

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Pilgrims

Unbelievable. It is already several weeks since the Great West Doors opened 'miraculously' and a band of pilgrims swept in to Lincoln Cathedral in procession. A wonderful climax to our Pilgrimage from Chester. So many memories of all that we experienced together!!

Every Pilgrimage since 1975 has been special. 2006 was no exception. There were 17 new pilgrims - congratulations to all of them. We had our first Menonite pilgrims. A real bonus to have Clare and Garth with us - not for the last time we hope. Howard distinguished himself, as always, but this time by introducing Annette and Freda, to say nothing of the Buxton family party at Lincoln. Clearly a Kiwi takeover bid! We were indebted to James and Theresa of Gloucester - Chester Pilgrimage, for the presence of the indomitable Helen Martin 'from the other London' and what a marvellous addition she was. It was a real breakthrough to have the Rev. John Crowe, an Anglican priest, present for so much of this pilgrimage and may he be with us for many others to come. Another first - a Lincoln Pilgrim, John Scaife. Along with Aruna, from London, Althea from Ceredigion and Jean from Chesterfield, there was ample evidence that the appeal of the pilgrimage continues to spread Nationwide and Worldwide. I am sure that no one would object to me singling out Marta and Ola for a special mention. Our two young - 16 and 18 - Polish Pilgrims were an amazing asset - their music, readings, prayers, Reflection and sheer enthusiasm for everything was an example to us all. Thank you to all the new pilgrims. Your presence and your contribution are a guarantee that this crazy idea of an Ecumenical Walking Pilgrimage will continue, bringing countless graces and blessings to all who put on their boots and join - THE PILGRIMS.

As always the end of a pilgrimage is a time for some who have served us magnificently to take a well earned rest. Sue our Coordinator for the last two years has been outstanding. Not only have Canterbury - Winchester and Chester - Lincoln been disaster free - a no mean achievement in itself, but Sue has brought to the Pilgrimage a real sense of prayer, which has enhanced the spirit of pilgrimage. Fred has ensured that we had somewhere to rest our weary bones and, even on occasion, the opportunity to wash off some of the dust - and mud - of the journey. An incalculable debt, appreciated by all! Tineke, the Sarnie Queen par excellence, has decided to hang up her rolls, knives and butter after many years of lunch filling service. Grateful thanks. A vacancy awaits. Please step forward if you can see this as your roll - ugh!!

There are so many who continue with Route Planning, Catering, Van Driving and loading, Drinks serving, Application processing, Accounts keeping, Church Liaison Organising, Web site updating, Publicising, Newsletter Producing, Fire safety managing and of course Chaplaining. It is thanks to all those unsung heroes that the Pilgrimage is able to continue and flourish. Our sincere thanks to everyone concerned.

As a novice pilgrim, it is with great trepidation that I take up the mantle of Coordinator after a mere three years alongside you. I am honoured and will endeavour to maintain the wonderful tradition set in place by all my illustrious predecessors. My God go with us all.

The hotly awaited news is that the Reunion will be from 3rd - 5th November at St. Bernadette's Church Hall, Tilgate in Crawley. Aply organised by Pat Donachie and Joan Gale, with a little assistance from Bill Ward. Many thanks to them. Do sign up without delay to ensure that this event is as successful as always.

The other NEWS is the route for 2007 - Wells to Arundel, Glastonburyish, but in reverse, with lots of new territory, masses of coastline and a return to our roots, Destination ARUNDEL!! Watch this space for developments over the coming months and prepare for another very special occasion - PILGRIMAGE 2007.

Peter Doran Pilgrimage Co-ordinator

Dear Pilgrims

This is just a brief note to thank you for the gifts at Lincoln; for the wonderful plant presented to me at the recent Committee Meeting, but most importantly for the support that I have received from you all over my two years as Co-ordinator, without which, the Pilgrimages could not have happened. I would also like to thank those at home who prayed for our Pilgrimages. The “abundant life” that Jesus promised us (John 10:10) is so evident of Pilgrimage, and this is won through prayer, before, during and after the Pilgrimage. Please continue to pray for our Pilgrimages – in particular for the ecumenical side of things, for more new pilgrims to join us, especially the young, for whom the Pilgrimage was first started.

I have enjoyed the Co-ordinator’s role very much and have learnt a great deal about Pilgrimage in all respects. I wish Peter every success. See you all at the Reunion.

Sue

Reunion 2006

As you will no doubt have already gathered from Peter’s Letter & the booking form, this years reunion is being held over the weekend of 3-5 November, just outside Crawley. The planned walk (kept down to ~10 miles due to the shorter November daylight) includes a visit to Worth Abbey, and looks like it should be very pleasant! Cost is a very reasonable £17 for the whole weekend, including the usual slide show & music.

If you have any queries, or need more booking forms contact Pat Donachie.

An English adventure

Imagine two Polish girls searching internet and looking for a Polish pilgrimage to Czestowowa. Imagine that by accident they found an English website. When it had happened they just couldn’t stop reading it. “Mum we have found something really interesting... Look, pilgrimage in England!” Imagine how shocked their mother felt. She had to sit down. – “Girls are you crazy? Where is Chester, where is Lincoln?” – We’re not sure. – “Do you now somebody? ” – We don’t – “Do you believe it’s possible?” – “Mum we’ll pray, with Him everything is possible.”

