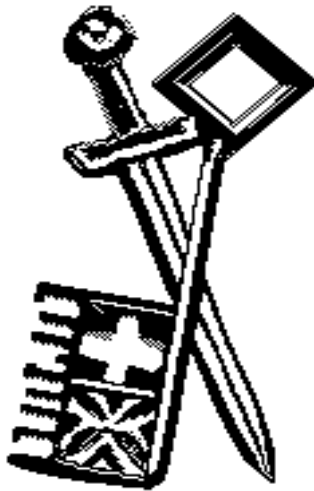


**CONFRATERNITY
OF
PILGRIMS TO ROME**



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2007 No. 2

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Editorial

This is the second issue of the Confraternity to Rome's *Newsletter*. As explained in the previous number, we are starting on a modest scale to begin with - two issues a year, in June and December. In 2008 we plan three, however: April, August and December. Eventually we hope to make it a quarterly publication.

There are five articles, six book reviews, a letter from Adelaide Trezzini of the AIVF and a section entitled 'Secretary's Notebook', containing short items of information likely to be of interest to our members. Anthony Brunning has written an account of his experiences on his pilgrimage from London to Rome in 1990, based on the reports he wrote at the time for his friends and the many people who sponsored his journey Chris George tells us about the hospice at the Great Saint Bernard Pass, both past and present day, after which Monsignor Bruno Vercesi from the Vatican has kindly written about his experiences receiving walking pilgrims to Rome. Joe Patterson has written an article about his experiences of a group pilgrimage along the *Via Francigena del Sud*, after which Howard Nelson, CSJ librarian, explains the position of the growing CPR library (housed in the former's premises), following it with a complete list of our holdings as of December 1st 2007.

In future editions, if the need arises, we will also include a Members' Page. In the meantime, however, articles on all aspects of the pilgrimage to Rome are invited for subsequent issues. As a rough guide they should be somewhere between 1000 and 1500 words, according to the subject matter. Book reviews (300-500 words maximum) are also invited, as is also information suitable for inclusion in the "Secretary's Notebook" section. In the interests of variety the editors have decided to limit accounts of pilgrim journeys to one per issue.

Short items can be sent in an email but longer articles should be included as attachments and most WORD and RTF documents are acceptable. If you send pictures, though, please do not integrate them in the text but send them as separate files.

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Pilgrim to Rome

Anthony Brunning fsc

Plans for a Pilgrimage in 1990

“989: In this year Sigeric was consecrated archbishop and afterwards, in the same year, went to Rome for his pallium.” In a few brief words an Anglo-Saxon or Norman chronicler records the fact and reason for a particular journey. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* contains many references to journeys made to Rome by kings, bishops and court officials. What is remarkable about Sigeric's pilgrimage is that he has left a record of the twenty-three churches he visited in Rome and of seventy-nine stopping places on his return journey. It is the first complete record of a pilgrimage to Rome. Scholars believe it was made in 990 rather than the 989 recorded in the chronicle. It was therefore one thousand years since Sigeric, archbishop of Canterbury, went to Rome.

Before September 1989 I knew nothing of Sigeric. While in Rome to review the responsibilities of my future work in the Bursar General's office of the De La Salle order. I had the opportunity of attending part of an international conference on Jacobean pilgrimage routes at Viterbo, some 50 miles to the north of Rome. One paper, read by Renato Stopani, and which caught my particular attention, described the *Via Francigena*, the pilgrimage route in Tuscany, used by Italian pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. Conversation with the author later that afternoon revealed an unexpected English connection, information about Sigeric, the fact of the millennium of his pilgrimage and details of a paper outlining Sigeric's itinerary. Meeting a friend who had just completed her walk to Rome to raise funds for multiple sclerosis, and my presence at the Mass in St Peter's, when the Archbishop of Canterbury greeted the Pope with the sign of peace, revived in my mind the idea of making a walking pilgrimage to Rome. The walk would provide a breathing space between apostolates, a time for refreshment and broadening horizons, an opportunity for reflection and prayer and, through sponsorship, an occasion to raise funds for charity.

Gaining information about a journey made one thousand years ago, without a background in Anglo-Saxon studies, was not easy but gradually I gathered sufficient information from articles in specialist journals and was able to work out a route which visits the towns, villages and other places mentioned in Sigeric's *Memorial* if not following the actual path he trod. In many places my route would follow former Roman roads, some of which have become the main roads of today. In other parts I would follow paths, tracks, byways and roads which link the places mentioned. Where there was a national trail, going in the right general direction, I would probably follow it. It was ironic that as I finished my plans I learned of a lecturer, David Hill, of the Extra Mural Department of the University of Manchester, who had walked Sigeric's route in 1985.

The route turned out to be almost a beeline between London and Rome, with a

slight kink to cross the Apennines near Parma. I broke the 1,125 miles, from London, into 71 sections of about 15-16 miles each. With four rest days, at Reims and Besançon in France, and Vercelli and Massa in Italy, all towns with Brothers' Communities, the journey would take 75 days. Leaving London on 10th June I hoped to reach Rome on 23rd August. From London I would go to Dover, via the shrine of Our Lady at Aylesford and Canterbury, using, for much of the way, the old Pilgrims' Way from Winchester to Canterbury. Across the Channel to Calais I would follow a French coastal path to Sombre, near Wissant, the now silted-up port, probably used by Sigeric. Then through the Pas de Calais passing near to St Omer to join the *Chausée Brunehaut* cutting straight as a die across Artois through Bruay to Arras where Sigeric possibly stayed at the monastery of St Vaast. From Arras the road would continue through Bapaume to Péronne and then cross-country between the Somme and St Quentin to Laon with the first Brothers' Community I expected to visit, its fine Romanesque cathedral, and 10 km to the east the shrine of Our Lady of Liesse. Then on to Reims, birth place, in 1651, of St John Baptist de La Salle, and the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, which he founded in 1680.

After Reims there would be a towpath walk along the Marne-Aisne Canal to Châlons-en-Champagne, unless I opt for a detour to Epernay through the Forêt de la Montagne de Rheims to visit the centre of the Champagne trade and another religious community at Pierry. Beyond Châlons, the map indicated an *Ancienne Voie Romaine* which crosses rolling countryside to Fontaine on the river Coole and Donnemont, with few villages on the way, to rejoin the main road near Brienne. Skirting La Forêt d'Orient I would reach Bar-sur-Aube and next day pass through Clairvaux, power-house of the Cistercian monastic revival of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on my way to Langres. A long trek through the hilly country of Haute-Marne would end at Besançon and a second rest day at the Provincial House of the District of Besançon.

After Besançon the route would take in Pontarlier before crossing the Jura Mountains through the Jougne Pass: at just over one thousand metres it is the highest point of the route in France. Into Switzerland I would descend to Orbe in a valley south west of Lake Neuchâtel, before heading for Lausanne on Lake Geneva. A couple of days walking by the lake-side through Vevey and Montreux would bring me into the upper valley of the Rhône, the village of St Maurice and then Martigny. After Martigny would be the testing climb through the Alps. The road climbs over two thousand metres as it winds its way through the Sigeric's stopping places of Orsières and Bourg Saint-Pierre to reach the Great Saint Bernard Pass. At 2,469 metres the pass is the highest point on the journey. As late in the summer as August snow, even deep snow, can cover the old road. Even though there is now a tunnel through the mountains I hoped to be able to reach the hospice, founded in the eleventh century, by Bernard de Menthon for travellers. It is one of many hospices in the Alps built for pilgrims both to Rome and Santiago. Downhill now the road wends its way down the Valle d'Aosta to Aosta, and on to Ivrea and Vercelli, home of the fourth-century saint, bishop and scholar, Eusebius of Vercelli, author of the Athanasian Creed. Here I hoped to

have a further rest day at the Brothers' Istituto San Giuseppe.

Beyond Vercelli the way reaches the Po valley and passes through Pavia, centre of the mediaeval trade in relics, Piacenza and Fidenza where just short of Parma the route turns south through Berceto to cross the Apennines through the Cisa Pass at 1,041 metres before descending to Pontremeoli and Aulla to join the coastal road near La Spezia. After passing the ruined Roman port of Luni I would reach Massa and my fourth rest day at the Brothers' Scuola San Filippo Neri.

After the fine medieval town of Lucca, inland from Pisa, comes Tuscany, the road passing through San Gimignano with its many old defensive towers before reaching beautiful Siena. The final stage of the pilgrimage passes through the land of the Etruscans down the Roman road, the *Via Cassia*, passing Lake Bolsena, the vineyards of the splendid *Est Est Est* wine near Montefiascone and through Viterbo, so strongly associated with the Popes, and I would reach, about 23rd August, the Eternal City.

By Easter, with a project clearly defined and possible of accomplishment, I felt it was possible to seek sponsorship. The needs of the people of Ethiopia are great and CAFOD, at the request of the Bishops of England and Wales, had launched a major appeal to alleviate the suffering. It seemed an appropriate charity, particularly as I was going to a country with Ethiopian connections. After meeting members of the CAFOD Fund Raising Team a Sponsor Form was produced and distributed to CAFOD Groups in the south east and to communities of the district. Through the Conference of Major Superiors I hope to interest religious communities in England and Wales. The local parish had been asked to seek sponsors. On Sunday 27th May I would have a live interview in an early Sunday afternoon programme on BBC Radio Kent. It was possible that from this broadcast further media interest would be aroused.

Such was the way and purpose but what was the attraction? It was quite easy to say 'to Rome for Ethiopia,' harder to research and describe the route but considerably more difficult to make the journey. Long distance walks such as the Pennine Way or the Pilgrim Road to Santiago de Compostela are well-known, way-marked and used by many walkers and pilgrims. Although the pilgrim path to Rome was one of the great medieval pilgrimage routes, the road to Rome had not yet become as formalised as the pilgrims' road to Santiago. Along the way to Santiago there is a succession of fine Romanesque cathedrals, churches and bridges. Helped by a twelfth-century travel guide, a part of the *Codex Calixtinus*, a fixed route was established early on. Around this route traditions and legends have developed and a pilgrim culture has grown up. Along the way you will meet up with fellow pilgrims to share the difficulties of the journey and in the villages along the way receive encouragement from the local people. The same cultural links do not yet exist for a walking pilgrimage to Rome and this, more than the actual distance, made it a more difficult and therefore more challenging undertaking. Following in the footsteps of Sigeric helped to provide a theme,

even though many of the buildings he saw have long been replaced and paths he trod diverted or overgrown.

However, companionship on the way would be more of the spirit than in actuality, apart from the many one-off encounters on the way. I suspect that it is in the companionship of the Spirit that one sets out, continues on the way and reaches the goal. It takes very little time on setting out for a different experience of life to assert itself. Although the journey may be long the distance for just a day is what matters and even just for the next hour and this simple experience moves one to live in the present moment. Although the weather may be inclement, the heat oppressive or the feet sore, somehow you reach the destination and appreciation of the gifts of the day deepens. And from these inner experiences I think lies the attraction of setting out on such a journey. While there is the challenge of accomplishment, the enjoyment of different sights, the meeting of different people, it is the moments when striding over hill and dale you experience a oneness or as you wander by flowing streams you recall with somewhat greater impact that *the Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit.* Or, on the road before dawn, you see the moon set behind a distant hill and watch the sun rise from a mountain top and spontaneously pray: *Sun and Moon, O bless the Lord. To him be highest glory and praise forever,* both experiences moments of grace on the pilgrimage of life.

Reports written on the Way

1. London - Calais 10-16 June 1990

Saturday 16 June 1990: English Channel, approaching Calais

I could not have had a better start to this pilgrimage. On Trinity Sunday at the end of the Mass, in my parish of Herne Hill, London, the priest blessed me, using an eleventh-century Pilgrim Blessing, and then I was on my way to the tune of a tenth-century Pilgrim Chant played by Mary Remnant, the medieval musicologist. Ten minutes into the walk, on passing a friend's house, wine and a pilgrim dole of bread, cheese and apple fed the inner man. Accompanied by Laurie Dennett, whose walk to Rome in 1989 raised thousands for Multiple Sclerosis, we walked towards West Wickham where at the Emmaus Centre I was generously received by Sister Maria Goretti.

