

# NEWSLETTER

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## Dear Pilgrims

A very HAPPY NEW YEAR to EVERYONE.

As we settle in to 2007 our thoughts turn to the next occasion we will meet as Pilgrims.

**Wells to Arundel Pilgrimage 2007.** You will be pleased, even amazed, to hear how far preparations are already in hand for August 2007. Our new Accommodation team, Pat and Keith, have clearly taken their role to heart. Within days of the September Meeting they had Arundel and Wells, our start and finish points, all fixed. To prove that this was no flash in the pan they have continued apace, so that by the time we met in January virtually all accommodation was arranged. An incredible achievement. Not to be outdone, your new Coordinator and another vaguely related pilgrim, Sarah Doran, have managed to complete their Day planning and have submitted all to the Master Route Planner, John Chenery, who overwhelmed them with congratulations on their achievement - an Email pointing out a missing 'l' in please in the notes for Day 11 and no postal addresses for the lunch pubs on either day. Attention to detail is all very well, but... - clearly a sense of humour is also quite useful!



The Gamble brothers, well Michael and Jonny anyway, ably supported by their father, Colin, have also managed to visit the Island ( Isle of Wight - is there any other island? ) and master the route from Totland to Brighstone, so regardless of any where else the Island section of the Pilgrimage is remarkably advanced. May this be an encouragement to all other Day Planners to dig out their boots and maps. There is nothing to prevent an early attack on this vital duty. Mind you a later visit is also much to be recommended. I planned Mansfield Woodhouse to Southwell in March 2006, only to discover in August that one pub was closed for refurbishment, another - the lunch stop - had changed from a Buttery with limited alcohol to a cafe with none and a vital section of the route was signed as ' Closed Footpath' due to work on overhead power lines. Fortunately it was a right turn not left, which we required, but it was a close run (walked) thing! So be warned and well advised.

The theme for this year is ' In the footsteps of the Lord ', using the Beatitudes and incorporating the idea of freedom, which is very topical as 2007 is the Bi- Centenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Many thanks to Aruna for drawing our attention to that celebration. Sadly it has been noted that slavery continues to be a deadly blemish on our world of today. Anyone with suggestions on how to develop that theme, please contact Sue Adilz, who has kindly agreed to coordinate planning of the theme.

This year the pilgrimage will take us over wonderful Downland, through the New Forest and across the Isle of Wight, returning to England for the final stages to our home Cathedral City of Arundel. Four days walking along the coast, and two Rest Days by the sea should provide ample opportunity for even the most enthusiastic swimmers to indulge their passion. Swim and Ice Cream stops will not exactly compete with Prayer Stops, but I am sure they will suitably complement the spiritual nature of our journey.

As a relative newcomer amongst you it would be presumptive of me to preach to so many pilgrims of long standing ( old pilgrims- tactless? ) about both the joys and benefits of a walking pilgrimage. A chance to build a truly sharing community, which lives together, eats together, drinks together, prays together and celebrates together (as far as is possible). The power of Pilgrimage is evident from the fact that so many return, year after year, anxious to experience again all that makes this such a unique way to spend two weeks in August. As always be on the alert for others who we can draw in to our band of wandering pilgrims. If you are a long absent pilgrim, here is your chance to return. The welcome will be great.

As last year, the incentive exists to encourage a friend to join us. If you recommend a new pilgrim who completes at least 7 days of the pilgrimage, you can receive a discount on your own cost. Last year we enjoyed the company of 17 new pilgrims. May that number be far exceeded in 2007, so that the benefits of pilgrimage are shared even more widely and the future of the Pilgrimage is assured with a vital injection of new blood.

### **Situations Vacant.**

Fortunately most of those who have special roles in the pilgrimage agreed to continue and where a number stood down, others stepped forward to fulfil the tasks required. However we do have a few of slots still requiring assistance.

**1. Sandwich Making.** Tineke has organised a team of 'sarnie bashers' for some years. She has decided to abandon the 'roll'. Many thanks to Tineke for past service. Please step forward a new leader. It could be a shared role. Over the fortnight 2 or 3 different people taking a hand. It is important. Many rely on the rolls for lunch. Like so many pilgrimage tasks it does help to forge friendship and bring us together in service to others. Please don't be bashful - your help is needed!

**2. Alternative Transport.** Like so many aspects of the pilgrimage, Rosemary has unobtrusively carried out the task of coordinating the information supplied by Day Route planners and ensured that every day on the Route Cards that pilgrims carry, there is a clear outline of the bus and train details, so that pilgrims can drop out of walking for all or part of a day, if there is a need to do so. Rosemary is no longer able to cover this role and so a replacement is needed. John Chenery is asking Day Route Planners to be more detailed in collecting information in this area, but someone to put it all together is essential. Let me know if this could be your contribution.

