

# NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 83

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## Dear Pilgrims

It was drawn to my attention at the January committee meeting that this (February) mailing goes to everyone on our database. We have become aware that some people have not received their pilgrimage mailings, so let me clarify the current situation:

**Mailings:** If you are a recent walking pilgrim you will receive three mailings a year (October, February and July). If you have not booked in as a walking pilgrim for some years or are now an armchair pilgrim, you will only receive the February mailing, which will contain details of the forthcoming Lincoln Pilgrimage and a booking form. If you do not book in, you will not receive details of the Pilgrimage in the post in July. This may exclude some people who would like to meet up with us at some point, but who cannot stay overnight. Should you wish to join us for the day, Lincoln Pilgrimage details will be available on our website in early August: [www.thepilgrims.org.uk](http://www.thepilgrims.org.uk). If you are unlikely or unable to book in as a walking pilgrim, but wish to receive the summer mailing containing route notes for the Lincoln Pilgrimage, please indicate this on the booking form or contact our database manager, Aidan Simons directly at [contact the pilgrims](#) (donations towards the cost of postage from “non-contributory” day pilgrims are appreciated). However, due to hall sizes and the need to know numbers for catering in advance, you cannot expect to stay overnight or join pilgrimage meals without prior booking. Please contact our Bookings Secretary, Monica McLauchlan, in advance if you wish to book an evening meal. I hope that this clarifies the situation and will enable those who wish to receive details to do so. We would love to see as many past pilgrims as possible, however briefly, but better still – book in to walk with us and bring a friend with you! **Electronic mailings:** Also, if you wish to receive mailings electronically in future, in addition to those you receive through the post please send an email to Aidan indicating this.

**Lincoln Pilgrimage 2006** Planning is well underway for the 2006 Pilgrimage from Chester to Lincoln, Saturday August 12<sup>th</sup> – Sunday August 27<sup>th</sup>. The Pilgrimage this year begins in Chester, our destination in 2004. Walking west to east, we traverse varied terrain, across the backbone of England, including four days in the Peak District with rest days in Macclesfield and Chesterfield. We have found that there is enormous personal and spiritual value in living and walking together over two weeks, sharing highs and lows, and growing as a community. This year the “highs” will reach new heights, as we will attempt the longest ascent known on Pilgrimage. Walking an average of 16 miles a day at a moderate pace, (less on hillier days) we will be stopping at churches and worshipping with the local communities. We will celebrate God’s love for us in both Pilgrim and Parish Services. Whilst the Pilgrimage has Roman Catholic roots, it is ecumenical and open to those of all faiths or none. Having explored the route from end-to-end by car, the Lincoln Pilgrimage offers a scenic experience!



**Lincoln Cathedral**

**Bring a friend with you!** We hope that whether seasoned pilgrims or those walking their first pilgrimage, you will join us. We wish to share the joys and benefits of Pilgrimage with as many people as possible, and in particular encourage young people to take up the challenge. To this effect we are offering a small financial incentive to those who introduce new pilgrims, who either walk a full week (7 nights) or two weeks (14 nights). Obviously, if you bring a large number of people you cannot be refunded more than the cost that you have spent on coming on Pilgrimage! The Pilgrimage is run by past pilgrims (on a voluntary basis), who give generously and freely, of their time. So we are able to continue to offer the Pilgrimage at a very reasonable price. The Pilgrimage is a charity and non-profit making, but aims to predict and cover its costs each year.

The theme that we will be exploring is “**Renewal - Faith on the Move**”, which will focus on **Prayer**. Over the next few weeks, we will be mapping out a framework for the theme, which will be reflected in our Prayer stops. We are having a sub-committee meeting on February 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss the theme and would welcome ideas from Pilgrims. If you would like to make a contribution, please contact me (via [contact the pilgrims](#)).

**Winchester Pilgrimage Reunion in Wye:** thank you to the Yeomans family for organising an excellent Reunion last November and to the Simons family for helping them. The weekend was most enjoyable, with a brisk morning walk over the downs, followed by a level return after lunch. In the evening, after a joint Pilgrim Eucharistic Service led by Revs David Russell and Dickie Cleveland, we enjoyed a delicious meal and spent time relaxing, sharing Pilgrimage memories and slides presented by Dave Cosham.

Thank you to all pilgrims who work hard behind the scenes: the Pilgrimage would not happen without you. As I write this letter, halls bookings are being finalised, routes planned, churches contacted, supermarkets located, coach and van prices investigated and our “theme” and design for a Lincoln Pilgrimage cross explored. Please use the posters enclosed with this mailing to advertise the Pilgrimage in your area. I hope that we will see you this summer.

**Sue**

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### **Winchester Reunion Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>**

This years reunion took place at Wye in Kent. We visited Wye on the second day of last summer's pilgrimage. It was good to revisit this pleasant village and be looked after so well by Mark & Mary Yeomans, who hosted and organised the weekend.

