

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Pilgrims

How can one describe it? The Pilgrimage of the Ferries, The Return to the Diocese, The Bishop's Welcome, The Death of Pat Olivier. All would be true, but they would all, separately or together, miss the essence of The Wells to Arundel Pilgrimage 2007. As always there were new pilgrims and others who had pilgrimed many times before. There was tremendous friendship. There were wonderful Eucharistic Celebrations. The Prayer stops were inspiring. The food was fantastic. The Halls were cosy! The Pubs were full of ale - well possibly not Day 2 (enough said) Combined this produced a truly memorable Pilgrimage, with an atmosphere of cooperation, enjoyment and pilgrim spirit at its eternal best.

The one title that Wells to Arundel will never receive is the ' Sunshine Pilgrimage '. We set off in blazing sun from Wells and arrived in equal heat in Arundel. A pity about the time in between! The Isle of Wight avoided rain, but the much vaunted 'Island Sun' was in short supply - missing! It was great to pilgrimage by the coast, but the temptation to plunge in to the sea was resisted by all but the mad few.

Although not quite the record of 2006, the new pilgrims this year were as ever an incredible asset. Neville undaunted by a brief contact on the path to Lincoln, returned for the full works and was forever at hand to quietly assist - and of course keep cousin Howard in order. Ruth's food was definitely special and she inspired us in prayer, conversation and overall enthusiasm. Catherine and Chris maintained the tradition of St. Francis Walkers bringing strength and spirit to the A&B Pilgrimage. Jean will be forever known as the Ode One. Helen gave us a hint of her musical talent at St Cecilia's Abbey - more!! Godwin fought the nettles and argued the world to rights. Derek and Gill gave a whole new meaning to the phrase 'dogged determination', bringing to the Pilgrimage both the new and the old. Dorking staged a mini take over bid with two new recruits, Louis McCulloch and Michael Fitz-Gibbon and Aruna introduced John Sheehy, who did sterling work as Back Marker Extraordinaire. Though fewer overseas pilgrims than recent years, Dani ensured that the impact would be unforgettable. A true pilgrim friend to all, young and older. Dani we need you back!

As well as the New Pilgrims, 2007 was significant for the Return of the Natives. How appropriate as we headed into Hardy Country. Sue and Mike McCabe gave us the chance to walk if not on water, at least through it. Julian as always added a touch of erudition and ensured that Betsy and Grace popped up on numerous occasions. Margaret (Archer) Howells renewed the link with the Portsmouth Pilgrimage. John and Lesley brought the youngest pilgrim, Matthew, less than a month old to join us for Mass at the Cathedral in Arundel - hopefully the start of a lifelong involvement.

Sadly John Crowe, was unable to fulfil his role as Anglican Chaplain to the Pilgrimage, as his wife Una had been recently diagnosed with cancer and was receiving treatment. We pray for a full and speedy recovery. It was with joy that we welcomed John and friend Alex Kirby, one time BBC Religious Affairs Correspondent, for the last two days into Arundel.

Many joined us along the way, not least at the Buddle Inn, Niton, scene of the Doran Invasion and of course Pat Olivier's final time as a pilgrim. He was so full of life, greeting past friends and so obviously delighted to be back within the pilgrimage fold. His collapse on the steps to the Baptist

Church in Niton and sudden death was a terrible shock and loss for Nicola, his wider family and all the pilgrim friends who will miss him deeply. Yet for Pat a truly wonderful end to his Pilgrimage. Please remember Pat, Nicola and all his family and friends in your prayers in the days, weeks and months ahead.

The call to past pilgrims to join the afternoon march to Arundel was answered and an impressive flock of pilgrims processed into Arundel Cathedral for that final Celebration- a worthy climax and true homecoming. Now that Bishop Kieran has experienced the Walking Pilgrimage first hand, we hope that the contact will be maintained and developed in the years ahead.

Finally a tremendous thankyou to everyone who contributed to the remarkable success of the 2007 Pilgrimage from Arundel to Brighton. With such a Team of Workers and Pilgrims the role of Coordinator was almost redundant. To paraphrase that timeless Gaelic welcome - a thousand million thanks!!