Next day I crossed the North Downs to Sevenoaks. At my brother's school, St Thomas of Canterbury, I spoke to the children of the needs in Ethiopia. Many have already responded generously. A lovely walk along the Greensand ridge took me past Knowle House, through the deer park, by Ightham Mote and the old Soar House before reaching West Malling at tea time. Passing the Abbey, I called at the guest house, was given a welcome cup of tea and joined the Anglican sisters for evensong. I was glad, so early in the pilgrimage, to have

prayed with Anglicans. That night the Aylesford Carmelites at Our Lady's shrine gave me a most hospitable welcome. Next day, joined by Benet from my own community, we enjoyed the flowers of hedgerow, field and hostelry. It was a long day and I reached Charing a little footsore, with some tender toes and slight traces of heat blisters, but nothing too inconvenient. In Charing I was reminded that St Richard of Chichester was curate here.

Early on Thursday morning I walked along a beautiful stretch of the Pilgrims' Way, often on a sunken path in woodland, and recalled to mind his beautiful prayer. At Chilham John Hatfield, another member of the Confraternity of St. James, joined me to walk the remaining half-dozen miles to Canterbury and, at the shrine of St Thomas, we thanked God for his blessings, his protection on the way and for unity among Christians. In the guide office I was glad to speak to members of the Cathedral staff about my pilgrimage: I hope a Bidding Prayer or two may be raised to bless the walk.

After enjoying the joyful hospitality of a Capuchin student hostel, near the centre of Canterbury, I set out on Friday morning on the first leg of my pilgrimage with Sigeric. I admired the lovely Gothic Cathedral so beautiful in the quiet of early morning, then passed St Augustine's Abbey where I expect Sigeric lived or visited, and finally St Martin's, England's oldest parish church, the red Roman tiles in its fabric testifying to its antiquity. Sigeric surely prayed here. By 9 am I was at St Anselm's School and half-an-hour later was talking at the school assembly about Sigeric, CAFOD and the needs in Ethiopia. After a ten-minute address, I was presented with a cheque for £1,000 for CAFOD - a great effort by the school community and a third of a total sum of £3,000 raised by the pupils through various activities. After an interview by pupils from the First Form, I was on my way again now to Dover via Barfreston where, in *The Yew Tree*, I made contact with the *L'Arche Community*. What a fine work they do and what a lovely spirit there is! Helping the handicapped is such a wonderful vocation. May God bless them all. Before leaving Dover I called at the beautiful chapel of St Edmund and St Richard. It was the feast of St Richard, so I end with St Richard's prayer:

*Thanks be to Thee, My Lord Jesus Christ
For all the benefits Thou hast given to me,
For all the pain and insults Thou hast borne for me.
Most Merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
May I know Thee more clearly,
Love Thee more dearly,
Follow Thee more nearly.
Amen.*

2. Calais - Bapaume 16-21 June 1990

Thursday 21 June 1990: Bapaume, Hôtel de La Paix

On *The Pride of Kent* I crossed the Channel on a gloriously sunny day with a calm sea, ready to begin the continental part of my walk. The crossing to Calais passed quickly in conversation with a holiday-maker and writing. The sea was calm. We reached Calais on time. Soon I was stepping into the great unknown. I have a little French but not sufficient to enter conversation with confidence or much comprehension. Poor map reading caused a longer trek through Calais than necessary but by late afternoon I was standing in bright warm sun along the dunes of Blériot Plage, named after the aviator who first crossed the Channel. Gradually my pace slowed in the dry sand - not the easiest surface to walk on, but it was pleasant to breathe the sea air. Near Sangatte are the workings for the French entrance to the Channel Tunnel, together with an exhibition of the work. On to chalk, progress was swifter over Cap Blanc Nez. England now was lost in haze although earlier it had been possible to see the French cliffs from the English side. Wissant is a pleasant fishing and bathing resort. I found a simple hotel near the *centre ville* and that evening enjoyed my first French meal - a good one.

Sigeric's last recorded stopping place was the nearby hamlet of Sambre. In Anglo-Saxon times archaeologists think there was a port here. Now Sambre is a mile inland. Next morning in bright sunshine I scanned the valley for remains, but my untrained eye revealed none; but I did photograph the farmstead. Along winding country lanes I made my way first to Guines where, in 1521, Henry VIII met Francis I on the field of the Cloth of Gold then, by way of an ancient hill-top chapel dedicated to St Louis, to Hervinghem for a night's rest on the local campsite.

Next day I was somewhat preoccupied about obtaining francs. I started off with what I thought was sufficient for the weekend and that on Monday I'd be able to change currency. I did not realise that the banks, at least in the region, did not open on Monday. At Lumbres all three banks were closed; similarly in Thérouanne. Luckily a garage owner sporting a MasterCard symbol advanced cash on my flexible friend.

Just before Thérouanne I had joined a road which runs almost straight as a die to Arras. There used to be a cathedral here. Today the church, like many another, was closed. There was no accommodation for miles around so I bought provisions and walked into the countryside where in a poplar grove I set up camp. I had quite a good meal washed down with a *vin de table*, and enjoyed the quiet and isolation. That night it rained quite heavily but I suffered no water penetration apart from a few drips from condensation.

Next day I made for Houdain, a long plod along the old road, with cars and lorries whizzing past often at high speed. The lorries are worst and if there is a verge I step aside to avoid the rush of air and whirlwind that marks their passage. Usually they give a reasonable berth. More dangerous are the lunatic drivers who overtake a car from behind. Mercifully I know nothing until I feel the

rush of air and see the car rocket by and thank God I am safe. Houdain had no accommodation so for a third night I had to camp, this time by a farm in a small village a short distance out of town on the way to Arras. Tomorrow, I resolve, I will have a bed come what may. The walking and lack of a cooked meal begin to take their toll and the day to Arras was tough going. Arras is a pleasant town with beautiful cobbled squares lined with gable-fronted three storey houses supported by sandstone pillars. According to the Arras guide, there are 155 of them and although their architectural style is similar to buildings in Belgium and Holland, the extent of the squares is unique. The Town Hall, with its 80 metres high belfry, is magnificent, particularly in the morning sun. I could have spent a day wandering around the Cathedral or admiring the exhibits in the Abbaye Saint Vaast. The abbey was originally founded by St Aubert to hold the relics of St Vaast who came to Arras about the year 500. By the time Sigeric visited Arras it would have been an important foundation. But most of the delights of Arras will have to await another visit. My main need was a meal and a good rest. As it turned out the meal was mediocre but the sleep good.

Next day I reached Bapaume. In Saint-Léger, almost by chance I found a small bar with a table ready laid for a meal. The jolly lady at the bar gave me a beer and said lunch would be available in half-an-hour. It was a jolly bar - most workmen of the hamlet must have called for beer or *café*. The meal was excellent, quite the best so far, and it more than made up for last night's travesty: French cuisine restored! All day I pass War Cemeteries reminding me of the huge loss of life in these parts during the Great War. The cemeteries are beautifully kept by gardeners employed by the War Graves Commission. In the visitors' book of one was the touching 'For the Uncle I never knew'. Hardly a mile goes by without such a reminder and I recall each time the *De Profundis*:

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice.
O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.
If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness;
for this we revere you.
Psalm 129:1-4 Grail.*

And May they rest in peace!

3. Bapaume - Reims 22-26 June 1990

Wednesday 27 June 1990: Reims, Hotel de La Salle

On Saturday evening I reached Reims, safe and sound after a long tiring day

walking along the RN44 in the hot sun, to a fine welcome by Brother Emile of the Provincialate Community here. But the past five days have been hard going. Leaving Bapaume on Thursday morning I had my first experience of walking along a *route nationale*. Today it was busy with all sorts of traffic and the walking was made more difficult by a very strong south westerly wind laced with the occasional shower. All morning I shuffled along the road, retreating to the verge at the onset of heavy lorries, which usually brought me to a halt in the whirlwind of their passage. By lunchtime I was in Péronne, a city almost completely destroyed in the Great War, enjoying a welcome plate of fish and chips and later admiring the château. By evening I was 10 km further on at a *gîte de France* in the Omicron Valley deep in the countryside. Expecting to camp tonight I had come upon the *gîte* by chance. It provided simple accommodation: beds in a dormitory, washing and cooking facilities - in the style of an English youth hostel, and the welcome companionship of two agricultural students gaining practical experience of their future profession.

Two days' further walking brought me across pleasant farming countryside and one afternoon along an 8 km stretch of the St Quentin canal to the historic city of Laon. On the outskirts I enquired about the location of the Brothers' House and minutes later met Brother Paul cycling towards me. He and his community of two other Brothers gave me a most hospitable welcome. By the time I was washed and bathed, an English tea, complete with strawberries from their delightful garden, and cream was ready. Later we had an excellent supper after watching yet another of the World Cup matches. I must have watched more football in the last 15 days than in the previous 15 years! Next morning Brother Bernard, formerly Director for 20 years of the Brothers' school in Laon, gave me a whirlwind tour of the town - the magnificent twelfth-century cathedral with its monument commemorating one million dead in the Great War, its chapel of St Thomas à Becket, recalling its close connections with Canterbury, and its splendid Romanesque architecture. I could easily have spent an entire morning but we had other sites in view in our double circuit of the plateau on which Laon stands - the Abbey of St Martin, the former Brothers' school and the biannual street market. Sightseeing over, we sped across the Aisne countryside on pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Liesse, the Marian shrine to which John Baptist de La Salle brought the first Brothers in 1684, to consecrate the nascent Institute to her care. It was a very full morning.

Immediately after lunch I was on my way again, across country and along pleasant country lanes towards the *Chemin des Dames*, the road in the front line of the Great War, and on to the Roman town of Corbény, one of Sigeric's resting places, with an excellent modest hotel with a most hospitable proprietor.

Now, in Reims, I am again enjoying the magnificent hospitality of the Brothers and gaining new insights into the beautiful psalm we prayed on occasional renewal of vows:

Behold, how good and pleasant it is

*when Brothers dwell in unity!
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
running down upon the beard,
upon the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!
It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion!
For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,
life for evermore.*

Psalm 133, RSV.

4. Reims - Brienne-le-Château 29 June-2 July 1990

Monday 9 July 1990: Besançon, Maison de Retraite

I really enjoyed my stay in Reims. Brother Emile Noiret made the two days memorable with three visits to the places associated with the Founder. With Brother Jean I went to Thillois to see the Agricultural College and the room used by Blessed Brother Arnould when he was the Director of Novices. But first we went to St Joseph's to visit the infirmary and for the infirmarian to dress the blister on my left foot. Now it is healing well and not causing delay or much pain. At St Joseph's the Brothers have built a Pavilion to house a beautifully arranged display of memorabilia of Blessed Brother Arnould - a former teacher at the school. Other visits took me to Saint Remi, a lovely eleventh-century abbey with the tomb of Saint Remi, where the Founder prayed so frequently, often at night; the Convent of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus where De La Salle first met Adrien Nyel, the chance encounter that began his life's work of such consequence for education; and of course to Reims Cathedral built for the consecration of Kings of France, a really magnificent piece of architecture.

The Brothers had made me feel very much at home, and I left Reims in good spirits along the Marne Canal making for Châlons-en-Champagne, on a bright morning, accompanied for some of the way by Brother Emile. Sadly the sun did not last and by midday I was sheltering in a workman's hut during a violent thunderstorm. The hut was well provided and the man enjoying his picnic lunch offered me a cup of coffee. That evening I enjoyed hospitality from the Mayor of Les Grandes Vosges and a bed in a theatrical storeroom offered by his brother, a farmer who lived next door. It was interesting to have a meal with a French family and learn about the difficulties of farming. Next morning I enjoyed a good breakfast with the mayor's brother and his wife.