I was a trifle hesitant about going. The weather forecast looked grim with a cold wet front sweeping across the country. However, as the weekend approached there seemed to be a chance of dry weather in that corner of southern England. So I set off after work, from Crawley picking John Dwyer up on the way. I was grateful for his cheery chat as we drove down dark wet motorways, navigating our way into the wilds of Kent

We arrived in good time, only one wrong turn, to find our accommodation at Wye C. of E. School. Mark & Mary had managed to book us into the new school hall, which was first class pilgrim fare. It is always a joy to see old pilgrim friends and our welcome was warm. Mary had made a lovely thick soup and I was soon tucking into soup & rolls, which made a good supper! People relaxed into pilgrim mode very quickly. Sleeping spots were chosen and beds were laid. I felt at home immediately. I could sense a certain impatience though: it was the call of the local pub. Maurice had the scent and we were off! Spending the evening in chat, reminiscence and real ale.

Morning came with a cup of tea. Maurice again! We were in luck too as the day outside beckoned with sunshine. We had the joys of a cooked breakfast before we booted up and headed for morning prayers at Sts Gregory & Martin's Church. We then passed through the grounds of Imperial College London's agrarian outpost, as we started the long climb to the Wye Memorial Crown on top of the Downs. We had previously passed this way on the summer's pilgrimage. It's a beautiful high vantage point, which gives splendid views of Kent looking towards the coast. In the summer we gathered here in a sudden heavy squall, but today was in brilliant sunshine. Father David's morning prayers had paid off!

The morning was sunny but crisp and classic autumn. As we came down off the Downs I noticed that Patrick Reeves, who was only wearing a light shirt fleece, had a patch of sweat on his back. It had turned to ice with the cold but Patrick hadn't noticed being warm from the walking. He brushed it off when we drew his attention to it, but gave it no thought as he lead the way down through a great orchard to the lunch time pub: the Five Bells at Brabourne. Mark had fixed us up with plastic bags, which fitted neatly over our boots. This thoughtfully saved the pub from mud but gave the old locals a laugh! It was a merry lunch stop with good food, drink and excellent companions. Could the old Canterbury Pilgrims have done any better?

We then had an easy and pleasant afternoon walk back down to Wye with a prayer stop at St. Mary's Church at Brook, where we were received by Mark Yeoman's mother, who's Parish church it was. She welcomed us and gave us a brief history of the church. As we finally approached Wye the weather started to break, we could see the wet front starkly.

In the evening we celebrated the end of the day, by gathering in the School Music Room for Mass and a joint Eucharist with Father David Russell and the Rev. Dickie Cleveland. Who we had previously met in the summer: a delightful spiritual lady. It was good to see her again. After this moving experience of a shared service and fellowship we finished off the evening with a first class meal and the odd glass of wine or two. Followed by Aidan's high Tech. Photo shots of the summer's walk and Dave Cosham's artistic slide show. Both were well done and much appreciated by pilgrims. I finally became overcome with a sleepy weariness and so found my sleeping bag. I was probably dreaming of next summer's walk to Lincoln. See you there!

*Bill Ward*

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### **From the Drinks Car**

Sometimes when we have found the spot on the map designated by the daily route planner as a drink stop, we have a little wait until the pilgrims arrive. After setting up the drinks, sorting the arrows & pin pots, doing any paperwork, checking the map for the next stop, what next?

A visit to the church, look at the view or in open country play 'spot the pilgrim', which approach are they using? Later there are always questions to be answered from the pilgrims: 'Where are we?', 'How far is it?', 'Where's the loo?'...

But by the last afternoon the mind can wander. We are used to having the Pilgrim T-shirts & sweat shirts for the big anniversary's but what about in between? Should we have something each year with a pilgrim motif & if so, what? Baseball cap/sun hat, map case, sarni-box (suitable for rolls), water bottle, wash bag, universal sink plug... You could go down the equipment list & we did gradually between serving the drinks!!

That's it! A Tea towel, with a place at the top where the pilgrims name can be put with fabric ink. The design could start with how to read the arrows, followed by an illustrated equipment list, with the word under the outline picture.

***Rosemary & Monica***

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### **Pilgrimage Web Diary**

See the website [www.thepilgrims.org.uk](http://www.thepilgrims.org.uk) for the digital slideshow of the Reunion featuring photos taken by several pilgrims used on the web diary, put together by Stephen Smith (Deputy Webmaster). We have found that the website enables many past pilgrims and others to follow our progress, and that this has been an encouragement to people. Thank you to Stephen, and to others who have assisted, for their hard work, particularly in the past few years developing and maintaining the pilgrimage diary.

***Sue***

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### **Situations Vacant!**

This years Pilgrimage is still without a Catering Assistant, to help Francis both in the kitchen & on the shopping run. If you are a driver, (preferably with car!) and would be willing to help please contact Sue Adilz.