Peter

SITUATION VACANT

John Russell has been a brilliant Van Driver for the Pilgrimage, but unfortunately he will be unable to provide his invaluable support in 2008. Anyone wanting to be a pilgrim but not walk here is your chance. Or if you know of someone who would be willing to perform this essential service, please, please, please SHOUT!!

THE REUNION

John and Louise Chenery did a brilliant job. The welcome to St. Joseph's, Dorking was warm and the facilities were excellent. Pat and Joan kept us gloriously fed. The Saturday walk to Parkgate via Holmwood Common was beautiful and the weather was fantastic. Our hosts obviously have first rate contacts! The Celebration Meal was enjoyed by 34, with just a slight distraction of The Big Match in the background. England's defeat did nothing to mar the tremendous atmosphere, which carried us through to involvement in the Sunday Parish Mass and a very successful Committee Meeting to round off the weekend. Well done and Many Thanks to all who helped to make this possible.

THE 2008 PILGRIMAGE



After much discussion it was decided that the Route for 2008 would be Evesham to Salisbury. A return to Evesham after 25 years, but heading to Salisbury to mark the 750th Anniversary of the Consecration of that magnificent Cathedral. The theme will be based on The Magnificat. A further complication was Bill Hayne's Wedding due on 9th August. Whether to set off for Evesham in two parties? Start a day later? Walk one less day? All possibilities. The final decision was to move the Pilgrimage on a week, the 16th to the 31st August, with the Bank Holiday in the middle not the end and restoring the arrival to Friday with a rest day in our destination, allowing time to prepare for our Final Celebration in style. Hopefully this will meet the demands of 2008 and cause the minimum of inconvenience.

Start preparing now for another wonderful Pilgrimage - Evesham to Salisbury 2008.

Peter

Bill Ward had a report on this years Pilgrimage published on the front page of the Catholic diocese's October edition of A & B News. An approximation of it follows. (Unfortunately it got rather garbled transferring between word processor formats & I've left my editing too late to get another copy!)

A & B Ecumenical Walking Pilgrimage - WELLS - IOW - ARUNDEL 2007- This year's Walking Pilgrimage was our 32nd year of walking the landscape of England and Wales. It is a tantalising mixture of worship, prayer and reflection, fun, walking and relaxing. A chance for Catholics to mix freely with other Christians as we try to walk in the 'Footsteps of the Lord'. Exploring our own faith anew and enjoying the experience of being welcomed into Methodist, Anglican and Baptist Churches as we struggled through wind and rain, sea and sky, coast and hills. A fantastic journey of fellowship and spirituality. We were many this year often filling church, community and school halls to capacity. We sleep on the floors our gear carried in a van which is part of the support team, who also feed us and nurture us well. Each night in a different place, we become temporary nomadic. It is a great feeling to wake up in a large church and see the early morning light beam down through stained glassed windows. Lunch is usually in a well appreciated country pub. We have Mass each day and often a Communion service for the Anglicans amongst us, sometimes a joint service. We gather together at 'Prayer Stops' in different churches, welcomed by the local people and ministers. Our theme this year marked the 200th anniversary of Wilberforce's Parliamentary Bill on Slavery. We reflected on Freedom and Slavery underpinned by a different Beatitude each day. The journey was 185 miles long, averaging 15 miles a day over two weeks. Starting off from Wells Cathedral in Somerset then snaking down to the coast at Southbourne. A private ferry over to the IOW, then walking the costal path to pick up the next ferry from Ryde to Portsmouth/Hayling Island and hence onward to Emsworth, Chichester and Arundel Cathedral. Where we were welcomed warmly by Bishop Kieran with a celebration Mass. It was great to end the pilgrimage, home in our own diocese in the brightness of our Cathedral in such a castled town as Arundel. The one sad note of our journey was the death of Pat Olivier on the Isle of Wight. He joined us for lunch at Niton, walked a short way to our next prayer stop but collapsed outside the church. His wife joined us at Mass at Shanklin the next morning. A very moving occasion. His friend Fr. Richard Lear, in his year at the seminary, was close by when he fell and attended him.