A long stretch along the old Roman Road cutting straight as a die across the rolling countryside brought me after two more days to Brienne -le-Château. The weather had been bright and often sunny and camping each evening enjoyable; and although it had been difficult to obtain food after Châlons-en-Champagne, I had just enough to feed myself over the weekend. Nonetheless I looked forward to a good meal in Brienne. I reached the town by midday. For a Monday it was

quiet. Shops were closed. There was hardly a person in sight. Restaurants and hotels were closed: it was the patronal feast! Luckily in the town square a bar was open and I enjoyed a couple of toasted sandwiches and a couple of beers. When I came to pay the bill, to my horror I found my wallet was missing. I could not think what had happened to it. I searched my rucksack to no avail and with some embarrassment explained that I had only 25 French francs until I could change some reserve dollars. The lady at the bar took all I could offer and I left to visit the Gendarmerie to report my loss. To my great relief my wallet had been found at a bar in Rosnay l'Hôpital which I had visited for a coffee earlier in the morning; it would be brought here shortly. In the meantime the police requested identification. In a few moments I was in the Commander's office talking about my pilgrimage and he about the town, his appreciation for his education by the Brothers at Troyes and about the Dominican Sisters who provided a refuge for pilgrims in the town centre. After tea with the Dominicans and with my wallet restored, I was driven by the Commander to the refuge with its comfortable mattresses and washing facilities, recently used by a Belgian family making a pilgrimage to Assisi. Later in the Dominican Sisters' most beautiful chapel I attended their evening Mass and enjoyed the hospitality of the Sisters' table. With greater fervour than usual I prayed the Vespers Magnificat: *My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour* for the most helpful *gendarmes* and the unknown person who reported the loss of my wallet.

5. Brienne-le-Château - Besançon 2-8 July 1990

Monday 9 July 1990: Besançon, Maison de Retraite

I reached Besançon just as the Tour de France (near the end of the *étape* Epinal-Besançon) arrived. On a tight right hand bend of the road I watched the group of five leaders, followed seconds later by the main bunch of over a hundred riders round the corner. They were gone in less than 30 seconds down the *route nationale* to the finish in Besançon's town centre. After the excitement of their passage I continued my way to the Brothers' House on the outskirts of the city, accompanied by the assortment of camp followers - press, mechanics with spare bicycles on the roof of their vans and gendarmerie outriders.

My *étape* from Brienne-le-Château over five days has been marked by a distinct change in scenery - more forested, more pasture and more frequent hills as I walked up the valley of the Aube to the watershed and across the plateau, first to Langres (at 450 metres the highest point so far), and then on to Besançon. The weather too has become inclement - overcast and at times very wet. On two days I reached my destination wet through but fortunately I was able to dry out before setting off again next morning. Accommodation has been difficult. In Bar-sur-Aube I found a nice hotel opposite the beautiful twelfth-century church of Saint Pierre with its beautiful statue of Our Lady with Grapes (I was still in the champagne wine region), fine nave and interesting *hallon*, a wooden gallery outside the church used during the Champagne Fairs to protect the merchants' stalls. But that was the last really comfortable bed I had until four days later I reached the Brothers' House in Besançon. I had high hopes of a bed in the

walled hill top town of Langres, with at least six hotels and a large youth hostel. After an hour tramping the streets after a 40 km hike from Brienne, I still had no bed and pitched my tent next to a trio of French cyclists on the camp site by the city wall. But it was an uncomfortable night: my sleeping bag was damp after the heavy rain of the day and there was no evening sun to dry it out. Despite the inclement weather, general damp air and cold wind, I did sleep that night and the morning was at least dry.

Langres was interesting - a fine cathedral, city walls and a market in full swing. The tourist information office offered no hope of accommodation on the road to Besançon so I resigned myself to a further two nights' camping if necessary and bought provisions to cover at least two days. Obtaining food is proving quite difficult. If I'm lucky I'll find a bar-restaurant at midday as my destination for a meal, but buying food in the villages I pass through is often impossible: they rely on mobile butchers or bakers for their provisions or drive to the nearest *supermarché* on the outskirts of large towns or villages. Nonetheless it is quite remarkable how my arrival in a village coincides with the mobile baker or butcher allowing me to stock up. This stage has certainly been tough but I'm not dispirited - the Lord has provided what is necessary and the experience of walking day by day produces a calm and contentment. I have not felt lonely; although I walk for hours without speaking to anybody there is often a sense of presence - a presence I'd experienced on the road to Santiago and of pilgrims who'd gone before, perhaps of the many Roman soldiers who marched this way two thousand years before, not to mention Sigeric 1000 years ago and of those who accompany me in the Spirit. Ahead lie the mountains which I briefly glimpsed yesterday and the promise of better weather. So tomorrow *I lift up my eyes to the mountains* and continue my way *in the light of the Lord*.

6. Besançon - Lausanne 10-14 July 1990

Thursday 26 July 1990: Vercelli, Istituto San Giuseppe

At long last the sun broke through the cloud in Besançon and it has given some really beautiful days. Besançon is a busy town built, like Rome, on seven hills, with the river Doubs almost encircling the old town. There is a fine cathedral, reached through a splendid Roman arch, which contains most architectural styles from the eleventh century onwards. An unusual feature is a choir at either end of the nave.

There was a long steady climb out of Besançon to reach the first plateau of the Jura at about 750 metres. Over the next two days there was a succession of similar climbs followed by plateau until I reached the Col d'Etroit (1,150 metres) just over the border in Switzerland. Once off the busy main road to Pontarlier it was extremely pleasant walking first through a gorge with, high above, the beautiful Château de Joux, then through some forest and mountain pasture to the pleasant ski resort of Sainte-Croix.

I'm glad I crossed the Jura from north to south because the descent to Vuiteboeuf, 481 metres below, next day was extremely steep. I chose the footpath which followed in part the old Roman road from Pontarlier to Yverdon. In places the old road was clearly visible with ruts indicating where the chariots had passed. Mind you, any passenger would have had a rather rough ride and in fear of being hurled hundreds of feet into the gorge below. Across the valley the walking was easier, with splendid views of the steep pine clad scarp of the Jura. I next reached the Roman town of Orbe. Over the past 100 years a series of mosaics which decorated several villas have been discovered. They are certainly splendid mosaics very finely drawn with quarter inch tesserae in a variety of designs both geometrical and pictorial. Excavations continue in a corner of the site, so further mosaics may be found.

On the Saturday I reached the large city of Lausanne on the shore of Lake Geneva. Here the daughter of a Swiss friend of my mother had put me in touch with the President of the Council of the English Catholic Community. Some years ago a Holy Ghost Father, due for a missionary appointment in Africa, contracted T.B. and was sent to Lausanne to convalesce. Unable to go to the missions he remained in Lausanne and over the years built up a thriving community centre for English speakers resident permanently or on temporary assignment in Lausanne. They have a beautiful chapel in the basement of an office block where they can gather for Sunday Mass and meetings. An Irish lady, Mary McGinley, gave me a bed for the night and prepared an excellent supper and ensured I set off after a good Irish breakfast and with an ample picnic lunch. At the Sunday Mass, before I set off for Vevey, I spoke to the congregation about my walk and chatted afterwards with the people over coffee. Before leaving, one of the young lads showed me a cartoon he had drawn of me sitting astride a Great Saint Bernard dog on my way over the pass! I left Lausanne with happy memories and thanks for the generous hospitality of the English Community.

7. Lausanne - Great Saint Bernard Pass 15- 20 July 1990

Thursday 26 July 1990: Vercelli, Istituto San Giuseppe

The sudden change in temperature a few days earlier had caused a temperature inversion over the lake and for most of my two days by the lakeside there was a light mist or haze clouding the far shore. It was only where the lake narrowed that I caught my first glimpse of the Alps. With little wind the lake was calm and there was a tranquil atmosphere about the day. My path followed the promenade for several miles, then a road through vineyards on the south facing slopes of the lake. Late on that Sunday afternoon I stopped to sample the local white wine, a very pleasant dry one. Next day I walked all morning along the flower promenade through Montreux, busy with its international Jazz Festival, to Villeneuve at the end of Lake Geneva. Successive communes seemed to vie with each other on their flower arrangements. It certainly was a most pleasant walk on a beautifully bright but cool morning. The afternoon was less interesting - a longish plod along a main road - but I was intent on reaching Ollon. Friends

in the Confraternity of St James had contacted an English couple living in this small village just off the main road and I'd been invited to spend the night. I was received by Olive and Noel Blackford most hospitably and given a lovely typically Swiss meal - a delicious chervil tart (a Vaud recipe) accompanied by *pasti* (potatoes coarsely grated and fried on a double saucepan) followed by *panpurlu*, a dessert made from bread and fruit. It was a most pleasant evening chatting about my journey and learning about the history and culture of the Vaud and Valais Cantons. Not least I left next morning with machine-washed and dried clothes.

It was a short walk up the narrowing valley to Saint-Maurice, a small town built under a sheer cliff where the valley is at its narrowest. Here in AD 290 a Roman legionary, St Maurice, and many of his men were executed on the orders of Emperor Maximian for refusing to execute fellow Christians. Over the place of martyrdom a shrine was eventually built and in AD 515 a monastery was established. Later the monks adopted the rule of St Augustine and became Canons Regular of St Augustine. It is the oldest continuous religious community in Western Christendom. I was received by the Prior and given a room in their guest house. Later, after sung Vespers and Mass, I enjoyed a meal with the Canons in their refectory. The Abbey has been rebuilt many times over the years after damage by fire, invasions and most recently, 40 years ago, from rock fall from the cliffs which rise directly above the buildings. During the last restoration the opportunity for excavation was taken and original foundations were discovered among which was a sixth-century font for baptism by immersion. The abbey also has a most remarkable treasury of gifts dating back to the seventh century.

The next three days took me up the valley and up to the Col du Grand-Saint-Bernard. The stretch to Martigny, a Roman town with forum and amphitheatres, was along agricultural tracks by the swiftly flowing Rhône. Then a long stretch along the busy road to the pass steadily uphill to Orsières, then the delightful walk began along a marked mountain path through pine forest steadily gaining height. At times the track was quite steep but by shortening my pace I was able to maintain a steady rhythm and gained height quite quickly. It had only been at Saint Maurice that I realised that I would be climbing well over two kilometres of hill over two days; but it was easier than I anticipated.

Halfway up I stopped at the little village of Bourg Saint-Pierre - the last before the pass - where, so I am told, each year the French Government is presented with an account for an I.O.U. rendered by Napoleon when he passed through the village with his army of 40,000 men on their way to defeat the Austrians at Marengo in 1805. So far only part of the I.O.U. has been honoured. The first day up the pass was a perfect mountain day - a cloudless sky, warm sun and a gentle breeze, with a good path most of the way up: if only the whole route was like this! It was a day crossing high mountain pasture, alongside a reservoir, up narrow gullies and finally in the Combes des Morts across a snow filled gully to gain the Col du Grand-Saint-Bernard at 2,469 metres. On the Col there was a

Roman temple whose foundations are still visible near the Hospice founded by St Bernard de Menthon, Archdeacon of Aosta, in 1050. I stayed in the hospice overnight, joining the Canons for Vespers and Mass in their beautiful crypt chapel, a chapel which probably dates back to the foundation; then supper. By evening, with tourists gone, it was a wonderfully peaceful place and I enjoyed the views of snow capped mountains and the reflection of the setting sun in the lake below the hospice. It was a wonderful place to be in and I envied the religious members of the community and others spending a month or two either on retreat or helping with the many youth activities which take place. In fact on the Saturday there was an Alpine pilgrimage when a group of a hundred or so gathered at La Foully, walked the six miles or so to the hospice, up a valley and across a mountain pass, attended a vigil service in the hospice chapel and completed the weekend with a Sunday Mass. It would have been nice to join them but that was not possible on this occasion.