That was our beginning. There were so many problems, so many questions, so many fears. There was a moment of resignation as well. Then suddenly it appeared that we can go! I’m sure I’ll never forget this happiness, we were running around our house shouting: “We’re going to England.” ☺

A time of big surprises came. First we got a letter from Monica. “Why is it so thick? ” – I was wondering keeping it in my hand. We were shocked when we saw all this information. When you are on Polish pilgrimage you only know that you are going to Czestochowa. You don’t know where you’ll sleep, who will be with you and when you’ll get your destination. Here it was good to have route’s details. We studied it carefully and we felt more secure. My first thought when I saw the list of pilgrims was that something was wrong. I was sure Monica had forgotten to add a few pages. I counted and I couldn’t believe that it was only

about 50 people. Last year there were 1000 people in our group. We were divided into five smaller ones. There were adults in only one group! Another difference was that we always walk all together. We thought in England it would be the same. When I translated "Pilgrim Code" to my mum I didn't tell her everything! I didn't want to worry her that we wouldn't go in one group. I didn't know that front marker's work is always very good and it's not a problem to follow the arrows. ☺

I didn't know other things as well! Pubs during pilgrimage??? Alcohol during pilgrimage? When we came back my friend told me about an unpleasant situation during Polish pilgrimage. There were three boys who took some beers. They couldn't continue their route when the co-ordinator had seen it. They had to come back home. Alcohol is forbidden during Polish pilgrimage. There would be hardly any pilgrims who got to Lincoln if we had the same rules in England. I think it's because of another spirit of pilgrimage. Polish people treat it like a march of penance. There are groups in which people walk in silence (ohh, it'll be difficult for Patrick to walk in this group☺). However, we were in singing group last August. It was the loudest group which got to Czestochowa! That's why we love singing and playing instruments! We were really happy we could play (thanks to Gamble's family)!

Now I know that all that has happened wasn't pure coincidence. I know that it was the part of the plan which God has for me and for Ola. He wants us to learn about ecumenism and tolerance. He shows us that He is everywhere. We found him in each of you and it wasn't important what kind of denomination you were. I think we saw England in the way that you would like all people to see it. We saw your friendship, your joy and your love. And we're not going to believe the stereotype that a typical Englishman is introverted. It's not true! We'll argue when some teacher at school says something like this!

We'd like to thank you again and hope we can meet in the future!!!

Marta Gucka

Walking in Faith and fellowship

(Published in Oct.06 A & B News)

This year about 60 of us, set out to walk from Chester Cathedral to Lincoln Cathedral. A distance of 174 miles - the way we walk it! Averaging about 15 miles a day, taking in the churches and the landscape we want to visit and enjoy on the way. We stopped at Chester two years ago, when we completed a pilgrimage which took us along the Welsh borders. So it was good to return to this old Roman town with its splendid cathedral and the warm memories it held for us. Many of us had initially gathered at Redhill to pick up the coach. But others joined us at Chester, with people coming from Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, Holland and Poland! A good mix and variety of Christians. Many of us are Catholic Christians but with a good number of Anglicans and Free Church pilgrims. The age range was particularly good this year too. We gathered in a Cathedral Chapel on Saturday evening for our induction service, we were given a warm welcome by the Dean, presented with our individual crafted wooden crosses and returned to our home for the night: at Northgate Church, Chester, to eat, sleep and perhaps pop out for a pint, if we had the energy: given that pilgrims mostly do! We wake early, arise from our sleeping bags, quickly slipping into the routine of early tea, washing in rather basic conditions, swiftly packing, the offering of morning prayers and then the welcome cooked breakfast. Boots on and away! We have an excellent back up team that feed us and transport our luggage to each new hall for the night, all volunteers and very much part of the pilgrimage family. This is our pattern of pilgrimage as we walked the landscape, sometimes demanding, as we hiked over some beautiful, but rugged hills and dales, of the Derbyshire Peak District. At one point in a sudden thunderstorm, we stood at a stone bridge, just above a spectacular waterfall, at a place where Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Cheshire meet. In spite of the rain my spirits were high, we had been singing in the rain as we followed each other down a rocky path. Then to be touched by a scene out of Tolkien, perhaps we looked like bedraggled hobbits too. What a delight! Only improved by the sun coming out. We have Mass each day and shared ecumenical services. We have prayer stops at churches along the way. We are often given a

warm welcome by local parishioners. Matching greetings with a feast of tea and cakes. With individual pilgrims leading prayers These occasions can be the high points of the pilgrimage. The journey is the goal but the celebration in Lincoln at journey's end can be fun too!

Bill Ward

Pilgrim News

Unfortunately the only news we have of individual pilgrims is of those who have reached the end of their earthly pilgrimages. I'm confident that they will be remembered with fondness, and that you will join me in praying for them and the families they leave behind.

- Mary Bushaway died in April.
- Bill Gleeson died on the morning of 21st September.