Bill Ward A pilgrim.

Pilgrim news



Many pilgrims will remember Edit Vigh who travelled from her native Hungary to join the Chester Pilgrimage. Having settled in Harrow she joined a local church choir and on 15 September she married the church organist and is now Mrs Philip Rees. Pilgrims were represented at the wedding by Maurice Hickman and Pat and Keith Donachie and Edit sends her best wishes to all the friends she made on the route to Chester.

Edit with her new husband Philip and friends from Redhill

Pat Oliver –RIP.

As you are no doubt already aware Pat Oliver collapsed during the pilgrimage & died whilst the pilgrims were on the isle of white. Pilgrims from numerous year's pilgrimages attended his requiem Mass (many wearing pilgrimage tee shirts at the request of Pat's family) along with hundreds of other friends and family. Over the years Pat has made a significant contribution to the pilgrimage – even serving as Chaplain and will be sadly missed.



After the service mourners shared our memories of Pat, amid. themed photos of Pat's Life - childhood, priesthood, family life, holidays and pilgrimage. The last of these included pictures

from this year's pilgrimage (lunch at The Buddle Inn and walking to Niton Baptist Church) and from other pilgrimages, including Lindisfarne (when he was our chaplain).

Possible Future Pilgrimage Destinations : Lindisfarne and Lisieux.

Both of these have attracted some support and both are the sort of destinations which need more than one year's planning. So this message is to let anybody holidaying in Northumberland / Durham or Normandy that they could help out by looking out for routes and halls! The idea for Lisieux is that we would walk some days in England then catch a ferry to Cherbourg or another port and walk the remainder in France.

Reunion Report

This year the reunion was held at St Joseph's parish hall Dorking. With a little forward planning the hall was originally booked for the following weekend. (First mistake! I should have waited until the football fixtures were published. I soon discovered that a certain football team was due to play at home that Saturday so the reunion was hastily rearranged for the previous weekend.)

Friday night and the pilgrims began to arrive. Unfortunately the obvious route from the one way system had been blocked by roadworks putting in a new gas main. The problem with a diversion on a one way system, if you don't know the area, is that you don't know that you have to take the diversion route until after you have passed it. Various pilgrim drivers phoned up from Wickes car park to ask for directions. After supper of soup, rolls and pizza several pilgrims decided to head for the nearest pub only to find it was closed! No problem, the next nearest pub was in view not far away.

Saturday morning dawned bright and frosty. Instead of heading for the more obvious, well known beauty spots of Boxhill or Leith Hill we chose instead a devious route through the woodlands of Holmwood Common to the lunchtime pub, the "Surrey Oaks", which once again was the winner of the CAMRA Surrey pub of the year. I think it must have been the sunniest day of the year for the pilgrims once the morning mist had been dispersed.



The afternoon walk was a gentle stroll through farmland and along tracks until the final climb into Dorking and the second prayer stop of the day at St Paul's church only ten minutes walk away from the hall where tea and coffee and delicious homebaked cake (made by Pat Donachie) awaited us.

In the past we have usually had a slide show of photographs taken during the pilgrimage. Now new technology has taken over and instead we had a digital presentation of images from this year's pilgrimage prepared by Aidan on his laptop and displayed via a digital projector which John had borrowed from work.

Next problem, the England Rugby team had somehow managed to reach the final of the World Cup. We wondered whether this would mean that several pilgrims would disappear to the nearest pub to watch but solved the problem by use of a portable television. Although the screen was rather small it did at least allow us to keep up with the score during an excellent meal prepared by Pat Donachie and Joan Gale.

We had to be up early on Sunday morning to get the hall cleared up before 9 o'clock mass at which a group of pilgrims led the music, joined by some of the parishioners. Then back to the hall to join the parishioners for coffee before finally dispersing to our homes. The coffee makers had a bit of a surprise to find so many people in the hall.

Louise