8. Great Saint Bernard Pass - Vercelli 21-25 July 1990

Thursday 26 July 1990: Vercelli, Istituto San Giuseppe

Early in the morning I crossed into Italy. Neither Swiss nor Italians were particularly interested in examining my passport or the reason for my journey, unlike the border guards at d'Aubrisson on the French Swiss border with whom I'd chatted for several minutes. Then it was downhill into the Valle d'Aosta. At first the mountain path was slippery and precipitous and great care was needed to avoid slithering down the very steep slope. It was far more interesting than the zig-zagging road which made its way down the centre of the valley. Gradually the path levelled and joined the ancient track to Saint-Rhémy, the first village on the Italian side, where young men were excused military service in exchange for providing alpine rescue services. Saint-Rhémy is a pretty village with many houses profusely decorated with flowers, often geraniums. By evening I was in Aosta, another Roman town with an important strategic position at the junction of two valleys. After a day largely on the main road, it was pleasant to spend the next on the byroad on the west bank of the river Dora Baltea passing through a succession of villages often with churches decorated on the west front with frescoes of patron saints. On two occasions I noticed fine frescoes of St George and wondered if there was some English connection. At Fenis, an otherwise undistinguished village, there was a really splendid château, the first of several I was to see on the next two days, clearly built to defend the valley in the Middle Ages. Often they were on high outcrops, giving a commanding view of the valley. Usually the castles were at points where the valley narrowed, as at Montepinet where the road passes through a narrow gorge. For Sigeric, 1000 years ago, it must have been a perilous ride on a terrace hundreds of feet above the raging torrent of the Dora Baltea. The motorway burrows its way through the outcrops or is carried across the river on viaducts. On this stretch there was little to tell me that I was on an ancient road, but at Donnan I came across a splendid stretch of original Roman road about a quarter of a mile long, crossing a small valley and then cut into the solid rock. Ruts made by carts and chariots were clearly visible as was some of the original

paving. Interestingly, the gauge of the ruts was different from the Swiss sections of road. In addition there was a solid Roman arch giving access to the village and a fine milestone indicating a distance of 36 Roman miles from Aosta. Not to be outdone in Roman remains, Pont-Saint-Martin a few kilometres further on, had a splendid Roman bridge. Surely Sigeric had passed this way and seen these remains.

Three days after leaving the pass, I'd reached the hilltop town of Ivrea, one of Sigeric's resting places, with a fine cathedral with a few remains of the Romanesque original and a four-turreted brick castle dominating the town. I was now nearly in the Po valley. The stage from Ivrea to Vercelli was entirely along a busy main road. As I neared the village of Cavaglia, I witnessed an extraordinary piece of driving. Just before the village, the road makes a sharp right angle bend to bypass the village. Appropriate signs warn drivers of the dangerous bend and mandate a slower speed. However a driver took the bend too fast, slid into the grit covered hard shoulder, then swerved on to the right side, then back to the left and finally did a complete U-turn before driving back in the direction he had come. Minutes later he returned tooting his horn as he recognised me and the two others who had witnessed his feat. He and his passenger were lucky that there was no oncoming traffic or for that matter following traffic, otherwise there could have been a serious tragedy. I counted myself fortunate that I was safely in the distance.

After Santhia, with a fine collegiate church of St Agatha and a Romanesque crypt in which Sigeric might have celebrated Mass, the scenery changed completely. The road crossed flat open country with mile after mile of rice fields. For most of the day I walked alongside a rushing irrigation channel supplying the rice fields with the necessary water. On the horizon were lines of tall poplars or plane trees which somehow I never seemed to reach. Luckily it was a cooler day with a gentle breeze, otherwise it would have been rather humid with all the lying water. By mid-afternoon I'd reached Vercelli and, next to the cathedral dedicated to St Eusebius, the Brothers' school of San Giuseppe, my resting place for a couple of nights.

It is amazing how time is slipping by and surprising how well my boots are bearing up to the pounding on the tarmac. With a spot of tan shoe polish, it would be hard to tell that they had covered well over 1000 kilometres. The sole in particular

shows little sign of wear and I'm confident that they will reach Rome intact, now just 28 days away, if all continues to go well as it has, thank God, so far.

9. Vercelli - Massa 27 July- 6 August 1990

Tuesday 7 August 1990: Massa, Scuola San Filippo Neri

A few years ago, before setting out for Compostela, a friend commented that 'behind every pilgrimage lies the hard slog of travel.' I believe that is true and

never more so than during the six days after leaving Vercelli. The rice fields I had encountered between Santhia and Vercelli continued, as did the gently downhill trend of the country and the generally straight busy main roads. In this lowland area it was hot - up to the mid-nineties by midday and occasionally rather humid, particularly near the rice fields and irrigation channels; but often by afternoon there was a gently breeze which made walking more pleasant. Under these conditions it is essential to drink regularly (and usually there are fountains in the villages), to start early and have a good midday siesta while this sun is at its highest. To absorb the heat, my hat was regularly soaked in water - either fountain or irrigation channel - and this helped to keep me cool.

Towns and villages each evening did provide some interest: Pavia with its fine domed cathedral, visible from miles away, and its streets; Piacenza with a magnificent brick palazzo in the town centre; and Fidenza with a fine Romanesque cathedral with some interesting carvings in the apse and over the tympanum.

After Fidenza the scenery changed: vineyards reappeared and gradually I entered the foothills of the Apennines. In these hills there are several spas. Now they are associated with bottling plants for the mineral water, both natural and gaseous, supplied almost automatically by restaurants. So I passed Sant'Andrea and higher in the hills, Fonte San Moderanno.

Two very pleasant days took me across the Apennines through the Cisa Pass, at 1,041 metres, with pine forest on the east, oak and hazel woodland on the steeper slopes of the west. The climb up the pass was steady and gently and most enjoyable in the cool of the early morning after a good night in the pleasant village of Berceto, with a cathedral dating back to the eighth century - a church Sigeric would probably have seen. At the summit there is a Sanctuary to Our Lady, a shrine visited by many cycling clubs who often leave a memorial of their pilgrimage in the form of a framed club jersey. While I was enjoying a beer, several groups of cyclists arrived and had some refreshment before setting off on the long downhill road to Pontremoli. My descent, however, was considerably slower than theirs!

After Pontremoli, the main road continues often in a narrow valley cut by the river Magra to Aulla and on to the coast. I took the inland road - the *Via Aurelia* - to head for Massa, passing close to the famous Carrara marble quarries. From the road the white quarries were clearly visible on the western slopes of the mountains. By the roadside were stone yards with huge blocks of pure white stone awaiting the attention of stone mason or transport to other parts. It was interesting watching the masons at work on tombstones or statuary, some gouging the stone with small pneumatic drills to create a rough outline; others polishing nearly finished work.

So on a hot, humid afternoon I reached Massa and the primary school of San Filippo Neri, conveniently positioned near the centre of the town, and a fine

welcome from the Brothers here. Ahead lay Tuscany, the interesting towns of Lucca, San Gimignano, Siena and Viterbo and, in fifteen or sixteen days, ROMA, which I expect to reach on 22nd or 23rd August.

10. Massa - Siena 8-14 August 1990

Friday 24 August 1990: Roma, Casa Generalizia

The full day's rest in the Brother's House in Massa did me a world of good. I set off next morning with renewed energy and Brother Guanluigi's splendid picnic lunch on the road to Camaiori, a pleasant town a couple of miles off the *Via Aurelia* and 25 km closer to Rome. It was still hot and the walk not particularly inspiring although Pietrasanta, the original centre of the marble industry, made an interesting break.

Things changed next day with a splendid early morning climb along a quiet road through lovely woodland with splendid views back to Camaiore with its backdrop of the Alpi Apuane, a mountain range rising to well over 1,800 metres. How nice it would have been to have walked along the ridge on one of the waymarked paths but that experience will have to wait until another day. The day ended in the fine walled town of Lucca, a town which attracts large numbers of tourists. On my way into the town I passed the Basilica of San Frediano with its splendid mosaic of the Ascension glinting in the early evening sun but it was an hour and a half before I found a room for the night. However, during the search I obtained an excellent knowledge of the narrow medieval streets of the old town. I found the Cathedral in time for the evening Mass and a good look around. Especially interesting was the fine painting of the Last Supper by Tintoretto and the west facade, which includes an intriguing Romanesque labyrinth sculpture. Sadly by the time I reached the Torre Guigna, a tree-topped brick tower some 30 metres high, it was closed for the day, depriving me of a fascinating aerial view of Lucca.

A day later the dull flat country of the Arno Valley came to a sudden end and the stiff climb to San Miniato lifted my spirits. I had entered the Tuscany so loved by English tourists. From the Torre high above the town I obtained a magnificent view of the rolling country ahead with its vineyards, olive groves and recently ploughed fields. Although it was again hot, into the nineties by early afternoon, it was pleasant walking in this varied region.

I timed my arrival at Santa Maria-in-Chianni perfectly for the Sunday morning Mass and afterwards had an interesting chat with the priest, who had spent twenty years in England and who knew of Sigeric's Itinerary. Then it was off to the spa town of Gambassi Terme. The water from the fountain outside the spa was excellent but in general the water in Tuscany had a clayey taste. It was not until I reached the volcanic areas beyond Radicofani, over a week later, that the water became pleasantly refreshing.

In early evening with a declining sun I turned a corner and lo the many tall and

slender stone towers of a hill-side town - a medieval New York. I was coming to San Gimignano. I could easily have spent a day viewing the museum, the cathedral, climbing the towers and wandering along the walls and narrow streets. The cathedral has a fascinating series of frescos, the first extensive series I had seen on this trip.

Siena was only 30 miles away but just too far for a day's walk. By early evening, after a picnic stop in Col di Valle d'Elsa, I reached the hill-top fort of Monteriggione. The settlement consisted of a cluster of well-maintained houses along a raggle-taggle of narrow alleys, a bar-restaurant and a grocer. No sign of a hotel but there was a nice patch of grass near the town wall and close to both toilets and water. None of the villagers objected to me camping there and I had a very comfortable night as well as a good meal in the 'Il Castello'. I will remember Monteriggione as one of the more enjoyable resting places on the walk.

At the Casa del Peregrino, next to Casa Santa Caterina, in Siena, the sister could offer me a room for two nights but not just the one. With next day being the Feast of the Assumption, and a national holiday, I decided a day's rest would do me good and provide the opportunity to see at least some of the Palio races. That evening I entered the crowded *Campo*, the scallop shaped town square, with beautiful buildings on all sides, which slopes down towards the splendid town hall with its magnificent slender brick tower. Around the perimeter a five-metre-wide hard clay race course had been laid and stands erected in front of the bars in the lower storey of the surrounding buildings. I was about to witness the third of the 'Trial Races' of the *Palio*. (The actual race was two days later in the evening of the 16th August.) After an enormous bang from the starter's cracker-jack the ten horses, representing the ten *contradas* (areas of the town), entered the *Campo* and processed to the starting line. The atmosphere was tense with excitement, supporters chanting the *contrada's* song and waving the flag of the *contrada*. A second explosion started the race, two laps of the course. On this occasion riders, in colourful fifteenth-century medieval costume, were getting the feel of the course, some giving full rein, others just cantering. On the actual day things were rather different. Next evening the fifth trial race was preceded by an exciting cavalry charge around the course at breathtaking speed. Siena needed several days to visit all its many interesting buildings and museums. I contented myself with a couple of visits to the cathedral, with its lovely black and white facade and magnificent inlaid pavement depicting a variety of secular and religious scenes, to mention only two of the magnificent works of art which fill the church. I also saw the Casa Santa Caterina and the Church of St Dominic, which contains a shrine of St Catherine of Siena, and went for a ramble along the narrow winding streets of the old town.

My two nights in Siena were enjoyable and the extra day's rest put me in good stead for the final stage across Tuscany to the Eternal City, now just 240 km away.

11. Siena - Rome 16-23 August 1990

Thursday 30 August 1990: ROMA, Casa Generalizia

Siena was buzzing with excitement as I crossed the *Campo* after the final trial race. Already in the square enthusiasts had marked their places by the racetrack ready for the evening's pageant, culminating in the actual race, some having slept overnight on the Karrimats so often seen atop the rucksacks of younger tourists at the London railway stations. I, however, was intent on finding the *Via Roma* and then rejoin the *Via Cassia* which would take me all the way to Rome. After the thunderstorm the previous afternoon the air was fresh and the sun was bright. It would be a hot day. The day before was a national holiday and it was noticeable how free the road was of heavy traffic. Perhaps for the drivers it was the morning-after-the-night-before. Whatever the reason, it was a pleasant start to the last stage of my walk and I enjoyed the rolling Tuscan scenery. For the next three days the road twisted and turned, rose and fell across fields newly ploughed cream or dark brown or still yellow with corn stubble. Frequently there was the clanking sound of a bulldozer with double plough turning the soil on the steep hillsides slopes. The vista constantly changed with houses atop the hillocks, now used as barns or sometimes disused and falling into decay.

