of a professional producer/director (who has now moved on to take charge of the Pitlochry Festival) and the audiences were sufficient to leave some money in the bank at the end of the run. Further productions followed at 18 month intervals, the most recent, last December, a version of the Advent story, took place in the chapel of the Royal Alexander and Albert School, one of our prayer stops during this year’s pilgrimage. The next production (which is where you come in!) is to be a version of "The Pilgrim’s Way" (or some such title) but not quite Chaucer! The theme arises because Gatton is on the traditional pilgrim route to Canterbury but the "story" will be generated during workshops starting next January. I can’t think of a better group for creating ideas, for showing a modern pilgrimage, than the readers of this article. Some of you are brilliant at creating a drama from the smallest thing! If you live reasonably near to Merstham, I hope I have retained your interest sufficiently to make you think that you could contribute ideas, and also possibly as a member of the cast or support group. If you’d like to know more, please contact me now and I will see you are added to the post-list for information about the start of workshops etc. The actual production is planned for 10th to 22nd July next year.

Peter Whipps

And finally...

Monica spotted an short article in the paper that she thought might interest pilgrims: Apparently a backpack has been developed which converts the wearers plodding stride into electricity. (The idea being that it can recharge the plenitude of devices that today's world considers vital, such as mobile phones, MP3 players, cameras, & GPS navigation devices.) The device works by making use of the up & down movement of the cargo compartment against the frame , to turn a gear connected to a simple magnetic coil generator. No data is given for the weight of the backpack, or how much extra energy the walker needs to expend to provide the charge.

I just need to get hold of one each for this kids to make use of their periods of excess energy...