**3. One Day Route Planner.** There is one vacancy for a route planner. *See below for details. (Ed)*

*Peter Doran Pilgrimage Co-ordinator*

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### ***Message from the Chief Route Planner***

"Route planning for the 2007 pilgrimage is going well in general and amazingly 2 route planners have already sent in their route notes, however we are still short of a route planner for one day. Anybody interested in planning the day from Verwood to Southbourne or alternatively the day from Wells to Castle Cary, please contact John Chenery (via the [contact page](#))."

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### **Crawley Reunion November 3rd - 5th 2006**

On a dark, misty evening in November I drove through Tilgate searching for St. Bernadette's Church. Not obvious from the outside, but once I had discovered where it was hidden, I received a traditional, joyful Pilgrimage welcome from the team preparing soup in the kitchen and was then offered a much needed glass of red wine!

Over the next hour a steady stream of pilgrims arrived. All staked out bed space and then joined in the chatter of reminiscence. Before long the customary issue arose - 'where is the nearest pub?' and shortly a party set off to 'The Downman' (I think) with our local guide, Bill Ward, in the lead. In traditional pilgrimage fashion we took over a sizeable area of the hostelry, with an ever-expanding table till 20+ were gathered. We were joined by two young men, clearly great fans of Bill's, the organiser of the football team and friend to all.



Saturday brought wonderful sunshine and an excellent breakfast. The first stage of the walk was a brief stagger around the corner to the local Anglican Church, where we were met by the vicar arriving by bike to lead us in prayer and send us on our way towards Worth Abbey. The morning walk was through Tilgate Forest, past lakes and

trees, beautifully set off with frost yet dazzling in the sunlight. Well ahead of schedule we arrived at the Cowdray Arms, taking the staff a little by surprise - not accustomed to so many thirsty and hungry walkers on a November Saturday! Lunch lasted so long that some pilgrims had taken root and the back markers were obliged to use their full authority to set them on their way.

Worth Abbey Church provided a wonderful setting for our second prayer stop of the day. Led by our recent Coordinator, Sue, we were invited to reflect on pilgrimage with the aid of Scripture and join in prayer, all accompanied by some excellent very young pilgrim participation!!

Again walking through wonderful woodland we headed back towards Crawley, stopping en route at the beautiful ancient church of St. Nicholas, Worth for our final reflection, where the hymn books dutifully carried all day - mainly by Fred - came in to their own, with an excellent rendition of

' Here I am Lord ', to underline that we are all called uniquely to serve, in so many different ways.

The final stage of the walk took us back across railway line and through woods, with a further sight of the lakes, now in the gathering dusk. Our return to the Hall was given added relish, by the sights and smells of dinner preparation. In the meanwhile Bill and David were setting up the equipment for one of the great highlights of every Reunion, the Slideshow. Knowing that we would have difficulty to gather for discussion after Mass the following day, we attempted a meeting, but time pressure proved to be too great. Memories of Chester to Lincoln were evoked by David's fascinating and detailed record on slide presentation, with frequent cries and laughter and an amazing range of crosses.



Dinner - our cooks surpassed themselves. A fantastic meal with ample wine and great company. What better way could there be to pass a November Saturday evening? Not satisfied with providing a banquet, our organisers felt that we deserved to be entertained and had engaged a highly impressive band (Mike O'Mara and his group). So meal led naturally into dancing, with Sister Hannah, resident parish sister at St. Bernadette's, Tilgate and past pilgrim at the heart of the revelry.

An early start on Sunday was inevitable, as the Hall had to be cleared of all sign of pilgrim slumbers and entertainment, by 08.00, so as to transform the space into a church for parish mass at 09.15. As a fitting conclusion to our Reunion, we shared in a joyous celebration of Mass with an overflowing congregation, involving first communion candidates, a vocations director celebrant and even a brief plug for Wells to Arundel 2007. After post mass coffee and friendly conversation, pilgrims gradually melted away for travels homeward after a highly successful Reunion!!

It is impossible to adequately thank all who contributed to the occasion, but we need to acknowledge how much we are indebted to - Pat and Keith Donachie and Joan Gale, for all the planning and preparation and for providing the meals with the support of Mary, Millie and Pauline, to Bill Ward and David Cosham for the walk, the slide show and much, much else. Not least we need to extend our gratitude to Sister Hannah for making us so welcome at St. Bernadette's.

Until we meet in Wells in August greetings to everyone.