By evening I had reach the pleasant town of Buonconvento. In the restaurant at seven o'clock all attention was on the televised *Palio* race and it was clear that no meal would be served until the outcome was known. And it turned out to be an exciting race. After three attempts at a start they were off. All went well on the first lap but as the riders turned to pass in front of the town hall three riders misjudged the sharp steep turn, collided with the cushioned barrier and were dismounted. Their horses ran free until the trainer could retrieve them, a feat easier said than done. Meanwhile the seven remaining horses galloped on, five in close line. On the final lap the leader collided with the third of the loose horses and three of the following horses were involved in a pile-up. The fifth was left to canter home and win the race to the delight of the Montone *contrada* and ire of the other nine. The race was over in three or four minutes but, I am sure, the celebrations in the *contrada* went on to the early hours.

San Quirico d'Orcia, one of Sigeric's stopping places, proved an interesting small town with a fine Romanesque parish church dating back to the thirteenth century, a pleasant sixteenth-century formal garden and a helpful lady in the tourist office who told me of an *albergo* for my night's rest. But I will also remember the town for the cup of tea and chat with two English cyclists who were breakfasting just before the town. Marcus and Anthony had left England a couple of days after me on, believe it or not, a two-year tour which they hoped would take them around the world. Already they had crossed France and seen a good chunk of Italy as well as an excursion (by rail however) to friends in Sicily. My 75 day journey seemed short by comparison with theirs. A little further on at Bagno Vignoli, a little off the main road, I saw the open thermal baths, used until recently by the villagers, and the house used by St Catherine of Siena when she visited the spa in the fourteenth century. According to the tourist leaflet the

springs date back a thousand years and I couldn't help wondering if Sigeric made a similar detour.

It was uphill all the way to Radicofani, a small town nestling under a huge volcanic crag surmounted by a tower visible from miles around. I was glad I made the ascent in the cool of the morning. Seven kilometres steadily uphill with a climb of over 290 metres was almost as severe as the climb through the Alps. After slaking my thirst in the small bar I was introduced to a English-speaking local who knew the area well. He suggested that, in fact, the road Sigeric had used was more or less the same as the route followed by the modern highway in the valley and across the much lower watershed. Sigeric's Sancte Petir-in-Pail was not the St Peter's Church in Radicofani, but was located down in the valley. He based his information on the fact that the road to Radicofani developed only in the eleventh or twelfth century as the town gained in importance. I consoled myself for the unnecessary climb by the fact that the view was superb, the town interesting and that the afternoon would be downhill along farm tracks until I rejoined *Via Cassia* at Ponte di Rigo where, I was told, there was a nice hotel.

The geology of the area changed significantly. I was now on volcanic *tufa*. A few miles after Aquapendente, yet another town on a steep hilltop, came the first view of Lago di Bolsena, a 16 km wide lake filling an ancient volcano, one of several between Bolsena and Rome. Just before the town I booked in at the Pineta Campsite, the first appointed campsite I had come across since my cold windy night at Langres some five weeks before, and had an excellent night, better in fact than many of my nights in stuffy hotel bedrooms because of the cool lakeside breeze. Next morning my visit to the Cathedral of Santa Cristina proved fascinating. Santa Cristina was a martyr in the persecution of Diocletian who was drowned in the lake. Her relics are enshrined in a side chapel. Nearby is an early catacomb, unfortunately closed at the time of my visit, and interesting Romanesque architecture. But Bolsena is also remembered for the thirteenth-century eucharistic miracle, celebrated also at nearby Orvieto, which prompted the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi. Above an altar can be seen a blood-stained corporal.

It was quiet and peaceful walking along the lakeside road to Montefiascone with a fine Romanesque church, parts of which Sigeric may have seen, but Montefiascone had another attraction. It is in these parts that the enjoyable *Est Est* wine is produced. It is said that a German bishop sent his steward ahead to test the local wine before his arrival. If it was good 'Est' was marked near the entrance; if better 'Est Est'. The wine at Montefiascone was so good that the steward gave a triple benediction. The bishop enjoyed the wine but drank rather too much and is buried in the church of San Flaviano. But who is to argue with a bishop's opinion so I followed his example and enjoyed a bottle with my picnic lunch. However, unlike the bishop, I was able to continue my journey. (I would hasten to add that a bottle of wine at lunchtime was not my usual practice but Montefiascone was special.) It was just as well my spirits were raised because the afternoon walk was through an almost continual

succession of factories or processing plants.

A visit to Viterbo, the City of the Popes, requires a full day but I did manage to wander in the medieval quarter and along the streets of the old town and visit the church of Santa Maria Nuova, paradoxically the oldest church in Viterbo, and see the splendid Longobard Cloister and early crypt. Also I was glad to make contact with Italian Poor Clares when I called for morning Mass in their nice chapel. I hope their recollection was not unduly disturbed by the surprise of my appearance bearing my rucksack. Their grille, behind the altar, directly faced the chapel entrance.

It was now three days walk to Rome and I followed the old *Via Cassia* through Vetralla to Sutri with its ancient amphitheatre carved in the hard volcanic rock dating back to Etruscan times and then along a long stretch of the modern four-lane *Via Cassia* to La Storta. I'd hoped for a quiet night in the Pensione Cassia in La Storta but as luck would have it they were fully booked for the night and a nearby motel wanted 85,000 lire for a room. I decided to camp and found an ideal place in a field well away from the noise of the *Via Cassia* but close enough to a restaurant for dinner. Nearby was the chapel built at the place where St Ignatius of Loyola had his vision of Our Lord.

Awake with the dawn I saw the sun rise, from behind the hillock opposite, in a clear blue sky. With a cool breeze the day was ideal for the final walk into Rome and up the *Via Aurelia* to the Mother House. Traffic into Rome, at the early hour I set out, was light and resulted in a more pleasant walk into Rome across the orbital motorway and on through the suburbs towards Ponte Milvio. On *Via Cassia* near Ponte Milvio I could see the dome of the Pantheon clearly but St Peter's was out of sight behind one of the seven hills. No doubt there was a 'Mount Joy' from which medieval pilgrims gained their first view of St Peter's but I did not succeed in identifying it. For me the moment of joy came as I strolled along the Tiber and saw the well known dome between the pine trees which line the bank. I was nearly there. Half an hour later I climbed the steps of the Basilica to reach the shrine of St Peter in time for an eleven o'clock Mass, and a fitting end to my seventy-five day pilgrimage. The journey which had taken me across four countries had covered well over 1,800 kilometres. I was glad to have arrived. A forty-minute walk up the *Via Aurelia* brought me to the Mother House of the Brothers. As I turned into the drive Brother Edwin Bannon emerged from the front door to greet me and soon the Director of the House, Brother Angelo, and several of the Brothers joined them. My journey was complete and I was thankful to have arrived safe and sound.

And it was in a spirit of thankfulness that I recalled one of the Psalms of Ascent originally used by pilgrims to Jerusalem but certainly applicable for pilgrims to Rome:

*I rejoiced when I heard them say: 'Let us go to God's house.'
And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.*

*Jerusalem built as a city strongly compact.
It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord.
For Israel's law it is, there to praise the Lord's name.
There were set the thrones of judgment of the house of David.
For the peace of Jerusalem pray: 'Peace to your homes.
May peace reign in your walls, in your palaces, peace.'
For love of my brethren and friends I say: Peace upon you.'
For love of the house of the Lord I will ask for your good.*

Psalm 121 (122)

One of the reasons for the pilgrimage was to raise funds to help relieve the plight of the people in Ethiopia but at a deeper level there is the need to pray for peace, peace within ourselves and peace for the war torn country of Ethiopia and now, of course, in the Gulf as well as the many other places where war is tearing countries apart.

With this last report I would like to say a 'Thank You' to all the many people who have already made contributions to the 'To Rome for Ethiopia' fund. Brother David Leo, who is looking after the fund, tells me there is already £5,600 in the bank. Perhaps, when all the promised funds arrived the final amount, will reach five figures.

Finally thanks to all who have supported me during the journey by their prayers and the letters, postcards and telephone calls to my *poste restante* addresses. They meant a very great deal to me. Thank you and may the peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding dwell with you now and always.

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Memorable Places on the Way to Rome: the Great Saint Bernard Hospice

Chris George

Since the most ancient of times the Great Saint Bernard (or Mont Joux) Pass has always been a highly frequented passage through the Alps. It is also quite close to the halfway point on the *Via Francigena* between Canterbury and Rome.

The Roman Emperor Augustus built a road over the pass and a temple was erected where travellers and soldiers would offer sacrifices to find favour with the gods.

Many famous and infamous people have used the pass: Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon etc. In the early 900s Huns and Saracens swept through the region raping, pillaging and destroying churches. To try to keep them quiet Hugh of Provence, King of Italy, granted them guardianship of

the Mont Joux pass, whereupon they began to terrorize travellers and demand tolls. These actions disrupted trade and travel throughout Europe. In an early act of European cooperation King Canute of Denmark and King Rudolph of Burgundy ejected these 'heathens' from the pass.

This provided an opportunity, in around 1050, for the Archdeacon of Aosta, one Bernard de Menthon, to begin the construction of a hospice on the pass. Bernard had already spent years tending to travellers coming down from there stripped of all their belongings. For this mission in the mountains Bernard called upon monks from the Augustinian Order, asking them to offer assistance at their peril. 'Here Christ is adored and cherished' would be their motto.

The hospice immediately became a welcome point of safety on an extremely dangerous route, attracting favours and gifts from royal and noble households, and by 1177 a papal bull confirmed that the monks owned some 78 properties in Vaud, Valais, Savoy, Italy, France and England, including Hornchurch in Essex. Throughout the Middle Ages, the hospice provided free shelter and food to pilgrims, clerics and travellers, many crossing to and from Rome. By 1817 some 20,000 people were using the road annually. During the wars of the 1790s, entire armies crossed the pass: in May 1800, Napoleon led 40,000 troops over it into Italy, consuming, on the way, 21,724 bottles of wine, a tonne and a half of cheese, 800kg of meat and more, running up a bill with the hospice of 40,000 francs before departing with a wave of his hand. Fifty years later the monks received 18,500 francs towards payment, and had to wait until May 1984 for a token gesture from French president François Mitterrand towards settling the account.

First mention of the famous Saint Bernard dogs – product of an unknown cross between a mastiff, Great Dane and/or Newfoundland – was in 1708. Since then, these heavy-set, jowly beasts, with or without a little flask of reviving brandy tied round their collars, have come to stand as icons of the mountains. With the advent of skis, phone lines, radios, and now helicopters, the rescue services of the dogs have faded, but the hospice still keeps a kennel for them on the pass. (Some fifteen pure-bred Saint Bernard puppies are born every year, each with a tidy price-tag of £700.sterling.) With the construction of the Simplon Tunnel further east in 1905, trains rapidly superseded the Saint Bernard road, and in 1964 a motorway tunnel opened beneath the pass in order to safeguard traffic flow year-round. These days the hospice spends the summer crowded with visitors and hikers, and the winter receiving people climbing up from below to spend a few days or weeks on a solitary snow-bound retreat. So for me, as I set out from Canterbury, on that terrible day for London, the 7th July 2005, to be able to stay (if I got that far ...) in the Great Saint Bernard Hospice was one of the highlights of the walk to Rome.

I remember well the frisson of excitement I felt when I first saw a road sign in Martigny containing the name 'Col du Grand-Saint-Bernard.' After Martigny

those comforting bright yellow Swiss footpath signs brought me through over the next one and a half days to the village of Liddes where I stayed the night in a comfortable *auberge* before my walk up to the pass the next day. That Saturday evening, August 13th 2005, I walked around the alpine village in the fading light of a beautiful warm sunny day, going over in my mind the advice I had just been given by a pipe-smoking old man: 'Get up early in the morning and get up to the hospice by midday, as there will be a storm in the afternoon.'

So who was I to dismiss such advice and by 7.30 am the next morning I was on my way out of the village, the yellow signs at the edge of the village stating that the hospice was four hours away at 2472 metres (8114 ft.). There was a fairly easy path to Bourg Saint-Pierre where I bought some fruit and chocolate, after which the path began to edge upwards to the barrage and lake and then it got steeper but undulating, so one did lose height gained rather annoyingly.

At the end of the path by the lake formed by the barrage, I arrived at a point called 'La Pierre' at 1915 metres. The sun was still shining but clouds were beginning to collect.

At 'L'Hospitalet' at 2110 metres I lost sight of those comforting yellow signs but there seemed an obvious but fairly steep path ahead which my compass suggested was the way to go. As this was a Sunday I did see a few people out for a day in the mountains and as I got to a point on my map called 'Les Troughets' a French group were having a picnic. I declined their very kind invitation to join them as I told them I had been given advice that the weather would be closing in by early afternoon and I wanted to get to the hospice. 'Ah, les Anglais et la météo,' I was told in a good-humoured manner.

Up and through the remnants of the winter snow in the 'Combe des Morts' and there, as I crested the rise, was the hospice, surrounded by motor coaches, motor bikes and milling crowds.

I climbed the steps up to the front door and entered a haven of peace, to be greeted by one of the lady volunteer helpers who, on learning I had reservation (made for me by the monks in the Abbey in Saint-Maurice), told me that Jacqueline, the lady who looked after such matters, was out but would be back within the hour. So she took me into the canteen and provide me with huge pot of tea - as I was English!!

Whilst I waited the weather changed as predicted by my pipe -smoking friend, it went very dark and it began to pour down with rain which went on for the next hour or so.

Jacqueline duly arrived and showed me up to room on the top floor. The room had five single beds with a washroom and toilet attached. Everywhere there was lovely solid old wood as were the floors. The corridors were carpeted, the white granite walls looked so solid and there was an aura of peace about the whole place that really overwhelmed me.

In the chapel a visiting mixed choir from Aosta were, as one of the monks told me, 'doing Bach' for the afternoon. As I sat absorbing the beautiful singing the sun began to filter through the stained glass so I left them to their music and went into Italy.

The Swiss border is only of few hundred metres from the door of the hospice and consequently the Italian border a few metres further on. I wandered through the border posts and took my first ever steps into Italy. I didn't stay long as down came the clouds again and I ran back to the hospice as the rain cut short my first visit.

At 6.00 pm I joined, with one or two other visitors and the white-robed Augustine monks, in the service of Compline in the crypt chapel. We sang accompanied by a zither-like instrument and had the longest period of silent prayer, around 25 minutes, I have ever experienced in a formal church service.

The next morning, when I looked out from my room at 6.30 am, I had quite a shock: an inch of snow covered the ground. I found one of the monks busily sweeping it from the front steps but telling me not to worry as by the time I had descended 200 metres the snow will have gone and the sun will be shining!!

So after breakfast I donned every bit of clothing I had and slithered down the road to find the Swiss Border Guards had decided it was too cold to get out of bed. The Italians were up but declined to come out of their nice warm hut. If I wanted a stamp for my 'Pilgrim Passport' I would have to join them. So I slipped that August morning into the land of pizzas and pasta with a great sense of gratitude for my time at the hospice of Saint Bernard, a place of peace and hospitality where the monks and helpers are still faithful to their founder's principles.

Editor's note: since it first opened over a thousand years ago the hospice has never closed, unlike many similar establishments, and has been welcoming pilgrims and other travellers continuously ever since

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Thoughts and Experiences when welcoming pilgrims to St Peter at the end of their journey

Monsignor Bruno Vercesi

Welcoming pilgrims to St Peter's basilica has been for me a very intense and consoling experience since July 2001, and I hope it continues to be so in the future, as far as my other commitments and our future permits. The pilgrimage is in fact similar to the journey on our earthly life, that at the end it makes us capable to acknowledge the loving gestures of our true God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and in Him he makes himself also our Father, especially when we let Him show us his ways.

'The Lord makes man's steps firm and guides his ways with love' (Psalm 27, 23). In particular, I have been so glad to welcome pilgrims coming from Canterbury, who with their most admirable and courageous choice, they brought us again to the Christian roots of our Europe.

I am also grateful to Mrs Adelaide Trezzini of the Association Internationale Via Francigena, who in the year 2000-2001, arranged with S.E. Georges Cardinal Cottier and our Superiors at the Basilica to provide a *Testimonium* to the *Via Francigena* pilgrims after completing their journey to the Tomb of St Peter, as in the case for pilgrims to the Basilica of Santiago de Compostela.

Mrs Trezzini has demonstrated great creativity and organisational capacity and is a true help for me in welcoming pilgrims in St Peter's Basilica in Rome.

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La Via Francigena del Sud or Il Cammino per Roma

Joe Patterson

Early in 2007 I was invited by an Italian friend, Alberto Alberti, to walk along the *La Via Francigena del Sud* from Formia to Rome.

I had already walked this route with Alberto and his group in 2006 and had enjoyed it so much I had no hesitation in accepting his offer. Alberto has vast experience of the *Via Francigena* north of Rome and indeed is co-author of a guide from Siena to Rome. Over the past few years Alberto and his friends (who all live along the way) have been researching the route from the south up to Rome along the *Via Appia Antica*. Their aim is to re-establish (and sometime re-invent) a path to go on foot from the south of Latium (Minturno/Gaeta/Formia) to Rome by walking it regularly, making a special effort to develop its cultural/spiritual aspects. As Alberto explains, the *Via Appia (Regina Viarum)* was the most widely-used of the ancient Roman roads for about a millennium. Apostles walked along it, emperors and popes too, saints such as St. Francis of Assisi and St. Thomas Aquinas, writers (Petarch, Tasso, Goethe) as well as some composers. Along the way you will see very varied landscape (mountains, sea, lakes and national parks) but also important castles, Roman temples and Cistercian basilicas in untouched medieval villages. As regards the route today, 20% of it is on ancient Roman roads with original paving, 40% on mountain or country paths and 9 % on varied types of ground. On the negative side some 8 % is on main roads with heavy traffic, while 23% is on tarmac roads but with very limited traffic. The walk is physically not very demanding, but some previous training is recommended.

Formia, from where the path begins, is easily accessible from Rome, being on the main rail line to Naples. Our group this year numbered around 20 people

and I took with me three English friends who have never walked this area, or indeed in Italy, before. The first two days walking, which includes perhaps one of the best sections of the *Via Appia Antica* are moderately demanding, as there are quite a few ups and downs, and the sometimes hot temperatures can be uncomfortable. For this reason the walk this year was in April/May as opposed to June in 2006. But we had wet days this year! The first two days also have the longer distances: Formia to Fondi 23km and Fondi to Terracina 25km. From there we walked to Fossanova (23km), Sezze (21km), Bassiano (15km), Sermoneta (11km), Cori (21km), Velletri (21km), Castel Gandolfo (20km) and Rome (20km) finishing at the church of *Quo Vadis* in the southern suburbs of Rome. We then met the following day at St Peters Basilica for the Papal audience.

Accommodation along the way was in B&Bs, convents, monasteries, youth hostels and hotels, sometimes there being a choice. Average cost about 40€ per person per night. As Alberto is promoting the route he is engaging with the towns and villages we pass through. This has interesting results. We were entertained by more than one superb choir (modern, classic, religious, and medieval) and in some memorable settings, amazed by the flag throwers, given tours of churches and dined and wined by the local *Commune*.. Something you would be hard pressed to organise yourself.

Alberto has sent me his proposals for 2008. The next group (20 people, walking approximately 20km for each of the 10 days) will start on April 25th and end in Rome on May 6th (provisional). Foreign participants are especially welcome.. Cost for overnight accommodation and food is borne by each participant.

<i>Formia</i>	Hotel/pension double room, breakfast and evening meal	
		per person about 45€
<i>Fondi</i>	Hotel as above	45€
<i>Terracina</i>	Convent (rooms with several beds)	35€
<i>Fossanova</i>	Hotel as above	48€
<i>Sezze</i>	Hotel as above	45€
<i>Bassiano</i>	Hotel as above	48€
	Youth hostel	38€
<i>Sermoneta</i>	Youth hostel	38€
<i>Cori</i>	Hotel as above	43€
<i>Velletri</i>	Hotel as above	48€
<i>Castelgandolfo</i>	Convent	40€

Luggage transport (one item per participant from stage to stage) can be arranged if required, as a cost of 3€ a day each) Insurance is legally required in Italy for any group with a guide (2€ per day each). (The guide pays his own expenses.)

Participation in only a part of the walk is not encouraged but is possible for more than 4 stages.

If you are interested in joining next years' group or have queries Alberto can be contacted by email at ro_albea@hotmail.com (note lower case hyphen between o and a), by telephone (he speaks good English) on.00-39. 065370765 or 00 39 3491648614 (mobile) or write to him at Largo Pepere 24, 00151 Roma. Alternatively you can email me at willjoepatt@pilgrim2001.fsnet.co.uk or phone 01305 833331.

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The CPR Library

Howard Nelson

We have a small but growing collection of books about the *Via Francigena* and about Rome itself. For the time being, the books are kept with the library of the Confraternity of Saint James at 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY, which has kindly offered us 'bibliographic hospitality' until such time as we have premises of our own.

Although housed together, the two collections are quite distinct. However, and again for the time being, the books are catalogued with the CSJ Library (not that it would be impossible to maintain a union catalogue of materials about the Santiago and Rome pilgrimages indefinitely).

Access to the catalogue is through the CSJ website, www.csj.org.uk/library.htm. All the items belonging to the CPR have been given the keyword "CPR LIBRARY", so the easiest way to get a comprehensive listing of the library's contents (in title order) is to run this keyword search.

However, the CSJ already held a number of books about the pilgrimage to Rome, not (yet) represented in our collection, and to see everything that is available, you should also search on other relevant keywords such as the following:

- PILGRIMAGE-ROME
- ROUTES-SENTIERO FRANCESCANO
- ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA

A full list of the current holdings of the CPR library follows. Our present policy is to invite members to give a book or books to the library in return for their pilgrim passports - so please consult the on-line catalogue before you buy, to be sure that you don't duplicate an item we already have!

The CSJ Trustees have agreed that members of the two Confraternities should have reciprocal borrowing rights. The two collections are open to the public when the CSJ office is open, but only members (of either Confraternity) may borrow. The borrowing rules are simple:

- Borrowers are expected to pay the cost of sending and/or returning books.
- Any item lost or damaged must be replaced at the borrower's expense.
- Books should be returned within a month, and immediately thereafter if requested by another reader.
- Full details must be entered in the appropriate borrowing register, and a yellow card filled in and placed where the book belongs on the shelf.

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CPR Library - Holdings at 1st December 2007

An English Pilgrim-Diary of the year 990 Magoun, Francis P.

An analysis of the stages recorded by Archbishop Sigeric on his return journey from Rome. 21 pp., source unidentified,.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME HISTORY CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR PAM 2. Acc No: #4340.

Archbishop Sigeric's journey to Rome in 990 Ortenburg, Veronica

In: Anglo-Saxon England, 19, 1990.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME HISTORY CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR PAM 1. Acc No: #4339.

Der Frankenweg - Via Francigena: der mittelalterliche Pilgerweg van Canterbury nach Rom Zweidler, Reinhard

Theiss, Stuttgart, 2003, pp. 159.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4316.

Di qui passò Francesco: 350 chilometri a piedi o in bicicletta tra la Verna, Gubbio, Assisi ... fino a Rieti Seracchioli, Angela Maria

2nd, Terre di Mezzo, Milano, 2006, pp. 163.

CPR LIBRARY ROUTES-SENTIERO FRANCESCANO

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4431.

European pilgrimage routes: pilgrimage routes to Santiago and the Via Francigena Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi

[The company], Rome, 2007/8 edition of the catalogue of a company offering tours on these pilgrimage routes, 2007, pp. 37.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO-GENERAL TOURISM CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR PAM 6. Acc No: #4425.

Guida alla Via Francigena: 900 chilometri a piedi sulle strade del pellegrinaggio verso Roma D'Atti, Monica and Cinti, Franco

Terre di Mezzo, Milan, 2006, pp. 203.

ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA PILGRIMAGE-ROME CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4303.

Guide to the Catacombs of Priscilla Carletti, Sandro

Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology, Vatican City, 2005, pp. 59.