Peter

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*Canon John Crowe has written an Article for Country Way which is reproduced here:*

## **WALKING PILGRIMAGES IN OUR OWN COUNTRY**

I first came across the Arundel & Brighton Annual Ecumenical Walking Pilgrimage in 2000 when I was Rector of Dorchester Abbey. Little did I know that I would be joining them in 2006, after retirement, as their Anglican Chaplain walking over the Peak District from Chester to Lincoln. In 2000 they were walking from Guildford to Lichfield; after a service by the shrine of St Birinus I joined them for a pub lunch and walk towards Abingdon.

I had been drawn to the theme of pilgrimage from the 1960s but without a strong element of walking until in 1996, with some of my family, I had walked the last 170 miles to Santiago de Compostela. Walking makes so much difference. The pilgrim travels in the open, doing what pilgrims have done since time immemorial, walking. It gives the chance for reflection, a sense of purpose, direction and goal; time on one's own and time with others, away from the pressures of everyday life.

In Dorchester I was used to our own Annual Ecumenical St Birinus Pilgrimage - a 12 mile walk from Blewbury, where in 634 AD, St Birinus preached to the pagan King Cynegils of Wessex Before his baptism in Dorchester. About 300 start , joined by others on the way, finishing in Dorchester Abbey with about 700 pilgrims at a service led by a Salvation Army Band . It is always much enjoyed by parish groups and individuals from a number of denominations in the Thames Valley. Even though only a day's walk it is surprising how pilgrims find themselves from time to time reflecting on their own as well as sharing the day with old and new friends along the way.

The Arundel & Brighton Pilgrimage is much more ambitious and highly organised. Started in 1975 it has covered many routes. There is a wonderful mixture of worship, reflection and fun, walking and relaxing - down-to-earth accommodation (sleeping on church and school halls) but with brilliant and satisfying meals cooked by the pilgrimage cook! It was refreshing to find such an all-age group from a wide cross-section of society - international as well as ecumenical. We had two young sisters from Poland - teenagers who had found details on the internet - also three New Zealanders, an Indian and three pilgrims from Canada, two of them Mennonite ministers.

Each year the routes are researched and planned in detail with visits made to possible centres of accommodation for up to 80 or 90 pilgrims. The cost is minimal - £125 for the 2006 fortnight pilgrimage. The 2007 pilgrimage will be from August 11 to 26 from Wells to Arundel via Dorset, the Hampshire coast and the Isle of Wight. For a record of previous pilgrimages and photos visit [www.thepilgrims.org.uk](http://www.thepilgrims.org.uk)  
For the St Birinus Pilgrimage visit [www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk](http://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk) for the pilgrimage website details

Canon John Crowe.

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## **The John Paul II Pilgrimage for the Conversion of England**

The Dominican sisters of St Joseph, whose priory near Lyminster we visited in 1999, have asked me to publicise this pilgrimage; for further information contact Sister Hyacinthe at the priory (01590 681 874 or [stdominics.priory@onetel.net](mailto:stdominics.priory@onetel.net)).

The John Paul II pilgrimage for the New Evangelization of England and Wales involves a 47 mile walk over 3 days arriving at Walsingham on Sunday 15 Jul 2007. If last year's pattern is followed, we'll have Mass and Benediction every day, said by our Dominican pilgrimage chaplain. Other highlights will include an inaugural Mass at the Shrine of St Etheldreda in Ely Cathedral on Thursday 12 Jul, by permission of the Dean, epic hospitality at St Thomas's in Brandon, overnight accommodation at the Sacred Heart Convent in Swaffham, an open air

mass in the ruins of Castle Acre Priory and arrival at Walsingham in time for the noon pilgrims' mass on Sunday. This year we hope to be accompanied by a Catholic historian, who will help us to rediscover the roots of the faith in our countryside.

The pilgrimage involves camping one night and sleeping on the floor all nights. First night is in the presbytery/ parishioners homes in Ely, the next two nights in the gym and sports hall of the Swaffham convent, the third in the field by the slipper chapel in Walsingham. The pilgrimage ends on the 16th (Monday morning) with a last Mass in the Slipper Chapel, hoping we can all cram in...

Hopefully, there will be a bus from London, if not a bus from Ely and back to Ely, so pilgrims would have to make their way to and from Ely to start of with.

We try to keep the cost minimal - last year's was £40 a head. We shall try very hard not to make it more, and if possible to make it less!

Target age is ideally 18-40 - but there are older ones coming along and helping out too.

There is morning prayer and compline everyday - and Sr Julie [Imelda's cousin] is in charge of the cooking!

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