ARCHAEOLOGY CPR LIBRARY ROME-CATACOMBS

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4399.

Guide to the excavations of Ostia Antica, with a section about the Renaissance Borgo Gallico, Sonia

Ars Italia Editrice, Rome, 2000, pp. 73.

ARCHAEOLOGY CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4397.

In Search of a Way: two journeys of spiritual discovery Hughes, Gerard W.

Darton Longmann & Todd, London, 1986, pp. 174.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME SPIRITUALITY CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4283.

Italien: Franziskaner Wanderweg von Florenz über Assisi nach Rom Roodenburg. Kees

Conrad Stein Verlag, Welver, (Outdoor Handbuch, 186), 2006, pp. 127.

CPR LIBRARY ROUTES-ITALY ROUTES-SENTIERO FRANCESCO
PILGRIMAGE-ROME

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4447.

La Basilique Saint-Paul Hors-les-Murs Administration Pontificale de la Basilique Patriarcale Saint-Paul

Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, Guide to San Paolo fuori le Mura, 2003, pp. 79.

ROME-CHURCHES CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4403.

La Via Francigena: the paths of the pilgrims Touring Club Italiano

Touring Club Italiano, Milan, 1995, pp. 79.

ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4402.

Le catacombe di Roma: meta privilegiata dei pellegrini d'Europa = The Roman Catacombs: privileged place of European pilgrims [etc] Pontificia

Commissione di Archeologia Sacra

Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, Vatican City, Booklet to accompany an exhibition at the San Callisto catacomb, 30 Sept - 30 Oct 2007, 2007, pp. [12].

ROME-CATACOMBS CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR PAM 4. Acc No: #4404.

Le Necropoli Vaticane Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici di Roma

Elio de Rosa Editore, Rome, (Roma Sacra, 25), 2002, pp. 64.

(Summary: Illustrated description of the excavations under the high altar of St Peter's)

ROME-ARCHAEOLOGY CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4405.

Museo Nazionale Romano: Crypta Balbi Rome, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma

Electa, Milan, English edition, 2000, pp. 95.

ARCHAEOLOGY CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4398.

Newsletter Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome

[The Confraternity], London, No 1 (June 2007) -, 2007-.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR PER 1. Acc No: #4384.

Pilgrim souvenirs and secular badges Spencer, Brian

The Stationery Office, London, Photocopy of pp 248-252, covering SS Peter and Paul and the Veronica, and St John Lateran, 1998.

PILGRIM BADGES PILGRIMAGE-ROME CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR PAM 5. Acc No: #4408.

Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages Birch, Debra J.

Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge, (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion, XIII), 1998, pp. 238.

HISTORY PILGRIMAGE-ROME CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4304.

Riding the Roman Way Gallard, Babette

EURL Pilgrim Publications, 2007, pp. 189.

ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA PILGRIMAGE-HORSEBACK CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4400.

Rome: a pilgrim's companion Baldwin, David

Catholic Truth Society, London, (CTS Christian Shrines Series,), 2005, pp. 111.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME SPIRITUALITY CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4284.

Santiago de Compostela: the Way of Saint James Baldwin, David
Catholic Truth Society, London, (CTS Christian Shrines Series,), 2001, pp. 86.
PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO-GENERAL SPIRITUALITY CPR LIBRARY
Location: CPR. Acc No: #4285.

Some notes on the Via Francigena Patterson, Joe
Typescript prepared for a CSJ "Other Routes" Practical Pilgrim Day, 2007.
CPR LIBRARY ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA PILGRIMAGE-ROME
Location: CPR PAM 7. Acc No: #4427.

Taking a line for a walk: 1000 miles on foot from le Havre to Rome Lambert, Christopher
Antique Collectors Club Ltd, 2004, pp. 144.
ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA PERSONAL ACCOUNTS CPR LIBRARY
Location: CPR. Acc No: #4401.

The bones of St Peter: the fascinating account of the search for the Apostle's body Walsh, John Evangelist
Sinag-Tala, Manila, 1987, pp. 207.
ROME-ARCHAEOLOGY CPR LIBRARY SAINTS
Location: CPR. Acc No: #4395.

The Christian Catacombs of Rome: history, decoration, inscriptions Nicolai, Vincenzo Fiocchi; Bisconti, Fabrizio; and Mazzoleni, Danilo
2nd, Schnell & Steiner, Regensburg, 2002, pp. 208.
ROME-ARCHAEOLOGY CPR LIBRARY ROME-CATACOMBS
Location: CPR. Acc No: #4396.

The Christian's Guide to Rome Luff, S.G.A.
Burns & Oates, Tunbridge Wells, 1990, pp. 335.
CPR LIBRARY PILGRIMAGE-ROME GUIDEBOOKS-ITALY
Location: CPR. Acc No: #4432.

The Cradle of English Christianity: The coming of St. Augustine and St. Martin's Church Canterbury Taylor, Martin I.
St. Martin's & St. Paul's PCC, Canterbury, 2001, pp. 16.
CPR LIBRARY PILGRIMAGE-ROME ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA
Location: CPR PAM 8. Acc No: #4428.

The Good Way: a Handbook for the Stonyhurst Pilgrimage to Rome ... April 2006. Stonyhurst College
A booklet containing maps and directions for the route from Orvieto to Capranica, plus meditations and prayers to accompany the pilgrimage, 2006.
PILGRIMAGE-ROME ROUTES-VIA FRANCIGENA SPIRITUALITY CPR LIBRARY
Location: CPR. Acc No: #4282.

The Pilgrim-Diary of Nikulas of Munkathvera: the Road to Rome Magoun, Francis P.

In: *Medieval Studies*, Vol 6, 1944, pp. 314-354, 1944.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR PAM 3. Acc No: #4394.

The Vatican Grottoes Soprintendenza Speciale per il Polo Museale Romano

Elio de Rosa Editore, Rome, (Roma Sacra, 26-27), 2003, pp. 128.

(Summary: Illustrated description of the crypt of St Peter's)

ROME-ARCHAEOLOGY ROME-CHURCHES CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4406.

VF Five Pilgrims to Rome: 15th June-13th July 2006 The VF Five

The VF Five, Durban, 2006, pp. 131.

PILGRIMAGE-ROME PERSONAL ACCOUNTS CPR LIBRARY

Location: CPR. Acc No: #4407.

Future issues of the CPR *Newsletter* will contain information about subsequent additions to the library.

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***Via Francigena* sign in Canterbury, now no longer there (does anybody know what happened to it?)**

Reviews

In the footsteps of St. Francis

Angela Maria Seracchioli, *Di qui passò Francesco : 350 chilometri a piedi o in bicicletta tra la Verna, Gubbio, Assisi ... fino a Rieti*. 2nd edition. Milano, Terre di Mezzo, 2006. 163 pp. €17. ISBN : 888938575-8.

Alison Raju reviewed the first (2004) edition of this guide in the *CPR Newsletter* no 1. This second edition includes a number of important changes.

The first involves accommodation: the first edition gave the impression that some of the places offering accommodation to pilgrims do so on the same impromptu basis as the *refugios* along the Camino de Santiago, with the result that they have at times - for example at la Verna - been overwhelmed by unexpected arrivals. The second edition is more cautious, indicating that advance booking is appreciated, indeed necessary, all along the way.

The route is also changed. The long 33km stage from Spoleto to Collescipoli, Via the interminable outskirts of Terni, is now broken into two (with a stop at Romita di Cesi), and avoids Terni altogether.

Finally, a section for cyclists has been added, dividing the walkers' 16 stages into 7 of about 60 km each. While this would have been welcome to one who recently tried to follow the footpath, on a bicycle, and using the first edition, it nevertheless suggests that this attractive route can be hurried: which is a pity, because there is much that is worth taking slowly.

The *Sentiero Francescano* is not part of the *Via Francigena*, nor really a pilgrimage route in itself, since the high point, Assisi, falls in the middle. Nevertheless, enthusiasts have painted yellow arrows along the way, and there is a way-marked path claiming to be part of the *Via Francigena* from Rieti on to Rome. In due course, however, and once a link from Lucca via Firenze to la Verna has been established, it is possible that the *Sentiero Francescano* could be treated as a variant - for those with a special interest in Francis and the sanctuaries he himself sought out - on the way to Rome.

Howard Nelson

Riding the Roman Way

Babette Gallard, *Riding the Roman Way*, EURL Pilgrim Publications, 2007, 189 pages, paperback, £11.99, ISBN 978-2-917183-00-7

This is the first edition and the second book written by Babette (*Riding the Milky Way*, published by the Long Rider's Guild Press in 2006, covered their ride to Santiago). It includes eighteen hand-drawn illustrations and a table of their 88

day itinerary.

There are few journals as yet written by the current generation of *Via Francigena* pilgrims and Babette's has the distinction of being about a journey on horseback. It starts, with partner Paul Chinn, at their home in St Aubin Fosse Louvain in northwest France, joins the *Via Francigena* at Martigny, and finishes in Rome.

2100 km is a long ride and you would not expect it to pass without problems, especially as Babette is not only pioneering a pilgrimage route for which no authoritative maps exist yet but also as she and Paul were making their own route for the first half of the journey. The difficulty is only made greater as the horses they are riding have been come from a rescue centre and are not what one would choose ideally to undertake such a difficult journey.

Two pilgrims on horseback carrying a dog are rare enough to attract the local media and Babette, Paul, Lubie, Gwendolyn and Vasco (the dog) become "famous " as they make their way though Italy. It does not all go according to plan but one way or another they all make it to Rome.

I found the book a very easy read and read it before, and again after having done the *Via Francigena* sections they did, and it brought back memories. Babette is a natural writer as those who have read this years VF blog on <http://pilgrimagepublications.blogspot.com/> will know and I can recommend this book to all those interested in reading about the challenges that arise on a journey to Rome and how Paul and Babette overcame them.

William Marques

Sketchbook diary of a journey to Rome

Christopher Lambert, *Taking a Line for a Walk, 1000 Miles on Foot from Le Havre to Rome*, Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club Ltd., 2004, 144pp., full colour hardback, 168x130mm, ISBN: 1-85149-470-7. Foreword by Chris Bonnington.

Not long before his 70th birthday, Christopher Lambert decided to walk solo across Europe, from Le Havre to Rome. When asked by his wife what his route would be he drew a blue line across a map of Europe to Lausanne and there joined the *Via Francigena*. Seventy-one walking days and 1000+ miles later he arrived in the Eternal City. A sketchbook and pencils were his journey-long companions.

This colourful book is an unedited facsimile of his daily sketches and the commentary of a very personal trek along that blue line. It reproduces, on a double-page spread for each day, his handwritten notes and several colour wash pen and ink drawings. A typeset margin has been added to each page,

guiding the reader along the route. Christopher uses a variety of approaches with his handful of sketching implements and the mixture of vibrant colour sketches and hand-written, spontaneous thoughts give the reader a vivid glimpse of the road to Rome. Christopher is a superb draughtsman and his drawings lead the way, being both charming and evocative.

It is worth taking the time and trouble to decipher Chris' handwritten notes, as you walk with him through the sights, sounds and smells of the streets and countryside, experiencing what he feels, and the sketches only seem to get better as the journey progresses. I hope I do not offend but I mean it as a compliment to say that this is a cross between Wainwright's *Walks* and *A Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*.

This is in no way a guide. It is a book that is likely to interest readers who have already walked, cycled or ridden to Rome or to ignite the desire to make the pilgrimage for others and we found it a fantastic reminder of the journey.

William Marques

Guidebook to the Via Francigena

Kees Roodenburg, *Italien: Franziskaner Wanderweg von Florenz über Assisi nach Rom*. (Outdoor Handbuch Band 186). Welver: Conrad Stein Verlag, 2006. 127 pp, 9.90€ ISBN 3-86686-186-9.

This is a German translation of a guide first published in Dutch. It describes a 493 km walking route from Florence via Assisi to Rome in 32 relatively short stages: few are longer than 20 km, but they do cross some very hilly country.

The route begins by going a little north of east to reach the monastery and hermitage of Camaldoli, before turning south for la Verna. From here it coincides with the *Sentiero Francese* (see other review on page 36), via Assisi, as far as Spoleto; but instead of going south-west to Terni, south-east to Rieti and then north again for Poggio Bustone, the route goes more nearly south, directly to Poggio Bustone and Rieti, and then west via Greccio to Stroncone and the Sacro Speco di Narni before finally turning south for Rome. It has the good sense to recommend public transport for the final difficult 20 km into the city.

It therefore provides a realistic pilgrimage route to Rome, and may one day, when the link between Lucca and Firenze is made, become an attractive variant for the *Via Francigena*: better, moreover, because more direct, than the *Sentiero Francese*, while linking, in a similar way, many beautiful sites associated with St Francis.

The guide is admirably compact, with detailed route-finding instructions (though these will need to be tested in practice), and details of accommodation and other facilities available. The maps however are very small, and would certainly

need to be supplemented by something larger.

The route itself includes some high and isolated stretches, where you are unlikely to meet any other walkers, so adequate experience and equipment are probably essential.

Howard Nelson

Maps for the Via Francigena

Monica D'Atti & Franco Cinti, *La Via Francigena. Cartografia e Gps. Dal Monginevro a Roma lungo l'itinerario storico*, Milan: Terre di Mezzo Editore, 2007. ISBN: 978-88-8985-60-9, 22€.

Just what we've been waiting for!

3 large sheets of maps in a set, covering the 800km from the Monginevro Pass over the Alps to Rome at a scale of 1:30.000, i.e. nearly two and a half inches to the mile. In full colour there are 40 detailed maps covering all the stages of the journey, with the walkers' route traced on them, height profiles, types of roads/paths used and complete GPS data. Designed initially to accompany the authors' own guide book (reviewed in *CPR Newsletter #1*) and very clearly presented, these maps will be an invaluable asset to any pilgrim wishing to make a trouble-free journey to Rome.

Their only drawback (at present) is that those wishing to follow the "Sigeric route" (i.e. cross the Alps Via the Great Saint Bernard Pass) will have to wait till Vercelli (150km into the Italian part of the route) before they can use them. (The Monginevre Pass crosses the Alps direct from France, near Briançon, and at "only" 1851 metres above sea level, compared to the 2469 of the Great St. Bernard.) However, the authors are working on this other section and will produce both a guide book and accompanying maps in due course.

Congratulations to the two authors for this magnificent achievement and many thanks to them for the enormous amount of work they have put in to make the lives of future pilgrims so much easier.

Alison Raju

VF Five pilgrims to Rome, 2006, price unknown. Published privately, obtainable from VF Five Pilgrims, 37 Broadway, Westville, 3630 - KZN, South Africa. A4, 132pp, photos, ISBN 978-0-620-38390-5,.

An account of a walking pilgrimage from Vevey, in Switzerland, to Rome, by five South African pilgrims - Kathy, Marian, Rayna, Sil and Val - made from June 15th to July 13th 2006, to raise money (R50,0000) for Homenet children's charities. The book is a record of their 700 mile journey on foot, as written for their daily BLOG (web log) whilst on the walk.

This is not a guide book but a five-strand journal, each of them recording her memories and impressions of each day on the journey. This is followed by sections with comments on the BLOG, 'post pilgrimage blues,' 'VF Five trivia,' a back pack list and one entitled 'resources.'

This book will be of interest not just to the many friends and relations of the VF Five and to those thinking of making a similar journey, but especially to those who have already taken this route to Rome.

There is a copy in the CPR library.

Alison Raju

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Letter

Adelaide Trezzini

Dear Pilgrim Friends,

The AIVF had wished to publish the 2nd edition of the **Guide-Vademecum** and of the **Topofrancigena A (from Canterbury to the Grand St Bernard)**, but too many changes have or are taking place on most of the French VF itinerary: the building of major roads, local footpaths and GR that are no longer practicable, rights of way that have been removed and new VF pathways that are being established by 2 regional councils. At the moment, the AIVF is therefore **not able to suggest a reliable VF itinerary in France.**

We suggest that **adventurous** pilgrims, that want to walk the VF in France, request the latest information from the appropriate departmental and regional councils.

The Topofrancigena A ed. 2004 is no longer on sale!

The Topofrancigena-CH (maps 32-39) remains on sale! (The Swiss VF route is ok.)

We suggest that other interested associations can provide for the redevelopment of the publications VF (Canterbury-Pontarlier) under the patronage of AIVF - as the **creator** of the **Guide-Vademecum**, **Topofrancigena** and **Dormifrancigena** for the **Via Francigena - Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.**

Best wishes, **ASOCIATION INTERNATIONALE VIA FRANCIGENA (AIVF)**

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Secretary's Notebook

Membership of the CPR We now have 97 members, with 39 foreign members from 12 countries.

Next Meeting and Anniversary Lunch The next meeting of the CPR will be on Sunday, January 20th 2008, at 12 noon, in the library of the Confraternity of St. James, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY. After the meeting there will be a lunch to celebrate our first year of work. The lunch will be held at 14.30 at a restaurant near Blackfriars. The food is Mediterranean and veggie alternatives are available. The lunch is being organised by Ann Milner: please contact her at info@pilgrimstorome.org.uk. (There is no need to attend the meeting if you just want lunch.)

Website The CPR website which is run by webmaster Ann Milner, is at www.pilgrimstorome.org.uk. All are welcome to e-mail Ann with input for the Tips page. Links will be provided to members' blogs or websites concerning the *Via Francigena* and other routes to Rome. Please contact Ann with your URLs.

Waymarking On the 29th of October the Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi held a ceremony to unveil the first in a series of over 1,500 signs that are being posted in Italy to revive the *Via Francigena*. Prime Minister Prodi met with reporters in the town of Monteriggioni, where one of 1,544 signs on the ancient route has been posted outside a medieval castle that once hosted pilgrims as they approached Rome.

Waymarking in the UK The CPR has written to Canterbury City Council to express the need for improved signage. This will be passed onto Kent County Council. A draft leaflet of the standard 1/3rd A4 type with information about the *Via Francigena* and its history, including a map out of Canterbury, has been produced by Paul Chinn. It is awaiting approval from Canterbury City Council and the Cathedral who we intend should distribute it. A *route guide* for the exit from Canterbury, provided by Alison Raju, is now available on the CPR website.

Accommodation The CPR current accommodation list is available from William Marques. It relies completely upon the feedback received from its members who travel the route. We will include whatever information we are given about any place that offers accommodation. It is the long term aim that the current accommodation list will provide the foundation for a booklet or booklets similar to the ones published by the CSJ. The Canterbury to Great Saint Bernard Pass will be the first one published as there is so little information available for this sector.

The *Topofrancigena* from Canterbury to Saint Bernard Pass has unexpectedly been withdrawn from sale (see Adelaide Trezzini's letter on page 40). Until Paul Chinn and Babette Gallard's or Alison Raju's guides for this section have been published there is no set of directional maps covering France and Switzerland.

The *Vademecum* is still available. This gives further impetus to us to convert the accommodation list for that section into some type of handbook. The warden for the section of the North Downs Way between Canterbury and Dover has a B&B near Shepherdswell (Colret House, The Green, Coldred). He walked with the RAI group last summer.

Pilgrim Passport We have sent out 24 so far and many of them have been sent to people outside the UK. The pilgrim passport is now available on the website in PDF format for printing at home by those who can. We suggest a donation to our Library should be made by those wanting a printed copy. Please contact William Marques for how to donate.

CPR Library We now have quite a lot more books, all of which have been catalogued and are housed on shelves to the side of the central window in the CSJ library (27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY, in the building adjoining Christ Church and just over the bridge from Blackfriars Station). See Howard Nelson's article on page 30 for more details of holdings. The CSJ office is open on a regular basis on Thursdays from 11am to 3pm, on some Saturdays and at other times on request (phone ahead: 020 7928 9988). If you have any books about Rome, pilgrimage, the *Via Francigena* or places along the way please contact Alison Raju (alisonraju@btopenworld.com) who will arrange for them to be passed on to Howard Nelson for cataloguing.

Road to Rome This is the name of an 18 day walking journey along the *Via Francigena* from Assisi to Rome, led by Australian CPR member Almis Simans. The tour includes four nights in Assisi and four in Rome and runs from 13th to 30th April 2008. It costs \$6,450 per person (twin share) for land and group travel ex-Sydney or \$4,680 for land content only. For more information contact William Suganda at william@inspiredtraveller.com.au or phone (+61 2) 8005 0978.

Welcome Day - Four Routes to Rome

Four pilgrim associations will each walk more than 120 km along four different routes to arrive at the same time in Rome (St. Peter's Square) at 4 p.m on May 13th 2008. Provisonal details of their itineraries are as follows:

- From **Bolsena**, north of Rome, along the *Via Francigena*. This group is organised by **Giovane Montagna**: Bolsena May 6, Montefiascone 7, Viterbo 8, Vetralla 9, Sutri 10, Campagnano 11, Isola Farnese/La Storta 12, Rome 13. *Info: Gborgianellis pina@libero.it*
- From **Assisi**, along the *Via Romea*. This group is organised by **Cammino della Luce** (dates to be confirmed): Assisi May 5, Deruta 6, Todi 7, Amelia 8, Corchiano 9, Castel S. Elia 10, Campagnano 11, La Storta 12, Rome 13. *Info: Giancarlo guerrini@tin.it*
- From **Montecassino**, along the route connecting most abbeys and sanctuaries along the path of St Benedict. This group is organised by the **CAI** branches of Frosinone, Alatri, Cassino, Napoli (dates and itineray to be finalized): Montecassino April 29th, Colle S. Magno 30, Casalattico May 1st, Arpino 2, Monte S. Giovanni Campano, Veroli 4, Collepardo 5, Campocatino

6, Guarcino 7, Altipiani Arcinazzo 8, Olevano Rom. 9, Paliano 10, Palestrina 11, Via Prenestina 12, Rome 13. *Info: Sabellico.walter@libero.it and Diegomag2002@libero.it*

Some groups will walk in Puglia, Basilicata, Campania. *Info: V.digironimo@libero.it*

• From **Gaeta/Formia** along the Roman *Via Appia (Regina Viarum)* and the medieval *Via Appia Pedemontana.*, a route dedicated to St Thomas Aquinas. This group is organised by **Gruppo dei Dodici**: Formia May 3, Fondi 4, Terracina 5, Fossanova/Priverno 6, Sezze 7, Bassiano 8, Sermoneta 9, Cori 10, Velletri 11, Castelgandolfo 12, Rome 13. *Info: Alberto. Alberti Ro_albea@hotmail.com*

Alternative route: Fossanova/Priverno 6, Maenza 7, Carpineto R. 8, Segni 9, Cori 10.

All these routes are rich in historic monuments - original Roman roads, significant ruins of Roman temples, Cistercian basilicas, medieval villages, Renaissance buildings. The scenery is very varied too - mountains, woods, lakes, and the seashore. It is anticipated that each group will have around 20 pilgrims of all ages, nearly half of them non-Italians, and will walk an average of 20 km a day. On Wednesday May 14. the programme includes participation to the General Audience of the Holy Father in the morning and a reception on Capitol Hill by authorities in the afternoon.

If this initiative is a success it will be repeated every spring. For further information contact Joe Patterson: willjoepatt@pilgrim2001.fsnet.co.uk

Other

An **embroidered badge** has been produced by the AIVF; the cost is £6.00 to friends of the AIVF.

The AEFV are organising a **European-wide day of all the towns on the Via Francigena** on the last Saturday of June annually. Canterbury City Council has asked if the CPR is interested in participating in this event. Any suggestions of how we might do so are welcome.

The **cyclists led by Canon Edward Condry** last summer raised more than £130,000. The sponsored ride by 27 cyclists took 17 days to complete and raised £132,899.81. Just under £92,000 will go to the Save Canterbury Cathedral Appeal and the rest is being shared between 16 local, national and international charities.

Did you know? Peter Robins asks: "Did you know that Macbeth made a pilgrimage to Rome, in 1072? According to Mariani Scotti Chronicon, 'Rex Scottiae Macbeth' 'handed out alms to the poor like one sowing seed'. Sadly, that's all the chronicle tells us.'

Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome

Founded November 2006

www.pilgrimstorome.org.uk

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